

**Focus on government efficiency, civil service strategy**



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, chaired the 30th Civil Service Council meeting. The meeting reviewed proposals to enhance government entities' efficiency and the latest developments to the civil service strategy.

**Diplomacy key to global management**



H.E. Ambassador Alastair Long

**TDT | Manama**

As the series on how 2026 is reshaping the global order continues, the United Kingdom turns the focus to technology, climate change, and multipolarity, arguing that diplomacy and renewed commitment to a rules-based system are essential to managing global change. Read the perspective of His Excellency Mr. Alastair Long, British Ambassador to Bahrain, on Page 2.

**Royal leadership hailed for support on National Guard**

**TDT | Manama**

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, received cables of congratulations from senior officials and Royal Family members on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of the establishment of the National Guard.

220 fils (includes VAT)



# Hiring success

Labour Minister tells MPs parallel Bahrainisation scheme 'raised compliance to 52 per cent'

**Ensuring quality jobs for qualified Bahraini workers**

**Mohammed Darwish**  
**TDT | Manama**

Labour Minister, His Excellency Yousef Khalaf, told MPs yesterday that the "parallel Bahrainisation" scheme had lifted compliance with Bahrainisation ratios from 38 per cent before the parallel fee was introduced to 52 per cent now, a rise he put at about 14 per cent.

Replying during the sitting to MP Mohammed Salman Al Ahmed, H.E. Khalaf said the ministry had supplied figures up to October 2025 and could send updated numbers once the year's data were closed.

Asked about the value of the system, and whether the Ministry of Labour and the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) review it, he said the scheme was reviewed like other government systems, with checks on its efficiency, its use-

fulness, and its role in meeting the aims it was created for.

**Figures**

He said the figures since the system began in May 2016 backed a positive verdict.

The main aim, he told MPs, was to strengthen the preference for Bahrainis in the labour market and to treat Bahrainis as the first choice for jobs.

He said the scheme sat alongside other initiatives, tools and policies being studied and put into place for the same aim.

**Work**

In the same sitting, responding to MP Hassan Ebrahim,

Khalaf spoke about work carried out since a directive by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to ensure three job opportunities were offered to each jobseeker registered with the ministry by the end of 2025.

H.E. Khalaf said reducing the number of jobseekers to zero was something the ministry hoped for, but that hiring was a running process because new entrants kept joining the labour



**"The main aim was to strengthen the preference for Bahrainis in the labour market and to treat Bahrainis as the first choice for jobs."**

— H.E. YOUSEF KHALAF, LABOUR MINISTER

market as others found work.

He said that, during the period linked to the directive, the Cabinet on Monday announced the employment of 4,746 people, while 4,485 new jobseekers registered with the ministry over the same stretch of time.

**Claims**

H.E. Khalaf dismissed claims that the ministry forced employers to list vacancies, saying it increased outreach and asked for help but did not compel it.

Some employers offered jobs of their own will, he said, while a ministry marketing team worked to feed vacancies into the national employment platform.

He added that the ministry had no way to force cooperation when an employer did not wish to take part.

The Minister also said measures had been taken to deal with disputes over jobseekers being recorded as refusing work.

**Refuser**

He said employers could no longer register a jobseeker as a refuser, and the power once held by an employment adviser to mark a jobseeker as "non-cooperative" had also been removed.

H.E. Khalaf said jobseekers had the right to appeal any decision issued by the ministry, including suspending unemployment benefit, ending entitlement, or recording someone as refusing an opportunity.

An appeals committee heard such cases, he said, and statistics showed many people who appealed provided evidence and had their cases decided by the committee on an impartial basis.

## His Excellency Mr. Alastair Long, British Ambassador to Bahrain



As 2026 sharpens the realities of a multipolar world shaped by rapid technological change and climate pressures, the United Kingdom argues that diplomacy and a renewed commitment to rules-based cooperation are becoming more critical than ever to global stability. In conversation with Mahir Haneef, His Excellency Mr. Alastair Long, British Ambassador to Bahrain, outlines why responsible use of technology, sustained investment in human skills, and respect for international rules are essential to ensuring progress remains inclusive, sustainable, and shared.

The world is changing rapidly. I would cite three changes in particular. First, the most rapid advancement ever seen of in both technological development and access to that technology. Second, the continuing climatic changes to our planet with their destructive consequences. Third, the emergence of a multi-polar world. All three invite humanity to embrace the opportunity that they might present - tech enablement of inclusive and sustainable growth and prosperity - but come with major risks and challenges. Navigating these and trying to pick the pathways for human progress is the role of diplomacy.

In the UK - a top ten global economy, the global financial centre, and global leader in green transition - we would welcome a distributed global economy in which wealth, prosperity and opportunity is more evenly shared, but we continue to underline the essential need for a rules-based system to underpin that. It is no secret that this is under threat. People, mistakenly in my view, blame the institutions and rules devel-

*People, mistakenly in my view, blame the institutions and rules developed in the post war years, criticising the UN, WTO, Geneva Conventions etc. But those institutions are only as good as their members, treaties only effective if implemented.*

oped in the post war years, criticising the UN, WTO, Geneva Conventions etc. But those institutions are only as good as their members, treaties only effective if implemented. Were they to be removed we would need to reinvent them. They should be our guarantee that we never repeat the dark episodes of the past. They should enable every UN nation, regardless of size or strength, to live free of fear and thrive. A world in which growth and prosperity is more evenly spread and shared is within reach. The progress in eliminating poverty in the last few decades has been remarkable. But in 2026 we need to recommit to the rules.

My top tip (risky as this is) for 2026 is don't expect A.I. to take over but do start using it or you will be left behind. I expect it not to curtail human attainment but let us rise to new levels of endeavour, creativity, and collaboration. But we shouldn't lose the old skills. Perhaps it shows my age, but I still feel we need to invest in literacy, numeracy, and the arts. Not least for our mental wellbeing.



(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)

# Unified system

Parliament passes GCC land transport law to increase volume of trade exchange

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Parliament approved Decree-Law No. 35 of 2025 yesterday, bringing Bahrain into the GCC's unified system for international land transport and laying down how it will work in the Kingdom.

MP Ahmed Al Salloom backed the move in the chamber, saying: "We certainly support the decree-law, out of our desire for the Kingdom of Bahrain to meet its regional obligations and to put into effect what the GCC Supreme Council approved at its 43rd session, by adopting the unified system for international land transport as a mandatory framework."

He pressed for clearer detail on what it could deliver for commerce, telling ministers: "I would like to understand more about what opportunities this system will add in order to increase the volume of trade exchange."

## Jobs

He also asked if it could "create job opportunities for citizens through the transport of goods and people between GCC states."

MP Jalal Kadhem said the change would reach beyond paperwork and into household incomes.

"The unified land transport law between GCC states affects a wide segment of Bahraini citizens and their families," he told



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**"We certainly support the decree-law, out of our desire for the Kingdom of Bahrain to meet its regional obligations."**

- MP AHMED AL SALLOOM

**"The unified land transport law between GCC states affects a wide segment of Bahraini citizens and their families."** - MP Ahmed Al Salloom

- MP JALAL KADHEM

and for rules that stop abuse on the ground.

The decree-law approves the Unified System (Law) for International Land Transport between GCC states, adopted by the GCC Supreme Council at its 43rd session.

## Referral

A parliamentary committee reviewing the referral said the decree-law was sound under the Constitution and recommended it be passed.

The six-article decree-law adopts the attached unified system and defines the "competent authority" as the government body to be named by decree.

For the system's purposes, it sets the Bahraini dinar at ten Saudi riyals.

It also sets a way to appeal decisions issued under the system, its executive regulations, and decisions made under them.

## Notification

Any affected party has 30 days from notification to file a grievance with the competent authority, either by registered letter with acknowledgement of receipt or by electronic means.

A decision must be issued within 30 days; if the grievance is rejected, reasons must be given, and if there is no reply it is treated as refused.

A further 30 days is allowed to challenge the refusal before the competent court.

## Committee to look into employment vacancies and unemployment allowance

**MP Jalila to serve as head**

TDT | Manama

The Council of Representatives has formed a parliamentary investigation committee to examine employment vacancies listed in the Ministry of Labour's records, as well as the procedures for closing job-seeker files and suspending the unemployment allowance.

The decision was approved during the Council's 12th ordinary session of the fourth annual term of the sixth legislative chapter, held on Tuesday, 30 December 2025.

The committee will be chaired by MP Jalila Alawi Al-Sayed, with MP Mahmoud Mirza Fardan serving as Deputy Chair.

Members include MPs Abdulfahid Abdulaziz Qarata, Munir Ibrahim Sarour, and Mohsen Ali Al-Asbol.

## Mandate

The committee's mandate focuses on verifying the number of job vacancies recorded by the Ministry of Labour and the procedures taken to fill them.

It will also examine the Ministry's mechanisms for closing job-seeker files and the processes governing the suspension of the unemployment allowance.

## Bahrain-Thailand relations



His Highness Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Advisor to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received His Excellency Khalil Yaqoub Al Khayat, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Kingdom of Thailand. HH Shaikh Ali commended the strong and steadily growing relations between the two Kingdoms, noting the continued development and cooperation across various domains. The Ambassador expressed his appreciation to HH Shaikh Ali, affirming his keenness to strengthen cooperation.

## Public employee, businessman face bribery charges

Rehab Mohammad  
TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has begun hearing a bribery case involving a public employee and a businessman accused of exchanging money to speed up official transactions during 2023.

The court has adjourned the case to 12 January to allow the defence to review the case files.

According to the Public Prosecution, the first defendant allegedly accepted a bribe in return for abusing his position to facilitate procedures outside his official authority.

### Transactions

Prosecutors said the second defendant, a businessman, is accused of offering and paying the bribe, amounting to BD2,800, in exchange for accelerating transactions.

The prosecution added that investigations found the employee continued to intervene in transactions despite being transferred from his post, citing his prior role and connections.

## MP for Arab financial audit initiative



MP Ahmed Abdulwahid Qarata

TDT | Manama

MP Ahmed Abdulwahid Qarata, Second Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives, member of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), and Chairman of the assigned Financial Committee, is participating in the preparation of a procedures manual for audit, financial oversight, and the selection of the Union's external legal auditor.

The initiative aims to enhance supervisory performance, reduce expenditures, and improve the investment of revenues of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The participation, to be held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in Beirut, comes pursuant to a mandate issued by the Union's Executive Committee during its 40th meeting, which was held in Cairo, on December 15-16.

The programme is scheduled to include a meeting with Brahim Boughali, President of the AIPU, as well as bilateral meetings with the representatives of the Parliament of the State of Libya and the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

# Rider restrictions

## Parliament backs proposal to bar delivery motorbikes from main roads

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Parliament voted yesterday to refer a proposal to the government for review that would ban delivery motorbikes from Bahrain's main roads, backing the measure even after a committee advised against it.

The proposal was submitted by MPs Bader Al Tameemi, Abdulwahid Qarata, Ali Al Doseri, Hamad Al Doy and Abdulla Al Rumaihi.

It calls on the government to stop delivery riders using main routes and to curb traffic breaches linked to the sector.

### Evidence

During the sitting, Al Tameemi pointed to impound figures as evidence of the scale of the issue.

"If we speak according to official statistics, more than 1,000 delivery motorbikes were impounded over four years, an average of 250 a year, which means there is a real problem on main roads and secondary roads," he said.

He also cited a recent example from Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Highway while travelling from Riffa towards Manama.

"This road has five lanes and a delivery rider was in the far-left lane where the lane speed is 120 kilometres an hour, which poses a real danger," he said.

### Rejection

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee had recommended rejecting the proposal, arguing that many areas cannot be reached without



**"More than 1,000 delivery motorbikes were impounded over four years, which means there is a real problem on main roads and secondary roads."**

— MP BADER AL TAMEEMI



**"The solution to the delivery bike problem is to find alternative solutions such as using cars more, or drones."**

— MP DR MARYAM AL DHAEN



**"The proposal is very important, but preventing delivery riders from main roads is unrealistic because they will move to internal roads."**

— MP MOHAMMED AL OLAIWI



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censing system that limits the rate of traffic, set out similar number of riders per company reservations in its comments on

The Ministry of Interior, through the General Director

It said Bahrain's road network

is built as an interconnected system linking main and secondary roads, junctions and different areas, and argued that a ban would be difficult to apply and would not improve traffic flow.

The directorate said it was already carrying out intensified enforcement against delivery riders who breach the Traffic Law, including impounding motorbikes. It reported that 1,005 delivery motorbikes were impounded from 2022 through February 2025.

It also said it was close to finishing a project to supply 500 smart cameras to record traffic offences and track unsafe driving behaviour, with the aim of strengthening monitoring and improving road safety.

### Measures

The committee's rapporteur, MP Dr Maryam Al Dhaen, said the committee remained against the proposal and urged a focus on other measures.

"The solution to the delivery bike problem is to find alternative solutions such as using cars more, or drones," she said.

She also raised a health concern tied to delivery times, warning: "If cooked food is delayed for more than 50 minutes to an hour in delivery, it may spoil, and if that process is delayed it can turn into toxic substances, including salmonella, which can cause food poisoning."

MP Abdulla Al Rumaihi supported the proposal during the sitting, telling MPs his car had been involved in a serious crash linked to a delivery motorbike.

## 33,000 daily bus trips cited as case for two-line Bahrain Metro

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Thirty-three thousand bus trips a day is the baseline on Bahrain's public transport network, the Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, His Excellency Dr Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, told MPs yesterday.

He also restated plans for a two-line Bahrain Metro running from Bahrain International Airport to Seef and from Juffair to the Educational Area in Isa Town.

"The Bahrain Metro project is still going ahead, God willing, and it is one of the most important projects for the ministry," H.E. Dr Shaikh Abdulla said during the sitting, describing the scheme as central to expanding mass transit.

He linked the case for a metro to current demand on buses, telling Parliament: "The daily trips are 33,000 on normal days, 50,000 at weekends, and in some events 75,000."

MP Lulwa Al Rumaihi, responding to the minister's written answer on the latest updates,



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— H.E. DR SHAIKH ABDULLA BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS



**"We hope there will be a second phase, without a long gap after the first, covering all governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain."**

— MP LULWA AL RUMAIHI

The minister said recent work has focused on confirming the two routes and choosing station sites that serve key residential and commercial areas.

He added that reaching the stations has been treated as a main part of the technical work, carried out with the Ministry of Housing, alongside plans to strengthen feeder services so passengers can get to the metro stops.

H.E. Dr Shaikh Abdulla told MPS the ministry is also working through the remaining steps needed on the two corridors, including land matters and moving services that obstruct preparation of the routes, and asked Parliament to keep backing the project.



Image used for illustrative purposes only

welcomed the detail on the first phase and pressed for the next stage to follow without a long wait.

"We hope there will be a second phase, without a long gap after the first, covering all

governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain," she said, arguing that areas with high population density need stronger links to cut reliance on private cars and ease traffic jams.

Under the first phase, the

ministry has presented two main routes with 20 stations in total.

Two interchange stations are planned to link the lines, one at BFH and the other at the Central Market in Manama.

# Key unified platform

Parliament proposes national online portal on services for people with disabilities

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

A unified national online platform for people with disabilities has been proposed in Parliament under an urgent request to link services and employment support to the main state bodies involved.

The proposal calls for one online portal where people with disabilities can apply for services, track progress and follow up their requests.

It would be linked, within each body's remit, to the Ministry of Labour, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and the Ministry of Social Development, and co-ordinated with other relevant bodies, including the health and education authorities and the

Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA).

## Proposal

MP Jaleela Alawi submitted the proposal with MPs Mammoud Al Saleh, Abdulwahid Qarata, Lulwa Al Rumaihi and Munneer Seroori.

"The idea of the proposal can be summed up as calling for the establishment of a unified national platform concerned with services for persons with disabilities, as well as their employment and rehabilitation," Alawi said.

She said it should be "a single digital "window" for requesting services and tracking them", so people are not sent between offices and websites to get basic support.

The proposal says the plat-



form would serve as a national source of information on services for people with disabilities in Bahrain.

It would also handle job search services, including registration

as a jobseeker, matching candidates with suitable vacancies and tracking openings in both the public and private sectors, through links with the Ministry of Labour and the Civil Service

Bureau. It would also connect users to care, rehabilitation and social support through the Ministry of Social Development, and include a defined pathway for

complaints and grievances.

## Obligations

The MPS pointed to Bahrain's obligations under international disability rights agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Bahrain ratified under Law No. 22 of 2011.

In explaining why it was submitted as urgent, the proposal says the lack of a single platform limits the ability to make data-backed decisions on the needs of people with disabilities, including employment and rehabilitation, and slows access to work because there is no unified pathway linking jobseekers with disabilities to the Ministry of Labour and the Civil Service Bureau.

**"The idea of the proposal calls for the establishment of a unified national platform concerned with services for persons with disabilities, as well as their employment and rehabilitation."**

- MP JALEELA ALAWI

# Manufacturing output could reach BD632m this year

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's manufacturing output could reach about BD632 million in 2026, according to estimates published in the Trading Economics database, alongside a wider growth rate for the economy of close to 3 per cent next year.

Trading Economics' published estimates, based on global sta-

tistical and economic analysis, point to moderate growth in factory activity in 2026 if supportive policies continue and the industrial investment climate improves.

The platform's research-based projections link the expected pace of growth to expanding non-oil activity and continued investment in aluminium, petrochemicals and higher value-added manufacturing, with ongoing

work on industrial infrastructure.

Separate official data show the non-oil economy remains the main driver.

## GDP

Figures from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and the Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA) put real GDP growth at about 2.5 per cent in the second quarter of

2025 compared with the same period in 2024, with non-oil activity up by around 3.5 per cent at constant prices.

In its second-quarter 2025 economic report, the government said non-oil activities accounted for more than 85 per cent of total GDP, in a sign of continued progress in widening the economic base and reducing reliance on oil as a key source of growth.

Within the non-oil econo-

my, manufacturing remained a major part of output.

## Output

At constant prices, manufacturing output was about BD543.70 million in the second quarter of 2025, compared with roughly BD535.21 million in the first quarter of the same year, according to the data.

Sector figures indicate manufacturing contributes roughly a fifth of GDP, supporting non-oil

growth and jobs. The figures sit alongside policy steps aimed at backing local industry in recent years, including customs exemptions for key raw materials used by industrial units, work to support industrial value chains, and efforts to expand the use of technology and digital systems.

## Exports

The direction also matches the National Industrial Strategy for 2022–2026, which focuses on raising industrial exports, increasing value added, improving the competitiveness of locally made products, and creating higher-quality jobs in higher-value manufacturing.

The data and estimates come against a backdrop of cost pressures and competition affecting manufacturing at points during 2025, though the overall impact is described as limited compared with some service sectors.



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## Medgulf Takaful B.S.C. (c)

**MEDGULF**  
TAKAFUL

Condensed interim statement of financial position As at 30 June 2025			
	30 June 2025 BHD	31 December 2024 BHD	1 January 2024 (Restated)
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	2,356,150	1,779,109	2,153,421
Islamic placements with financial institutions	2,188,969	2,189,081	2,123,191
Investments	12,599,947	12,859,904	14,095,755
Takaful contract assets	-	396	2,592
Retakaful contract assets	4,918,767	5,888,627	5,824,305
Other receables	243,558	233,818	314,615
Prepayments and other assets	582,243	494,539	521,129
Stock and deposits	182,951	182,951	152,930
Property and equipment	37,152	50,429	75,327
Intangible assets	96,915	114,849	105,013
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>23,191,852</b>	<b>23,795,103</b>	<b>25,366,638</b>
<b>Liabilities, policyholders' fund and shareholders' equity</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Takaful contract liabilities	18,310,398	17,843,444	18,095,666
Retakaful contract liabilities	118,667	238,761	75,666
Payables and other liabilities	2,150,908	1,642,626	1,724,045
Provision for employees' leave and end-of-service benefits	96,485	222,898	210,996
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>20,576,458</b>	<b>19,947,729</b>	<b>20,105,373</b>
<b>Policyholders' fund</b>			
Deficit in General Takaful fund	(4,240,951)	(2,863,545)	(1,704,741)
Investments fair value reserve	4,875	4,875	131,250
Total deficit in Policyholders' Fund - General Takaful	(4,236,076)	(2,858,670)	(1,573,491)
Deficit in Family Takaful fund	(747,321)	(726,257)	(510,566)
Takaful finance reserve	205,908	194,318	253,659
Investments fair value reserve	(183,656)	(87,140)	226,875
Total deficit in Policyholders' Fund - Family Takaful	(725,069)	(619,079)	(30,032)
<b>Total policyholders' fund</b>	<b>(4,961,145)</b>	<b>(3,477,749)</b>	<b>(1,603,523)</b>
<b>Shareholders' equity</b>			
Share capital	6,667,000	6,667,000	6,667,000
Retained earnings	713,183	561,767	326,190
Statutory reserve	58,106	58,106	31,923
Investments fair value reserve	38,250	38,250	(161,250)
<b>Total shareholders' equity</b>	<b>7,476,539</b>	<b>7,325,123</b>	<b>6,863,789</b>
<b>Total liabilities, policyholders' fund and shareholders' equity</b>	<b>23,191,852</b>	<b>23,795,103</b>	<b>25,366,638</b>

Condensed interim statement of comprehensive income For the six months period ended 30 June 2025			
	30 June 2025 BHD	30 June 2024 BHD	
<b>Income</b>			
Wakala, management and other fees earned	1,098,362	1,101,867	
Investment income	212,830	195,877	
Other income	25,492	4,343	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,336,684</b>	<b>1,302,087</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>			
Staff expenses	(516,590)	(514,897)	
Acquisition costs	(289,286)	(306,988)	
Other operating expenses	(341,609)	(326,224)	
(Allowance for) / reversal of impairment on financial assets	(3,559)	3,059	
Depreciation	(13,579)	(14,919)	
Amortisation of intangible assets	(20,645)	(20,103)	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(1,185,268)</b>	<b>(1,180,072)</b>	
<b>Net profit for the period attributable to shareholders</b>	<b>151,416</b>	<b>122,015</b>	
<b>Other comprehensive loss</b>			
Items that will not be reclassified to income in subsequent period	-	(155,625)	
Change in fair value of FVOCI investments	-	(155,625)	
<b>Total other comprehensive loss for the period</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(155,625)</b>	
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the period</b>	<b>151,416</b>	<b>(33,610)</b>	

Parliament yesterday passed a draft law that would pull year-end budget surpluses from all public authorities and public institutions into the state budget.

The law also requires that at least half of the net profits due to the state from Mumtalakat and Bapco Energies, after the statutory reserve has been set aside.

In its amended form, the draft says "the surpluses of the budgets of all public authorities and public institutions" must be included in the state budget, with no carve-outs.

It also says the budget must include "a percentage of not



MP Zainab AbdulAmeer

less than 50%" of the net profits accruing to the state from Mumtalakat Holding Company and Bapco Energies, after the statutory reserve has been set aside.

MP Zainab AbdulAmeer argued in the chamber that the draft says "the surpluses of the budgets of all public authorities and public institutions" must be included in the state budget, with no carve-outs.

"We are living through an unusual time," she said, linking the debate to calls for reforms and pressure tied to credit ratings.

The government urged MPS to reconsider, saying much of what the proposal sought was already covered by existing law and practice.

It also warned that pulling all public bodies' surpluses into the state budget could add costs if the budget became responsible for the spending, losses, or debts of bodies that now run under their own financial systems.

After passage in the Council of Representatives, the bill now moves to the next stages, including review in the Shura Council, before it can be ratified and published.

## Parliament votes to add public bodies' surpluses to state budget

### Bill moves to Shura for review

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Parliament yesterday passed a draft law that would pull year-end budget surpluses from all public authorities and public institutions into the state budget.

The law also requires that at least half of the net profits due to the state from Mumtalakat and Bapco Energies, after the statutory reserve has been set aside.

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# Commute costs

Urgent call to raise civil service transport allowance for government employees

**Mohammed Darwish**

TDT | Manama

**A**n urgent request to raise transport allowances for government employees has been submitted to Parliament after MPs said recent fuel price rises have pushed up the daily cost of getting to work.

The proposal, lodged under the urgent track, was signed by Mohammed Janahi, Ahmed Sabah Salloom, Hanan Fardan, First Deputy Speaker AbdulNabi Salman and Ahmed Abdulwahid Qarata.

## Gap

"Fuel costs have risen while the allowance has stayed still, and staff are covering that gap from their own pockets," Janahi said.

The MPs argue the allowance no longer matches real commuting costs for many staff who rely on private cars.

They drew attention in par-



Image used for illustrative purposes only

## Costs

ticular to Jayyid fuel, which they said has risen by about 57 per cent, adding to daily spending for employees travelling to and from their workplaces.

The memo says the current allowance has lost buying power and no longer covers even basic travel costs for a wide group of government workers.

"We are asking for a rise that brings the allowance closer to real travel costs, especially for those who have no choice but to drive to work each day," Janahi said.

The MPs asked for the request to be treated as urgent on the



**"The allowance no longer matches real commuting costs for many staff who rely on private cars."**

- MP MOHAMMED JANAH

grounds that the impact of higher fuel prices is being felt now, day after day, without a suitable way to make up the added burden through the existing allowance.

# MPs push for public park in Old Sanad

● Seeking to expand green space and support upgrades walking routes

**Mohammed Darwish**

TDT | Manama



MP Iman Shuwaiter



**Old Sanad has a large and growing population but lacks public parks and green spaces.**

Goals.

The MPs say residents have waited for the park for years.

They say the park would expand green space in Sanad and support upgrades to parks and walking routes.

The motion calls for free recreational areas for children, a free sports ground for amateur athletes, and a green open space for residents.

# '84% overall satisfaction with services and information on bahrain.bh portal'

● iGA 2024–2025 annual Customer Satisfaction Index Study

TDT | Manama

**T**he Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) announced the results of its annual Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) study for 2024–2025, which was conducted through an online survey via the National Portal, bahrain.bh.

The study assessed public views on government eServices and information provided through the portal.

iGA's Acting Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of Operations and Governance, Dr. Khalid Almutawah stated that the results showed an overall satisfaction rate of 84% with the eServices and information offered to the public through the

portal, and that this is a reflection of sustained government efforts to improve the efficiency and quality of services as well as the strong support provided by stakeholders to the iGA.

## Efforts

He also mentioned that these efforts include simplifying and reengineering procedures, enhancing the user journey, continuously updating information and the government services catalogue, and aligning services with ongoing developments across various sectors in the Kingdom.

Dr. Khalid also emphasized the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure, adopting advanced technologies, and maintaining public engagement through participation and voting on topics via the National eParticipation Platform, Sharekna.

Dr. Khalid Almutawah highlighted the iGA's commitment



Dr. Khalid Almutawah

to implementing the directives of His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Information and Communications Technology (MCICT), by strengthening communication channels with the public and continuing to actively listen to their feedback and suggestions.

These efforts support the development of the eServices' eco-

system and reflect the iGA's ongoing commitment to keeping pace with rapid advancements in digital government, enhancing quality of life for citizens and residents, and supporting the core pillars of government programs and the Kingdom's digital transformation.

## Criteria

Based on the study's evaluation criteria, which included satisfaction with the portal's design, ease of use and access to eServices and information, the personal profile feature and the effectiveness of the search engine, the Personalization feature achieved the highest satisfaction rate at 86%.

This feature enables users to access their preferred services through single sign-on access, track transactions, receive official notifications, and view previous payments, resulting in a more organized and convenient user experience.

# Gold Souq digital platform launched

TDT | Manama

my and expand opportunities for entrepreneurs and Bahraini talents, particularly in the creative industries.

Ayman bin Tawfiq Al-Moayyed, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS) and Chairman of the Board of Hope Fund, announced the launch of the Gold Souq electronic platform, the first digital application in the Kingdom of Bahrain to provide a modern system for saving, investing and trading gold in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Sharia.

Al-Moayyed emphasised the importance of continuing to deploy innovative digital solutions in the investment sector to support the national econo-

my and expand opportunities for entrepreneurs and Bahraini talents, particularly in the creative industries.

He noted that supporting innovation-based entrepreneurial projects aligns with SCYS's directions to empower youth and encourage their engagement in future-oriented sectors with regional and international reach.

He explained that the launch of the Gold Souq platform reflects an advanced approach towards adopting innovative digital solutions to enhance investment sustainability and represents a practical model for integrating financial technology.

# Bahrain leads way in women's leadership opportunities

● GTCI 2025 index

TDT | Manama

**B**ahrain has recorded a new achievement after ranking first in both the Arab world and the Gulf in the Women's Leadership Opportunities indicator, one of the key measures within the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2025 issued by INSEAD.

This indicator is calculated using data from the World Economic Forum's annual Execu-

tive Opinion Survey (Davos).

It assesses the availability of leadership opportunities for women in the workplace, as well as the extent to which women enjoy equal opportunities to access senior leadership positions in companies.

The Global Talent Competitiveness Index is recognised as one of the world's leading international reference reports for evaluating countries' capacities to develop, attract, and retain talent.

## Relationship

The report stated "econo-

mies such as Brazil, Bahrain, France, and the United Kingdom demonstrate a balanced input-output relationship, suggesting proportionate returns on their talent competitiveness investments. These economies sustain equilibrium between talent investments and resulting performance, indicating mature and stable talent ecosystems."

This assessment reflects the Kingdom's efforts to translate investment in human capital into sustainable outcomes and highlights its position among world's growing economies.

# A strategic partnership for cybersecurity modernisation

● Transition towards quantum-safe economy

TDT | Manama

**T**he National Cyber Security Center of the Kingdom of Bahrain and SandboxAQ, a global leader in AI-driven cybersecurity and cryptographic management, yesterday announced a landmark partnership, aimed at establishing a nationwide cybersecurity modernisation framework.

The partnership marks one of the world's first large-scale commitments to transitioning towards a quantum-safe economy.

As a founding member of the UNICC AI Hub on Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC), SandboxAQ will support Bahrain in securing sovereign data, critical infrastructure and sensitive government and private-sector systems against rapidly evolving cyber, cryptographic, and quantum computing threats.

The announcement comes as governments worldwide

prepare for "Q-Day", the point when cryptographically relevant quantum computers (CRQCs) will be capable of breaking today's widely used encryption.

While experts now estimate CRQCs to be feasible by as early as 2029, the threat is already present through "harvest-now, decrypt-later" attacks, where adversaries steal encrypted data today with plans to decrypt it once quantum capabilities mature.

For governments, this includes classified communications and diplomatic cables.

# Alba exceeds 2025 production target despite challenges, achieves back-to-back LTI-Free years

Manama

**A**luminium Bahrain B.S.C. (Alba), the world's largest aluminium smelter on one site, delivered a historic production record of 1,623,139 metric tonnes in 2025 (versus 1,622,261 metric tonnes in 2024), exceeding its annual target despite the challenges posed by an industrial fire earlier in late 2025. This achievement underscores Alba's resilience, disciplined operations and commitment to sustainable growth.

In addition, the company concluded 2025 with over 42 million work hours without a Lost Time Injury (LTI), marking an unprecedented two consecutive years of LTI-free operations - a first in



the Company's five-decade history.

Ali Al Baqali, Alba's CEO, said "This record is more than a production figure; it reflects our ability to overcome adversity and set new benchmarks in both operational performance and safety. We'll build on this success, push our performance further, and continue to unlock the full potential of our people and operations. I'm also proud and grateful to everyone who contributed to making 2025 a truly historic year for Alba."

Looking ahead, Alba will continue to strengthen its operational capabilities through in-house initiatives that drive sustained improvements in production throughput and efficiency.

## Oil prices gain as equities extend record run higher

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Oil prices climbed and stock markets hit new heights Tuesday as investors tracked developments surrounding crude-rich Venezuela as well as the outlook for the global economy.

The United Nations voiced deep concern over the dramatic US operation in Venezuela, warning that it clearly "undermined a fundamental principle of international law".

"States must not threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state," Ravina Shamdasani, spokeswoman for the UN rights office, told reporters in Geneva.

Oil prices have experienced choppy trading since the surprise US raid Saturday on Caracas that saw Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and his wife taken to New York.

They pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking and other charges at a court hearing on Monday, where a judge ordered them to remain behind bars until the next hearing due March 17.

While Venezuela sits on about a fifth of the world's oil reserves, observers pointed out that a quick ramp-up of output



A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) after the opening bell in New York

### Key figures at around 1340 GMT

Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 0.7% at \$62.20 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 0.7% at \$58.72 per barrel
New York - Dow:	▲ at 48,966.58 points
New York - S&P 500:	▲ 0.1% at 6,910.63
Nasdaq Composite:	▲ 0.2% at 23,448.82
London - FTSE 100:	▲ 1.2% at 10,121.46
Paris - CAC 40:	▲ less than 0.1% at 8,216.11
Frankfurt - DAX:	▲ 0.3% at 24,954.31
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 1.3% at 52,518.08 (close)
Hang Seng Index:	▲ 1.4% at 26,710.45 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 1.5% at 4,083.67 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1705 from \$1.1714 on Monday
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3517 from \$1.3525
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 156.43 yen from 156.31 yen
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.56 pence from 86.57 pence

100 index reached a new high Tuesday above 10,000 points, with investors expecting more cuts to British interest rates to bolster growth in 2026.

"Global equities are likely to keep looking through the geopolitical shock unless it threatens the broader supply chain or tightens financial conditions, because geopolitics has become a persistent feature rather than a surprise," said Charu Chanana, chief investment strategist at Saxo Markets.

"Equities can continue grinding higher if earnings expectations, liquidity, and rate expectations remain supportive, especially in tech," she added.

Shares in Nvidia climbed 1.1% after the world's most valuable company unveiled its latest AI platform the previous evening.

Wall Street opened mixed, with the Dow dipping from its record close, but quickly stabilising.

Traders are awaiting key US jobs data due Friday for clues on the outlook for interest rates.

The Federal Reserve is expected to keep cutting American borrowing costs this year, but how many times remains unclear.

US Fed governor Miran says rates should fall over 1%-point in 2026



Stephen Miran, Governor, Federal Reserve speaks onstage during the Semafor World Economy Summit Fall Edition at Gallup HQ

Miran was appointed by President Donald Trump last year for a term lasting until late January

AFP | Washington, United States

tween 3.50 percent and 3.75 percent. Miran voted for a bigger half-percentage-point cut at each instance.

The central bank is widely expected to hold rates steady at its next gathering in late January, however, as it digests a slate of delayed economic data after a government shutdown last year.

Miran argued on Tuesday that "policy is clearly restrictive and holding the economy back."

While officials have been lowering rates to shore up the world's biggest economy as the employment market weakens, some see the need to hold back on reductions to rein in inflation.

Chicago Fed President Austin Goolsbee, who joined Kansas City Fed President Jeffrey Schmid in pushing to keep rates unchanged in December, warned last month that progress in cooling price hikes had stalled as firms and households grapple with Trump's new tariffs.

While inflation from Trump's sweeping tariff hikes could be one-off, Goolsbee cautioned that higher prices may still prove more long-lasting than expected.

The Fed has a dual mandate of balancing maximum employment and price stability as it mulls the path of interest rates.

On Tuesday, Miran added that he did not put himself forward for the Fed Chair job, with current chief Jerome Powell's term ending in May.



Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world, with around 303 billion barrels of crude oil, accounting for nearly one-fifth of all known global oil reserves – more than Saudi Arabia or any other country

# US would lead Ukraine ceasefire monitoring

Back multinational force: draft statement

● There would be US participation in the force

● President Emmanuel Macron is hosting a meeting

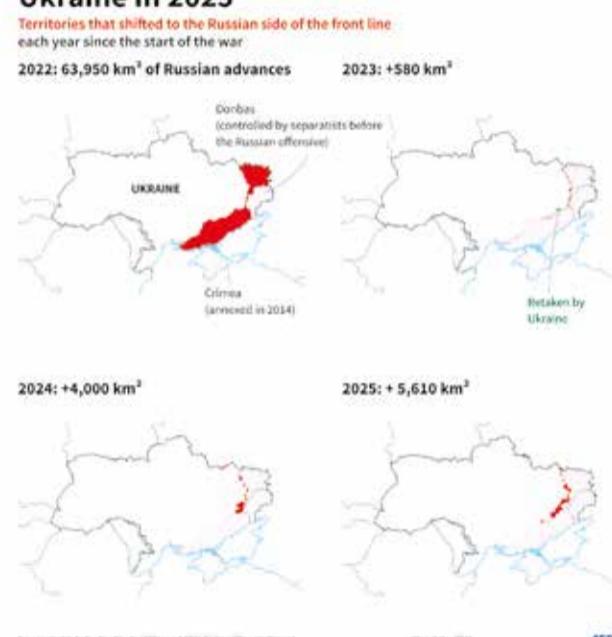
AFP | Paris, France

The United States would lead a "ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism" with European participation if a peace deal is agreed in the Russia-Ukraine war, Kyiv's allies said in a draft statement seen by AFP ahead of a Paris summit yesterday.

Washington would also commit to "support" a European-led multinational force -- deployed in Ukraine after any ceasefire -- "in case of" a new attack by Russia, it added.

President Emmanuel Macron is hosting a meeting of the so-called Coalition of the Willing allies of Ukraine on Tuesday, including European leaders, Ukrainian President Volodymyr

## The Russian army sped up advances in Ukraine in 2025



Zelensky and American envoys. The meeting is focused on the security guarantees Ukraine

requires in the event of a ceasefire to deter further Russian aggression.

"There will be a continuous, reliable ceasefire monitoring system. This will be led by the US with international participation," the draft statement said.

The multinational force to be deployed after a ceasefire would provide "reassurance measures in the air, at sea and on land" for Ukraine and ensure the "regeneration of the armed forces of Ukraine", it added.

"These elements will be European-led," it said.

There would be US participation in the force "including US capabilities such as intelligence and logistics", and "a US commitment to support the force in case of attack" by Russia, it said.

The draft statement said there would be "binding commitments to support Ukraine in the case of a future armed attack by Russia in order to restore peace".

These commitments "may include the use of military capabilities, intelligence and logistical support, diplomatic initiatives, adoption of additional sanctions," it said.

**Maduro lawyer previously defended WikiLeaks' Julian Assange**



Barry Pollack

AFP | New York, United States

"lives, breathes and sleeps trials, and has such a natural way in front of juries."

In 2024, Pollack secured the release of Assange from a British prison after negotiating a plea deal with the US Justice Department that saw the Australian plead guilty to violating the Espionage Act by unlawfully disclosing national defense material.

In another high-profile case, Pollack obtained the acquittal of a former Enron accountant who was facing criminal fraud charges stemming from the collapse of the energy giant.

Another prominent case involved a New York man who was wrongfully convicted of murdering his parents when he was a teenager and spent 17 years in prison.

Pollack managed to get the charges dismissed and secured his freedom.

Pollack gave a hint of his defense strategy during Monday's brief arraignment of Maduro before District Judge Alvin Hellerstein, questioning the "legality of his abduction" by the US military.

## TV makers tout AI upgrades at CES, as smartphone threat looms

AFP | Las Vegas, United States

A century after Scottish inventor John Logie Baird demonstrated the first mechanical television system, TVs face mounting competition from a much more recent invention: smartphones.

But with a suite of new models boasting massive screens, richer imagery and artificial intelligence enhancements -- on display this week at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas -- manufacturers don't plan on TVs being relegated to the dustbin of history.

The proportion of daily viewing on TV sets declined from 61 percent at the start of 2017 to 48 percent late last year, according to market tracker Ampere Analysis. Smartphone viewing, meanwhile, nearly doubled over that same period to 21 percent.

"This is the battle between big screens, which are traditionally for older people who grew up around televisions, and younger people who have either a phone, tablet, or laptop on which they're doing their consumption," said Patrick Horner, leader of TV research at Omdia.

He said that in China, seen as a trendsetter in the global market, young consumers are shunning large-screen televisions in favor of smartphones or tablets.

Around the world, television ownership is constant or declining, with average selling prices also holding steady or dropping, according to Horner.

One way for TV makers to protect or increase revenue when unit sales don't rise is to get people to buy ever larger and smarter screens, at a higher price.



The Agibot X2 humanoid robot dances as it is demonstrated during Pepcom ahead of the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada



The Afeela Prototype 2026 is displayed during a Sony Honda Mobility news conference ahead of the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas

### TVs get personal

Those massive screens once again starred at CES, with producers touting AI to personalize experiences and sharpen picture quality.

"We will embed AI across every area, every product, and every service," Samsung device experience division chief executive TM Roh said during a media event.

Samsung Electronics, the top TV seller for 20 consecutive

years, unveiled what it billed as the world's first 130-inch Micro RGB TV and spoke of packing AI into its products.

"We will embed AI across every area, every product, and every service," Samsung device experience division chief executive TM Roh said during a media event.

Hisense, LG, Samsung, Sony, and TCL were also at CES.

AI is being used to improve

picture and sound quality, as well as help people find shows they want or ask questions about what they're seeing.

"I am really curious to see if most brands at CES can actually prove their new AI devices live up to their claims," said Forrester principal analyst Thomas Husson.

### Amazon vs Walmart

Behind the scenes, e-commerce titans Amazon and Walmart are shaping the future of television as they vie for dominance -- not in selling TVs, but in advertising and e-commerce.

"This is really a knockdown, drag-out fight between Amazon.com and Walmart," Horner told AFP.

Walmart closed a \$2.3 billion deal to buy TV maker Vizio in late 2024, as a strategic response to Amazon boosting sales through advertising on its Fire smart TVs and devices, often through its Prime Video streaming service.

"Amazon was putting advertisements on television programming for things that Amazon sold," Horner said. "So now Walmart is going to be putting advertisements on your television for things that Walmart sells."

And the profit margin on selling ads dwarfs the markup on selling TV hardware.

Walmart is expected to sell more than a million of its "Onn" brand TVs monthly and use an operating system it acquired with Vizio to pump advertising to viewers.

"Televisions are no longer about making profit from TV hardware," Horner said. "They're an ad delivery device being inserted into your living room to boost e-commerce sales."

## 92-year-old US judge presiding over Maduro case

AFP | New York, United States

Alvin Hellerstein, the 92-year-old US judge handling the case against deposed Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, has presided over a number of notable trials during his decades on the bench.

Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, made their first appearance in Hellerstein's Manhattan courtroom on Monday, pleading not guilty to narco-terrorism and other charges.

Maduro was indicted in 2020 in a sprawling drug trafficking case that has been before Hellerstein for nearly 15 years and has already seen the conviction of Venezuela's former intelligence chief, Hugo Armando Carvajal.

A graduate of Columbia University law school, Hellerstein served as a lawyer in the US Army from 1957 to 1960 before entering private practice.

He was nominated by former president Bill Clinton in 1998 to be a district court judge for the Southern District of New York.

During his lengthy career, Hellerstein has presided over several civil cases stemming from the September 11, 2001 Al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington.

He has also tangled at times with Donald Trump, rejecting

a request by the president to have his New York hush money case moved to federal court. Hellerstein also blocked the Trump administration last year from deporting alleged Venezuelan gang members without a court hearing.

In September, he sentenced tech start-up highflier Charlie Javice to more than seven years in prison after she was convicted of defrauding JP Morgan Chase on a \$175 million deal.

In another high-profile fraud case, Hellerstein sentenced Bill Hwang, the founder of US investment firm Archegos Capital Management, to 18 years in prison.

He also presided over the trial last year in which a jury found French banking giant BNP Paribas's work in Sudan had helped prop up the regime of former ruler Omar al-Bashir, awarding \$20.75 million in damages to three plaintiffs from Sudan.



## News in brief

◆ **The Israeli army said**

Monday it was introducing a new technological system to enforce movement restrictions in the occupied West Bank for both Israelis and Palestinians, in a move Israeli media said aims to rein in surging settler violence. The decision allows security forces "to install a technological monitoring device on individuals subject to an administrative order restricting their movement within the (West Bank)," the army said in a statement. The system would allow for monitoring of "violations of these restriction orders accordingly," it added.

The measure was adopted after a request by head of the domestic Shin Bet security agency David Zini in response to rising violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank, Israel's Channel 12 reported. The monitoring devices used will be electronic bracelets, according to the Israeli broadcaster.



**Israel to introduce electronic tagging in West Bank**

**Malaysia ex-PM Mahathir's hip injury 'serious but not dangerous': daughter**

Tuesday after he fell at his home, aide Sufi Yusoff told AFP. "It is serious, but it's not dangerous. For his age, everything is relative... he's fine," his daughter Marina Mahathir was quoted as saying by national news agency Bernama.

◆ **The UK government** yesterday called on Elon Musk's social network X to take urgent action over its AI tool Grok being used to create fake sexually explicit images of children. "What we have been seeing online in recent days

has been absolutely appalling, and unacceptable in decent society," Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said in a statement. "X needs to deal with this urgently," she added. Grok is facing a growing international backlash for allowing users to generate sexualised deepfakes of women and minors through its so-called spicy mode setting. The European Commission announced on Monday that it was "very seriously" reviewing complaints about the tool. The UK's media watchdog Ofcom also said it was looking into X and xAI, which created Grok. Kendall said Ofcom "has my full backing to take any enforcement action it deems necessary". Under Britain's Online Safety Act

which came into force in July, websites, social media and video-sharing platforms hosting potentially harmful content have been required to implement strict age verification through tools such as facial imagery or credit card checks.



**UK urges Musk's X to act over 'appalling' sexual deepfakes**

## SPOTLIGHT

### Climate-driven tree deaths speeding up in Australia: study

AFP | Bangkok, Thailand

Australia's forests are losing trees more rapidly as the climate warms, a new study examining decades of data said Tuesday, warning the trend was likely a "widespread phenomenon".

The research used forest inventory data from 2,700 plots across the country, ranging from cool moist forests to dry savanna.

It excluded areas affected by logging, clearance or fires to examine how "background tree mortality" has changed in recent decades.

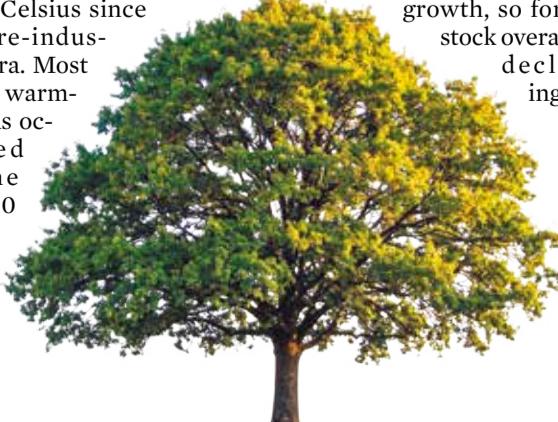
"What we found is that the mortality rate has consistently increased over time, in all of the different forest types," said Belinda Medlyn, a professor at Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment.

"And this increase is very likely caused by the increase in temperature," she told AFP.

The world has warmed by an average of nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since the pre-industrial era. Most of this warming has occurred in the last 50 years.



**Maduro became president in 2013, taking over from his equally hardline socialist predecessor Hugo Chavez. The United States and European Union say he stayed in power by rigging elections -- most recently in 2024 -- and imprisoning opponents, while overseeing rampant corruption.**



# Maduro pleads not guilty, insists still president

Thousands of people marched through Caracas in support of Maduro

● **Maduro's wife Cilia Flores likewise pleaded not guilty**

● **Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado slammed Rodriguez**

● **Trump declared that the United States was "in charge"**

● **The 79-year-old president also dismissed the idea of Caracas having new elections in the next month**

● **Details of the US operation in Caracas were still emerging**

● **US House Speaker and Trump ally Mike Johnson said he thinks an election "should happen in short order" in Venezuela.**

AFP | New York, United States

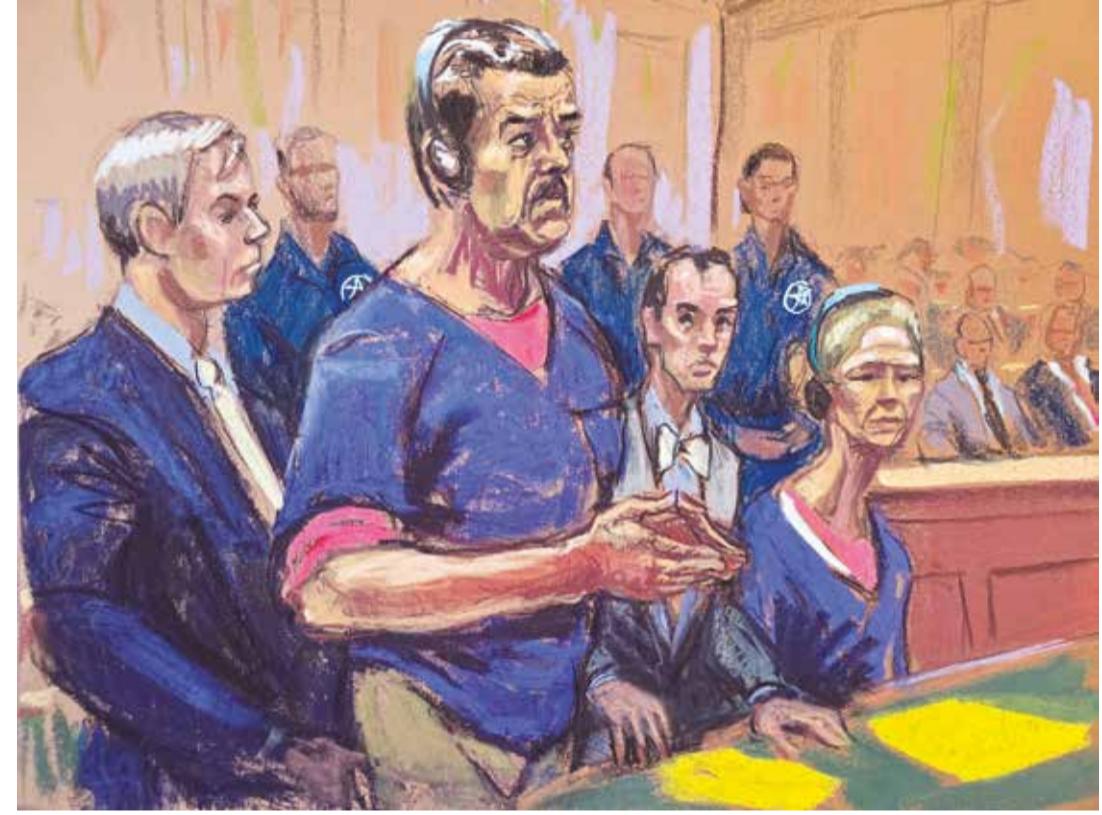
Ousted Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking and other charges at a defiant appearance in a New York court Monday, two days after being snatched by US forces in a stunning raid on his home in Caracas.

Maduro, 63, told a federal judge in Manhattan "I'm innocent. I'm not guilty."

Smiling as he entered the courtroom and wearing an orange shirt with beige trousers, Maduro spoke softly.

"I'm president of the Republic of Venezuela and I'm here kidnapped since January 3, Saturday," Maduro told the court, speaking in Spanish through an interpreter. "I was captured at my home in Caracas, Venezuela."

Maduro's wife Cilia Flores likewise pleaded not guilty. The judge ordered both to remain behind bars and set a new hearing date of March 17.



This courtroom sketch shows deposed president of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro (2nd-L), and his wife, Cilia Flores, attending their arraignment at Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse



Demonstrators hold signs in support of ousted Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro outside the Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse

### 55 Cuban, Venezuelan troops killed during US capture of Maduro: official tolls

Caracas, Venezuela

capital and seized him from his home.

Cuba published the names of 32 members of its military who died in the nighttime assault that led to Maduro's capture in Caracas on January 3.

They included three senior officers from the Cuban interior ministry.

The Venezuelan military published online a list of 23 of its personnel who were also killed, including five admirals.

In the face of pressure from Washington, the leftist governments in Cuba and Venezuela maintain close ties in military cooperation, health and education.

The presidential couple were forcibly taken by US commandos in the early hours of Saturday in airstrikes on the Venezuelan capital backed by warplanes and a heavy naval deployment.

Thousands of people marched

and calling her "one of the main architects of torture, persecution, corruption, narcotrafficking."

Speaking from an undisclosed location to broadcaster Sean Hannity on Fox News in her first public comments since the weekend, Machado added that she plans to return to Venezuela "as soon as possible" after leaving under cover last month to accept her Nobel Peace Prize.

After the raid, Trump declared that the United States was "in charge" in Venezuela and intends to take control of the country's huge but decrepit oil industry.

The 79-year-old president also dismissed the idea of Caracas having new elections in the next month.

"We have to fix the country first. You can't have an election. There's no way the people could even vote," Trump told broadcaster NBC News in an interview aired Monday.

However, US House Speaker and Trump ally Mike Johnson said he thinks an election "should happen in short order" in Venezuela.

### Cuba, Greenland next?

Trump, who has shocked many Americans with his unprecedented moves to accumulate domestic power, also now appears increasingly emboldened in foreign policy.

On Sunday, he said communist Cuba was "ready to fall" and he repeated that Greenland, which is part of US ally Denmark, should be controlled by the United States.

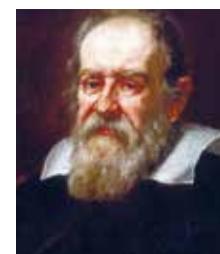
Brian Finucane, of the International Crisis Group, told AFP that Trump "seems to be disregarding international law altogether" in Venezuela and added that US domestic law also appeared to have been broken.

1610

Galileo Galilei discovers the first three moons of Jupiter: Io, Europa and Ganymede

1714

Typewriter patented by Englishman Henry Mill (built years later)



1953

US President Harry Truman announces the United States' development of the hydrogen bomb

1954

Georgetown-IBM experiment, the first public demonstration of a machine translation system, is held at IBM headquarters in New York City

X

TOP

TWEETS

01



I'm deeply concerned about the possible intensification of instability in Venezuela, the potential impact on the region & the precedent it may set for how relations between & among states are conducted.

The situation is critical, but it's still possible to prevent a wider & more destructive conflagration.

I call on all Venezuelan actors to engage in an inclusive, democratic dialogue in which all sectors of society can determine their future, with full respect of human rights, the rule of law & the sovereign will of the Venezuelan people.

My full remarks to the Security Council:  
@antonio\_guterres

02



Diplomacy and real assistance must go hand in hand. Russia does not stop its strikes against our country, and right now we need to bolster air defense to protect our people, our communities, and critical infrastructure. Every delivery of air defense missiles saves lives and boosts the chances for diplomacy.

@zelenskyyua

03



The Coalition of the Willing is meeting in Paris today. Our goal is clear: Provide robust security guarantees for Ukraine. With strong Ukrainian armed forces that can deter future attacks, a multinational force for deterrence and binding commitments to support Ukraine in the case of a future attack by Russia.

@vonderleyen

# US operation in Venezuela undermined international law: UN

“Undermined a fundamental principle of international law”

US commandos forcibly seized Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

US air strikes on Venezuela and the seizing of the country's leader on the weekend clearly "undermined a fundamental principle of international law", the United Nations said yesterday.

"States must not threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state," Ravina Shamdasani, spokeswoman for the UN rights office, told reporters in Geneva.

"And this is what we are seeing," she said, calling on the international community to "come together with one voice... to make clear that this is an action that in contravention of the international law that was set up by member states".

US commandos backed by warplanes, the navy and air strikes, forcibly seized Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores in the early hours of Saturday.

Shamdasani said the UN rights office had spent years reporting on the "continued deterioration" in Venezuela.

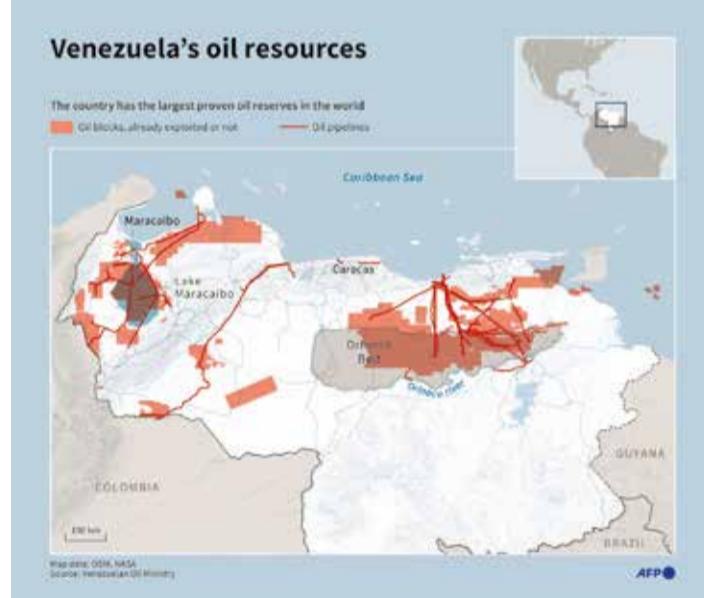
## ‘Unacceptable’

But she dismissed US justifications for its actions, saying accountability for rights violations "cannot be achieved by unilateral military intervention in violation of international law".

"Using human rights argu-



Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodriguez (C-R); Venezuela's defense minister, Vladimir Padrino Lopez (L); Venezuela's minister of interior, Diosdado Cabello (C-L); and Venezuela's National Assembly president, Jorge Rodriguez (R), walking after she took an oath in a ceremony at the National Assembly in Caracas



Ravina Shamdasani, spokeswoman for the UN rights office

ments as a justification for this kind of military intervention is unacceptable," she said, adding that she feared the US intervention "will only make the situation worse". Shamdasani pointed out that a state of emergency declared by Venezuelan authorities on Saturday allows property seizures, restricts free movement and suspends the right to protest among other measures. "Far from being a

victory for human rights, this military intervention... damages the architecture of international security, making every country less safe," she said.

The rights office has been monitoring from Panama since its international staff were expelled from Venezuela in early 2024.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said nearly eight million people in Venezuela -- a quarter of the population -- needed humanitarian assistance even before the US operation.

The UN refugee agency UNHCR said they had yet to see signs of mass displacement since Saturday. UNHCR spokeswoman Eujin Byun said the agency was closely monitoring the situation, adding that UN agencies were ready to "support emergency relief efforts and to protect displaced people in need as required".



Venezuela has been governed by the same political movement since 1999, when Hugo Chávez came to power, making it one of the longest-running continuous leftist governments in the world; his successor, Nicolás Maduro, has remained president despite repeated international disputes over election legitimacy.

## Red Crescent says Israeli army gunfire wounds five in West Bank

AFP | Birzeit, Palestinian Territories



A view of east Jerusalem and the compound of the Al-Aqsa mosque and its Dome of the Rock in the Old City of Jerusalem

The Palestinian Red Crescent said the Israeli military shot and wounded five people yesterday at a university campus in the occupied West Bank.

The reason for the intervention at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah was unknown. Contacted by AFP, the military said it was "looking into the matter".

Military vehicles entered the campus late in the morning, according to several witnesses who spoke to AFP and whose accounts were confirmed by university president Talal Shahwan.

Videos posted to social media showed the intervention, while AFP journalists saw several military vehicles leave the campus, escorted by Israeli soldiers on foot.

The university's communications department told AFP that students had thrown stones at the army, adding that all of the wounded were students.

The Red Crescent said 11 people were wounded in total, including five from live ammunition, four through gas inhalation and two as a result of falls. An AFP journalist saw ambu-

lances take away several people. "Unfortunately, the university has been a recurring target, but this time the brutality crossed all limits," Shahwan told a news conference.

The Israeli army had previously entered the campus several times. Palestinians consider the university to be one of the best in the territories.

## Yemen separatists set for Riyadh talks after fighting: official



The moment a strike hits the Southern Transitional Council (STC) forces in Seiyun, in the Hadhramaut Governorate, AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

rift. "A large delegation headed by the president of the Southern Transitional Council, Aidaros Alzubidi, will travel to Riyadh at the official invitation of Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman," the STC official said, requesting anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

The Saudi-organised talks indicate the beginning of de-escalation efforts after the clashes in Yemen's government-run areas that exposed a

Alzubidi will also "discuss the southern dialogue sponsored by Riyadh", the official said.

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

# European leaders back Denmark after Trump claims on Greenland

Washington's military intervention in Venezuela has reignited fears



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Greenland's Head of Government Jens-Frederik Nielsen and (small pictures in the middle, clockwise, from top L) Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

● **NATO has made clear that the Arctic region is a priority**

● **Trump quipped on Sunday that "we'll worry about Greenland in about two months"**

AFP | Berlin, Germany

A group of European leaders yesterday underlined their support for Denmark after US President Donald Trump again voiced designs on its autonomous Arctic territory of Greenland.

The leaders of France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland and

Spain as well as Denmark said that sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders were "universal principles, and we will not stop defending them".

Washington's military intervention in Venezuela has reignited fears about Trump's designs on Greenland, which has untapped rare earth deposits and could be a vital player as polar ice melts, opening up new shipping routes.

Greenland is on the shortest route for missiles between Russia and the United States, and Washington already has a military base there.

With the situation in Venezuela more pressing, Trump quipped on Sunday that "we'll worry about Greenland in about two months".

The European leaders' joint statement said: "Arctic security remains a key priority for Europe and it is critical for international and transatlantic security."

"NATO has made clear that the Arctic region is a priority and European allies are stepping up."

"We and many other allies have increased our presence, activities and investments, to keep the Arctic safe and to deter adversaries."

They stressed that Denmark -- including Greenland -- was part of NATO.

"Security in the Arctic must therefore be achieved collectively, in conjunction with NATO allies including the United States, by upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders,"

the leaders said.

"These are universal principles, and we will not stop defending them."

The statement was signed by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

They added that the US was "an essential partner in this endeavour".

"Greenland belongs to its people. It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland," they said.

## US Capitol riot anniversary exposes a country still divided

AFP | Washington, United States

Washington on Tuesday marks five years since a mob overran the US Capitol, with rioters pardoned by Donald Trump retracing their steps as Democrats revive hearings to hold the president accountable.

The anniversary of a day that reshaped American politics is expected to reflect a country still unable to agree on who was responsible, or what justice should look like.

"Five years ago today, a violent mob brutally attacked the US Capitol on January 6. Their mission was to overturn a free and fair election. We will never allow extremists to whitewash their treachery," top House Democrat Hakeem Jeffries posted on X.

On January 6 2021, thousands of Trump supporters gathered in Washington after the president urged them to protest Congress's certification of his election defeat to Joe

Biden.

Several thousand breached the Capitol grounds, overwhelming police lines and wounding more than 140 officers, smashing windows and doors, ransacking offices and forcing lawmakers into hiding as the electoral count was halted for hours.

Inside the Capitol on Tuesday, House Democrats are convening an unofficial hearing featuring police, former lawmakers and civilians who experienced the violence firsthand.

Many involved in the original

investigation say the aim is not to relitigate the past but to prevent it from being erased -- particularly after Trump returned to office and pardoned nearly all defendants charged in connection with the attack.

### Normalizing political violence

A new Democratic report documents dozens of pardoned rioters later charged with new crimes, and they warn that the clemency risks normalizing political violence.

Outside the building Trump supporters, including figures linked to the far-right Proud Boys, are staging a midday march retracing the route taken by rioters in 2021.

The march is being promoted by the group's former leader Enrique Tarrio, who was serving a 22-year sentence for seditious conspiracy before Trump pardoned him.

Organizers say the march will honor those who died, including Trump rioter Ashli Babbitt, and protest what they describe as excessive force by police and politically motivated prosecutions, insisting the event will be

peaceful.

The competing events mirror a broader political dispute, with Democrats saying Trump incited the attack to overturn the election. Republicans reject that view, instead citing security failures and criticizing the Justice Department.

Republican leaders have dismissed Tuesday's hearing as partisan and have shown little appetite for formal commemoration.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, an unwavering Trump ally, has yet to install a plaque honoring Capitol Police officers who defended the building that day, despite a federal law requiring it.

And Republican investigator Barry Loudermilk has argued that January 6 has been used to advance a political narrative against Trump and his allies.

The anniversary also arrives against the backdrop of unresolved legal and historical questions.

Former special counsel Jack Smith has said the attack would not have occurred without Trump, but abandoned the federal case after Trump's reelection, in line with Justice Department policy barring prosecution of a sitting president.

Trump was impeached by the House over the riot in 2021 and acquitted by the Senate.

## Taiwan launches search for fighter jet pilot



Representative picture

AFP | Taipei, Taiwan

ment.

Taiwan has ordered 66 US F-16V -- a fourth-generation multi-role fighter -- that is a significantly upgraded version of Taiwan's ageing F-16 A/B jets.

Taiwan completed upgrades of 141 older F-16s to the V standard in late 2023.

The aircraft were due to be delivered in 2026 but Taiwan's Defence Minister Wellington Koo said recently that would be "challenging".

Taiwan's military is under pressure from China, which claims the democratic island is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to annex it.

China has in recent years ramped up incursions by fighter jets and warships around the island -- actions that military experts dub as grey-zone tactics that serve to exhaust the island's armed forces.

## Israeli FM in Somaliland weeks after official recognition

AFP | Mogadishu, Somalia

Israel's foreign minister arrived in Somaliland yesterday in the first high-profile visit by an Israeli official since the country recognised the breakaway region in the Horn of Africa, the Somaliland presidency said.

Israel announced last month it was officially recognising Somaliland, a first for the self-proclaimed republic that in 1991 declared it had unilaterally separated from Somalia.

"A delegation led by the Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar landed at the Hargeisa town, he was received at the airport by senior government officials. He had meetings with the Somaliland top officials," the presidency said in a statement.

Israel's recognition of the breakaway region drew widespread criticism from Africa and Muslim-majority countries, which described the move as an attack on Somali sovereignty.

The European Union has also insisted that Somalia's sovereignty should be respected.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud condemned the decision as a "threat" to the stability in the Horn of Africa.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, he said Somaliland had accepted three conditions from Israel: the resettlement of Palestinians, the establishment of a military base on the Gulf of Aden, and joining the Abraham Accords to normalise ties with Israel.

But Somaliland's foreign



Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

ministry denied the first two conditions.

The breakaway region has been diplomatically isolated since its unilateral declaration of independence, even if it has generally experienced greater stability than Somalia, where Al-Shabaab Islamic militants periodically mount attacks in the capital Mogadishu.

Regional analysts believe that a rapprochement with Somaliland would provide Israel with better access to the Red Sea, enabling it to hit Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Its location alongside one of the world's busiest shipping lanes has made it a key partner for foreign countries.



Somaliland, which has for decades sought international recognition, enjoys a strategic position on the Gulf of Aden and has its own currency, passport and army.

## Northern Governor Praises Bahraini Agriculture at “Sunbulah” Event



His Excellency Ali bin Al-Shaikh Abdulhussein Al-Asfoor, Northern Governor, visited the “Sunbulah” event at Abu Saiba Nursery, emphasizing agriculture's vital role in food security and the “Healthy City” initiative. Accompanied by Deputy Governor Brigadier Abdullah Maantar and officials, the Governor toured sections featuring local nurseries, productive families, and interactive workshops. He praised the high quality of local produce and the excellence of Bahraini farmers. The tour included an inspection of climate-controlled greenhouses and various plant species adapted to the local environment. Highlighting community engagement, the event featured children's activities and food stalls. As part of Bahrain's national afforestation goals, 2,000 seedlings were distributed to attendees to promote environmental awareness and expand green spaces.

## Bahraini Pavilion Inaugurated at Muscat Nights 2026



His Excellency Dr. Juma bin Ahmed Al Kaabi, Bahrain's Ambassador to Oman, officially opened the Kingdom of Bahrain's pavilion at the Muscat Nights festival in Qurum Natural Park. Running throughout January 2026, the pavilion showcases a talented group of Bahraini entrepreneurs aiming to strengthen regional presence and support the growth of small and medium enterprises. Ambassador Al Kaabi praised the festival as a premier community event, emphasizing its role in translating the close, brotherly relations between the two nations into active cooperation. He noted that the participation of business incubators allows Bahraini entrepreneurs to exchange expertise and gain fresh insights into the regional market.

## A Warm Farewell Honoring Service and Diplomacy



Mr. Mohammad Afzal Bhatti, Chairman of the Pakistan Club Bahrain, hosted a farewell lunch at the Sadoun Guest House for Mr. Mohammad Aneel Zafar, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Pakistan, marking his upcoming departure. The event was attended by H.E. Saqib Rauf, Ambassador of Pakistan, alongside senior officials and community leaders, including Mr. Mohammad Sajid Sheik, Ch. Mohammad Akram, Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Joz, Mr. Shuja Ul Islam, Mr. Allah Ditta, and Pakistan School Chairman Mr. Samiu Rahman. Members of the business community also gathered to honor Mr. Zafar's dedicated service and his success in strengthening the bond between the Embassy and the Pakistani diaspora.

## Le Meridien Bahrain Launches Training Program to Empower National Talent



Le Meridien Bahrain Hotel has launched a specialized training initiative to upskill its Bahraini employees, in collaboration with an accredited training center and the “Athar” Development Center. The program follows a systematic analysis of training needs, targeting specific skill gaps to ensure employees meet the high-quality standards of the international hospitality sector. Mr. Taher Al-Wadaei, Acting Director of Human Resources, emphasized that investing in local talent is a fundamental pillar for operational excellence and institutional competitiveness. Supporting this vision, Abdullah bin Saleh, Director of the Athar Development Center, noted that the program uses scientific metrics to align training with professional career paths.

## Bahrain University College Holds Annual Sakhir Community Camp



The Office of Student and Graduate Affairs at Bahrain University College hosted its annual camp in the Sakhir area, attended by Founding President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Professor Dr. Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed Al Khalifa. The event saw broad participation from students, alumni, and university staff. The camp featured various recreational activities and competitions designed to foster teamwork and a spirit of positive competition. Beyond the entertainment, the gathering provided a friendly environment for students to engage with one another and the university administration, strengthening the concept of the “university family.”

## KPA Hosts “Snehasangamam 2026” for Labor Community



The Kollam Pravasi Association (KPA), Bahrain a Kerala based expatriate association celebrated the New Year by organizing “Snehasangamam 2026” at a labor camp in Janabiya. The event, aimed at sharing joy with workers, was inaugurated by KPA President Anoj Master. The program was presided over by Budaiya Area President Vijo Vijayan, with Area Secretary Nizam welcoming the gathering. KPA General Secretary Prashanth Prabhudhan delivered the keynote address. The event concluded with a traditional grand feast (Snehasadya).

# Classifieds

## VACANCIES AVAILABLE

TOP GEAR CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17414600 or hanhilal@yahoo.com

CLEANERS BAY SERVICES W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36116246 or cleanersbayservices@gmail.com

ABUOBAID CONTRACTING & TRADING GROUP has a vacancy for the occupation of MASON, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17700204 or abuobaigroup@gmail.com

PROJECTS ACCESS SCAFFOLDING & FORMWORK CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SCAFFOLDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17737891 or jose@projectsaccess.net

DIAMOND LIFE ALUMINIUM W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of STEEL FABRICATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39398876 or DIAMONDALUMINIUMWLL@gmail.com

multi tech contracting has a vacancy for the occupation of MASON, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39444165 or NADIA-ALKHALED@HOTMAIL.COM

AL MOAYYED LANDSCAPES AND SWIMMING POOLS has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(GARDENING), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17400407 or proffice@almoayyedcg.com

BEN EID TOWERS CLEANING W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17250078 or KEHF-2011@HOTMAIL.COM

GULF CITY CLEANING W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39641612 or yousif@aanass.net

ALMOAYYED CONTRACTING GROUP W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of AIR-CONDITIONING TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17400407 or proffice@almoayyedcg.com

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EVER FINE TRADING W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39697958 or GEEPASBAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

SAID DAL 1923 RESTAURANT W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38365147 or SAIDDAL1923BH@MASDAR.COM.KW

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JANAH LAUNDRY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of WASHING MACHINE OPERATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33838515 or SAUDQAEDI@ICLOUD.COM

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ARIZONACLEANING@GMAIL.COM

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ARHEBO CAFE has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33377530 or OMJAS-SIM355@GMAIL.COM

AL MANSOORI PACKING AND SHIP MAINTENANCE has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER/PACKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39966665 or ALAMEEDMOTORS@GMAIL.COM

CLARKE FITS CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of MANAGER (PROJECT), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17710541 or clarkefits@gmail.com

ANOWAR SARDAR MOBILE SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 66343207 or ANOWAR9@GMAIL.COM

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WADI ALMUHARRAQ FOOD STUFF has a vacancy for the occupation of BAKER( GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39850148 or BUNGASH122@GMAIL.COM

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ASIA JEWELLERS B.S.C CLOSED has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17534444 or PRO@ASIAJEWELLERS.COM

IDEAL STAR PUNJABI CHASKA RESTAURANT W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33448200 or IDEALSTARBAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

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ADAM TOUCH CARPENTRY WORKSHOP has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPEN-

TRY WORKER( CONSTRUCTION).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33880076 or NALTARVALLEYBH@GMAIL.COM

Premiere Hotel W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17811811 or CORP@DADABAI.COM

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NALTAR VALLEY CARGO HANDLING CO. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33880076 or NALTARVALLEYBH@GMAIL.COM

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NEW UM MAJED SHOE REPAIR has a vacancy for the occupation of SHOE REPAIRER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36364269 or KHURRAM\_LEO82@YAHOO.COM

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HOPE CITY BUSINESS CONSULTANCY W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of ADMINISTRATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 77916333 or NOUFLNK@HOTMAIL.COM

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UMAIR TABASUM COOL STORE BAHRANI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN (GROCERY OR COLDSTORE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33029528 or UZ203060@GMAIL.COM

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email: advt@newsofbahrain.com

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ALKOMED ENGINEERING SERVICES CO. has a vacancy for the occupation of ELECTRICIAN(MAINTENANCE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17698500 or ALKOMED@BATELCO.COM.BH

WHITE FALCON PRIVATE SECURITY SERVICES Co. W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66626168 or TDAINEH@GMAIL.COM

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COURIERX W.L.L. has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38870666 or HAMAD@COURIERX.COM

NEW PORT LAUNDRY has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKERS(LAUNDRY), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17500228 or AYUBIAN99@HOTMAIL.COM

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MASKATI BROTHERS & COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of MACHINE OPERATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17464646 or jobs@maskatibros.com

GULF AIR B.S.C. (C) has a vacancy for the occupation of CABIN CREW / FLIGHT STeward, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17337804 or recruitment@gulfair.com

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17826007 or hrs.bh@rameehotels.com  
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BLACK LINE AUTO SERVICES CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 3431959 or FARHADKHAN9071453@GMAIL.COM

BAROLA INTERIOR DECORATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39187678 or KHAN19.MUJAHID@GMAIL.COM

SIMPLYFI CONSULTING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MANAGER (MARKETING & SALES(EXCEPT WHOLESALE)), suitably qualified applicants can contact 32210515 or SANAT@SIMPLYFI.ME

MR ANMOL BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33883145 or YASEENAMOL3145@GMAIL.COM

Haiba Tailoring w.l.l has a vacancy for the occupation of TAILOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 16161122 or BAMIN@DIVIDENDGATECAPITAL.COM

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## Red Wolves Roar Back into Title Contention



Juninho strikes emphatically to double Muharraq's lead

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Defending champions Muharraq produced a clinical display at Khalifa Sports City yesterday, thrashing Sitra 4-0 to climb to 2nd place in the Nasser Bin Hamad Premier League, just one point behind leaders Al Khaldiya. The Red Wolves were coming off a 1-0 defeat to Al Khaldiya, but Nandinho's side controlled the game from start to finish. Sitra, coached by Isa Al Saadoun, were thoroughly outplayed and remain in eighth.

The scoring blitz started almost immediately, with Waleed Al Hayyam opening the account in the first minute. What looked like a routine corner clearance fell perfectly to Gervasio Olivera, whose side-footed delivery sent the

ball high into the box, where Al Hayyam met it with a composed volley into the corner. Keeper Youssef Habib could do little as the ball floated delicately from range, and the defender finished like a seasoned striker.

Nandinho's men then doubled their advantage in the 16th minute through Brazilian Juninho. A throw-in found Argentinian Facundo Tobares at the edge of the box, and although Sitra defenders thought they had cleared it, the ball fell kindly to Juninho in space. The striker made no mistake, unleashing an emphatic volley that underlined his reputation as Muharraq's reliable finisher.

Al Saadoun's were put further on the back foot just before halftime when Tobares turned provider into scorer.

## Dias sidelined with Gvardiol as Man City face defensive crisis

AFP | London

Manchester City will be without Ruben Dias for up to six weeks and fellow defender Josko Gvardiol for "a long time", manager Pep Guardiola said yesterday.

The club announced on Monday that centre-back Gvardiol was facing a lengthy lay-off with a tibial fracture to his right leg that he suffered in Sunday's 1-1 draw with Chelsea.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, on the eve of City's home game against Brighton, Guardiola confirmed the depth of the crisis in central defence, with John Stones also sidelined.

Guardiola said Dias had injured his hamstring and would be out of action for "between four and six weeks" while he did not put a timescale on Gvardiol's return.



Josko Gvardiol

Referring to Stones, Guardiola said: "(He is not) ready for the next games. Of course, he's an important player for us for a long time and he was injured for a long time last season. This season looks the same."

"He's trying a lot and trying everything, but he's not fit."

Guardiola, whose team are second in the Premier League, six points behind leaders Arsenal, said he was confident they could cope with the absences.

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## Kyrgios urges Djokovic to stay in tennis after Adelaide pullout

Injury concerns force Djokovic caution as Kyrgios hails lasting legacy

● Djokovic targets Australian Open return

● Kyrgios praises veteran's longevity

AFP | Adelaide

Nick Kyrgios urged Novak Djokovic to stay in tennis "as long as possible" after the Serbian great yesterday pulled out of his only lead-up tournament to the Australian Open, saying he was "not quite physically ready".

The 38-year-old was planning to use the Adelaide International from January 12 as a springboard to the opening Grand Slam at Melbourne Park a week later where he is targeting an 11th title and elusive 25th major crown.

"To all my fans in Adelaide, unfortunately I'm not quite physically ready to compete in the Adelaide International next week," Djokovic said on Instagram.

"It's personally very disappointing to me, as I have such great memories of winning the title there two years ago. I was really excited about returning as it truly felt like playing at home."

"My focus is now on my preparation for the Australian Open and I look forward to arriving in Melbourne soon and seeing all the tennis fans in Australia."



Novak Djokovic celebrates after winning the final of the ATP Adelaide International tournament in 2023

Slam or something else," he told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"But I think we should just cherish the fact that someone that old in our sport is still at the top of it and still gives everything to it."

"The longer we have guys like this around, the better it is for our sport."

"I feel like there's been a void in the sport ever since (Roger) Federer and (Rafael) Nadal left ... and obviously when Novak goes, that era is completely gone. I want him to stay for as long as possible."



Djokovic has signalled he hopes to play until the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, aiming to defend the gold medal he won in Paris

## Muharraq Begin Arab Championship Journey in Tunisia



Team Muharraq ahead of departure for the championship

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

The Kingdom's volleyball champions Muharraq are set to take center stage in Tunisia as the 44th Arab Club Men's Volleyball Championship begins today, marking the start of a demanding regional contest featuring the Arab world's elite clubs. The tournament runs from January 6 to 18, with matches at El Menzah Sports Palace and the Sidi Bou Said Indoor Arena, bringing together 12 top teams.

Muharraq are the Kingdom's sole representatives and are in Group B alongside Etoile

Sportive du Sahel of Tunisia, Qatar's Al Shorta SC, Al Ittihad of Libya, Majees of Oman, and the Palestinian Military Club.

While the tournament starts today, Muharraq will begin their campaign tomorrow, ready to challenge the region's strongest sides.

The Bahrain champions have a demanding group-stage schedule, with five matches in as many days. They open against Majees on Thursday at 2 PM Bahrain time, followed by a clash with Al Ittihad on Friday at the same hour. On Saturday, they meet the hosts Etoile Sportive du Sahel at 3 PM, before facing Police SC on Sunday at 3

PM, and concluding the preliminary round on Monday against the Palestinian Military Club at 5 PM.

Preparation has been carried out locally under head coach Yaseen Al Meel, as the squad balances continental ambitions

with the 2025-26 Isa Bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League, where they aim to defend their national crown. Muharraq's roster brings experienced national-team regulars with internationally recognized talent. This includes Naser Anan, Mahmood Alafyah, Sayed Hashem Issa, Mohammed Abdulla, Mohammed Omar, Abbas Al Khabbaz, Majeed Mohammed, Hussain

Ehsan, Abbas Ehsan, Ali Al-sairafi, and Swedish professional Jacob Link, whose presence adds further strength and depth to the squad.

Meanwhile, the other side of the draw features Al Seeb (Oman), Northern Refineries (Iraq), Tadjenanet (Algeria), Asswehly (Libya), Qatar SC, and Espérance Sportive de Tunis, setting the stage for highly competitive matchups. With last year's finalists, Zamalek and Al Ahly, absent, Muharraq have a prime opportunity to assert themselves and target a deep run as they begin their campaign tomorrow in Tunis.

# REHC seals strategic partnership with BBK



Yousif Osama Buhiji, CEO of the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club, and Yasser Al-Sharifi, Group CEO of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait sign the deal

## ● HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman meets with the Chairperson of BBK

Manama

His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister's Court and Chairman of the High Committee of the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club (REHC), today met with Tariq Jaleel AlSaffar, Chairperson of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK).

His Highness highlighted the important role of the private sector in supporting the Kingdom's development, including horse racing, in line with the vi-

sions of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman noted that strategic partnerships with the private sector represent a fundamental pillar in supporting plans and programmes aimed at strengthening the role of the REHC as an integrated sports and tourism hub.

His Highness commended BBK for its continued support of the REHC's initiatives and development plans, noting that the strategic partnership between REHC and BBK serves as a strong model for private-sector contribution to national development efforts and underscores their shared commitment to advanc-



HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa meets with Tariq Al-Saffar, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait

ing the horse racing sector regionally and internationally.

His Highness noted the importance of continuing to develop this partnership to develop the Club's infrastructure and facilities, strengthening its ability to host diverse tournaments and events, and positioning the Kingdom as a leading integrated destination for horse racing.

For his part, the Chairperson of BBK expressed his appreciation for His Highness' support in strengthening partnerships with the private sector, commending His Highness' leadership in developing and advancing the horse racing sector.

In this context, the REHC announced a strategic partnership with BBK in support of its development plans aimed at upgrading facilities and enhancing the Kingdom's position as a leading destination for horse racing.

The agreement, which includes BBK's sponsorship of one of the Club's development projects, was signed by Mr. Yusuf Osama Buheji, Chief Executive Officer of the REHC, and Mr. Yasser Alsharifi, Group Chief Executive of BBK, in the presence of several officials from both sides.

On this occasion, Yusuf Osama Buheji noted that this agreement reflects the Club's commitment

to strengthening partnerships with private sector institutions, contributing to the development of the horse racing sector and enhancing Bahrain's position on the global racing map.

For his part, Yasser Alsharifi affirmed BBK's commitment to continuing its support for the REHC through sponsoring development projects, championships, and international races, as part of the Bank's role in supporting the Kingdom's vital sectors, noting that the development witnessed in the horse racing sector has been a key driver in strengthening this partnership.

**Veteran manager O'Neill returns to Celtic as Nancy sacked after eight games**



Martin O'Neill

AFP | Glasgow

Martin O'Neill has returned to lead Celtic until the end of the season after the Scottish champions sacked Wilfried Nancy following six defeats in just eight games under the French manager.

By contrast, the 73-year-old O'Neill won seven out of eight games after being brought in as caretaker boss for eight games after Brendan Rodgers' exit in October.

O'Neill, a full-time manager of the Glasgow giants from 2000-2005, stepped aside for Nancy in early December.

But Nancy was sacked on Monday after just eight games in charge, including six losses.

# Australian Open title rivals ease through in Brisbane warm-up

Sabalenka, Keys and Rybakina win easily as Kyrgios stumbles on comeback

## ● Sabalenka beats Bucsa in 48 minutes

## ● Keys, Rybakina also through in straight sets

## ● Kyrgios loses comeback match 6-3, 6-4

AFP | Brisbane

Australian Open title rivals Aryna Sabalenka, Madison Keys and Elena Rybakina all launched their build-up with straight-sets wins yesterday in Brisbane but home favourite Nick Kyrgios lost on his return.

Sabalenka, the world number one beater in last year's Melbourne final by Keys, took just 48 minutes to dispose of Cristina Bucsa 6-0, 6-1 in the second round of the season-opening tournament.

Sabalenka said the fact that she played so well in her first match of the campaign showed that her divisive December 28 "Battle of the Sexes" exhibition match in Dubai against Kyrgios had been worthwhile.

"When you play against a guy the intensity is completely different," said the Belarusian.

"Especially when there is Nick, who is drop-shotting every other shot, so you move a lot, so there was a great fitness for me."

"And today I was, like, whew,



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka hits a return to Spain's Cristina Bucsa

let's move around, you know."

Sabalenka will now play Sorana Cirstea in the third round and remains on track to meet Keys in the quarter-finals, a rematch of last year's Australian Open final.

Keys reached the Brisbane third round with a 6-4, 6-3 win over fellow American McCartney Kessler.

Like Sabalenka, Keys had a bye into the second round and said she had found it tough to find her rhythm early on.

"I think it's sometimes a little bit harder when the person you're playing has already played a match, and then you're

bit of the rust," she said.

**YOU KNOW WHAT**  
Sabalenka credited her sharp movement and fitness to a pre-season "Battle of the Sexes" exhibition against Kyrgios in Dubai just days earlier

"I felt like it took a little

bit just to find my rhythm, but I feel like once I did it, I kind of settled in a little bit better."

Former Wimbledon champion and third seed Rybakina moved through with a 6-3, 7-5 win over Chinese qualifier Zhang Shuai.

Kyrgios is making a tentative comeback to tennis after an injury-ravaged three years saw him slip to 670 in the world.

In his first tour-level singles match since March, the former Wimbledon finalist showed glimpses of his talent but lacked consistency against American Aleksandar Kovacevic in a 6-3, 6-4 loss.

# stc Bahrain sponsors 13th race meeting at REHC



TDT | Manama

Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club will stage the 13th race meeting of the 2025-2026 season on Friday, January 9, under the sponsorship of stc Bahrain, with strong participation and cash prizes announced for racegoers.

Organisers said the meeting is expected to deliver an integrated spectator experience combining competitive racing with accompanying entertainment and activities, reflecting the club's efforts to enhance fan engagement and promote Bahrain's horse racing heritage.

stc Bahrain will offer cash prizes to the public through draws held during the race programme, giving spectators the chance to win financial rewards alongside enjoying the evening's festivities.

The initiative is part of the company's support for the racing community and fan-focused events.

A total of 104 horses have been declared for the meeting, competing across nine races for stc Bahrain-sponsored trophies.

Officials said closely matched fields in most races are likely to produce strong competition throughout the card.

# Venus Williams ousted in first round of Australian Open warm-up

AFP | Auckland

Venus Williams was beaten in three sets by Magda Linette at the Auckland Classic as the American great gears up to make history at the Australian Open aged 45.

Williams showed glimpses of the talent that has brought

her seven major singles titles before running out of steam as the 52nd-ranked Linette won 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Williams received a generous ovation as she left the court and will now head to Hobart for another warm-up event before the first Grand Slam of the year.

# BIC holds annual coordination meeting with government entities ahead of 2026 F1 events

Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), 'The Home of Motor-sport in the Middle East', today hosted a coordination meeting with Government Ministries and Agencies ahead of the Kingdom's upcoming events in the 2026 FIA Formula 1 World Championship.

The meeting, held at The Four Seasons Bahrain Bay, reviewed all preparations for Formula 1 Pre-Season Testing, taking place at BIC across six days from 11 to 13 February and from 18 to 20 February, and the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026, scheduled for 10 to 12 April as the fourth round of the new F1 season.

BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa chaired the coordination meeting. Also in attendance were BIC Corporate Services Director Beshara Abdu Beshara and other members of the circuit's top management.

Shaikh Salman discussed all the latest arrangements ahead of pre-season testing and the



grand prix weekend, as well as the necessary coordinated efforts to ensure their smooth success.

Shaikh Salman spoke of BIC's keenness to work closely with ministries and government institutions as the Kingdom gets ready for the largest and

most-anticipated annual events in the region, which attracts record crowds each year with fans coming from all over the world.

Shaikh Salman thanked the officials who were present at the coordination meeting and praised their respective bodies

for their efforts and continuous support.

Also during the meeting, Beshara gave a presentation on both upcoming F1 events, detailing the most prominent activities, the organisational plan for hosting, and the procedures for receiving the participating

stakeholders, officials, teams, and fans coming into Bahrain from overseas.

Beshara further explained the requirements for the efficient and orderly passage of fans to and from BIC for both pre-season testing and the grand prix weekend. Beshara also gave a detailed overview of the new plans that are to be implemented for this year's F1 events.

F1 pre-season testing will be the first chance for fans to witness the next generation of F1 cars in action ahead of the 2026 campaign. It will be the sixth consecutive year that Sakhir has been selected as the venue for the tests.

For more information on the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026 and Pre-Season Testing 2026, or other events and experiences at BIC, visit [bahraingp.com](http://bahraingp.com), call the BIC Hotline at +973-17450000, or follow the circuit on social media.

# Chelsea appoint Rosenior as manager

Chelsea officially confirm the appointment of the 41-year-old English manager

● Rosenior leaves Strasbourg for role

● Has only three years' managerial experience

● Chelsea's fourth permanent boss since 2022

AFP | Strasbourg

Liam Rosenior was confirmed yesterday as Chelsea's new head coach on a six-and-a-half-year deal, saying the opportunity to succeed Enzo Maresca at Stamford Bridge was too good to turn down.

The 41-year-old Strasbourg boss told a press conference earlier in the day at the Ligue 1 club that he had "verbally agreed" on the move.

Chelsea officially announced that Rosenior, who will take charge of his first match in the FA Cup at the weekend, had signed a deal until 2032.

"I am extremely humbled and honoured to be appointed head coach of Chelsea Football Club," he said in a statement on the Premier League team's website.

"This is a club with a unique spirit and a proud history of winning trophies."

"My job is to protect that identity and create a team that reflects these values in every game we play as we continue winning trophies."

Rosenior has just three years'



Strasbourg's British head coach Liam Rosenior reacts after a match (file photo)

experience as a manager, with Hull City and French club Strasbourg, and has never coached in the Premier League.

But he had been widely touted as the frontrunner to succeed Maresca since the Italian left Chelsea last week.

Strasbourg are part of the Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital-owned BlueCo multi-club ownership group that also controls Chelsea.

Rosenior is Chelsea's fourth permanent managerial appointment since BlueCo took control of the club previously owned by Roman Abramovich in 2022.

The club said the English-

man had shown "he can build teams with a clear way of playing while setting the highest standards with players on and off the pitch".

"While there will continue to be a focus on player development, the club's expectations and ambitions remain high," Chelsea added.

Rosenior said he had wanted to announce the news himself in Strasbourg because of his deep feelings for the French club.

The former defender, whose father, Leroy Rosenior, was also a player and a manager, told reporters the chance to manage Chelsea was "an opportunity I

cannot turn down".

## 'World-class club'

"I'm so excited about the future. I cannot lie. My whole life I've worked to be a coach," he said.

"To be presented with this opportunity to manage a world-class football club is something I've always dreamed of."

"With that is a mixed emotion of sadness of what I'm leaving behind."

Chelsea interim manager Calum McFarlane told reporters that he would remain in charge for Wednesday's Premier League match against Fulham.

McFarlane said he had spoken briefly to the club's new boss.

"He's obviously really excited about taking the role," he said. "It's a brief conversation, so my understanding is he's going to be at Cobham (Chelsea's training ground) later on today."

Rosenior played in the Premier League and the second-tier Championship in England. His clubs included Fulham, Reading and Hull.

He had a variety of coaching roles at Derby, which included 12 matches as caretaker manager at the start of the 2022/23 season.

Later in 2022 Rosenior took over as manager of Championship team Hull.

He was sacked after 18 months and in July 2024 was appointed by Strasbourg, who he guided to seventh place in Ligue 1 last season.

McFarlane said Rosenior's teams played "aggressive, front-foot football" and that his appointment would inspire Eng-



This is a club with a unique spirit and a proud history of winning trophies. My job is to protect that identity and create a team that reflects these values in every game we play as we continue winning trophies

LIAM ROSENIOR

Liam Rosenior's appointment is seen as a major milestone for English managers; notably, no Englishman has ever won the Premier League title since the competition was founded back in 1992

lish managers.

Since the formation of the Premier League in 1992, not a single English manager has won the title.

"I'm sure all young English coaches from an academy background will be in some way, regardless of who you support, rooting for Liam," said McFarlane.

"So it is really inspirational for young academy English coaches."

Maresca left Chelsea abruptly on New Year's Day following a deterioration in his relationship with club bosses, just months after winning the UEFA Conference League and Club World Cup.

Chelsea are fifth in the Premier League, 17 points behind Arsenal, with just one win in their past eight league games.