

Riffa slam refereeing after loss to Al Khaldiya

Riffa have voiced outrage after their 2-1 defeat to Al Khaldiya last Saturday | P16

THE DAILY **tribune**



Takaful International unveils refreshed brand identity **7 BUSINESS**

BUSINESS 10 Kanoo, Salahuddin, and Al-Zayani Lead Bahrain Chamber's 31st Board

Terror Suspects Arrested Over Alleged Links to Foreign Intelligence Networks
TDT | Manama

The Head of the Terror Crimes Prosecution stated that the Public Prosecution has been informed by the National Intelligence Agency that, as part of ongoing efforts to monitor and expose individuals affiliated with terrorist organizations and hostile entities targeting the country, several suspects have been arrested.

According to investigations and surveillance of their activities, the suspects were found to have links with Iranian intelligence services and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). They are accused of receiving instructions from these entities—through operatives working on their behalf in Iran—to monitor vital locations within the Kingdom, collect information about them, and transmit it for the purpose of targeting those sites.

The suspects are also alleged to have monitored the aftermath of such intended attacks by documenting images of destruction and sabotage resulting from assaults on the Kingdom, and that they had already carried out tasks assigned to them.

The Terror Crimes Prosecution has taken over the investigation, interrogated the suspects, and ordered their pre-trial detention. Investigations are ongoing.

Trump warning



“We will find who leaked that the pilot went missing in Iran. They put this mission at great risk,

U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

He delivered a wide-ranging statement at a press conference last night addressing escalating tensions with Iran.

(Page 8-9)

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HM King Praises Bahrain Chamber's Legacy

● 86-year legacy in trade and industry

● Congratulated the New Chairman

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has extended his congratulations to Mr. Nabil Khalid Kano following his election as Chairman of the Board of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In a cable of congratulations, His Majesty wished Mr. Kano success in his new role, express-

ing confidence in his ability to continue advancing the Chamber's mission and strengthening its contribution to Bahrain's economic development and progress.

HM the King also conveyed his congratulations to the newly elected members of the Chamber's Board of Directors for its 31st term, wishing them success in serving the business community and the national economy.

His Majesty commended the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry for its distinguished legacy spanning more than 86 years, describing it as one of the region's most established and influential business institutions. He noted its contin-



HM the King

ued role in supporting commercial and industrial growth and in reinforcing Bahrain's position as a competitive economic hub regionally and internationally.



The Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber held its inaugural session for the 31st term

Recovery Measures

Economic Impact Assessment Ordered Following Hostile Acts

● Prioritize swift relief for damaged properties

● An economic impact assessment has been ordered

● supporting jobs, growth, and national stability

TDT | Manama

The weekly Cabinet meeting was held yesterday at Gudaibiya Palace, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

The Cabinet commended the Bahrain Defence Force, the National Guard, the Ministry of Interior, and all military, security, and civilian agencies for their continued dedication to safeguarding the Kingdom and maintaining the highest standards of national security.

The Cabinet strongly condemned the hostile Iranian aggression that resulted in injuries to citizens, threatened public



HRH Prince Salman chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting

safety, and caused damage to residential properties. It reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to international law and emphasised the importance of implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817, which condemns such acts and calls for an immediate cessation

of attacks on civilian infrastructure.

The Cabinet reviewed the implementation of directives issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and instructions from His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister regarding full compen-

The Cabinet reviewed memorandums from ministerial committees and approved the following:

Inclusion of several individuals on the United Nations Security Council list.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Interior and Serene Psychiatric Hospital to support the Alternative Sentencing Programme.

Memorandum of Understanding between Bahrain Polytechnic and Abu Dhabi Maritime Academy.

Adoption of reports issued by the Education and Training Quality Authority. Government response to proposals submitted by the Council of Representatives.

The Cabinet was also briefed on the outcomes of Bahrain's participation in the 43rd session of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers.

sation for citizens affected by damage to homes and vehicles resulting from the aggression.

His Royal Highness also directed the Ministerial Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs and Fiscal Balance to assess the economic impact of the hostile acts, introduce measures to support employment and economic growth, and submit a detailed report to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet further reviewed the efficiency and continuity of public services provided to citizens and residents, instructing officials to enhance service delivery under all circumstances.

Commitment

Marking World Health Day, the Cabinet praised the commitment and readiness of health-care professionals across the Kingdom, who continue to deliver essential services despite ongoing challenges. The Cabinet also extended congratulations to the Chairman and members of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry on their election to the Board of Directors for its 31st term, wishing them success in their responsibilities and acknowledging the efforts of the outgoing Board.

Emergency Committee Reviews National Preparedness

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's National Committee for Civil Emergency Management held an extraordinary meeting to assess operational readiness at the National Civil Emergency Management Centre, as the Kingdom continues to monitor evolving regional developments and their impact on national security.

The meeting was chaired by Chief of Police, Lt-General Tariq Al Hassan, Chairman of the committee, with representatives from relevant member authorities participating.

During the session, the committee reviewed ongoing coordination efforts and preparedness measures in light of the current regional situation, including



Chief of Police, Lt-General Tariq Al Hassan, Chairman of the committee, chairs the extraordinary meeting

what was described as Iranian aggression against the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The Chief of Police highlighted the royal directives issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al

Khalifa to ensure compensation for citizens affected by damage to their homes and vehicles.

Major Green Push

● 1.8 million mangroves planted across Bahrain

● Planting drive spans all four governorates

● Climate benefits include carbon absorption and cooling

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Mangrove forests, once a fading feature of Bahrain's coastal landscape, are now re-emerging as a vital natural defence system, with more than 1.8 million trees planted across the Kingdom in a major environmental expansion drive.

Far from being a distant ecological goal, mangroves are increasingly treated as a living infrastructure that protects shorelines, supports marine biodiversity, and strengthens coastal communities.

Progress

This progress was highlighted during the Services and Public Utilities Committee of the Capital Trustees Board's 29th meeting, chaired by Engineer Mohammed Tawfiq Al Abbas and attended by Council Chairman Engineer Saleh Tarrada and senior officials.

Officials reviewed planting figures between 2022 and 2025, confirming that 1,811,336 mangrove trees have been planted nationwide.

The distribution shows significant regional variation: the Capital Governorate leads with 533,307 trees, followed by the Southern Governorate with 787,510, Muharraq Governorate with 470,424, and the Northern Governorate with 20,095.

Once limited in scope, mangrove planting is now developing into a structured ecological network that protects shorelines while restoring marine habitats closely tied to local



Services and Public Utilities Committee of the Capital Trustees Board meeting held online



Beekeeper Ali Al Mousawi

1,811,336
Number of mangrove trees planted nationwide between 2022 and 2025.

livelihoods.

Historical Roots

Beekeeper Ali Al Mousawi, in an exclusive interview with



Mangroves protect shorelines, support marine biodiversity, and strengthen coastal communities.

The Daily Tribune, described mangroves as part of Bahrain's ancient natural identity, with historical roots stretching back more than 2,000 years.

He linked their presence to the Dilmun civilisation and early records describing coastal tree systems believed to be mangroves.

Al Mousawi noted that mangroves once grew widely along shallow coastal areas, particularly in regions such as Tubli Bay, and said their current return represents restoration rather than expansion.

Expansion

Attention is now shifting toward 2026, with plans to further expand planting zones across the Capital Governorate. Officials stressed the importance of stronger coordination and structured implementation to ensure long-term environmental stability.

Al Mousawi emphasised that mangroves play a direct role in protecting coastal communities, reducing erosion, weakening wave impact, and creating safe breeding areas for fish stocks

that support local livelihoods.

Beyond their coastal protection role, mangroves also act as powerful carbon sinks, absorbing significant amounts of carbon dioxide and storing it in coastal soils, which helps mitigate climate change and regulate local environmental conditions.

Mangrove Honey

One of the ecosystem's most distinctive products is mangrove honey, which Al Mousawi described as darker, richer, and more intense in flavour due to its coastal origin.

However, he noted that its limited seasonal production makes it rare. Its availability depends directly on the health of mangrove ecosystems, creating both opportunity and vulnerability for beekeepers.

The committee emphasised that continued momentum is essential. Ongoing planting, coordination, and long-term planning will determine whether mangroves remain an expanding natural shield or risk losing strategic environmental progress.

Onion Shipment Scam Exposed

● 1-Ton Illegal "Tambaku" Seized

● The lower court sentenced three years

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

11,110

Total packets of the banned substance found by authorities hidden within the onion bags, weighing approximately 1,035 kilograms.

A 40-year-old Asian man has been convicted after attempting to smuggle a large quantity of the banned substance known as "Tambaku" into the country, concealing it inside a shipment of onions.

The lower court sentenced him to three years in prison, imposed a fine of 3,985 dinars, and ordered additional customs and tax penalties exceeding 59,000 dinars. He will also be deported after completing his sentence. All seized goods were confiscated.

Inspection

The case came to light during a routine inspection at a maritime port, where a customs officer became suspicious after noticing irregularities in an incoming onion shipment from Asia. The cargo was subjected to X-ray screening, which revealed that the shipment had been used as a cover for smuggling activity.

Authorities discovered a total of 11,110 packets of the banned substance hid-

den within the onion bags, weighing approximately 1,035 kilograms.

Investigations showed the operation was carefully planned. The accused had worked with a customs broker and submitted falsified import documents in an attempt to disguise the shipment as legitimate trade. He allegedly arranged for the goods to be registered under another company in exchange for payment, despite lacking the required commercial licence.

Inquiries

Further inquiries also revealed attempts to evade taxes and customs duties, with coordination involving overseas accomplices to facilitate the illegal import.

What initially appeared to be a routine agricultural shipment ultimately uncovered a large-scale smuggling attempt, highlighting both the sophistication of the operation and the vigilance of customs authorities in preventing illegal imports.

Man Jailed 3 Years After Counterfeit Cash Found in Drug Case

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

A 48-year-old man has been sentenced to three years in prison and fined 500 dinars after authorities discovered counterfeit currency in his possession during a drug-related arrest, the First High Criminal Court ruled.

The case, already linked to narcotics charges, took a further turn when officials found a forged 500 Saudi riyal banknote among the man's belongings while processing his seized items.

Investigations later confirmed that the accused had knowingly possessed the counterfeit note with the intention of circulating it as genuine currency.

According to testimony from a lieutenant at the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Investigation Directorate, the discovery was

made following instructions from the Public Prosecution to examine the suspect's confiscated belongings.

The defendant had initially been arrested on August 9, 2025, by the Anti-Narcotics Directorate on charges related to drug use. The counterfeit currency came to light only during the subsequent inventory of his personal items.

A forensic examination by the General Directorate of Criminal Evidence confirmed that the 500 riyal note was fake.

During questioning, the accused claimed he had received the forged note from an unknown individual in exchange for 30 dinars, a statement that did not alter the court's findings.

The court ordered a three-year prison sentence, a 500-dinar fine, and the confiscation of all related seized materials.

Possession of Counterfeit Currency Leads to 3-Year Prison Sentence

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a 48-year-old man to three years in prison, fined him BD500, and ordered the confiscation of seized items after authorities discovered he

possessed a forged 500 Saudi Riyal note while handing over property, in connection with a drug-related case.

Investigations revealed that the defendant had in his possession a counterfeit 500 Riyal banknote intended for distribution.

A police officer from the Ministry of Interior stated during the investigation that, based on a public prosecution order and subsequent inquiries, the defendant had been previously arrested by the Drug Enforcement Department on August 9, 2025, on a drug use charge.

During the handover of property, the counterfeit note was discovered, and its authenticity was confirmed by the Forensics Department's expert report.

The defendant admitted that he received the forged banknote from an unknown individual in exchange for BD30.

Government Hospitals Prioritise Critical Cases with CTAS System

● Prioritising patients with severe medical condition

TDT | Manama

The Government Hospitals has announced that the

Accident & Emergency Unit at Salmaniya Medical Complex operates using the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS), an internationally recognised system designed to prioritise patients based on the severity of their medical condition.

The CTAS system ensures a structured and efficient process for assessing and admitting pa-

tients upon arrival. Each case is evaluated immediately and categorised according to its level of urgency.

Approach

This approach enables medical teams to prioritise critical and life-threatening cases without delay, while also helping to reduce waiting times for other

patients. Officials say the system contributes to improving the overall quality, safety, and efficiency of emergency healthcare services.

The initiative reflects the commitment of Government Hospitals to align with international best practices in emergency care and patient management.

Artemis II Crew Enters Lunar Gravity



Proposal to Ease Rent



Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Five MPs have proposed rent relief for Bahraini factory and shop owners has been proposed by five MPs, who want a six-month waiver on industrial plot lease fees and shop rents collected through the municipalities after the economic effects of the Iranian attacks.

The urgent proposal, submitted by Hisham Al Awadhi, Zainab AbdulAmeer, Mohammed Al Maarefi, Ahmed Al Salloom and Khalid Buanaq, asks the government to exempt Bahraini owners of factories, industrial plots and commercial premises from those payments for half a year. The MPs stated the move was needed after trade slowed in some areas and running costs rose.

Strain

Al Awadhi said the proposal aims to ease the strain on Bahrainis whose businesses depend on daily cash flow and regular trading, while fixed payments still had to be met.

"This proposal comes in light of the exceptional conditions Bahrain is going through as a result of the repercussions of the Iranian attacks, and the direct and indirect economic effects that have touched the commercial and industrial sectors," he said. "Trade has been affected, some businesses have slowed and operating costs for owners have risen. Bahraini factory and shop owners are among those most affected because their work depends on daily cash flow and on keeping their businesses running."

He said those owners remain liable for industrial land and plot lease fees, along with rents on commercial premises collected through the municipal-

Bahraini factory and shop owners are among those most affected because their work depends on daily cash flow and on keeping their businesses running.

MP HISHAM AL AWADHI

ities, even when takings were under strain.

Obligations

"Their financial obligations do not stop," Al Awadhi said. "They still have to pay the fees for leasing industrial land and plots allocated through the competent authorities, as well as rents linked to commercial shops collected by the municipalities. That adds another burden at a time when many of these businesses are already under strain."

The proposal suggests these costs could leave some businesses unable to keep going at the same level, pushing some owners to cut back or close for a time, with jobs also at risk.

"These burdens may affect the ability of some establishments to continue," Al Awadhi said. "They may push business owners to scale back or stop work for a temporary period, and that would affect trade and the jobs linked to those activities."

Waiver

The MPs stated the waiver should cover Bahraini owners of factories and industrial establishments as well as commercial tenants in municipally managed premises, including craft shops and repair workshops. They said a six-month period would give owners time to sort out their finances and regain business momentum while keeping the measure limited.

"Setting the exemption period at six months is a balanced step," Al Awadhi said. "It gives business owners enough time to put their affairs in order and regain their footing bit by bit, without turning the measure into an open-ended cost."

A Return to Normalcy

Why Physical Classrooms Matter Most for Young Learners?

● **Classrooms Come Alive Again**

● **Early Learning Reawakens**

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

From learning new words to making new friends, young children across Bahrain are stepping back into classrooms as nurseries and kindergartens reopen for in-person learning following the latest government update on the functioning of educational institutions. For many families and educators, this isn't just a reopening - it's a long-awaited return to normalcy as classrooms fill again with tiny footsteps and curious questions.

Educators

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Renuja Issac, owner of Building Blocks, a preschool dedicated to children with special needs, expressed her joy. "We are so thankful to be able to resume our services for children with special needs and their families again during these uncertain times," she said, adding that many families have welcomed the move as routine, play, and social interaction are key to young children's emotional stability and development.

Across the sector, educators agree that screens simply can't replace the magic of a classroom, highlighting the benefits of in-person learning, while noting that online learning can be challenging to sustain effectively especially for young children.

Mona Alqaed from 'Kidzworld kindergarten' management noted that virtual classrooms can-



Children at play in a physical kindergarten classroom, engaging in hands-on learning and group activities.



We're not just reopening doors, we're rebuilding the sense of normalcy and connection every child needs to thrive

RENUJA ISSAC



There is no real substitute for the classroom experience. Every child learns differently, and in-person learning allows them to explore, interact, and grow through meaningful play

MONA ALQAEED

not fully replace physical interaction. "Classrooms become more child-led than teacher-led

in person and rightly so, catering to each child's cognitive thinking. Every child is differ-

ent in how they understand and perceive things, and in-person classrooms contribute greatly through activities and play," she said, adding that most parents are keen to return, with only a small number currently abroad opting for online continuation.

Nisha, Principal of New Horizon Kindergarten, said they are fully prepared to welcome students on the 8th for the new academic year, with safety measures in place.

Parents

But perhaps the strongest voices are those of parents witnessing the difference firsthand. Jabeena Sultana, whose child recently returned to school, said, "Every day, my child comes home learning a new word, an idea or a story, and I couldn't stop smiling," capturing the small yet powerful moments that define early learning.

In bright, playful classrooms, Bahrain's youngest learners are once again finding their rhythm through learning, play, and connection.

A faster rebuilding path for homes damaged by residential fires

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Families who lose their homes in residential fires will benefit from faster rebuilding support after authorities approved humanitarian exceptions within the urban development framework.

The Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture has given in-principle approval to a proposal by Northern Municipal Council member Abdulla Mubarak Belal Al Qubaisi. The initiative introduces exceptional consideration for fire-damaged homes, allowing building permits to be issued even in cases that would normally fall outside standard planning regulations under the Cities and Villages Development Project guidelines.

Procedures

The ministry confirmed that administrative and regulatory procedures are now underway to formally integrate the pro-



Abdulla Mubarak Belal Al Qubaisi proposal into official guidelines, taking council recommendations into account to ensure smooth implementation.

Al Qubaisi said the initiative responds to urgent humanitarian needs, noting that families particularly widows and orphans often face prolonged hardship after losing their homes to fire, with reconstruction delayed by regulatory constraints. The new measure aims to remove these barriers and allow quicker rebuilding.

Violations

He also pointed out that many housing-related violations are not intentional, but often re-



Civil Defence teams extinguish a house fire caused by an electrical short circuit

sult from limited space within residential plots. He added that recent updates to urban planning rules have already helped resolve some legacy violations, allowing better integration of affected homes into development plans.

Despite the new flexibility, he stressed that all exceptions will remain subject to strict technical and engineering standards to ensure safety and structural integrity.

Approach

Al Qubaisi praised the ministry's approach in balancing humanitarian considerations with regulatory requirements, describing it as an important step toward addressing urgent social needs while maintaining orderly urban planning.

He said the proposal ultimately supports greater social stability by enabling affected families to rebuild their homes and resume normal life, while aligning with broader sustainable development goals across the Kingdom.

Gulf Air Expands Temporary Dammam Network



TDT | Manama

- Kochi (India)
- Dhaka (Bangladesh)

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, has expanded its temporary operations from Dammam, which already include major international destinations such as London Heathrow, Mumbai, Nairobi, Cairo, Chennai, Bangkok, Casablanca, Manila, Paris, Frankfurt, Istanbul, Athens, and Thiruvananthapuram.

- Lahore (Pakistan)
- Islamabad (Pakistan)

Unclear rules sink proposal

- Fixed guarantee seen as unjustified
- Focus shifts to employment reforms
- Billions in liquidity could be tied up

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

A proposal requiring foreign partners in Bahraini companies to provide a BD30,000 bank guarantee has been rejected, with officials warning it could harm the Kingdom's investment appeal. Shura Council member Ali Al Aradi said the amendment lacked clarity on key aspects, including the duration, purpose, and handling of the guarantee. He noted that the fixed amount lacked backing from clear economic studies and failed to consider the diversity of business activities, especially impacting small and medium enterprises.

Al Aradi also raised concerns over legal and procedural gaps, such as how the guaran-



“Rejecting this amendment safeguards the Kingdom’s economic direction and reinforces investor confidence.”

ALI AL ARADI



“Protecting the investment environment requires balance, not excessive regulation that may hinder growth and innovation.”

DALAL AL ZAYED



“We should be easing pathways for investors, not reintroducing obstacles that limit growth and liquidity.”

JAMAL FAKHRO

tee would be managed during ownership changes or when multiple foreign partners are involved.

Shura Council member Dalal Al Zayed cautioned that tight-

ening requirements for foreign partners could undermine Bahrain's investment climate and economic competitiveness.

She said amendments to the Commercial Companies Law

are carefully developed in line with international agreements and aim to support business growth while ensuring proper oversight and accountability.

Al Zayed noted that existing

regulations already provide strict monitoring through the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, alongside legal safeguards that hold shareholders accountable for misconduct, including fraud or false reporting.

Shura Council member Jamal Fakhro said the draft law would reverse earlier reforms that removed the BD20,000 minimum capital requirement to encourage investment. He argued that requiring companies to provide a fixed government guarantee, regardless of their capital, is “unreasonable” and could deter foreign businesses.

He noted that Bahrain is home to around 35,000 companies with foreign ownership, adding that such guarantees could lock up nearly BD1 billion, limiting funds that would otherwise be invested in the local economy.

Meanwhile, the Shura Council has, in principle, rejected the proposed amendment to Article 264 of the Commercial Companies Law. It is also reviewing a separate draft law aimed at boosting employment by requiring large firms to train university graduates, supporting efforts to reduce unemployment and strengthen workforce participation.

Health Sector “Highly Efficient and Fully Ready”



Bahrain's health sector operates with high efficiency and full readiness to serve the nation under all circumstances, according to the President of the Supreme Council of Health, Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

In a statement marking World Health Day, observed on April 7, he emphasized that the Kingdom's healthcare system continues to deliver the highest quality services, supported by strong national capabilities and ongoing development.

Referring to this year's World Health Day theme, “Together for Health: Support Science,” he stressed the importance of strengthening scientific research and investing in medical development, alongside expanding training programmes for national healthcare professionals to boost innovation and service quality.

Muharraq heritage zoning revised under new ministerial decision

TDT | Manama

The Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Amna bint Hamad Al Rumaihi, has issued a decision to reclassify several properties in Muharraq as part of the strategic project to develop the historic city.

According to the decision published in the Official Gazette, the classification of a number of properties located in Muharraq and connected to the Pearl



Amna bint Hamad Al Rumaihi, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning

Route has been changed. The areas previously designated as Continuous Residential Zones (RHB) and Continuous Residential with Commercial Use (RHB) have now been reclassified into National Heritage Buildings (NHB) and Urban Heritage Areas (UHA).

The move is part of Bahrain's ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance its historical urban identity while integrating development

standards aligned with heritage protection.

The decision stipulates that the updated classifications will follow the planning and building regulations applicable across different zones in the Kingdom of Bahrain, as outlined in Resolution No. 93 of 2023.

It also states that any provisions that conflict with the new decision will be annulled. The resolution will be published in the Official Gazette and will take effect from the day following



Sewer Network Coverage Exceeds 93% in Manama

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Sewage network coverage in the First Constituency of the Capital Governorate has reached over 99%, while overall coverage across the governorate stands at around 93%, the Ministry of Works said in response to MP Mohammed Janahi.

The ministry also outlined ongoing and planned infrastructure works across Manama, Salmaniya, and Hooraa, along with completed projects in 2025 worth BD323,000.

Key ongoing works include the upgrade of Road 709 in Block 307 in Manama, which is 25% complete and valued



at BD220,000. The project covers road improvements, parking spaces, drainage systems, sidewalks, lighting, and road markings.

Future projects include upgrades to Al Fateh Highway towards Shaikh Hamad Bridge, as well as works on Roads 715 and 1805 in Hooraa, aimed at improving road quality and connectivity.

Maintenance works worth around BD270,000 are also planned, covering resurfacing and rehabilitation of roads in Manama, Salmaniya, and Hooraa.

The ministry said projects are selected based on urban density, technical priorities, and approved budgets, in coordination with relevant municipal authorities

RHCF partners with eye center to support patient care



TDT | Manama

The Royal Humanitarian Foundation signed a cooperation agreement with the Almosawi Specialist Eye Center to enhance medical services for its beneficiaries requiring eye care treatment.

The agreement was signed by Engineer Ibrahim Dallhan Al Dosari, Acting Secretary-General of the Royal Humanitarian Foundation, and Dr. Jalal Amin Al Mosawi, Chief Executive Officer of Almosawi Specialist Eye Center. Under the agreement, the

center will provide specialized surgical procedures for eye diseases to cases referred by the foundation. It also includes offering vision correction surgeries at preferential rates, along with a range of free medical services for eligible beneficiaries.

Cabinet Moves Highlight Adaptability and Investor Confidence

● Focusing on boosting economic resilience and maintaining stability

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Cabinet directives issued during the latest session chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, reflect Bahrain's continued focus on

strengthening economic resilience and maintaining stability amid regional developments, according to a member of the Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

Hisham Hashim Al-Qassab said the government's approach demonstrates a balanced policy framework that combines firmness in addressing challenges with flexibility in managing change, ensuring the national economy remains well-positioned to adapt to evolving regional conditions.

He pointed to recent directives



“Despite regional challenges, Bahrain's development path remains steady and forward-looking, supported by strong institutions, proactive planning, and growing confidence in the Kingdom's economic environment”

HISHAM HASHIM AL-QASSAB

from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa regarding compensation for citizens affected by property damage, followed by the Crown Prince's instructions during Monday's Cabinet meeting. He said these measures highlight the leadership's close attention to the needs of both citizens and residents, reinforcing Bahrain's focus on safety, stability, and welfare.

Al-Qassab added that Bahrain continues to pursue economic and financial development despite exceptional regional challenges, guided by the Kingdom's

long-term vision to build a diversified and sustainable economy capable of steady growth. He noted that recent hostile developments in the region would not disrupt Bahrain's development path, but instead reinforce institutional coordination, planning, and proactive policymaking.

Workforce

He further emphasized that Cabinet directives prioritise protecting the national workforce, ensuring continuity of economic activity, and monitoring service quality across sectors.

Shura Praises Government Measures to Safeguard Economy

● Royal directives key reinforcement of Bahrain's economic stability, national resilience

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Financial and Economic Affairs Committee of the Shura Council has praised recent directives issued by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, describing them as a key reinforcement of Bahrain's economic stability and national resilience.

Chaired by Khalid Hussain Al-Maskati, the committee said the directives issued during yesterday's Cabinet session reflect a proactive government approach that closely monitors regional developments and prepares for any potential economic impact linked to hostile Iranian actions against Bahrain.



Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee members

Response

It noted that the leadership's response underscores a high level of readiness and efficiency in managing emerging challenges while maintaining stability

across key sectors.

The committee also highlighted that the Crown Prince's directives align with guidance from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, delivered during his meeting with Bahrain

Defence Force personnel, which emphasized compensation for citizens affected by recent incidents. It said this reflects a unified leadership approach focused on protecting citizens and reinforcing national security.

15 Years Jail for Airport Drug Smugglers

TDT | Manama

A major drug smuggling attempt at Bahrain International Airport has been foiled, two suspects were each sentenced to 15 years in prison, fined BD10,000, and ordered to be deported after serving their terms.

The First High Criminal Court of Appeals has scheduled April 13 to hear an appeal filed by the convicted individuals, who were found guilty of attempting to smuggle illegal drugs into the Kingdom using a highly sophisticated concealment method.

According to court records, customs officials grew suspicious while inspecting luggage arriving from an Asian country. Customs officials flagged two suitcases belonging to the suspects and diverted them to the red inspection channel. When questioned, both individuals denied carrying any items requiring declaration.

However, a detailed search revealed six transparent bags containing drugs, hidden among dried fish and shrimp. Authorities said the concealment was carried out with such precision that detection was extremely challenging.

Investigations revealed that the first suspect received the suitcase from an individual abroad, with instructions to deliver it to a contact in Bahrain in exchange for payment.



The second suspect carried a similar suitcase, used the same concealment method, and admitted to a similar arrangement.

Authorities also seized multiple currencies believed to be proceeds of drug trafficking.

Further inquiries showed that the suspects had checked into a hotel while awaiting instructions from an unidentified accomplice. They were told to photograph the luggage, use specific codes to open it, and prepare it for collection. However, no one arrived, and communication with the contact was eventually cut off.

Prosecutors confirmed that the suspects were part of an organised network engaged in drug trafficking for distribution and sale, with assistance from others whose identities remain unknown. Both individuals were aware that the substances they were transporting were illegal in Bahrain.

Their admissions during questioning exposed a meticulously coordinated operation that ultimately failed due to the vigilance of customs authorities.

New Gulf Academic-Statistical Partnership to Boost Data Capabilities

TDT | Manama

A new step toward strengthening regional data and research cooperation was marked in Muscat, Oman, where the Arabian Gulf University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the GCC Statistical Center.

The agreement aims to deepen collaboration in statistical research, capacity building, and knowledge exchange, focusing on developing skilled national talents and enhancing the quality and reliability of statistical data across Gulf Cooperation Council states.

Agreement

Under the agreement, the two institutions will collaborate to develop joint training programmes, workshops, and research initiatives designed to strengthen expertise in data



Professor Dr. Omar Al Ruwas, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Arabian Gulf University, attended the signing ceremony along with senior officials from both parties, formalizing the agreement.

analysis and statistical methodologies. The partnership will also support the exchange of statistical reports and information to enhance academic research and policy development.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Saad bin Saud Al Fahid, President of Arabian Gulf Univer-

sity, said the collaboration reflects the university's ongoing commitment to building strong regional partnerships that enhance academic excellence and prepare Gulf professionals with advanced research and analytical skills.

He added that such initiatives

are essential to keeping pace with global developments and supporting sustainable economic growth in the region.

On her part, Intisar bint Abdullah Al Wahibiyah, Director-General of the GCC Statistical Center, highlighted that the agreement aligns with the Centre's strategy to expand strategic partnerships with academic institutions.

She noted that integrating statistical expertise with academic research plays a vital role in strengthening the foundations of a knowledge-based economy in the Gulf.

She further emphasized that cooperation with Arabian Gulf University will help broaden research opportunities, develop Gulf talent, and improve the use of data in specialized studies that support evidence-based policymaking.

Eight Detained Over BD800,000 Burglary

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Head of the Capital Governorate Prosecution stated that the Public Prosecution received a report from Um Al-Hassam Police Station regarding a burglary at a private residence where gold bars and other valuables exceeding BD 800,000 were stolen.

Investigations by the Criminal Investigation Division identified the suspects. Three of them reportedly committed the theft while the house was unoccupied

and handed the stolen items to five others for concealment, fully aware that the items were stolen.

Upon receiving the report, the Public Prosecution immediately launched an investigation, ordering the suspects to be apprehended and their residences searched. The stolen items were recovered during the arrests, and the suspects admitted to committing the crime. The Public Prosecution ordered their pretrial detention while investigations continue in preparation for referral to court.

Kanoo, Salahuddin, and Al-Zayani Lead Bahrain Chamber's 31st Board

TDT | Manama

The Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber held its inaugural session for the 31st term, during which members endorsed Nabeel Khalid Kanoo as Chairman. This reflects their confidence in his leadership vision and ability to guide the Chamber in line with the aspirations of the private sector.

The session also saw the election of Yousef Salahuddin as First Vice Chairman and Nawaf Alzayani as Second Vice Chairman, alongside the appointment of Bob Thaker and Hasan Kaiksov to the Executive Committee. Ahmed AlSalom was elected Treasurer, with Khalid Juma as Vice Treasurer, as part of organizational procedures designed to strengthen institutional cohesion and support effective decision-making.

At the start, Yousef Salahuddin chaired the session as the most senior member. Following the completion of legal proce-



dures, Nabeel Kanoo assumed the chairmanship, marking the beginning of a new phase of structured institutional work built on partnership and integration, focused on advancing the Chamber's strategic objectives and reinforcing its role in supporting the national economy.

Chairman Nabeel Kanoo expressed his pride in the trust placed in him by the Board and the business sector, noting that it carries significant responsibility

requiring diligent work while fully acknowledging the challenges facing the private sector. He expressed deep appreciation to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for his ongoing support of the national economy and for strengthening the private sector's role as a key partner in development, and to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for advancing the economic framework

and reinforcing public-private sector partnership.

He congratulated the Board members on their election, emphasizing that the upcoming phase requires collective work based on active partnership, with each member serving as a partner in decision-making and responsible for delivering results.

He outlined that the Chamber will operate this term according to a structured approach guid-

ed by clear priorities, aimed at enhancing its role as the representative of the private sector, strengthening its tools, and increasing its presence and influence in the business environment, building on past achievements. Key priorities include enhancing direct communication with members, understanding their needs and challenges, and turning them into actionable initiatives, including support for micro, small, and medium enterprises through improved services and access to funding and growth opportunities.

He also stressed the importance of developing legislation and the business environment in cooperation with relevant authorities, to simplify procedures, improve service efficiency, enhance competitiveness, and develop all commercial markets in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He emphasized the need to develop sectoral committees to better represent various economic sectors, improve the efficiency of the Chamber's administrative

apparatus, and rationalize expenditures to promote financial sustainability. The Chamber also aims to strengthen its regional and international presence and reinforce its role in social responsibility as a contributor to economic development.

He commended members' participation in the electoral process under exceptional circumstances, appreciating the cooperation of government entities, including the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, led by H.E. Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro, and the Ministry of Interior, led by H.E. General Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, in ensuring a smooth process.

He praised the efforts of the Election Committee, chaired by Mr. Abbas Radi, and the Appeals Committee, chaired by Counselor Musab Busaibeh, for managing the process with integrity and transparency, and expressed appreciation to the previous Board, chaired by Sameer Nass, for their work during the past term.

Al Salam Bank launches interactive contest

To determine distribution of first BD 1 million grand prize under "Danat 2026" scheme

● Contest runs on Instagram account as part of the "Danat 2026" campaign

● Aims to determine how the first BD 1,000,000 grand prize will be distributed among winners

TDT | Manama

Al Salam Bank has announced the launch of an interactive contest

on its Instagram account as part of the "Danat 2026" campaign, introduced this year under the theme "Designed by You". The contest aims to engage clients and the wider public in determining how the first BD 1,000,000

Mr. Mohammed Buhijji - Chief Retail Banking Officer at Al Salam Bank



grand prize will be distributed among winners, reflecting the Bank's commitment to enhancing client engagement and involving them in shaping their experience.

The contest invites participants to submit their suggestions on how the first grand prize should be distributed—whether awarded to one winner or divid-

ed among multiple winners—through the comments section on the Bank's Instagram post. The participation mechanism requires users to follow the Bank's account, like the post, submit a comment outlining their suggested prize structure, and tag a friend, contributing to increased engagement and broader reach.

This contest forms part of the innovative concept introduced by the "Danat 2026" scheme, which, for the first time, enables clients to play a direct role in deciding how the BD 1 million grand prizes are distributed, reinforcing the Bank's approach of placing clients at the centre of

its development and innovation efforts.

Commenting, Mr. Mohammed Buhijji, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Al Salam Bank, said: "This contest represents an extension of our vision to strengthen the role of clients as key partners in shaping our banking experience. By giving them the opportunity to submit their suggestions on how the first grand prize will be distributed, we reaffirm our commitment to adopting an interactive approach that places client feedback and aspirations at the forefront of our priorities. We are confident that this initiative will enhance engagement

and deliver a more flexible and innovative savings experience."

Through such initiatives, Al Salam Bank continues to reinforce its position as a leading financial institution committed to delivering innovative banking solutions and advanced digital experiences that promote a culture of savings and align with client aspirations, while actively involving them in shaping future programmes and initiatives.

Clients can open a "Danat" or "Danat Plus" account and invest directly through Al Salam Bank's mobile application to benefit from multiple chances to win within the scheme.

Ritz-Carlton introduces elevated at-home experiences and curated dining offerings

TDT | Manama

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain has unveiled a collection of at-home and in-resort experiences, extending its signature hospitality beyond the traditional setting. Created for those who value privacy, connection, and detail, each offering brings the spirit of the resort into more personal spaces, where moments feel closer, and celebrations feel truly your own.

For life's most meaningful occasions, intimate at-home weddings by The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain offer a different kind of luxury, one rooted in emotion, familiarity, and meaning. Set in the comfort of your own home, each wedding is brought to life with a sense of occasion, carried through every detail with warmth and care. Spaces are transformed, tables are set with intention, and menus are shaped around your story, allowing you



to celebrate surrounded not just by guests, but by memories already held within those walls. It is a wedding that feels less like an event, and more like a moment that belongs entirely to you.

Restaurant experiences by The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain are now reimagined at home, bringing the essence of dining at the



resort to your table. Designed for both social and corporate gatherings, at-home catering brings the creativity and precision of the resort's kitchens into a more intimate setting. Dishes are prepared with care, and live chef led cooking stations inspired by Cantina Kahlo, Nirvana, Primavera, and Plums add a sense of energy and interaction. The result is not simply a meal, but an

atmosphere, where conversation flows, flavours unfold, and hosting feels effortless.

Within the resort, the Villa Staycation offers a private experience designed for complete ease. Each villa becomes your own sanctuary, with a private pool, direct access to a secluded beach, and space to fully unwind. Days move slower here. Mornings begin quietly, after-

noons stretch into the sun, and evenings settle into calm. With dedicated service always within reach, it is a way to experience The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain at your own pace, uninterrupted and entirely your own.

At The Ritz-Carlton Spa, signature treatments are designed to restore balance and create space to pause. Whether through deeply relaxing massages or advanced, results-driven facials, each experience is tailored with care, leaving a sense of calm that lingers long after you leave. Among them, the Ultimate Radiance and Renewal Facial is a treatment designed to bring the skin back to life, revealing a brighter, smoother, and more luminous complexion. Using ESPA products and a combination of expert techniques, it helps to refresh, lift, and revive, making it especially suited ahead of special occasions, or simply when you want to look

and feel your best.

For those who prefer to bring the experience home in a different way, the resort's expanded To-Go offering introduces a flexible approach to dining. Across venues including Plums, Nirvana, La Terrace, Primavera, Cantina Kahlo, Thai Lounge, La Plage, and The Ritz Gourmet Lounge, guests can choose from curated menus designed for sharing, whether for smaller gatherings or larger occasions. Each dish carries the same attention to flavour, quality, and presentation, ensuring that even the simplest moments feel considered.

With this collection, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain invites guests to experience its world beyond the expected. Whether at home or within the resort, each offering is shaped around one idea: that the most meaningful luxury is not just seen, but felt.

Takaful International unveils refreshed brand identity

The company will now operate under its established legal name Takaful International

TDI | Manama

Takaful International Company, a leading provider of Islamic insurance solutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain and a member of the Gulf Insurance Group, has announced the launch of its refreshed brand identity. The Company will now operate under its established legal name, Takaful International.

This strategic rebranding reflects the Company's commitment to strengthening its independent brand equity while honouring a legacy that spans more than three decades. The refreshed identity embodies Takaful International's enduring values of fairness, transparency, and shared responsibility—principles that have con-

TAKAFUL
التكافل الدولية

A GIG Company

sistently guided its approach to delivering Sharia-compliant protection solutions.

The new brand positioning is inspired by the Company's core belief that protection is a shared responsibility, rooted in the risk-sharing principles of takaful. It underscores a continued focus on community, trust, and mutual support, while aligning with the Company's forward-looking vision to en-

hance customer experience, expand its offerings, and deepen its market presence.

Commenting, Mr Essam Al Ansari, CEO of Takaful International Co., said: "Protection, for us, has always been more than a



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Our refreshed identity reflects the strength of our legacy and our commitment to building a future rooted in fairness, transparency, and shared values.

MR ESSAM AL ANSARI, CEO OF TAKAFUL INTERNATIONAL CO.

promise—it is a responsibility we have upheld for over three decades. Our refreshed identity reflects the strength of our legacy and our commitment to building a future rooted in fairness, transparency, and shared values. While we evolve our brand, we remain firmly grounded in the principles of takaful, where protection grows strong-

er when it is shared, and where the success of one contributes to the wellbeing of all."

The Company emphasised that the rebranding will not impact its operations, services, or commitments to customers and partners. Takaful International will continue to leverage the strength and regional expertise of the GIG Group, while reinforcing its position as a trusted and leading takaful provider in Bahrain.

BFLC shareholders approve Truffle merger

Milestone brings together Truffle's and BFLC's portfolios of over 20 brands



● **BFLC will acquire 100% of the fully issued and paid shares of Truffle**

● **Truffle shareholders will have 58% of the issued and paid up share capital of BFLC**

TDI | Manama

Dividend Gate Capital, a leading Bahrain-based private equity firm, announced plans to integrate the portfolio of its subsidiary, Truffle Hospitality Holding, with that of Bahrain Family Leisure Company, following the successful approval of the

transaction by BFLC shareholders at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) yesterday. This follows the receipt of a no-objection letter from the Central Bank of Bahrain dated 8 March 2026. The transaction creates one of Bahrain's largest hospitality platforms, with investments ranging from restaurants and cafés to food manufacturers and distributors.

Deal terms

Under the terms of the transaction, BFLC will acquire 100% of the fully issued and paid shares of Truffle in exchange for newly issued shares by BFLC, resulting in Truffle shareholders holding 58% of the issued and paid-up share capital of BFLC, while existing BFLC shareholders will hold the remaining 42%. Truffle

will now proceed with full operational integration, as well as the execution of its capital raise and growth roadmap.

This milestone will bring together Truffle's and BFLC's portfolios of more than 20 brands, including fast-casual concepts, upper-casual dining, cafés, and central kitchens. This will be supported by SoleCorp, the Group's centralised operating platform, which manages finance, HR, procurement, and logistics, enabling optimised efficiency and scalable growth.

Mr Mohamed Khonji, Managing Director and Board Member of Dividend Gate Capital and Board Member of Truffle, said: "Truffle today represents one of the region's most diversified hospitality platforms. With a multi-category portfolio and a

unified operational backbone, we are built for scale. Becoming part of a listed structure strengthens our governance and positions us for long-term expansion across the wider GCC."

Mr Ahmed Janahi, Vice Chairman of BFLC, added: "The completion of this transaction marks an important step forward in establishing an integrated and scalable F&B platform. The consolidation of Truffle's diversified restaurant portfolio with BFLC, operated under a unified model and supported by a robust governance framework, positions the Company to enhance operational efficiency while supporting the sustained growth of its brands across Bahrain and the wider GCC region."

The approval follows the execution of the definitive trans-

action agreement on 8 February 2026, following the completion of financial due diligence by KPMG and legal due diligence by ASAR – Al Ruwayeh & Partners on Truffle. Furthermore, the fairness opinion letter issued by the appointed independent professional advisor, Moore JFC Consulting confirms and supports the transaction's result-

20
The merger will bring together Truffle's and BFLC's portfolios of more than 20 brands

ing ownership structure. The transaction was overseen and executed by SICO in its capacity as financial advisor to BFLC.

Portfolio cos

Truffle's portfolio includes brands such as Hlayel, Goodness, Bombay Bowl, Dumpling & Co, Blink, Tikka2Go, Café Mayfair, Kumo Asian Chicken, Tikka & Kabab Ameen, Hong Kong Gateway Restaurant, Rasmalai Balti Cuisine, Bombo Shawarma, and a central kitchen facility, Hidden Stations. Truffle is also a strategic partner to Manos Group, which owns upper-casual dining brands Manos the Family Bistro, Zimari by Manos, and Rame-nara. BFLC's food and beverage assets include Bennigan's, Cucina, Kazbah Catering, and more.

AirAsia X to raise fares, cut capacity over Mideast war

AFP | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Southeast Asia's largest low-cost carrier AirAsia X said yesterday it was raising ticket prices by up to 40% and cutting

routes to cushion the impact of the war on Iran, but stressed demand for flights remained high.

The Malaysia-based no-frills airline said about 10 percent of its overall flights had been cut

so far.

However it said its planned services to Bahrain, the airline's first Middle East hub, and a move to expand its network beyond Southeast Asia, were still

set to launch in June.

AirAsia X chief commercial officer Amanda Woo said the Malaysia-based carrier, which flies to more than 150 destinations across 25 coun-

tries, was able to spread operations along routes "where we can recover the high fuel surcharges".

Airline fares have gone up about "31 to 40% incremental",

Woo said, while fuel surcharges raised by 20%.

The airline was also taking measures to try to rein in price hikes, including reducing baggage fees, she added.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

YOU ACTUALLY CANNOT SELL THE IDEA OF FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, DIVERSITY, AS IF IT WERE A BRAND ATTRIBUTE AND NOT REALITY -- NOT AT THE SAME TIME AS YOU'RE BOMBING PEOPLE, YOU CAN'T.
NAOMI KLEIN



Giant step for humankind

Artemis to set space distance record

AFP | Houston, United States

Four Artemis II astronauts are taking a giant step for humankind Monday when they shoot deeper into space than anyone before and glimpse parts of the Moon never seen by the naked eye.

The NASA mission swept earlier into the Moon's gravitational sphere of influence, meaning their spacecraft is now in the natural satellite's neighborhood, with lunar gravity outmuscling any pull from Earth.

The Orion capsule will whip around the Moon, setting the crew up to reach an estimated record 252,757 miles (406,772 kilometers) from Earth, before starting the journey home. This will surpass the 1972 distance record set on Apollo 13 by 4,102 miles.

Swooping around the far side of the Moon, the crew of four will witness previously hidden lunar territory -- the sphere looming large through their capsule windows.

The Moon will appear to the astronauts "about the size of a basketball held at arm's length," Noah Petro, head of the US space agency's planetary geology lab, told AFP.

Several firsts

Victor Glover will be the first person of color to fly around the Moon, Christina Koch will be the first woman, and Canadian Jeremy Hansen the first non-American.

Human eye vs camera
The astronauts have already started seeing features never previously glimpsed directly.

An image sent back by the crew showed the Moon's Orientale basin visible, a massive crater that before had only been viewed by orbiting, uncrewed cameras.

Speaking to Canadian children live from space, Koch said the

crew was most excited to see the basin -- sometimes known as the Moon's "Grand Canyon."

"It's very distinctive and no human eyes previously had seen this crater until today, really, when we were privileged enough to see it," Koch said during a question-and-answer session hosted by the Canadian Space Agency.

Near the end of their flyby, the astronauts will witness a solar eclipse, when the Sun will be behind the Moon.

Despite the technological advancements since the Apollo missions, NASA still relies on the eyesight of its astronauts to learn more about the Moon.

"The human eye is basically the best camera that could ever or will ever exist," Kelsey Young, the lead scientist for the Artemis II mission, told AFP. "The number of receptors in the human eye far outweighs what a camera is able to do."

And while the Orion crew will still be at a substantial distance from the Moon, their flyby is key to preparing for a later crewed mission to the planet's surface itself.

Over the next day, "they will be on the far side of the Moon, they will eclipse that record, and we're going to learn an awful lot about the spacecraft," NASA administrator Jared Isaacman told CNN on Sunday. The information will be "pretty paramount to set up for subsequent missions like Artemis III in 2027 and, of course, the lunar landing itself on Artemis IV in 2028," he added.

The four astronauts will also spend some time testing their "Orion crew survival system" spacesuits.

The orange suits protect the crewmembers during launch and reentry, but are also available for emergency use -- they can provide up to six days of breathable air.

Easter splash rite



Polish bachelors wearing traditional straw costumes parade through the streets and splash water on the villagers in a ritual for fertility and a bountiful harvest as they celebrate Easter Monday in Dobra, Lesser Poland Voivodeship



An aerial image shows prospective Indonesian pilgrims practicing circumambulation rituals around a replica of the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, during a training session at the Al Mahmudah Manasik Training Center (AMTC) in South Tangerang. The centre provides a simulated experience of Mecca's pilgrimage sites ahead of the Hajj season in late May. Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, has been allocated a Hajj quota of 221,000 pilgrims for 2026, but faces long waiting lists that can stretch for decades in some regions.

Ukraine hits major oil terminal in southern Russia: Moscow

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Ukrainian drones attacked the Caspian Pipeline Consortium's marine terminal in southern Russia early Monday, damaging part of a mooring point and setting four oil tanks ablaze, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday.

The Ukrainian army said it had

attacked a different terminal in the port of Novorossiysk, without mentioning the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC).

The CPC pipeline -- which had not commented -- handles around one percent of the world's oil supplies, as well as around 80 percent of Kazakhstan's exports.

During the night, Ukraine "attacked facilities at the marine transshipment complex in Novorossiysk using fixed-wing attack drones", the Russian defence ministry said in a statement on Telegram.

"As a result of the Ukrainian drone strikes, the pipeline of a single mooring point, as

well as a loading and unloading terminal, were damaged, and four oil product storage tanks caught fire," the ministry added.

It accused Ukraine of attempting to "destabilise the global hydrocarbon market and cut off oil supplies to European consumers".

The Iran war

US, Iran reject ceasefire

Iran has rejected the proposed truce insisting "on the need for a definitive end to the conflict," IRNA reported yesterday. Iranian state media said the proposal contained 10 undisclosed points

Israel army says struck Iran helicopters, aircraft at Tehran airports

AFP | Jerusalem

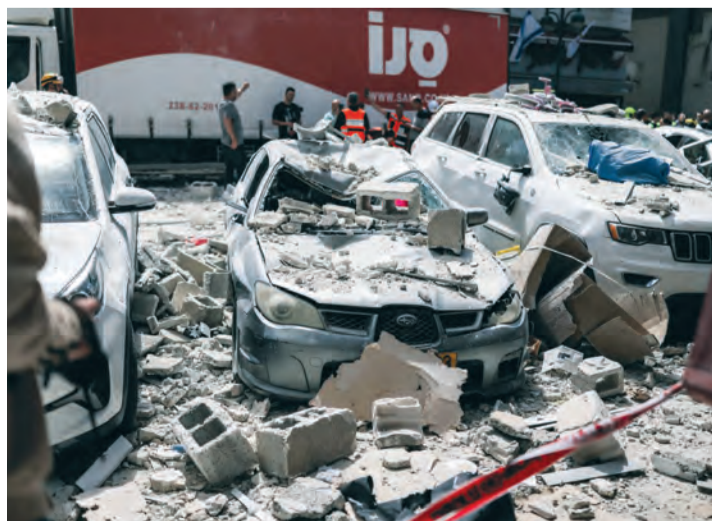
The Israeli military said yesterday it carried out overnight strikes on three airports in Tehran, targeting several Iranian planes and helicopters.

Dozens of Israeli fighter jets struck aircraft and other military infrastructure at Bahram Airport, Mehrabad Airport and Azmayesh Airport in Tehran, the military said.

It described Mehrabad Airport, which has been hit several times before in the ongoing war, as a hub used by the Iran Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force to transfer weapons and funds to

allied groups in the region.

The Israeli military said the strikes were part of efforts aimed at "degrading the Iranian Air Force and the IRGC air force at airports in Tehran".



First responders stand behind damaged vehicles along a street before a building that was hit by an Iranian projectile attack in Ramat Gan in central Israel

Erdogan accuses Israel of undermining peace initiatives

AFP | Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday accused Israel of undermining all efforts to halt the war in the Middle East, but said Ankara would continue to pursue any opportunity to advance a ceasefire.

"The Israeli government has continued to undermine all initiatives aimed at ending the war," Erdogan said following a weekly cabinet meeting in

the Turkish capital. "If there is even the slightest chance to silence the weapons and open space for negotiations, we are making sincere efforts to seize it," he added.

"Our hope is that this unlawful, senseless, illegitimate, and extremely costly war for all humanity will come to an end as soon as possible."

Erdogan also said Turkey has stepped up diplomatic contacts to achieve a ceasefire.



529

First draft of Corpus Juris Civilis or the Justinian Code (a fundamental work in jurisprudence) is issued by Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I

1948

World Health Organization is formed by the United Nations



1954

US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in a news conference, is the first to voice fear of a "domino effect" of communism in the Indochina region

1968

Riots continue in over 100 US cities following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Easter Egg Roll



US President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump, and Eric Trump watch a race during the White House Easter Egg Roll on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC. The Easter Egg Roll is a White House tradition dating back to 1878. The Trumps also honored the 250th anniversary of the United States during the event.

US-Israeli strike kills Iran Guards intelligence chief

AFP | Paris, France

US-Israeli strikes yesterday killed Iran's Revolutionary Guards intelligence chief, who earlier this year had been sanctioned by the United States for his role in suppressing anti-government protests. Major General Majid Khademi, who, according to a

statement by the Guards was killed in an airstrike at dawn, was one of several senior figures within the force to be killed so far in the war. He was promoted to be chief of the Guards' intelligence when his predecessor Mohammad Kazemi was killed last year in an airstrike in Israel's 12-day war against Iran.

ICRC warning

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mirjana Spoljaric, warned that "deliberate threats... against essential civilian infrastructure and nuclear facilities must not become the new norm in warfare". "Any war fought without

limits is incompatible with the law," she said. Though Spoljaric did not single out any country or leader, Trump has publicly told Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to shipping by 0000 GMT Wednesday or face strikes on its bridges and power plants.

Iran gas sites hit

Israel said it struck Iran's largest petrochemical complex, which services the South Pars natural gas field, the biggest natural gas reserve in the world. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the facil-

ity was "destroyed" his country was "systematically eliminating the Revolutionary Guards' money machine". Strikes also hit another petrochemical complex near the Iranian city of Shiraz, local authorities said.

Still a very **significant** step, **says Trump**

"It's a significant step. It's not good enough, but it's a very significant step," Trump told reporters in Washington. The White House said Trump had "not signed off" on the proposal, which calls for a 45-day ceasefire.

Trump said intermediaries between the US and Iran "are negotiating now" on improving the ceasefire proposal, which US media reported was being mediated by Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey. Trump added that he would still go through with his threat against civilian targets if a deal is not reached. Iran's military would "continue the war as long as the political authorities see fit", army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia told the ISNA news agency.

IAEA says strikes near Iran nuke plant 'must stop'

AFP | Vienna, Austria

The chief of the UN nuclear watchdog yesterday warned attacks near Iran's Bushehr atomic power plant "pose a very real danger to nuclear safety and must stop". The facility, located in the south of the country and equipped with a 1,000-megawatt reactor, has been targeted four times since the US-Israeli

war on Iran began. The latest strike was reported by Iranian state media on Saturday. Strikes near the operating plant "could cause a severe radiological accident with harmful consequences for people and the environment in Iran and beyond," said Rafael Grossi, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on X. The IAEA analysed satellite

imagery of the site, confirming the impact of the latest strike, which did not damage the power plant. Grossi added that one strike hit just 75 metres (246 feet) from the plant perimeter. "A nuclear facility and surrounding areas should never be struck," he said. Bushehr, built with help from Russia, is Iran's only operational nuclear power reactor, according to the IAEA.

Houthi target Israel

Yemen's Houthi rebels said they launched an attack targeting Israel alongside their backer Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Israel hits Beirut

An Israeli strike hit Beirut's southern suburbs as Israel's army said it was targeting Hezbollah. Israeli strikes on Lebanon on Sunday killed at least 15 people and wounded 39, Lebanese officials said.

US Democratic lawmakers slam 'economic bombing' after Cuba visit

AFP | Havana, Cuba

Two US Democratic lawmakers have met Cuba's president in the first congressional visit since Washington imposed an oil blockade against the island, a measure they denounced as "economic bombing." US Representatives Pramila

Jayapal and Jonathan Jackson concluded a five-day trip to Cuba on Sunday as President Donald Trump has stepped up pressure on the communist government. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel yesterday posted photos of his meeting with the lawmakers on social media plat-

form X. Diaz-Canel said that during the meeting he denounced "the criminal harm" caused by the US blockade as well as Washington's "threats of even more aggressive actions." The Cuban leader, who confirmed in March that US and

Cuban officials had held talks, reiterated his government's willingness to "engage in serious and responsible bilateral dialogue, and finding solutions to existing differences." In a statement, the US lawmakers said the de facto blockade imposed by Trump in January was "illegal" and "causing

untold suffering to the Cuban people." "This is cruel collective punishment -- effectively an economic bombing of the infrastructure of the country -- that has produced permanent damage. It must stop immediately," the statement said.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



"Today is a very special day. It's a day where we celebrate Jesus. It's a day where we celebrate religion. And it's an honor to be the President of the United States." President Trump and the First Lady participate in the Easter Egg Roll, a long-standing tradition at the White House!

@VP

02



With particular affection, in the light of the risen Lord, we remember today Pope Francis, who, on Easter Monday of last year, returned to the Lord.

@Pontifex

03



Science is a powerful tool, if we choose it, and use it. This World Health Day, WHO has a simple message: Together for Health. #StandWithScience.

@DrTedros

04



Landmines, explosive remnants of war & improvised explosive devices do not disappear when the fighting is over. They kill thousands each year & injure many more.

@antoniguterres

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

India Union Minister Piyush Goyal unveils **Malabar Gold & Diamonds'** USD 24M CSR Initiative



Manama

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the world's fifth-largest retail jewellery group and a responsible jewellery brand, announced its CSR initiatives worth USD 24 Million for the financial year 2026-27 at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi in the presence of Shri Piyush Goyal, India Union Minister for Commerce and Industry.

At the CSR initiative, the Union Minister inaugurated the distribution of educational scholarships for 33,000 female students across India. The event was attended by Malabar Group Chairman Mr. M.P. Ahammad, Malabar Gold & Diamonds Managing Director - India Operations Mr. O. Asher, Malabar Group Executive

Directors Mr. Nishad A.K. and Mr. Abdulla Ibrahim, Kerala House Resident Commissioner Mr. Puneet Kumar, IAS, Pratham CEO Ms. Rukmini Banerji, and Thanal Chairman Dr. Idris, among others.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal stated that the Malabar Charitable Trust's initiatives align closely with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of empowering India's daughters through programs like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao.

He added that "Malabar Gold & Diamonds' decision to allocate USD 24 Million towards CSR will further strengthen the nation's progress," emphasizing that India's growth is rooted in the empowerment of its people - especially women and girls and appreciating the company's efforts in driving meaningful

change through education."

"He also encouraged students and young citizens to dream big, aspire beyond limitations, and seize the vast opportunities India offers, urging them to contribute actively to the nation's growth story"

Malabar Group, Chairman, Mr. M.P. Ahammad highlighted "Human resource development is the backbone of national growth. He noted that nurturing talent through quality education is essential, and that the scholarship programme enables students to achieve academic success and contribute to the country's development. He added that the group remains committed to creating sustainable, long-term societal impact through significant CSR investments."

During 2026-27, CSR projects

worth USD 24 Million will be implemented across more than 3,000 locations in 19 states in India, covering 15 major initiatives. These programmes are expected to benefit over 200,000 people.

A significant focus is on education with USD 14 Million allocated to initiatives such as micro-learning centres for street children and national scholarship programmes for girls. USD 3.6 Million has been earmarked for food distribution under the Hunger Free World project, and USD 1.7 Million for healthcare initiatives. Housing projects, including the 'Grandma Home' initiative for destitute mothers, will receive 3 Million. Additionally, 0.82 Million will be allocated for other humanitarian activities and USD 1.2 Million for environmental protection.

As part of the Malabar Group's 33rd anniversary, scholarships will be awarded this year to 33,000 girl students from 284 districts across 18 states in India. Since its inception, the programme has benefited over 115,000 girls. All CSR initiatives are implemented through the Malabar Charitable Trust.

For the rehabilitation of street children, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has established 1,543 micro-learning centres across 17 states in partnership with Pratham Education Foundation, one of India's largest NGOs. The number of centres will be increased to 2,500 this year, with student enrolment expected to grow from over 64,000 to 100,000.

Under the Hunger Free World project, nutritious meals are provided daily to 115,000

people across India, Zambia, and Ethiopia. Other CSR initiatives include the 'Grandma Home' project, which provides free accommodation and care for destitute women, and Malabar-Thanal pharmacies that offer medicines at subsidized rates to the underprivileged.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds' operations are guided by ESG principles. Since its inception, the company has allocated 5% of its net trading profit towards CSR activities. These initiatives focus on women empowerment, healthcare, education, housing, hunger eradication and environmental protection, in collaboration with NGOs such as Pratham and Thanal.

These efforts have already brought positive change to the lives of over 1.8 million people across India.

BKIC introduces refined Logo

● The refined logo represents a return to BKIC's core foundations, reinforcing the values of strength, trust, and reliability that have defined the company for more than five decades

Manama

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company (BKIC) has introduced a refined version of its logo, marking a natural evolution of its visual identity. Guided by its commitment to policyholders, the update reflects a thoughtful refinement that preserves the essence of the brand while aligning with its future direction. The Company will continue to operate under its established legal name, Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company.

The refined logo represents



a return to BKIC's core foundations, reinforcing the values of strength, trust, and reliability that have defined the company for more than five decades. By simplifying and strengthening its visual presence, BKIC aims to ensure greater clarity and ease of recognition across all customer touchpoints.

This evolution reflects the company's belief that progress is not always about change, but about returning to what matters most - remaining true to its roots while continuing to move forward with confidence.

This refinement is a bold declaration of our identity - a beacon of clarity for our customers in Bahrain and Kuwait. In a landscape of multiple GIG entities, this new identity em-



Dr. Abdulla Sultan, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company (BKIC), said:

powers you to distinguish BKIC Bahrain and BKIC Kuwait across the Group companies with absolute ease, recognizing the unique strength and individual dedication that BKIC brings to the GIG Group's expansive regional horizon and to better serve our customers.

Our evolution is visually anchored by the iconic GIG Group

shell, now paired with the definitive signature: "A GIG Company." This is our seal of continuity - a tribute to the legal structural integrity that binds us. For AM Best and our partners, this reinforces that our financial fortress and A- (Excellent) rating are sustained by an unbreakable, growing synergy with the GIG Group.

Commenting, Dr. Abdulla Sultan, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company (BKIC), said:

"At its heart, this refinement is more than a change in name; it is a reaffirmation of our core identity. While we evolve to better serve a new era, our commitment to the values that earned your trust remains unshakable. We are staying true to our roots while strengthening our promise as your most dependable partner."

The refined logo will be gradually rolled out across all BKIC platforms and touchpoints, ensuring a seamless and familiar experience for customers.

Oil prices slip back

Indian-flagged LPG tanker passed through the strait



A trader works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange

● A third Turkish-owned ship also crossed the war-torn strait.

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Oil prices edged down yesterday amid subdued Easter holiday trading as investors took some encouragement from news of some oil tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

"There is definitely some sort of volumes being shipped through the strait -- by far not at all normalising the commercial ship traffic -- but it's definitely a step in the right direction," SEB analyst Ole R. Hvalbye told AFP.

Around 1050 GMT, a barrel of the main Brent benchmark was off 0.8% at \$108.20. US equivalent West Texas Intermediate was down 1.4 percent

at 110.01.

Those dips came on comments by Turkey's transport minister that a third Turkish-owned ship had crossed the war-torn strait.

Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, a key global waterway, since the US-Israeli strikes on Iran started on February 28 sent global oil and gas prices soaring from around \$60 a barrel pre-war. Turkey said its Ocean Thunder tanker, carrying crude oil from Iraq to Malaysia, safely passed through the strait on Sunday. According to the global ship tracking intelligence Marine Traffic, it was coming from Basra in Iraq.

Two other vessels safely exited the strait at the weekend.

In addition, Japanese shipping firm Mitsui O.S.K. Lines said yesterday that an Indian-flagged LPG tanker owned by its subsidiary had passed through the strait.

US stocks mixed as market weighs confusing signs on war

AFP | New York, United States

Wall Street stocks were mixed early yesterday as markets monitored the latest military developments in the Middle East while the White House confirmed receiving a ceasefire proposal from medi-

ators. About 15 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.1% at 46,456.21. The broad-based S&P 500 rose 0.2% to 6,593.70, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.4% to 21,960.89. Yesterday's session was the first since Friday's

monthly jobs report, which showed unexpectedly strong employment gains in March. US markets had been closed for Good Friday. CFRA Research's Sam Stovall described investor's perspective as one of "confusion" at the varying developments in the Iran conflict with

the US-Israel alliance. Stovall said the US Federal Reserve is expected to keep rates unchanged for the next while but that a "very high" inflation reading could be concerning as an indication higher oil prices are leading to broad-based pricing pressure.

AI at war: Five things to know about **Project Maven**

AFP | Washington, United States

A Pentagon AI programme called Project Maven is at the center of the US strikes against Iran and potentially one of the most consequential transformations of modern warfare.

What is it?

Project Maven is the Pentagon's flagship artificial intelligence program, launched in 2017 as a narrow experiment to help military analysts make sense of the torrent of drone footage pouring in from conflict zones.

Operators were drowning in imagery, searching frame by frame for objects of interest that might appear for only a moment before vanishing. Maven was built to find the needle in the haystack.

Eight years later, the program has evolved into something far more expansive: an AI-assisted targeting and battlefield management system that has vastly accelerated what is known in war-making as the kill chain -- the process from initial detection to destruction.

How does it work?

Maven functions like both the air traffic control of battle and its cockpit.

Aalok Mehta, director of the CSIS Wadhvani AI Center, described the system as "essentially an overlay" that fuses sensor data, enemy troop intelligence, satellite imagery, and information on troop deployment.

In practice, that means rapidly scanning satellite feeds to detect troop movements or identify targets, while also "taking a snapshot of the operational theater" to determine the best course of action for striking a specific target.

In a recent demonstration posted online, a Pentagon official described how Maven "magically" turns an observed threat into a targeting workflow, weighing available assets and presenting a commander with options.

The emergence of ChatGPT



In the Iran war the Pentagon is using an AI program that is potentially of the most consequential changes in modern warfare

Massive speed and efficiency gains

- Maven uses AI to analyze drone footage, satellite images, and sensor data far faster than humans.
- It can process huge datasets and flag potential targets automatically, letting analysts focus on decisions rather than raw data.
- Military reports suggest it has supported thousands of strikes and real-world operations, showing it's not just experimental anymore.



was another leap forward, broadening the use of the technology to a far greater range of users who can interact with Maven in natural language.

For now, this capability is supplied by Anthropic's Claude

— though that arrangement is coming to a bitter end after the Pentagon bristled at the AI lab's demand that its model not be used for fully automated strikes or the tracking of US citizens.

Why did Google say no?

The ethical question was a factor in Maven's early years, when Google was the program's original AI contractor.

In 2018, more than 3,000 employees signed an open letter protesting the company's involvement, arguing that the contract crossed a line. Several engineers resigned.

Google declined to renew when the contract expired, and subsequently published AI principles explicitly ruling out participation in weapons systems.

The episode exposed a fault line in Silicon Valley between engineers who viewed autonomous targeting as an ethical red line and defense officials who

saw it as essential.

More recently, Google removed its AI policy restrictions and said it is leaning further into national security work. The Pentagon has said that Google, along with xAI and OpenAI, are in the mix to replace Claude in Maven.

What is Palantir's role?

In 2024, Palantir — founded in part with CIA seed funding and built from the start around government intelligence work — stepped into the space Google vacated.

The company has reportedly become Maven's primary technology contractor, and its AI now forms the operational backbone of the program.

Project Maven is the Pentagon's flagship artificial intelligence program, launched in 2017 as a narrow experiment to help military analysts make sense of the torrent of drone footage pouring in from conflict zones

Palantir CEO Alex Karp frames the stakes explicitly.

"This is a have, have-not world," he said at a recent Palantir event, arguing that it was important for the West to achieve capabilities the rest of the world lacked.

A system that compresses a kill chain from hours to seconds makes an adversary obsolete, he said.

How has it fared?

The Pentagon and Palantir declined to comment on Maven's performance in the current war with Iran.

US strikes have been carried out at a sustained pace, and it can be assumed that Maven's ability to speed up the targeting and firing process has played a central role.

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, after three weeks the US strike campaign settled into a pace of between 300 and 500 targets per day.

In the first 24 hours of Operation Epic Fury, US forces struck over 1,000 targets, including a school housed in a building previously used as a military complex, according to various media reports. Iran has said the attack killed 168 children aged seven to 12 and wounded many other people.

Lebanon says Israeli strikes hit Beirut suburbs, country's south

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

An Israeli airstrike yesterday hit the southern suburbs of Beirut, where Israel's army said it was targeting Iran-backed Hezbollah, as Lebanon reported more attacks in the country's south.

AFP TV footage showed smoke billowing across the skyline after the strike on the southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold which has largely emptied of residents following repeated Israeli attacks and evacuation warnings.

Israel's army said it was "striking Hezbollah targets in Beirut", after previously warning it would hit the area.

Israel has launched strikes across Lebanon and a ground in-

vasion in the south since March 2, when Hezbollah entered the Middle East war on the side of its backer Iran.

Shortly before the warning, an AFP journalist in the southern suburbs had seen just a few shops open, as well as a gas station belonging to the Al-Amana fuel company that was destroyed in a previous raid. The Israeli army had announced targeting Al-Amana stations recently that were "controlled by Hezbollah".

The latest attacks came a day after the first reported strike on the town of Ain Saadeh, east of Beirut, which killed three people including two women, according to Lebanese authorities.

Among the dead were Pierre Mouawad, a local official in the

Lebanese Forces, a Christian party strongly opposed to Hezbollah, and his wife.

Samir Geagea, head of the Lebanese Forces, said on Monday that "the Israelis were targeting a member of the Quds Force", the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' foreign operations arm, but he did not seem to have been killed.

Israel's military said it had struck a "terrorist target" east of Beirut and was reviewing the incident after "reports of casualties among Lebanese civilians not involved in the fighting".

'Cannot become the new norm'

In south Lebanon, the health ministry said four people were killed in an attack on a car in

Kfar Rumman, near the city of Nabatiyeh.

The state-run National News Agency (NNA) also reported deadly strikes elsewhere in the country's south and east, including in the Tyre district village of Burj Rahal, where an AFP correspondent saw mangled metal and household items among the rubble of destroyed buildings.

"The preliminary toll is 15 homes damaged, which are no longer liveable," said Burj Rahal mayor Daoud Ezzedine.

"The residents want to return home, but unfortunately they will not be able to."

Hezbollah announced attacks on Israeli targets in south Lebanon and across the border, in-

cluding launching an advanced missile and attack drones at a base near the central city of Hadera.

Lebanon's health ministry said an Israeli attack killed a para-

medic from the Hezbollah-allied Risala Scouts Organization on Monday.

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X that the WHO "has verified 92 attacks on health facilities, medical vehicles, personnel, and warehouses".

"These acts cannot become the new norm," he added.

On Sunday, a strike in the capital's Jnah neighbourhood hit near the country's largest public medical facility, killing five, the ministry said.

Israel's military chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir visited troops in southern Lebanon on Sunday and pledged to intensify strikes against Hezbollah.



Lebanon says 1,497 people have been killed since the war erupted, including 57 health workers.

“Iran Strategy Will Strengthen US Role in Gulf”

● Over 2,000 drones intercepted as UAE faces

● Calls for lasting solution

● warns against fragile ceasefire

UAE

Dr. Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, has said Iran's handling of the ongoing conflict will ultimately reinforce not diminish the United States' presence in the Gulf.

Speaking to journalists on Saturday, Dr. Gargash stressed that Iran's current approach is “moving forward” to strengthen “the American role in the Gulf.”

“It will not reduce it,” he said, underlining that Washington remains the UAE's primary security partner. “We will double down on our relationship with the United States.”

As the conflict enters its sixth week, Dr. Gargash expressed gratitude for the international



“Iran's current approach will only strengthen, not reduce, the American role in the Gulf, and we remain firmly committed to the United States as our primary security partner, doubling down on that relationship,”

DR. ANWAR GARGASH, DIPLOMATIC ADVISER TO UAE PRESIDENT SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

support extended to the UAE. His remarks came during Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's visit to Abu Dhabi and followed backing from more than 125 world leaders.

He highlighted “exceptional” US assistance, particularly in air defence, while also describing France as a “steadfast partner.”

He added that Iran's actions could lead to growing Israeli influence in the Gulf region.

‘Worst-Case Scenario’ Unfolding

Dr. Gargash described the ongoing war as the “worst-case scenario” the UAE had long anticipated “If you asked me over the last 20 years... a full Iranian attack would have been the worst-case scenario — and this is what we are seeing,” he said.

Despite the situation's severity, he emphasised the UAE's resilience and capacity to respond

effectively. “We are coping very well the fundamentals are very strong for a UAE comeback.”

According to official figures, UAE air defences have intercepted over 2,100 drones, more than 500 ballistic missiles, and dozens of cruise missiles since the conflict began.

Hormuz Tensions

Addressing tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, Dr. Gargash stressed that the vital shipping

route “cannot be held hostage by one country.”

While reports suggested the UAE could take a leading maritime role, he clarified that the country would instead support any US-led or international effort to secure navigation.

“This is extremely important for the global economy and global trade,” he said.

Meanwhile, Bahrain is preparing to present a resolution at the

UN Security Council to address the issue, following diplomatic efforts to avoid vetoes.

Regional Impact

Highlighting the broader consequences of the conflict, Dr. Gargash pointed to the economic and security toll of Iran's actions on Gulf nations.

“When Iranians speak about reparations, it also works here,” he said, noting that accountability must extend beyond actions by the US and Israel to include Iran's conduct towards its neighbours.

High-level Qatar–Norway call focuses on regional security

Qatar

The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, held a telephone conversation with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Jonas Gahr Støre, to discuss the latest developments surrounding the military escalation in the region and its wider implications for regional and international peace and security.

Both sides reviewed ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving disputes through peaceful dialogue, underscoring the urgent need to prevent further escalation of tensions.

During the call, the Qatari



Prime Minister called for an immediate halt to what he described as unjustified attacks by Iran against Qatar and other countries in the region. He also warned against any targeting of critical infrastructure, particularly facilities connected to water security, food supply chains, and energy production.

He further stressed the im-

portance of enhancing coordination, strengthening joint diplomatic initiatives, and returning to negotiations to contain the crisis. He reiterated that a diplomatic solution remains essential to ensuring global energy security, safeguarding freedom of navigation, protecting the environment, and maintaining regional stability.

UAE Backs Bahrain's Push on Hormuz Crisis



The United Arab Emirates has joined Bahrain in calling for urgent action by the United Nations Security Council over rising concerns in the Strait of Hormuz, warning that the situation now poses a serious threat to global stability.

In a strong statement, Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Af-

fairs, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, stressed that the issue has escalated beyond a regional concern and now directly impacts international security, global food and energy supplies, and the rule of international law.

He cautioned that continued inaction could push the world

closer to a wider crisis, with developing nations expected to bear the most severe consequences.

The UAE expressed its full support for Bahrain's diplomatic efforts at the Security Council, highlighting the Kingdom's leadership in advancing a resolution aimed at addressing the growing risks in the vital maritime corridor.

The Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping route, remains central to international trade, particularly for oil and gas supplies. Any disruption in the area is seen as a potential trigger for widespread economic and geopolitical instability.

The UAE also extended its appreciation to Bahrain for spearheading diplomatic initiatives and mobilizing international attention toward the urgency of the issue.

Saudi governor received Maldivian President



Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, President of the Republic of Maldives, arrived in Medina yesterday, where he performed prayers at the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi.

Upon arrival at Prince Mohammed bin Abdulaziz International Airport, the Maldivian President was received by Prince Salman bin Sultan, Governor of the Madinah Region.

The visit formed part of his official schedule and reflected the spiritual importance of Madinah, as well as the close and cordial relations between the Maldives and the Kingdom.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What inspired me to volunteer across Bahrain?

Bahrain has always felt like my second home. A place where kindness and solidarity truly shine. It is truly an honor for me to be part of initiative like this. In times of uncertainties people deserve to feel seen, supported and reminded that they are not alone. Every act of compassion, every kind words and every moment of connection has the power to restore hope. I am always grateful for the opportunity to contribute, to make even a small difference, and to bring light hope and love into the room. And this is what my heart calls me to do.

Joyce Bagang BSN, RN

Pet Owners Face Stress Amid Limited Travel Options

I'm currently in the process of planning a trip from Bahrain to India, and one of the biggest challenges I've faced isn't the travel itself, it's figuring out what to do about my cat.

I have a British cat, and she is honestly part of my everyday life. Anyone who has a pet knows it's not just an animal you leave behind or "send separately" without thinking twice. That's why this whole process has been more stressful than I expected.

Right now, in-cabin pet travel options are very limited, which already narrows things down quite a bit. That leaves cargo transport as the main alternative, which is likely to cost an arm and a leg for middle class families like mine.

But for me, it's not just about the money. It's the emotional side of it too. The idea of my cat travelling separately, out of my sight, is not easy at all.

On top of that, the process itself feels quite complicated. Everything depends on airline availability and different regulatory requirements, which makes planning uncertain. Even routes via Saudi Arabia, while understandable in terms of procedures and checks, can feel a bit tiring and time-consuming to navigate.

I do understand these rules exist for safety and animal welfare, and I respect that fully. I just wish there were a bit more clarity and maybe more pet-friendly travel options, or at least a simpler system for people who are relocating with pets.

At the moment, it really feels like pet owners are left trying to work through limited choices while hoping everything works out safely in the end.

Noora M.

Unified GCC Visa Seen as Urgent Relief for Stranded Travelers

Considering the current air traffic situation, it is necessary to consider arranging the Gulf Unified Tourist Visa online in a very acceptable manner for GCC residence permit holders. It is an appropriate time to introduce a unified tourist visa for travelers who are facing a lot of travel difficulties. The timely decision is a favorable situation for the Gulf countries to implement jointly.

It is of urgent importance that transit travelers are currently facing and expecting. Since Bahrain and Kuwait are currently dependent on Saudi Arabia due to the closure of the airspace, it is hoped that the concerned parties will take a reassuring decision to implement the GCC tourist visa.

If the GCC tourist visa is implemented on a trial basis on the Schengen visa model for those who are currently traveling, it will be equally helpful to travel from Bahrain and Kuwait to India via Saudi Arabia, which is currently possible, without airspace obstacles.

A unified tourist visa, which would be equally beneficial for travelers with GCC work permits for all six GCC countries, could be tested in the current situation as a solution to travel through GCC countries without the hassle of transit visas.

The GCC unified visa, which will be implemented soon, would provide relief to travelers from the additional costs caused by the significantly rising ticket prices as well as visa fees.

Sunil Thomas Ranny

Feel safe in this beautiful island

I'm an expatriate living in Bahrain, and something small recently made me pause.

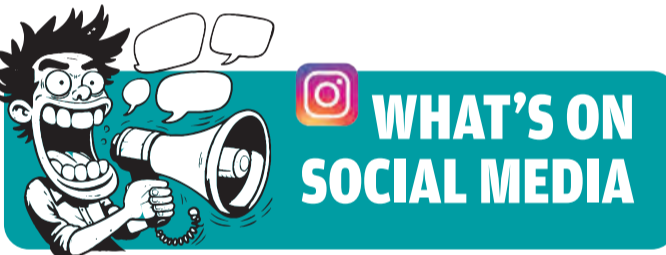
I had to step out late at night recently for something personal. On the way, I realised how natural it felt - no worry, no second thoughts. Even with everything happening around, I still feel safe in this beautiful island. I don't take that feeling lightly. It may sound like a simple thing, but it really does mean a lot.

Over time, Bahrain has started to feel like home. It's the everyday calm that stands out - the ability to go about life, even at night, without that constant sense of concern you sometimes carry elsewhere.

As an expat, that kind of safety quietly shapes how you live and how you feel about a place. It makes life easier, lighter, and more settled.

I'm genuinely grateful for it, and I hope this sense of peace continues for everyone who lives here.

Teena Thomas



MPs Approve move to cut Nursery fees during school suspension

Parliament has approved a proposal to regulate nursery fees during school closures. Recognising that remote learning cannot replace direct interaction, MPs are pushing for fee adjustments and credits while ensuring staff remain supported.

TOP COMMENTS

fayyaz1788
This is a very great decision as i am giving my kids fee before 43bhd now they have increased to 73 bhd in iqra privateschool this is such a big amount to pay in this situation very difficult the schools should take some step.

famithaabdulrahman
Kindly waive off atleast transportation fees which students didn't use.

beastmotivator888
Now do private schools (primary and secondary). The online school delivery is terrible and nowhere near what should be taught for the money spent

kutikutu141
Teachers are waiting for a salary as well to take care of their families.

bu.abeer
Yes please, do something for the private schools as well

hina7957
I have already paid the March fee, but my child did not attend even a single day. Now nurseries are asking for April fees as well. Nursery kids are too young to benefit from online classes — they mainly need care and physical interaction. I kindly request that fees be reconsidered or adjusted during this period.

We would love to hear from you.

If you have anything you'd like to say or share with us, please feel free to write to us at online@newsfbahrain.com

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Photo : Abhishek Ghosh



Spot the six differences



Classifieds

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Fit-again Mbappe at Real Madrid for clashes like Bayern tie: Arbeloa

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said Kylian Mbappe joined the club to star in key matches like Tuesday's Champions League clash against German giants Bayern Munich.

Arbeloa said Mbappe was a vital part of the team, although questions remain over whether record 15-time winners Madrid can strike the right balance with all their biggest names on the pitch at the same time.

French superstar Mbappe, the club's top goalscorer, did not start either game in the last 16 tie against Manchester City which Madrid won impressively, because of a long struggle with a knee sprain.

Fit once more, Arbeloa indicated Mbappe was likely to feature along with Vinicius Junior in attack at the Santiago Bernabeu against Bayern in the quarter-final first leg.

"I'm delighted to have that kind of problem, to have outstanding players at my disposal and to have a player like Kylian Mbappe, who came to Real Madrid for matches like tomorrow's and for knockout ties like this one," Arbeloa told reporters yesterday.

"I'm sure we're going to see Kylian at his best, leading the team the way he's always known how to do, and I have a great deal of confidence in all the players."

England international Jude Bellingham is also finding his way back to fitness after injury

It's clear Mbappe has different characteristics and conditions to those Brahim has, so we have to play in a different way, but I'm delighted to have this problem

KYLIAN MBAPPE



Real Madrid's French forward #10 Kylian Mbappe (C) and teammates attend a training session

and Arbeloa said he would keep betting on the squad's stars when they are available.

Against City young midfielder Thiago Pitarch and attacking midfielder Brahim Diaz played important roles, but they may get less time on the pitch in the Bayern tie.

"It's clear Mbappe has different characteristics and conditions to those Brahim has, so we have to play in a different way, but I'm delighted to have this problem," said Arbeloa.

"Just as you mention Bellingham and other great players I have available, for me it's a blessing to be able to count on everyone..." he continued.

"Having a player like Mbappe in the team is an extraordinary stroke of luck. I don't know if there's a coach in the world who wouldn't want to have him.

"I put myself in the shoes of the defenders who play against Real Madrid and have to face Mbappe, Vinicius, Valverde, Bellingham... I think they're some of the best players on the planet."

15

times Real Madrid has won the Champions League trophy, a record they hope to extend by successfully integrating their star-studded roster for the remainder of the tournament

'Incredible' connection

Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior said he worked well together with Mbappe, despite some believing the fit is not right for Madrid.

"People talk a lot... 'Kyli' is here to help us, he's always given us confidence, he scores the goals for us, we have to be connected tomorrow, above all with the fans and all the players," he told reporters.

"It's a difficult game where the best players make the difference, and Kyli is one of those. I have an incredible connection with him, not just on the pitch but off it too."

Tour of Flanders cyclists face fines for running red light at railroad

AFP | Oudenaarde

Up to 20 cyclists from the Tour of Flanders, including race winner Tadej Pogacar, could face action from Belgian authorities after running a red light at a railway crossing on Sunday.

While the main peloton stopped as required, Pogacar and a bunch of chasers slipped across the tracks in pursuit of a leading group, despite the warning signals and the risk of an oncoming train.

Pogacar said he and several others were alerted to the red light too late.

"Suddenly, three guys jumped in the middle of the road and started waving to stop. How can you stop in one second," he said.

Pogacar also said he at first thought he might be dealing with some kind of protest, which is common at bike races held on public roads.

"I was thinking maybe it's some protesters or something crazy is going on."

The East Flanders public prosecutor's office announced it would pursue the riders for



Red Bull-BORA-hansgroh's Belgian rider Remco Evenepoel competes in the men's race

breaching road safety rules.

"The offenders will be identified and a report will be filed," the local prosecutor's office said.

Race organisers forced the group that went through to slow down and wait for the rest of the peloton to catch up once the train had passed, but the breakaway was allowed to keep racing and they stretched their

lead by nearly two minutes in that period.

"The rule is a little bit weird. I don't know why they don't stop the breakaway, stop us and then restart normally like it should be. In the end, no complaints," said Pogacar.

Belgian hero Remco Evenepoel, who finished third on the day, was also among the riders concerned.

Third Bahrain Jockey Academy Cohort Honoured



Manama

As part of the vision and programs of the Jockey Foundation at the Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC), the third cohort of trainee jockeys for the 2025/2026 season was honored

at the Bahrain Jockey Academy at REHC, amid a strong turnout of young Bahraini men and women.

The program concluded with the honoring of 38 trainees who successfully completed it after five months of intensive theoretical and practical training covering the fundamentals

and skills of horse racing, under the supervision of a number of specialized lecturers and trainers.

The program delivered strong results among the participants, who were divided into four groups: Group (A), with trainee Sayed Hussain Mohammed as its top performer; Group (B), led by

trainee Loay Mohammed; Group (C-1), led by trainee Abbas Rajab; and Group (C-2), led by trainee Asma Mushrif.

The training programs organized by the Bahrain Jockey Academy continue to achieve significant success, reflected in the growing participation of young Bahrainis

and their outstanding results, alongside an increasing rate of first-place finishes in seasonal races.

These programs form part of the Jockey Foundation's ongoing efforts to develop national talent in equestrianism and horse racing, making the sport more appealing to young

Bahrainis.

This is achieved by providing an ideal environment and comprehensive support to enhance their skills, thereby laying a solid foundation for a new generation of Bahraini jockeys and preparing them to compete at regional and international levels.

Bahrain eyes strong showing at Asian Beach Games

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain will compete in four sports at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, from April 22 to 30, 2026. The Kingdom's athletes will take part in men's beach handball, 3x3 basketball, beach wrestling, and open water swimming.

Officials in Sanya yesterday kicked off the Games' torch relay with a lighting ceremony along the coast, symbolising the start of Asia's premier beach sports festival. The flame will travel across the city ahead of the April 22 opening ceremony, highlighting Sanya's tropical beaches and growing sports culture.

An online meeting of the Bahraini administrative delegation, chaired by Ahmed Mohammed Abdulghaffar, was held on Sunday to finalise arrangements. Abdulghaffar conveyed greetings from H.E. Faris Mustafa Al Kooheji, Secretary General of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, and discussed travel logistics and team preparations. The delegation will depart for Doha on April 14 before flying on a special Gulf delegation flight to



Torch lit for the 2026 Asian Beach Games in Sanya

Sanya on April 15.

In men's beach handball, Bahrain are drawn in Group A with hosts China, Iran, the Philippines, Hong Kong, India, and Sri Lanka. Head coach Hussain Al Qaidoum described the draw as balanced, noting that a seven-team group provides more flexibility than Group B's eight-team line-up. Full preparations will begin after the domestic league concludes, with the

squad arriving in Sanya several days in advance to acclimatise and fine-tune their readiness. Al Qaidoum believes the early fixtures will help build match rhythm and provide a strong chance to advance from the group stage. The team's main target is the semi-finals, though the later stages are expected to be highly competitive against experienced sides from Group B, including Qatar, Oman, Jor-

dan, and Pakistan

Bahrain's 3x3 basketball team, led by coach Ahmed Elias, includes Bogdan Dragovic, Austin Ogukwa, Milos Supica, and Nasser Al Mousawi. The team opens against Qatar on April 25 at 12:10 PM, faces India later that same day at 2:15 PM, and concludes the preliminary round against Kazakhstan on April 27 at 8:30 PM. Quarter-finals are scheduled for April 28, with semi-finals and finals on April 29.

With venues, transport, and support infrastructure fully prepared, Bahrain aims to deliver strong performances across all four sports. Organizers say the Games will feature 1,790 athletes from 45 countries competing in 14 sports, 15 disciplines, and 62 events.

Zhang Changfeng, deputy secretary general of the Sanya Asian Beach Games Organizing Committee, stressed: "As we enter the final stretch, we will refine every detail to perfection with a meticulous attitude. With strong national coordination, provincial leadership, municipal implementation, and support from all sectors of society, the 6th Asian Beach Games will surely become a wonderful and extraordinary sporting event."

Kane trains with Bayern ahead of Real Madrid Champions League tie



Bayern Munich's English forward #09 Harry Kane (2nd L) celebrates with teammates (file photo)

AFP | Madrid

Harry Kane took part in training with his Bayern Munich team-mates yesterday ahead of the German club's Champions League quarter-final first leg match at Real Madrid as he continues his recovery from an ankle niggle.

The striker picked up an injury while on international duty with England in late March, which caused him to pull out of last Tuesday's

friendly defeat to Japan at Wembley, with coach Thomas Tuchel saying the 32-year-old was suffering just a "minor" complaint.

Kane was then not included in the Bayern squad for Saturday's 3-2 Bundesliga win at Freiburg.

Yesterday, however, he appeared in good spirits on Bayern's training ground during the 15-minute session, which was open to the press.

Atalanta in Champions League hunt after cruising past Lecce

AFP | Milan

Atalanta are firmly in contention for next season's Champions League after beating lowly Lecce 3-0 yesterday and creeping to within five points of Serie A's top four.

Goals from Giorgio Scalvini, Lecce old boy Nikola Krstovic and Giacomo Raspadori gave

seventh-placed Atalanta a straightforward win at the Stadio Via del mare.

Raffaello Palladino's side took advantage of Como's goalless draw at Udinese in yesterday's early fixture and the 5-2 hammering dished out to Roma by league leaders Inter Milan last night.

Roma, in sixth and the Conference League spot, and fifth-placed Juventus lead Atalanta by a single point, with Juve hosting Genoa later yesterday.

And with Atalanta welcoming Juve on Saturday -- Como face Inter by the lake on Sunday -- and then travelling to Roma the following weekend, the Berga-

mo club are back in the Champions League mix.

Lecce were booted off by disgruntled fans after a defeat which left their team back in the relegation zone, level on 27 points with Cremonese who sit just outside the bottom three thanks to their superior head-to-head record.

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Riffa slam refereeing after loss to Al Khaldiya



Referee Mohammed Khalid shows red to Riffa's goalkeeper Abdulkarim Fardan

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Riffa have voiced outrage after their 2-1 defeat to Al Khaldiya last Saturday in the 17th round of the 2025-26 Nasser Bin Hamad Premier League, insisting key refereeing decisions shaped the result. The club highlighted three red cards that left them with just eight players and questioned VAR and penalty calls, warning that repeated errors threaten

the league's credibility.

Riffa had taken the lead in the 42nd minute when Brazilian midfielder Rodrigo Yuri converted a penalty after Gabriel Monteiro was fouled. Their advantage lasted just over 15 minutes as Thiago Fernandes was sent off for an elbow on Al Khaldiya's Mohammed Adel.

Al Khaldiya equalised in the 58th minute when Riffa defender Yacouba Diarra deflected a cross from Nizar Elotmani into his own net. Riffa goalkeeper

Dziugas Bartkus was sent off in the 71st minute, followed by substitute keeper Abdulkarim Fardan later dismissed for a foul outside the area. Outfield player Rodrigo Yuri stepped in goal, producing a string of vital saves to keep Riffa in the game.

Saifeddine Bouhra eventually struck the winner in the 106th minute with a low drive from outside the box. The result moved Al Khaldiya top of the table on 42 points, two clear of defending champions Muharraq, while Riffa remained on 34 points, a significant blow to their title hopes.



Riffa's midfielder Rodrigo Yuri steps in as goalkeeper

Both sides now turn to the semi-finals of the His Majesty the King's Cup on Friday, with Riffa facing Al Khaldiya again and Muharraq taking on Al Ahli.

Riffa have vowed to challenge the refereeing decisions while preparing for the knockout clash, underlining the impact officiating can have on the title race.

Donovan Smith joins Manama for finals



Smith makes his presence felt against Manama in the semi-final

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

American Donovan Smith will line up for Manama in the 2025-26 Zain Bahrain Basketball League finals against Muharraq, just days after his Al Najma side were eliminated by the same team.

Manama, who beat Najma 3-1 in the semi-finals, acted quickly to sign the forward following a series of standout performances. Standing 6'10, Smith was a constant presence in the paint, scoring 14 points in Game 1, including a last-second tip-in, before adding 24 in Game 2 and 15 in Game 3. His

size made him difficult to contain on the boards and around the basket.

Now joining the team that ended his campaign, Smith adds a strong inside option and a versatile presence on both ends. Under coach Salman Ramadhan, Manama will look to integrate him as they prepare for a best-of-five finals against a side chasing their fifth title.

For Smith, the move offers immediate redemption. From semi-final opponent to potential title-winner, his impact inside could prove decisive as Manama chase their 26th league crown.

Wawrinka falls in first round of Monte Carlo Masters



Stan Wawrinka reacts after the match
AFP | Monte Carlo

Stan Wawrinka bid farewell to the Monte Carlo Masters as the 2014 champion fell 7-5, 7-5 to Sebastian Baez in the first round yesterday.

The 41-year-old three-time Grand Slam winner will retire from tennis at the end of the season and entered the main draw in Monaco as a wild card 20 years on from his debut at the tournament.

The Swiss won his sole 1000-level title 12 years ago in the principality when he defeated his compatriot Roger Federer.

"It was a long time ago, but of course I remember it, it was

exceptional," Wawrinka said on-court of his 2014 victory after tournament organisers showed a video homage to him.

"To have the chance to play this final here, with this exceptional tournament, and to win it in addition, will always be one of my best memories of my career."

Heading into his round of 64 meeting with 65th-ranked Argentinian Baez, Wawrinka's only match since losing to eventual winner Daniil Medvedev in the last 16 at February's Dubai Open was a three-set defeat to then-world number 348 Matteo Martineau at a challenger event on clay in Naples late last month.

Bahrain Youth Yet to Break Through



Coach Vovoras confers with his staff during the game

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-18 men's basketball team lost 57-112 to Slovenia yesterday in their third preliminary-round game at the 31st Albert Schweitzer Tournament in Germany.

The Bahrainis started competitively but struggled to keep pace. The first quarter ended

33-10 in Slovenia's favour, and by halftime the deficit had grown to 59-30. Despite battling through the second half, the Kingdom's representatives couldn't close the gap, finishing 55 points behind.

Somto Patrick Onoduonyi once again led Bahrain with 20 points, adding 10 rebounds and 4 assists. Hassan Abdulkadir contributed 17 points and 11



Bahrain's Yousif Meshael drives to the basket for a layup

rebounds, while Ali Mohamed added 6 points. The team found scoring difficult from long range, making just 3-of-19 three-point attempts. Slovenia had five players in double figures, led by Rok Kozel with 21 points and 9 rebounds, and Galop with 20 points and 3 steals.

Bahrain had previously lost to Germany (59-116) and Sweden (70-101), leaving them without

a win after three matches.

Coached by Greek Gregorios Vovoras, Bahrain rests today before facing fellow-Asian side Japan tomorrow at 2:15pm in their fourth Group A match. They will then conclude against Turkiye on Thursday at the same time. The team is using the tournament as preparation for the upcoming FIBA U18 Asia Cup qualifiers in Qatar.