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St. Paul is thought to have been shipwrecked at Malta

1720

Edmond Halley is appointed as the second Astronomer Royal at the Greenwich Observatory



1763 1824

Treaty of Paris ends the French-Indian War; France agrees to surrender Canada to Great Britain

Simón Bolívar is named dictator by the Congress of Peru

BY INVITATION

## Bahrain Brings Alternative Healthcare into the Mainstream



HIMA BINDU KOTA

**Alternative healthcare is not new to Bahraini society. Traditional practices such as hijama (cupping) and herbal remedies have long been part of community health traditions.**

Interest in alternative and complementary healthcare has grown worldwide, driven by a shift towards preventive, lifestyle-based and holistic approaches to well-being. Practices such as acupuncture, herbal medicine, yoga and mindfulness are now widely used across the United States, Europe and Asia. Global health bodies, including the World Health Organization, have encouraged governments to regulate and integrate these practices into national health systems to improve safety, quality and patient care.

This global trend is increasingly visible in Bahrain. As life-style-related conditions such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease become more prevalent, more residents are exploring alternative therapies alongside conventional medical care. Recognising this shift early, the Government of Bahrain has adopted a structured and forward-looking approach, bringing alternative healthcare into the national health framework through regulation, licensing and policy oversight.

Alternative healthcare is not new to Bahraini society. Traditional practices such as hijama (cupping) and herbal remedies have long been part of community health traditions. What has changed in recent years is the way these practices are governed and professionalised. In 2016, the government established a legal foundation for regulating alternative and complementary medicine, signalling a clear policy choice to move the sector out of informality and into a supervised healthcare environment.

The National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) has since played a central role in implementing this vision. Through licensing requirements, verification of professional qualifications and regular facility inspections, the authority ensures that alternative healthcare services meet acceptable safety and quality standards. Practices such as hijama, acupuncture, Ayurveda, traditional Chinese medicine, chiropractic care, homeopathy and therapeutic massage are now subject to the same regulatory discipline expected of other health services. This framework protects patients while allowing credible practitioners to operate transparently.

Crucially, government policy positions alternative healthcare as complementary to modern medicine, not a replacement for it. Conventional medical treatment remains central to Bahrain's healthcare system, with alternative therapies encouraged as supportive options where appropriate. This distinction has helped prevent unrealistic claims while encouraging coordination between patients, physicians and licensed alternative practitioners. The emphasis remains firmly on evidence, transparency and informed choice – principles that protect patients while respecting cultural and personal preferences.

Bahrain has also invested in capacity building and international cooperation. Health authorities have engaged with countries that have long-standing traditional medicine systems, particularly India and China, to study best practices in training, certification and clinical governance. These exchanges have helped shape licensing standards suited to Bahrain's healthcare environment while maintaining international credibility.

Beyond health outcomes, the regulated integration of alternative healthcare supports wider national goals. It contributes to Bahrain's Vision 2030 focus on quality of life, preventive care and service-sector diversification. Properly regulated wellness services also enhance the Kingdom's appeal as a destination for medical and wellness tourism, while creating professional opportunities within the health sector.

Challenges remain, particularly in addressing misinformation and discouraging unlicensed practice. However, Bahrain's regulatory framework provides a strong foundation to address these concerns over time.

By choosing regulation over restriction and integration over neglect, Bahrain has demonstrated a balanced and forward-looking approach. As global interest in holistic health continues to rise, the Kingdom's policies ensure that alternative healthcare evolves as a credible, well-governed component of its modern healthcare system.

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TOP  
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TWEETS

01



The founders of the @UN understood that global problems can only be solved by the tools of diplomacy, supported by a system based on international law. By dialogue, not the zero-sum rhetoric of division. And by collaboration, not geopolitical competition

@antoniofoterres

02



Happy to receive a phone call from my friend, Prime Minister Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. We reviewed progress in the wide-ranging cooperation between India and Mauritius since our memorable meeting in Varanasi last year. Reaffirmed our commitment to further strengthen the special, historic and people-centric ties that unite our two nations.

India and Mauritius will continue to work together to achieve shared objectives of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean Region.

I look forward to welcoming him to India for the AI Impact Summit next week.

@narendramodi

03



Congratulations, António José Seguro, on your election as President of Portugal. The Portuguese citizens have spoken and, in the face of devastation caused by the storms, demonstrated remarkable democratic resilience. Portugal's voice for our shared European values remains strong.

@vonderleyen

# Japan PM Takaichi basks in historic election triumph

Takaichi's LDP won a two-thirds majority

● Japan's first woman prime minister

● She had said Japan could intervene militarily if Beijing sought to take Taiwan by force

AFP | Tokyo, Japan



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi enters the Prime Minister's Office in Tokyo

Japanese premier Sanae Takaichi said yesterday that the public saw an "urgent need" for major reform after a historic election landslide, pledging to boost the country's defences in order to protect its territory.

Sunday's snap vote saw Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) win a two-thirds majority in the lower house for the first time in its history, capitalising on her strong popularity since taking office in October.

The outcome allows Japan's first woman prime minister to stamp her mark on the country of 123 million people over the next four years, having pledged to boost the economy and get tough on immigration.

"This is the start of a heavy, heavy responsibility to make Japan stronger, more prosperous," Takaichi, 64, told a news conference on Monday.

### Honeymoon

Capitalising on her honeymoon start after becoming Japan's fifth premier in as many years in October, Takaichi called the snap election last month.

The gamble paid off, with the LDP winning around 316 of the 465 seats contested, according to Japanese media.

That takes the party past the 310-seat threshold needed for a two-thirds majority for the first time in its history and may prompt the government to try and make changes to the country's constitution. US President Donald Trump -- who is due to host Takaichi in Washington next month -- congratulated her after an earlier endorsement.

"I wish you Great Success in passing your Conservative, Peace Through Strength Agenda," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

## US vice president visits Armenia, Azerbaijan to 'advance' peace

AFP | Yerevan, Armenia



recently a close Russia ally -- comes as Moscow's influence has dwindled in the region since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

At a White House summit in August 2025, US President Donald Trump brokered an agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan that saw the two countries commit to renouncing claims on each other's territory and refrain from using force.

US Vice President JD Vance arrived in Armenia yesterday, before a scheduled trip to Azerbaijan, as Washington seeks to consolidate a peace process between the neighbours.

Vance is the most senior US official to visit Armenia, where he is also expected to advance a flagship project to improve road and rail infra-

structure in the region.

His visit to Armenia -- until

## UN deplores Hong Kong mogul Jimmy Lai's jailing

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland



ditious" articles in his paper.

On Monday, a Hong Kong court handed down the harshest penalty yet under a Beijing-imposed national security law.

"Jimmy Lai is a publisher sentenced to 20 years in prison for exercising rights protected under international law," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement.

urging foreign countries to impose sanctions on Hong Kong and for publishing "se-

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