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NATO Secretary General expresses solidarity with Bahrain over Iranian attacks

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday received a message from NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte expressing strong support for Bahrain amid ongoing Iranian attacks targeting the Kingdom's territory.

In his message, Secretary General Rutte conveyed his deepest regret over the "unacceptable and indiscriminate" strikes, which have affected civilian populations, critical infrastructure, and freedom of navigation. He strongly condemned the attacks and reaffirmed NATO's commitment to Bahrain's security and regional stability.

GCC warns against Strait of Hormuz closure at OIC meeting

TDT | New York

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) yesterday warned that any attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz would constitute a serious escalation, threatening regional stability and global economic security.

The statement came during a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the United Nations, convened at Bahrain's request on behalf of GCC states.

Ambassador Jamal Fares Al Ruwaie, Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the UN, highlighted that the GCC has consistently sought dialogue with Iran to resolve differences peacefully and prevent escalation. He stressed that, despite these efforts, GCC countries have faced unjustified attacks violating Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.



Tarawih prayers continued to be held across mosques in the Kingdom of Bahrain during the nights of the holy month of Ramadan, in an atmosphere of calm and serenity, with regular attendance by worshippers keen to perform the religious rites while following the instructions and organisational guidelines set by the competent authorities. In this regard, the General Directorate of Sunni Endowments issued a circular to imams and muezzins, confirming that the five daily prayers and Tarawih prayers would continue as usual in its affiliated mosques. The circular emphasised the importance of taking necessary precautions and fostering a spirit of peace and tranquillity among worshippers, ensuring their safety and the smooth conduct of religious practices.



Bahraini families, institutions express solidarity

TDT | Manama

Bahraini families, community leaders, business figures, religious centres, sports and cultural clubs, and civil society organisations reaffirmed their support for the Kingdom, national unity, and loyalty to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Issued by around 1,000 entities, the statements expressed confidence in the government's measures, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to confront Iranian aggression.

They praised the Bahrain Defence Force for its readiness, professionalism, and vigilance in responding to attacks on civilian sites and private property, describing such assaults as serious violations of good-neighbourliness, religious bonds, and regional security. The Ministry of Interior was also commended for addressing the consequences of the attacks, with national personnel recognised for their dedication and professionalism across sectors.

The statements reaffirmed that, under the leadership of His Majesty the King and HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Bahrain will maintain its firm stance in supporting peace, promoting regional and international stability, and upholding principles of mutual respect, coexistence, and good-neighbourly relations.

Critical services on war footing

Medicine, care and connectivity ready for any crisis



Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed at the central medicine warehouses

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's key health and telecommunications systems are fully prepared to respond to any emergency, officials confirmed during inspections of vital facilities across the Kingdom yesterday.

Central Medicine warehouse

His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, visited central medicine warehouses alongside Her Excellency Dr Jalila bint Sayed Jawad Hassan, Minister of Health. The inspection focused on storage conditions, inventory management, and distribution mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted supplies of medicines and medical equipment to hospitals and clinics nationwide. Dr Jalila highlighted the advanced digital tracking systems recently implemented, which monitor stock levels in real time and flag potential shortages before they occur.



Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Dr Shaikh Abdullah

TDT | Manama

"Ensuring that essential medicines are always available is a top priority," Dr Jalila said. "Our teams are continuously upgrading storage protocols and logistics to guarantee safety, quality, and efficiency across all health institutions."

SMC

At Salmaniya Medical Complex, members of the Board of Commissioners of the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR) reviewed medical care provided to residents and citizens injured in recent attacks. Officials assessed treatment protocols, hospital readiness,



NIHR officials at SMC

and the level of care being extended to patients. They also inspected shelters housing displaced residents, including Al Budaiya and Dar Al Karama Social Care Centre, ensuring that accommodation, social services, and humanitarian support meet national standards.

"We are committed to safeguarding human dignity and delivering professional care even under exceptional circumstances," said an NIHR official. "All protocols are aligned with recognised humanitarian and medical standards to support affected residents and citizens."

Telecom

Meanwhile, the telecommunications sector has reassured the public that network services will remain fully operational under all circumstances. Dr Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, conducted visits to Batelco, STC Bahrain, Zain Bahrain, and BNET to inspect emergency response procedures and rapid recovery systems.

"The telecommunications sector is a key pillar of national security and digital infrastructure," the minister said. "Maintaining uninterrupted connectivity is essential not only for daily life but also for emergency response and coordination across all sectors."

Officials emphasised that coordinated preparedness across health, humanitarian, and telecom sectors reflects Bahrain's commitment to protecting residents and ensuring essential services remain uninterrupted during any crisis.

Only Iran's 'unconditional surrender' can end war: Trump

AFP | Tehran, Iran

President Donald Trump said yesterday that only Iran's "unconditional surrender" would bring an end to the Middle East war.

"There will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER," Trump wrote.

Britain 'ready to support' Saudi

London | United Kingdom

Britain is ready to help defend Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Keir Starmer told the kingdom in a call yesterday.

Starmer spoke to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and assured him "the UK stood ready to support the defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should it be needed," the PM's spokeswoman said.



Diplomatic missions praise Bahrain's leadership and community safety

Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Japan and Philippine envoys commend proactive measures to protect residents

Pradeep Puravankara
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's swift and coordinated response to regional tensions has earned praise and gratitude from multiple diplomatic missions in the Kingdom, reflecting confidence in the authorities' ability to safeguard all residents.

Deep sense of confidence

The Embassy of Sri Lanka expressed "sincere gratitude to the Bahraini government for its steadfast commitment to the safety and well-being of the Sri Lankan community," highlighting the proactive support provided by authorities through high-level briefings and daily updates via the Ministry of Interior's Al Madar Centre. The Embassy noted that transparent communication channels have "instilled a deep sense of confidence and reassurance among both embassy officials and community members."

Ambassador of Bangladesh

Similarly, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Md. Rais Hasan Sarower, praised the professionalism and prudence of Bahraini authorities in ensuring



The effective use of public warning sirens and rapid establishment of shelter facilities has been instrumental in safeguarding lives.

THE AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH, H.E. MR. MD. RAIS HASAN SAROWER



We commend the Ministry of Interior, Bahrain Defence Force, and security units for their professionalism and bravery in defending the Kingdom's sovereignty.

THE PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR, H.E. GINES JAIME RICARDO D. GALLAGA



The transparent communication channels provided by the authorities have instilled a deep sense of confidence and reassurance among our officials and community members

H.E. SHANIKA DISSANAYAKE, SRI LANKAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN



Japan stands shoulder to shoulder with Bahrain in these challenging times. It is our sincere and earnest hope that hostilities will come to an immediate end

HE MS ASAKO OKAI, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN TO THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

precipitate the swift crisis response that prioritises the protection of lives," the Ambassador said.

Philippine Ambassador

The Philippine Ambassador, H.E. Gines Jaime Ricardo D. Gallaga, also extended profound thanks to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, noting their "inclusive care provided to all residents during this unprecedented period." Ambassador Gallaga praised field visits to shelters across Bahrain, highlighting the "warm hospitality" and essential support offered to over 55,000 Filipino nationals. He added that the professionalism and bravery of the Ministry of Interior, Bahrain Defence Force, and security units reinforced his confidence in Bahrain's internal stability and security.

Officials from all four missions emphasised the importance of maintaining communication with authorities, adhering to safety instructions, and avoiding the spread of unverified information, reflecting a strong collaboration between diplomatic representatives and Bahraini authorities.

the safety of all residents, including the large Bangladeshi community. He commended the use of public warning sirens, rapid

shelter establishment, and continuous coordination between the Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladeshi leader-

ship. He also expressed gratitude for the condolences extended by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa

Al Khalifa following the tragic death of a Bangladeshi national due to missile debris. "We ap-

Four arrested for filming attack aftermath and spreading false news



TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior has announced that the Anti-Cybercrime Directorate at the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security has identified and arrested four individuals for misusing social media.

The suspects reportedly filmed and circulated videos related to the aftermath of Iranian aggression, including footage from military sites, in ways that violated the law and spread false information.

The Ministry warned that sharing such content can mislead public opinion, create fear among citizens and residents, and undermine security and public order.

Legal proceedings have been initiated, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution.

The Ministry urged the public to rely on official sources for information and avoid reposting unverified videos or news, cautioning that doing so may result in legal consequences and threaten national safety.

BD500 fee for firms missing Bahrainisation targets

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Companies that fail to meet Bahrainisation targets may be charged BD500 for each expatriate work permit, the Ministry of Labour said.

In a written reply to Shura Council member Dr Ebtisam Al Dallal, the ministry said the 2023-2026 national labour market plan prioritises hiring Bahrainis while allowing expatriate recruitment where employers demonstrate genuine need.

Prepared under Decree-Law No. 21 of 2021, the plan was approved by the Cabinet on 26

June 2023 and published in the Official Gazette on 3 July 2023.

The ministry said the strategy focuses on creating better jobs for Bahrainis, aligning education with labour market needs, strengthening private sector partnerships, and supporting investment while protecting workers' rights.

Bahrainisation rules apply across all sectors, with some reaching 50 per cent localisation. Compliance is monitored automatically through the Labour Market Regulatory Authority's electronic systems.

To encourage hiring Bahrainis, wage support schemes cover up to 70% in the first year,

50% in the second and 30% in the third, with support ceilings raised to BD800 for graduates, BD600 for diploma holders and BD450 for secondary-level workers.

The ministry also said fees on expatriate labour have been increased to narrow the cost gap with local hires. Around 80% of these fees go to Tamkeen, which funds wage support and business development programmes. Under Cabinet Resolution No. 79 of 2025, work permit fees will rise gradually until 2029, while monthly levies will increase annually to BD30 per worker, excluding domestic workers.

Civil court hearings move online from Sunday

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Civil court hearings will move online from Sunday under a measure announced by the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf in coordination with the Supreme Judicial Council.

The ministry said hearings will be conducted through the remote litigation service available on its website, moj.gov.bh, placing civil cases under a unified digital system.

Users will access the platform through the upgraded eKey 2.0 system, which uses facial recognition and allows secure login without the need for passwords.

According to the ministry, each session will remain under the full supervision of the presiding judge. The platform also enables documents to be presented and exchanged electronically during hearings, while both parties can submit their arguments directly through the system.

The ministry added that the digital process preserves all legal safeguards related to access to justice and the right to a fair trial, in accordance with existing laws and procedures.

Grace period proposed for LMRA violations

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Lawmakers have proposed introducing a warning mechanism to alert employers before suspending services on the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) system over violations.

The proposal, submitted by MP Khalid Buanaq and reviewed by the Services Committee, calls for granting employers a 10-day period to cor-



MP Khalid Buanaq

rect violations before access to the system is suspended.

Supporters say the measure would help prevent sudden disruptions to business oper-

ations, particularly for small and medium enterprises that rely heavily on the authority's electronic platform to manage labour procedures.

MPs backing the initiative noted that unexpected suspension of system access can create operational challenges for companies.

If approved, the proposal could lead to a procedural change in how the LMRA handles compliance issues within its electronic system.

Life term for using dangerous animals in attacks



Mohammed Mousa, Chairman of Parliament's Public Utilities and Environment Committee
Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Using a dangerous animal to attack someone could lead to life imprisonment under a draft law Parliament is set to debate on Tuesday. The legislation would also ban private ownership and introduce strict controls on how such animals are kept, traded and transported.

The bill, attached to Decree No. 15 of 2025, aims to regulate the keeping, sale, import, export and breeding of dangerous animals, while imposing penalties for possession without a licence from the relevant authorities.

Dangerous animals are defined as those capable of harming people or other animals, including predatory species and "semi-dangerous" animals that may become aggressive despite not being naturally dangerous.

Under the proposal, individuals and companies would be barred from keeping or breeding such animals. Only licensed institutions, including zoos, animal parks, circuses and research centres, would be permitted to handle them. These establishments would require ministry approval, register their animals and keep them in secure enclosures under conditions set by ministerial regulations.

Licensed facilities would also have to provide proper food, shelter and veterinary care, prevent escapes and obtain approval before transferring animals or holding public displays.

The draft also obliges the public to report stray or illegally kept dangerous animals. Authorities would have the power to seize such animals, shelter them and recover related costs from the responsible person.

Parliament's Public Utilities and Environment Committee has recommended approval of the bill.

Aggression

Iran targets residential buildings in Manama, says Interior Ministry



Qatar says its naval forces were in buildings targeted by Iran

TDT | Manama

Ignoring United Nations calls to "give peace a chance", Iran widened its missile and drone campaign across the Gulf, striking Bahrain and threatening its Gulf Cooperation Council neighbours, fuelling fears the conflict could spill into Azerbaijan as the war entered its eighth day.

Bahrain's Ministry of Interior said Iran struck a hotel and two residential buildings in the capital Manama yesterday, correcting an earlier statement that two hotels and one residential building had been hit.

"Iranian aggression targeted a hotel and two residential buildings in Manama," the Interior Ministry said on X, adding that there was "no loss of life".

"Sirens have sounded. Citizens and residents are urged to remain calm and head to the nearest safe place," the Ministry of Interior said in a post

Iranian aggression targeted a hotel & 2 residential buildings in Manama. No loss of life were recorded. Civil defence extinguished a fire in a flat in 1 of the 2 buildings

@MOI_BAHRAIN

on X.

Authorities said one of the residential buildings caught fire following the strike, but the blaze was quickly extinguished. Qatar later confirmed that members of its Emiri Naval Forces were inside the buildings targeted overnight but escaped unharmed.

"The State of Qatar strongly condemns the Iranian attack targeting buildings in various parts of the Kingdom of Bahrain, housing members of the Qatari Emiri Naval Forces participating in the Unified Maritime Operations Center of the Gulf Cooperation Council's Unified Military Command," the Qatari foreign ministry said in a statement.

"The Qatari Emiri Naval Forces personnel present in the

targeted buildings are safe and unharmed," it added.

The Qatari defence ministry also said its air defences thwarted a drone attack targeting the US air base at Al-Udeid, Washington's largest military facility in the Middle East.

Explosions were also reported yesterday in Kuwait, Dubai and Abu Dhabi as the conflict spread across the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia said it intercepted three ballistic missiles launched towards Prince Sultan Air Base.

"Three ballistic missiles launched towards Prince Sultan Air Base were intercepted and destroyed," the Saudi defence ministry said on X.

Meanwhile, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said their forces had targeted ra-

dar systems in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Qatar.

"US THAAD radars deployed in the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, as well as the US FPS-132 over-the-horizon radar ('Desert Eye') stationed in Qatar, have been destroyed by the missile and drone units of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," the Guards said on their website Sepah News.



At least 13 people have been killed in the Gulf, including seven civilians, since Iran began its strikes on Saturday. Washington said six US service members were killed, including four in Kuwait.

MPs propose public park in Khalifa City

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

MPs are calling for the creation of a public park in Khalifa City to increase recreational spaces for residents, according to a proposal up for discussion in the next session.

The proposal, reviewed by the Public Utilities and Environment Committee, focuses on developing the park in the Tenth District of the Southern Governorate.

Supporters highlighted the importance of public parks in improving quality of life, while the committee noted that the project aligns with wider efforts to expand public facilities and promote balanced urban development across residential areas.

Model park on way in Madinat Khalifa

The scheme also includes a mosque, a majlis for residents of the constituency and shops for the area

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture said it has begun detailed designs for what it called a model park in Madinat Khalifa, Block 957, on plot number 12016095, with a total area of 1,844 square metres.

The ministry said the work is being prepared with a number of government bodies and that the project is due to begin in the latter half of 2026.

The scheme also includes a mosque, a majlis for residents of the constituency and shops for the area. The ministry said the park, mosque, majlis and shops would be designed as one linked site to form a lively focal point in the city.

The Southern Municipal Council backed the proposal. It said the project would help bring people together and encourage sport and outdoor activity in a safe and suitable place.

Infrastructure push in Northern Governorate

Over half the network complete as BD4.3 million projects continue

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Sewerage projects worth over BD4.3 million are currently underway in the Northern Governorate, the Ministry of Works disclosed in a parliamentary update on infrastructure development in the Governorate's Twelfth District.

Work on the sewer network has reached 69% completion overall, while the Twelfth District stands at around 53%. Plans



are in place to further expand the network to connect additional properties to the public sewer system in the coming years.

Four projects @BD1.85m

Four sewer projects have already been completed in the area at a combined cost of approximately BD1.85 million. These included network expansions in Malkiya and Sadad villages, as well as infrastructure linking the Karzakan Health Centre to the

main sewer system. The largest of these was the third phase of the Malkiya Block 1034 sewer network, serving hundreds of properties at a cost exceeding BD1.3 million.

Meanwhile, three major sewer projects are under construction with a total value of about BD4.37 million. These encompass sewer and stormwater drainage networks in Malkiya Block 1033, Shahrakan Block 1044, and Sadad Block 1038. Work on these projects began between late

2024 and early 2025, with completion expected in 2026.

Beyond sewer networks, the ministry confirmed that additional road infrastructure projects are planned in the district, with estimated future costs of around BD8.1 million. These projects will include road paving, construction of service roads, stormwater drainage systems, and pedestrian facilities to support the Northern Governorate's growing residential communities.

Bahrain refutes false Iranian claims at UN on behalf of GCC

TDT | New York

Bahrain, representing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), has formally rejected false and misleading claims by Iran at the United Nations, condemning Tehran's attacks on GCC countries as clear violations of international law and the UN Charter.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain, acting as President of the 46th Session of the GCC Ministerial Council, submitted a letter to Ambassador Mike Waltz, President of the UN Security Council for March, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The communication included detailed evidence refuting allegations made by Iran's representative during a UN press briefing and in correspondence to the Security Council.

The letter affirmed that Iran's attacks using ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, and



fighter aircraft constitute a blatant breach of international law. It stressed that Iran's invocation of Article 51 of the UN Charter is an unfounded attempt to justify aggression, violating the prohibition on the use of force against state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Despite repeated assurances by GCC countries that their territories would not be used to launch attacks on Iran, Tehran has continued op-

erations targeting the region, in violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.

The communication also rejected Iran's claim that its strikes target only military installations, noting that most attacks struck critical civilian infrastructure and endangered millions of civilians. It emphasised that Iran bears full responsibility for all injuries, losses, and ongoing damages resulting

from these attacks.

The letter praised GCC air defence forces for intercepting the attacks, welcomed the UN Secretary-General's stance, and urged the Security Council to take decisive measures to compel Iran to cease violations. It reaffirmed the GCC states' right to self-defence and to protect their territories, people, and sovereignty under international law.

US embassy urges Americans to register for departure assistance

TDT | Manama

The U.S. Embassy in Bahrain urged American citizens to register with the U.S. State Department, highlighting the government's readiness to assist those wishing to leave the Middle East.

In a statement obtained by Al-Ayyam, the embassy said citizens should complete the designated form online to receive assistance and updates. Those who have already submitted the crisis registration form need not resubmit it.

The embassy added that U.S. citizens in Bahrain can call (+1-202-501-4444) for information on departure procedures and available support.



While commercial flights are currently not operating from Bahrain, land routes through Saudi Arabia remain accessible. The King Fahd Causeway is open for now, but its status may change without notice, and citizens are advised to monitor updates via official channels.

34 collapse-risk buildings tracked in three years in Muharraq

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Thirty-four buildings considered at risk of collapse have been recorded in Muharraq's Fourth Constituency over the past three years, Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Eng. Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak told Parliament, adding that owners are responsible for repairs and legal action is ongoing in several cases.

In a written reply to MP Hisham Al Awadhi, the minister said 13 buildings had been addressed through demolition or repair, 11 were under legal action, and 10 were nearing completion of ownership checks.

The ministry, working with the Capital Secretariat, municipal directorates, and other agencies, conducts regular inspections in older neighbourhoods to identify unsafe buildings. When a dangerous property is found, the surrounding area can be cordoned off until legal and administrative procedures are completed. Owners are notified and required to maintain their buildings to prevent hazards.

Al Mubarak noted that while owners have the right to repair



Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture

or alter their property, municipal permits are required for construction, demolition, structural work, or land-level changes. Buildings are classified as at risk based on engineering reports detailing partial or full structural failure, including deep cracks in beams or columns—building age alone is not a factor.

Support options are available: homes at risk can access Eskin Bank housing loans, and under the Cities and Villages Development Project, 141 homes in Muharraq have benefited over the past three years, including 95 repairs and 45 rainproofing installations.

Abandoned houses fall outside the ministry's monitoring scope; municipalities are notified to secure these properties.

Fish market sees stable prices and abundant supply

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's fish markets continue to maintain a plentiful supply of seafood, with prices remaining stable despite recent challenges affecting the region.

Local vendors report that demand remains strong, and a wide variety of fresh fish is available for residents and businesses alike.

Officials highlighted that strict quality control measures and efficient supply chains have helped ensure that the market remains well-stocked, providing reassurance to consumers during this period.



Shoppers visiting the market praised the availability of both

local and imported varieties, noting that prices have stayed reasonable. The authorities

urged buyers and vendors to continue following safety and hygiene measures.

Shura Council to vote on limited abortion exceptions

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Shura Council is set to vote on a draft law that would allow abortion only in two medically defined cases: when a pregnancy endangers the mother's life, or when a foetus is diagnosed as unable to survive after birth. The measure targets Article 19 of Decree-Law No. 7 of 1989 on human medicine and dentistry.

The draft, submitted by Shura members Lina Habeeb, Dr Jehad Al Fadhel, Dalal Al Zayed, Dr Jameela Al Salman, and Dr



Lina Habeeb, Shura Council member

Ahmed Al Oraiyedh, maintains the general ban while creating structured exceptions. Abortions would require confirma-

tion by a medical committee of three licensed specialists, written consent from the woman—or her spouse/guardian if she cannot consent—and must be performed in a government or authorised private hospital by an obstetrics and gynaecology specialist. Procedures for severe foetal malformations must occur within 120 days of pregnancy, with both spouses informed and consenting.

The Shura Council's Services Committee recommended advancing the draft after consulting legal advisers, the Ministry of Health, the Supreme

Council of Health, and the National Health Regulatory Authority. The proposal was backed by the Women and Child Affairs Committee, which emphasised that it does not create an absolute right to abortion and preserves procedural safeguards.

Several bodies, including the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Supreme Council for Women, and the National Institution for Human Rights, provided feedback, highlighting medical safety, Sharia compliance, and clear legal procedures.

Drivers detained and vehicles impounded for public disturbance

TDT | Manama

Authorities here have detained several drivers and impounded their vehicles for 60 days after they were found creating loud noises, causing panic among residents, and disrupting public order.

Legal measures have been taken against those involved to ensure public safety and maintain order.



Parliament to discuss development of Muharraq waterfront

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Parliament is set to discuss plans for developing Muharraq's waterfront in the upcoming session, as lawmakers aim to enhance public spaces and strengthen the island's urban landscape.

The discussion follows a parliamentary question direct-

ed to the Minister of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture regarding development plans for the Sixth District of Muharraq Governorate.

Supporters of the initiative say that a well-designed waterfront could feature pedestrian walkways, seating areas, green spaces, and recreational facilities to promote outdoor activity and community engagement.

Air India group to fly 50 West Asia flights Sunday for stranded passengers

Flights planned to and from Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Jeddah, Muscat, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah

TDI | Manama

Air India and Air India Express will operate around 50 flights across West Asia on Sunday to help stranded travellers return to India as airspace disruptions continue to affect parts of the region.

The airlines announced the additional operations after airspace over Saudi Arabia and Oman reopened, allowing scheduled flights to resume on select routes. However, closures in other parts of West Asia continue to impact commercial operations,



An Air India Airbus A320 taxis on the tarmac at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi

forcing several regular services to remain suspended.

Air India Express is scheduled to operate 43 flights across the region, connecting cities including Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, as well as Muscat in Oman and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, with major Indian destinations.

Several non-scheduled commercial flights have also been arranged specifically to assist travellers who were unable to travel due to recent disruptions. Priority for these flights will

be given to travellers holding existing bookings with either airline.

Passengers whose travel plans were affected have been offered flexible rebooking options without additional charges. Travellers can reschedule their flights to India within one month of their original travel date, provided their tickets were issued before March 4 for journeys planned between February 28 and March 8.

The airlines said they are contacting affected passengers directly using registered mobile

numbers to provide rebooking options and updated travel information.

Despite the disruptions in West Asia, the Air India group confirmed that its services to Europe, including the United Kingdom, and North America continue to operate on schedule, using alternative routes where necessary.

Both airlines said they are continuing to explore opportunities to operate additional ad-hoc flights to support passengers while regional airspace restrictions remain in place.

Oil prices surge as Mideast war rages, stocks fall on US jobs

● The international benchmark oil contract, Brent North Sea crude, surged more than 6% to hit \$91.89 per barrel

● The main US contract West Texas Intermediate soared more than 11% to over \$90 per barrel.

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Crude prices surged higher yesterday as oil fields in Iraq came under attack and US Donald Trump demanded Iran's unconditional surrender, while stocks slumped after data showed a surprise drop in jobs in the United States.

The international benchmark oil contract, Brent North Sea crude, surged more than 6% to hit \$91.89 per barrel, after Trump said only the "unconditional surrender" of Iran would end the Middle East war. That is its highest level in nearly two years.

The main US contract West Texas Intermediate soared more than 11% to over \$90 per barrel.

Maritime traffic has all but dried up through the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas supplies run.

Market reaction to the conflict had been tempered by hopes that it would be short, but Trump's demand for Iran's

Key figures at around 1630 GMT	
Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 6.4% at \$90.85 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 9.2% at \$88.42 per barrel
New York - Dow:	▼ 1.3% at 47,349.37 points
New York - S&P 500:	▼ 1.2% at 6,752.33
Nasdaq Composite:	▼ 1.0% at 22,527.81
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 1.2% at 10,284.75 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.7% at 7,993.49 (close)
Frankfurt - DAX:	▼ 0.9% at 23,591.03 (close)
Seoul - Kospi: FLAT at 5,584.87 (close)	
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 0.6% at 55,620.84 (close)
Hang Seng Index:	▲ 1.7% at 25,775.29 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.4% at 4,124.19 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1599 from \$1.1604 on Thursday
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.3388 from \$1.3357
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 157.61 yen from 157.55 yen
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.64 pence from 86.87 pence

capitulation increases the prospect of a long conflict.

Trump's comments "dashed hopes that the conflict will be averted quickly, and the oil price has continued its push" higher, said XTB research director Kathleen Brooks.

Brent soared by more than a quarter and WTI by a third this past week.

"This is a disaster for the global economy," said Brooks.

The prospect of high energy prices for a sustained period has fanned fears of a fresh spike in inflation that could hit the global economy while curbing the ability of central banks to cut interest rates to prop up growth.

"The longer that key energy infrastructure and shipping routes in the region are affected, the greater the chance of a significant inflationary impact," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

Attacks on oilfields were reported in southern Iraq and in the northern autonomous Kurdistan region, which forced a US-run oil field to shut production.

Earlier this week, US President Donald Trump pledged to protect ships through the Strait of Hormuz, but shipping companies have exercised caution in the region.

US Energy Secretary Chris Wright said Friday the US Navy was preparing to escort ships

through the Strait of Hormuz "as soon as it's reasonable to do it".

Meanwhile, data showed the US economy had unexpectedly lost jobs in February, while unemployment also edged up.

The world's biggest economy shed 92,000 jobs last month, down from revised job growth of 126,000 in January, said the Labor Department.

New data released Friday also showed US retail sales had fallen by 0.2% in January.

Investors often look at data showing a slowdown in the economy as raising the chances of the US Federal Reserve as lowering interest rates.

But Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare noted that the jobs figures showed hourly earnings also accelerating.

This "muddles the economic view for the Fed", he said.

"Accordingly, look for the Fed to sit on its policy hands, unwilling to cut rates for now as it also contends with the spike in oil prices and the uncertainty of the Iran war," added O'Hare.

Until recently, the markets were anticipating the Fed would resume interest rate cuts in June, but that has now shifted to September.

Wall Street's main indices were down around 1% or more in late morning trading.

Europe's main markets, which had earlier shown only small losses, finished the day with losses of around 1%.

EWA sets 23% water loss target by 2032 under updated plan

Mohammed Darwish
TDI | Manama

Bahrain aims to reduce water loss to 23 per cent by 2032 under a new Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) plan set to begin in 2026. The authority is preparing a master plan for water demand with a specialist consultant, reviewing the state of the network and factors affecting loss. The current 15 per cent target will be reassessed, with updated measures introduced in the first quarter of 2026.

The EWA is enhancing tracking of the transmission network, upgrading meters, strengthening billing checks, and addressing illegal water use. Since mid-2022, unresolved illegal connections have been referred to the Public Prosecution, backed by draft amendments to the electricity sector law.

An updated register of all flow meters, including installation dates, will support a staged replacement plan starting in 2026, prioritising technical assessment and efficiency. Routine testing ensures meters meet standards, while faulty or hard-to-replace meters are managed case by case. Manual readings are taken where telecom issues affect meters.

The authority is also improving billing systems for closed accounts, tightening controls on unusually high bills, and tracking staff actions for a

clear audit trail. Smart meters, first adopted in Muharraq in 2012, have improved accuracy and are being expanded.

Technical updates in 2024 to distribution materials, early leak detection, and monthly monitoring of district metered areas all contribute to water-loss management. Procurement of meters continues through public tenders, with ongoing reviews for alternative technologies. The EWA said rectifying illegal extensions is minor compared to losses from illegal consumption, and routine maintenance extends meter service life to 20 years.



Over 70% of the Earth's surface is covered by water, but only about 2.5% of it is freshwater, and less than 1% is readily accessible for human use.



Dair and Samaheej waterfront to be offered on Government Land Investment Platform

Mohammed Darwish
TDI | Manama

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture has announced that the planned waterfront for Dair and Samaheej will be listed on the Government Land Investment Platform in the first half of this year, marking the next step in East Muharraq's shoreline development. In a written reply to MP Dr



Dr Hisham Al Ashiri, MP

Hisham Al Ashiri, the ministry said the project will be delivered in partnership with the private sector, following the same model used for the Sama Bay project near Dry Dock Highway leading to Amwaj Islands.

The Dair-Samaheej site comprises two public coastline properties on Avenue 65, measuring 50,866 and 51,741 square metres respectively. The ministry confirmed that the entire area will

be dedicated to coastal purposes.

Preliminary plans include a seafront walkway, cycle lane, seating areas, green spaces, a play area, outdoor fitness equipment, and a services building. For comparison, the first phase of East Muharraq's waterfront, the Sama Beach project, spans two kilometres and features beaches, a retail unit, a food-truck zone, a walkway, padel courts, and a football pitch.

Dr Al Ashiri had asked why the Dair and Samaheej coastline, ordered in 2010, had not progressed, and requested details on the full project area, any land reassignments, the work schedule, and the status of engineering designs. The ministry said initial designs are prepared but did not provide start or completion dates, noting that finalising marine reclamation lines is outside its remit.

Trump demands Iran's 'unconditional surrender'

Massive aerial strikes devastate Tehran and Beirut as the regional conflict enters its second week

● Lebanon faces humanitarian crisis

● Iran launches missiles at Israel

● Iran holds first Friday prayers since Khamenei's death

● Mourners weep for slain supreme leader

● Iran internet at one percent capacity

AFP | Washington

President Donald Trump said yesterday that only Iran's "unconditional surrender" would bring an end to the Middle East war, as Tehran was rocked by some of the heaviest US-Israeli strikes of the spiralling, week-long conflict.

Now in its seventh day, the war has embroiled nations beyond the region, upended the world's energy and transport sectors, and brought chaos to even usually peaceful areas around the Gulf.

It has spread to Lebanon, whose prime minister warned of an impending humanitarian disaster as tens of thousands fled heavy Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs.

Trump, who has given varying reasons for starting the war that killed Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last weekend, promised to help rebuild the country's economy if Tehran installed an "acceptable" new leader.

"There will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.



The site of overnight Israeli airstrikes is pictured in the southern suburbs of Beirut

"MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN (MIGA!)," he added.

In Tehran, crowds of men and women dressed in black, some carrying Iranian flags, gathered for the first Friday prayers since the start of the war, online footage showed.

Several loud explosions sent clouds of black smoke into Tehran's sky, according to AFP journalists who described the day's strikes as the heaviest yet on the capital.

"It's really very scary," a Tehran businessman who gave his first name as Robert told AFP.

"Checkpoints have been put up in place in the city to prevent

looting and ensure control," the 60-year-old said at the Armenian border with Iran.

'Additional surprises'

Both Israel and the US warned yesterday they were escalating their attacks on Iran.

"We have additional surprises ahead which I do not intend to disclose," Israel's military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said.

According to Iran's health ministry, the US and Israeli strikes on the country have killed 926 people.

Iranian government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said

yesterday that 30 percent of the dead were children.

Iran has launched missile and drone attacks at Israel and Gulf states since the war began, with journalists in Tel Aviv reporting hearing several blasts yesterday.

In Israel, at least 10 people have been killed, according to first responders there.

The US military has reported the deaths of six of its personnel.

'We'll sleep on the road'

The conflict has sucked in Israel's neighbour Lebanon after Tehran's proxy group Hezbollah launched missiles at Israel.

Israeli air strikes hit sites in

Lebanon's south and east yesterday.

There has been widespread destruction in the southern Beirut suburbs, considered a Hezbollah stronghold and home to an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people.

Correspondents on the ground saw scenes of panic on Thursday as residents massively fled after an unprecedented Israeli order to evacuate immediately if they wanted to save their lives.

Hundreds of families milled around on a Beirut beach, left with nowhere to go.

"We'll sleep on the road tonight and God alone knows what



In a move mirroring his domestic slogans, President Trump posted "MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN (MIGA!)" on Truth Social, coupling the demand for surrender with a promise to restore the Iranian economy under new leadership

will happen to us," one man said, declining to give his name.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam warned that a "humanitarian disaster is looming" from the displacement.

Yesterday, Hezbollah told Israeli residents to evacuate areas within five kilometres (three miles) of the Lebanese border.

The death toll in Lebanon rose to 217 yesterday, according to the country's health ministry.

Israel's army meanwhile said it had killed more than 70 Hezbollah gunmen.

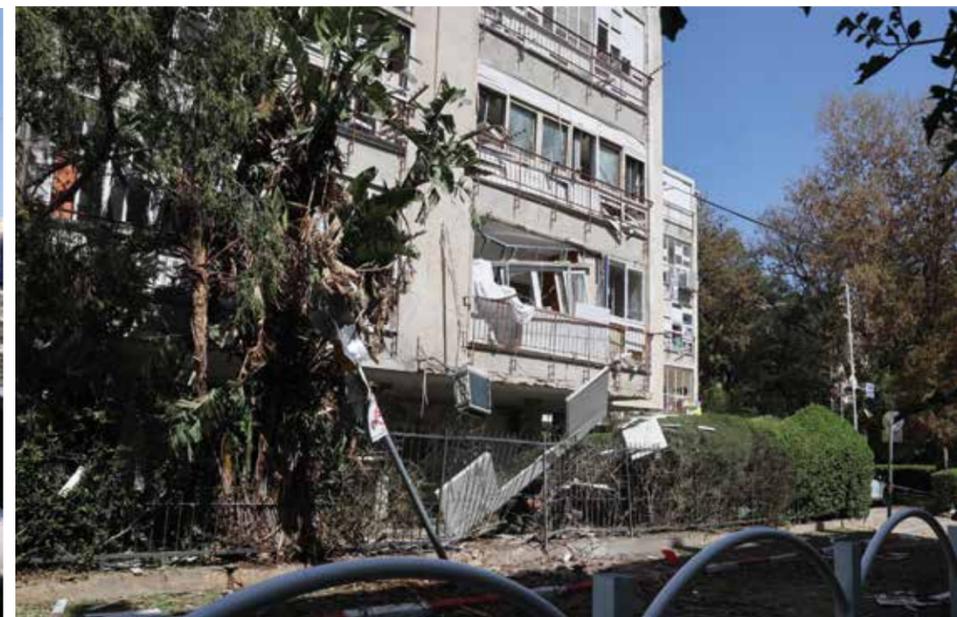
The United Nations refugee agency said yesterday it had declared the crisis a major humanitarian emergency, stressing the need for an immediate response.

The war has also come under increasing scrutiny in Europe, with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez calling the US-Israeli strikes an "extraordinary mistake" and "not in accordance with international law".

European Union chiefs are scheduled to hold talks about the war on Monday.



Women hold posters of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during Friday noon prayers at the compound of the Mosalla mosque in Tehran



A view of the site of an Iranian strike in Givatayim, in the center of Israel

Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius dies and is succeeded by co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, an unprecedented political arrangement in the Roman Empire

English King Henry VIII's divorce request is denied by Pope Clement VII

Alexander Graham Bell receives a patent for the telephone in the US



Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen announces his team was the first to reach the South Pole on December 14, 1911, 34 days before British explorer Robert Falcon Scott

US likely responsible for strike on Iran school: New York Times

● School once part of IRGC compound

● Pentagon confirms investigating incident

● White House denies certain knowledge

AFP | Washington

The United States is most likely responsible for a strike that reportedly killed scores of people at an elementary school in southern Iran, according to a New York Times investigation.

The February 28 strike hit an elementary school in the Iranian town of Minab and killed at least 150 people, according to Iranian officials.

Neither Israel nor the United States has claimed responsibility for the attack, which was in close proximity to sites controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

The US Department of Defense has said it is investigating the incident.

The New York Times reported on Thursday that US military statements indicating forces were attacking naval targets near the Strait of Hormuz, where an IRGC base is located, "suggest they were most likely to have carried out the strike."



The site of a strike on a girls' school in Minab, in Iran's southern Hormozgan province (file photo)

An analysis of social media posts from the time of the attack, as well as photos and videos from witnesses, indicated that the Shajare Tayyebeh elementary school was struck at the same time as a Revolutionary Guards' naval base sites, the Times said.

Two unidentified US officials told Reuters that military investigators "believe it is likely" that US forces were responsible for the strike.

AFP has been unable to reach the location to independently verify the toll or the circumstances of the attack.

General Dan Caine, the top US military officer, said on Wednesday that the United States was carrying out strikes along southern Iran at the time.

A map he presented, the Times reported, indicated an area including Minab had been targeted by strikes in the first 100 hours of the operation.

Caine noted that Israel had mainly been operating further north in Iran.

The school was at one point part of the IRGC's naval base, according to satellite images from 2013 reviewed by the Times.

However, the paper said publicly available historical satellite imagery "shows the structure bears the hallmarks of a school, including a sports field and other recreational areas that were added over time."



Historical satellite imagery showed the building had sports fields and playground facilities, reinforcing evidence that the structure functioned as an elementary school despite its proximity to an IRGC naval base

"Given the U.S.'s intelligence capabilities, they should have known that a school was in the vicinity," Beth Van Schaack, a former State Department official who teaches at Stanford University's Center for Human Rights and International Justice, told the Times.

The Norway-based rights group Hengaw said the school was holding its morning session at the time of the attack and reportedly had about 170 students present.

Asked Wednesday whether the United States was involved in the strike, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt replied: "Not that we know of."

Iran police chief says ordered to open fire at looters during wartime

AFP | Tehran

Iran's police chief Ahmad Radan said yesterday that officers had been authorised to shoot at suspected looters amid the war with Israel and the United States.

"Because we are in wartime conditions, I have issued orders to shoot at potential thieves," Radan told state TV, adding that any thieves would be "swiftly neutralised".

He also said that authorities had taken measures to maintain order online.

"We will not allow a group of paid agents to undermine the unity that the people achieved with the blood of thousands of martyrs by spreading agitation," said Radan.

US cannot provide enough missiles for Gulf states and Ukraine: EU commissioner

AFP | Paris

The United States is not in a position to provide enough missiles to the Gulf states and Ukraine to defend themselves, EU defence and space commissioner Andrius Kubilius said yesterday.

"It's very clear that after the Iranian crisis ... it became more urgent for us in Europe to ramp up production of air defence and anti-ballistic missiles," Kubilius said in Warsaw.

"Americans really will not be able to provide enough of those missiles, both for the Gulf countries, for American army itself, and also for Ukrainian needs."

Kubilius said Europe was facing a "huge challenge" in developing anti-missile defence, stressing that Ukraine's needs were "immense".

He said "for the winter season alone" Ukraine needed around 700 Patriot, PAC-2 and PAC-3 missiles, which is "more or less equal to the number of missiles that American manufacturers are capable of producing in a year".

At a joint press conference with Polish defence minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, Kubilius emphasised that "the situation (in Europe) is really critical".

"It is clear that we are going to have to develop our missile production very quickly and very urgently," he added.

UN rights chief says US must probe school strike 'very quickly'

AFP | Geneva

The United Nations rights chief stressed yesterday the need for "impartial investigations" into a strike on a school in Iran, urging the US to move "very quickly" with its announced probe.

UN rights chief Volker Turk condemned "this absolutely tragic incident".

"What we have asked for is obviously prompt, transparent and impartial investigations, which we understand has been announced by the United States," he told reporters in Geneva.

"We need this to happen very quickly and we need to also make sure that there is accountability as well as redress for the victims," he insisted.

Turk, who said he hoped to go to Washington later this month, said there were "significant concerns about the respect for international humanitarian law, especially the conduct of hostilities... (and what) measures of precaution, of distinction, of proportionality are taken".

When it comes to a school, he



Mourners dig graves during the funeral for children killed in a reported strike on a primary school in Iran's Hormozgan province in Minab (file photo)

said, that was "clearly a civilian institution that should never be attacked".

"Then there are questions around the type of weapons that were used, as well as the timing," he said, pointing out

that the attack "happened in the morning", at a time when children were likely to be in school.

"These factors need to be taken into account," he said.

There is "a horrible, tragic lesson to be learnt when girls

are killed in this way", the rights chief said.

He added that he hoped "there will be not only guarantees of non-recurrence but a review of all the standard operating procedures when it comes

to this type of issues".

What we have asked for is obviously prompt, transparent and impartial investigations, which we understand has been announced by the United States. We need this to happen very quickly and we need to also make sure that there is accountability as well as redress for the victims

UN RIGHTS CHIEF VOLKER TURK

Turk said his office so far had few details, since it did not have a presence inside Iran, with the ongoing internet shutdown making it even harder to get information.

"The onus is now really on those who conducted these strikes to conduct this type of investigation," he said.

"We expect accountability to be served."

Drones hit oil sites, target armed groups in Iraq

AFP | Baghdad

Drones hit an airport and oil facilities in southern Iraq yesterday, while in the north strikes and explosions mainly targeted Iranian armed groups.

In Iraq's southern Basra province, "a drone crashed into the cargo terminal at Basra airport," a security official told AFP.

Two others hit a US company in the Burjesia oil complex, and a fourth struck the Rumaila oil field, where energy major BP operates, the official added, without being able to identify the perpetrators.

Iraq, long a proxy battleground between the US and Iran, has said it did not want to be dragged into the war engulfing the Middle East. But it has not been spared.

Iraq was drawn into the war from the outset, with strikes blamed on the United States and Israel targeting Iran-backed groups in Iraq which have vowed not to remain neutral and which have claimed attacks on US bases in the country and in the region.

The northern autonomous Kurdistan region, which hosts US troops, has been a main target of attacks. Explosions sounded yesterday near the airport in Kurdistan's capital Erbil, where drones have been repeatedly intercepted.



Smoke rises after an explosion near Erbil International Airport in Erbil

Kurdistan's natural resources ministry said yesterday that oil production at an oil field operated by US firm HKN Energy had been halted following an attack a day earlier in Dohuk province.

It said the strike was launched from areas in federal Iraq, and urged Baghdad to prevent such attacks on the northern region's civilians, economic infrastructure, and its oil and gas sector.

A security source said the at-

tack was carried out with two drones. In Erbil, construction worker Abdulmajid Ibrahim, 38, said he fears the "war will last for a long time".

Iraq's Kurdistan also hosts camps and rear-bases operated by several Iranian Kurdish rebel groups, which Iran has struck repeatedly since the start of the war.

Tehran threatened yesterday to target "all the facilities" of the region if Kurdish Iranian groups were allowed to enter Iran.

So far, no forces have entered Iran, several sources from the opposition said on Thursday.

Yesterday, fresh strikes hit the Kurdish groups, said an official from the exiled Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

"Our bases are under attack from the Iranian enemy," the PDKI official said.

Iranian Kurds pin their hopes on the war weakening the Islamic republic and may even go so far as to ally with the United States.

Iran warship docks at Indian port of Kochi: Indian govt source

AFP | New Delhi

An Iranian warship has docked in the southwest Indian port of Kochi, a government source in New Delhi said yesterday, after a US submarine sank another Iranian frigate and a third docked in Sri Lanka.

"IRIS Lavan... docked at Kochi on March 4. In this context, its crew of 183 are currently accommodated at naval facilities in Kochi," the source said.

Like the IRIS Dena, the Iranian warship sunk by a US submarine Wednesday off

the coast of Sri Lanka, IRIS Lavan had also been part of a naval fleet review off India's port city of Visakhapatnam.

"Days before the IRIS Dena incident south of Sri Lanka, India was approached by Iran to take in the Iranian Ship IRIS Lavan," the source said.

"This request was received on February 28, 2026, indicating that a docking at Kochi was urgent as the vessel had developed technical issues," the source added.

"Approval was accorded for the docking on March 1."

Merz warns against Iran state collapse, uncontrolled migration

AFP | Berlin

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said yesterday the Middle East war must not lead to the collapse of the Iranian state, warning of the impact this would have on migration to Europe.

"An endless war is not in our interest. The same applies to a collapse of Iranian statehood or proxy conflicts fought on Iranian soil," he said in a statement.

"Such scenarios could have far-reaching consequences for Europe, including for security, energy supply and

migration."

He added that "we share the goals of the United States and Israel regarding the Iranian nuclear and missile programme, Tehran's threats against Israel, its support for terrorism and proxies."

"The Iranian people have the right to freely decide their own destiny."

But Merz said a total collapse of the Iranian state would spread chaos, a point he also stressed speaking at a trade fair in Munich.

Germany and its European allies were "pushing hard for Iran's sovereignty to be preserved", he said there.

Israel says destroyed 'bunker' of slain Iran supreme leader



Satellite imagery from an alleged Israeli strike on the bunker where Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is being guarded

AFP | Jerusalem

The Israeli military yesterday said its fighter jets had "dismantled" an underground bunker that was meant to be used as a command hub by slain leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"The underground military bunker, which was located beneath the regime's leadership compound in the centre of Tehran, was intended to be used by the supreme leader of the Iranian regime as a secure emergency command centre," the army said.

"Khamenei was eliminated before he could use the bunker during operation 'Roaring Lion' but the compound continued to be used by senior Iranian regime officials."

The Israeli military said around 50 combat jets were involved in the strikes on the underground network that spanned "multiple streets in the heart of Tehran".

Khamenei was killed at his leadership compound on Saturday, on the first day of joint US-Israeli strikes that sparked the Middle East war.

The Pentagon has since said it was an Israeli strike that killed him, while Trump has said it was in part thanks to US intelligence.

On Thursday, Israel's military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir said: "In just 40 seconds, approximately 40 senior officials of the Iranian terror regime were eliminated, including the regime's leader, Ali Khamenei."

Sri Lanka denounces war deaths, houses Iran sailors

AFP | Colombo

Sri Lanka denounced the toll of Middle East fighting yesterday as it gave refuge to more than 250 Iranian sailors two days after a deadly torpedo strike on another of Iran's ships.

The crew from the second ship were brought ashore on Thursday and were being accommodated at a military camp near the capital Colombo. Their ship, IRIS Bushehr, was under Sri Lankan control.

The vessel reported engine trouble and sought port entry after another Iranian vessel, IRIS Dena, was hit by a US torpedo off Sri Lanka's southern coast on Wednesday.

Washington said it had carried out that attack, which killed at least 84 Iranian sailors and left 64 more missing. Sri Lanka rescued 32 injured survivors.

"Our approach is that every life is as precious as our own," Sri Lanka's President Anura Kumara Dissanayake wrote on X yesterday, urging peace after the Israeli-US campaign led to Iranian retaliatory strikes.

Wednesday's attack was the first military strike far outside the Middle East since the United States and Israel launched their war on Iran on Saturday.

US authorities said Wednesday's strike was the first by a torpedo fired from an American



Iranian ship IRIS Bushehr after a US submarine attack, off the coast of Colombo

submarine since World War II. Sri Lanka gave permission to IRIS Bushehr to enter its territorial waters and also evacuated its 219 crew to the naval facility, while the 32 survivors from the first vessel are in hospital.

"All our actions are aimed at saving lives and ensuring that humanity prevails," Dissanayake said.

He said in an earlier address to the nation that sheltering the sailors was the "most courageous and humanitarian course of action that a state can take".

"We jealously guard our non-aligned policy while ensuring

All our actions are aimed at saving lives and ensuring that humanity prevails

SRI LANKA'S PRESIDENT ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE

that humanitarian values and the saving of lives remain our top priority," he said.

'Ceremonial' ship

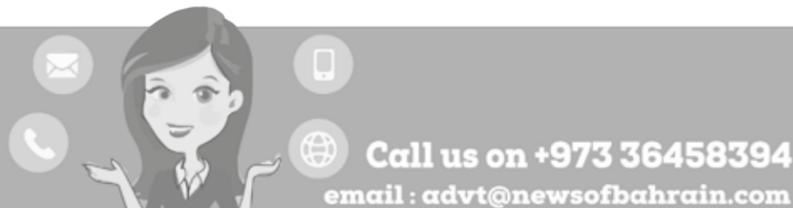
Sri Lanka has remained neutral in the conflict. The United

States is Sri Lanka's largest export market, while Iran is a key buyer of tea, the island's main export commodity.

Iran's ambassador to Sri Lanka, Alireza Delkhosh, welcomed Dissanayake's gesture.

In neighbouring India, visiting Iranian deputy foreign minister Saeed Khatibzadeh slammed the United States for attacking a "ceremonial, unloaded" ship. Health authorities said autopsies on the 84 sailors killed in Wednesday's attack had been completed, but the cause of death will be announced "in a few days".

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Bahrain Victorious set for Paris-Nice challenge

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Victorious will line up at the 2026 Paris-Nice from 8-15 March, with a challenging final weekend awaiting in the hills behind Nice.

The race covers roughly 1,200 kilometres, featuring a 23.4 km team time trial, selective midweek stages, and the summit finish at Auron. Consequently, the general classification is expected to take shape progressively throughout the week.

Lenny Martinez will lead the team for the general classification. To begin with, the opening northern stages are typically influenced more by positioning and wind than terrain, making careful organisation essential before the race turns selective. Martinez commented: "I like Paris-Nice. It's a special race for me — it was my first win in Bahrain colours last year, and I have good memories from that moment."

Next, the Stage 3 team time trial will create the first meaningful gaps. A coordinated effort from all seven riders is essential to set a strong foundation for the remainder of the race.

From Stage 4 onwards, the course becomes more demanding. The uphill finish at Uchon provides an early test for the



Argentinian star Lionel Messi hands US President Donald Trump a ball during an event for Inter Miami CF

overall contenders, while the summit finish at Auron later in the week is expected to be decisive. Bahrain Victorious has historically performed well on this climb, aiming to be present when the race reaches its critical moments. Martinez added: "The course suits me well with some punchy finishes and hard climbs. There is strong competition this year, so it will be interesting to see where my form stands."

Meanwhile, Phil Bauhaus will target the sprint stages early in the week, with support from Robert Stannard and Mathijs Paasschens, while Nikias Arndt and Kamil Gradek focus on protecting Martinez in exposed sections.

Sports Director Roman Kreuziger explained: "We come to Paris-Nice with a very balanced team. The early flat stages require organisation and wind management, while the team

time trial sets the stage for the second half of the race. Lenny is in excellent form, and Damiano Caruso's experience will be key in positioning him at decisive moments."

Finally, due to local elections in France, the final stage will not finish on the Promenade des Anglais. Instead, the race will conclude on a revised circuit around Nice, featuring additional climbs to challenge the riders before the finish.

Muharrag Advance to KBS Cup Semis in Record Fashion

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Reigning champions Al Muharrag Club and Al Ahli have secured their spots in the semi-finals of the Khalifa Bin Salman Cup. Muharrag powered past Sitra Club 153-94 last night at the Bahrain Basketball Association Arena in Um Al Hassam, while Al Ahli defeated Al Hala in their quarter-final clash.

Muharrag delivered a dominant performance in a fast-paced game that featured 247 total points across 187 possessions, marking one of the highest-scoring contests in recent Bahraini basketball history. Their 153 points set a record for the highest total by any team in a Bahraini competition since statistics were digitized in 2016.

The match was competitive in the first half, with Muharrag leading 75-59 at the break despite a late three-pointer from Sitra's Ali Mohsin. Quarter-by-quarter scores were 35-35, 40-24, 35-20, and 43-15 in favor of Muharrag, as the Red Wolves pulled away in the second



Mohammed Ameer Hamooda drives for a layup for Muharrag

half with relentless scoring and tight defense.

Standout performers for Muharrag included Kris Cly-

burn, who earned Man of the Match honors with 41 points, seven rebounds, and four assists, while shooting 7-of-9 from three-point range. Mohammed Nasser added 22 points, and Nader Ali contributed 20 points to help secure the comprehensive victory.

Despite the loss, Sitra produced a historic individual performance. Nigerian-American guard Austin Kelechi Ajukwa scored 51 points, setting a new KBS Cup scoring record, while Ali Mohsin added 21 points for the second-division side.

With this emphatic victory, Peter Schomers' side advance to the semi-finals to continue their title defense. They will face Al Ahli in a best-of-three series at Khalifa Sports City in Isa Town. The first two games are scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, and Wednesday, March 11, with a decisive third game on March 17 if needed.

The semi-final lineup will be completed tonight as Manama Club takes on League B leaders Al Ittihad at 8:30 PM, followed by Al Najma facing Al Nuwaidrat at 10:30 PM, both matches held at the BBA Arena.

India's Bumrah only 'human' says Phillips ahead of T20 World Cup final

AFP | Ahmedabad

New Zealand will be ready to pounce if India's bowling star Jasprit Bumrah falters in the T20 World Cup final said all-rounder Glenn Phillips yesterday. Defending champions

India and New Zealand clash in Ahmedabad on a blockbuster Sunday after the co-hosts edged out a spirited England team in the second semi-final.

A brilliant 105 from Jacob Bethell on Thursday kept England in the hunt during a record

chase of 254 before Bumrah bowled a near-perfect 18th over.

A succession of precise yorkers and length balls yielded just six runs and England were behind the chase. New Zealand, who thrashed South Africa in the first semi-final, are eyeing their

maiden title in their second final appearance and Phillips said the team are ready for Bumrah.

"He's human as well," Phillips told reporters. "He is allowed to have a bad day, as are the rest of us. So hopefully we have a good day against him."

Home hero Piastri edges Antonelli in second Australian GP practice

Piastri excites Melbourne crowd while rivals struggle with sweeping engine changes

● Piastri fastest at 1:19.729

● Antonelli and Russell follow closely

● Verstappen session ends early

● Norris hampered by gearbox issues

AFP | Melbourne

McLaren's Oscar Piastri powered to the fastest time ahead of Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli in second practice for the season-opening Australian Grand Prix yesterday as drivers grappled with sweeping new engine changes.

The Australian sent 125,000 fans at his home track into a frenzy by blasting round Albert Park in one minute 19.729secs, 0.214 clear of Antonelli.

Antonelli's teammate, pre-season favourite George Russell, came third, a fraction clear of Ferrari's seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton.

"A lot of learnings but overall a reasonably good day," said Piastri, who won seven times last year but could only finish the championship in third.

"FP2 ran smoothly and we were able to find a bit more consistency and the car behaved more as we expected, which was good."

After a dismal debut season with Ferrari last year, an upbeat



Mechanics work on the car of McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri in the pits during the second practice session

Hamilton was encouraged by what had been achieved so far by the Scuderia.

"It was challenging at times on track, but we maximised our laps and executed to the best of our ability, getting some good information," he said.

"Lots of work to do but I'm looking forward to getting back in the car tomorrow."

Charles Leclerc, in the other Ferrari, was fifth with four-time world champion Max Verstappen sixth after spending half

the session in the garage having stalled his Red Bull.

McLaren world champion Lando Norris clawed his way to seventh, more than one second off the pace, after managing only seven laps in first practice due to gearbox issues.

"We've got some good bits of data to go over from the second half of FP2 and there's plenty we can learn from what our competitors have been doing," said Norris, while admitting to "a tricky first day".

Racing Bulls' impressive

rookie Arvid Lindblad banked an eye-opening eighth, a place ahead of Isack Hadjar -- the man he replaced and who is now Verstappen's teammate.

F1 begins new era

It was the first proper test of far-reaching new engine and chassis rules with the hybrid power units now 50 percent traditional combustion and 50 percent electric.

With a finite amount of energy available, drivers had to carefully manage their batteries on

YOU KNOW WHAT

The new 50-50 thermal-electric power units faced a brutal test at Albert Park; the track's long straights rapidly drained batteries, leaving drivers struggling to find enough braking zones to recharge their systems

"A lot of learnings but overall a reasonably good day. FP2 ran smoothly and we were able to find a bit more consistency and the car behaved more as we expected, which was good"

OSCAR PIASTRI

Russell soon upstaged Hamilton as they jockeyed for places.

At the halfway mark it was Italy's Antonelli, Russell, Hamilton and Piastri.

Russell locked up and hit the gravel at Turn 3 as he pushed hard, as did Hamilton, but they both kept enough momentum to get back on track.

Piastri blasted to the top of the timesheets on soft tyres with 25 minutes left as Verstappen began climbing the leaderboard.

But the Dutchman was trying too hard and careered into the gravel at Turn 10 with debris flying off his car, ending his day early.

Fernando Alonso clocked 18 laps and Lance Stroll 13 as the troubled Aston Martins battle extreme vibration caused by the new Honda power unit.

Newcomers Cadillac -- the 11th team on the grid -- also struggled with Valtteri Bottas 19th and Sergio Perez last.

In first practice, Leclerc outpaced Hamilton with Verstappen and Hadjar third and fourth.

each lap, working out when to deploy while building it up back through braking.

The challenge of Albert Park is its long sweeping straights, which deplete batteries, and relatively few twisty turns to brake and charge it up again.

There have also been changes to the aerodynamics of the cars, which are lighter and smaller.

On a perfect Melbourne afternoon, Nico Hulkenberg led them out, but it was Hamilton who set the opening time.

Verstappen had an inauspicious start, stalling in the pit lane, while Russell clipped Lindblad on his way out and needed a new nose.

Verstappen's car was wheeled back into the garage, apparently stuck in gear, where he stayed for almost half an hour.

The drivers started on a mix of medium and hard tyres and

Aston Martin chief Newey says no quick fix to vibration problems

AFP | Melbourne

Aston Martin chief Adrian Newey said yesterday that a vibration issue plaguing their cars was "sucking all energy" out of the team with star driver Fernando Alonso in "a hard mental place".

The Newey-designed car suffered countless issues through pre-season testing

with an unreliable Honda power unit, and that has continued in Melbourne at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

Vibration into the chassis has caused mirrors and tail lights to fall off and there are fears that Alonso and teammate Lance Stroll could suffer nerve damage in their hands.

King's Cup quarter-finals resume tonight

TDT | Manama

Quarter-final action in the prestigious HM the King's Cup resumes tonight, marking the gradual return of domestic football in Bahrain following the recent suspension of matches.

The Bahrain Football Association (BFA) has confirmed that two fixtures will kick off simultaneously at 9:30 PM. Al Ahli Club will face Al Ittifaq Club at the Bahrain National Stadium while Bahrain Club meets Riffa Club at the Khalifa Sports City Stadium.

These matches will be played behind closed doors, without spectators or media, following BFA guidelines for a safe return to competition.

Already through to the semi-finals are defending champions Al Khaldiya Club, who defeated A'ali Club 2-0, and record champions Muharraq Club, who overcame Al Shabab Club 3-0 last weekend before the pause. Consequently, tonight's winners will advance to face Muharraq and Khaldiya, respectively, in the semi-finals.

In addition, strict safety protocols will govern play. Should a security alert arise, the referee and commissioner will imme-



KHK Cup holders Riffa train ahead of their King's Cup quarter-final

diately suspend the match and direct all players and staff to safe areas. After assessing the threat, games may resume from the exact minute and possession where play was stopped. Referees maintain full disciplinary authority, but no substitutions are allowed during stoppages. Suspensions can last up to 30

minutes, and if the venue cannot be deemed safe, officials may terminate and reschedule the match under tournament regulations.

Looking ahead, the BFA plans the resumption of other competitions: the Nasser Bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League next Thursday, the Bah-

rain First Division League on March 15, the Bahrain Super Cup on March 18, and youth tournaments beginning March 24.

Ultimately, tonight's King's Cup quarter-finals represent a significant step in bringing football back to Bahrain after recent disruptions.

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