

**Iran Ultimatum Issued**

Talks reportedly advance on a draft deal as the US issues a stark ultimatum to Iran regarding war and strikes in the Strait of Hormuz. | **P8**

**Parliament Session Officially Adjourned**



TDT | Manama

HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a royal order ending the fourth session of the sixth legislative term of the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives, according to an official decree.

The order, numbered (14) of 2026, follows earlier provisions including Royal Order (30) of 2025, which called for the convening of the two chambers.

According to the decree, the fourth session of the current legislative term will formally adjourn as of Tuesday, May 12, 2026.



**Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company B.S.C. announces its financial results for the first quarter of 2026**

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220 fils (includes VAT)



# Investing in Youth

Scholarships described as key to preparing future national talent

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa met the 27th intake of the Crown Prince’s International Scholarship Programme (CPISP) at Riffa Palace, alongside their parents and members of the programme’s board.

He said that investing in Bahraini youth through scholarships and academic support remains central to preparing future generations to support the country’s long-term development under HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The Crown Prince congratulated the students on their selection, commending their “dedication and excellence” and noting that their achievements reflected the “ambition and capabilities” of Bahraini citizens.

He also praised parents for supporting their children’s education and wished the students



HRH Prince Salman with the youth scholars

success in their academic and professional journeys.

The Crown Prince also thanked CPISP staff and partner institutions for supporting the programme since its inception.

The 27th intake of scholarship recipients includes students from various schools in Bahrain and abroad.

These students expressed gratitude for the programme, stating that it encouraged them to pursue academic excellence

and contribute to national development.

**Recipients**

The recipients of the 2026 Crown Prince’s International Scholarship Programme (CPISP) include Aaya Mohamed Merza Ashoor from Arabian Pearl Gulf School, Ahmed Hussain Sameer Abdulrahman from Hawar International School, Ali Husain Ali Mahdi, Carma Khalid Naji

El Ali, Hussain Fareed Hamza Rahimi and Omid Hasan Ghulam Abdali from St. Christopher’s School, Dana Hassan Ali Al Saffar from Jidhafs Secondary Girls School, Dana Mohamed Radhi Al Qumaish and Sayed Yousif Sayed Adnan Al Mousawi from The British School of Bahrain, Hasan Ammar Mohamed Al Saad from Bahrain School, Jena Salman Ali Al Sairafi from the International School of Geneva, Mariam Ahmed Mahdi Alghanemi from

Saar Secondary Girls School, Mohamed Adel Mohsen Abdulla Mohsen from Nasser Centre for Science & Technology, Nabeel Abdulnabi Jawad Ali Jasim from Shaikh Isa Bin Ali Secondary Boys School, Ronin Abdulla Salman Ahmed from Ahlia School, Sarah Hussain Mahdi Al Jaidoom and Yousif Khalid Abduljabbar Al Awadhi from Ibn Khuldoon National School, and Yousif Yaqoob Yousif Ahmed from Al Taawon Secondary Boys School.

## ‘Solid foundation’

Historic Bahrain-UK defence ties reaffirmed during meeting



HRH Prince Salman with Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister stressed the strength of his country’s long-standing ties with the United Kingdom, describing the relationship as rooted in “solid foundations” of partnership and coordination.

He made the remarks during

a meeting at Riffa Palace with senior British defence official Vice Admiral Edward Ahlgren, UK Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa and his accompanying delegation.

He said both countries were committed to expanding cooperation across multiple sectors, particularly in security and defence, supported by existing agreements including the Comprehensive Security Integration

and Prosperity Agreement.

The Crown Prince also highlighted Britain’s role alongside regional and international partners in promoting security, stability and development in the Middle East and beyond.

He underlined the importance of building on strategic partnerships in defence and military cooperation, saying this would serve the shared interests and aspirations of both countries.

## Bahrain, UK reaffirm strategic security partnership

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, National Security Adviser reaffirmed strong strategic ties with Britain during talks with a senior UK defence official.

HH Shaikh Nasser praised the ongoing coordination between Bahrain and the United Kingdom and stressed the importance of further strengthening joint efforts in line with existing strategic agreements. They discussed regional and



HH Shaikh Nasser with a senior UK defence official.

international developments and exchanged views on security issues of mutual concern.

Field marshal Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force, also received British defence officials. The Bahraini commander described relations with the United Kingdom as “deep-rooted and historic”, praising continued collaboration across defence and military fields. He stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation through training, expertise exchange, and joint coordination in line with shared strategic interests.



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# Investment Bridge Built

BIS and BCCI push to turn bilateral ties into business partnerships



BIS Chairman Abdulrahman Juma and BCCI Chairman Nabeel Kanoo with other key officials

- **Move to turn ties into business action**
- **DTAA finalisation urged**
- **Linked to upcoming corporate tax in Bahrain**

**Pradeep Puravankara**  
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain India Society (BIS) and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) held a strategic meeting at the Chamber's headquarters to enhance commercial and economic cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of India.

BIS Chairman Abdulrahman Juma and BCCI Chairman Nabeel Kanoo led the discus-

sions, emphasizing the need to transform historical bilateral relations into concrete business initiatives.

A primary outcome of the meeting was the decision to form a Joint Committee and a dedicated working group to define priorities and create a structured roadmap for future collaboration.

One critical topic discussed was the urgent need to finalize a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between Bahrain and India, especially since corporate income tax is set to become a reality in Bahrain.

The leaders also focused on reviewing existing Memoranda of Understanding to identify new areas of synergy and investment opportunities.

The BIS highlighted its commitment to working with the Economic Development Board (EDB) to ensure that trade leads



One of the main outcomes of the meeting was the agreement to establish a Joint Committee and a specialized working group to set priorities and develop a clear, structured roadmap for future collaboration.

are successfully converted into tangible investments within Bahrain.

Beyond traditional trade, the meeting explored creative avenues for engagement, including

sports-related initiatives such as cricket.

Both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to supporting business delegations and exchange programs to ensure sustained growth and added value for the private sectors in both nations.

"This meeting reflects the shared commitment of both organizations to further strengthen Bahrain-India economic relations," stated Abdulrahman Juma, President of the Bahrain India Society. "We look forward to working closely with the Bahrain Chamber to support trade, investment, and private-sector engagement."

The meeting concluded with a presentation by BIS Vice Chairman Mr. Balu on future initiatives and a vote of thanks by Treasurer Mr. Vijay Bolor, reaffirming both parties' dedication to a sustainable strategic partnership.

# Government allocates 12 agricultural plots in Buri



Agriculture and Animal Wealth Affairs Undersecretary Asim Abdulatif Abdullah and a representative of Bahraini farmers sign the agreement, in the presence of H.E. Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak and H.E. Shaikha Maram bint Isa Al Khalifa

**Hasan Barakat**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain allocated 12 agricultural plots in the Buri area to local farmers as part of efforts to strengthen food security and boost domestic agricultural production, officials said.

The plots, covering a total area of 81,996.93 square metres, were distributed to Bahraini farmers through a public tender on the Government Land Investment Platform. Each plot ranges between 6,000 and 8,000 square metres and will be leased under 10-year contracts, including a one-year grace period to establish farming infrastructure.

Wael bin Nasser Al Mubarak, Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture Minister said the

initiative reflects continued national support for the agricultural sector and aligns with Bahrain's broader push for sustainable development and local empowerment.

He said farmers will receive ongoing technical and advisory assistance through field visits and specialised teams to ensure long-term productivity, while infrastructure works are underway to extend irrigation networks and support modern farming techniques.

The agreements were signed by Agriculture and Animal Wealth Affairs Undersecretary Asim Abdulatif Abdullah with 12 Bahraini farmers, in the presence of Shaikha Maram bint Isa Al Khalifa, Secretary-General of the National Initiative for Agricultural Development.

# 'Colours of Unity'



**Neethu V**  
TDT | Manama

For some, art is a way of giving back. For others, it is reflection, healing, or a connection to something larger than themselves.

At the ongoing "The Open Palette" art exhibition at Oasis Mall, Juffair, artists from across generations and backgrounds spoke to The Daily Tribune about the ideas behind their works.

Each piece is shaped by memory, culture, and lived experience, echoing a shared sense of unity and a collective love for Bahrain.

For 11-year-old Zamrin, inclusivity and gratitude are at the heart of her artwork. "I drew this as a tribute to Bahrain, as it has given me a home and a safe place to live.

It is also meant to encourage all talented young artists to showcase their work," she said, alongside her mother, Dr. Sunila, a renowned artist herself.



**Bahrain has been very good to us - it feels like a home away from home.**

HEMENDRA KILLAWALA

Dr. Sunila's work reflects gratitude and protection, inspired by her experience in Bahrain. Her piece depicts a mother and son symbolizing sacrifice and inner strength. "It represents courage, care, and the sense of safety we felt here," she said.

Sneha's artwork draws on nostalgia through a vintage Indian postal stamp, evoking memory and distance.

Annie Killawala's Sufi-inspired portraits explore spirituality, describing them as a bridge between heaven and earth.

For Praseetha Ullas, art is rooted in memory. "It comes in the form of horses - quiet, sometimes intense, always within



**A self-taught artist, nature is her muse. Capturing the magnificent aurora borealis.**

DEEPA PARTHIBAN



Nada Ebrahim's dream of hope artwork



**Keep dreaming, no matter what your age.**

NADA EBRAHIM ALSABBAGH



Deepa Parthiban's aurora-inspired artwork

## Korean Ambassador Credential



His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Bahrain's Foreign Minister, received a copy of the credentials of Choi Byung-son, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bahrain, during a meeting at the ministry headquarters in Manama.

## Ukrainian Ambassador Credential



Foreign Minister received the credentials of Ukraine's ambassador to Bahrain during a meeting in Manama.

## Maritime Security Concerns



Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani received US Ambassador Stephanie Hallett in Manama. They discussed recent regional developments, including concerns over maritime security and the implications of reported restrictions on navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

# Parliament Decides Today

MPs to vote on removal of three MPs after committee recommendation

TDT | Manama  
Mohammed Darwish

Parliament is set to vote today on whether to strip three lawmakers of their seats, following a committee recommendation and a request backed by 37 of the chamber's 40 members.

The extraordinary sitting will open with debate and a vote on the membership of MPs Abdulnabi Salman, Mamdouh Al Saleh and Mahdi Al Shuwaikh, after the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee urged their removal.

The committee said the three MPs violated parliamentary duties during an April 28 session, when they opposed a de-



Dr Mahdi Al Shuwaikh, MP



Abdulnabi Salman,  
First Deputy Speaker



Mamdouh Al Saleh, Chairman of  
Parliament's Services Committee

ree-law amending the Judicial Authority Law. It argued their conduct undermined trust and conflicted with their constitutional oath.

According to the committee report, the MPs also criticised

state measures taken against individuals accused of praising Iranian attacks on Bahrain, including citizenship revocations.

The referral to the committee was submitted by Speaker Ahmed Al Musallam on May 4

April security incident involving Iran, in which he warned against disloyalty and stressed that parliamentary representation is a responsibility tied to national trust.

All three MPs attended the committee meeting on May 4 and submitted their defence before lawmakers voted unanimously within the committee to recommend their removal.

Under Bahrain's constitution, MPs can lose their seats if they are deemed to have breached membership duties or lost trust and standing. Any final decision requires approval by a two-thirds majority of parliament — at least 27 votes in the 40-member chamber.

## IRGC Links Under Probe



The Interior Ministry launched a "comprehensive security and legal review" into a series of cases linked to alleged espionage and support for "blatant Iranian aggression," according to a statement.

The ministry said investigations indicated that individuals arrested in connection with the cases had "close links" to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and were influenced by the ideology of Wilayat al-Faqih.

The probe also includes scrutiny of alleged unlawful practices and the use of ideological and religious messaging across media platforms, places of worship, and social, charitable and educational institutions, including schools and kindergartens.

According to the ministry, these activities allegedly promoted "false concepts" and deepened the influence of what it described as an extremist ideology with political aims "under a religious cover" in various areas of community life.

### Investigations

The Interior Ministry said the investigations come amid broader efforts to keep the public informed of security developments following what it called the repercussions of Iranian aggression, including the exposure of espionage cases involving foreign entities and expressions of support for such actions.

It added that the alleged practices took place despite the state providing "all services and forms of care" to citizens. They were aimed at inciting hostility against the state, intimidating citizens and civil society institutions, spreading hatred, and endangering national security.

The ministry stressed that it was examining the underlying causes that led to the alleged violations and crimes, adding that they do not reflect Bahrain's "national stands, patriotic spirit, and the authenticity of its cohesive society."

It also called for continued strengthening of community cooperation, saying citizen engagement at this stage is "of utmost importance" to reinforce social solidarity and safeguard the national fabric and higher interests of the country.

## Prison terms for 10 juveniles

Cases linked to violence and property damage during unauthorised gatherings

TDT | Manama  
Rehab Mohammad

A juvenile court in Bahrain sentenced 10 minors to prison terms in separate cases linked to violence and vandalism.

The Minor Criminal Court for Juveniles issued rulings in six cases, handing down sentences ranging from two to three years. It also ordered the Reform and Rehabilitation Centre to submit a progress report on the juveniles after six months to assess whether the sentences should continue or be replaced with alternative measures.

According to the prosecution,

the cases involved the juveniles' participation in unauthorised gatherings during which acts of violence and damage to public property were reported. Police arrested the youths in the Northern Governorate and referred to the Public Prosecution for questioning before being sent to court.

The prosecution said the defendants were interrogated in line with legal safeguards before being placed in detention pending trial.

Officials said the court proceedings came after multiple police reports documented the incidents and the subsequent arrests.



Public Prosecution

The Head of the Family and Child Prosecution stressed that legal action would continue against anyone involved in threats to public order or damage to property, while also highlighting the importance of family supervision in guiding and protecting minors from behavioural risks and repeated offending.

## Up to five years for filming key sites

The court sentenced defendants to prison terms of up to five years in two separate cases linked to filming sensitive infrastructure during what authorities described as "malicious Iranian attacks" on the kingdom.

The Head of the Terrorism Crimes Prosecution said the Minor Criminal Court issued rulings ranging from one to five years in prison. One defendant was also fined 100 Bahraini dinars, and the confiscation of seized items was ordered in both cases.

According to prosecutors,

### Cybercrime Directorate tracked a social media account filming vital facilities

the first case involved a social media account monitored by the Cybercrime Directorate that published footage of vital facilities during the attacks, leading to the suspect's arrest.

In the second case, the defendant was detained while allegedly filming key installations, an act deemed a violation of national security laws. Both individuals were referred to the Public Prosecution.

## Fake "CBD" Drug Warning Raises Alarm in Bahrain

Misleading Use of "CBD" to Mask Dangerous Synthetic Substances Targeting Young People

TDT | Manama  
Ghadeer Alkumaish

The misleading use of the term "CBD" to disguise dangerous synthetic substances circulating among young people.

This warning was issued by Colonel Dr. Osama Bahar as part of the Ministry of Interior's Al Aman Program, highlighting growing concerns over the increasing circulation of synthetic drugs being falsely presented under misleading names.

Authorities stressed that this practice misleads young people and their families by creating a false sense of safety around substances that are, in reality, unregulated and potentially dangerous.

He further warned that this tactic is deliberately used by drug dealers to deceive users, stating: "drug dealers used the name CBD manufactured as synthetic hash, a dangerous substance and gave it that name so



if a teenager gets caught he can tell his mother it's a beneficial therapeutic substance."

The message strongly cautioned the public not to be misled, adding: "don't believe him."

Officials clarified that Cannabidiol (CBD) is a naturally occurring compound derived from the cannabis plant, and in

some countries it is used under strict medical and pharmaceutical supervision for specific conditions such as epilepsy and chronic pain.

However, authorities emphasized that the substances currently being circulated illegally under similar names are entirely different in composition,



"It is deeply concerning when a young person turns from a valued family member into a source of harm."

COLONEL DR. OSAMA BAHAR

origin, and risk.

Officials warned that illegal manufacturers are producing synthetic cannabinoids in laboratories and distributing them under misleading labels, including "CBD," in an attempt to present them as safe or medically approved.

These substances are not regulated, and their chemical composition is often unknown, making their effects unpredictable and potentially harmful.

Authorities noted that such products do not contain verified therapeutic benefits and may lead to severe physical and psychological consequences.

The awareness message also highlighted serious concerns regarding behavioral changes linked to the misuse of such substances.

Officials emphasized that such behaviors are not inherent traits, but may result from the influence of dangerous synthetic substances that can affect mood, judgment, and self-control.

# Unpaid wages remain top concern

Neethu V  
TDT | Manama

The Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) announced plans to launch a dedicated African Communities Help Desk to strengthen assistance for migrant workers, as it reported 42 cases in the first quarter of 2026, with an 85 per cent resolution rate.

The announcement was made during a press briefing held at the headquarters of YK Almoayed & Sons, where MWPS said April 2026 alone recorded a 45 per cent case resolution rate.

The new help desk will focus on supporting African nationals, including communities from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Cameroon.

It will coordinate with community leaders and consulates in regional hubs such as Riyadh and Abu Dhabi to provide legal aid, repatriation support, immigration clearance assistance, and access to basic services.

"This is not just a hotline – it is a bridge," said MWPS Chairperson Mona Almoayed, adding that the initiative aims to overcome language and administrative barriers faced by workers.

The organisation said it will also approach authorities to re-



MWPS Vice Chairperson Evone Bhaskaran, Treasurer Kavitasree Suvarna, and Media Committee Head Raji Unnikrishnan attended the briefing.

instate a three-month summer midday work ban, which had previously been agreed but not fully implemented.

MWPS said most cases in early 2026 were linked to rent and living costs, immigration penalties, medical assistance, travel costs, and unpaid wages. It noted that salary-related disputes accounted for around 80 per cent of complaints.

Other recurring issues include repatriation support, legal assistance, and delays in visa cancellations or job transfers after termination.



## MWPS Case Overview (2024-Q1 2026)

- 2024: 39 cases handled
- 2025: 86 cases recorded, 77 resolved (90% resolution rate)
- Q1 2026: 42 cases reported, 85% already resolved
- April 2026: 45% monthly resolution rate

However, the society said cases involving domestic abuse and illegal residency have declined, crediting government measures and increased awareness among workers.

# Youth Identity Launch Unveiled

TDT | Manama

Rawan bint Najeeb Tawfiqi, Minister of Youth Affairs, attended the launch of the new visual identity of Al Bait Al Oud Authority at Bin Matar House in Muharraq. Officials, youth advocates and a group of creative young participants were present.

Speaking at the event, the minister described the unveiling as a key milestone in advancing youth initiatives in the kingdom, highlighting a strategic approach focused on empowering young people and

involving them in shaping national programmes.

She said the initiative aligns with the vision of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, to strengthen the role of youth in preserving Bahrain's cultural heritage.

The Minister added that the associated hackathon reflected an advanced model of youth-driven creativity, translating national values into a modern visual language that reinforces Bahraini identity and deepens a sense of belonging.

## Economic Relations Strengthened



His H.E. Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce, received Moon Byung-jun, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, in a meeting that underscored the growing Bahrain-South Korea partnership and explored further cooperation in trade, economic development, and areas of mutual interest.

## Pilgrimage Mission Sent



Field Marshal Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa, Commander of the National Guard, received the head and members of the National Guard's annual Hajj mission. Lieutenant General Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Saud Al Khalifa, Chief of Staff of the National Guard, where he conveyed greetings from HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, wished the delegation success in performing Hajj, and praised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's efforts in serving pilgrims. (By Rehab Mohammad)

## Women Leadership Review



The Equal Opportunities Committee at the Labour Market Regulatory Authority, chaired by Noura Issa Mubarak, Deputy Chief Executive for Legal Enforcement and Protection, held its periodic meeting to review progress on gender balance and workplace inclusion. The session focused on enhancing equal opportunities, strengthening women's representation in leadership roles. (By Rehab Mohammad)

## Advancing Market Vision



Bahrain Bourse convened its second 2026 town hall, led by CEO Shaikh Khalifa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, to review progress on its Strategic Roadmap 2026-2028 and align teams on key priorities driving market growth, transparency, and long-term sustainability in Bahrain's capital markets.

# AUBH: HM the King's remarks reinforce loyalty and national unity

TDT | Manama



Acting President Dr Wafa Al Mansoori

American University of Bahrain said remarks by HM King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa reflect a firm national vision placing the kingdom's security, sovereignty and stability as top priorities essential for sustaining development.

In a statement, the university said the King's comments to the media underline Bahrain's national cohesion and highlight

the importance of unity and solidarity behind the leadership to safeguard achievements and confidently confront challenges.

The university affirmed that educational institutions play a key role in instilling values of loyalty, belonging and national responsibility among younger generations, while preparing qualified national cadres to contribute to the country's progress.

Acting President Dr Wafa Al

Mansoori said the king's remarks carried "noble national messages" reinforcing unity and belonging, adding that the university is committed not only to academic excellence but also to fostering civic values and responsibility among students.

The university concluded by renewing its pledge of loyalty to the leadership and expressing hope for continued security, stability and prosperity in Bahrain.

# The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain supports Friendship Society for the Blind through community footprints initiative

TDT | Manama

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain proudly presented a charitable cash donation to the Friendship Society for the Blind as part of its ongoing commitment to community engagement through The Ritz-Carlton Community Footprints program.

The donation was made possible through funds raised during the hotel's recent Farmers Market and Bentley Aquathlon events, which brought together guests, partners, and the wider community in a shared spirit of giving, reinforcing its dedication to supporting meaningful causes within the Kingdom.

The handover was attended by the hotel's General Manager, Bernard de Villele, who commented, "At The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, we believe in the power of community and the responsibility we share to uplift those around us. Our continued support to the Friendship Society for the Blind reflects our ongoing commitment to creating meaningful impact in the Kingdom of Bahrain, empowering individuals and supporting initiatives that enhance lives. It is through these collective efforts that we continue to build



Bernard de Villele, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain General Manager, hands over the symbolic cheque to Mr. Ali Mohamed Haji Husain on behalf of the Friendship Society for the Blind, in the presence of the hotel's senior leaders

a more inclusive and compassionate society."

In attendance were senior leadership, reflecting the organization's collective commitment to making a tangible difference.

The contribution was received on behalf of the Friendship Society for the Blind by Mr. Ali Mohamed Haji Husain.

Established in 1981, the Friendship Society for the Blind is a non-governmental organization dedicated to supporting individuals with visual im-

pairments through education, training, and social integration initiatives.

The society continues to play a vital role in empowering its members and enhancing their independence within the community.

### Support

With the support of the ownership, the hotel's leadership, and its Ladies and Gentlemen, guided by the principles of Community Footprints, The

Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain remains committed to creating meaningful connections and driving positive impact within the communities it serves.

For additional information about The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, please call the hotel directly at (+973) 1758 0000, or visit The Ritz-Carlton website at ritzcarlton.com/bahrain.

Follow the hotel on Facebook and Instagram @ritzcarlton-bahrain and join the conversation using #RCMemories.



# Standard Chartered wins ‘Islamic Bank of the Year’ and ‘Most Innovative Sukuk’ Awards by The Banker

Marks a milestone for Islamic banking franchise

**Manama**

Recognition highlights the Bank's Shariah-compliant platform across client segments and its sukuk structuring capability across growth markets

Standard Chartered has been named ‘Islamic Bank of the Year’ and awarded ‘Most Innovative Sukuk’ by The Banker, recognising the strength of its Islamic banking platform across affluent, corporate and institutional clients, and its ability to deliver Shariah-compliant solutions across Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The awards highlight the Bank's role in supporting clients across the full spectrum of Islamic finance, from everyday banking and wealth solutions to financing and capital markets. This includes facilitating the flow of capital between issuers and investors through its global network, providing efficient access to funding and liquidity. Within this, sukuk remains a core differentiator, where the Bank supports structures that extend beyond traditional formats, drawing on diversified liquidity pools and investor participation across multiple

markets, enabling issuers to raise funding efficiently and on a repeat basis.

Commenting on the achievement, Khurram Hilal, CEO - Islamic Banking at Standard Chartered, said: “Islamic finance is evolving beyond single-market access. Affluent clients are increasingly investing globally, while corporates and institutions are raising capital through more diversified sources of liquidity.”

He added: “We support both by providing a single Shariah-compliant platform that enables access to opportunities and



Khurram Hilal, CEO - Islamic Banking at Standard Chartered

capital, with the consistency and execution required to oper-

ate across markets. That ability to deliver at scale while meeting both Shariah requirements and commercial objectives is what differentiates us.”

This growth in cross-border activity is reflected in the continued expansion of Islamic finance, which remains one of the fastest-growing segments of global finance, with total assets projected to grow by 36% to reach USD 7.5 trillion by 2028. Standard Chartered supports this growth, by enabling clients to access financing, investment and liquidity solutions across its network.

Central to this proposition is Standard Chartered's robust Shariah governance framework, supported by a highly respected Shariah Supervisory Committee comprising internationally recognised scholars ensuring financial solutions meet the highest standards of Shariah-compliance, transparency and integrity.

These awards demonstrate Standard Chartered's ability to deliver Islamic finance solutions at scale, supported by its global network and cross-border execution capability.

# Bede continues its “Win Your Finance” campaign to reward customers

● The first initiative of its kind by a microfinance provider in the Kingdom.

● All eligible customers who successfully receive their financing are automatically entered into the draw, with no

additional steps required

**Manama**

Bede, the innovative micro-finance solutions app, continues its exclusive “Win Your Finance” campaign, marking the first initiative of its kind by a microfinance provider in the Kingdom. The campaign aims to reward customers while reflecting Bede's commitment to

understanding and responding to their evolving needs, offering users the opportunity to win back the full value of their financing.

The exclusive campaign gives customers the opportunity to recover the full value of their Shariah-compliant financing through monthly raffle draws, making financing more rewarding. All eligible customers are automatically entered into the draw upon receiving their fi-

ancing, with no additional steps required.

A.Nasser Al-Rayes, CEO, Bede Bahrain, commented, “Continuing this exclusive campaign reinforces Bede's position as a customer-first digital micro-finance platform, continuously introducing innovative and rewarding experiences that go beyond traditional microfinance solutions. We are proud to introduce such an initiative that supports our customers financially



ply for Islamic financing in just a few minutes, from anywhere and at any time throughout the week, and can recover their financing automatically, making it a comfortable experience.

Customers can apply for financing through the App or find out more details via our website, www.bede.bh. Our dedicated customer service team is available 24/7 at +973 13633333, ensuring that our users always have the support they need.

and additionally enhances their overall experience with Bede.”

Bede offers a straightforward registration process with minimal requirements. Users can ap-



## Bahrain Cinema Company B.S.C.



### Condensed consolidated interim financial information for the three months period ended 31 March 2026

**Condensed consolidated interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the three months period ended 31 March 2026**

	(Reviewed) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)	
	Three months period ended 31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	Three months period ended 31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
Operating income	682,417	719,674
Operating costs	(687,393)	(573,009)
<b>Operating gross (loss) / profit for the period</b>	<b>(4,976)</b>	<b>146,665</b>
Loss from investments, net	(380,855)	(127,435)
Other income	33,013	65,733
General and administrative expenses	(257,656)	(199,517)
Finance costs	(19,407)	(24,374)
	(277,063)	(223,891)
<b>Net loss and other comprehensive loss for the period</b>	<b>(629,881)</b>	<b>(138,928)</b>
<b>Basic loss per share</b>	<b>(8.3filis)</b>	<b>(1.8filis)</b>

**Condensed consolidated interim statement of financial position as at 31 March 2026**

	(Reviewed) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)	
	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 December 2025 (Audited)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	25,292	616,143
Investment properties	17,290,535	16,725,731
Right-of-use assets	500,129	351,132
Investment in an associate	3,197,466	3,363,501
Financial assets at amortised cost	15,524,560	14,070,878
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	8,600,203	9,624,477
	45,388,185	44,751,862
<b>Current assets</b>		
Inventories	94,975	99,487
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	65,957	65,957
Trade and other receivables	2,215,304	1,533,168
Cash and bank balances	420,521	3,609,257
	2,796,757	5,307,869
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>48,184,942</b>	<b>50,059,731</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Share capital	8,262,345	8,262,345
Share premium	638,802	640,008
Revaluation reserve	4,678,687	4,678,687
Statutory reserve	4,131,173	4,131,173
Charity reserve	262,790	270,340
Retained earnings	20,955,058	22,879,506
Treasury shares	(646,697)	(645,697)
	38,282,158	40,216,362
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Non-current portion of term loan	6,161,129	7,310,792
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	361,378	254,728
Employees' terminal and other benefits	299,424	297,544
	6,821,931	7,863,064
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Current portion of lease liabilities	378,639	307,401
Trade and other payables	1,155,619	1,672,904
Bank overdrafts	1,546,595	-
	3,080,853	1,980,305
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>	<b>48,184,942</b>	<b>50,059,731</b>

**Condensed consolidated interim statement of cash flows for the three months period ended 31 March 2026**

	(Reviewed) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)	
	Three months period ended 31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	Three months period ended 31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Net loss for the period	(629,881)	(138,928)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	8,141	20,763
Amortisation of cost to right-of-use assets	111,466	157,923
Loss on sale of property, plant and equipment	10,456	-
Net share of loss from investment in an associate	166,035	133,362
Dividend income	(115,717)	(23,673)
Unrealised losses on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	405,751	267,559
Loss on sale of financial assets at amortised cost	127,013	-
Interest income from sukuk and bonds	(202,227)	(240,730)
Interest income - discount amortisation	-	(9,083)
Interest income on loan to a related party	(8,165)	(16,421)
Finance costs	19,407	24,374
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Inventories	4,512	(4,144)
Trade and other receivables	(588,534)	243,664
Employees terminal and other benefits	1,880	(1,988)
Trade and other payables	(517,285)	(278,179)
<b>Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(1,207,148)</b>	<b>134,499</b>
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	-	(1,170)
Additions to investment properties	(1,169)	-
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	8,619	-
Proceeds from sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	4,161,685	-
Purchase of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(3,743,162)	-
Purchase of financial assets at amortised cost	(22,545,538)	-
Proceeds from sale of financial assets at amortised cost	20,964,843	-
Interest income on loan to a related party	8,165	16,421
Interest income from bonds and sukuk	202,227	240,730
Dividend income received	22,115	23,673
<b>Net cash (used in) / provided by investing activities</b>	<b>(922,215)</b>	<b>279,654</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>		
Lease liabilities paid	(132,575)	(184,756)
Loan obtained during the period	6,161,129	-
Repayment of term loan during the period	(7,310,792)	(452,013)
Charity paid	(7,550)	(10,150)
Treasury shares purchased	(2,206)	-
Dividends paid during the period	(1,294,567)	-
Finance costs paid	(19,407)	(24,374)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>	<b>(2,605,968)</b>	<b>(671,293)</b>
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(4,735,331)</b>	<b>(257,140)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the period	3,609,257	(390,627)
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the period	(1,126,074)	(647,767)
Comprising:		
Cash and bank balances	420,521	188,992
Bank overdrafts	(1,546,595)	(836,759)
	(1,126,074)	(647,767)

**Condensed consolidated interim statement of changes in shareholders' equity for the three months period ended 31 March 2026**

	(Reviewed) (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)							
	Share capital	Share premium	Revaluation reserve	Statutory reserve	Charity reserve	Retained earnings	Treasury shares	Total
At 31 December 2024 - Audited	8,262,345	824,849	4,557,442	4,131,173	283,110	22,716,870	(437,514)	40,338,275
Dividend paid for the year 2024	-	-	-	-	-	(1,173,642)	-	(1,173,642)
Charity paid	-	-	-	-	(10,150)	-	-	(10,150)
Net loss and other comprehensive loss for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(138,928)	-	(138,928)
At 31 March 2025 - reviewed	8,262,345	824,849	4,557,442	4,131,173	272,960	21,404,300	(437,514)	39,015,555
At 31 December 2025 - Audited	8,262,345	640,008	4,678,687	4,131,173	270,340	22,879,506	(645,697)	40,216,362
Dividend paid for the year 2025	-	-	-	-	-	(1,294,567)	-	(1,294,567)
Charity paid	-	-	-	-	(7,550)	-	-	(7,550)
Purchase of treasury shares	-	(1,206)	-	-	-	-	(1,000)	(2,206)
Net loss and other comprehensive loss for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(629,881)	-	(629,881)
At 31 March 2026 - reviewed	8,262,345	638,802	4,678,687	4,131,173	262,790	20,955,058	(646,697)	38,282,158

Dr Esam Abdulla Yusuf Fakhro  
Chairman

Abdulla Esam Abdulla Fakhro  
Vice- Chairman

Ahmad A. Rashed Albastaki  
Managing Director

Auditors  
BDO

## Seef Properties congratulates local newspapers on Bahraini Press Day

Manama

Seef Properties expressed its great appreciation for the Bahraini press and its prominent role in supporting the Kingdom's national development journey, as well as highlighting the achievements realised by the Kingdom of Bahrain across various sectors, affirming that Bahraini Press Day represents an important annual occasion to celebrate the honourable professional contributions of journalists and media professionals in the Kingdom.



Ahmed Yusuf, Chief Executive Officer of Seef Properties

Seef Properties commended the vital role played by press institutions in conveying the civilised image of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and in keeping pace with the economic and developmental successes and initiatives witnessed by the Kingdom.

The Company further affirmed that the national press is a key partner in supporting the private sector's journey and strengthening effective communication with the community.

Commenting on this occasion, Mr Ahmed Yusuf, Chief Execu-

tive Officer of Seef Properties, stated: "At Seef Properties, we take pride in the distinguished cooperative relations we have built with the Bahraini press, which has always been an active partner in communicating the Company's achievements, projects and initiatives to the public with professionalism and excellence, reflecting the development of the press sector in the Kingdom of Bahrain."

He added: "The Bahraini press has played an important role in supporting economic and developmental momentum through

its professional coverage and continuous engagement with various national events and initiatives. This has contributed to consolidating a developed press environment founded on responsibility, credibility and awareness in service of the community."

Mr Ahmed Yusuf concluded his statement saying: "Bahraini Press Day is an important occasion to renew our appreciation and pride in all national journalistic talent, who continue to fulfil their noble mission with sincerity and dedication, contributing to highlighting the civ-

ilised position of the Kingdom of Bahrain and strengthening its media and economic presence at the regional and international levels." Seef Properties affirmed its continued keenness to build positive and sustainable partnerships with all local newspapers and media outlets, based on its belief in the importance of their role as an active partner in supporting economic development and shedding light on the initiatives and projects that contribute to enhancing Bahrain's position as a leading destination for business, investment and entertainment.



## Abdullah Al Sayegh wins Cadillac OPTIQ EV with NBB

Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has announced Abdullah Faisal Al Sayegh as the winner of its credit card campaign, receiving a Cadillac OPTIQ EV.

The campaign aimed to reward NBB credit cardholders for their everyday spending through the Points by NBB app.

Throughout the campaign, Mastercard cardholders took

part in challenges across lifestyle, household, and travel categories. They earned raffle entries through daily purchases and tracked their progress through the app.

By linking app-based challenges to everyday spending, the campaign made card usage more engaging and rewarding for customers.

Commenting on the occasion, Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani,

Chief Executive – Retail Banking at NBB, said: "We are pleased to congratulate Mr. Abdullah Faisal Al Sayegh on his win.

This campaign was developed to encourage our clients to use their cards, engage with our Points programme, and reward their lifestyles through a seamless and rewarding digital experience that aligns with their everyday needs. The selection of an electric vehicle as the grand prize also reflects our

commitment to sustainability and our focus on offering rewards that align with future aspirations."

This campaign reflects NBB's continued focus on delivering digital experiences that add value to everyday banking. Through such initiatives, NBB continues to reinforce its role as a national financial partner committed to elevating the banking experience across the Kingdom.



### BAHRAIN COMMERCIAL FACILITIES COMPANY B.S.C.

Interim Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements 31 March 2026

#### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS

For the three months ended 31 March 2026

Bahraini dinars in thousands	Three months ended	
	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
Interest income	3,861	3,841
Interest expense	(1,542)	(1,598)
<b>Net interest income</b>	<b>2,319</b>	<b>2,243</b>
Automotive revenue	10,594	11,458
Cost of sales	(8,581)	(9,157)
<b>Gross profit on automotive revenue</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>2,301</b>
Net fees and commission income	378	502
Rental and real estate income	95	206
Other income	204	230
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>5,009</b>	<b>5,482</b>
Salaries and related costs	(2,048)	(2,206)
Other operating expenses	(2,813)	(2,853)
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>(4,861)</b>	<b>(5,059)</b>
<b>Profit before provisions, credit losses and recoveries</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>423</b>
Provisions and credit losses	(909)	(476)
Recoveries from written off balances	871	1,186
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,133</b>
<b>Basic and diluted earnings per 100 fils share</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>6</b>

#### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the three months ended 31 March 2026

Bahraini dinars in thousands	Three months ended	
	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,133</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income / (loss):</b>		
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss		
Net change in cash flow hedge reserve	36	(285)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the period</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>848</b>

#### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

At 31 March 2026

Bahraini dinars in thousands	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 December 2025 (Audited)
	<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash and balances with banks	9,910	6,792
Loans and advances to customers	137,685	140,054
Trade receivables	5,213	4,718
Inventories	28,071	21,924
Investment properties	4,745	4,755
Property and equipment	29,340	30,296
Other assets	7,167	7,861
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>222,131</b>	<b>216,400</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	22,618	18,082
Bank term loans and other borrowings	95,531	91,053
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>118,149</b>	<b>109,135</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Share capital	20,419	20,419
Treasury shares	(599)	(599)
Statutory reserve	10,210	10,210
Share premium	25,292	25,292
Other reserves	27,738	27,557
Retained earnings	20,922	24,386
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>103,982</b>	<b>107,265</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>222,131</b>	<b>216,400</b>

#### OPERATING SEGMENT INFORMATION

For the three months ended 31 March 2026

Bahraini dinars in thousands	Operating Income		Profit / (loss)	
	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 (Reviewed)	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
Lending	2,547	2,640	(506)	447
Automotive	2,200	2,430	658	775
Insurance	167	206	33	(2)
Real estate	95	206	(75)	(87)
	<b>5,009</b>	<b>5,482</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,133</b>

#### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the three months ended 31 March 2026

Bahraini dinars in thousands	Three months ended	
	31 March 2026 (Reviewed)	31 March 2025 (Reviewed)
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Loan repayments, interest received and other credit related receipts	52,157	53,158
Cash receipts from automotive sales	10,224	10,857
Insurance commission received	82	92
Proceeds from sale of real estate inventory	221	263
Rental and evaluation income received	73	193
Directors' fees paid	(300)	-
Loans and advances to customers	(45,602)	(50,054)
Payments to suppliers	(12,767)	(8,914)
Payments for operating expenses	(3,580)	(3,924)
Interest paid	(1,556)	(1,784)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<b>(1,048)</b>	<b>(113)</b>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Addition to property and equipment	(2,744)	(1,856)
Addition to investment properties	(4)	(23)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	2,506	421
Movement of fixed deposits with maturities of more than three months	-	1,000
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(242)</b>	<b>(458)</b>
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Bank term loans and other borrowings availed	5,212	11,815
Bank term loans and other borrowings paid	(950)	(15,080)
Donations paid	(5)	-
<b>Net cash generated from / (used in) financing activities</b>	<b>4,257</b>	<b>(3,265)</b>
<b>NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>2,967</b>	<b>(3,836)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	6,207	10,658
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 31 MARCH</b>	<b>9,174</b>	<b>6,822</b>
Cash and cash equivalents comprise:		
Cash and balances with banks	9,910	10,024
Less:		
Restricted cash	(118)	(202)
Bank overdrafts	(618)	-
Fixed deposits with maturities of more than three months	-	(3,000)
	<b>9,174</b>	<b>6,822</b>

#### INTERIM CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the three months ended 31 March 2026

(Reviewed) Bahraini dinars in thousands	Share capital				Reserves and retained earnings				Total equity
	Share Capital	Treasury shares	Statutory reserve	Share Premium	Other reserves			Retained earnings	
					Cash flow hedge reserve	Donation reserve	General reserve		
As at 1 January 2026	20,419	(599)	10,210	25,292	50	7	27,500	24,386	107,265
<b>2025 appropriations (approved by shareholders):</b>									
- Donations	-	-	-	-	-	150	-	(150)	-
- Dividends to equity holders	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3,424)	(3,424)
<b>Balance after 2025 appropriations</b>	<b>20,419</b>	<b>(599)</b>	<b>10,210</b>	<b>25,292</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>20,812</b>	<b>103,841</b>
<b>Comprehensive income for the period:</b>									
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	110	110
Other comprehensive income:									
- Net change in cash flow hedge reserve	-	-	-	-	36	-	-	-	36
	<b>20,419</b>	<b>(599)</b>	<b>10,210</b>	<b>25,292</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>20,922</b>	<b>103,987</b>
Utilisation of donation reserve	-	-	-	-	-	(5)	-	-	(5)
<b>At 31 March 2026</b>	<b>20,419</b>	<b>(599)</b>	<b>10,210</b>	<b>25,292</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>20,922</b>	<b>103,982</b>

The interim condensed consolidated financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

**Najla M. Al Shirawi**  
Chairperson

**Yaser Alsharifi**  
Vice Chairperson

**Abdulla Abdulrazaq Bukhowa**  
Chief Executive Officer

The above interim condensed consolidated financial statements, have been extracted from the interim condensed consolidated financial statements of Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company B.S.C. for the three-months period ended 31 March 2026 on which an unqualified review conclusion was issued by Ernst and Young, Kingdom of Bahrain on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

For further information please visit: [www.bcfcbh](http://www.bcfcbh).

The Company is licensed and regulated by the Central Bank of Bahrain as a financing company.

**Iran reviewing US proposal**

Iran foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said a US proposal to end the war is still "under review" by Tehran, local media reported. Tehran will convey its views to key mediator Pakistan after "finalising its views", Baqaei told the ISNA news agency.

**Israel vows to 'dismantle' Hezbollah**

Israel's army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir vowed to dismantle Hezbollah and said the military was prepared to launch a new offensive against Iran if needed. "We will seize every opportunity to deepen the dismantling of Hezbollah and continue weakening it," Zamir said while visiting soldiers near the Lebanese town of Khiam.

**Senior Hezbollah commander killed by Israel in Beirut suburbs: source from group**

A senior Hezbollah commander from the group's elite Radwan force was killed in Israel's strike on Beirut's southern suburbs on Wednesday evening, a source close to the group said. "Malek Ballout, the operations commander in the Radwan force" was killed, the source told AFP on condition of anonymity. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his military had targeted "the commander of Hezbollah's Radwan force".

**Israel resumes Lebanon strikes**

Israel's army said yesterday it had begun striking Hezbollah infrastructure in several areas of Lebanon. The army had reported "several incidents" during which drones had exploded near Israeli soldiers operating in Lebanon's south. Earlier, it had issued an evacuation warning for a dozen villages in south Lebanon.

**Oil prices slide**

Oil prices fell yesterday, with oil benchmark Brent North Sea making a double-digit plunge to under \$100 a barrel, before climbing back after Trump's threat to start bombing Iran again. The main US contract, West Texas Intermediate, dived more than 12 percent to under \$90 a barrel before paring losses.

**US wants 'concrete actions' on Iran from next Iraqi PM**

AFP | Washington, United States

The United States is looking for "concrete actions" by Iraq's next prime minister to distance the state from pro-Iran armed groups before resuming financial shipments and security aid, a senior official said Tuesday.

Iraq's ruling coalition has put forward Ali al-Zaidi as the next leader and he quickly received



Washington suspended cash payments for oil revenue, which have been handled from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in an arrangement dating to the aftermath of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, as well as security assistance over a spate of attacks on US interests.

a congratulatory call from President Donald Trump, who had threatened to end all US support if former frontrunner Nouri al-Maliki took office. But a senior US State Department

official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Zaidi must address the "blurry line" between pro-Iran armed groups in the Shia-majority country and the state. Resuming full support "would start with expelling terrorist militias from any state institution, cutting off their support from the Iraqi budget (and) denying salary payments to these militia fighters," the official said. "Those are the type of concrete actions that would give us confidence and say that there's a new mindset." The official said US facilities in Iraq suffered more than 600 attacks after February 28, when the United States and Israel launched their war on Iran.

**Israeli court rejects flotilla activists' appeal challenging detention**

AFP | Beersheva, Israel

An Israeli court yesterday rejected an appeal contesting the detention of two foreign activists seized by Israeli forces from a Gaza-bound flotilla, with the rights group representing them denouncing the ruling as "unlawful."

Saif Abu Keshek, a Spanish national of Palestinian origin, and Brazilian Thiago Avila were among dozens of activists aboard a flotilla intercepted



Brazil's activist Thiago Avila is escorted into court in the Israeli coastal city of Ashkelon

in international waters off the coast of Greece on Thursday.

The two were seized by Israeli forces and brought to Israel for questioning, while the others were taken to the Greek island of Crete and released.

On Tuesday, an Israeli court extended their detention until Sunday to allow police more time to interrogate them, according to their lawyers.

The lawyers then filed an appeal at the Beersheva district

court against the detention, but it was rejected.

"Today, the district court of Beersheva denied our appeal and basically accepted all of the arguments that the state or the police have represented before the court and kept the previous decision," lawyer Hadeel Abu Salih said.

The two activists, who are on a hunger strike, had appeared in the district court with their feet shackled, an AFP journalist saw.

Abu Keshek looked exhausted and sat with his hands clasped in his lap, while Avila appeared calm.

Abu Salih said her clients had been subjected to "an illegal arrest that took place in international waters where the activists were kidnapped by the Israeli navy without any authority".

She went on to accuse the courts of "giving a free hand for the Israeli forces... to do it again and again".

Reports say both sides are close to agreeing on a "one-page memorandum of understanding to end the war" and start a 30-day period of talks that could take place in Geneva or Islamabad.

**Ultimatum for Iran**

**US warns diplomacy window narrowing as military threat loom**

● **Despite Rubio's announcement of the end of "Operation Epic Fury", the standoff in the vital waterway has led to claims of attacks by both sides**

● **A container ship owned by major French shipping company CMA CGM was also the "target of an attack" in the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, the firm said.**

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump issued an ultimatum yesterday for Iran to accept a deal to end the war or face renewed, more intense US bombing, in

Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is perhaps a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will be at an end. If they don't agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before

DONALD TRUMP

the latest of a series of abrupt policy shifts. "Assuming Iran agrees to give what has been agreed to, which is perhaps a big assumption, the already legendary Epic Fury will

be at an end," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform, "using the US name for its campaign against Iran.

"If they don't agree, the bombing starts, and it will be, sadly, at a much higher level and intensity than it was before," he added.

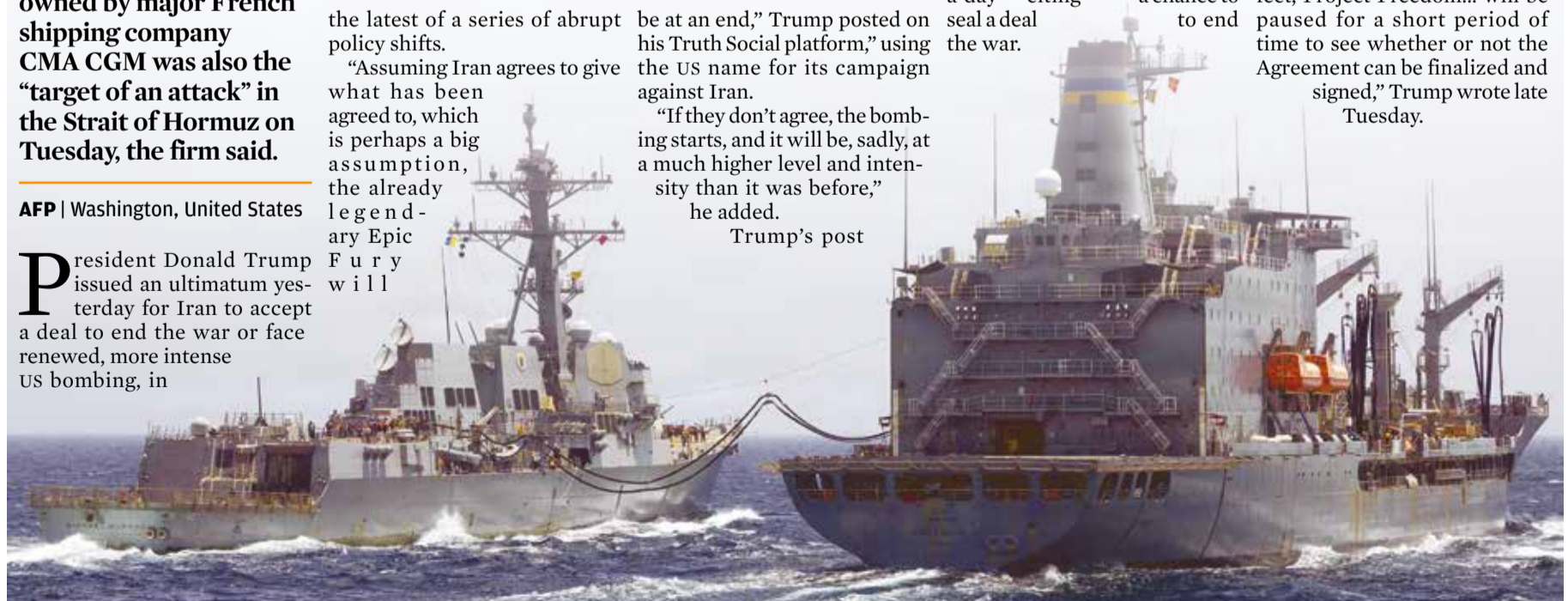
Trump's post

came after US news outlet Axios reported that Washington and Tehran were close to agreeing on a one-page memorandum of understanding to end the war and set a framework for more detailed nuclear negotiations.

Trump late Tuesday announced a pause in a US military operation to guide stranded commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz -- after only a day -- citing a chance to seal a deal to end the war.

Trump wrote on social media that the decision to halt his so-called "Project Freedom" a day after it began came after requests from "mediator Pakistan and other countries", saying "Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement" with Tehran.

"We have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom... will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed," Trump wrote late Tuesday.



This US Navy handout photograph released on May 2, 2026 by US Central Command Public Affairs shows Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile USS Michael Murphy (DDG 112) conducting a replenishment-at-sea with fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO-187)

Washington and Gulf countries have drafted a UN Security Council resolution demanding Tehran halt attacks, disclose mine locations and end efforts to charge tolls, Rubio said, with a vote expected in the com-

ing days. Israel's military chief of staff Eyal Zamir said the country would respond "with force" to any Iranian attack and remained "on high alert across all fronts".

On another front, Israel struck at least two villages in southern Lebanon on Wednesday, including one near a 12th-century Crusader-era castle, according to AFP images.

The Lebanese health ministry said an Israeli strike killed four people in the eastern Bekaa valley. Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah have kept up their attacks despite a ceasefire in Lebanon.

On Iran, Israel's military chief of staff Eyal Zamir said the country would respond "with force" to any Iranian attack and remained "on high alert across all fronts".

1386

Treaty of Windsor between Portugal and England is ratified at Windsor, cementing and strengthening ties between the two kingdoms.

1865

President Andrew Johnson issues a proclamation declaring that armed resistance in the South is virtually at an end, the commonly accepted end date of the American Civil War



1901 1945

First Australian Parliament opens in Melbourne, though the first working session is not until May 21

Soviet Union celebrates Victory Day in World War II

## French aircraft carrier pre-positions for possible Hormuz mission

AFP | Paris, France

France's aircraft carrier the Charles de Gaulle was yesterday heading towards the southern Red Sea to pre-position for a possible mission to restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, the presidency and defence ministry said.

President Emmanuel Macron's office said the move was intended to send "a signal that not only are we ready to secure the Strait of Hormuz but that we are also capable of doing so".

The flagship of the French Navy and its escorts was transiting the Suez Canal en route to the southern Red Sea, the defence ministry said.

The decision was intended "to reduce the time needed to implement this initiative as soon as circumstances allow", the



The flight deck of the French Navy's flagship aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle transiting the Suez Canal en route to the southern Red Sea to pre-position for a possible mission to restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

ministry said. Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer are leading a multinational mission to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, while emphasising the force would be entirely defensive and only deployed once lasting peace in the region was agreed.

More than 40 coun-

tries have begun military planning in London. "The movement of the carrier strike group is separate from the military operations initiated in the region and complements the security posture," the defence ministry said.

Its presence near the Gulf will allow "an early assessment of the regional

operational environment ahead of the possible launch of the initiative" and "offer additional crisis-exit options to strengthen the security of the region", the ministry added. The aircraft carrier houses around twenty Rafale fighter jets and is escorted by several frigates.

### U-TURN WITH UK

## The Question Beneath the Knife



P. UNNIKISHNAN

This knife was right against my throat. For a brief second, he paused, looked at me through the mirror, and asked: "Do you trust AI?"

I stayed still while the sharp blade carefully trimmed the thin line of beard near my neck. Then I smiled and replied:

"How can I sit here without trust? You could cut my throat in a fraction of a second if you wanted to."

Before I could continue, he laughed softly and said:

"But you trust me because you know me. AI is something people don't really know closely. So how can they trust it?"

That question opened up one of the most unexpected conversations I've had in recent times.

I told him, "Have you ever met the engineer who designed the building we are sitting in? Or the contractor who built it? Still, we sit and work inside without fear because we trust them. When we board a flight, most of us don't know the pilot personally either. Yet we trust him with our lives."

Trust, in many ways, is blind. Humanity has survived and grown largely because people believed in one another.

I was sitting in a small salon near Salmaniya. The young barber from Kerala had somehow become my favourite hairstylist over the past year. What made him interesting was not just his skill, but his endless curiosity. He never allowed silence to settle in the room. Every haircut turned into a discussion about life, society, technology, or politics.

Recently, he had been hearing a lot about AI being used in wars and military systems.

"You know," he said, "there's a big debate happening in America about whether AI should be allowed to access dangerous military knowledge."

He had clearly been following the subject closely.

And honestly, it is a serious debate.

Some people argue that overly restricting AI could weaken technological leadership and slow innovation. Others fear that advanced AI could help create biological weapons, make cyberattacks easier, or even power autonomous weapons capable of killing without direct human control.

Then he suddenly looked at me and asked the real question:

"Are we progressing... or slowly moving toward self-destruction?"

I paused for a moment.

There are already reports of intelligent missile systems capable of identifying human movement and striking targets with terrifying precision. Technology is advancing at a pace that can sometimes feel difficult to comprehend.

"So in the future," he asked, "will wars become AI versus AI?"

"Possibly," I admitted, with my limited understanding of the subject.

Then came another question.

"Do you think people will reach a stage where most humans may not even need to work for survival?"

That thought reminded me of my interview with A. Sivathanu Pillai, one of the minds behind the BrahMos missile project. Technological change is happening so rapidly that many professions may eventually transform beyond recognition.

The barber slowly removed the cloth around my neck while continuing the conversation.

"So how do we survive in such a future?" he asked.

I told him honestly:

"It's going to be challenging — not just for us, but for the entire world."

Then I added something that made him stop for a second.

"I think we may even be heading toward a future where humans could choose how long they want to live."

He looked shocked.

"Serious?"

I nodded.

"Today, we can already replace many body parts — kidneys, hearts, liver, artificial hands and legs. Computers are becoming more intelligent in many ways. The biggest remaining challenge is not intelligence but memory and emotions. The day technology learns how to preserve or replicate human memory and emotions perfectly, humanity itself may change forever."

For a moment, he became silent.

Then he switched on the hair dryer, carefully adjusted my hairstyle, and gave the finishing touches with complete concentration.

"You know what world leaders and decision-makers should seriously do?" I told him. "They should trim and shape technological growth the same way you shape a haircut. Remove the dangerous excess, control the unwanted growth, and carefully guide it into something better. Technology itself is not the enemy — the lack of direction is."

He smiled while continuing his work.

As I asked him to make a few final adjustments, he suddenly looked at me through the mirror again and asked:

"But do you think AI can replace my job too?"

I smiled back.

"Maybe. But even if a robot cuts hair perfectly, I still may not choose it if I have someone like you — someone who can speak from the heart."

He burst into laughter.

"So," he said, "I may still have the option to remain your hairstylist forever."

"Only if I choose to live forever," I replied.

And both of us laughed together.

*They should trim and shape technological growth the same way you shape a haircut. Remove the dangerous excess, control the unwanted growth, and carefully guide it into something better. Technology itself is not the enemy — the lack of direction is*

# Deal or face bombs

Trump warns of 'higher-level' strikes if agreement collapses

US news outlet Axios reported that Washington and Tehran were close to agreeing on a one-page memorandum of understanding to end the war and set a framework for more detailed nuclear negotiations.



An F/A-18E Super Hornet landing aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) at sea

## US warplane disables ship that tried to break Iran port blockade: US military

AFP | Washington, United States

A US Navy warplane fired on and disabled the rudder of an oil tanker that

tried to break Washington's blockade of Iranian ports, the US military said yesterday.

US forces warned the

Iranian-flagged ship that it was in violation of the blockade but its crew "failed to comply," so a US F/A-18 Super Hornet "dis-

abled the tanker's rudder by firing several rounds from (its) 20mm cannon gun," Central Command said in a post on X.

## China says will play 'greater role' in ending Mideast fighting

AFP | Beijing, China

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing would play a "greater role" in ending hostilities in the Middle East during talks with his Iranian counterpart on Wednesday, a week before US President Donald Trump is due to meet Xi Jinping.

China "will work harder to ease tensions and end the fighting, continue to support the launch of peace talks, and play a greater role in restoring peace and tranquility to the Middle East", Wang told Iran's Abbas Araghchi in Beijing.

"China considers that a complete cessation of

fighting must be achieved without delay, that it is even more unacceptable to restart hostilities, and that continuing to negotiate remains essential," Wang said, according to a statement from his ministry after the talks. "On the nuclear issue, China welcomes Iran's commitment not to

develop nuclear weapons, while considering that Iran has the legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy," Wang said. The US leader is expected to meet Chinese President Xi in Beijing on a visit the White House said will take place May 14-15.

# Virus-hit cruise ship evacuees head to Europe

Hondius is a rare strain that can be transmitted between humans

● Two sick crew members and another person who had been in contact with one of the confirmed cases were taken from the ship

● Health experts warned of the risk of a wider outbreak after it emerged the Dutch woman who died had flown on a commercial plane

● The cruise ship originally counted 88 passengers and 59 crew, with 23 nationalities on board

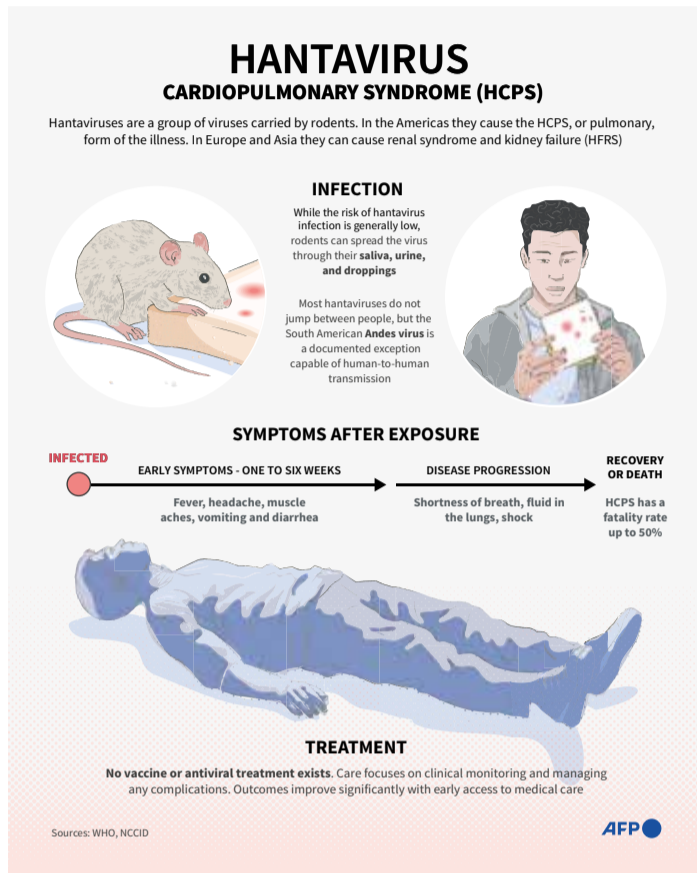
AFP | Praia, Cape Verde

A medical plane that left Cape Verde following the evacuation of a cruise ship hit by the hantavirus landed in Spain's Canary Islands yesterday, while a second flight headed for the Netherlands.

Downplaying fears over the deadly outbreak aboard the MV Hondius, World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted it was not comparable to the Covid pandemic.

As the WHO said emergency crews had evacuated three people from the ship, experts confirmed the version of the virus detected aboard the Hondius is a rare strain that can be transmitted between humans.

Two sick crew members and another person who had been in contact with one of the con-



firmed cases were taken from the ship, which was moored off Cape Verde, the WHO said.

They later boarded flights at the airport in Cape Verde's capital Praia.

Plane tracker FlightRadar24 indicated one had taken off bound for Amsterdam, where it was due to land at 1730 GMT.

The other flight, a medical transport plane, landed at Las

Palmas in Spain's Canary Islands on Wednesday afternoon, an AFP journalist there saw.

It has not been specified who was on the planes.

## Low risk: WHO

Health officials played down fears of a wider global outbreak from the virus, which is less contagious than Covid.

UN health agency chief Tedros told AFP it was not like the Covid-19 pandemic, adding: "The risk to the rest of the world is low."

The ship has been at the centre of an international health scare since Saturday, when the WHO was informed that three passengers had died and the suspected cause was hantavirus.

The rare respiratory disease is usually spread from infected rodents, typically through urine, droppings and saliva.

## Passengers began falling ill a month ago.

A Dutch man died on board on April 11, and his wife, who left the ship to accompany his body to South Africa, died there 15 days later after also falling ill.

Two other people are still being treated -- one in Johannesburg and one in the Swiss city of Zurich.

Spanish Health Minister Monica Garcia Gomez said the vessel would dock within the next three days in Tenerife, in the Canaries, and all foreign passengers would be flown back to their home countries from there if their health allowed.

The Hondius set sail from Ushuaia in Argentina on April 1, and has been anchored off Cape Verde since Sunday while emergency teams try to deal with the situation.

## Pioneering CNN founder Ted Turner dead at 87



Media mogul Ted Turner and his wife, actress Jane Fonda

AFP | New York, United States

Ted Turner, the flamboyant US entrepreneur who transformed television news with the creation of CNN in 1980, has died at the age of 87, the network said yesterday.

The mustached southerner, yachting enthusiast and philanthropist, whose empire also included sports clubs, had been suffering from the degenerative disease Lewy Body Dementia.

Cable News Network upended established broadcasting with its dedication to around-the-clock breaking news and shot to global recognition with its coverage of the Gulf War in 1990-91.

The 24-hour network was the first in the United States to run non-stop news and quickly built a worldwide footprint.

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio in November 1938, Robert Edward "Ted" Turner III went to a military boarding school in Tennessee, and then attended

Brown University, but was expelled before graduating.

Turner took over a faltering family advertising business after his father, despondent over financial problems, committed suicide.

After buying a number of radio stations, Turner's purchase of a struggling Atlanta station in 1970 was his first move into television.

Ten years later, that became the flagship of his nationwide Turner Broadcasting System, the profits from which he parlayed into the launch of CNN.

CNN's success inspired the creation of other 24-hour news channels including Fox News by longtime Turner rival Rupert Murdoch, MSNBC and countless networks worldwide.

Turner's television empire expanded beyond CNN and included TBS and TNT channels for sports and entertainment.

Turner Classic Movies and Cartoon Network, among others.

## Britain's Princess Catherine to make official visit to Italy

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Britain's Princess Catherine, will next week carry out her first overseas royal visit since her cancer diagnosis when she travels to Italy, Kensington palace said yesterday.

The trip to Reggio Emilia in northern Italy will focus on the Princess of Wales's work in early years child development, said a palace statement.



"The princess is very much looking forward to visiting Italy next week and seeing first-hand how the Reggio Emilia approach creates environments where nature and loving human relationships come together to support children's development."

Catherine, who is married to heir to the throne Prince William, announced in January 2025 that she was in remission from cancer, and has been gradually returning to public royal duties.

## India, Vietnam target \$25 bn in bilateral trade by 2030: Modi

AFP | New Delhi, India

India and Vietnam are looking to ramp up bilateral trade to \$25 billion by 2030, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday, following talks with President To Lam in New Delhi.

"Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has doubled in the last decade and reached \$16 billion. Today, we have taken several important decisions to take it to \$25 billion by 2030," Modi said in a speech.

"We will take our cooperation to new heights."

Lam, on his first visit to India as president, said the two countries "will elevate defence and security cooperation" and contribute to "strengthening an environment of peace and stability".

Both sides said the discussions focused on sectors like education, rare earth minerals and digital payment systems, reflecting "the enhanced compre-



India's President Droupadi Murmu (L) alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) poses for a photograph with her Vietnamese counterpart To Lam during a ceremonial reception at the presidential palace Rashtapati Bhavan in New Delhi

hensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam", according to Modi.

Lam was earlier accorded a red-carpet welcome at the presidential palace, with Modi standing alongside him as troops marched past in an honour guard parade.

The Vietnamese president kicked off his India trip a day earlier, with a visit to the Buddhist pilgrimage site of Bodhi Gaya -- where the Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment -- in the eastern state of Bihar.

Lam is accompanied by a

large business delegation, and is also due to visit India's financial hub Mumbai.

Vietnam has been seeking to enhance economic cooperation with India, with companies such as electric vehicle giant VinFast trying to make inroads into the world's most populous nation.

Indian media had suggested Wednesday's discussions might include a potential \$700 million deal for India's long-range BrahMos cruise missiles, but no such announcement was made by either leader.

Lam met India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday to discuss "strengthening" the partnership between the countries, Delhi's foreign ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said.

On Thursday, Lam will leave for Sri Lanka for a two-day visit that will focus on trade, investment and tourism, Colombo said in a statement.

## North Korea drops references to unification from constitution

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

North Korea has deleted all references to uniting with South Korea from its constitution, a document reviewed by AFP yesterday showed, underscoring Pyongyang's push for a more hostile policy towards Seoul.

North and South Korea remain technically at war because their 1950-53 war ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. Pyongyang's constitution had previously contained

a clause stating that it aimed "to realise the unification of the motherland".

That reference no longer appears in the latest version, presented on Wednesday by a professor during a news conference at South Korea's Unification Ministry and subsequently seen by AFP.

North Korean officials considered constitutional amendments at a major congress in March, where leader Kim Jong Un labelled Seoul as the "most hostile state".

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Concern Over Improper Parking in Roundabouts**

**A**s a resident, I am compelled to raise a growing concern that has troubled many of us for some time now. Vehicles parked within roundabouts are becoming increasingly common in areas like Gudaibiya, Sitra, and Umm Al Hassam, creating both inconvenience and serious road safety risks.

Roundabouts are designed to ensure smooth traffic flow and reduce congestion. However, the presence of parked cars disrupt this flow, often forcing drivers to manoeuvre abruptly or reduce speed unexpectedly. This has sometimes led to near-miss situations and even minor accidents, putting both motorists and pedestrians at risk.

Beyond safety concerns, this practice also creates unnecessary traffic bottlenecks, especially during peak hours, which adds frustration to daily commutes.

I urge the concerned authorities to seriously investigate this matter and enforce stricter monitoring and penalties where necessary. Clear signage and increased awareness could also significantly discourage this behaviour.

Ensuring road discipline is a shared responsibility, and addressing this issue will greatly contribute to safer and smoother traffic conditions for everyone.

Jaffar Ebrahim

**Call for Fair Pay Amid Heavy Work Pressure**

**S**ir, I wish to highlight the issue of being underpaid during a crucial time of work when responsibilities and pressure are high. Employees deserve fair compensation and timely support. I urge authorities to look into this matter and guide workers on whom to approach and how to resolve such concerns.

Suresh

**Resident Urges Clarity on Rental Insurance**

**I** am writing to share a personal experience and seek broader awareness regarding a situation that many expatriates may unexpectedly face while living in the Kingdom.

Recently, a fire occurred in my apartment. Thankfully, I was safe, but the incident caused significant damage to my belongings and living space. Importantly, the fire was not caused by any negligence on my part. However, I now find myself uncertain about the process of compensation and recovery.

As an expatriate, I have come to realize how important it is to fully understand rental agreements and insurance coverage before such incidents occur. In my case, I am now considering whether to approach my insurance company for compensation, but I also recognize that many residents may not have adequate coverage or awareness of the procedures involved.

This experience has highlighted a common issue: a lack of clarity among tenants regarding liability, insurance obligations, and long-term protection in case of unforeseen events such as fires or water damage.

I believe stronger awareness campaigns and clearer guidance from landlords, insurance providers, and relevant authorities would greatly benefit residents. It is essential for tenants, especially expatriates, to be better informed about their rights and available protection mechanisms.

I hope my experience serves as a reminder for others to take preventive steps and ensure proper insurance coverage for peace of mind.

Fasal

**Safer roads needed as scooters become part of daily life in Bahrain**

**I**t was sad to read about the recent tragic incident in Budaiya involving an 11-year-old boy and scooters. Moments like these are deeply unsettling and naturally make us reflect on how road safety can be improved.

Electric scooters have quietly become a familiar part of everyday life in Bahrain. You see them more and more: on neighbourhood streets, near schools, and along main roads.

At the same time, it's clear that our current road setup hasn't really caught up with this shift. Scooters often end up sharing space with cars or pedestrians, which can feel uneasy at times, especially in busy areas.

Alongside the recent discussions about regulation and registration, I feel it would also help to consider how we physically accommodate this growing mode of transport. Dedicated scooter lanes, even if introduced gradually in key areas, could make a real difference. This would give riders a clearer, safer space and reduce confusion for drivers and pedestrians.

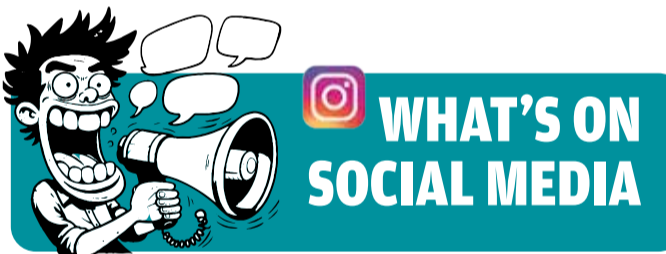
It's not about restricting scooters, but about making room for them in an organised and safe way for everyone. As their use continues to grow, simple infrastructure changes like this could go a long way in preventing accidents and making daily travel smoother for all road users.

Alex George

**PICTURE OF THE DAY**



Photo : A. Mathai

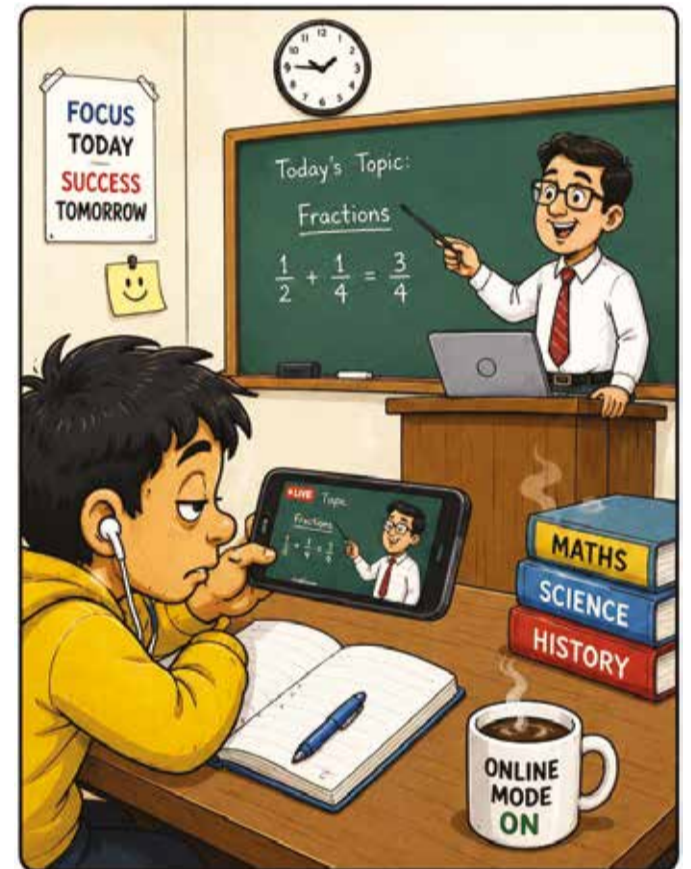


Bahrain's intense summer heat is pushing abandoned pets and stray animals into a worsening survival crisis, with shelters like the Bahrain Animal Rescue Centre (BARC) operating beyond capacity as rising temperatures, high costs, and falling adoption rates strain already limited resources.

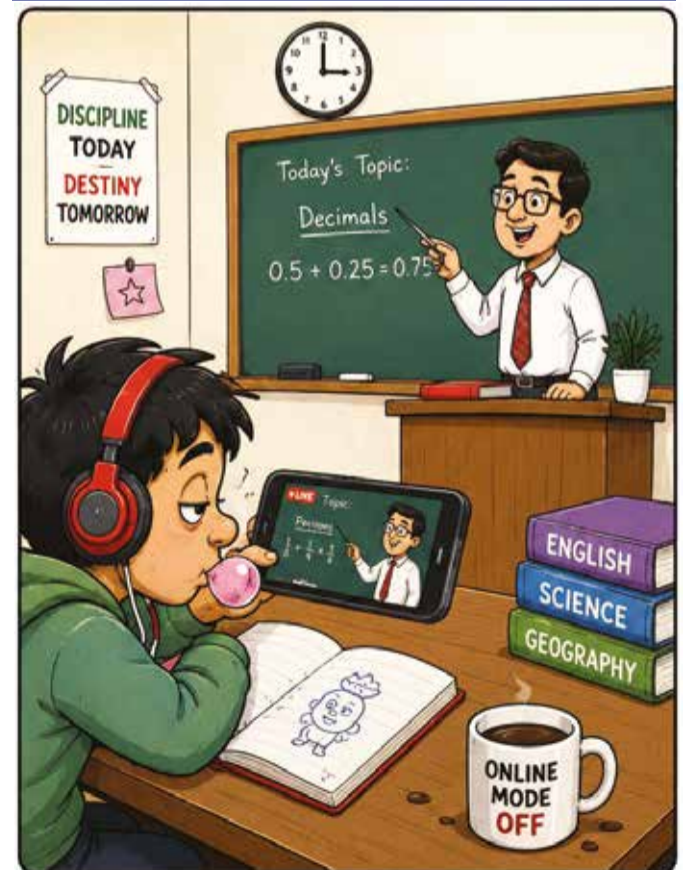
**TOP COMMENTS**

- vini\_officially**  
Make mandatory rules to SPAY and NEUTER pets.
- shinuvarghese94**  
Most expats can't take their pets to other countries because of high cargo charges. To India it's more than BD 325 for a cat.
- paoshantam**  
Maybe they can create more laws to protect the animals and also spay and neuter those who are on the streets already to prevent more stray animals (cats and dogs) and also they should control the status of any pet in the kingdom through the microchip and be more strict when owners want to leave the kingdom without the pets. Any pet in the kingdom should have a profile and location in the system attached to their owners.
- nabelnaseem4**  
Need something for them. As humans it is our responsibility to show kindness and support to them.
- sirshannoncrockett**  
The biggest problem is that many people wish to adopt pets but their rental property doesn't allow it. This is the majority of the current rental market. To find a pet friendly accommodation is difficult.
- ikevin2196**  
Governmental information about feeding animals in street should be given to all.

**ONLINE HANGOVER!** Too much screen time? Find the 6 differences.



**Spot the six differences**



**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](mailto:online@newsfbahrain.com)

# Gulf states confront Iran at UN over escalating attacks

Bahrain and UAE warn of threats to global trade and security after missile and drone strikes

● Threat to global trade routes

● Violation of international law

● Call for global united response

TDI | Manama  
Ashen Tharaka

Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates strongly condemned Iran at the United Nations, accusing it of escalating attacks that threaten regional and global security, including strikes on civilian infrastructure and shipping routes.

Speaking at a UN Security Council media stakeout, Jamal Fares Alrowaiee, Bahrain's permanent representative, described the incidents as part of a "deliberate and escalating pattern of destabilising conduct" targeting the Gulf region.

He said attacks on the UAE



Jamal Fares Alrowaiee, Bahrain's permanent representative to the UN



Mohamed Abushahab, UAE's permanent representative to the UN

represent "an immediate and serious collective concern" for Bahrain and the wider region, warning that continued strikes on civilian infrastructure and commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz pose a direct threat to international peace.

Alrowaiee added that the actions violate UN Security Council Resolution 2817 and demonstrate Iran's continued non-compliance. He cited recent drone and missile attacks in Fujairah that caused civilian injuries and damaged critical energy facilities.

"The security of the region is indivisible," he said, reaffirming Bahrain's full solidarity with the

UAE and calling for a "credible, united and decisive" response from the international community.

Addressing the same briefing, Mohamed Abushahab, the UAE's permanent representative to the UN, said Iran had launched a large-scale attack on May 4 involving ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones.

According to Abushahab, UAE air defences intercepted most of the projectiles, but three civilians were injured and a fire broke out in the Fujairah oil industry zone.

"Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is not only unacceptable — it is unlawful,"

he said.

The UAE envoy added that since February 28, the country has intercepted more than 500 ballistic missiles, nearly 30 cruise missiles and over 2,000 drones launched from Iran.

He also warned that attacks on commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most critical energy corridors — risk disrupting global markets.

"What happens in the Strait of Hormuz does not stay there," Abushahab said, noting potential impacts on energy supplies, food prices and global economic stability.

He stressed that the issue extends beyond the region, calling it "a test of whether the international system can protect the basic conditions on which the global economy depends."

The UAE condemned the attacks "in the strongest possible terms" and urged the Security Council to take decisive action, while affirming its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

## China, Oman discuss Middle East stability



China's ambassador to Oman Lyu Jian held discussions with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, during which they exchanged views on regional developments and cooperation between the two countries.

Lyu outlined a four-point proposal by Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at advancing peace and stability in the Middle East, highlighting Beijing's commitment to diplomatic solutions.

He also praised Oman's "continued and sincere efforts" to promote peace through dialogue, adding that China would work with "like-minded

countries" to support stability in the region.

Albusaidi welcomed the initiative, expressing appreciation for what he described as a "constructive vision" that emphasises dialogue, mutual respect, sovereignty and collective security.

Oman also commended China's "balanced approach" in regional affairs and reaffirmed its support for efforts aimed at de-escalation and long-term peace, the statement said.

Both sides said they looked forward to strengthening cooperation and maintaining close exchanges on regional issues.

## Jordan FM holds talks with South Korea



Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aymen Safadi, held phone talks on Wednesday with South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Hyun, discussing bilateral relations and regional developments.

The two ministers reaffirmed the strength of ties between Jordan and South Korea and their shared commitment to expanding cooperation across sectors of mutual interest, in a way that serves both countries.

They also reviewed the lat-

est regional developments, stressing the need to end ongoing escalation and support diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring calm.

Safadi and Cho highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement between the United States and Iran that would deliver a comprehensive solution ensuring regional security and stability.

Both sides agreed to maintain coordination and consultations to advance bilateral cooperation and address regional and international issues of common concern.

## Visa exemption deal



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said that Türkiye and Saudi Arabia held high-level talks in Ankara on Wednesday, reviewing cooperation across key sectors and discussing regional developments, including the situation in Gaza.

Fidan co-chaired the third meeting of the Turkish-Saudi Coordination Council with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, bringing together officials from various ministries and institutions.

The discussions focused on strengthening collaboration in strategic areas such as trade, en-

ergy, defence, education, culture, tourism and transportation, within an institutional framework aimed at deepening bilateral ties.

The two sides also addressed regional issues, with particular emphasis on Gaza, though no further details were immediately disclosed.

During the meeting, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement to exempt holders of diplomatic and special passports from visa requirements.

Fidan said he hoped the agreement would benefit both countries and thanked his Saudi counterpart and his delegation for their visit.

## Cyprus boosts Middle East ties



The Republic of Cyprus is stepping up coordination and diplomatic engagement with Middle Eastern and Gulf states at a critical moment for regional security and stability, reaffirming its commitment to open communication channels and close cooperation with key regional partners.

As part of these efforts, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides visited the United Arab Emirates to show solidarity following what Cyprus de-

scribed as "unjustified attacks" against the Gulf nation.

During his visit to Abu Dhabi, Christodoulides held talks with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, underscoring Nicosia's support for the UAE and its commitment to de-escalation and regional stability.

The visit highlights Cyprus' broader diplomatic push to strengthen ties with strategic partners in the region while promoting dialogue amid heightened tensions.

## Kuwait, Turkey Review Strategic Defence Partnership

Kuwait's Defence Minister held talks with senior Turkish officials during an official visit to Ankara, focusing on strengthening military and industrial cooperation between the two countries.

Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah met Turkish National Defence Minister Yaşar Güler. They reviewed longstanding ties between Kuwait and Turkey and discussed ways to expand collaboration, particularly in defence and military sectors.

The discussions highlighted the depth of bilateral relations and explored opportunities to further develop joint initiatives aligned



with shared strategic interests.

During the visit, Sheikh Abdullah also met Haluk Görgün, head of Turkey's Defence Industries Authority, to examine prospects for industrial partnerships and the exchange of technical expertise. Talks also covered enhancing cooperation in defence technologies to support capability development on both sides.

The Kuwaiti minister was accompanied by Ambassador Abdulaziz Ahmad Al-Adwani and Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

## GCC Unity and Development



Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah received GCC Secretary-General Jasssem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi on Wednesday at Seif Palace. They discussed efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and integration among member states.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed several issues related to joint Gulf action, focusing on advancing the GCC's collective initiatives and enhancing coordi-

nation across the bloc. The discussions also highlighted ongoing efforts aimed at promoting development and prosperity for the peoples of GCC countries, in line with the directives of Gulf leaders.

Albudaiwi expressed his appreciation to the Kuwaiti leadership for its continued support of the GCC General Secretariat and its initiatives.

# Classifieds



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## FIFA extends Prestianni ban worldwide



SL Benfica's Argentine forward #25 Gianluca Prestianni hides his mouth while arguing with Real Madrid's Brazilian forward #07 Vinicius Junior

AFP | Lausanne

FIFA announced yesterday it had extended Gianluca Prestianni's suspension worldwide after the Benfica winger was originally banned by European football's governing body UEFA.

Argentina's Prestianni was handed a six-game ban, with three of them suspended, for discriminatory conduct in the first leg of Champions League play-off tie against Real Madrid on February 17.

Madrid forward Vinicius Junior accused the 20-year-old Prestianni of racism as they clashed on the field, which Prestianni denies.

As the two argued, Prestianni spoke to Vinicius while covering his mouth, with the Brazilian subsequently complaining to the referee, leading to the match being suspended

for 10 minutes.

"The FIFA Disciplinary Committee has decided to extend the six-match ban imposed by UEFA on SL Benfica player Gianluca Prestianni to have worldwide effect," FIFA told AFP.

"The sanction has been extended in accordance with article 70 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code."

Prestianni, who made his only international appearance last November, has already served one match of his suspension, missing the Champions League play-off second leg.

Following FIFA's decision, the former Velez Sarsfield player would miss holders Argentina's two opening games of the World Cup, which takes place in the United States, Canada and Mexico between June 11 and July 19.

# MAD-RID

## Simeone Jr Blasts 'Ignored' Penalty Claims After Champions League Exit

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Atletico Madrid were left frustrated on Tuesday night as their Champions League campaign came to an end with a semi-final defeat to Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium.

The winning moment came in the first half when Bukayo Saka reacted quickest after Jan Oblak parried Leandro Trossard's effort, bundling the ball home to give Arsenal a 1-0 lead — a scoreline they would hold until full-time.

However, the Spanish side were convinced the match could have taken a different turn.

Atletico's main complaint came midway through the second half, when Giuliano Simeone broke through on goal and went down under pressure from Gabriel Magalhães. Although appeals for a penalty were im-



Giuliano Simeone appeals for a penalty during Atletico's semi-final defeat to Arsenal

mediately made, play was not reviewed by VAR after the assistant referee had already flagged an offside in the build-up. Replays later suggested Simeone may have been level when the pass was played, raising questions over whether the attacking phase should have been allowed to continue.

Following the incident, Simeone shared images on social media highlighting the moment,

questioning why the decision had not been reviewed in full.

Shortly after, Atletico were again denied a penalty when Antoine Griezmann went down in the box following a challenge from Riccardo Calafiori. On this occasion, VAR upheld the on-field decision, citing a prior foul by Marc Pubill on Gabriel Magalhães earlier in the move, which had already ended the attacking sequence.

Despite the disputed incidents, Atletico manager Diego Simeone declined to criticise the officials after the match, saying: "I won't focus on that. It would be an excuse, and I don't want to make excuses."

Arsenal progress to the final in Budapest, where they will aim to secure their first Champions League title. For Atletico, the search for a maiden European crown continues.



Madrid winger Giuliano Simeone is the son of the club's manager, Diego Simeone

# Europa League Semi-Final Preview

Braga host Freiburg as Aston Villa face Nottingham Forest tonight



Chris Wood celebrates his penalty in Forest's first-leg win over Villa

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

The Europa League semi-finals continue tonight at 10PM Bahrain time, with teams competing for a place in the final at Besiktas Park in Istanbul on May 20.

### Braga vs Freiburg

SC Freiburg host SC Braga in the second leg, with Braga

leading 2-1 on aggregate after a dramatic first-leg win, sealed by a stoppage-time winner from Mario Dorgeles.

Freiburg have already made history by reaching their first European semi-final. The Bundesliga side have been among the competition's most in-form teams, scoring 11 goals in their last three Europa League matches while conceding just twice. However, their domestic form

has dipped, with recent defeats to Stuttgart and Borussia Dortmund raising concerns ahead of this tie in Germany.

Braga, meanwhile, bring experience at this level. The Portuguese side reached the Europa League final in 2011 and are back in the semi-finals for only the second time after a 5-3 aggregate win over Real Betis. Despite a recent league loss, they remain competitive domestically and



Braga's Demir Ege Tknaz (L) battles for possession with Freiburg's Jordy Makengo

will look to protect their advantage away from home.

Freiburg are expected to be without Patrick Osterhage, while Jordy Makengo remains a doubt. Braga will miss Gabriel Moscardo through suspension, but key players such as Rodrigo Zalazar and Florian Grillitsch add quality and familiarity with German opposition.

### Aston Villa vs Nottingham Forest

In England, Aston Villa host Nottingham Forest in the second leg of their semi-final, with Forest holding a 1-0 advantage from the first leg.

Forest arrive full of confi-

dence, unbeaten in their last ten matches and revitalised under Vitor Pereira. Their disciplined performance in the first leg gives them the edge, but the job is far from done.

Villa will rely on their exceptional home form in Europe. Unai Emery's side have won their last nine European matches at Villa Park and will be confident of overturning the deficit despite inconsistent domestic results.

With both clubs boasting European pedigree — Forest with two European Cup titles and Villa with one — the tie remains finely balanced heading into tonight's decisive clash.

## Australia FA condemns Melbourne ban on World Cup watch parties

AFP | Sydney

Football Australia called yesterday for a ban on public watch parties for the 2026 World Cup in Melbourne's Federation Square to be reversed.

The governing body said it was "extremely disappointed" with the decision by Melbourne Arts Precinct, which cited previous "dangerous" fan behaviour in the square.

"The FIFA World Cup is the biggest sporting event in the world and unites Australia's multicultural communities, while reinforcing our national identity," said Football Australia chief executive Martin Kugeler.

"Live sites create iconic moments for Australian sports fans," he added.

"Melbourne is one of Australia's sporting and multicultural capitals, and this decision goes against this tradition."

Katrina Sedgwick, chief executive of the Melbourne Arts Precinct, which manages the square, said the behaviour of some fans led to its decision not to host World Cup watch parties.

# Dar Kulaib to face Muharraq in Crown Prince Cup final

## ● Crown Prince Cup final set for Saturday

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib survived a major scare to reach the Crown Prince Cup final with a 3-1 semi-final win over Bani Jamra at Isa bin Rashid Volleyball Arena last night, before Muharraq beat Al Ahli to set up the title clash.

Bahrain Volleyball Association President Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa was among those in attendance for a night that featured two contrasting semi-finals: Dar Kulaib endured a tense battle and Muharraq produced a straight-sets win.

In the opening semi-final, Bani Jamra, coached by Mohammed Al Jaboori, made a strong start and took the first set 25-21. Dar Kulaib, led by Ivan Joksimovic, responded immediately, levelling the match with a dominant 25-16 second set as Enock Mogeni's influence grew.

The third set followed a similar pattern, with Dar Kulaib taking early control and closing it 25-18. Mahmood Abdulwahab and Enock Mogeni were decisive



Kenyan professional Enock Mogeni attacks at the net for Dar Kulaib

in transition, repeatedly punishing Bani Jamra, who struggled for consistency in longer rallies.

The fourth set delivered the night's defining drama, with both teams locked together early and neither able to establish control. At 10-10, Mogeni brought Dar Kulaib level before play was briefly halted after

a collision between two Bani Jamra players at the net. When action resumed, Abdulla Jaffar put Bani Jamra ahead 12-10, but was later penalised for over-celebration.

From there, the set became a tense exchange of runs and errors. Abdulwahab's touch at the net gave Dar Kulaib an 18-17



Jacob Link in action for Muharraq against Al Ahli in the semi-final

lead, before Mogeni finished a long rally for 19-18. The lead continued to swing amid net violations, disputed calls, and mounting pressure as the score reached 23-23. At 25-25, Abdulwahab struck again to edge Dar Kulaib ahead, and despite Bani Jamra briefly going 29-28 up, Dar Kulaib held firm. Abdulwahab and Mogeni then combined for the decisive block-touch winner to seal a 30-28 fourth set and a 3-1 victory.

In the second semi-final, Muharraq produced a far more comfortable performance to defeat bitter rivals Al Ahli 3-0 (25-18, 25-22, 25-17). Muharraq controlled proceedings throughout, closing out the match in straight sets after a decisive final sequence. An Al Ahli service error opened the door for Muharraq to reach match point, before Sayed Hashim Ali played the final rally. Although his attack was initially thought to be out, a video challenge review confirmed a block touch, sealing Muharraq's victory.

The final is now set for Saturday, with Dar Kulaib taking on Muharraq. Dar Kulaib are targeting a domestic double following their Isa bin Rashid League triumph last month, while Muharraq go into the final as reigning champions.

## Ahmedabad to host IPL final after Bengaluru switch



A general view of the stadium

AFP | New Delhi

The Indian Premier League final will be held in Ahmedabad on May 31 instead of Bengaluru as originally planned, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said the venue was shifted because of "certain requirements" from local authorities and the state association.

Bengaluru was cleared to host five games this IPL season despite a stampede last year outside its main cricket stadium that killed 11 young fans.

Qualifier 1, featuring the top two teams in the standings, will be played on May 26 at Dharamsala, with a direct berth in the final at stake.

Chandigarh will host the Eliminator on May 27 between the third and fourth-placed teams. The same venue will also stage Qualifier 2 on May 29, where the loser of Qualifier 1 will face the winner of the Eliminator to determine the second finalist.

The title clash will be held at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, the world's largest cricket stadium with a capacity of 130,000.

The IPL, the world's richest cricket league, attracts leading international players and is broadcast globally, with several franchises backed by Bollywood stars.

It is also a top revenue earner for the BCCI and was estimated in 2020 to generate more than \$11 billion a year for the Indian economy.

## PSG on Brink of European Crown Defence

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Paris Saint-Germain are through to the Champions League final after a 1-1 draw with Bayern Munich in the second leg, securing a 6-5 aggregate victory. They will face Arsenal in the final on May 30 in Budapest, as they move within one match of claiming a second European title.

PSG made a fast start, with Ousmane Dembélé scoring in the 3rd minute to extend their advantage in the tie. The move came down the left, where Khvicha Kvaratskhelia combined with Fabián Ruiz before delivering a low cross that Dembélé finished past Manuel Neuer.

Bayern gradually took control of possession and territory but struggled to create clear chances against a well-organised PSG defensive shape. Despite sustained pressure, the visitors limited space in key areas and



Dembélé celebrates PSG's goal against Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-final

managed the game with composure for long spells.

The match came alive in stoppage time when Harry Kane equalised for Bayern, finishing from close range to give the home side hope in the dying moments. However, the goal was not enough to alter the outcome, with PSG still holding a narrow aggregate lead.

There was also controversy in the first half when Bayern appealed for a penalty after a handball incident involving João Neves, but the referee waved play on. Earlier physical exchanges involving Nuno Mendes also added to Bayern's frustration as the atmosphere inside the Allianz Arena grew increasingly tense.

In the end, PSG's first-leg advantage proved decisive. Despite Bayern's late push and Kane's stoppage-time goal, the French side held on across both legs to reach another Champions League final.

## Andorra owner Pique banned for two months after referee row

AFP | Andorra la Vella

Former Barcelona star and current FC Andorra owner Gerard Pique was banned for two months yesterday after a heated row with a referee.

The 39-year-old businessman, who retired from playing in 2022, became embroiled in an argument after Andorra's 1-0 defeat by Albacete last week in



Former Spanish footballer Gerard Pique

the second division.

Referee Alonso de Ena Wolf wrote in his report after the game that Pique, as well as other members of Andorra's staff and playing squad, were confronting the officiating team.

The Spanish football federation's disciplinary committee said Pique has been "suspended for two months for notorious and public acts that undermine sport-

ing dignity and decorum, based on the facts recorded in the referee's report". Separately the committee also banned Pique for "six matches for acts involving minor violence toward the referees".

Andorra president Ferran Vilaseca was issued a four-month suspension, while the sporting director Jaume Nogues, and several other members of club staff were also banned.

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