



**Kingdom condemns terrorist bombings in Pakistan province**

**TDT** | Manama

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom of Bahrain's strong condemnation of the terrorist bombings that occurred prior to the general and local elections in the Balochistan region, southwest of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and resulted in the death and injury of dozens of innocent people.

The Ministry affirmed the solidarity of the Kingdom with Pakistan in the face of terrorism that aims to terrorize people and destabilize the security and stability of the country, expressing its sincere condolences to the government, brotherly people of Pakistan and to the families of the victims, and its wishes for a speedy recovery for all those injured.

**NBB and BBK merger is on the horizon**

**TDT** | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain B.S.C. announces that it has begun initial discussions with the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait B.S.C. about a potential merger and has decided to appoint advisers to study the economic feasibility of a merger. Any material developments shall be announced as required and in accordance with applicable regulations.

**Israel bombs Gaza's crowded Rafah city as battlefield nears**

**AFP** | Jerusalem

Israel's armed forces stepped up air strikes on Gaza's far-southern Rafah yesterday as fears of ground fighting grew among the more than one million Palestinians crowded into the city.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken left Israel without securing a pause in fighting, wrapping up his fifth crisis tour of the Middle East since the war started.

Heavy fighting raged on despite international efforts towards a ceasefire in the bloodiest ever Gaza war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel.

220 fils (includes VAT)



## Bahrain, Saudi sign key economic cooperation deals

Riyadh

Minister of Finance and National Economy, His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, stressed the importance of consolidating financial and economic cooperation relations between Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This came as the two kingdoms signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the finance sector between the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and the Saudi Ministry of Finance, and an MoU in economics and planning between the Ministry of Finance and National Economy and the Saudi Ministry of Economy and Planning, within the framework of the third meeting of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council.

Shaikh Salman praised the



H.E. Shaikh Salman with his Saudi counterpart after signing the agreement

deep-rooted and historic Bahraini-Saudi relations and their constant development in various sectors, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

He hailed the support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and His Royal Highness

Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in strengthening cooperation and working towards more integration.

The minister stressed the importance of MoUs in consolidating financial and economic cooperation relations between the two kingdoms, highlighting the role of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council in enhancing joint work to build on previous achievements.

### Energy partnership

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the energy sector between the Ministry of Oil and Environment and the Saudi Ministry of Energy, within the framework of the third meeting of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council.

The MoU aimed at fostering cooperation in this vital sector to develop innovative plans towards digital transformation in the sector, in addition to developing partnerships to nationalise materials, products and services, as well as developing standards and relevant regulations and benefiting from expertise and modern technological systems.

It includes cooperation in developing various fields, including oil, gas, electricity, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and petrochemicals.

### Major sectors

The two countries also signed cooperation deals in the education, health, legal, and media sectors, and for Intellectual Property, regarding the Patent Application Fast Track Examination (FTE) Programme.

# Bahrain Blazes

## Bahrain Grand Prix roars to victory with F1 Innovation Award

**TDT** | Manama

Bahrain is celebrating a remarkable triumph as the 2023 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix clinched the prestigious Event Innovation Award at the F1 Promoter Awards held in London.

This coveted accolade acknowledges the outstanding achievements of Formula 1 venues worldwide, with Bahrain's triumph marking a significant milestone in the realm of motorsports innovation.

The Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) has been lauded for its trailblazing initiatives, including the establishment of a cutting-edge solar facility, propelling Bahrain to the forefront of sustainable racing.

In a dazzling ceremony attended by luminaries from the global motorsport community, Arif Rahimi, Chairman of



BIC Chairman Arif Rahimi receives the award from F1 Chief Commercial Officer Emily Prazer

Bahrain International Circuit, proudly accepted the award on behalf of BIC, presented by F1's Chief Commercial Officer, Emily Prazer.

Bahrain's triumph at the F1 Promoter Awards underscores its unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of inno-

vation in motorsport.

The Event Innovation Award recognizes Bahrain's pioneering efforts in event delivery, commercial offerings, and infrastructure enhancements. Among the standout innovations acknowledged by the judging panel are:

### Industry-Leading Solar Production Facility

BIC's groundbreaking solar park, operational for just one year, has already generated over 5 million kWh of clean energy, equivalent to offsetting 3,108 tonnes of carbon emissions.

### Innovative Energy-Saving Measures

A range of energy-saving initiatives were implemented by BIC, including advanced building management systems, upgraded air conditioning chillers, and the adoption of energy-efficient LED lighting, resulting in a remark-



able 30% reduction in energy consumption.

### Revolutionary Race Control Technology

It was BIC that introduced a pioneering system linking digital flag panels on the track to cameras in race control, streamlining incident management and enhancing safety protocols.

### Digitalization for Enhanced Fan Experience

The integration of digitalized directional signage has revolutionized fan engagement, facilitating seamless traffic management and enhancing the overall event experience for spectators.

Stefano Domenicali, President & CEO of Formula 1, commended Bahrain's visionary approach, emphasizing the pivotal role of promoters like Bahrain in advancing Formula 1's sustainability goals. Arif Rahimi expressed gratitude for the prestigious accolade, attributing it to the collective efforts of the Bahrain Grand Prix team and the unwavering support of Bahrain's leadership.

"I offer my sincerest gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Roy-

al Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. It has been their vision and guidance that has formed the cornerstone of our achievements. I also thank all the team at BIC, together with our partners across the public and private sector. It

is the collaboration of Team Bahrain that enables us to deliver a racing and entertainment spectacle for fans across the world."

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive of Bahrain International Circuit, hailed the award as a testament to Bahrain's relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation in motorsport, marking a fitting tribute to the circuit's 20th anniversary in Formula 1.

"It is fitting that such an award comes as we celebrate our 20th anniversary in Formula 1. Since our very beginning, we have strived to improve and develop our race across every area of operation. We seek to innovate, enhance and adapt our event to ensure that we are a modern venue that will always deliver an F1 experience that exceeds the expectations of our fans and partners in the sport. I am grateful to all those who have supported us in our endeavours."

As Bahrain continues to spearhead innovation in motorsport, the Kingdom stands as a beacon of excellence, driving Formula 1 towards a sustainable and exhilarating future on the global stage.



The Bahrain International Circuit



HM the King



HRH the CP, PM

## Bahrain greets Azerbaijan President on re-election

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday sent cables of congratulations to Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev on re-election.

HM the King and HRH Prince Salman wished President Aliyev continued success in carrying out his presidential duties to achieve the aspirations of the Azeri people for further progress and prosperity.

His Royal Highness commended the depth of the Bahrain-Azerbaijan relations, affirming the Kingdom's commitment to continue developing ties with Azerbaijan, as well as bolster bilateral cooperation and coordination to achieve common interests.

## ASRY head, US Ambassador hail strong Bahrain-US ties



H.E. Aymen bin Tawfeeq Almoayed with H.E. Ambassador Steven C. Bondy

TDT | Manama

levels to advance cooperation that serves both parties.

The visit also involved a brief presentation summarizing ASRY's foundation, operations, and development stages.

This was followed by a tour to ASRY's facilities that aimed to introduce ASRY's activities and operations as well as present ASRY's competitive level of professionalism. ASRY is recognized as the leading maritime repair and fabrication facility in the region, and one of the pillars of Bahrain's national economy.

At the conclusion of the visit, Ambassador Bondy expressed his thanks and appreciation for the generous hospitality, emphasizing the significance of strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing joint cooperation to maintain close cooperative ties between the two countries.

## Tamkeen's support programs



Tamkeen management met with the Al Kindi Hospital to present Tamkeen's support programs. The programs present various opportunities for support in the employment and career development of the Bahraini workforce in various key sectors, including the health sector.

# Sharia Solutions, 30-Year Terms

AUB keys up homeownership with tailored solutions at Housing Finance Exhibition

TDT | Manama

Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (AUB) announced its participation in the third edition of the Housing Finance Exhibition, scheduled for February 8th to 17th, 2024, at City Centre Bahrain. The Bank intends to showcase an array of Shari'a-compliant financing options designed to facilitate property acquisition for potential homeowners.

Visitors to the exhibition will be greeted by AUB representatives eager to assist them in matching their chosen properties with suitable financing



The Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, attends the event's previous edition

## Home Finance Freedom

Grace periods, zero fees with BisB at Housing Finance Exhibition



H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, visiting the BisB stall. BisB CEO Yaser Alsharifi, second from right, was also present.

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), renowned for its Islamic digital banking services, has announced exclusive financing offers at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning's third Housing Finance Exhibition.

The exhibition presents a golden opportunity for customers to leverage attractive benefits.

BisB offers a grace period of up to 6 months, a complete waiver of administrative fees, and complimentary fire insurance for those utilizing the Mazaya and

Tasheel housing financing schemes.

This marks BisB's third consecutive participation in the Housing Finance Exhibition, held at City Centre Bahrain from February 8th to 17th. Their presence embodies their dedication to providing customized financial solutions tailored to the community's needs.

With its expansive network of 8 branches and user-friendly digital platforms, including online banking and a mobile app, BisB seamlessly delivers convenience and accessibility. Beyond these channels, the

Bank boasts a diverse array of innovative and simplified financial products and services. This comprehensive suite is consistently adapted to meet the evolving demands of customers, ensuring personalized and seamless banking experiences.

Through this exhibition, BisB reaffirms its commitment to empowering individuals to achieve their financial goals while upholding Islamic principles.

Their captivating offers and unparalleled service make them a leading choice for aspiring homeowners in Bahrain.

plans. These plans boast flexible terms, including financing tenors stretching up to 30 years, coverage of up to 120% of property value, competitive profit rates and fees, special fee waivers, streamlined processing, and adjustable financing amounts. It is important to note that terms and conditions apply.

The offered financing solutions encompass the purchase of land or property, including those categorized as Social Housing. Recognizing the significance of homeownership aspirations, Suvrat Saigal, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer – Retail Banking at AUB, expressed the Bank's delight in participating in the exhibition for the third consecutive year. He stated, "This event serves as a valuable platform for us to connect with potential homeowners and present our comprehensive suite of Shari'a-compliant financing solutions. We are steadfast in our commitment to enhancing the accessibility of homeownership for all Bahrainis, and we are confident that our offerings, coupled with our expert guidance and personalized service, will empower our customers to realize their dream of owning a home."

Through its participation in the Housing Finance Exhibition, AUB aims to empower individuals in Bahrain to achieve their homeownership aspirations by providing them with convenient and adaptable financing solutions.

## Hair Donation camp successful

TDT | Manama

Sixty-eight people donated hair to cancer patients in need as part of World Cancer Day commemorations.

Men, women and children took part in the Hair Donation camp held at the KIMSHEALTH auditorium in Umm Al Hassam on Sunday, February 4.

The initiative was organised by Cancer Care Group Bahrain, in co-operation with Bahrain Prathibha and Royal Bahrain Hospital (RBH), under the theme 'Close the Care Gap'.

All donors were awarded with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Awareness lectures were held by RBH doctors - Dr. Alpay Yilmaz, Consultant - Gynecologic Oncology and Dr. Venkatesh Mushani, Consultant - Medical & Hemato Oncology to raise awareness on factors that can lead to cancer, as well as symptoms and preventive measures.



A donor receives a Certificate of Appreciation from the KIMSHEALTH leaders

More than 200 people attended the event, including MPs Abdulhakim Al Shino and Dr. Mariam Al Dhain, Cancer Care Group Bahrain president Dr. P. V. Cherian, Prathibha president Binu Mannil, Royal Bahrain Hospital president and KIMSHEALTH Medical Center Chairman Mr. Ahmed Jawahery, KIMSHEALTH Group Chief Executive Officer Dr. Sheriff M. Sahadulla, Regional chief operating officer - Bahrain Dr. Ahmed AlRashid, KIMSHEALTH Hospital chief operating officer Tariq Najeeb, in addition to officials from the Bahrain Cancer Society and from the Embassies for Thailand and Japan.

# CBB creates more promising investment opportunities

TDT | Manama

Minister of Finance and National Economy, His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, has affirmed the pivotal role played by the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB) in supporting and developing the national financial and banking policies in a way that enhances the Kingdom's position in this sector, which contributes to improving its performance.

Shaikh Salman praised the financial and banking sector's prominent role in developing the national economy, stressing

the kingdom's interest in developing this sector and creating more promising investment opportunities, which will contribute to achieving the goals of the comprehensive development process, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

The Minister was speaking while meeting H.E. CBB Governor Rasheed Al Maraj. He commended the efforts exerted by Al Maraj throughout his tenure as CBB Governor, wishing him continued success.

## Bahrain-EU ties

Shaikh Salman highlighted the steady growth of the kingdom's relations with the European Union (EU) countries across various fields, stressing the two sides' keenness to continue developing their ties to achieve their common goals.



H.E. Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa with H.E. CBB Governor Rasheed Al Maraj

While meeting H.E. Christophe Varno, the EU Ambassador to Bahrain, the minister highlighted the advanced level reached by the Bahrain-EU cooperation at all levels, particularly in the financial and economic fields.

He underlined the importance of pushing bilateral relations further towards more fruitful cooperation and joint coordination.

The two sides also discussed ways to bolster the Bahrain-EU financial and economic cooperation, in addition to topics of common interest.

# Shared Vision

**MP Al-Dhaen hails role of Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council**



MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen

TDT | Manama

MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen emphasized the pivotal role of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council in bolstering collaboration and integration between the two nations.

Recognizing Saudi Arabia as a strategic cornerstone, she underscored the significance of the council's third meeting in fostering joint endeavours.

Al-Dhaen highlighted the forthcoming signing of agreements and the launch of initiatives aimed at deepening cooperation across various sectors. She emphasized that these efforts would further align common visions, strengthen partnerships in the private sector, and advance mutual interests.

Characterizing Bahraini-Saudi relations as deeply

rooted in communication and cooperation, Al-Dhaen praised the unwavering support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, HRH King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The MP commended the leadership of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council, led by HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. She attributed the success of the bilateral relationship to their guidance.

Al-Dhaen emphasized that the collaboration between the two nations has yielded diplomatic, political, economic, social, and humanitarian achievements, fostering peace and prosperity for their peoples and beyond.

## Bahraini and accomplice jailed for unauthorised money collection

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a Bahraini man to six months in prison and his accomplice to three months after they collected money without the approval of the relevant authorities.

They convinced two sisters to invest in the gold sector and promised them financial profits. However, after handing over the money to the defendants, they received nothing in return.

According to the details of the case, the victim met the second defendant who informed her about his various investments in the paper cup and box industries, as well as gold investments with another individual. He offered her

the opportunity to invest her money, and she agreed.

She then presented the idea to her sister, who also agreed and gave her son BD20,000 to hand over to the defendant for investment in the gold sector, at a determined time and place. The transfer took place on the specified day.

## Profit share

It was agreed that the victims would receive a 30% profit share of the paid capital amount for a period of six months, totaling BD2,000, in addition to the return of the capital amount after the deal was completed.

The first defendant handed over two receipts, each worth BD11,000, as a guarantee for receiving the amounts. Af-

# Grow Your Oasis

This weekend, swap houseplants for a rooftop harvest!

Ashen Tharaka  
TDT | Manama

Winter's greenery paints Bahrain, but maintaining it needs work beyond seasonal shifts. Enter Bahrain's 'green vision', with rooftop gardening blossoming across urban areas!

## From barren to booming

Retired physiotherapist Eman Shaker, once limited by space and sun, now flourishes on her rooftop farm. "Moving everything was intimidating, but now it's my haven!" she beams, nurturing new seeds even between seasons.

Marketing whiz Ahmed Al-Hayki started with a single pepper seedling. "YouTube became my teacher," he smiles, his rooftop now boasting veggies and even fruit trees. Both transformed their once "dead space" into vibrant life!

## Growing beyond backyards

The UN and Bahrain's government are teaming up to make cities greener, healthier places. "Rooftop farming improves air quality, combats heat, and offers urban residents a green escape," explains Dr. Fernanda Lonardoni, Head of UN-Habitat Bahrain.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also supports Bahrain's "National Afforestation Plan" to green its urban areas. "We encourage sustainable agriculture for a greener future," says Lonardoni.

## Your green thumb adventure awaits!

A recent UN survey found



Eman Shaker's rooftop



Dr Fernanda Lonardoni

40% of Bahraini home gardeners use their rooftops! This weekend, ditch the houseplants and join the rooftop revolution. Transform your unused space, breathe cleaner air, and enjoy the fruits (and veggies!) of your labour. Get inspired by Shaker and AlHayki, and let your green thumb take flight!

## Ready to dig in?

The National Initiative for Agricultural Development (NIAD) is providing guidance and resources for beginners. For expert tips and tricks, check out online tutorials and

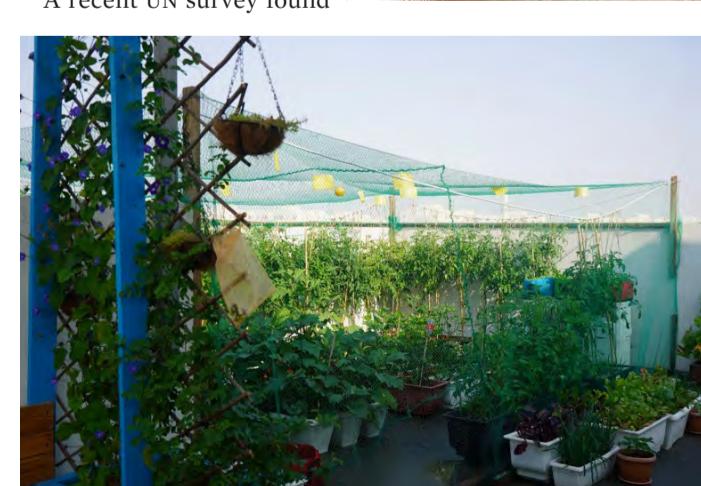


Ahmed AlHayki's rooftop

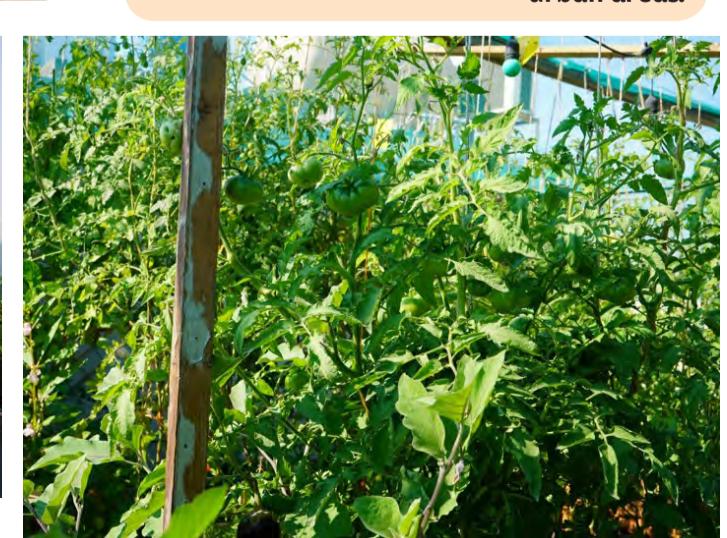
communities. Start importantly, have fun growing small, experiment, and most your own urban oasis!



The UN and Bahrain's government are teaming up to make cities greener, healthier places. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) also supports Bahrain's "National Afforestation Plan" to green its urban areas.



Turning 'green vision' into reality



# Web of deceit unmasked

Asian fraudulent network convicted by High Criminal Court for fake website scam

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has delivered a verdict convicting an Asian fraudulent network for orchestrating deceptive operations utilizing a counterfeit website.

The announcement was made by the Deputy Chief of the Electronic Crimes Prosecution.

The principal culprit was sentenced to five years in prison, fined BD5,000, and ordered permanent deportation from the Kingdom of Bahrain upon completion of the sentence.

Additionally, the court sentenced the remaining defendants to three years imprisonment, fined them BD2,000 each, and ordered their expulsion from the country after completing their jail terms.

The incident traces back to a report filed by an electronic payment company concerning



suspicious transactions totaling BD4,312 conducted through its website.

Following investigations conducted by the Department of Combating Economic Crimes within the General Department of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security, an

experienced Asian fraudulent network was uncovered.

## Confession

The Public Prosecution promptly initiated investigations upon receiving the report, leading to the arrest of the accused who confessed to stealing victims' bank data and creating a fraudulent website for illicit

activities.

After thorough examinations of seized electronic devices, testimonies from witnesses, and interrogation of the accused, the Public Prosecution presented the defendants to the Criminal Court. They were charged with utilising an electronic signature for fraudulent purposes and two misdemeanors related to fraud through information technology means, unauthorised entry into an information technology system, and forgery and use of a private document.

The court meticulously deliberated on the case until reaching a verdict.

The Public Prosecution underscores its ongoing efforts to combat electronic fraud in all its manifestations and emphasises the importance of safeguarding societal interests. It pledges to take decisive measures to protect financial assets and ensure economic and electronic security in the Kingdom.

# Maroon 5 captivates fans at Al Dana Amphitheatre



Maroon 5 performs to a full-house crowd

TDT | Manama

Global sensation Maroon 5 lit up Al Dana Amphitheatre on Wednesday night during their first ever performance in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The American band performed their all-time classics and charting hit singles for

the excited crowds of fans at the venue.

Following the memorable evening, Damian Bush, Chief Executive Officer of Al Dana Amphitheatre, commented: "We were thrilled to host the Grammy award-winning artists, Maroon 5, for a night of captivating music and unforgettable performances. The

concert was an incredible success, and the Theatre was filled with concertgoers from across the region, all who have come together to enjoy the vibrant sounds of this bestselling band. In the year ahead, we look forward to welcoming a wide range of global entertainers and performers to our stage."

For news on all upcoming performances, updates as well as ticketing information, follow Al Dana Amphitheatre's social media accounts: Instagram (@aldana\_amp), Threads (@aldana\_amp), X (@aldana\_amp), Facebook (facebook.com/aldanaamphitheatre), TikTok (@aldana\_amp) and Snapchat (@aldana\_amp).



# Foundation stone laid for mosque project

First Salman City mosque to be established after lapse of three years

TDT | Manama

The foundation stone laying for the Imam Al-Rida Mosque project in Salman City, situated in Block 583, has been completed.

This marks a significant milestone as the first mosque to be established in the city after a lapse of three years.

This was confirmed by the Second District of the Northern Municipal Council representative, Basem Abu Idris.

Highlighting the significance of this development, Idris described the construction of the Imam Al-Rida Mosque as the initial "rain of rain" in Salman City. He revealed plans for the



Northern Municipal Council Second District officials at the ceremony

construction of three additional mosques in the city's first stage: Imam Al-Jawad Mosque, Al-Zahra Mosque, and Sayyida Zainab Mosque.

Idris extended his congratulations to the residents of the second district and the individuals responsible for overseeing the mosque projects. He expressed

gratitude for their dedication and tireless efforts in collaboration with the municipal council to serve the region and the nation.

# NBR holds interactive VAT implementation workshop

TDT | Manama

quiries by NBR representatives.

The NBR will continue organizing workshops in the upcoming phase. Those interested may pre-register by filling out the workshop registration form through the NBR's website at [www.nbr.gov.bh](http://www.nbr.gov.bh) to enable NBR representatives to communicate and share relevant details for upcoming workshops.

The workshop was attended by more than 80 representatives from VAT payers.

The workshop was dedicated to assisting businesses in achieving maximum effectiveness and awareness of all VAT procedures and related aspects. It concluded with a question-and-answer session to respond to all relevant in-

## Fourth National Sickle Cell Symposium inaugurated



His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH), inaugurated the Fourth National Sickle Cell Symposium, organised by Government Hospitals. The event was attended by Dr. Jaleela bint Al Sayyed Jawad Hasan, Minister of Health; Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulaziz Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Governmental Hospitals; and Dr. Maryam Athbi Al Jalhma, Chief Executive of the Government Hospitals. Lt. Gen. Dr. Shaikh Mohammed affirmed Bahrain's medical sector development in providing comprehensive care for all members of society.

## Inspection campaigns



The Coast Guard is still conducting inspection security campaigns through its maritime patrols to ensure the fishermen's compliance with the rules and regulations, ensure the validity of the fishing licenses for small vessels, in addition to the availability of the safety tools onboard, emphasising on using the licensed fishing tools. It called upon all seafarers to adhere to the laws and regulations in coordination with the competent authorities to preserve the environment and wildlife, in addition to the provision of practical experience for cybersecurity graduates within the partnership among academic organisations and public and private cybersecurity institutions.

# Three-year jail term upheld for doctors in fatal medical error case

TDT | Manama

The Grand Court of Appeal has upheld the sentence issued in the appeals of two doctors, identified as "Gulf and Arab," who were convicted by the court of first instance.

The doctors were sentenced to three years in prison for their involvement in a medical error that resulted in the death of a young man during a gastric sleeve operation.

In its ruling, the Court of Appeal affirmed the imprisonment of the Gulf doctor for a period of three years. The doctor was present during the appeal sessions but was absent during the ruling session. The court also stated that the appeal of the Arab doctor was dismissed because he failed to appear before the Court of Appeal.

The victim, a 29-year-old individual, died in June 2023.

# Bahrain Bourse joins hands with Saudi Tadawul Group

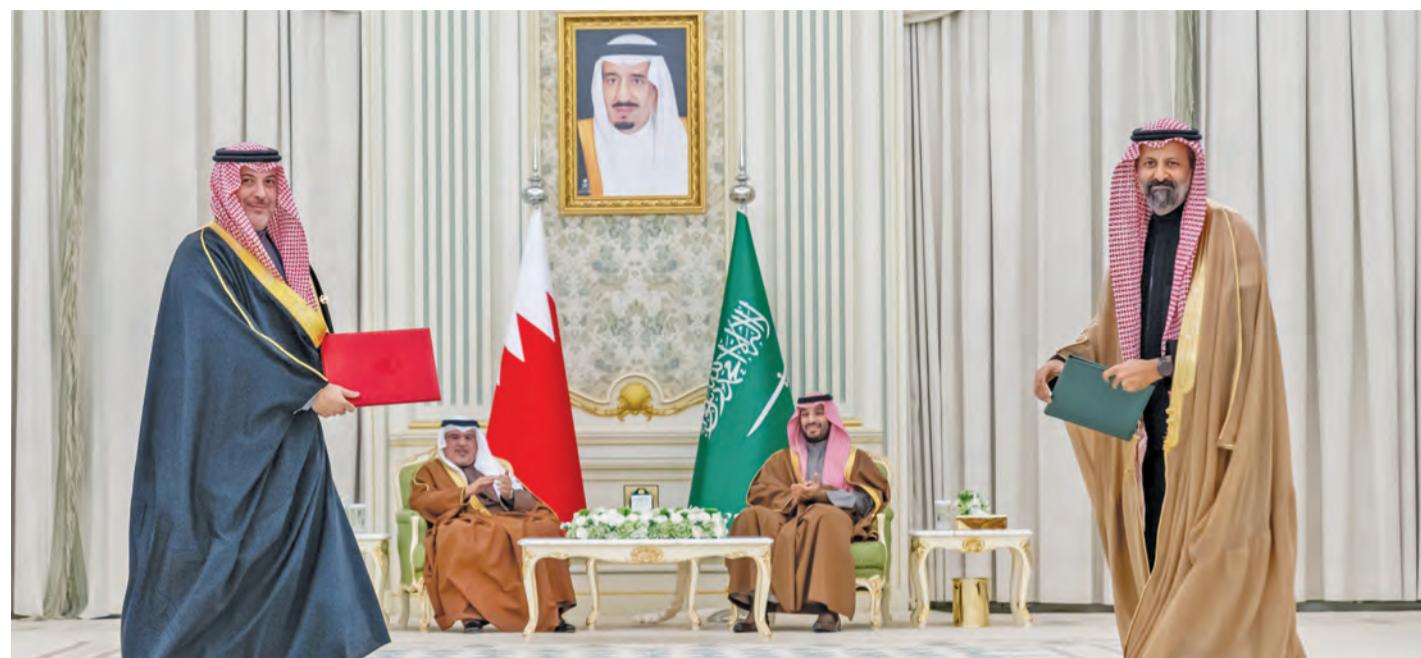
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Bourse and the Saudi Tadawul Group signed a cooperation agreement, on the sidelines of the third meeting of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council in Riyadh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Executive Officer of the Bahrain Bourse, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, affirmed the strong and longstanding fraternal relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which have been witnessing continuous growth in various fields.

The two parties will work on strengthening and developing an integrated structure to enhance investments in both markets, including the development of new products.

Shaikh Khalifa said: "This



The deal signing

agreement seeks to generate a multitude of investment opportunities for investors in both countries. This will be achieved through the development and introduction of various innovative products and the enhancement of trading mechanisms. This includes streamlining deposit and clearing processes in both markets, which is anticipated to considerably boost the linkage and collaboration between the two markets, and in turn, support the economic growth of both countries."

CEO of the Saudi Tadawul Group, Khalid bin Abdullah Al Hussan said: "The agreement with Bahrain Bourse, allows us to further drive regional integration amongst GCC exchanges, whilst unlocking exciting opportunities for investors regionally and internationally."

# Tamkeen service centres at Seef Mall and BCCI get Taqyeem Gold Classification once again

TDT | Manama

The Labour Fund Tamkeen was again awarded the Gold Classification by the Government Service Centre Evaluation Committee (Taqyeem 4) for its service centers at Seef Mall and Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

The Seef Mall service center welcomed a visit by the Taqyeem 4 committee, led by Information & eGovernment Authority (IGA) Chief Executive and Taqyeem Chairman, Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, who ceremonially displayed the Gold Shield at the facility. At Tamkeen's BCCI service center, the Gold Shield was showcased by Bahrain Institute of Public Administration (BIPA) Director General and Taqyeem Vice Chairman, Dr. Raed Mohammed Bin Shams.

Tamkeen Chief Executive, Maha Mofeez commented: "The Gold Classification awarded to



In pictures, the honouring ceremony



Tamkeen's service centers at Seef Mall and BCCI recognizes the highest levels of quality, reflecting our commitment to offering the best services and our efforts to encourage innovation, including virtual services."

"This is in addition to our achievement of the ISO 9001:2015 certification, which highlights Tamkeen's continuous mission

to enhance programs catering to both individuals and enterprises."

This is the fourth time that Tamkeen's service center in Seef Mall has received Taqyeem's Gold Shield. The center at BCCI was also previously awarded Gold twice and Silver once.

The award is a culmination of 17 years of hard work and

achievement by Tamkeen in support of national prosperity. These efforts have included upgrades to service offerings aimed at creating sustainable growth and a positive impact on the economy in line with national priorities.

Tamkeen's service centers provide an exceptional customer experience tailored to meet

the needs of the public at every step. Additionally, Tamkeen has launched a virtual branch service to ensure uninterrupted service delivery and to facilitate visual consultations with seasoned Customer Service Advisors. The introduction of an appointment booking feature streamlines the customer experience, ensuring efficiency and

speed. To enhance accessibility, Tamkeen has expanded its service channels, introducing an English and Arabic Chatbot feature which is available 24/7 on its official website. This feature offers comprehensive information on Tamkeen's full range of support programs and initiatives, further enriching the user experience.

# India's central bank holds rates, vows to cut inflation

New Delhi, India

India's central bank kept interest rates unchanged for a sixth time in a row yesterday, as both inflation and economic growth remain high in the world's fifth-largest economy.

The Reserve Bank of India said its benchmark "repo rate", the level at which the central bank lends to commercial banks, would stay unchanged at 6.50 percent.

Interest rates were hiked by 2.5 percentage points between May 2022 and February 2023, but have stayed constant since then.

India's economy -- which is projected to grow at a brisk 7.3% in the financial year ending March 31 -- has performed "remarkably well", central bank governor Shaktikanta Das said.



a smaller-than-expected fiscal deficit for this financial year, while shunning populist spending in the last budget before national elections expected to begin in April.

Retail inflation in India hit 5.69% in December 2023, higher than November's 5.55%, and well above the central bank's target of four percent.

India's "core" inflation, which

stood at 3.8% in December. Das, speaking in the financial capital Mumbai, said the central bank was "resolute" in its commitment to pursue an "actively disinflationary" monetary policy.

The RBI's monetary policy committee "will carefully monitor any signs of generalisation of food price pressures, which can fritter away the gains in easing core inflation", Das said.

## US regulator declares AI-voice robocalls illegal

San Francisco, United States

tion Act (TCPA).

US regulators yesterday declared scam "robocalls" made using voices created with artificial intelligence (AI) as illegal.

The phenomenon gained attention last month when a robocall impersonation of US President Joe Biden urged people to not cast ballots in the New Hampshire primary.

"Bad actors are using AI-generated voices in unsolicited robocalls to extort vulnerable family members, imitate celebrities, and misinform voters," Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel said in a release.

"State Attorneys General will now have new tools to crack down on these scams."

The FCC unanimously ruled that AI-generated voices are "artificial" and thus violate a Telephone Consumer Protec-

## Uber posts first annual net profit since IPO

San Francisco, United States

Ride-hailing giant Uber on Wednesday reported its first annual net profit since the company went public in 2019.

Uber booked a net profit of \$1.9 billion in 2023, compared with a loss of \$9.1 billion in 2022, according to a statement.

The earnings marked an important milestone for the company, after surviving its tumultuous early years of defying regulators and amassing losses under the stewardship of former CEO and cofounder Travis Kalanick.

"2023 was an inflection point for Uber, proving that we can continue to generate strong, profitable growth at scale," said current CEO Dara Khosrowshahi.



Previously, law enforcement agencies could prosecute people for the outcomes of scams such as fraud committed with the help of robocalls, but not the calls themselves



# AUTOBUZZ

## autobuzz

# Sorry! It's not zero emission

Electric cars can't advertise as 'zero emissions': UK body

London, United Kingdom



Pictures for representation only

**B**ritain's advertising regulator ruled Wednesday that BMW and MG Motors could not claim that their electric vehicles are "zero emissions" be-

cause of the environmental impact of their manufacturing and power generation.

"We understood that when electric vehicles were driven no emissions were produced," the Advertising Standards Authority wrote about a Google ad for BMW seen in August 2023.

"However, in other circumstances, such as the manufacture or charging of an electric vehicle using electricity from the national grid, emissions were generated," ASA said.

The German manu-

facturer said the "zero emission cars" label was inserted because of Google's automatic keyword feature.

"We welcomed BMW's assurance that the claim would not be repeated in the future," ASA said.

A second decision followed an advert for Chinese-owned British carmaker MG Motor, also seen on Google last August, that claimed its models were "zero emissions".

"The ad made the claim 'zero emissions' without material information that was required to allow consumers to understand on what it was based," ASA said. "The ad must not appear again in its current form."

Colin Walker, head of transport at the Energy and Climate Intelligence

Unit, called the decisions "very strange" given the government's efforts to promote electric cars.

"It is accepted practice that cars of all fuel types are assessed by the CO2 they emit from their exhaust pipes," he said.

"It seems perverse that car

manufacturers, in an effort to meet the targets they have been set under this mandate for the number of zero emission vehicles that they have to sell, are being told that they can't market those vehicles as zero emission," he said.



## Volkswagen unveils unique Virtus Cabrio Prototype in Brazil

TDT | agencies

**V**olkswagen has introduced the Virtus Cabrio convertible prototype in Brazil as part of its celebration of a new investment phase in the country, coinciding with President Lula's visit to the VW plant.

This unique open-top variant of the mid-size sedan blends elements from both the Highline and Exclusive trims. Noteworthy is the structural reinforcement necessary for the

chopped-off roof, alongside adjustments to suspension components and realignment of the doors, which are now pillarless.

Interior space has been optimised by extending the floor and modifying the rear seat with an exclusive design for

this special model. External components, such as closing parts for columns, doors, seats, and fuel tank, have been redesigned. Additionally, a cross-bar has been added for rear occupants' support and safety, with certain electronic vehicle management systems receiving modifications.

Sporting a Bis-

cay Blue exterior

and

18-inch alloy wheels with a darkened finish, the cabrio adopts an all-black theme for the seats, dashboard, and door inserts. Constructed in just six weeks by a team of 30 professionals, the Virtus Cabrio is powered by a 1.4-liter TSI turbocharged petrol engine coupled with a 6-speed manual gearbox—a configuration unique from the India-spec Virtus, which offers different engine and transmission options.

Volkswagen has a track record of crafting one-off convertible prototypes, including models like the Beetle, Polo Sedan, and Fox. The Virtus Cabrio will be a part of the VW Garage collection, showcasing special, sports, and prototype vehicles, but it will not be available for commercial purchase.



## Pete Buttigieg warns against driving with Apple's Vision Pro headset



TDT | agencies

Buttigieg took to the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to emphasize, "Reminder – ALL advanced driver assistance systems available today require the human driver to be in control and fully engaged in the driving task at all times."

While Apple mentions that the Vision Pro headset includes "built-in safety features to help prevent collisions and falls," these are primarily intended for preventing accidents involving walls, not car crashes.

## Kia Surpasses Hyundai in Market Value

One of the key drivers behind Kia's growth is attributed to its introduction of lower-cost EVs

TDT | agencies

**K**ia's market value has exceeded Hyundai's for the first time in over two decades, making it South Korea's fifth-most-valued stock at \$31 billion, as reported by media sources. This significant milestone comes amid Kia's stock surge, particu-

larly following its fourth-quarter earnings announcement and 2024 guidance last month. The company aims for a 3.4% operational profit growth and a profit ratio of 11.9% in 2024.

One of the key drivers behind Kia's growth is attributed to its introduction of lower-cost EVs in global markets. The carmaker has

a lineup of price-competitive EVs, including models like the EV3, EV4, and EV5. Analyst YongJun Jung from Shinhan Securities predicts a 50% increase in Kia's EV sales this year, reaching 270,000 units.

Despite anticipating a challenging business environment in 2024, Kia remains optimistic about sustaining momentum by launching affordable EVs. The company aims to achieve sustainable growth by strengthening its leadership in the eco-friendly car market.



Notably, Hyundai rescued Kia from bankruptcy in 1998 and subsequently formed the Hyundai Motor Group in 2000 after acquiring the brand. The Hyundai Motor Group also includes Genesis, which transitioned into a standalone luxury marque in 2015.

# Classifieds

## VACANCIES AVAILABLE

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# Exciting eight-race card today at REHC

The HH Shaikh Faisal bin Rashid bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup to headline day's events in season's 21st meeting

● The graded, class-one race, which will be the last of the day, is to be held over eight furlongs, with BD12,000 in total prize money up for grabs.

TDT | Manama

The HH Shaikh Faisal bin Rashid bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup headlines an eight-race card today in the 21st meeting of the 2023/2024 season at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Sakhir.

The graded, class-one race, which will be the last of the day,

Seven imported horses are in the fray, representing leading owners such as Al Mohamediya Racing, Al Adiyat Racing, Al Afoo Racing and Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim.

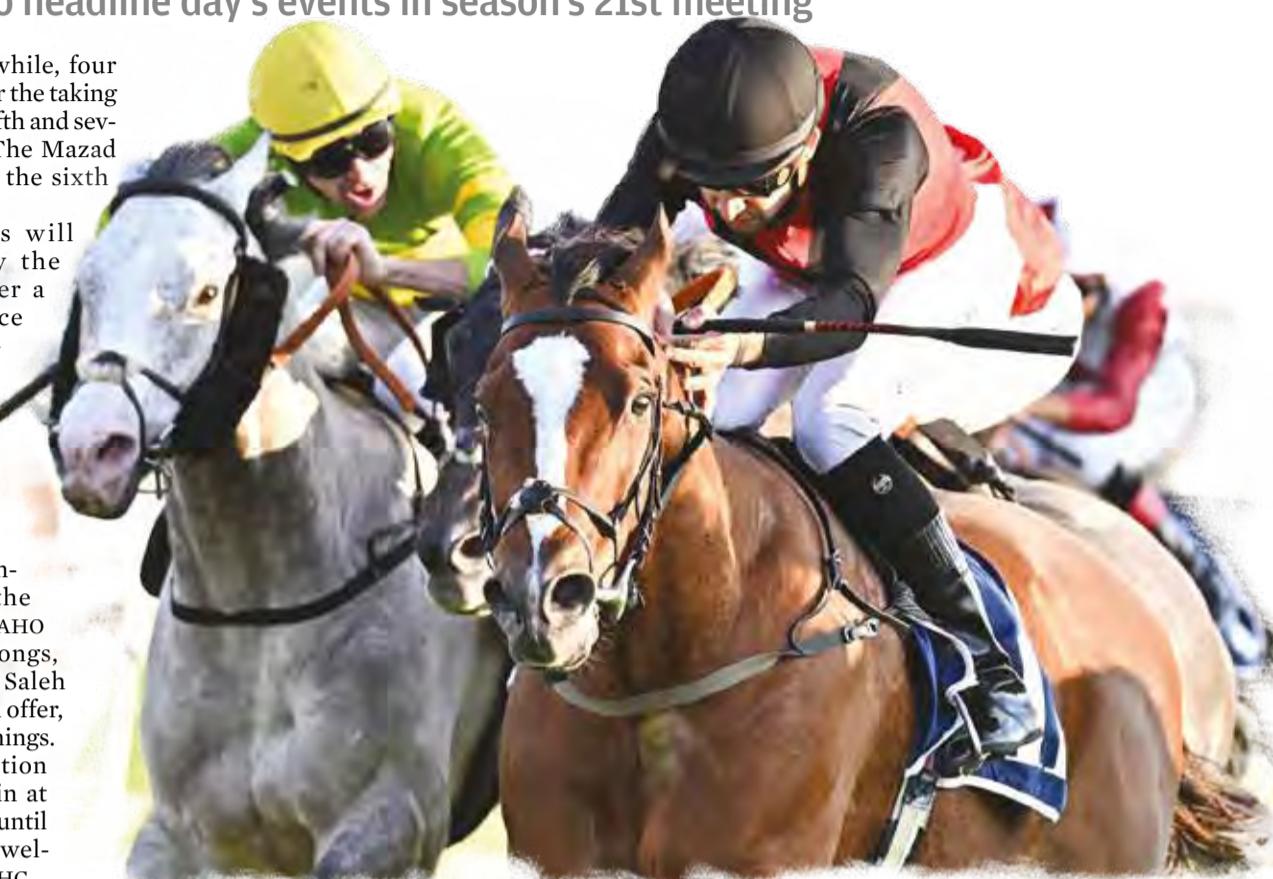
is to be held over eight furlongs, with BD12,000 in total prize money up for grabs.

Seven imported horses are in the fray, representing leading owners such as Al Mohamediya Racing, Al Adiyat Racing, Al Afoo Racing and Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim.

Top jockeys are also set to ride, including Jason Watson on Fawzi Nass-trained Bussint, Neil Callan on Royal Scimitar, also Nass trained, and Gerald Mosse on Time Step, trained by AM Smith, to name a few.

Also to be won today is the HH Shaikh Isa bin Faisal bin Rashid Al Khalifa Cup in race two. It will be held over seven furlongs and it is a graded, class-one event for local breeds.

Eight entrants are to battle it out for the lion's share of the BD3,000 prize, with top owners including Al Mohamediya, Al Afoo, M and E Racing, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa.



Jockeys battle it out in a previous meeting at REHC

# British Grand Prix to stay at Silverstone for next 10 years

London, United Kingdom

The British Grand Prix will be held at Silverstone for the next 10 years after the announcement of a new long-term deal with the venue on Thursday.

Silverstone's five-year contract with Formula One's American owners Liberty Media was up for renewal this year.

The Northamptonshire track, owned by the British Drivers' Racing Club, has

battled speculation that it could lose the prestigious Grand Prix in recent years.

But Thursday's fresh deal, worth a reported £30 million (\$37 million) per year, keeps the race at Silverstone until at least 2034.

"I am delighted to announce that the British Grand Prix will remain on the calendar for 10 more years with this agreement," F1 president Stefano Domenicali said.

"Silverstone is an iconic venue at

the heart of F1 history and as it approaches its ninth decade hosting Grands Prix, the event continues to attract fans from around the world for fantastic racing on track and the amazing fan experience off it."

The British Grand Prix has been an ever-present on the F1 calendar, dating back more than 70 years, with Silverstone staging the sport's first world championship race in 1950.

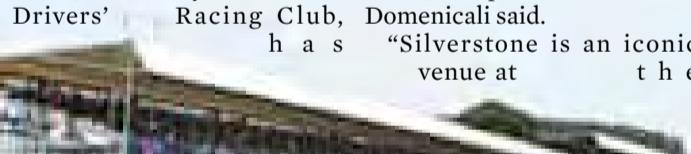
A record-breaking crowd in excess of 150,000 watched Max Verstappen win last year's British Grand

Prix, with nearly half a million spectators passing through the gates over the course of the weekend.

Silverstone chief executive Stuart Pringle added: "This long-term commitment reflects the importance of the British Grand Prix to Formula One and their acknowledgement of our ability to deliver a

world-class experience.

"The cheers of support for the home teams, and particularly for the British drivers on the grid, makes the Silverstone atmosphere unique."



**Bagnaia sets new lap record**  
Sepang, Malaysia

Reigning MotoGP world champion Francesco Bagnaia fired a clear warning as the man to beat for the 2024 season after the Italian ended the final day of pre-season test in Malaysia by setting the track's unofficial fastest lap record. The 27-year-old racer needed less than half an hour to achieve the feat as he zipped through the 5.543 kilometre tricky Sepang circuit in 1 min 56.682 sec on his eighth lap to become the day's pacesetter. The Ducati Lenovo star led a quarter of riders who ended the last testing day below the 1 min 57 mark, with Jorge Martin coming in second with 1 min 56.854 sec. Wednesday's timesheets leader Enea Bastianini came in third after clocking 1 min 56.915 sec, with Alex Marquez finishing fourth.

# BRAVE CF announces 2024 Europe Tour

Debuts in Netherlands and Croatia; shows in Germany and France

● The most global MMA organization in the world will increase its footprint in Europe by visiting two more countries for a total of 15 nations hosted

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation president Mohammed Shabid hinted recently at major plans for Europe and the most global organization in the world can now confirm at least six events taking place in the continent throughout this year. The BRAVE CF 2024 European Tour will feature shows in five dif-



ferent countries, from April 20, announced in November, when the organization returns to France.

BRAVE CF will be hosted for the first time in Croatia and in

the Netherlands, pushing its world record to 32 host countries, a feat no other promotion has been able to achieve. BRAVE CF Netherlands takes place on May 25, while Croatia welcomes the fastest-growing MMA organization on September 28.

The company will host two shows in Slovenia, in partnership with WFC: BRAVE CF 81 kicks off the calendar year on April 20, and BRAVE CF returns to the Hala Tivoli, in Ljubljana, on October 19.

Finally, BRAVE Combat Federation can confirm its return to two huge MMA markets in Europe. BRAVE CF will host its third show in Germany on October 12, while France will witness its second BRAVE CF event on a date still to be announced in

November.

The most global MMA organization in the world will look to increase its reach as the only promotion to have hosted events in 13 European countries in the last five years, with that number set to increase to 15 with the additions of Croatia and the Netherlands. Additionally, BRAVE CF has put on 22 shows on the continent thus far, with the number expected to increase to at least 28 by the end of the year.

In the coming days, BRAVE Combat Federation will announce more events in different (and new) locations, as the organization gears up for a history-making year in 2024, with a New Era of mixed martial arts on the horizon around the globe.

# replica cars showcase @ The Avenues



Bahrain International Circuit exhibits Formula 1 cars from 2004 and 2024 for fans to see them up close this weekend

TDT | Manama

**B**ahrain International Circuit (BIC), "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", is inviting race fans to see the evolution of a Formula 1 car in a special showcase at The Avenues Bahrain.

As part of BIC's 20th anniversary celebrations and the Kingdom of Bahrain's 20th year in

F1, and in the exciting lead-up to this year's F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024 taking place 29 February to 2 March, BIC has brought together F1 replica cars from 2004 and 2024, and fans will be able to see them up close at The Avenues Bahrain.

The 2004 car features its original Gulf Air livery from when the first-ever F1 race in the Middle East took place on 04/04/04

(April 4, 2004), while the current generation car boasts its 2024 BIC livery, mirroring the challengers that will be taking to the track in just over a couple of weeks' time in Sakhir.

The display can be enjoyed all throughout this weekend and fans will be able to take pictures with both replicas. They will also get to see first-hand the intricate chassis design of

an F1 contender, and how it has advanced over the past two decades.

This year's F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix will be the first of a record 24 rounds in the 2024 FIA F1 World Championship. It will be an extra-special occasion, celebrating "20 Years of a Modern Classic", and will also be Bahrain's first-ever Saturday night race.

Those who are eager to attend the F1 weekend and have yet to purchase their tickets or hospitality packages can do so online at [bahraingp.com](http://bahraingp.com), by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or at the BIC stand at City Centre Bahrain.

This year will mark the sixth time BIC is raising the curtain on the new F1 season, following previous editions in 2006, 2010,

2021, 2022 and 2023.

Prior to race week, BIC is also set to host three days of F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2024 from February 21 to 23.

For more information on F1 weekend or F1 pre-season testing, visit [bahraingp.com](http://bahraingp.com), call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or follow the circuit's official social media accounts.

# For one last surprise

Qatar face Jordan in Asian Cup final tomorrow

Qatar would be the fifth team to win back-to-back Asian Cups.

AFP | Doha, Qatar

**A**n Asian Cup full of late goals and surprises reaches a climax tomorrow when hosts and holders Qatar face a Jordan side looking to make yet more history.

The 88,000-capacity Lusail Stadium, where Lionel Messi's Argentina beat France in the World Cup final 14 months ago, will stage the final act of four weeks of Asian football.

Few would have predicted it would come down to a decider between a Qatar side who swapped coaches one month before the Asian Cup and a Jor-

dan team ranked 87 in the world. Pre-tournament favourites Japan were dumped out in the quarter-finals by Iran, who then went down in a 3-2 semi-final thriller to Qatar on Wednesday.

In a competition raining late goals, it should have been little surprise that Qatar's winner came eight minutes from time when Almoez Ali turned in to break Iranian hearts.

"I'm very happy for Qatar, the people of Qatar, the fans and the players," said coach Tintin Marquez, the Spaniard who was spirited in to replace Carlos Queiroz less than four weeks before the competition.

"The match was very complex but we played a big game, the players didn't spare any effort. Now we have one final step left to defend our title." They have been keen to avoid the topic, but winning the Asian Cup for a second time and retaining their crown will exorcise the demons of Qatar's World Cup flop. Their three defeats when they staged the World Cup in 2022 was the worst record of any host in the competition's history.

In 27-year-old striker Akram Afif, Qatar have one of the play-

ers of the tournament and he scored a glorious goal against Iran to take his tally to five in six games.

Qatar would be the fifth team to win back-to-back Asian Cups.

#### Mindset of champions'

With much of the crowd behind them and as reigning champions, Qatar will be expected to beat a Jordan side ranked 29 places below them by FIFA.

But under their widely admired Moroccan coach Hussein Ammoua, Jordan have repeatedly proved the doubters wrong.

They held South Korea 2-2 in the group phase, then scored twice in second-half injury time to storm back and dump Iraq out 3-2 in the last 16.

They ended the fairytale run of tournament debutants Tajikistan 1-0 in the quarter-finals, before handing out a lesson to South Korea in Jordan's first Asian Cup semi-final.

That deserved 2-0 win left Jürgen Klinsmann hanging onto his job as South Korea coach and skipper Son Heung-min wondering if he will ever reign over Asia.

South Korea had roared back

late in matches on four occasions until then -- Korean media dubbed it "zombie football" -- but there was no way back from the dead this time.

"We displayed the mindset of champions, showing resilience and determination in every aspect of the game," said Ammoua, having taken Jordan into their first Asian Cup semi-final and now their first final. He added: "We must defend this shirt with everything we've got."

"We are growing more ambitious by the hour."

Qatar's danger men in attack will be Afif and Ali, who have seven goals between them so far, but Jordan are equally potent with the pace and power of Yanz Al-Naimat and Mousa Al-Tamari. They have scored six times at the tournament together and Tottenham's Son could only stand back and admire in the semi-final as the 26-year-old Tamari scored one of the goals of the tournament.

The Montpellier man picked the ball up deep in his own half, sliced through the hesitant Korean rearguard, left a defender on his backside and swept the ball into the bottom corner.

**YOU KNOW WHAT**  
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#### JORDAN

v Malaysia 4-0 - group phase  
v South Korea 2-2 - group phase  
v Bahrain 0-1 - group phase  
v Iraq 3-2 - last 16  
v Tajikistan 1-0 - quarter-finals  
v South Korea 2-0 - semi-finals

#### QATAR

v Lebanon 3-0 - group phase  
v Tajikistan 1-0 - group phase  
v China 1-0 - group phase  
v Palestine 2-1 - last 16  
v Uzbekistan 1-1 (3-2 on penalties) - quarter-finals  
v Iran 3-2 - semi-finals



Qatar's midfielder #12 Lucas Mendes heads the ball past Iran's defender #04 Shojae Khalilzadeh during the Qatar 2023 AFC Asian Cup semi-final football match between Iran and Qatar at al-Thumama Stadium in Doha