



Global Economic Talks

Minister of Finance and National Economy, H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, attended a high-level working breakfast hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysée Palace, alongside senior officials and dignitaries from around the world.



Discussions centred on the latest global economic developments, shifting international market trends, and investment growth opportunities supporting sustainable development.

The Minister reaffirmed Bahrain's dedication to strengthening bilateral partnerships and economic cooperation to drive inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

Health Warning Over Ebola Spread



Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged citizens to exercise caution and consider postponing travel to Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo amid concerns over the spread of Ebola virus disease.

The statement issued by the ministry said the advisory comes as health authorities report the continued presence of Ebola virus disease in parts of the region.

Officials emphasized the importance of taking preventive measures, following health guidance, and closely monitoring updates from relevant international health organisations before planning any travel.

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Royal Address Highlights Unity

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Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Consort of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), has praised His Majesty's address delivered during the weekly Cabinet meeting at Al Sakhir Palace.

HRH Princess Sabeeka said the speech outlined the direction of Bahrain's next phase of development and reflected His Majesty's vision of strengthen-



ing national unity while protecting the Kingdom's achievements and continued prosperity.

She commended the King's recognition of the strong sense of unity and loyalty shown by Bahraini families and citizens, describing it as a reflection of the close bond between the leadership and the people in confronting challenges.

Her Royal Highness also stressed the important role Bahraini women continue to play in the King-

dom's national development process under the leadership of His Majesty the King. She said women remain key partners in progress and in instilling values of loyalty and national belonging in future generations.

HRH Princess Sabeeka reaffirmed loyalty to His Majesty King Hamad, adding that the Supreme Council for Women, its affiliates and Bahraini women would continue working with dedication to safeguard Bahrain's achievements and ensure the Kingdom remains a symbol of security, peace and prosperity.

Bahrain Suspends Citizens' Travel to Iran and Iraq

The Ministry of Interior announced a temporary ban on citizens travelling to Iran and Iraq, citing ongoing regional security tensions.

In a statement, the ministry said the decision was taken “in light of the continuing security situation” linked to the repercussions of the “Iranian aggression”.

The ministry said the measure was introduced to safeguard national security and ensure the safety of Bahraini citizens.

The travel suspension remains in effect until further notice.

Hands Off Al-Aqsa

Eight countries deliver a sharp warning to Israel over holy site violations

TDT | Manama

Foreign ministers from eight Muslim and Arab nations — the UAE, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar — have jointly condemned Israeli settler incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif, carried out under the protection of Israeli forces. The raising of the Israeli flag inside the mosque's courtyards drew particular outrage.

“Violation of International Law”

The ministers described the actions as provocative and unacceptable, stating they constitute a clear breach of international

law, United Nations resolutions, and the long-established historical and legal status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites. They further condemned what they called Israel's systematic efforts to alter the historical, legal, and demographic character of occupied East Jerusalem — targeting both its Islamic and Christian sacred sites.

Who Has the Right to Al-Aqsa?

The ministers were unanimous: the entire 144-dunam compound of Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims. They affirmed that the Jerusalem Endowments and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Depart-



ment—under Jordan's Ministry of Awqaf—holds sole legal authority to administer and regulate access to the site, reaffirming Jordan's historic Hashemite custodianship.

The eight nations held Israel directly responsible for halting these escalatory actions, warning that continued violations fuel instability, deepen extremism, and sabotage international peace efforts. They called for an

immediate and complete halt to all illegal Israeli practices at the holy site.

The ministers reaffirmed their unconditional support for Palestinian self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital — consistent with international law, UN resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Voices Behind the Game



H.E. Dr. Ramzan bin Abdulla Al Noaimi, Minister of Information, presided over a ceremony recognising staff from Bahrain Sports Channel and the analytical studio team behind football coverage.

The event, held in Manama, was attended by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Deputy President of the Bahrain Football Association, and celebrated contributors from the past football season — including sponsors and partners.

The Minister credited Bahrain's growing sports media success to the backing of His Majesty King Hamad and the directives of HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

H.E. Dr. Ramzan praised the studio team's professionalism, saying their work reflects the rising standard of sports broadcasting in the Kingdom.

He also highlighted Bahrain Sports Channel's vital role in covering local competitions and showcasing national sporting achievements across all platforms.

JAILBREAK IN THE DESERT

Kuwait's Great Escape Ends in Capture

● Three death-row inmates who staged a daring midnight prison break were recaptured within 24 hours after a high-speed desert chase.

Three convicted criminals broke out of a Kuwaiti prison using a remarkably improvised method: crawling through air conditioning vents, scaling a deserted watchtower, and rappelling down the outer walls using a rope fashioned from hoses and clothing.

The escapees were identified as Kuwaiti nationals Ali Manahi Al Subaie and Hassan Salem Al Rashidi—both on



death row for separate murder convictions—and Ahmed Mohammed Qatea, a third inmate of undisclosed nationality serving a life sentence for drug offences.

Dramatic footage circulating online captured the three men speeding through the desert in a red pick-up truck, pursued by police vehicles in the Bar Al Liyah area of northwestern Kuwait.

Special security forces and the police air wing tracked and arrested all three within 24 hours. Security forces seized two firearms found in their possession.

The Ministry of Interior issued a firm statement: “The security of society is a red line — justice will reach anyone who attempts to evade legal accountability or assist wanted individuals.”

Calls for Stronger Parliamentary Cooperation

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Rehab Mohammad

The parliamentary delegation of the Kingdom of Bahrain, led by H.E. Dr. Mohammed Ali Hassan Ali, Chair of the Public Utilities and Environment Committee of the Shura Council, participated in the opening session of the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians 2026, which commenced in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, under the theme "Promoting Equality: Breaking Barriers of Gender Stereotypes and Negative Social Norms," organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in cooperation with the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

The opening session featured addresses by H.E. Ana Brnabić, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia; H.E. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and H.E. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the IPU, as well as a statement by a representative of the Serbian National Assembly. The keynote address was delivered by H.E. Senator Cynthia López Castro, Member



of the Mexican Senate and Chair of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, entitled "From Mexico to Belgrade: Continuing the Path Toward Equality."

The conference addresses, across seven sessions, key issues including dismantling barriers to equality, challenging stereotypes and negative social norms, promoting diversity in parliamentary work, combating misinformation and violence against women in politics, strengthening gender-sensitive parliaments, sharing cross-

sector experiences to transform leadership and institutional culture, and supporting the participation of women and youth in democratic life.

Pushes Parliamentary Diplomacy Forward

On the sidelines of the conference, the Bahraini delegation held a meeting with H.E. Edin Derlek, Deputy Speaker of the Serbian National Assembly, in the presence of H.E. Dr. Jameela Mohammed Redha Al Salman,

H.E. MP Zainab Abdullameer Khalil, and H.E. MP Mohammed Mohammed Al Rifaie, along with several members of the Serbian Parliament.

During the meeting, the delegation emphasized the importance of further strengthening parliamentary cooperation and exchanging expertise between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the friendly Republic of Serbia to support bilateral relations and expand areas of joint cooperation. It also highlighted the growing role of parliamentary diplo-



macy in bringing peoples closer together, strengthening friendship and mutual understanding, and opening broader channels for dialogue and coordination on issues of common interest.

The delegation praised the warm reception and excellent organization of the conference, noting its important focus on women's empowerment and equality, and its role as a key platform for exchanging parliamentary experiences worldwide. It reaffirmed the commitment of Bahrain's legislative authority to strengthening parliamentary relations with Serbia and building on the strong ties between the

two friendly countries.

For his part, the Deputy Speaker of the Serbian National Assembly expressed his pride in hosting the conference, stressing the importance of supporting women's participation in political life and decision-making, and praising the strong bilateral relations between the two countries. He also highlighted the positive impact of reciprocal official visits in strengthening relations, as well as Bahrain's humanitarian stance toward Serbia during the COVID-19 pandemic, which reflected the depth of friendship and cooperation between both sides.

Bahrain Mourns Former Yemeni President



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Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, visited the Embassy of Yemen in Bahrain to offer condolences following the death of former Yemeni President Field Marshal Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi.

During the visit, Al Zayani conveyed the condolences and sympathy of Bahrain's government to the people and leadership of Yemen. He met with Ahmed Mohammed Al Juffi, Deputy Ambassador of Yemen

to Bahrain, at the embassy in Manama.

The foreign minister paid tribute to Hadi's contributions and service to Yemen, recalling his role during a critical period in the country's history. He also praised the late president's dedication to his national responsibilities and his efforts in leading Yemen through challenging times.

Minister Al Zayani said Hadi left a legacy of sincere service to Yemen, prayed for mercy upon his soul, and extended condolences to his family and the Yemeni people.

Education Links Strengthened



The Minister of Education, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, received the French Ambassador to Bahrain, Eric Giraud-Telme, in Manama for talks focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in education. The discussions focused on ways to further enhance existing cooperation between the two countries, including potential initiatives aimed at supporting educational exchange and academic collaboration.

Bahrain Draws 16m Non-Bahraini Arrivals

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain received 16.04 million non-Bahraini arrivals in 2025, its highest yearly total in nine years, as travel into the kingdom rose for a third year running after the pandemic slump.

Figures published by Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs at the Ministry of Interior on Bahrain's Open Data Portal show arrivals climbed from 15.71 million in 2024, up by 334,000 travellers, or 2.1 pc.

The total was also 1.92 million higher than in 2023, when 14.13 million arrivals were recorded. Compared with 2022, the number has risen by 4.66 million, or about 41 pc, from 11.38 million.

The rise was led mainly by visitors from the Gulf. GCC arrivals reached about 11.2 million in 2025, compared with 10.8



million in 2024 and 9.6 million in 2023.

Saudi Arabia made up the largest share by far, with more than 10.4 million arrivals. Kuwait came next with about 425,000, followed by Qatar with 151,000, the UAE with 114,000 and Oman with around 70,000.

The second quarter gave the main lift to the yearly rise. Arrivals during the period reached

about 4.13 million, compared with 3.93 million in the same quarter of 2024, an increase of more than 201,000, or 5.1 pc.

January was the busiest month of the year, with 1.54 million arrivals. May followed with 1.45 million, August with 1.44 million and November with 1.42 million.

Bahrain recorded year-on-year growth in seven months out of 12

in 2025. April posted the biggest monthly rise by rate, with arrivals up 12.1 pc, or about 146,000 travellers, compared with April 2024.

May rose by 7.9 pc, January by 6.6 pc, October by 6.3 pc and August by 5.8 pc. The GCC figures show the scale of the rebound. Gulf arrivals stood at more than 5.8 million in 2010 and rose to about 9.5 million in 2018, before easing to 8.4 million in 2019.

They then fell to about 1.2 million in 2020 as travel curbs hit movement across the region.

The number recovered to more than 8.2 million in 2022, then rose to 9.6 million in 2023 and 10.8 million in 2024, before reaching about 11.2 million in 2025. The 2025 figures put Bahrain above the 16 million mark for non-Bahraini arrivals in a single year, with nearby Gulf markets, chiefly Saudi Arabia, still accounting for most of the flow.

Limited Supply Keeps Safi Prices High After Fishing Ban Ends

Fish markets across Bahrain recorded slow trading activity on Monday as only limited quantities of safi and shaari became available following the end of the seasonal fishing ban on safi, shaari and andaq.

Vendors at the Central Market and other fish stalls said safi was selling for between BD4.5 and BD5 per kilo, while shaari prices ranged from BD3.5 to BD4 a kilo.

Traders added that a full box of safi was selling for around BD180, while shaari boxes were priced at nearly BD160.

Sellers attributed the reduced supply and firm prices to strong winds during the Al Bareh season, which disrupted fishing operations and prevented some boats



from heading out to sea.

They said prices could begin to fall over the next few days if weather conditions improve and fishermen can bring in larger catches.

Bahrain-Jordan Ties Reviewed



His Highness Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Advisor to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received Shaikh Khalifa bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain's Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the

longstanding relations between Bahrain and Jordan and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation across various fields.

HH Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa praised the ambassador's efforts in enhancing bilateral ties and supporting continued coordination between the two countries.

Royal Address Embodies Bahrain's National Values

A Speech That Resonated Across Government

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National Interest Above All

Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa said the royal address “establishes a renewed phase of dedicated work,” placing national interest as the top priority for sustained security and stability. He pledged continued commitment under the banner of “Team Bahrain.”

Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa sent a formal message of gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, expressing deep appreciation for the King's recent royal address delivered at the weekly Cabinet meeting. He described the speech as a reflection of wise and far-sighted leadership, affirming that Bahrain advances under a vision prioritizing wisdom, security, and human development.



His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister

General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Interior Minister

His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa is the Minister of the Prime Minister's Court

Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, Minister of Education

Dr. Ramzan bin Abdulla Al Noaimi, Information Minister

“An Honour and a National Duty”

His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister's Court praised the address, calling its implementation “an honour for all and a national duty.” He stressed the importance of teamwork and continued effort to fulfil the King's vision, highlighting the readiness and profession-

alism demonstrated by Bahrain's military and security forces.

The Minister of Education, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma'a, said the address embodied the highest ideals of national unity. He vowed to document these national milestones and integrate them into school and university curricula for future generations.

A Speech Rooted in National Values

Dr. Ramzan bin Abdulla Al Noaimi, Information Minister affirmed that His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's royal address, delivered at the weekly Cabinet meeting, embodied the Kingdom's core national values—loyalty, belonging, and civic responsibility—which have long been the foundation of Bahrain's strength and resilience.

The Minister highlighted the King's pride in the Bahraini people, who demonstrated exceptional national awareness and stood firm in defending the Kingdom's security, protecting its higher interests, and preserving its national unity against all challenges—under His Majesty's wise leadership and the guidance of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

The minister underscored that the royal address sent a clear and decisive message: protecting Bahrain and safeguarding its national interests is a duty that allows no compromise. Any attempt to undermine the Kingdom's security or conspire against its stability is destined to fail, given the deep national cohesion and unwavering loyalty of the Bahraini people to their King and nation.

University of Bahrain launches upgraded digital verification service

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The University of Bahrain has introduced an enhanced digital service allowing institutions in Bahrain and abroad to instantly track the status of document verification requests, as part of wider government efforts to improve and streamline public services.

The upgraded “verification request status inquiry” service enables beneficiaries, including embassies, companies and over-

seas organisations, to monitor the authentication of university-issued documents such as certificates, transcripts and academic statements. The updates can now be accessed electronically through the national portal bahrain.bh, improving transparency and ease of access.

Under the new sys-



tem, processing time has been reduced from two working days to an immediate automated response. The service has also been fully digitised, cutting service level agreement requirements by at least 25%, reducing application steps to a maximum of four, and improving the user interface to simplify the pro-

cess. University officials said the redesign aims to strengthen efficiency and ensure faster delivery of services to stakeholders while maintaining accuracy and reliability in verification procedures. University of Bahrain President Dr Fawouzi Mohammed Al Ansari said the initiative reflects the institution's commitment to adopting innovative digital solutions aligned with Bahrain's wider government transformation strategy.

Life Sentence for Perpetrator in Death of Detainee Case

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The Special Investigation Unit announced that the First High Criminal Court issued a ruling in the case concerning the death of a detainee, sentencing the defendant to life imprisonment.

The case dates back to 27 March 2026, when the Special Investigation Unit monitored social media reports regarding the death of a detainee. On the same day, it also received a notification from the Inspector General of the National Intelligence Service stating that the deceased had been held in custody by the agency and had been assaulted by one of its personnel, resulting in multiple injuries. The detainee was subsequently transferred to the hospital, where he later died

from his injuries.

The Unit conducted comprehensive and extensive investigations to determine the circumstances of the incident, tracing the procedures taken following the arrest of the deceased, and examining all evidence and information related to the case within its legally mandated authority.



وحدة التحقيق الخاصة
Special Investigation Unit

The investigations concluded that the defendant committed the crime, based on sufficient and conclusive evidence. The Unit therefore

ordered his referral, while in custody, to the High Criminal Court, which issued the above-mentioned verdict, reaffirming its commitment to safeguarding rights, ensuring accountability, and upholding the rule of law.

Youth Hub Launched in Muharraq

Minister highlights role in empowering young Bahrainis

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Minister of Youth Affairs, Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi, inaugurated Bayt Lamea in Muharraq Governorate, marking the launch of a new initiative aimed at supporting and developing young talent in the Kingdom.

The opening ceremony was attended by Shaikha Dwa bint Khalid Al Khalifa.

Speaking at the inauguration, the Minister described the project as a “qualitative step” toward creating integrated youth environments that nurture national talent, develop skills and empower young people to contribute to Bahrain's wider development goals.

She said the initiative reflects the vision of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, aimed at building a comprehensive national system to empower young



people and encourage creativity, innovation and excellence.

The minister added that Bayt Lamea would serve as a national incubator for emerging young leaders and a platform to sup-

ported through cooperation between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), highlighting what she

“Bayt Lamea is more than a space – it is a platform where we invest in young minds, empower talent, and build the leaders of tomorrow.”

– RAWAN BINT NAJEEB TAWFIQI

described as integrated national efforts to strengthen the youth sector and provide inspiring environments for future talent.

Tawfiqi said the ministry continues to prioritise skills development and youth qualification programmes through initiatives designed to enhance readiness and increase participation in national development.

Bayt Lamea is expected to function as a dedicated space for mentoring, training and supporting young Bahrainis as part of broader efforts to expand youth engagement across the country.

Shura Panel Reviews 24 Laws and Treaties

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Mohammed Darwish

The Shura Council's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee completed 24 reports in the fourth session of the sixth legislative term, covering decree-laws, draft laws, treaties and one proposed cybercrime amendment.

The committee, chaired by Dr Ali Al Rumaihi, held 16 meetings during the session. Its work covered five decree-laws, 18 draft laws and one proposed law.

It said the measures dealt with traffic rules, the Penal Code, criminal procedure, public security, identity cards, reform and rehabilitation, anti-money laundering, terrorism financing, GCC road transport, tax treaties, air services, investment protection and international legal co-operation.

The committee said it had kept its work focused on laws tied to Bahrain's foreign affairs, defence and security, as well as the country's regional and overseas links.

It added that it would keep working with government bodies and other parties on laws linked to Bahrain's security, interests and development plans, under His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and with the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

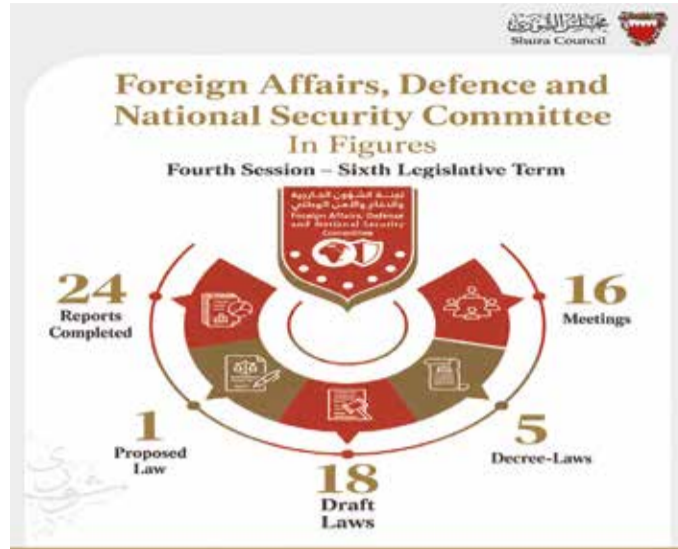
Among the decree-laws reviewed was Decree-Law No. 30 of 2025 amending parts of the Traffic Law issued by Law No.



Dr Ali Al Rumaihi, Head of Shura Council's



Bahrain has reviewed international agreements covering justice cooperation with Pakistan, marine pollution control, and global financial transparency standards.



decision on the Shura Council's decision over a bill amending Article 56 of the Traffic Law.

It also examined a draft law amending the Public Security Forces Law, attached to Decree No. 26 of 2025, and a draft law amending Article 3 of Law No. 46 of 2006 on identity cards.

Further bills dealt with amendments to the Penal Code, attached to Decree No. 68 of 2025, and to the Reform and Rehabilitation Institution Law, attached to Decree No. 69 of 2025.

Traffic law amendments also took up part of the committee's work. It reviewed a bill adding a new Article 19 bis to the Traffic Law, as well as a separate bill amending Article 19 of the same law.

The committee said treaties and overseas agreements formed another part of its work, with

several reports tied to Bahrain's diplomacy, trade and legal links.

These included the draft law ratifying the Makkah Al Mukarramah Convention for OIC member states on co-operation in enforcing anti-corruption laws.

The committee also completed reports on double taxation agreements with Saudi Arabia and Jersey, air services agreements with Kyrgyzstan, the establishment of the International Dates Observatory's headquarters in Bahrain, and a host country agreement with the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Other agreements reviewed included an amendment to the treaty establishing the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries and accession to the Locarno Agreement on international classifications for industrial designs.

National Cohesion Strengthened

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Minister of Labour and Minister of Legal Affairs, Yousef bin Abdhussain Khalaf described the recent address by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa as a "national roadmap" aimed at strengthening internal unity and advancing the country's national development efforts.

Mr. Khalaf said Bahrainis took pride in the King's praise for the patriotic spirit shown by citizens as well as public and private in-



stitutions. He added that the remarks highlighted the close relationship between the leadership and the people, which he described as being built on mutual trust and loyalty.

He said the King's emphasis on national unity and solidarity represented a key pillar in confronting challenges and safeguarding the country's achievements.

Inclusive Education Through "Hand in Hand" Initiative

TDT | Manama
Ghadeer Alkumaish

Al-Ahd Al-Zaher Secondary School for Girls has highlighted the impact of its "Hand in Hand" initiative, which aims to strengthen inclusive education and support students with disabilities during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Launched by the school's Academic Guidance and Career Counselling Office, the programme focuses on integrating students more fully into school life and enhancing their academic and social participation.

School principal Dr. Noor Muneer Al-Subaie said the initiative has already produced encouraging outcomes, pointing to student Layla Ali Abdaljalil, a



first-year secondary student with autism, who has shown strong academic performance and active engagement in school activities.

She praised the work of the guidance and counselling team, alongside student peer supporters who assist students with disabilities, saying their efforts have helped create a more inclusive learning environment.

Layla's mother also welcomed the initiative, saying it had improved her daughter's English language skills, particularly in reading and speaking, and boosted her confidence and communication abilities.

From The Court

TDT | Manama Rehab Mohammad

Drunk Driver Jailed Two Years

A Bahraini appeals court upheld a two-year prison sentence against a young man who caused a fatal car accident while drink-driving. The defendant had been drinking by the sea before getting behind the wheel with two friends, travelling at 30 percent above the speed limit.

He lost control of the vehicle, veered into oncoming traffic and struck a curb. His female passenger was thrown from the car and died from her injuries, while the other passenger was wounded.

The Public Prosecution charged him with causing death and injury through negligence, drunk driving, and speeding. He admitted to all charges in court, though he denied exceeding the speed limit.

Man Faces Trial for Blackmailing Teen Girl

A defendant has been referred to criminal trial after allegedly blackmailing a 17-year-old girl through social media, threatening to leak intimate images unless she paid money and handed over her gold jewellery.

The case began when the victim's mother filed a complaint with authorities. Investigators from the Ministry of Interior's Child Protection Unit identified and arrested the suspect, who confessed to the charges. Incriminating images were found on his mobile phone. A court hearing is scheduled for June 22, 2026.

The Head of the Family and Child Prosecution urged parents to monitor their children's online activity, warning that the Public

Prosecution will pursue firm legal action against anyone involved in child exploitation or cyber extortion.

Doctor Fined for Missing Brain Tumor



Public Prosecution

Bahrain's Court of Cassation upheld a BD 200 fine against a neurology consultant found guilty of medical malpractice after failing to order essential scans, resulting in a six-week delay in diagnosing a patient's brain tumour.

The patient presented with vomiting and head pain at a private hospital. The consultant dismissed her condition as neck strain without requesting a CT scan or MRI. Six weeks later, a second doctor ordered the scans, which revealed a large cancerous tumour. Her condition had deteriorated significantly by that point, and she was ultimately transferred abroad for surgery.

The Court of Cassation endorsed findings by the Technical Committee for Medical Errors, ruling that the physician committed a professional error. The patient's civil compensation claim was referred to a civil court.

Drug Dealer Gets 10 Years for Trafficking Marijuana



A Bahraini appeals court upheld a 10-year prison sentence and BD 5,000 fine against a man convicted of trafficking marijuana and possessing multiple narcotics including heroin, methamphetamine, hashish, LSD, and prescription drugs.

Authorities received a tip that the defendant was distributing drugs using "dead drop" hand-offs in areas including East Riffa and Hamad Town. Following surveillance, he was arrested and a search of his home uncovered a range of substances. He told investigators he had been recruited by two individuals in September 2025, receiving drugs and cash via BenefitPay in return for distributing shipments he collected seven times.

The court also ordered the confiscation of all seized items. A urine test confirmed the defendant had consumed cannabis and methamphetamine.

New mosque project begins in Hamad Town

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

A new mosque project has entered its first phase in Hamad Town, set to serve hundreds of residents in a densely populated area.

Municipal Council member Abdulla Mubarak Bilal Al Qubaisi, representing the Ninth Constituency in the Northern Governorate, highlighted the start of work following the completion of approvals and site preparations.

He praised the cooperation of the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments and the Sunni Endowments Directorate, noting their role in facilitating procedures for the project.



Abdulla Mubarak Bilal Al Qubaisi

Al Qubaisi also commended the donor and his family for funding the construction, describing the initiative as a reflection of Bahrain's strong culture of community support

and charitable giving.

The mosque will be built on a 1,349.4-square-metre plot in Block 1205, with a total built-up area of 396.74 square metres.

It will include a main prayer hall accommodating around 200 worshippers, a separate section for women with a capacity of 45, ablution facilities, modern amenities, and a residential unit for the muezzin.

The project follows the removal of a temporary prayer structure on the site, paving the way for construction to begin.

Officials said the development will enhance access to religious services and support the needs of residents in the surrounding area.



The first phase of the mosque's construction

BBK releases 2025 Sustainability Report

Reinforcing its leadership in governance, sustainable finance and community impact

TDI | Manama

BBK, a leader in retail and corporate banking in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has announced the release of its 2025 Sustainability Report, marking continued progress in embedding environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles across its operations. The report reflects BBK's long-term approach to building a more resilient, responsible and sustainable banking model.

The report outlines BBK's performance across its core sustainability pillars: Good Corporate Governance, Responsible and Responsive Employer, Long-Term Positive Customer Relationships and Experiences, and Social Responsibility Mindset, alongside its continued focus on environmental responsibility and climate-related initiatives. It also highlights the Bank's efforts to evolve its operations in line with the changing expectations of customers and society, while supporting Bahrain's national development priorities. The report further reinforces BBK's position as a leading institution in sustainable banking in the Kingdom.

Commenting on the report, BBK Group Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, Mohamed Alaali, said: "This year's Sustainability Report reflects the progress BBK has made in embedding sustainability into its core



Mohamed Alaali, BBK Group Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer

operations. Over the past year, we strengthened governance practices, enhanced information security, invested in our people, expanded digital capabilities and introduced our Sustainable Finance Framework. These efforts reinforce our commitment to building trust, delivering long-term value and supporting the communities we serve."

Key highlights from the report include BD188 million in sustainable finance assets, a 39% reduction in paper consumption, and BD2.4 million in community investments.

In Good Corporate Governance, BBK continued to strengthen its oversight framework and institutional practices. Independent directors represented around 60% of the Board, which also included three female directors. The Bank achieved 100% employee acknowledgement of its Code of

Conduct in 2025 and continued to respond to data subject rights requests, reinforcing its commitment to information security and data privacy as key pillars of trust. BBK also maintains an advanced Information Security Management System certified to ISO/IEC 27001, supported by robust governance practices and oversight by relevant committees to ensure effective management of cyber and data-related risks.

Under the Responsible and Responsive Employer pillar, the report highlights BBK's commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace that enables employee growth and development. During 2025, the Bank completed the integration of employees supporting retail banking operations previously managed by HSBC Bank Middle East, Bahrain Branch, ensuring service continuity while strengthening operational capabilities and institutional expertise. Women represented 42% of the workforce, while the Bank's nationalization rate reached approximately 95%, demonstrating BBK's strong focus on developing Bahraini talent and supporting national workforce priorities.

As part of its efforts to support female leadership and career progression, BBK celebrated the graduation of 20 employees from its Women in Leadership program, delivered in collaboration with Harvard University and Cornell University. The Bank also contin-

ued to enhance its learning and development programs, including the third edition of GROW, delivered in partnership with Lumofy, an AI-powered talent management platform. The program provides advanced tools to assess employee capabilities and design personalized development pathways, supporting workforce readiness for the future.

In addition, BBK strengthened its work-life balance framework through a range of employee-focused benefits, including maternity and paternity leave, nursing hours, parent-child leave and phased return-to-work arrangements, fostering a more inclusive and flexible working environment.

Within the Long-Term Positive Customer Relationships and Experiences pillar, BBK recorded several achievements in 2025. The Bank received the "Most Trusted Digital Banking Services Provider in Bahrain 2025" award from World Business Outlook, the "Customer Experience 2025" award for excellence in customer experience and was named "Best Retail Bank in Bahrain 2025" by Global Banking & Finance Review for the third consecutive year. These achievements reflect BBK's continued focus on enhancing customer experience through more accessible, efficient and innovative banking solutions.

BBK also advanced its digital transformation agenda through

streamlined lending processes, automation of customer services, enhanced mobile banking capabilities and the establishment of a dedicated innovation center to expand AI-driven solutions.

Under its Social Responsibility Mindset, BBK continued to support the local economy and wider community. The Bank engaged 640 local suppliers during 2025, while its community investments reached BD2.4 million. BBK also maintained its Platinum sponsorship of the Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program through a BD1 million contribution and upgraded its sponsorship in Isa Bin Salman Education Fund while continuing its support to 50 scholarships at the University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic. BBK also commenced construction of its new health center in Galali, marking the second healthcare facility funded by the Bank following the BBK Health Centre in Hidd. The facility will enhance access to healthcare services and support broader community development objectives in the Kingdom.

In line with its environmental and climate commitments, BBK achieved a 39% reduction in paper consumption and expanded its greenhouse gas emissions measurement to include additional Scope 3 categories, including financed emissions. This marks an important step in aligning with global best practices and provides

a more comprehensive view of BBK's indirect environmental impact across its value chain. It also enhances the Bank's ability to assess climate-related risks and opportunities, supporting more informed decision-making and future target setting. The Bank also launched its Sustainable Finance Framework during the year, marking a significant milestone in aligning its financing activities with international ESG standards. By the end of 2025, BBK's sustainable finance portfolio reached BD188 million, supporting projects across key sectors such as renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable infrastructure. This progress reinforces BBK's growing role in mobilizing capital towards environmentally and socially responsible investments and strengthens its contribution to Bahrain's sustainable economic transition. In addition, BBK issued its first Climate Risk Position Statement aligned with regulatory guidance and collected 755 kilograms of electronic waste through an internal campaign.

Alaali added: "We believe banks play a vital role in enabling inclusive and sustainable economic growth. At BBK, we continue to translate this responsibility into tangible action across sustainable finance, climate initiatives, social investment and talent development, supporting Bahrain's Vision 2030 and contributing to a more resilient future."

Electricity Privatisation Bill Delayed Over Tariffs

TDI | Manama

Mohammed Darwish

A government bill to privatise Electricity and Water Authority has been put off to the next session after MPs and the government failed to agree on tariff controls and the treatment of multi-family households.

Public Utilities and Environment Committee chairman Mohammed Mousa said the committee and the ministry had agreed on 10 articles in the bill, all of which he said were in citizens' favour.

The dispute, he said, was now confined to two files: tariffs and households made up of more than one family.

'We in the committee insisted that the tariff be included within the articles of the law,' he said. 'If the government wishes in the future to lower or raise the tariff, this must be done with the approval of



Mohammed Mousa, Chairman of Parliament's Public Utilities and Environment Committee

Parliament.'

Mr Mousa said the committee's stance came from MPs' views, which he said were treated as matters that should be written into the law.

'The committee takes MPs' views into account and deals with them as important matters that must be included in the law,' he said.

The second unresolved file concerns multi-family households. Mr Mousa said the government had not yet submitted a clear study on the matter. The issue had been referred to the Social Development Ministry, but no final reply had been given.

He said the committee had asked, at its last meeting, for the Electricity and Water Affairs Minister, the Social Development Minister and eGovernment representatives to attend.

The aim, he said, was to reach wording that protects the rights of multi-family households within the law.

Mr Mousa said no agreement had yet been reached with the government on either tariffs or multi-family households.

For that reason, he said, the committee decided to put off discussion of the electricity and water law until the next session.

BisB hosts national event reaffirming loyalty



TDI | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) organised a national event at its headquarters where employees signed a "Declaration of Loyalty and Support" to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The event was attended by members of the bank's board, executive management and staff from across different departments. It highlighted what organisers described as strong national unity and the close relationship between the leadership and the people of Bahrain.



Through this initiative, BisB employees reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Kingdom's development efforts and national progress. The bank also expressed its continued backing of government plans led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

BisB said the event reflects its ongoing focus on national responsibility as part of its wider corporate strategy. The bank added that it aims to align its operations with Bahrain's development goals, while supporting innovation, talent development and the growth of Islamic banking in the Kingdom.

Bahrain, Comoros Ink Tech Agreement

TDI | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain and the Union of the Comoros signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation in eGovernment and digital transformation as part of Bahrain's Global Digital Twinning Initiative.

The agreement was signed between Bahrain's Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) and the National Digital Development Agency (ANADEN) of the Comoros during a virtual meeting.

The initiative, launched by Bahrain in December 2024, aims to expand digital cooperation with friendly countries and support the development of government digital services in line with United Nations standards.

Under the agreement, Bahrain will support the Comoros in improving its performance in the United Nations eGovern-

ment Development Index (EGDI) and enhancing digital government services through the exchange of technical expertise and training programmes.

The partnership will also include workshops, official visits, and the sharing of studies, statistics, and best practices to strengthen digital development and government efficiency in both countries.



The MoU was signed by Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, Chief Executive of the iGA, and Said Moinou Ahmed, Director General of ANADEN

Mumtalakat and TRAIL Announce Strategic Partnership

Mumtalakat, the sovereign wealth fund of the Kingdom of Bahrain, joins TRAIL's flagship Sport, Luxury, Arts and Music platform.

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company (Mumtalakat), the sovereign wealth fund of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and TRAIL, the French investment company, today announced a strategic partnership under which Mumtalakat will be an investor in SLAM, the first private equity fund dedicated to the Sport, Luxury, Arts and Music sectors.

The strategic partnership was signed in the presence of His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy and Chairman of Mumtalakat Holding Company, and His Excellency Nicolas Forissier, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness of France, during the participation at "Choose France" Summit - France's flagship international investment summit.

The partnership brings together TRAIL's deep sectoral expertise and investment acumen with Mumtalakat's regional presence



and long-term investment approach. Together, the two entities will work to develop SLAM's sectors within Bahrain and across the broader Gulf Cooperation Council region - through direct investments and by supporting the regional expansion of the fund's portfolio companies. Under the terms of the agreement, TRAIL will open an office in Manama to serve as its GCC hub, fa-

cilitating the growth of portfolio companies and enabling regional capital raising.

On the occasion, His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa affirmed that the strategic partnership reflects Bahrain's distinguished standing as a destination for high-quality investment and meaningful international partnerships. He noted that the investment in the

SLAM Fund is fully aligned with the Kingdom's drive to diversify investment opportunities and harness the potential of emerging sectors in support of sustained economic growth.

His Excellency further emphasised that the partnership represents an important step towards attracting greater global investment and expertise to the Kingdom, reinforcing Bahrain's



Our partnership with TRAIL reflects Mumtalakat's commitment to diversifying investments, creating long-term value, and supporting Bahrain's economic growth.

SHAIKH ABDULLAH BIN KHALIFA AL KHALIFA, CEO OF MUMTALAKAT

position as a regional hub for business and investment, and advancing the goals of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 through economic diversification and the creation of new avenues for sustainable growth.

His Excellency Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive Officer of Mumtalakat, said: "At Mumtalakat, we continue to grow our portfolio through partnerships with investors who share our long-term perspective. Our collaboration with TRAIL introduces the SLAM sectors as a new asset class to Bahrain and the wider GCC, reflecting our commitment to diversifying our portfolio and unlocking new avenues for value creation. This partnership is designed to deliver sustainable long-term financial returns while contributing to tangible economic impact for the Kingdom of Bahrain."

"The convergence of sport, luxury, arts and music is creating one of the most compelling value-creation opportunities of the coming decade, and SLAM was built to capture it. We are convinced of the considerable development potential of the GCC region in the SLAM sectors and we are delighted to form this strategic partnership with Mumtalakat," said Xavier Marin, President of TRAIL.

Bahrain's Alba Acquires Aluminium Dunkerque, the EU's Largest Aluminium Smelter, for USD 2.2 Billion

Aluminium Bahrain B.S.C. (Alba), the world's largest single-site aluminium smelter, has agreed to acquire Aluminium Dunkerque - the largest aluminium smelter in the European Union - in a transaction valued at approximately USD 2.2 billion, marking a pivotal step in Alba's strategy to build a global low-carbon aluminium platform. The deal was announced jointly with American Industrial Partners, who are the current owners of Aluminium Dunkerque, and Bpifrance, the French public investment bank who will acquire a minority stake in the company alongside Alba. The Memorandum of Understanding with Bpifrance (MoU) was signed in Paris on the sidelines of the Choose France Summit - the leading investment summit - in the presence of His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy and Chairman of Mumtalakat Holding Company, and Mr Nicolas Forissier, France's Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness. The parties to the signing ceremony were represented by Mr Khalid Amro Al-Rumaihi, Chairman of Alba's Board of Directors; Mr Dino Cusumano, Managing Partner at American Industrial Partners; and Mr José Gonzalo, Executive Director of Capital Development at Bpifrance.

Upon closing of the transaction, Alba will acquire 100% of Aluminium Dunkerque in a

transaction valued at approximately USD 2.2 Billion, to be fully financed by a consortium of Alba's banking partners. The MoU between Alba and Bpifrance further provides for a capital investment of EUR 100 million by Bpifrance in the transaction, representing a 6% ownership stake in Aluminium Dunkerque, subject to the completion of customary approvals. Bpifrance will also hold a seat on the Board of Directors of Aluminium Dunkerque's holding company.

The entry of Bpifrance, as a key minority shareholder and member of the Board of Directors, aims to strengthen Aluminium Dunkerque's presence in the region and demonstrates the strategic significance of the company within the French aluminium sector.

His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa affirmed that this transaction is a reflection of the strong and enduring economic ties between Bahrain and France, and demonstrative of the confidence international partners place in Bahrain as an investment destination. He added that it reinforces Bahrain's position as a competitive industrial hub with the qualified local talent and advanced capabilities to pursue opportunities on the world stage.

Mr Khalid Amro Al-Rumaihi, Chairman of Alba's Board of Directors, highlighted the significance of Aluminium Dunkerque as one of France's strategic industrial assets and that the acquisition is a de-



fining moment for Alba that demonstrates strong confidence in the company's promising potential and long-term growth prospects, and represents a strategic step towards building a more diversified and competitive international industrial platform - one that strengthens Alba's presence in global markets and supports its capacity to achieve sustainable growth. He further noted the important opportunities this partnership creates to enhance industrial resilience in both the Kingdom of Bahrain and the French Republic, and to advance the economic and industrial partnership between the two nations.

Nicolas Dufourcq, CEO at Bpifrance, said: "Alongside Alba, Bpifrance's investment

in Aluminium Dunkerque underscores our commitment to securing and reinforcing the long-term future of this strategic industrial site. By joining forces, we are not only supporting the growth of a key player in the European aluminium sector but also ensuring that Aluminium Dunkerque remains a cornerstone of France's industrial resilience and innovation. Together, we will work to strengthen the site's industrial project, fostering sustainable development and competitiveness for years to come."

Dino Cusumano, General Partner at AIP, said: "We are pleased to mark an important step in the transition of Aluminium Dunkerque's ownership to Aluminium Bahrain.

Over the past four months, the process has advanced smoothly as expected thanks to the constructive work among all parties and a shared commitment to responsible execution. We remain confident that Alba is the right long-term owner for Aluminium Dunkerque and will be a strong partner for France in supporting the company's continued development and strategic role in Europe. Aluminium Dunkerque's success during our ownership reflects France's enduring attractiveness as a destination for long-term industrial investment, supported by its strong industrial base, skilled workforce and commitment to decarbonisation."

Located in Loon-Plage in the Dunkerque region, the smelt-

er produces approximately 300,000 tonnes of aluminium annually. With advanced automation, integrated production capabilities, and a highly skilled workforce, Aluminium Dunkerque is well-positioned to capitalise on the growing European demand for sustainably produced aluminium.

Transaction overview

Aluminium Bahrain B.S.C. ("Alba") and an affiliate of American Industrial Partners ("AIP") entered into an exclusive agreement on 2 March 2026 for Alba to acquire 100% of Aluminium Dunkerque. The transaction values Aluminium Dunkerque at US\$2,200 million on an enterprise value basis, with the consideration payable in cash and funding fully underwritten by a syndicate of Alba's relationship banks. On 6 May 2026, following completion of the French works council consultation process, Alba and an affiliate of AIP signed a Share Purchase Agreement setting out the terms of the acquisition. The transaction closing remains subject to FDI approval from the French State and EU FSR approval, which are expected in due course. EU Antitrust approval was obtained in May 2026. Closing is expected in 2026.

Alba will continue to update the market in accordance with its disclosure obligations on the Bahrain Bourse and London Stock Exchange, and applicable regulatory requirements.

Bahrain Bourse to Host “The Market 2.0: Bahrain 2026” Conference

TDT | Manama

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Bahrain Bourse (BHB), in collaboration with the Arab Federation of Capital Markets (AFCM), will host “The Market 2.0: Bahrain 2026” conference on 3 December 2026 in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Held under the theme “Markets in Motion: Powering the Next Era of Trading,” the conference will serve as a leading regional platform bringing together prominent global and regional market participants, financial institutions, regulators, investors, and technology leaders to explore the future of capital markets and the rapidly evolving trading ecosystem.

The conference will address the transformational shifts reshaping financial markets worldwide,



structure in driving market efficiency, resilience, transparency, and accessibility. Key sessions will cover the modernization of trading platforms, evolving execution strategies, enhanced liquidity access, advancements in market surveillance, and developments in post-trade operations.

The event is expected to attract more than 500 participants, including representatives from

with discussions focused on the growing role of technology, data, and next-generation market infra-

regional and international stock exchanges, regulatory authorities, brokerage firms, listed companies,

institutional investors, technology providers, and other influential stakeholders shaping the future of the global capital markets industry.

The conference agenda will feature keynote speeches, panel discussions, and strategic industry conversations addressing some of the most significant trends shaping the future of global capital markets. Discussions will explore the increasing role of automation, artificial intelligence, and real-time market infrastructure in enhancing market resilience, strengthening operational continuity, improving trading efficiency, and supporting long-term market sustainability. The conference will also provide a platform for industry leaders to exchange perspectives on emerging opportunities, regulatory developments, innovation, and the future direction of global trading ecosystems.

Commenting on the occasion,

Shaikh Khalifa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Bourse, stated: “We are honoured to host ‘The Market 2.0: Bahrain 2026’ conference in the Kingdom of Bahrain under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. The conference reflects Bahrain Bourse’s continued commitment to supporting the development of Bahrain’s capital markets ecosystem and reinforcing the Kingdom’s position as a regional financial hub.

As financial markets continue to evolve rapidly, the conference will provide an important platform for industry leaders, regulators, investors, and technology providers to exchange insights, explore emerging trends, and discuss the future of trading and market infrastructure. Through this initiative, we aim to support innovation, collaboration,

and sustainable growth across regional and international capital markets.”

Rami El-Dokany, Secretary General of the Arab Financial Markets commented, “The Market 2.0 has become a strategic platform for advancing the technology agenda of Arab capital markets. As exchanges and market infrastructures adapt to rapid developments in artificial intelligence, automation, data, cloud, surveillance, and post-trade innovation, this event provides a focused forum to discuss how our Arab markets can become more efficient, resilient, connected, and future-ready. We are proud to partner once again with Bahrain Bourse in hosting this second consecutive edition in the Kingdom of Bahrain, building on the success of 2025 and the growing importance of technology in shaping the next phase of regional market development”.

Zain Bahrain Launches “#1 – First is Your Place” Activation Campaign at City Centre Bahrain



TDT | Manama

Zain Bahrain has recently launched a new interactive campaign under “#1 – First is Your Place” at City Centre Bahrain, celebrating its recognition as the Kingdom’s most awarded network experience by Opensignal.

Zain Bahrain invites all visitors to City Centre Bahrain to participate in Zain #1 activation, running until 8th June, for a chance to win smart phones, TV’s and Cash Prizes. Participants can take a photo on the dedicated #1 chair, share it on Instagram while tagging Zain Bahrain’s official account @ZainBahrain on the photo.

The campaign follows Zain Bahrain’s recognition by Open-

signal as the most awarded network in Bahrain, including its leadership in coverage, quality, and Games Experience, a key metric for real-time online gaming. This distinction has positioned Zain Bahrain as the most awarded network in Bahrain and played a pivotal role in propelling the Kingdom to the #1 Overall Rank position in Opensignal’s Global Network Excellence Index for the MENA region for “all devices”.

Zain Bahrain continues to bring its network excellence closer to customers through engaging and memorable experiences, while celebrating a milestone that reflects its continuous investment in delivering high-quality connectivity across the Kingdom.

- Take part in Zain Bahrain’s #1 activation and get the chance to win smart phones, TV’s, Cash Prizes and more.
- The campaign follows Zain Bahrain’s recognition by Opensignal as the most awarded network in Bahrain, including its leadership in coverage, quality, and Games Experience.
- The achievement contributed to positioning Bahrain as the #1 Overall Rank in Opensignal’s Global Network Excellence Index for the MENA region.

BCFC Strengthens Digital Infrastructure and Customer Experience with eKey 2.0 Integration via Sahel App

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company (BCFC) is pleased to announce the successful technical integration of eKey 2.0 - Bahrain’s national digital identity framework - into its Sahel App platform, reflecting BCFC’s ongoing commitment to modernising its digital infrastructure, elevating service quality, and delivering seamless technology-driven experiences for its customers.

Built on internationally recognised digital identity standards, eKey 2.0 enables BCFC to replace legacy authentication methods with a streamlined, biometric-based access framework. Using facial recognition technology and eKYC-driven data retrieval, customers can now onboard and authenticate faster and more accurately. This reduces the risk of identity fraud and unauthorised access while



The integration of eKey 2.0 into Sahel App reflects our commitment to delivering faster, safer, and more seamless digital experiences for our customers.

MR. ALI AL MARZOOQ, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER AT BCFC

meeting the requirements of the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) and Bahrain’s Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL). As a natural outcome of this infrastructure upgrade, eliminating password-based authentication also brings meaningful improvements to the security profile of BCFC’s digital channels.

Commenting on the milestone, Mr. Ali Al Marzooq, Chief Technology Officer at BCFC, stated: “Integrating eKey 2.0 into our Sahel App is a significant step in our digital infrastructure roadmap. Our focus was on building a more reliable, efficient, and future-ready technology stack that serves our customers better and integrates seamlessly with Bahrain’s national digital ecosystem. The result is a faster, more accurate, and more compliant customer journey, and a platform we can continue to build on as we expand our digital services.”

BCFC Embraces Bahrain’s Digital Future with eKey 2.0

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company ‘BCFC’, is proud to announce its successful adoption of eKey 2.0, Bahrain’s advanced national digital identity solution, marking a significant milestone in our journey toward innovation and customer empowerment. This achievement coincides with the celebration of the second anniversary of the Sahel App and the launch of the Bulk KYC service, reinforcing BCFC’s commitment to supporting Bahrain’s digital transformation and enhancing the way customers interact with financial services.

The enhanced digital identity platform eKey 2.0 represents a major leap towards creating a secure and seamless digital ecosystem. By integrating this cutting-edge identity frame-

work, BCFC enables customers to access services effortlessly through password less biometric facial authentication while streamlining onboarding and registration through eKYC based data retrieval. This ensures greater convenience while maintaining the highest standards of data protection. These initiatives reflect BCFC’s dedication to delivering digital experiences that combine simplicity with security, aligning with Bahrain’s vision for a future-ready financial sector.

Commenting on this milestone, Mr. Mohamed Jehad Bukamal, Deputy CEO of BCFC, stated: “At BCFC, we are proud to embrace Bahrain’s national digital transformation journey through the adoption of eKey 2.0. This milestone reflects our commitment to innovation, security, and customer-centricity.



Mr. Mohamed Jehad Bukamal, Deputy CEO of BCFC



Mr. Chris Hild, Beyon Connect CEO

eKey 2.0 empowers us to deliver seamless, passwordless digital experiences while ensuring the highest standards of compliance and data protection. By integrating this trusted identity framework, we are not only enhancing convenience for our customers, but also reinforcing Bahrain’s vision for a secure, future-ready financial ecosystem. Together, we are shaping a smarter, safer,

and more connected digital future for our community.”

From his end, Dr. Khaled Ahmed Al-Mutawa, Deputy Chief Executive for Operations and Governance at the Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA), welcomed BCFC to the eKey 2.0 ecosystem, as a strategic move toward strengthening the company’s secure digital services framework and enhancing customer experience.

Dr. Al-Mutawa affirmed that BCFC’s adoption of eKey 2.0 reflects the private sector’s commitment to the Kingdom’s vision of developing an advanced, customer-centric digital environment. He noted that this initiative contributes to expanding the national digital identity verification infrastructure, facilitating access to services, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and enhancing customer trust in digital transactions. He added that BCFC’s participation represents a strong model of effective public-private collaboration in advancing Bahrain’s digital transformation journey, emphasizing that the Information & eGovernment Authority will continue its efforts to drive digital innovation, accelerate digital transformation, and expand access to secure digital services.

Commenting on the collaboration, Beyon Connect CEO Chris Hild said: “BCFC’s adoption of eKey 2.0 is a strong example of how trusted digital identity can enable secure, seamless, and customer-centric financial services. At Beyon Connect, we are proud to support organizations that are advancing Bahrain’s national digital ecosystem by leveraging interoperable, future-ready identity solutions.”

BCFC remains committed to leveraging technology to enhance customer experiences and contribute to Bahrain’s leadership in digital innovation. The integration of eKey 2.0 alongside the Sahel App anniversary and the launch of the Bulk KYC service underscores BCFC’s role as a trusted partner in driving progress and creating long term value for our customers and the Kingdom.

Despite explosion Blue Origin CEO says rocket to fly before year-end

AFP | Washington, United States

The CEO of Blue Origin vowed its New Glenn rocket "will fly again before the end of this year" after a recent ground test ended in a massive fireball that damaged the launch platform.

That ambitious promise from CEO David Limp, announced in a post late Monday on X, follows last week's colossal explosion at Cape Canaveral, Florida.

It was a major setback for Blue Origin, the company founded by billionaire Jeff Bezos, but also NASA, which was counting on the firm to collaborate on upcoming Moon missions.

NASA administrator Jared Isaacman meanwhile told CNBC that it would "take some serious time to repair" the launch pad.

He later said on X that 2028, when New Glenn is slated to carry out lunar rover deliveries, "should be well within what is possible for pad recovery."

Blue Origin's setback came at a crucial moment for the company, which is seeking to rival Elon Musk's SpaceX.

The Bezos company's New



CEO David Limp

Glenn rocket is meant to participate in NASA's Artemis lunar program, delivering both landers and cargo.

SpaceX has seen its own challenges in recent months, and Blue Origin had emerged as a promising alternative for NASA.

But New Glenn is key. With its explosion coming shortly after a malfunction that caused a recent satellite mission failure, the anomalies could disrupt NASA's tight mission schedule.

NASA is aiming to test an in-orbit rendezvous between a spacecraft and one or two lunar landers in 2027 as part of Artemis III, and carry out a crewed lunar landing before the end of 2028, before the end of US President Donald Trump's time in office.

Hong Kong arrests parents who refused DNA test for baby

AFP | Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong authorities have arrested a couple on suspicion of child neglect after they refused to provide DNA test results for a baby boy they said had been born at home, the city's security chief said on Tuesday.

The unmarried couple said the child had been born two months ago but had not yet received a birth certificate, local media reported.

They had previously said they refused to provide DNA test results for birth registration, citing privacy and religion as reasons.

On Tuesday Secretary for Security Chris Tang denied it was a privacy issue and called on the couple to provide evidence that they are the boy's biological parents.

"At this point, the mother has not been able to provide any records of her prenatal checkups or any medical consultations," he told reporters.



She had also refused to provide photos taken while she was pregnant, he added.

"With the baby's welfare as a starting point, we will first send the baby to the hospital for a medical exam," Tang said.

The couple have also said that Swedish authorities have taken custody of their older daughter during an illegal stay in Sweden in 2023.

Their Facebook page campaigning for her return drew attention to the current Hong Kong case.

Newborns must be registered within 42 days after birth under Hong Kong law.

Anyone found guilty of child neglect faces up to 10 years in prison.

UK sets target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 87% by 2040

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The UK government yesterday set a legal target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 87 percent by 2040, an additional intermediate goal.

The country has already fixed an objective of reducing emissions by 68 percent by 2030 and at least 81 percent by 2035, compared to 1990 levels, and is aiming to be carbon neutral by the middle of the century. The announcement comes

as Energy Security and Net Zero Minister Ed Miliband said the UK faced "the second fossil fuel shock of the decade", a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 followed in February by the United States war with Iran.

The government would set out its plan for implementing the objective in coming months, in line with the Paris Agreement aim to keep global warming to 1.5C, a ministry statement added.

Rubio says Mojtaba Khamenei alive and 'increasingly engaging'

AFP | Washington, United States

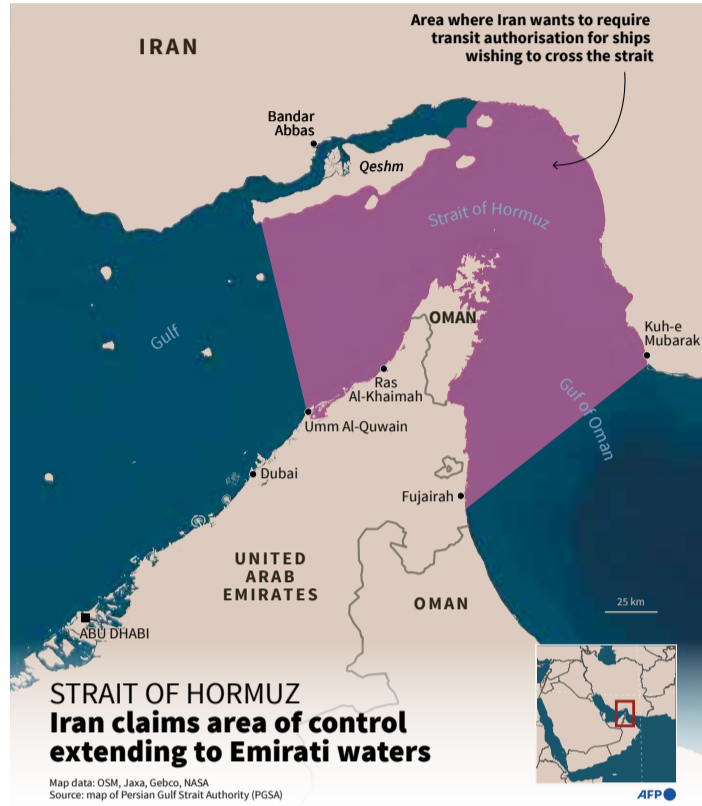
US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said yesterday that Iran's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who was wounded in US-Israeli attacks and has not been seen in public since assuming office, is alive and increasingly active.

"I think there are indications out there that he is increasingly engaging at some level," Rubio told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Mojtaba Khamenei, 56, succeeded his father Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the first wave of US-Israeli strikes that launched the war on February 28.

Rubio was testifying in front of the Senate panel as talks on ending the three-month-old war that has engulfed the Middle East and triggered a global energy crisis have stalled.

Rubio expressed hope for a deal with Iran, while insisting



STRAIT OF HORMUZ
Iran claims area of control extending to Emirati waters

Map data: OSM, Jaxa, Gebcos, NASA
Source: map of Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)

that Tehran must severely limit its nuclear program in order to see sanctions lifted.

"There is the prospect before us, which could happen today, it could happen tomorrow, it could happen next week," Rubio said.

Rubio said that Tehran must agree to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping channel for Gulf oil and gas.

"They have to announce very clearly 'The straits are now open, we're not charging a toll.' We will help remove the mines that they put in there, and they will not fire on ships."

Additionally, he said: "They have to agree on negotiating severe and long-term limitations and/or cancellation of enrichment activity."

Rubio continued: "Iran is being sanctioned because they've highly enriched uranium, Iran is being sanctioned because of their nuclear activities, if they agree to give up those things, there will be sanctions relief."

Trump signs AI order giving government access to powerful models

Washington, United States

The order was triggered by concerns over Anthropic's Mythos model, which the AI startup has refused to release publicly.

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order Tuesday creating a voluntary framework under which AI developers could share advanced models with the government before public release.

The central provision allows

companies such as OpenAI, Google or Anthropic to give the government access to their most powerful models for up to 30 days before planned release.

The order was triggered by concerns over Anthropic's Mythos model, which the AI startup has refused to release publicly due to its ability to ex-

pose vulnerabilities in computer systems -- including those of banks, governments and hospitals.



Israel, Hezbollah trade blows despite Trump declaring deal

Israel-Lebanon talks begin in Washington

- Lebanon's health ministry said on Tuesday that Israeli attacks had killed at least 3,468 people since March 2 -- an increase of 35 compared to Monday.
- At least 26 Israeli soldiers and one civilian contractor have been killed over the same time frame.

- At least 26 Israeli soldiers and one civilian contractor have been killed over the same time frame.

AFP | Washington, United States

The ambassadors of Israel and Lebanon began a new round of direct talks in Washington yesterday after US President Donald Trump said he had received commitments from both sides to de-escalate.

The fourth meeting between representatives of the two countries, which do not have diplomatic relations, is taking place at the State Department and is



US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, State Department Chief of Staff Daniel Holler, Deputy National Security Advisor Mike Needham, and US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa attend a meeting with Israeli and Lebanese delegations at the State Department in Washington, DC

scheduled to last two days.

Participants include Israel's ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter and Lebanese envoy Nada Hamadeh Moawad, as well as Daniel Holler, a senior advisor to Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

None of the officials made any statements.

The talks come as Hezbollah

and Israel continue to exchange fire, despite Trump announcing an agreement Monday to halt attacks.

Israel on Tuesday said it would continue targeting Hezbollah's bastions in Beirut's suburbs if the Iran-backed group continues to attack northern Israeli towns.

Recent days have seen a dramatic escalation in fighting

and bombardment as Israeli troops stage their deepest incursion into Lebanon in two decades.

Lebanon's health ministry said Tuesday that Israeli strikes a day earlier near a hospital in the southern city of Tyre killed four people and wounded 127 others, including 39 staff from the facility.

Dutch West India Company receives charter for the West Indies (the Americas, Caribbean and West Africa)

A mob of 60 from the Los Angeles Naval Reserve Armory beats up everyone perceived to be Hispanic, starting the week-long Zoot Suit Riots



Ixtoc I rig in the Gulf of Mexico blows out, spilling 3 million barrels of oil in one of the worst oil spills in history

Start of the Tiananmen Square crackdown as Chinese troops open fire on pro-democracy supporters in Beijing



TOP
3
TWEETS

01



More than 500 personnel of the State Emergency Service have been involved in dealing with the aftermath of Russia's overnight attack on our cities and communities. The main strike was on Kyiv, where dozens of residential buildings and other purely civilian infrastructure were damaged again. Tragically, four people have been reported killed. My condolences to all their families and loved ones. At this moment, 38 people are in hospitals in the capital, and all of them are receiving the necessary care.

@ZelenskyyUa

02



I'd like to express my deep appreciation to @cindymccain for her dedicated service as she steps down from her role as @WFPChief. I'm grateful for her steadfast commitment to the fight against global hunger & malnutrition, and I wish her all the very best in the future.

@antonioguterres

03



Ending #DRC's Ebola outbreak will require sustained and close collaboration and coordination among all health and humanitarian partners to help the government and community overcome the health emergency.

@DrTedros

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

India-Oman CEPA comes into force

Trade between two countries expected to rise

ANI | New Delhi

The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) comes into force from today, marking a significant milestone in bilateral economic relations and providing Indian exporters with duty-free access across 98.08 per cent of Oman's tariff lines, covering 99.38 per cent of India's export value.

The trade pact is expected to boost merchandise exports from India by improving market access for key sectors including engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and processed food products, marine products, textiles, chemicals, electronics, plastics, gems and jewellery.

Under the agreement, several Indian products will enjoy immediate duty-free access to the Omani market. These include natural honey, cashew, boneless meat, bakery products, chocolate and sugar confectionery, mineral water, cheese, curd, milk, cream, frozen fish and butter.

The CEPA is also expected to benefit India's exports of animal and vegetable fats and oils, which currently attract import duties ranging between 5 and 100 per cent in Oman. The agreement will further consolidate India's position in the Omani market, including in sectors such as egg exports, where duty-free access will strengthen competitiveness.



Beyond trade in goods, the agreement contains substantial commitments in services and mobility. It provides enhanced mobility provisions for Indian professionals, including temporary stay commitments for intra-corporate transferees, contractual service suppliers, business visitors and independent professionals.

The pact also liberalises entry and stay norms for professionals in sectors such as accountancy, taxation, architecture and healthcare. In a major investment-related commitment, Oman has agreed to provide 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) access for Indian companies in key services sectors.

According to the provisions of the agreement, Oman has also made its first-ever commitment on traditional medicine in any trade pact. The deal further provides for faster marketing authorisations for pharmaceutical products already approved by major international regulators such as the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The CEPA is expected to generate gains for consumers and businesses in both countries. India has agreed to provide duty-free access for up to 2,000 tonnes of Omani dates annually, while concessions have also

been extended to products such as Gum Arabic, used in food and medicines, frankincense used in the perfume industry, petrochemicals and marble blocks.

India and Oman have witnessed steady growth in bilateral trade over recent years. India imported USD 7.2 billion worth of goods from Oman in fiscal 2026, dominated by crude oil (USD 1.6 billion), liquefied natural gas (USD 1.2 billion), and fertilizers (USD 843 million).

The implementation of the CEPA is expected to further deepen economic engagement, enhance supply chain integration and create new opportunities for trade, investment and services cooperation between

the two countries.

Nearly 7 lakh Indian nationals reside in Oman, including Indian merchant families with a presence of over 200-300 years, with annual remittances of around \$2 billion. Over 6,000 Indian establishments operate across sectors in the West Asian country. The agreement is part of India's strategy to sign trade agreements with developed economies that don't compete with its labour-intensive interests as well as provide opportunities for businesses.

With India's export share in Oman's global imports basket at 5.31% out of the latter's global services imports of \$12.52 billion, India's Commerce Ministry has projected significant untapped potential for Indian service providers in sectors like Computer Related Services, Business and Professional Services, Audio-visual Services, Research and Development, Education and Health Services to promote high-value job creation and support commercial engagement between both countries.

For the first time, Oman has offered wide-ranging commitments like an increase in quota for Intra-Corporate Transferees from 20% to 50%, with a longer permitted duration of stay for Contractual Service Suppliers extended from the existing 90 days to two years, and the possibility of a further two-year extension.

UN warns world to prepare for El Nino extreme weather

● The WMO says that even a moderate El Nino makes some weather and climate extremes more likely.

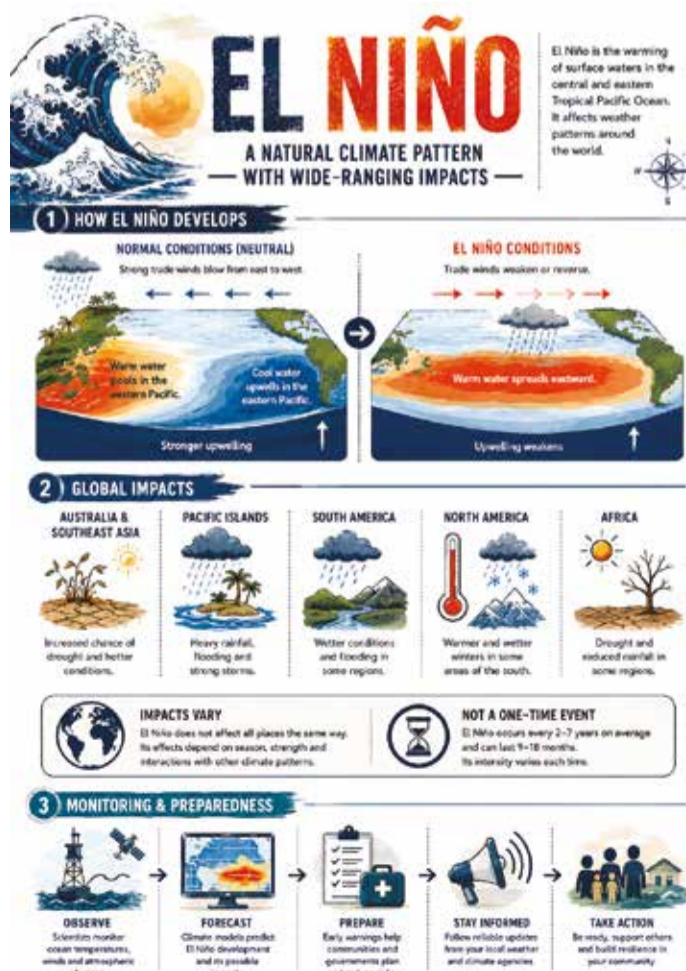
AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

There is an 80-percent chance of the warming El Nino phenomenon developing between June and August, increasing the risk of extreme weather events, the World Meteorological Organization said Tuesday.

"Fuelled by unusually warm ocean waters in the tropical Pacific, El Nino conditions are developing and are set to influence global temperature and rainfall patterns," the United Nations' WMO weather and climate agency said.

Forecasts from the WMO global network "indicate a pronounced shift toward El Nino conditions, with probabilities reaching 80 percent for June-August", the Geneva-based organisation said.

El Nino is a natural climate phenomenon that warms sur-



face temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between.

The likelihood of El Nino developing by November is "near or above 90 percent", and most forecast models suggest it will be "at least moderate -- and possibly strong", the WMO said in its quarterly El Nino/La Nina update.

WMO chief Celeste Saulo said the world needed to get ready for an El Nino which could "exacerbate drought and heavy rainfall and increase the risk of heatwaves both on land and in the ocean".

The WMO says that even a moderate El Nino makes some weather and climate extremes more likely. The last El Nino contributed to making 2023 the second-hottest year on record and 2024 the all-time high at around 1.55C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average.

WHO reports sharp drop in suspected Ebola cases from 906 to 116

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The WHO yesterday dramatically scaled back the number of suspected Ebola cases in central Africa to 116, down from more than 900 previously, with 330 cases now confirmed.

As of May 31, the World Health Organization said 116 suspected cases of the deadly virus had been registered in the Democratic Republic of Congo -- down from 906 late last week.

Some 321 cases have now been confirmed in the DR Congo, including 48 deaths, while nine confirmed cases have been registered in neighbouring Uganda, including one fatality.

While some suspected cases have been confirmed, many more "have been cleared out" from the data after having been shown to have other diseases with similar early symptoms or an unlinked fever, said WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier.

'I can't breathe'

Outrage after UK police handcuff dying student

● A judge on Monday jailed his killer, 23-year-old Sikh Vickrum Digwa, for at least 21 years

● One officer can be heard asking Nowak: "You've been stabbed, whereabouts?" before adding: "Don't think you have, mate."

● American tech tycoon Elon Musk has posted on X an offer to fund a private prosecution against the police over its handling of the murder.



18-year-old student Henry Nowak being handcuffed by police before his death, following a false claim of racial abuse, in Southampton, south England.

AFP | Southampton, United Kingdom

Body camera footage of a dying student who was handcuffed by British police after being stabbed by a Sikh man and falsely accused of racially abusing his murderer sparked outrage yesterday. Eighteen-year-old Henry Nowak is heard repeatedly telling police "I can't breathe" in the footage captured as he lay mortally wounded in December after a night out with his football team members.

A judge on Monday jailed his killer, 23-year-old Sikh Vickrum Digwa, for at least 21 years for stabbing Nowak to death with a ceremonial knife with a 21cm (8 inch) blade.

When police arrived at the scene in the south coast city of Southampton, Digwa lied to officers, telling them Nowak had racially insulted him and that he



Vickrum Digwa

was the victim.

The footage, which was played during Digwa's trial, shows police accepting the aggressor's accusation, and rather than helping Nowak initially placing him in handcuffs despite his pleas that he had been stabbed and could not breathe.

One officer can be heard

asking Nowak: "You've been stabbed, whereabouts?" before adding: "Don't think you have, mate."

Moments later the young student collapsed and became unconscious.

Speaking after Digwa was sentenced at Southampton Crown Court, Nowak's father Mark described the police treatment of his son as "shocking".

He called Nowak's treatment "inhumane and degrading... his murderer, however, was afforded decency. He was believed".

The family gave permission for police to release the bodycam footage.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the "awful, shocking case" on X on Monday, saying it was right the independent police complaints watchdog was investigating officers' "response to (Nowak's) senseless murder".

Main opposition Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch and far-right Reform UK leader

Nigel Farage called for changes to police diversity policies.

Farage said there needed to be an end to "anti-white prejudice" and recognition that "white lives matter".

American tech tycoon Elon Musk has posted on X an offer to fund a private prosecution against the police over its handling of the murder.

Digwa was due in court again Tuesday with his brother, Gurbreet Digwa, 27, and his father, Moga Singh, 52, on weapons offences. All three face charges of possession of offensive weapons including a flick knife, an extendable baton, knuckledusters, a machete, swords and kusaris.

Digwa's family apologised to Nowak's family for the killing and for bringing the Sikh community into "disrepute".

The convicted killer's mother, Kiran Kaur, 53, will be sentenced on July 17 for assisting an offender by taking the knife back to the family home.

Trump names inexperienced ally as intelligence director

AFP | Washington, United States



Bill Pulte

US President Donald Trump appointed a loyalist with no national security experience as head of US intelligence on Tuesday -- and said he would also retain his existing jobs overseeing federal housing and mortgage policies.

Federal Housing Finance Agency chief Bill Pulte, who also leads the mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, was named as the acting director of national intelligence, replacing Tulsi Gabbard.

Gabbard, herself a controversial pick for the job, resigned in late May, ending a tenure that saw her appear to be at odds with Trump over his war on Iran.

"William has deep experience managing the most sensitive matters in America, the safety and soundness of the Markets," said Trump in a post on his Truth Social platform, adding that Pulte would continue to serve in his housing-related roles.

Pulte, 38, is an outspoken ally of the president who has been known for publicly attacking Trump's political enemies, with some US media describing him as the president's "attack dog."

Pulte has accused Trump's political enemies, including Democratic Senator Adam Schiff and New York Attorney General Letitia James, of falsifying documents on mortgage applications.

He has also championed the mortgage fraud case against US Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook, based upon which Trump attempted to fire the monetary policy maker.

Pope names first lay woman to head Vatican department

AFP | Vatican City, Holy See

Pope Leo XIV yesterday named a Mexico-born news executive to head up the Vatican's powerful communications department -- the first lay woman to hold a post in the Roman Curia.

Maria Montserrat Alvarado, currently president of the Catholic media outlet EWTN News, will take up her post on November 1, the Vatican said in a statement.

She was born in Mexico City and studied in the United States.

Vatican News said the appointment was "continuing the path of reform and renewal initiated by Pope Francis", Leo's predecessor.

"Alvarado is the first non-religious woman to be appointed pre-

fect of a dicastery of the Holy See," the Vatican news service report said.

The Dicastery for Communication oversees the Vatican's vast print, radio and television services, which broadcast to a global audience.

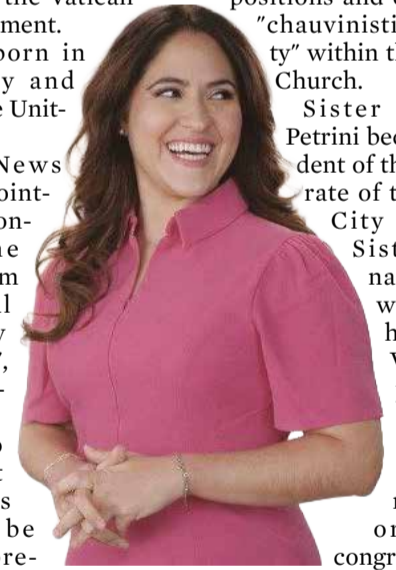
It also runs the Vatican press office.

In the months before he died on April 21 last year, Francis named two nuns to key Vatican positions and criticised a "chauvinistic mentality" within the Catholic Church.

Sister Raffaella Petri became governor of the Vatican City state and

Sister Simona Brambilla

was named head of the Vatican department overseeing the world's Catholic religious orders and congregations.



Exoplanets can have magnetic fields, 'hot Jupiter' winds reveal

AFP | Paris, France

Planets beyond our solar system can have magnetic fields similar to those closer to home, astronomers said Tuesday after observing extreme winds on scorching worlds known as "hot Jupiters".

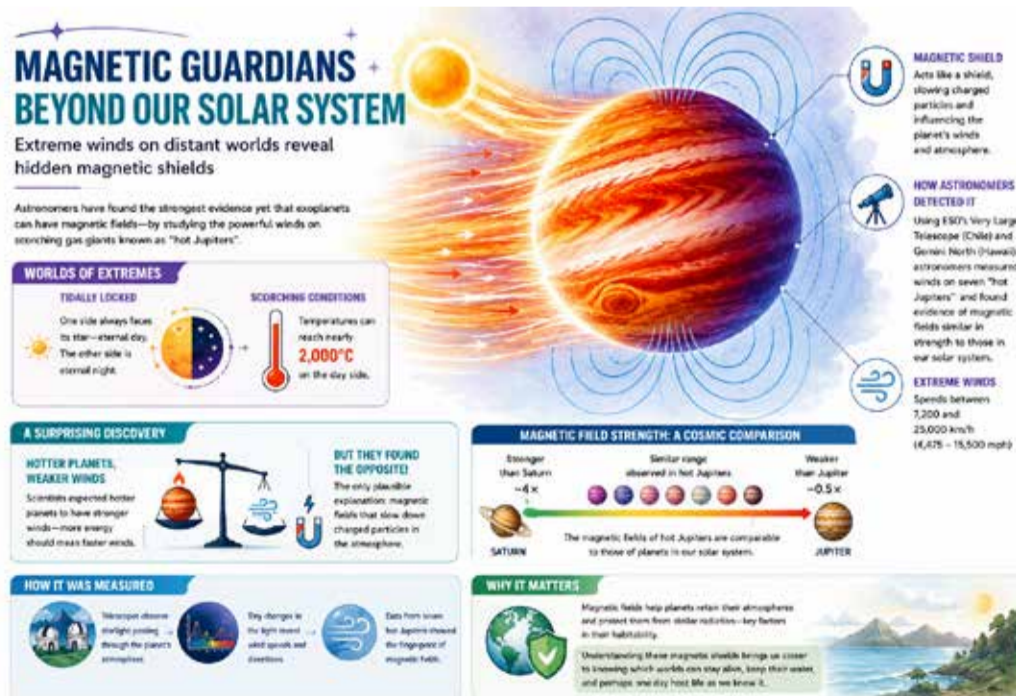
The observations offer the strongest evidence yet of magnetic fields outside our cosmic backyard, a subject which has long eluded scientists.

"It's the first time we can compare the magnetic environments of other worlds -- a key step toward ultimately understanding which planets can stay alive, keep their water, and perhaps even, one day, host life as we know it," said astronomer Julia Seidel of France's Cote d'Azur Observatory.

By deflecting the charged particles that bombard planets, magnetic fields play a "very complex role in atmospheric retention," Seidel, the lead author of a new study in Nature Astronomy, told AFP.

In our solar system, Earth, Jupiter and Saturn have active magnetic fields -- but Venus and Mars do not.

However exactly what is



happening on far-away worlds known as exoplanets is difficult to measure.

Seidel and her colleagues did not originally intend to measure magnetic fields, but instead set out to look into wind.

The team studied seven "hot Jupiters", gas giants where temperatures can hit nearly

2,000 degrees Celsius. They have "compositions completely unknown in our solar system," Seidel explained.

These planets are so close to their stars that they are tidally locked.

This means they always have one side facing their star -- similar to how the same side of the

Moon always faces Earth.

So it will always be a blisteringly hot day on one side of these planets, while the other sits in eternal night.

This extreme difference creates very violent winds, ranging from 7,200 to 25,000 kilometres (4,475 to 15,500 miles) an hour, the scientists found.

Bear goes on rampage in Japan, injuring four people

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

A bear attack left four people injured in two factories and a residential area in northern Japan's Fukushima on Tuesday, police and media reports said.

A record 13 people were killed by bears in Japan last year, and there has been a jump in sightings as the animals emerge hungry from hibernation.

"A bear-related human injury incident... occurred in Fukushima City, injuring four people," the prefectural police said in a statement.

The bear was first spotted in a car parts

factory, prompting an emergency call explaining that "employees had been bitten", the Yomiuri Shimbun daily reported citing police and fire department officials.

As the bear continued its rampage, two other people were injured, one in a residential area and the other on the premises of an electronic equipment manufacturer nearby, the Yomiuri said, adding that the animal was thought to have remained inside the factory.

The report said one of those attacked was heavily injured, while the rest suffered only mild injuries.



'Endless scrolling': Sweden mulls under-15s social media ban

● The Scandinavian country's government appointed the commission in the autumn to assess introducing a minimum age for social media access

AFP | Stockholm, Sweden

A Swedish government commission proposed on Tuesday banning under-15s from accessing social media, adding to the list of countries considering similar measures to tackle the harms of the internet on children.

"We are in the process of losing an entire generation to endless scrolling," Public Health Minister Jakob Forssmed told a press conference.

The Scandinavian country's government appointed the com-



mission in the autumn to assess introducing a minimum age for social media access, which would affect platforms including Snapchat, Instagram, Face-

book, TikTok and YouTube.

Commission head Lisa Englund Krafft recommended setting the age floor at 15, with the body proposing the limit come

into force on January 1, 2028.

While the likes of Facebook and TikTok would be required to verify their users' ages, video games popular with children

such as Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite would be exempt.

In December 2025, Australia became the first country to ban social media for children in a bid to protect them from the effects of the internet on their mental health -- so far to mixed results.

Brazil and Indonesia are among the countries to have followed suit, while many European nations are considering similar bans.



Australia became the first country to pass a nationwide law banning social media access for children under 16 in 2025.

Venezuela's Rodriguez to visit India as oil imports rise

AFP | New Delhi, India

Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez will travel to India today for a five-day visit, the foreign ministry said, as New Delhi scales up crude imports from Caracas.

India, the world's third-largest oil buyer, has revived crude supplies from Venezuela to blunt a sharp crude shortfall from the crisis-ridden Middle East.

Rodriguez will be accompanied by several ministers and will hold meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said foreign ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal.

"Acting President Rodriguez will hold bilateral discussions with the Prime Minister covering the full spectrum of India-Venezuela relations and exploring avenues for further cooperation in energy, trade, investment, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, transportation, and renewable energy," Jaiswal told reporters Tuesday.

EU holds crunch talks on flight delay compensation

● The European Union's 27 countries would like to trim the compensation air carriers currently have to pay out for cancelled flights and long delays

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The EU was holding crunch talks yesterday on whether to ban airlines from charging for carry-on luggage -- but let them incur longer flight delays before passenger compensation kicks in.

A marathon meeting in Brussels was hoping to break an impasse over a long-planned reform of air passenger rights, with European lawmakers and member states locking horns.



Discussions got underway at around 1:00 pm (1100 GMT) and are expected to run into the night.

The European Union's 27 countries would like to trim the compensation air carriers currently have to pay out for cancelled flights and long delays -- a

move opposed by lawmakers.

At present, passengers in Europe have a right to between 250 and 600 euros (\$291-\$699) in compensation, depending on flight distance, for delays of three hours or more.

Airlines complain that leaves them with a hefty bill and of-

ten leads them to cancel flights rather than run them with a long delay, due to knock-on effects on flight schedules.

Most EU states agreed last year to extend the threshold to four hours for flights of up to 3,500 kilometres (2,175 miles) or for any flights within the bloc, and to six hours for longer journeys.

Payout amounts were also revised to between 300 and 500 euros.

The scheme came with extra carrots including a "right to be rerouted" at the earliest opportunity and a system for passengers to be automatically compensated for flights cancelled within 14 days of departure.

But that was not good enough for parliament.

Lawmakers pushed back on changes to the allowed delays -- and doubled down with addi-

tional measures broadly disliked by flight operators.

They pushed for airlines to be mandated to include a seven kilogramme carry-on luggage, as well as a small personal bag, in the price of the ticket and banned them from charging parents to get seats next to their children.

Lawmakers and governments have to agree on the same text for a reform to move forward, but months of talks have so far failed to produce a deal.

As member states initially tried to ram through the changes with rarely-used expedited procedure, the two parties have only weeks left to strike a compromise.

A no-deal would simply leave in place the current rules -- which the EU has been seeking to reform for more than a decade.

Press gala halted by alleged Trump assassination bid to be held July 24

Washington, United States

A gala media dinner halted by an alleged assassination attempt against US President Donald Trump has been rescheduled for July 24, the White House Correspondents Association said yesterday.

The new dinner will be a "more intimate gathering" than the April 25 event, WHCA President Weijia Jiang said in a statement. It did not say if Trump himself would attend the rescheduled dinner.

Britons jailed in Iran lose appeal, son says

London, United Kingdom

A British couple jailed in Iran have lost an appeal against their 10-year prison sentences for espionage, their son said yesterday.

Lindsay Foreman and her husband Craig Foreman were detained during a round-the-world motorbike trip at the start of 2025.

The couple were sentenced in February to 10 years in prison on espionage charges that they deny.

"It is now emerging that their appeal against a ten-year espionage conviction has failed," their son, Joe Bennett, said in a statement.

He said the couple were "not permitted to attend their own appeal hearing" and were asked to sign documents in Farsi, but had so far refused as they did not understand them.

Anthropic expands access to powerful Mythos AI model

AFP | New York, United States

Anthropic yesterday gave approximately 150 organizations around the world access to Mythos, its powerful new AI model whose rapid ability to identify weaknesses in computer security has sparked global concern.

The California AI company had initially restricted access to Mythos in early April, after tests showed the model was extraordinarily good at finding security holes in software code -- identifying thousands of them in a short period of time.

At first, only around 50 partners -- mostly US companies -- were brought into the program called Project Glasswing to test the model's powers before it could be weaponized by hackers.

Among them were major tech



Mythos AI reportedly helped uncover more than 10,000 high-severity software vulnerabilities, making it one of the most powerful cybersecurity-focused AI systems developed to date.

companies including Amazon, Google, Nvidia, Apple and Microsoft, along with cybersecurity firms CrowdStrike and Palo Alto Networks.

By late May, those early partners had already used Mythos to uncover more than 10,000 serious security weaknesses that hackers could exploit to cause real damage.

Now Anthropic is opening the program to groups from more than 15 countries.

Most of them run software that millions of other organ-

izations -- including governments -- depend on every day.

A successful cyberattack on any one of them, Anthropic says, could affect "more than 100 million people, with important ramifications for both global and national security."

The new participants cover industries that were missing from the original group, including power grids, water systems, hospitals, phone networks and hardware manufacturers.

The company declined to

name the new partners.

When Project Glasswing launched, some critics accused Anthropic of overhyping the threat to generate attention.

The company, which is also behind the popular Claude chatbot, announced on Monday that it had filed confidentially for an initial public offering (IPO).

But companies that have tested Mythos have since backed up its capabilities, with the US government, which had been in a legal dispute with Anthropic, eventually testing the model over security concerns.

Some observers link that government shift to a broader policy change from the Trump administration, which struck deals with Google, Microsoft and Elon Musk's xAI in early May to have their most powerful

AI models reviewed for safety before going on sale.

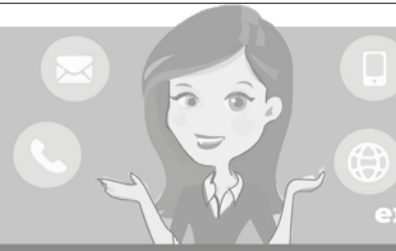
A presidential order to make that policy official was drafted but then put on hold after disagreements inside the White House.

On Monday, a European Commission spokesperson confirmed to AFP that Anthropic had invited ENISA -- the European Union's cybersecurity agency -- to join Project Glasswing.

150

Anthropic yesterday gave approximately 150 organizations around the world access to Mythos.

Classifieds



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UN Security Council Urges Israel to Withdraw from Southern Lebanon

Most members back call for de-escalation as violence forces mass displacement



An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council saw near-unanimous support — with the exception of the United States — for calls urging Israel to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon and avoid further military escalation.

The session, requested by France, came amid growing unrest in Lebanon, where tens of thousands of residents have

reportedly fled their homes. Shelters have become overcrowded as panic spread following Israeli warnings of a possible imminent strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

During the meeting, some of the strongest criticism of Israel came from France, Britain, Russia and China, all permanent members of the Security Council. The United States, however, focused its remarks

on holding Iran and Hezbollah responsible for the escalation.

Martha Pobee, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peace Operations and Political Affairs, told the council that the increase in hostilities since 2 March had resulted in a "devastating human toll".

Citing figures from Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, she said Israeli attacks had killed at least 3,412 people and in-

jured more than 10,000 others in Lebanon.

Pobee also stressed that "Israel's presence north of the Blue Line constitutes a clear violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701".

"These hostilities are reverberating across the region," she added.

Qatar urges stronger preventive diplomacy

Call for greater global support for peaceful dispute resolution

The State of Qatar has reaffirmed its commitment to mediation, dialogue and preventive diplomacy, saying such efforts are essential to de-escalating conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

The position was outlined in a statement to the United Nations General Assembly in New York by Sheikha Alia Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani, Qatar's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Speaking during a meeting focused on enhancing the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, she said mediation remains one of the most effective tools for pre-



venting conflict and building sustainable peace. She warned that growing global instability, including an increase in armed conflicts, has made strengthening diplomatic tools more urgent than ever.

She added that mediation

and preventive diplomacy are central pillars of Qatar's foreign policy, rooted in constitutional principles and aligned with United Nations resolutions.

Qatar also highlighted its involvement in several international mediation efforts. These include joint work with Egypt, the United States and Türkiye that contributed to a ceasefire agreement in Gaza signed in October last year. The statement called on all parties to fully honour their commitments, implement the agreement, and ensure continued humanitarian access through border crossings.

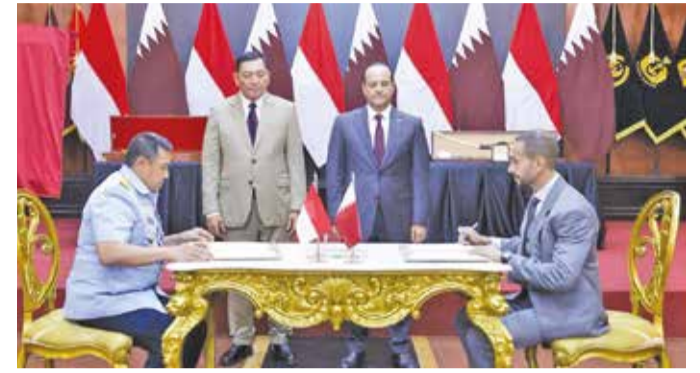
The country also referred to its ongoing engagement in east-

ern Congo through the Doha framework for a comprehensive peace agreement signed in November 2025. It further pointed to its earlier mediation role in Afghanistan, which led to the 2020 agreement between the United States and the Taliban in Doha.

In addition, Qatar expressed support for Pakistan's mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, saying it backs all initiatives aimed at reducing tensions and strengthening regional stability.

The statement concluded with a call for renewed international commitment to mediation as global conflicts become increasingly complex.

Qatar, Indonesia Boost Defence Ties



His Excellency Shaikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al Thani, Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, met Indonesia's Defence Minister, Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, during an official visit to the Republic of Indonesia.

An official reception ceremony was held for Sheikh Saud upon his arrival at the headquarters of Indonesia's Ministry of Defence in Jakarta. During the talks, both sides reviewed the latest regional security developments and

discussed ways to strengthen military cooperation and coordination amid current regional challenges.

The meeting also saw the signing of a contract between Barzan Holding Group and Indonesia's Ministry of Defence. In addition, Barzan Holding Group signed a partnership agreement with Replek Corp.

The discussions were attended by Qatar's Ambassador to Indonesia, Dr Sultan Mubarak Al-Dosari, along with senior military officers and officials from both countries.

Prophet's Mosque sees smooth flow of post-Hajj pilgrims

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Thousands of pilgrims arriving in Madinah after completing this year's Hajj have been welcomed at the Prophet's Mosque, where crowd movement has remained smooth under a comprehensive service system.

According to the Saudi Press Agency, the mosque's courtyards and corridors witnessed a steady flow, supported by field and organisational plans designed to manage entry and exit points and regulate visitor movement, particularly in the Rawdah area.

Authorities deployed guidance and support services, including wayfinding assistance, information centres, and multilingual support to assist visitors.

Digital platforms and electronic guidance boards were also activated to enhance awareness and improve the



overall experience. Field teams continue to operate around the clock, providing Zamzam water and assisting elderly visitors and people with disabilities as part of ongoing post-Hajj services.

Middle East war strains global logistics

Aid routes under pressure, UNICEF says

The United Nations children's agency has warned that escalating disruption to global transport networks, driven in part by conflict in the Middle East, is threatening the delivery of life-saving supplies to vulnerable children.

UNICEF said rising shipping costs, insecurity along key Gulf maritime routes, and severe congestion at alternative ports are combining to slow humanitarian operations and sharply increase logistics expenses.

Nearly 100 days into the conflict in the Middle East, the agency said heightened risks to shipping in the region had driven up fuel prices and insurance premiums. At the same time, diversion of cargo to alternative ports has created bottlenecks, further delaying deliveries.

UNICEF warned that it is increasingly forced to rely on air transport to move essential supplies, as sea freight becomes slower and less predictable. In the first quarter of the year alone, the agency said it had almost exhausted the annual contributions from logistics partners that typically provide donated charter flights.

It said it had been airlifting aid to Lebanon and Gaza, with delays in the supply chain now stretching between four and six weeks — a disruption it described as unprecedented.

The agency also said it had been relying on air freight to support its response to an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as congestion continues at major ports including Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. UNICEF estimates that some



shipments are now taking up to six months to reach their destinations, raising concern over the impact on emergency response efforts in multiple regions.

Dubai Economy



HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum visits the Department of Economy and Tourism in Dubai to review progress and plans aimed at accelerating economic growth and strengthening the emirate's position as a global hub for trade, tourism, and investment.

From Rocafonda to the World Cup: Lamine Yamal's meteoric rise

Spanish teenage prodigy prepares for a historic debut on the world stage

● **Rocafonda celebrates local hero**

● **Barcelona spotted talent early**

● **Euro 2024 elevated global profile**

AFP | Mataró

Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo will play at a record sixth World Cup in 2026, but years from now the tournament may instead be remembered as Lamine Yamal's first.

From the concrete square in Mataró the Spanish 18-year-old used to play in, to the biggest stages in world football, his rise has been dazzling.

His uncle Abdul Nasraoui used to keep a small replica World Cup trophy in his bakery in the humble neighbourhood of Rocafonda, a 20-mile (32-kilometre) crawl up the Catalan coast from Barcelona, telling people it was for when his nephew wins it.

Abdul had the trophy before Yamal even debuted for Spain, because he knew something special was coming. Many claim they did, in Rocafonda, but importantly for Barca it was Jordi Roura who got there first.

Alerted to Yamal by a scout, Barcelona's then youth football chief Roura and close colleague Aureli Altimira pounced. In the chaos of a trial match, Lamine stood out.

"We were there with Aureli and at the beginning we saw him and he looked a bit odd, kind of scrawny, he moved a bit strangely, and we said, 'hmm let's see...'," Roura tells AFP.



15 years old was Lamine Yamal's age when he made his professional debut, beginning one of football's most remarkable rises

"Then once they start playing, it's difficult, right? Because imagine 20 kids of seven, eight years old, all chasing the ball.

"Even so, Lamine would sometimes do something where you'd go, 'Damn!'. Instead of just running after the ball, sometimes he would find space, wait, look for his left foot, execute really quickly."

One attribute, honed on the square where if your feet aren't fast enough to swerve defenders you can end up on the concrete, marked out little Lamine.

"Dribbling might be the most innate technical action, right?" says Roura. "It's hard to train a dribbler. He had that. He would feint, do things which made you say 'wow'."

"We thought this kid had something special, even if he looked a bit slight, and decided to sign him."

Negotiations were quick with Lamine's father Mounir Nasraoui from Morocco,

and his mother Sheila Ebana, from Equatorial Guinea.

He was a quiet, even shy child, who loved to play football and spent a lot of time with his paternal grandmother, Fatima.

She was the first of the family to move to

Spain, arriving on a ferry from Tangier in 1990 and slowly bringing across her children in the following years.

Fatima settled in Rocafonda and remains there, although Mounir, after being stabbed during an altercation in 2024, has since relocated to the upmarket Barcelona neighbourhood of Sarria.

After Lamine's parents split up when he was three, he also lived with his mother in Roca del Valles, north of Mataró, but Rocafonda was always home.

It is represented in his goal celebration, using his hands to show the numbers 304, the last digits of the neighbourhood's postcode.

Now even in the more well-to-do parts of Mataró the number appears. Rocafonda is northeast of the elegant centre, a neighbourhood with a negative reputation for crime and poverty,

although now it is famous for being where Lamine came from.

Lamine Yamal

Glance down the right street and you can catch a narrow glimpse of sweet Mediterranean blue.

The winger and his father are spotted less frequently there now, but the games go on, with players duking it out in front of a mural of Lamine, painted in 2025.

"With all these great players... they're capable of doing the same, or more than they did when they were children, and that's very difficult, very rare, and that's why they're the chosen ones," said Roura.

"(Lamine) enjoys playing, and I think that even when he was very little, when the challenge was greater, when a game was harder, that's when he liked it the most, you know?"

'No limits'

Not everyone has the accuracy of the neighbourhood's "idol" and an "example" as youngsters sitting and waiting for a chance to play describe him.

The ball is lashed high over the fence that divides the concrete pitch from the road, to howls of frustration.

The kids call to a passer-by, before one player zips past on an electric scooter to retrieve it.

But for the interception, it may have rolled down the road and past the bar run by Lamine's uncle, 'Familia LY 304', since he gave up his bakery.

Over the past three years Abdul has answered plenty of questions about Lamine, but with concerns over the winger's fitness heading into the World Cup, he doesn't feel like speaking for now.

On a shelf behind the bar, sits his replica trophy. Abdul's dream, just three years after Lamine made his professional



Lamine Yamal honors his roots by flashing the number 304 during goal celebrations, representing the last digits of the postcode for Rocafonda, the humble neighborhood where he grew up playing street football

debut aged just 15, could come true remarkably quickly.

"When you see the resume he already has at 18, it's scary, so what this kid can achieve has no limits," added Roura.

Yamal was still studying for his exams during Spain's run to Euro 2024 glory, where he captured the world's attention with a sensational strike against France.

That moment is memorialised on one wall of the bar, along with others from the winger's short yet glittering career for club and country, along with two framed shirts.

Nearly three decades after arriving from Morocco, Abdul is still happy working. He sits and eats a few mouthfuls of vegetables before a shout comes from the kitchen and he is on his feet again, bringing dishes, olive oil and bread to customers.

"Ojala -- I hope -- ojala," he says on the prospect of Lamine bringing the real thing back to Rocafonda. "If we win the World Cup, then I'll talk."

NBA star Curry signs 10-year deal with China's Li-Ning



Stephen Curry reacts during a game (file photo)

AFP | San Francisco

Four-time NBA champion Stephen Curry ended his sneaker free agency on Monday, announcing a 10-year deal with Chinese company Li-Ning after leaving Under Armour last November.

Curry, 38, revealed the deal on social media and called it "the partnership of a lifetime" that will include global expansion of his Curry Brand, basketball products, a golf line, leisure clothing and the ability to sign other athletes to his

brand.

"This is bigger than a show deal, bigger than a signature series," Curry said in a video, saying Li-Ning will deliver "sneakers that I believe in that will continue to deliver at the highest level."

Other Li-Ning athletes with their shoes include Dwyane Wade and Jimmy Butler, Curry's Golden State Warriors teammate. Curry had been a partner with Under Armour for 13 years before the split and had worn various brands through the NBA season.

BRAVE Hearts initiative and 3DB events join forces to strengthen business communities through strategic collaboration

Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation™ (BRAVE CF), the world's fastest-growing and most global mixed martial arts organization, proudly announces that BRAVE Hearts has officially signed a strategic partnership agreement with 3DB Events, marking a significant milestone in its mission to deliver tangible relief and high-quality event experiences to the business community.

The agreement was formally signed by Matt Dale, General Manager of 3DB Events, and Jabran Zakariya, Director of BRAVE Hearts, reinforcing a shared commitment to empowering organizations through meaningful collaboration and practical support.

Jabran Zakariya, Director of BRAVE Hearts, stated: "Partnerships such as this are essential to expanding the impact of BRAVE Hearts. By bringing together complementary expertise and a shared vision, we can provide stronger support systems for businesses and communities seeking growth, stability, and opportunity."

Under this new alliance, 3DB



Events aligns with the Initiative's core pillars: Empowerment, Resilience, and Community. Created to address critical corporate challenges with real and actionable solutions, the initiative provides specialized assistance across four essential areas: Technology, Marketing, Finance, and Business Development.

Through this collaboration, BRAVE Hearts will further strengthen its ability to deliver outstanding technical event production and ensure operational

continuity, helping organizations navigate challenges with greater confidence and stability. By combining expertise and resources, both organizations aim to create lasting value for businesses while encouraging a culture rooted in compassion, innovation, and sustainable economic progress.

Established in 2003 and headquartered in Dubai, 3DB Events is a premier technical event production company operating throughout the GCC region. Serving as the crucial

bridge between traditional event agencies and technical production houses, the company delivers comprehensive 360-degree solutions tailored to a wide range of requirements.

Its expertise includes world-class audio-visual services, immersive experience design, creative staging, and meticulous technical management that ensure seamless event execution.

On the other hand, BRAVE Hearts remains dedicated to fostering empowerment, resilience, and community by connecting pressing corporate needs with practical assistance. Through its focus on Technology, Marketing, Finance, and Business Development, the initiative continues to help organizations overcome challenges, unlock opportunities, and build stronger foundations for long-term success.

Together, BRAVE Hearts and 3DB Events are setting a new benchmark for purpose-driven collaboration, demonstrating how strategic partnerships can create meaningful impact while supporting business continuity, growth, and collective prosperity.

Bahrain U18 gear up for Gulf Championship

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's national under-18 basketball team have begun preparations for the Gulf Championship qualifiers, which serve as the pathway to the FIBA U18 Asian Cup and will take place in Qatar from July 17 to 22.

The team opened their campaign with a training camp in Umm Al Hassam, attended by Bahrain Basketball Association vice-president Salman Hubail, board member Ahmed Kaldari, and the technical staff led by head coach Salman Ramadan.

All selected players were present for the first session, marking the start of the national team's build-up for the regional qualifiers and their bid to reach the continental stage.

Hubail and Kaldari observed the opening training session and met with players and staff, stressing the importance of the preparation phase and urging



Coach Ramadan guides his players during training

full focus to ensure peak physical and technical readiness ahead of the competition.

Under Ramadan's guidance, the coaching staff have begun implementing a structured training programme focused on improving fitness, tactical

discipline, and overall team performance in the lead-up to the tournament.

The Gulf Championship represents Bahrain's qualification route to the FIBA U18 Asian Cup, with the team aiming to compete strongly against the

region's top youth sides and secure a place at the continental event.

Preparations will continue in the coming weeks as the squad steps up its build-up towards the July competition in Qatar.

Seef open 2026 campaign in Bulgaria

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's Seef 3x3 basketball team will kick off their 2026 international season this weekend by taking part in the Sofia Open 3x3 Palms Lite Quest in Bulgaria, marking their first appearance on this year's global circuit.

The tournament is officially sanctioned by FIBA and sits within the organisation's "Road to the World Tour" structure, bringing together a wide international field and offering teams a pathway into higher-tier events.

This year's Sofia competition features 24 teams from across Europe, North America and beyond. While the event does not grant direct access to a World Tour Masters, it carries added significance as a Lite Quest; the winning side earns qualification to the Caceres Challenger in Spain, set for July 11-12. Only the title winners will secure that progression.

Seef will line up with Bogdan Dragovic, Austin Ajukwa, Uros Ilic, and Isa Jassim forming the squad for the Bulgarian chal-



Bogdan Dragovic in action during a training session

lenge, as the team looks to build early-season rhythm against strong international opposition.

As part of their build-up, the Bahraini outfit has already set up a training base in Serbia,

where they are undergoing a short preparatory camp focused on conditioning, tactical work, and team coordination ahead of the competition.

Once their Sofia Open campaign concludes, Seef will remain in the region and return to Serbia to continue preparations for their next assignment on the FIBA 3x3 calendar – the Lion City Challenger in Singapore on June 20-21. That event also serves as a qualifying stop on the Road to the World Tour, with the top three teams earning places in the Lausanne Masters in Switzerland later in the season.

The FIBA 3x3 system continues to grow as a structured global pathway, featuring tiers ranging from Quest and Lite Quest events through to Challengers and elite Masters tournaments that make up the World Tour.

Bahrain has established a steady presence in the format in recent years, regularly competing in and hosting international stops, helping raise the country's profile within the fast-growing 3x3 scene.

Bahrain Begin Georgia Training Camp

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national football team have begun their overseas training camp in Tbilisi after arriving in Georgia to continue preparations for upcoming international commitments.

The squad's European base follows their departure from Manama on Monday evening, marking the start of a preparatory phase that includes two friendly matches against strong opposition as part of their build-up for major tournaments



Waleed Al Hayyam in action on the training ground

ahead.

Head coach Dragan Talajic is overseeing the camp, which comes as Bahrain continue their structured preparation for the 27th Gulf Cup, where they will enter as defending champions, as well as the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

Upon arrival, the team have already begun their initial training sessions, focusing on ball work and tactical organisation as the coaching staff look to fine-tune both physical and technical aspects of the squad.

The delegation includes a 30-man roster, with players continuing to link up with the group in phases. A number of overseas-based professionals are expected to join directly in Georgia, strengthening the squad ahead of the first friendly.

Bahrain are scheduled to face hosts Georgia, ranked 72nd in the world, on Friday at Mikheil Meskhi Stadium in Tbilisi. The team will then travel to Antalya, Türkiye, for a second friendly against Syria on Tuesday at the Gloria Sports Arena.

Liverpool close to hiring Iraola: reports



Andoni Iraola

AFP | London

Liverpool are in advanced talks with former Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola as they seek a replacement for Arne Slot, according to reports yesterday.

Iraola has emerged as Liverpool's top target to replace Slot, who was sacked on Saturday after a turbulent second season in charge.

Liverpool have reportedly agreed a deal in principle to bring the Spaniard, who left Bournemouth at the end of this season, to Anfield.

Sporting director Richard Hughes was heavily involved in hiring Iraola during his time at Bournemouth and is again spearheading the recruitment of the highly rated coach.

The Reds are believed to be keen to wrap up a deal with Iraola before the start of the World Cup next week, which would allow the 43-year-old a lengthy acclimatisation period before pre-season training.

Slot was sacked last weekend after Liverpool finished fifth in the Premier League, 25 points behind champions Arsenal.

The Dutchman had led Liverpool to the Premier League title in his debut season, but his follow-up campaign quickly turned into a nightmare.

The death of Liverpool forward Diogo Jota last year

25 points separated Liverpool from Premier League champions Arsenal leading to Arne Slot's sacking after just two seasons

had a huge impact at Anfield, while the club's £450 million (\$606 million) spending spree on new signings failed to pay off.

Slot's relationship with star forward Mohamed Salah also deteriorated, while Liverpool fans turned on the former Feyenoord manager due to his team's lifeless performances and poor results.

Liverpool's pursuit of Iraola is in line with the club's desire to move back towards the aggressive, attacking style used by Slot's predecessor Jurgen Klopp.

Iraola earned plaudits for Bournemouth's impressive sixth-place finish this season, which secured the club's first qualification for Europe in the Europa League.

He arrived at Bournemouth from Raya Vallecano in 2023, having previously managed Mirandes and AEK Larnaca.

Bournemouth improved each year under Iraola, finishing 12th, ninth and sixth.

Sotheby's to auction Pele jersey worn in 1958 World Cup



17-year-old Pele cries on the shoulder of the goalkeeper Gilmar after Brazil's 5-2 victory against Sweden in the 1958 World Cup final in Stockholm

AFP | New York

The jersey worn by late football legend Pele during Brazil's 1958 World Cup victory will headline an auction set to coincide with this year's tournament, Sotheby's announced yesterday.

Pele, then just 17 years old, scored two of Brazil's five goals

in the 1958 final against host nation Sweden.

The victory marked Brazil's first of a record five World Cup titles, three of which were won under the man who would become known as "The King."

Pele, born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, died in December 2022 at the age of 82 after being diagnosed with colon cancer.

Barbar End Seven-Year Wait for Seventh League Crown

TDT | Manama

Barbar were crowned champions of the 2025–26 Khalid bin Hamad Bahrain Handball League yesterday after defeating Al Ahli 28–26 in a gripping final played before a sold-out crowd at Khalifa Sports City Arena.

The victory secured Barbar's seventh league title and their first since the 2018–19 season, ending a seven-year wait to return to the summit of Bahraini handball. Meanwhile, Al Ahli's wait for a record-extending 20th league title continues after a 10-year drought.

Barbar, who finished fourth in the regular season, booked their place in the final after a stunning best-of-three semi-final sweep over defending champions Al Najma. Al Ahli, who ended the regular season just one point ahead of them in third, also progressed with a sweep over Al Shabab.

The final also highlighted the contrasting leadership on the sidelines. Barbar were guided by Bahraini coach Hussam Madan, while Al Ahli were led by Serbian tactician Predrag Petljanski.

The championship clash attracted several notable sporting figures, including Ali Mohamed Isa Eshaqi, President of the Bahrain Handball Federation, HH



Madan, Showaikh, and Abdulqader lift the league title

Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Vice President of the General Sports Authority, and HH Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee.

Also in attendance were H.E. Abdulrahman Sadiq Askar, Chief Executive Officer of the General Sports Authority, as well as Bahrain basketball stars Mustafa Rashid, his brother Ali Rashid, and Ali Meelad.

The opening stages were fiercely contested. Mahmood Al Jawhar and Salman Al Showaikh both threatened early for Barbar, but Al Ahli goalkeeper Hussain Mahfoudh produced several important saves to keep them at bay.

Abdulla Ali opened the scoring for Ahli in the third minute before Al Showaikh responded from the wing. He then struck again moments later to put Barbar ahead, while goalkeeper Isa Khalaf added to the lead with an impressive goal-to-goal effort after Ahli left their net unattended.

The momentum swung repeatedly throughout the first half. Ali Mirza helped Ahli draw level at 3–3, while Mohammed Ayyad and Al Jawhar kept Barbar in front during a tight opening period.

Ahli gradually found their rhythm and, after trailing for much of the half, moved ahead through Yousif Al Qassimi. Youngster Qassim Qambar then con-

tinued his strong form from the semi-finals and helped Ahli establish a three-goal cushion at 10–7.

Despite several key stops from the Barbar goalkeeper, Ahli maintained control late in the half and carried a 12–10 advantage into the break.

Ali Mirza extended Ahli's lead to 13–10 shortly after the restart, but Barbar refused to allow the game to drift away. Mohammed Ayyad and Al Showaikh led the fightback, while strong defensive work and key saves kept the contest within reach.

Barbar eventually erased the deficit when Al Showaikh levelled the score at 14–14 with an emphatic penalty throw. Moayyed Samir then completed

the turnaround on a fast break, while Hassan Al Fardan and Ayyad kept the pressure firmly on Ahli.

The contest remained deadlocked entering the final quarter. Mohamed Al Maqabi was shown a red card for Barbar after an accidental defensive challenge, but the dismissal did not disrupt their momentum.

Ali Mirza briefly gave Ahli a 22–21 lead with just over 10 minutes remaining, only for Al Showaikh to respond from the penalty line. Barbar then regained the initiative as the match entered its decisive stages.

With the tension rising, Al Showaikh fired home to make it 25–23 before Moayyed Samir

struck at a crucial moment to restore a one-goal advantage after Ahli had narrowed the gap.

Youngster Ahmed Ayyad then scored to make it 27–25 before Ali Abdulqader effectively sealed the title with a powerful strike for 28–26 with less than a minute remaining.

A huge late save preserved Barbar's advantage as the closing seconds ticked away, with celebrations already beginning to build among the club's supporters.

When the final whistle sounded, Barbar's players and fans erupted in celebration as the club completed a memorable campaign and secured a long-awaited return to the top of Bahraini handball.

Zverev powers into French Open semis, Kostyuk to face Andreeva

● Zverev defeats teenager Rafael Jodar

● Kostyuk beats compatriot Svitolina

AFP | Paris

Alexander Zverev breezed past Rafael Jodar to stay on course for an elusive Grand Slam title at the French Open, where Marta Kostyuk and Mirra Andreeva will meet for a place in the women's final.

Zverev, the highest-ranked player left in the men's draw, put an end to Spanish teenager Jodar's impressive Roland Garros debut, easing to a 7–6, (7/3), 6–1, 6–3 win yesterday.

The 29-year-old Zverev is the clear favourite for a maiden Grand Slam title. He has finished runner-up on three occasions, including at the 2024 French Open.

"I want to win the matches that are ahead of me, that is my goal, that is my aim," said Zverev,

who has only dropped one set en route to the last four.

It is the fifth time in six years he has made it to this stage in Paris.

"I'm happy to be in the semi-finals, for now," he added.

Zverev will play the winner of the night-time encounter between Brazilian sensation Joao Fonseca and Czech youngster Jakub Mensik.

For Jodar, the grind of back-to-back five-setters appeared to take its toll as he struggled to cope after blowing a 5–2 lead in the opening set.

The 19-year-old Jodar was featuring at just his second major. He was ranked 707th in the world this time last year, losing in the first and second rounds of second-tier Challenger events in the United States during the 2025 French Open.

'Flashbacks'

Earlier, the in-form Kostyuk held her nerve to withstand a comeback from compatriot Elina Svitolina in the first all-Ukrainian women's quarter-final at a Grand Slam in the Open era,



Germany's Alexander Zverev plays a backhand return to Spain's Rafael Jodar

winning 6–3, 2–6, 6–2.

The 23-year-old Kostyuk extended her unbeaten run on clay this season to 17 matches to reach her first Grand Slam semi-final.

"I'm very happy I found a way. It was very difficult in the first

two sets," said Kostyuk, who again dedicated her victory to the people of Ukraine.

The country was hit by hundreds of Russian drones and dozens of missiles early Tuesday, killing at least 18 people.

"We had another difficult

17
matches is Marta Kostyuk's unbeaten run on clay this season after reaching her first Grand Slam semi-final

night in Ukraine, especially in Kyiv where so many people died, so I want to give this match to Ukraine," said Kostyuk.

Svitolina, 31, fell at the quarter-final stage at Roland Garros for the sixth time. It is the only major where she has not reached the last four.

Kostyuk has been an outspoken supporter of Ukraine during the ongoing war with Russia. Her next opponent is Russian teenager Andreeva, who she beat in the Madrid Open final last month.

"I usually never care who is on the other side of the net. I'm there to play tennis and do my job, and that's it," said Kostyuk.

Andreeva breezed into her

second French Open semi-final earlier in the day with a 6–0, 6–3 rout of Romania's Sorana Cirstea, who plans to retire at the end of the season.

The eighth seed needed less than an hour to dispatch the 36-year-old Cirstea, appearing in the last eight in Paris for the first time since 2009.

Andreeva beat Cirstea en route to the title in Linz earlier this year, but made short work of her opponent under the roof on Philippe Chatrier as rain and strong winds arrived in Paris after last week's heatwave.

"I'm super happy that I'm going to be playing in semis again," said Andreeva.

"I felt like it was one of my best matches so far this tournament."

Andreeva atoned for the disappointment of her quarter-final loss to French outsider Lois Boisson 12 months ago.

"I was just trying to have flashbacks only about the weather and only about the court with closed roof, not about how I played. I'm happy that I could turn it around," she said.