

Ebola Trial Begins
 The WHO has launched a clinical trial in DR Congo to test two potential treatments for the rare Bundibugyo strain of Ebola. | P6-7

OIC says UNRWA remains vital for millions of Palestinian refugees.

Summer Toy Festival Returns



The third edition of the Bahrain Summer Toy Festival opened at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre, launching its largest and most diverse edition yet. The 35-day event will run until August 5 as part of the Kingdom's wider summer entertainment programme aimed at strengthening Bahrain's position as a regional family tourism hub.

Organised by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority in partnership with Beyon Al Dana Amphitheatre, the festival features three themed zones catering to different age groups. Twinkle Land offers six attractions inspired by international children's characters, Brave Land provides five adventure and gaming experiences, while Little Explorers Land is designed for younger children in a safe and interactive environment.

The festival also includes a packed programme of entertainment on the main stage, featuring seven live shows and eight meet-and-greet sessions with popular characters and performers, including Rasha Rizk and Tareq Al Arabi Tourgane. The event runs daily from 2:00 PM to 10:00 PM on weekdays, and from 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM on weekends.

Javelin Bronze Glory



Rubal Al-Omari won the bronze medal in the women's F55 javelin throw at the Olomouc World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 in the Czech Republic. She secured third place with a best throw of 17.56 metres, adding another achievement to Bahrain's para athletics team.

220 fils (includes VAT)



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Bahrain, US Strengthen Alliance

Regional security and stability at the centre of discussions

TDI | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces held talks with Admiral Charles Bradford Cooper, Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), during the senior military official's visit to the Kingdom.

The two sides reviewed the strong and longstanding partnership between Bahrain and the United States, with His Majesty highlighting deepening cooperation across defence and military sectors. The



King reaffirmed both nations' commitment to advancing their strategic alliance.

His Majesty praised Washington's critical role in upholding security and stability across the region and in supporting broader international peace efforts.

Talks touched on the latest regional and international developments, with discussions centring on ongoing events in the Middle East and coordinated efforts to strengthen security. The meeting also addressed recent Iranian attacks in the region, with both sides exchanging views on key issues of shared concern.

AI Governance Conference on Sunday

Bahrain will host the fifth edition of the World CIO200 – Bahrain Edition conference on Sunday, bringing together global leaders, policymakers and technology experts to discuss the future of artificial intelligence (AI), digital governance and responsible innovation.



H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, Chairman of the Shura Council

The virtual conference will feature senior executives, information technology specialists and digital transformation experts from Bahrain and abroad. Discussions will focus on emerging AI technologies, digital leadership, governance frameworks, ethical AI adoption and international best practices.

According to Dr. Jassim Haji, President of the Global AI Group, the conference will open with a keynote address by His Excellency Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, Chairman of the Shura Council. The programme will also include presentations by experts from Italy, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, providing insights into AI regulation, governance and the evolving global digital landscape.

Bahrain Takes Iran to UN Over Missile Strikes

FM Zayani condemns repeated ballistic missile and drone attacks on civilian areas

Bahrain convened an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council after Iran resumed ballistic missile and armed drone strikes on the Kingdom. These strikes targeted civilian areas, directly violating the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding signed on June 17, which called for a permanent halt to military operations.

Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, addressing the Council, said this marks the second emergency session convened over what he described as a sustained pattern of Iranian aggression. The first was called following an attack on the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the United Arab Emirates—a strike that pushed the region to the brink of nuclear catastrophe.



FM Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani addresses the emergency session of the United Nations Security Council.

states have faced similar attacks, reflecting a deeply alarming pattern of escalation.

Chemical Disaster Narrowly Averted

One strike hit an ammonia storage tank at the Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company inside a populated area. This forced authorities to evacuate a two-kilometre radius, narrowly averting a major chemical disaster.

The Foreign Minister called on the Council to ensure its resolutions are enforced, warning that credibility lies not in adopting resolutions but in implementing them. While Bahrain would continue exercising restraint, he affirmed the Kingdom retains its inherent right to self-defence.

Hundreds of Attacks Since February

Al Zayani said Bahrain has endured hundreds of missile and drone strikes since February 28, targeting residential neighbour-

hoods and the civilian infrastructure communities depend on daily. Three people have been killed and hundreds wounded, including women and children. Other Gulf Cooperation Council member

Saving Lives in Drone Defense



U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Adm. Brad Cooper recognized American soldiers and sailors assigned to a Joint Counter-Unmanned Aerial System (C-UAS) unit in Bahrain for their exceptional performance in intercepting and shooting down 14 Iranian one-way attack drones over recent weeks. He praised their professionalism, skill, and dedication, noting that their actions helped save lives.

Attacks Since the Conflict Began

Total reported attacks	808
Ballistic missile attacks	203
Drone attacks	605
People killed	3
Civilians injured	465

Restored Homes Hit by Iranian Attacks

Ministries completed repairs under royal directives; residents praised the swift response

The government delivered a new batch of restored homes in Al-Hidd Housing City after completing structural and engineering repairs to properties damaged in Iranian attacks.

The handover was carried out in line with royal directives from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and an order from His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to compensate citizens whose homes and vehicles were affected.



The Ministries of Works and Housing and Urban Planning oversaw the repairs, which were executed under an approved plan within a defined timeline. Restoration work covered structural damage, interior and exterior finishing, and rehabilitation of affected utilities.

Residents of Al-Hidd expressed deep appreciation for the royal directives and praised the speed and quality of the response. They noted that technical teams mobilised immediately to assess damage and begin rehabilitation.

Public Prosecution Runs Training for Tamkeen



The Public Prosecution of Bahrain has organised a specialised training programme for employees of the Labour Fund "Tamkeen" focused on legal procedures, inspection mechanisms, and regulatory compliance, as part of efforts to strengthen institutional cooperation and promote legal awareness.

The programme covered key legal and practical aspects of Public Prosecution procedures, including the proper preparation of reports and case records in accordance with legal standards. It also addressed methods for identifying and handling violations, enhancing the quality of field inspections and improving the efficiency of regulatory and auditing processes.

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Moves to Tackle Stray Dog Crisis

Fines, adoption drives and awareness campaigns on the agenda as northern officials coordinate multi-agency response

● **BD300 fine for feeding strays or leaving food waste in public places**

● **Adoption programme launching in September**

● **Remains rabies-free despite rising stray dog numbers**

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Bahrain's Northern Municipality is stepping up efforts to address the growing problem of stray dogs in residential areas and heritage sites. Plans for fines, public awareness campaigns and a new adoption programme are expected to launch as early as September.

The issue was discussed at a coordination meeting held at the Northern Municipality building, attended by municipal member Abdulla Mubarak Al Qobaisi alongside representatives from the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, the Agriculture Affairs agency, the Bahrain Cats and Pets Society and members of the Press.



Fine for Feeding

Officials highlighted that random public feeding is a key driver behind dogs repeatedly returning to the same neighbourhoods. Under existing public cleanliness rules, individuals who feed stray dogs or leave food waste in public spaces could face fines of up to BD300.

However, authorities stressed that awareness must come before enforcement, calling for a community programme to educate residents on the risks of unregulated feeding and proper ways to handle stray animals. Mr Al Qobaisi urged the media to support the effort through

short public awareness videos, noting that public influence can be more powerful than legislation in changing behaviour.

Adoption Drive

A significant shift in policy is also on the horizon. While previous arrangements involved catching, sterilising and relocating dogs to industrial areas or shelters, the upcoming contract—expected to be awarded in September—will open adoption pathways both within Bahrain and internationally.

Officials also proposed designating licensed feeding zones coordinated with animal wel-

fare groups, using dry food only to minimise littering.

Heritage Sites at Risk

The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities flagged concerns over stray dogs entering archaeological sites including areas around Saar and Hamad Town, where gaps in fencing allow animals access. Officials confirmed Bahrain remains rabies-free, with strict import controls in place for pets.

Attendees agreed the crisis requires a unified response linking enforcement, welfare and heritage protection under a clearer coordination framework.

Ministry Backs Growth of Bahrain's Veterinary Sector

Hospital's services align with international veterinary best practices.



Eng. Asim Abdullatif Abdullah with the staff during hospital visit

Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting investment in the veterinary sector, highlighting the importance of public-private partnerships in advancing animal healthcare and protecting the Kingdom's animal wealth.

The message came during a visit by Eng. Asim Abdullatif Abdullah, Undersecretary for Agriculture and Animal Wealth Affairs, to Bari Veterinary Hospital, where he was accompanied by ministry officials and welcomed by Dr. Bari Hamed and co-founder Anood Khalid Al Sharif.

During the visit, the undersecretary praised the hospital as an example of the private sector's growing contribution to veterinary medicine, noting that such investments help enhance public health, improve veterinary services, and create opportunities to train and develop Bahraini professionals. He stressed that

Bari Veterinary Hospital handles an average of 40 animal cases each day, making it one of Bahrain's leading specialised veterinary healthcare centres.

collaboration between the public and private sectors remains essential to achieving Bahrain's sustainable development goals.

Eng. Asim also commended the hospital's commitment to delivering veterinary care in accordance with international best practices, saying its specialised services play an important role in promoting animal welfare while supporting wider public health efforts.

The delegation toured the hospital's specialised clinics, examination rooms, surgical theatres and intensive care unit, and reviewed its advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies. Officials were also briefed on the hospital's operations, which are led by Bahraini professionals alongside a team of veterinarians.

Smart Camera Network Expands

Intelligent surveillance system targets phone use, seatbelt violations, and reckless lane changes

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Bahrain is stepping up road safety enforcement with an expanded network of smart cameras capable of automatically detecting a wide range of traffic offences, a senior official announced at the Bahrain Smart Cities Summit 2026.

Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Mubarak Bu Qais, Director of the Traffic Culture Directorate, said the system goes beyond



simply recording violations—it aims to deter dangerous behaviour before it leads to tragedy.

"A moment of distraction behind the wheel can change a life in seconds," he warned, adding



Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Mubarak Bu Qais, Director of the Traffic Culture Directorate at the General Directorate of Traffic

that a single wrong decision on the road can cause injuries that affect victims for years.

The system uses AI-powered algorithms to identify offences including illegal overtaking through emergency lanes or pavements, running red lights, speeding, mobile phone use while driving, and unsafe lane changes. It also flags seatbelt violations, illegal U-turns, driving against traffic, ignoring road signs, failure to keep right, and children seated in the front seat.

Once a camera captures an incident, the system conducts an automatic analysis and prepares photographic evidence for human review. Each case is verified for accuracy before a violation is confirmed or rejected. Motorists retain the right to appeal through official procedures.

Lieutenant Colonel Bu Qais said the system integrates artificial intelligence, plate recognition, and two-way connectivity with other traffic platforms.



Bahrain will deploy 100 additional smart traffic cameras in September, expanding a surveillance network built to flag dangerous driving before it causes accidents.

Cash for Recycling?

Bahrain Explores Smart Reverse Vending Machines

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

Bahrain is considering introducing smart reverse vending machines that reward residents with instant cash points for recycling plastic bottles and aluminium cans, as part of its broader efforts to develop smarter and more sustainable cities.

Speaking at the closing session of the Smart Cities Conference, Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary for Municipal Affairs at the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture, said the Kingdom is studying Saudi Arabia's successful recycling model as a potential framework for implementation.

The proposed initiative is based on Saudi Arabia's reverse vending machine programme, launched in Riyadh through a partnership between the Riyadh Municipality and the Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC). The machines, installed in parks and public spaces, allow residents to deposit used plastic bottles and



aluminium cans in exchange for instant reward points.

Acting Director of the Public Cleanliness Directorate Ammar Abdulkareem said the technology could play a key role in modernising Bahrain's waste management system, although several concepts would need to be tested locally before implementation.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahmood Al Afia, Head of Administrative Services and Coordination at the Northern Municipal Council,

called for expanding recycling initiatives to include paper and wood, in addition to plastic and aluminium, to further support environmental sustainability.

Abdullah Al Sayeh, Head of Household Waste Regulation Operations at Estidama, said officials are preparing to send a specialised delegation to Saudi Arabia to study the initiative and develop an implementation timeline once all aspects of the project have been agreed upon.



Saudi Arabia aims to recycle 95% of its waste by 2035, with an ambitious programme expected to divert 82% of waste from landfills while creating around 100,000 jobs to support a circular economy.

Passenger Traffic Surges at Bahrain Airport

Summer travel and restored flight schedules expected to drive further demand

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain's air traffic rose sharply in May after a steep fall in April, new Civil Aviation Affairs figures show. Passenger numbers at Bahrain International Airport climbed from 76,397 in April to 487,069 in May, a rise of 410,672, or about 538 pc.

The April fall came during the Iran-US war and the Iranian attack on Bahrain and the Gulf, which disrupted flights and airspace use across the region.

Arrivals rose from 37,289 passengers in April to 234,124 in May, up by 196,835, or about 528 pc. Departures increased from 39,108 to 252,684, a rise of 213,576, or about 546 pc.

Aircraft movements also rose. Total arrivals and departures went from 926 in April to 4,875 in May, up by 3,949, or about 426 pc.

Incoming aircraft movements increased from 472 to 2,437, a rise



of 1,965, or about 416 pc. Outgoing movements rose from 454 to 2,438, up by 1,984, or about 437 pc. The figures also show a rise in traffic through Bahrain's airspace. Overflights rose from 548 in April to 11,242 in May, an increase of 10,694, or about 1,951 pc.

Movements in the flight information region rose from 1,474 to 16,117, up by 14,643, or about 993 pc.

The rise comes after the opening of the new passenger terminal at Bahrain International Airport,

which raised airport capacity. Bahrain's Gulf location, links with nearby markets and the presence of international cargo and logistics firms also shape its air freight activity.

Summer travel is likely to add to passenger demand in the coming months, with annual holidays, family trips, resident travel and seasonal flights. Cargo volumes are also expected to draw support from the return of regular flight timetables and higher operating capacity.

Strong Health in Bahrain's Pearl Ecosystem

Study Shows Stable, Regenerating Pearl Oyster Populations

EXCLUSIVE

TDT | Manama
Neethu V

Bahrain's natural pearl oyster beds remain healthy, with no evidence of widespread depletion following the revival of pearl diving, according to findings released under the Hayrat Project Initiative led by the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT).

The project, conducted between 2020 and 2023, assessed the condition of Bahrain's pearl oyster beds to determine whether the reintroduction of pearl diving licences had resulted in overharvesting or declining oyster populations.

Led by DANAT in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Environment and Fisheries authorities, the project brought together more than 30 Bahraini experts and compared its findings with a national baseline survey conducted in 2012.

Researchers revisited the same 60 survey stations examined in the earlier study while adding four new nearshore monitoring sites. Using the same scientific methods enabled a direct com-



parison of changes over the past decade.

Findings

The study found that most pearl oyster beds maintained stable abundance and density, while several locations recorded increases in oyster populations. Only three of the 35 stations surveyed in Hirat Ashteh showed notable declines.

Researchers also observed a shift towards smaller oyster size classes, indicating strong natural recruitment and healthy regeneration, while larger breeding oysters remained present to sustain future populations.

The likelihood of finding natural pearls increased from 3.9 per cent in 2012 to 4.5 per cent, with



Bahrain is one of the few countries alongside Australia where pearl diving is still permitted under strict scientific monitoring and government regulation.

natural pearl yield improving by around 15 per cent. Water and sediment quality also remained largely unchanged, confirming that Bahrain's marine envi-



The study enables direct comparison of a decade of ecological change using consistent scientific methods.

NOORA JAMSHEER, CEO, BAHRAIN INSTITUTE FOR PEARLS AND GEMSTONES

ronment continues to support healthy oyster habitats. The project also produced

Bahrain's first comprehensive documentation and mapping of multiple pearl oyster species, along with associated marine fauna and flora across the surveyed sites, providing valuable new scientific data for conservation planning.

Based on the findings, researchers recommended continued long-term monitoring of pearl oyster beds, greater awareness among licensed pearl divers, protection of breeding-size oysters, and ongoing monitoring of biodiversity, water quality and habitat health.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune at the launch of its 2025 Sustainability Report, DANAT CEO Noora Jamsheer said the institute will continue long-term monitoring

DANAT Cuts Carbon Emissions by 21.7%

- 21.7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions achieved between 2022 and 2025
- First full ESG disclosure includes Scope 1, 2 and selected Scope 3 emissions.
- Scope 2 (electricity use) remains the largest source of emissions.
- Sustainability focus areas: governance, social responsibility, marine conservation and risk management.
- More than 32 million pearls and gemstones have been tested since establishment.

of Bahrain's pearl oyster beds, describing the research as critical to ensuring the sustainability of the Kingdom's pearling sector.

The monitoring programme is carried out in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Environment and the Directorate of Fisheries through licensing, scientific research and continuous ecosystem assessments to ensure pearl oyster stocks remain healthy and protected from depletion.

DANAT has already launched its third monitoring cycle, reaffirming its commitment to evidence-based conservation and the long-term sustainability of Bahrain's natural pearl industry.

Faster Licensing Process for Recruitment Agencies

Service enhancement supports Bahrain's digital transformation

● **Enhanced system cuts processing time**

● **New two-stage licensing process**

● **Improved licensing platform simplifies procedures**

TDT | Manama

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) has introduced an upgraded digital licensing service for recruitment agencies, marking another step in Bahrain's ongoing efforts to improve public services and accelerate digital transformation.

The enhanced service now follows a two-stage licensing process, beginning with initial approval before the issuance of the final licence. Licensed agencies will be authorised to provide employment mediation services, including match-



Bahrain Public Service Development

- 1,300+ government services documented, translated, and published
- 800+ services developed and re-engineered

ing job seekers with employers, facilitating employment contracts, recruiting domestic workers, and supplying foreign workers to companies and establishments for designated positions.

According to the LMRA, the upgraded system significantly reduces processing times,

requires fewer supporting documents, and standardises service information across all government channels. The improvements have also reduced the number of approvals needed to obtain a licence by 25%, making the process more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly for applicants.

LMRA Deputy Chief Executive for Services and Business Affairs, Ahmed Ibrahim Al Arabi, said the initiative reflects the Authority's commitment to adopting innovative digital solutions that enhance service quality, simplify procedures, and improve the customer experience. He noted that the enhancement supports the government's digital transformation agenda while strengthening the competitiveness of Bahrain's labour market.

Al Arabi added that the upgraded licensing service is designed to reduce the time and administrative burden on businesses while improving the overall effectiveness of the Kingdom's labour market regulatory framework.

Bahrain and UAE Unite in Cultural Celebration

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) and the Zayed National Museum will jointly host a cultural evening at the Bahrain National Museum on Saturday, July 4, at 7:00 PM, open to the public.

The event features a presentation titled "Zayed National Museum: Celebrating the Enduring Connections Between Magan and Dilmun", exploring deep-rooted trade, social, and economic links between the ancient civilisations of Dilmun — centred in present-day Bahrain — and Magan, associated

with the modern UAE.

A screening of the documentary "A Bronze Age Boat Sails Again" will follow, spotlighting traditional boat-building techniques that defined the Gulf's early maritime heritage.

First Collaboration The event marks the first partnership between the two national museums since the Zayed National Museum opened last year. Cultural specialists attending include Noura Al Mubarak, Head of Corporate and International Affairs; Aisha Al Mansoori, As-



stant Curator; and Dr. Emma Thompson, Head of Acquisitions and Commissions.

The collaboration underscores both nations' shared commitment to preserving heritage and strengthening bilateral cultural bonds.

Strengthening Media



Minister of Information, Dr. Ramzan bin Abdullah Al Nuaimi, received Mr. Mohamed Saleh Abdullah Bukhris, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Libya to the Kingdom of Bahrain, at the ministry headquarters in Manama. During the meeting, the Minister welcomed the Libyan diplomat and highlighted the deep fraternal relations between Bahrain and Libya. He noted that both countries continue to develop cooperation across various fields, reflecting their shared commitment to strengthening ties and advancing mutual interests. The discussions also reviewed a number of topics of common concern.

Garage Worker Jailed 10 Years



From The Court

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The First High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld prison sentences in a drug trafficking case involving a garage worker and three other defendants after investigations revealed the workshop was used to distribute narcotics in Bahrain.

The court confirmed a 10-year

prison sentence for the garage worker, along with a BD 5,000 fine and permanent deportation after serving his term. The second to fourth defendants each received a one-year prison sentence and a BD 1,000 fine for possession and drug-related offences; all seized narcotics and paraphernalia were confiscated.

Case details showed the workshop owner alerted authorities after noticing repeated suspicious visits to the garage. Police later discovered 195.3 grams of cannabis during a search, and investigations uncovered an organised network importing, storing, and distributing drugs across Bahrain.

Three Expats Jailed in Online Frauds

The Court of Appeal upheld a five-year prison sentence for three Asian nationals convicted in an online fraud scheme that targeted victims through fake traffic violation messages, causing losses exceeding BD 1,800.

The court also imposed BD

3,000 fines on each defendant, additional fines on the second and third accused, confiscation of electronic devices, and permanent deportation after serving their sentences.

Investigations revealed that the defendants used SIM cards to send fraudulent messages di-

recting victims to fake payment links, leading to unauthorised withdrawals from bank accounts. Authorities confirmed the involvement of an organised cyber fraud network after the stolen funds were used to purchase mobile phones in Bahrain.

Security Cooperation Takes Center Stage in Bahrain-US Talks



General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, the Interior Minister, received Stephanie Hallett, US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the presence of Lieutenant-General Tariq bin Hassan Al Hassan, Chief of Police. The Minister highlighted the two countries' shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation, coordination, and joint action at all levels, particularly in security cooperation, while expanding opportunities to exchange expertise. He commended the longstanding historical relations and strategic partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States, noting their continued growth across various fields.

Bahrain Chamber Approves Key Resolutions to Strengthen Private Sector Engagement

TDT | Manama

The Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) has approved a package of initiatives aimed at reinforcing its role as the voice of Bahrain's private sector and broadening its economic partnerships.

The decisions were made during the third meeting of the 31st session, held on Thursday, July 2, 2026, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Nabil Khalid Kanoo.

The Board reviewed updates on the restructuring of sectoral



committees, reaffirming their central role in channelling the concerns and proposals of key economic sectors and shaping solutions that support private

sector growth.

The Board approved reforming the Bahrain-Jordan Joint Business Council, opening membership to board members, business-

people, and traders interested in the Jordanian market. This move is designed to unlock new trade and investment opportunities between the two countries.

The Chamber also outlined a programme of upcoming sectoral meetings and field visits to engage directly with businesses across industries. The Board stressed

leveraging international participation to spotlight Bahrain's investment landscape and connect members with opportunities in allied nations.



German drone maker raises \$1.2 bn as investors pile into defence

AFP | Frankfurt, Germany

German drone maker Quantum Systems said Thursday it has raised \$1.2 billion (one billion euros) in a funding round and more than doubled its valuation, highlighting investor buzz surrounding defence tech firms.

The Munich-based company, which makes surveillance drones and other AI-powered autonomous systems, is among a crop of younger defence manufacturers attracting huge interest as European countries rearm.

The funding came from backers including US private equity giant Blackstone, aviation behemoth Airbus, as well as investment firms Noteus and Advent, more than doubling the valuation of the company to \$8 billion.

"This financing allows us to scale production, expand globally, and deliver the next generation of AI-powered autonomous systems," said the group's co-CEO Sven Kruck.

The funds will also help further develop the company's software platforms that connect all of its autonomous systems.



Quantum, established in 2015, is a supplier of reconnaissance drones to the armed forces of Ukraine, where the war against Russia is now in its fifth year, as well as the German military and other European armies.

The firm, whose revenues were around 300 million euros last year, has expanded its offerings beyond spy drones, and is developing autonomous land and sea systems.

Florian Seibel, co-CEO and co-founder, told reporters that the fundraising could open the way for Quantum to acquire Stark Defence -- a maker of attack drones, which he also helped to found.

Stark, set up in 2024, an-

nounced a funding round of its own last week, raising 500 million euros.

But Stark said in a statement there were "no plans" to merge with Quantum Systems.

"A strong European defence ecosystem depends on independent companies that compete, innovate and collaborate where it makes sense," it said.

"That ultimately delivers better capabilities to the armed forces."

European countries are racing to build up their militaries to contend with an increasingly hostile Russia and growing worries about US security commitments to the continent under President Donald Trump.

General Assembly Graduates Join the AI workforce

Signs MoU with Infiteware to Advance National Digital Talent Development

"In today's fast-evolving digital economy, GA graduates stand out as excellent models of technical and practical excellence. The graduates who joined our team have already proven to possess a powerful mix of tech skills and strong interpersonal capabilities both of which are vital for leading digital transformation projects. We look forward to building on this partnership and welcoming more of this exceptional talent to our team in the future."

Our strategic partnership with INFINITWARE reflects our shared vision to build an integrated ecosystem that bridges specialized training and employment. The fact that our graduates have already joined their AI team underscores the true value of our practical programs, proving that national talent is fully capable of contributing effectively to modern workplaces where innovation and AI proficiency have become essential pillars driving the growth of the Kingdom's digital economy."



Ameen Altajer
Chief Executive Officer of
INFINITWARE



Ahlam Oun
Director of Middle East Academies at
General Assembly

TDT | Manama

General Assembly Bahrain has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with artificial intelligence firm Infiteware, formalising a partnership aimed at developing national digital talent and connecting graduates with employment opportunities in the technology sector.

The announcement comes with immediate results. Infiteware has already hired two General Assembly graduates into full-time AI roles. Zainab Mohammed, who holds

a background in biotechnology, successfully pivoted into tech, while Hassan Ali joined leveraging his computer programming foundation — both now integrated into Infiteware's live AI operations.

Under the agreement, the two organisations will collaborate on talent recruitment, employee upskilling, career events, specialist workshops, and joint technology initiatives. They also plan awareness programmes to support knowledge-sharing between national talent and the private sector.

"The recruitment of two of

our graduates demonstrates the real value of practical skills," said Ahlam Oun, Director of General Assembly Middle East Academies.

Infiteware CEO Ameen Altajer added that graduates demonstrated strong technical competence alongside communication and interpersonal skills — qualities essential for leading digital transformation projects.

The partnership is backed by the Labour Fund Tamkeen and aligns with Bahrain's broader push to make national talent the private sector's first choice.

GCC Banks Hold Firm — But Ceasefire Must Last

Fitch warns resilience hinges on whether US-Iran peace deal takes hold

TDT | Manama

Gulf banking systems have weathered the US-Iran conflict with their credit fundamentals largely intact, but their continued stability depends on the durability of the current ceasefire, Fitch Ratings warned.

A Memorandum of Understanding signed on 17 June extended an earlier April ceasefire, giving both sides a 60-day window to negotiate a permanent peace deal. Iran was called upon to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping — a closure that Fitch estimates has already lasted around five months.

Despite resilient banking fundamentals, the economic toll is mounting. Fitch forecasts non-oil GDP to contract across three of the six GCC member states this year, damp-

ening loan growth and nudging asset quality lower. Sectors including tourism, aviation, logistics and real estate face rising borrower stress.

The ratings agency has shifted its outlook for Middle East banks from neutral to deteriorating — though GCC sovereign support remains a key ratings anchor.

Liquidity a Bright Spot

Government deposits, comprising 20–30% of sector funding, have provided a stable base. Bond market access has also recovered faster than initially feared.

Fitch cautioned, however, that a deeper Dubai property correction or renewed military escalation could in-



tensify pressure on smaller UAE banks with heavier real estate exposure.

Shop Closed Over Pricing Violations

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce ordered the administrative closure of a commercial outlet in the Capital Governorate following violations of consumer protection and pricing regulations.

The decision resulted from ongoing market inspection campaigns conducted by the ministry, after the outlet increased prices on several food products in breach of applicable laws.

Inspectors also recorded additional violations, including the failure to clearly display prices on several goods and discrepancies between shelf prices and amounts charged at checkout. These practices were non-compliant with consumer protection regulations and established commercial



standards.

The ministry reiterated its commitment to intensifying inspection efforts across markets to ensure compliance with regulations, safeguard consumer rights, and maintain overall market stability. It also confirmed that legal action will continue against any establishment violating relevant laws.

Consumers are encouraged to report any suspected violations or unfair commercial practices through official channels, including WhatsApp on 17112225 or via the national complaints and suggestions system, Tawasul, to support ongoing regulatory oversight and consumer protection efforts.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE WHOLE STAIRCASE
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

**Thailand denies viral claim
Macron knelt before king**

AFP | Bangkok

Thailand's foreign ministry denied yesterday that French President Emmanuel Macron knelt before the country's king during his state visit to Paris this week, after an AI-generated picture circulated online.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida's trip was the first official visit by a Thai monarch to France since 1960, marking the 170th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations.

During a state dinner at the presidential palace, Macron presented the 73-year-old king with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour -- France's highest award -- and Queen Suthida with the Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit, according to Thai media.

Trial of potential Ebola treatments begins in DR Congo: WHO

AFP | Geneva

The trial of two potential treatments for the rare Bundibugyo species of Ebola behind the deadly outbreak in the DR Congo began in the country yesterday, the WHO said.

"Today, the clinical trial of two therapeutics began, with the enrolment of the first patient," with the trial evaluating the monoclonal antibody MBP134 and the antiviral drug remdesivir, alone and in combination, the World Health Organization's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters.

Vatican excommunicates six ultraconservative bishops over ordination

AFP | Vatican City

The Vatican excommunicated six bishops from the ultraconservative Society of St. Pius X yesterday, while warning that any lay believers who "formally adhere" to the breakaway Catholic group would suffer the same fate.

The Vatican decree comes a day after the traditionalist group consecrated four new bishops, openly defying a plea from Pope Leo XIV to desist and exacerbating a rift dating from 1988 when the group earlier consecrated four bishops.

Russian strikes kill 21 in biggest ever attack on Kyiv, mayor says

Zelensky urges more air defences



A damaged residential building is seen following missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv

● 52,000 sheltered in metro

● EU proposes new sanctions on Moscow

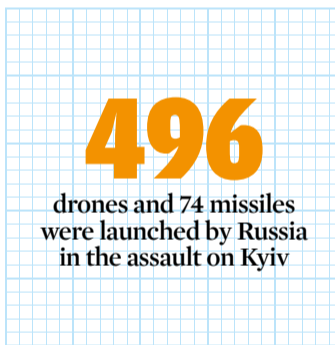
AFP | Kyiv

Russia launched its largest ever barrage on Kyiv early yesterday, according to the city's mayor, tearing open apartment buildings in an hours-long drone and missile attack that killed at least 21 people.

In Moscow, the Kremlin vowed to further ramp up the "pressure" on Kyiv after the strike, sticking to its no-compromise rhetoric as rescuers in Kyiv scoured the rubble for survivors.

The European Union's top diplomat proposed new sanctions on Moscow, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked the United States for licences to manufacture Patriot air defence missiles.

Russia has routinely launched waves of missiles and drones at Ukrainian cities during its more than four-year invasion, which



has become Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II.

AFP journalists in central and eastern Kyiv heard more than a dozen explosions and saw residents -- some with children and pets -- rushing to shelter in metro stations.

In the morning, locals stood on the rubble of destroyed apartment blocks ripped apart by the barrage, as smoke poured over the Kyiv skyline.

At one spot, a mother cried as she embraced her son in front of the smouldering debris.

Blasts started echoing out late on Wednesday, lasting into the early hours of yesterday as Russian missiles and drones rained down on residential areas in the city centre.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko described it as the "enemy's most

massive attack on the capital", without elaborating.

The state emergency services said at least 21 people were killed and 85 were wounded, including two children.

Kyiv urged its allies to send more air defence.

"Air defence supplies for Ukraine are an absolute and critical priority," Zelensky said in a post on Facebook.

"We also very much count on a decision by the United States regarding licences for Patriots."

Ukraine is seeking to manufacture munitions for the US-made missile interceptor system, one of its only ways of defending against Russian ballistic missiles, although defence experts say it will take time to set up production domestically.

Struggling to sleep

Russia fired 496 drones and 74 missiles -- including hard-to-intercept ballistic projectiles -- Ukraine's air force said.

It said it shot down 48 of the missiles and 476 drones.

AFP reporters met several Kyiv residents outside an apartment building largely destroyed in the attack.

Next indirect US-Iran talks after Khamenei funeral: mediators



The sun sets behind the Doha skyline

● Indirect US-Iran talks held in Doha

● Progress made via Qatari-Pakistani mediators

● Discussions cover nuclear and assets issues

● Tensions persist despite diplomatic steps

AFP | Washington

The next indirect US-Iran talks will come after the late Iranian supreme leader's funeral, mediators said yesterday, as diplomacy inches ahead on ending the Middle East war.

Following the foes' indirect discussions in Doha on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump as well as mediators Qatar and Pakistan offered signs that diplomacy was holding, despite exchanges of fire this week.

An interim deal was agreed to reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz and end hostilities, but major questions still need to be tackled in talks, including Iran's nuclear programme.

"Qatari and Pakistani mediators concluded separate meetings with the US and Iranian negotiators in Doha (Wednesday), with positive progress made," Pakistan said yesterday.

Islamabad added the sides agreed to keep talking, "with the next meeting to be set at the earliest possible time following the funeral processions of the former Iranian Supreme Leader."

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed aged 86 at his compound in the centre of the Iranian cap-

ital on February 28, the first day of the war. Power was swiftly passed to his son Mojtaba.

Ali Khamenei's public funeral will begin on Saturday, with his body lying in state at the colossal complex in central Tehran that hosts major Friday prayers, official ceremonies and religious gatherings.

His burial will take place on July 9 at the shrine of Imam Reza in the northeastern city of Mashhad, his birthplace.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who led Tehran's delegation, said Wednesday talks had concluded with an agreement to establish a communications channel by yesterday to report and record alleged violations of the memorandum.

Iran had insisted there would be no direct negotiations with the United States in Doha.

Trump told reporters Wednesday before boarding Air Force One: "As far as things are going, the denuclearization of Iran is moving along well."

"We hit them very hard... but we're getting along very well," he added.

YOU KNOW WHAT

Negotiators agreed to establish a communications channel to report and document alleged violations of the interim memorandum before the next round of talks

Space startup to launch India's first private orbital rocket

AFP | New Delhi

Indian startup Skyroot Aerospace said yesterday it would hold the maiden test flight of the country's first privately developed orbital-class rocket in the coming weeks.

The Vikram-1 rocket, designed to carry small satellites into low-Earth orbit, will lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota between July 12 and August 4, the company said.

"The countdown to history

has begun," Skyroot co-founder and chief executive Pawan Kumar Chandana said in a social media post.

"What once was a bold dream now stands tall on the launch pad. Vikram-1. India's first private orbital rocket."

The rocket, about as tall as a seven-story building, is capable of carrying payloads weighing up to 300 kilograms (661 pounds).

"Skyroot plans to commence full-scale commercial launch operations after one or two suc-

cessful orbital demonstration missions," the newspaper The Hindu reported.

The rocket is a significant step for India's space industry, which was opened to greater private-sector participation in 2020, with New Delhi seeking to capture a larger share of the rapidly growing global space economy.

India has built a reputation for delivering low-cost space missions and now hosts more than 400 space startups.

Its space economy is currently

valued at about \$8 billion and accounts for around two to three percent of the global market, according to government figures released last month.

The government estimates the sector could grow to \$40-50 billion over the next decade.

India's space ambitions have gathered pace in recent years. In August 2023, it became only the fourth country to successfully land an unmanned spacecraft on the Moon, after Russia, the United States and China.



Vikram-1 sits on a launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre

324

Battle of Adrianople: Roman Emperor Constantine I defeats his co-emperor Licinius, who flees to Byzantium



1863

Battle of Gettysburg, the largest battle ever fought on the American continent, ends in a major victory for the Union during the US Civil War

1884

Dow Jones publishes its first stock index, the Dow Jones Transportation Average

1996

UK House of Commons announces that the Stone of Scone, aka the Stone of Destiny, used in the coronation of Scottish and subsequently English and British monarchs, will be returned to Scotland after 700 years in Westminster Abbey

Rescuers dig out man eight days after Venezuela quakes

Dramatic rescue offered rare hope as Venezuela's death toll neared 2,300

● Hernan Gil pulled alive from collapsed building

● Multinational teams celebrate success

● Thousands remain homeless and missing

● Focus turns to food and health risks

AFP | Catia La Mar

Hundreds of rescuers in Venezuela cheered and embraced yesterday after pulling a 43-year-old man alive from the ruins of a collapsed building eight days after deadly twin earthquakes, journalists witnessed.

With the official death toll nearing 2,300 and huge numbers of people still missing, the rescue of security guard Hernan Gil after so long under the rubble was greeted as a miracle.

Gil was brought out on a stretcher after a painstaking op-



An international rescue team carries Hernan Gil, a survivor of Venezuela's twin earthquakes, on a stretcher in Catia La Mar

eration to extract him from the collapsed seven-story building where he worked in Catia La Mar, a coastal area almost entirely razed to the ground in the June 24 catastrophe.

"This is truly a miracle," Gil's wife Gusbimar Gonzalez said

before his rescue.

"I'm completely amazed because it's the first time I've seen so many countries come together like this to save a single person," she said.

Rescue teams from seven countries -- Venezuela, Chile,

the United States, Portugal, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Mexico -- worked around the clock over the past three days to reach him.

It was a complex operation in which teams had to avoid provoking the further collapse of already damaged, nearby struc-

tures.

"It wasn't easy to reach the exact spot where the victim was located," Cristian Vera, the leader of the Chilean rescue team told AFP.

However, while there have been a few astounding rescues -- a three-year-old boy was found Tuesday six days after the quake -- hope has faded of finding many more survivors.

No signs of life

The majority of collapsed buildings in the hardest-hit city of La Guaira, just north of Caracas, have been marked with the letter 'D' for 'deceased' -- a sign they had been searched with no signs of life found.

"Time isn't wasted in a place where there is no expectation of recovering people alive," said Javier Rodes, the coordinator of a Spanish rescue team whose sniffer dog Nala searched in vain through the rubble for traces of life.

Venezuela's National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez said Wednesday that the number of deaths had risen to 2,295, and more than 11,000 people were injured.

India, Japan vow closer work on critical minerals

AFP | New Delhi

India and Japan will work more closely on critical minerals to boost "resilience" in their supply chains, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday, as the two huge Asian economies look to cut dependence on top exporter China.

Both India and Japan depend on imports for many such minerals, used in everything from electric vehicles, solar panels and smartphones to jet engines and guided missiles.

They have been seeking new suppliers, including the United States and other countries, as China's dominance may leave them vulnerable to changes in their ties with Beijing.

"We have agreed to strengthen supply chain resilience in strategic sectors such as semiconductors, quantum technologies, and critical minerals," India's Modi said after talks with Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in New Delhi.

Japan and India are members of the Quad security alliance along with the United States and Australia, a group seen as a counterweight to China's expanding presence in the Indian Ocean and wider Asia-Pacific region.

Takaichi said both Japan and India were facing challenges



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (L) and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi gesture during her ceremonial reception at India's presidential palace, Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi

such as "weaponisation of the economy and non-market policies and practices".

"We need to urgently build resilience in our critical minerals supply chains," she said in her speech.

In a sign of camaraderie between the two leaders, Modi referred to Takaichi as his "little sister" and the Japanese premier responded by calling him "elder brother".

Japanese and Indian businesses concluded investment deals worth \$12.3 billion, the two sides said.

They form part of a Japanese pledge to pour \$68 billion into

India over 10 years.

Modi said the countries had also agreed to co-develop a naval radio antenna project aimed at boosting maritime surveillance.

Earlier, Takaichi received a red-carpet welcome at the presidential palace in Delhi, where troops marched past in an honour guard parade.

She will address a business forum as part of efforts to strengthen economic ties between Asia's second- and third-largest economies.

Trade between them in 2025-26 topped \$27 billion, according to official figures from India.

Nine Thai monks killed after boy drives truck into procession



the aftermath of a collision between a pickup truck driven by an 11-year old and a procession of Buddhist monks

AFP | Bangkok

An 11-year-old boy drove his parents' truck into a Buddhist procession in Thailand yesterday, killing nine monks and seriously injuring around 10 others, police and local authorities said.

A group of 35 monks and five lay followers were walking along a roadside in north-eastern Mukdahan province during a pilgrimage when the incident occurred.

"I saw a boy driving a pickup truck, approaching. At that moment I was chanting 'Buddho, Buddho' (a meditation mantra)," one monk, identified as Phra Sompong, said in

a video posted online by local rescue workers.

"Then suddenly the truck hit at full speed and crashed us," he said.

"Luckily another monk and I managed to jump out of the way in time," he added.

"The first nine monks in line survived. But others who were hit were thrown into the air."

Police said five monks died at the scene and three more in hospital. The Mukdahan provincial office later announced the death of a ninth monk.

Health authorities had earlier said four monks were in a critical condition and 10 others were seriously hurt, while more were being treated for lighter injuries.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Another #EUHumanitarianAirBridge flight has landed in Rwanda, carrying over 75 tonnes of medical supplies from Belgium. The cargo now continues by road to Goma, supporting our humanitarian partners as they deliver lifesaving assistance against #Ebola to people in eastern DRC.

@hadjalahbib

02



It is good to be back in Yerevan so soon. The recent elections have once again shown the strength of Armenia's democracy. Armenia is staying the course on reform and moving closer to Europe. So I'm here with a simple message: Armenia can count on us.

@vonderleyen

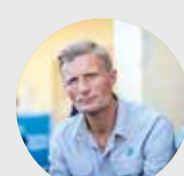
03



The death penalty does not deliver justice. It is an inhumane form of punishment, puts innocent lives at risk, and has no place in the 21st century. I remain fully committed to the universal abolition of the death penalty -- firmly & without exception.

@antonioguerres

04

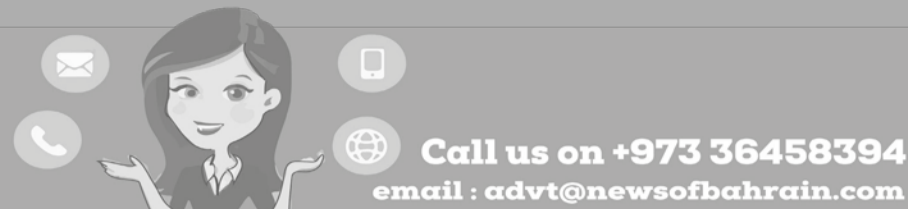


E! Obeid is a warning, we've seen this before and cannot see it again. Violence and hunger are rising. In the gap between what @WFP can do and what funding allows, people are left behind. The world must act to end this war and support #Sudan.

@WFPchief

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

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region

OIC Backs UNRWA Role in Protecting Palestinian Refugees

Calls for sustained financial and political backing from international community

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has reiterated its firm support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), emphasising its continued political, legal, and humanitarian responsibility toward Palestinian refugees.

The OIC stressed that UNRWA plays a vital role in delivering essential services, including education, healthcare, and social protection, to Palestinian refugees across the occupied Palestinian territories—including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Al-Quds (Jerusalem)—as well as in refugee communities across the diaspora.

The Secretariat also reaffirmed the importance of Palestinian unity, both geographically and politically, highlighting the indivisibility of the occupied Palestinian territories and the unity of its people at home and abroad.

Reiterating its position, the OIC underlined the necessity of fully respecting UNRWA's mandate as established under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (1949). It called for the protection of the agency's institutions and rejected any efforts aimed at undermining, reducing, or replacing its role.



The organisation further urged all member states, international partners, and donors to provide sustained financial, political, legal, and media support to ensure UNRWA can continue delivering critical services to millions of Palestinian refugees.

Saudi Foreign Minister Visits Beijing

His Royal Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited the Museum of the Imperial Palace in Beijing as part of his official visit to the People's Republic of China.

During the visit, HRH Prince Faisal bin Farhan was briefed on the museum's most significant cultural and historical landmarks, gaining insights into China's rich imperial heritage and centuries-old civilization.

The visit occurred on the sidelines of his official diplomatic engagements in China,



reflecting ongoing cultural and diplomatic exchanges between the two countries.

UAE Leads Global Push to Counter Terrorist Drone Threats



The United Arab Emirates, in partnership with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Portugal, hosted a high-level side event focused on the growing threat posed by terrorist groups' use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The event was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Institute for Crime and Justice Research (UNICRI) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

Held under the theme "The Growing Threat of Terrorist Groups' Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Strengthening International Cooperation and Implementation," the event brought together international partners to discuss the evolving security challenges created by the convergence of terrorism and emerging technologies.

Participants underscored the importance of strengthening international cooperation and enhancing coordinated efforts to counter the misuse of drone technology by terrorist organizations. Discussions also focused on supporting the implementation of the Abu Dhabi Guiding Principles, which provide a framework for addressing threats related to the terrorist exploitation of unmanned aircraft systems.

The UAE reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with international partners to strengthen global cooperation and translate shared commitments into practical and effective measures aimed at countering evolving terrorist threats and enhancing international security.

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GCC Chief, Singapore Envoy Discuss FTA Update



His Excellency Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, meets with His Excellency S. Premjith, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at the GCC General Secretariat headquarters in Riyadh. The meeting focused on strengthening GCC-Singapore relations and reviewed the latest developments in efforts to update the Free Trade Agreement signed between the two sides in 2008.

National cyclists begin Japan track camp



TDT | Manama

Bahrain's national cycling team has arrived in Japan for a track cycling training camp in Shuzenji, Shizuoka Prefecture.

The squad reached Tokyo before heading straight to Shuzenji, about 150km from the capital. The camp runs from July 1 to 13 and brings together riders from several countries, along with a number of leading international cyclists.

Bahrain is being represented by Mohammed Hassan and Hassan Thamer, under national coach Jassim Mohammed Hussain.

Shuzenji is one of Japan's

main bases for track cycling and keirin training. It is also the Asian regional development centre of the International Cycling Union.

The site has training grounds built for elite track riders and includes Japan's first indoor 250-metre velodrome built to International Cycling Union standards.

Shaikh Dr Khalid bin Hamad bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, president of the Bahrain Cycling Association, thanked the Bahrain Olympic Committee for its support for cycling.

He wished the team well and said the camp was aimed at preparing a Bahraini side able to compete in track cycling.

Three Bahrainis land senior sambo posts in Manila



Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Three Bahrainis have been elected to senior committee posts at the Sambo Union of Asia and Oceania.

Safaa Haji was named head of the Women and Sport Committee, Mahdi Al Mascati head of the Disciplinary Committee, and Fahad Taqi head of the Media and Marketing Committee.

The votes took place during the union's annual meeting in Manila, held alongside the 2026 Asian and Oceania Sambo Championships.

Delegates from member federations also met to discuss the growth of sambo and closer work between national bodies.

Mohammed Ali Janahi, president of the Bahrain Sambo Federation, thanked Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport, Chairman of the General Sports Authority and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, for his support for combat sports.

He also thanked Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Deputy Chairman of the General Sports Authority and Chairman of the Bahrain Combat Sports Council, for

his work with federations under the council, including the sambo federation.

Mr Janahi said the results showed the trust placed in Bahrainis by members of the Asian and Oceania body.

'This win is an important step and shows the growing standing and trust enjoyed by Bahraini talent at continental level,' he said. 'We are proud of the confidence shown by members of the Sambo Union of Asia and Oceania, and we look forward to turning this achievement into hard work to develop the sport, serve athletes and promote professionalism.'

Mr Taqi, vice-president of the Bahrain Sambo Federation and the newly named head of the Media and Marketing Committee, thanked member federations for their votes.

He said the coming phase would bring new plans to raise media coverage and marketing for sambo, with the aim of widening its base across the region.

The Bahrain Sambo Federation also congratulated the Asian and Oceania union on the annual meeting and praised the Philippine federation for hosting the championship and its linked events.

Bahrain lose to Egypt before final rematch



Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-18 basketball team suffered their first defeat of the Arab Championship yesterday, losing 88-60 to Egypt in their final group match, but will face the same side again in Saturday's final.

The young national side had

already booked their place in the title match after beating Morocco 73-46 on Wednesday, their fourth straight win in the tournament in Tunisia.

Despite the loss to Egypt, Bahrain remain in the race for the title after a strong group-stage run that included wins over Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco.

Bahrain opened their cam-



paign with a 60-51 win over Algeria before beating hosts Tunisia 78-66.

They then defeated Libya 73-58 and Morocco 73-46 to seal their place in the final before yesterday's closing group match against Egypt.

The result means Bahrain and Egypt will meet again after tomorrow in the championship final, with the national team

seeking to turn around yesterday's defeat and end the tournament with the title.

The Arab under-18 championship is being played in a single round-robin format, with the six teams facing each other once.

The top two sides advance to the final, while the third- and fourth-placed teams meet in the third-place play-off.

England refused to accept defeat in 'beautiful' DR Congo win, says Tuchel

AFP | Atlanta

Thomas Tuchel said England had defied the ghosts of previous major tournament disappointments by coming from behind to avoid a shock World Cup elimination at the hands of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Captain Harry Kane rescued the Three Lions with two late goals for a 2-1 win in Atlanta that sets up a meeting with co-hosts Mexico, who will have home advantage at the historic Azteca Stadium, on Sunday.

England are aiming to end a 60-year wait to win a major tournament.

This generation of players have come closer to glory than most, losing each of the past two finals of the European Championship.

But Tuchel said he saw no sign of his squad crumbling under the weight of expectation despite a horrendous start against a side ranked 46th in the world.

Brian Cipenga took advantage of slack England defending to fire the Congolese into an early lead, that they held until 15 minutes from time.

"This team today did not ac-



England's forward #09 Harry Kane celebrates with England's German head coach Thomas Tuchel

cept a defeat as an outcome," the German said in a post-match press conference.

"It would be so easy to give in, it would be so easy to accept the narrative. I didn't see any of that and that is a very, very good sign."

The former Chelsea boss added: "That makes me very proud because they did what was necessary. The going got tough today, they showed up and we got a deserved win, even if it was a late one."

Despite having cleared one hurdle, Tuchel's men face a dev-

ilishly difficult route to their aim of becoming world champions.

Brazil, Argentina and France could await in the final stages, even if they manage to inflict heartbreak on Mexico in front of over 70,000 home fans.

El Tri have won all four of their World Cup games so far without conceding a goal and also have the advantage of having acclimatised to the high altitude of Mexico City.

"It is maybe one of the most beautiful fixtures, the most exciting fixtures that you can have.

We play against Mexico in the Azteca," added Tuchel.

"The altitude will be, of course, a big disadvantage because we cannot physically adapt to it in four days. It's just impossible.

"More obstacles may come, but we are ready for that. We need it. Maybe we have the ideal platform now to genuinely believe that we are ready for that. When the going gets tough, we will find the answers."

'Our captain, our leader'

Not for the first time, Kane rode to his country's rescue.

A fifth goal of the tournament took his World Cup tally in total to 13 and kept the Bayern Munich striker in the star-studded battle for the Golden Boot.

Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappe lead the way on six goals. Erling Haaland also has five, with Ousmane Dembele and Vinicius Junior on four.

"They are all sharks. If they smell blood, they come and score," said Tuchel on the Golden Boot race.

"It's crazy. (Kane is) so, so good. He's our captain, he's our leader, and decides football matches with unbelievable finishes.

Belgium late show floors Senegal

Dramatic extra-time comeback seals Belgium's place in the World Cup round of 16

● Belgium beat Senegal 3-2

● Senegal led by two goals

● Lukaku sparked late comeback

● Tielemans scored twice

AFP | Seattle

Youri Tielemans scored the latest winner in World Cup history as Belgium mounted an incredible comeback from two goals down to beat Senegal 3-2 and qualify for the last 16 of the World Cup.

Senegal appeared on course for a first win in a World Cup knockout match since their 2002 debut after taking a 2-0 lead through strikes from Habib Diarra and Ismaila Sarr in Seattle.

However, Belgium forced extra time as Romelu Lukaku and Tielemans scored in the final five minutes, before the Aston Villa midfielder completed a remarkable turnaround by converting a penalty in the 125th minute.

"In football, anything is always possible as long as you believe



Youri Tielemans #8 of Belgium celebrates with teammate Nicolas Raskin #23 after scoring his team's third goal from the penalty spot

in it," said Belgium coach Rudi Garcia.

"We're out -- it hurts. We must congratulate the team, who gave it their all, but unfortunately we weren't able to hold on to our two-goal lead," rued Senegal coach Pape Thiaw.

A defeat would surely have signaled the end of the road for the last remnants of Belgium's golden generation -- Lukaku, Kevin De Bruyne and perhaps Thibaut

Courtois -- but instead they live to fight another day.

After a 5-1 win over New Zealand that clinched top spot for Belgium in Group G, Garcia named an unchanged side with Atalanta forward Charles De Ketelaere leading the attack and Lukaku on the bench.

Thiaw made three changes to the Senegal side that thrashed Iraq 5-0, which allowed them to squeak through as the last of

the eight best third-place teams.

Pape Gueye started after scoring twice as a substitute in that match, while Pathe Ciss and Everton winger Iliman Ndiaye came into the line-up.

Senegal nearly went ahead through the in-form Sarr, who hit the post after Courtois inadvertently diverted a cross into the Crystal Palace forward's path.

The Lions of Teranga did take



Belgium scored twice in the final five minutes of normal time to erase a two-goal deficit before completing the comeback with a penalty deep into extra time

the lead, however, when Sarr's header from Sadio Mane's cross came back off the same post, with Diarra reacting quickest to turn the rebound home.

Belgium's best chance of the half fell to Maxim De Cuyper, whose curling effort from outside the area drew an outstanding full-stretch save from Mory Diaw.

Diaw was again filling in for Edouard Mendy, who returned to Saudi Arabia for tests on a knee injury he suffered in Senegal's second game of the tournament.

Belgian fightback

Belgium unsurprisingly turned to their all-time leading scorer at the interval, with

Lukaku having already proven his value as a substitute against Egypt and New Zealand in the group phase.

But Belgium fell further behind six minutes into the second half when Sarr chested down Moussa Niakhate's long pass over the defence before firing an emphatic finish beyond Courtois.

De Bruyne and Jeremy Doku were hauled off as Belgium appeared to be heading out, but Lukaku -- limited to barely an hour's play with Napoli this season -- grabbed his team a lifeline in the 86th minute.

He swept home from a Thomas Meunier cross and, just three minutes later, Belgium were level. Diaw failed to deal with Leandro Trossard's delivery into the box and Tielemans held off two defenders to nod into an empty net.

Belgium substitute Dodi Lukebakioclipped the crossbar late in the second period of extra time as the match appeared destined for a penalty shootout.

But there was one final twist when Tielemans went down under a challenge from Lamine Camara, prompting referee Said Martinez to award a penalty after a VAR review.

Tielemans stepped up and dispatched with aplomb to cap a stunning fightback and break Senegalese hearts.

Balogun scores and sees red as US beat Bosnia 2-0

Malik Tillman's late free kick seals a historic knockout victory for the Americans

AFP | Santa Clara

Folarin Balogun scored and was sent off as the United States beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 2-0 to reach the last 16 of the World Cup.

The co-hosts' first World Cup knockout victory in nearly a quarter-century -- and only their second ever -- sets up a clash with Belgium in Seattle on Monday.

Balogun's goal on the stroke of half-time had sent the California crowd into delirium, with some 30 million Americans expected to be watching the blockbuster clash across the nation.

But the striker saw red as VAR intervened following a nasty clash with Bosnia's Tarik Muharemovic. But even with the US forced into a 10-man rearguard action, Malik Tillman curled in a free kick to secure the win.

US supporters had flocked into the San Francisco Bay Area stadium in festive mood, their exuberant confidence summed up by the traditional pre-match fighter jet flyover in the bright California skies.

Bosnia's tactics were made clear from the kickoff -- an immediate long ball -- while the US defense quickly camped out on the halfway line, always pushing forward.

Still, Bosnia had the best early chances. Forty-year-old captain Edin Dzeko held up a launched pass from his goalkeeper and laid it off for Ermedin Demirovic, who shot right at Matt Freese.



Folarin Balogun #20 of the United States scores his team's first goal

The US 'keeper made another good save moments later from a Kerim Alajbegovic corner, which threatened to swing straight into his net.

But the US pressure began to tell. Balogun had a decent penalty shout for a clumsy Amar Dedic tackle waved away. Soon after the American striker had the ball in the net, but was offside from Weston McKennie's smart pass.

Those near misses enlivened an increasingly anxious crowd. But their nerves were soon reduced, as Balogun scored in the 45th minute.

US captain Tim Ream had in-

tercepted a Bosnian goal kick, swiftly playing it to Tillman. His through ball deflected into the path of Balogun, who tucked it under the goalkeeper.

Impressive holding midfielder Tyler Adams nearly created a second before the break. He found Sergino Dest, who headed back to Balogun. His shot from the six-yard line clipped the crossbar on its way over.

Historic win

Just five minutes into the second half Dzeko limped off. Bosnian coach Sergej Barbarez made a triple substitution.

A younger, more mobile front

line featuring Wisconsin-born, US-raised Esmir Bajraktarevic immediately pressed higher and faster.

In the 64th minute, Balogun was shown a straight red after VAR review, harshly judged to have stamped on the back of Muharemovic's foot.

With the crowd stunned, Demirovic spurned a chance to add insult to injury, shooting straight at Freese from a dangerous position.

US coach Mauricio Pochettino used the hydration break to gather his squad in a tight huddle on the field, rallying his outnumbered troops to hold out



After Balogun's dismissal, coach Mauricio Pochettino gathered his players into a huddle during the hydration break before the 10-man side successfully protected their lead

for the game's final phase.

Despite his team suddenly being on the backfoot, Christian Pulisic put the ball in the net, but was comfortably offside.

And in the 82nd minute, the US won a free kick on the edge of the Bosnian box from a pull on Dest. Tillman curled it over the wall and to the right of Nikola Vasilj, whose fingertips could not keep it out.

The Americans rode out a nervy 10 minutes of stoppage time, substitute Ermin Mahmic's shot flashing inches wide of the far post.

But they ultimately holding out for a clean sheet and a historic win, keeping alive their World Cup journey on home soil, as "USA" chants and "Take Me Home, Country Roads" reverberated around the giant arena that hosted this year's Super Bowl.

West Ham's Fernandes joins Spurs



Mateus Fernandes

AFP | London

West Ham's Portugal midfielder Mateus Fernandes has joined Spurs after the Hammers' relegation from the Premier League, the clubs announced yesterday.

Fernandes, 21, arrived in London in 2025 and his move across the capital city is worth a reported club record fee of 85 million pounds (\$113.4 million).

The most Spurs had paid for a player before Fernandes was the 52 million pounds they spent on Netherlands attacker Xavi Simons from RB Leipzig last August.

The one-time international arrives as Roberto de Zerbi attempts to re-build a Spurs squad who narrowly avoided dropping to the Championship last season.

"Spurs is a massive club and the head coach was a key part of why I have decided to join," Fernandes said.

Spain ease past Austria with 3-0 World Cup win

Spain coasted past Austria and into the World Cup last-16 on Thursday, thoroughly outclassing their opponents in a 3-0 knockout win with a brace from Mikel Oyarzabal and a Pedro Porro header.

The European champions controlled possession and sliced through the Austrian defense in a typically dominant performance in Los Angeles, as Hollywood stars Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem and singer Rosalia cheered on.

The win -- which could have been by a greater margin, with a disallowed goal and a free kick off the woodwork -- sets up a tantalizing round-of-16 clash with either Portugal or Croatia.

The SoFi Stadium was a sea of red and excitement was sky-high over the first visit by a bona fide World Cup favorite to America's second city.

Spain ratcheted up the pressure gradually through the first half, creating a string of chances after the first hydration break.

Marc Cucurella thought he had scored from a Lamine Yamal corner, but Pau Cubarsi was judged to have encroached on Austria's goalkeeper.

Alexander Schlager then made a superb diving save, pushing Oyarzabal's low shot around the post.

Austria's defense finally buckled in the 36th minute. Pedri pinged a ball wide left to Cucur-



Spain's defender #24 Marc Cucurella and Austria's forward #14 Sasa Kalajdzic fight for the ball during the match

ella, whose cross to Oyarzabal was calmly side-footed past the 'keeper.

Spain's dominance grew further, with Yamal tormenting the Austrians, mainly from the right flank.

An Alex Baena free kick hit the crossbar, and Yamal's close-range follow-up shot was well saved.

Austria spurned a rare chance at the other end. Romano Schmid played in a late-arriving and unmarked Stefan Posch, but a terrible first touch meant he lost the ball before even attempting a shot.

After the break Spain continued knocking on the door

without quite putting the game to rest.

Austria sent on two giant

strikers -- Sasa Kalajdzic and Marko Arnautovic -- and immediately went long, with Kalajdzic putting a header over the bar.

But in the 66th minute, Spain struck again. Baena lifted a cross onto the head of Pedro Porro, who nodded in his first goal for Spain.

Some dogged defending kept the scoreline respectable, including a goalline clearance by David Alaba from Yamal, who was substituted off to rest moments later.

Spain sprayed passes around the pitch as the final minutes ticked down, eliciting "Oles" from the crowd, as attention turned to a sterner test on Monday in Dallas.

In the 89th minute, a pinpoint Cucurella cross found a completely unmarked Oyarzabal in the penalty area, who slotted the ball home.

World Cup Schedule

Today (Round of 32)

Time	Match	Venue
09:00 PM	Australia vs Egypt	Dallas Stadium

Tomorrow (Round of 32)

01:00 AM	Argentina vs Cape Verde	Miami Stadium
04:30 AM	Colombia vs Ghana	Kansas City Stadium

Tomorrow (Round of 16)

08:00 PM	Canada vs Morocco	Houston Stadium
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(All games in Bahrain time)

Klopp poised to replace Nagelsmann as Germany coach: reports



Jurgen Klopp

AFP | Berlin

Julian Nagelsmann is reportedly set to be sacked as Germany coach, tabloid Bild reported yesterday, with former Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp the favourite to take over in the dugout.

Nagelsmann, 38, has been under fire since Germany's last 32 exit from the World Cup after a shock loss to Paraguay.

Showing pictures of Nagelsmann at German FA (DFB) headquarters in Frankfurt, Bild reported yesterday the coach had been offered a severance package of seven million euros (\$8 million) to leave the position in a three-hour meeting.

Last renewed in January 2025, Nagelsmann's contract is set to run until 2028.

Figures on his annual salary have not been made public, al-

though German media reports he earns roughly seven million euros per year.

Germany's loss on penalties to Paraguay marked the third straight early World Cup exit for the four-time champions, after group stage eliminations in Russia and Qatar.

Monday's defeat was Germany's first knockout match since winning the World Cup in Brazil in 2014.

On Tuesday, DFB president Bernd Neuendorf announced an immediate investigation into the World Cup failure.

A decision on Nagelsmann is expected "by the beginning of next week at the latest", AFP sports subsidiary SID reported yesterday.

Several German media outlets, including Sky and Munich daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung, have said Klopp is the overwhelming favourite to succeed Nagelsmann.

Superb Swiatek, Zverev cruise into Wimbledon last 32

AFP | London

Iga Swiatek put a stuttering start to her Wimbledon title defence firmly behind her by powering to a statement second-round victory over Karolina Pliskova, while Alexander Zverev also eased through yesterday.

Reigning champion Swiatek, who struggled to hold back tears after battling past Taylor Townsend in the first round, was back to her ruthless best in a 6-1, 6-3 dismantling of former world number one Pliskova in 70 minutes.

"For sure the first round was really emotional but today I felt like it's another day at the office, I need to be ready, be sharp," said Swiatek.

The Pole, who has been inconsistent since winning her sixth Grand Slam title at the All England Club 12 months ago, will next face the Philippines' Alexandra Eala, who beat Serena Williams' first-round conqueror Maya Joint.

Pliskova, who returned to the tour this year after a long-term injury absence, was no match for the third seed.

The 25-year-old Swiatek has reached at least the third round on each of her past 26 Grand Slam appearances since losing in round two at the 2019 US Open.



Germany's Alexander Zverev returns to France's Valentin Royer

Eala, the 29th seed, became the first woman from the Philippines to reach the third round of a Grand Slam, defeating Joint 3-6, 6-2, 6-0 on a raucous Court Three.

"I think the atmosphere today was amazing, it was electric, respectful and all that I could have hoped for," said the 21-year-old.

Last year's runner-up Amanda Anisimova came back from a break down in the third set to beat Sofia Kenin in a deciding tie-break.

Former Australian Open champion Madison Keys ended home interest in the women's singles, beating Britain's Katie Swan in straight sets.

Last on Centre Court, 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, bidding to take the world-number-one ranking from Aryna Sabalenka next week, meets American Caty McNally.

Britain's future queen Princess Catherine attended the tournament yesterday, greeting fans before watching some of the



Poland's Iga Swiatek returns against Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova

action on Court 18.

Zverev powers on

Zverev was on top form in a 6-1, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) victory over Valentin Royer, raising hopes the German can finally master the grass courts.

He ended his long wait for a maiden Grand Slam title at the French Open last month but has never performed well at Wimbledon, failing to get past the last 16 in nine previous appearances at the All England Club.

The second seed has a golden opportunity to go further this time around, with Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic in the other half of the draw, and fourth seed Ben Shelton already out of the tournament.

"If I keep playing like this I definitely think it can happen this year," said Zverev. "In tennis you need to have a short-term memory, whether it's good or bad."

Zverev made short work of Royer, banishing some of the

26

consecutive Grand Slam appearances have now taken Iga Swiatek reach at least the third round since her 2019 US Open exit

memories of last year when he was dumped out in the first round by another unseeded Frenchman, Arthur Rinderknech.

American sixth seed Taylor Fritz continued his strong recent record at the All England Club, seeing off compatriot Patrick Kypson 6-2, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the third round.

Fritz has made at least the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in three of the past four years and lost to Carlos Alcaraz in the semis 12 months ago.

Fifth-seeded Australian Alex de Minaur also breezed through with a dominant straight-sets victory over French veteran Adrian Mannarino.

Rising Spanish star Rafael Nadal returned to court in a match delayed by darkness on Wednesday, winning the last two sets to complete a comeback victory over Pablo Carreno Busta.