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**Nasser bin Hamad Premier League resumes tonight**

The Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier League returns tonight after a two-week break due to disruptions and the King's Cup quarter-finals. | P16

WORLD 8 War enters 13th day, All eyes on Hormuz

# THE DAILY tribune

Ruthless Sinner subdues Fonseca to reach Indian Wells quarter-finals

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BUSINESS

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IEA says members to release 400 mn barrels from oil reserves

**Solidarity for Kingdom amid Iranian attacks**

TDT | Manama

More than 1,000 Bahraini families, community leaders, business figures, sports and cultural clubs, and civil society organisations have issued statements reaffirming their solidarity with the royal leadership amid the Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain and other Gulf countries.

They emphasised their support for the Kingdom, national unity, and loyalty under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

This brings the total number of statements issued to 13,500.

They also expressed confidence in the measures taken by the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to confront the Iranian attacks.

**BDF intercepts 108 missiles and 177 drones**

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) General Command announced that its air defence systems have continued to successfully intercept successive waves of the Iranian terrorist aggression.

Since the onset of hostilities, BDF forces have intercepted and destroyed 108 ballistic missiles and 177 unmanned aerial vehicles directed at the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The BDF General Command commended the exceptional combat readiness and operational excellence demonstrated by its personnel throughout this period, and affirmed that Bahrain's airspace remains protected.

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## Germany supports Bahrain sovereignty and security

TDT | Manama

Germany reaffirmed its support for Bahrain in the measures it takes to safeguard its sovereignty, ensure its security, and protect its national achievements.

This came as His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received a telephone call from German President Frank-Walter



HM the King



President Steinmeier

Steinmeier yesterday.

During the call, President Steinmeier affirmed Germany's solidarity with the Kingdom and condemned the Iranian attacks on its territory.

HM the King affirmed that the Kingdom will remain steadfast in its firm approach based on wisdom and moderation, and in promoting peace and coop-

eration with its Arab, regional, and international partners, in a manner that contributes to the region's security and stability.

His Majesty also expressed his deep appreciation for Germany's supportive stance, as well as his gratitude for the sincere feelings of solidarity expressed by President Steinmeier and the support he conveyed to the Kingdom.

# Blatant assaults

Iranian attacks on civilian sites violate Bahrain's sovereignty and international law

**Committee renews condemnation of ongoing strikes**

TDT | Manama

The continued Iranian assaults targeting civilian sites across the Kingdom constitute a flagrant violation of Bahrain's sovereignty, as well as international law and international humanitarian law.

The Ministerial Committee for Development and Infrastructure Projects emphasised this while renewing its condemnation of the strikes on residential neighbourhoods, vital economic, oil and educational facilities, desalination plants, and other infrastructure.

The committee warned that these attacks pose a direct threat to



the lives of citizens and residents and represent a dangerous escalation that undermines regional and international security and stability.

**Directive**

During its meeting, the committee also thanked His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces,



and Prime Minister, for ordering authorities to address damage to citizens' homes following what it described as hostile Iranian attacks and to ensure the best possible medical services are provided to those injured.

Officials reviewed measures taken by relevant authorities to assess the extent of damage and begin implementation of repair efforts aimed at restoring stabil-



H.E. the Deputy Prime Minister chairs the 295th Ministerial Committee meeting

**“These attacks pose a direct threat to the lives of citizens and residents and represent a dangerous escalation that undermines regional and international security and stability.”**

- MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS STATEMENT

ity for affected Bahraini families. The committee meeting, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, also

commended the efforts of military, security and civilian personnel for their professional response to the recent developments.

Peace and security threat

## Iran must halt attacks on Gulf states: UN

AFP | United Nations

The UN Security Council yesterday passed a resolution calling for Iran to immediately halt its attacks on Gulf states, saying they breach international law and pose a “serious threat to international peace and security.”

The resolution, passed by 13

votes with two abstentions, “demands the immediate cessation of all attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran against Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan.”

It also “condemns any actions or threats by the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at closing, obstructing, or otherwise

interfering with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.”

Iran has struck Gulf states in retaliation to US-Israeli attacks

that killed Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The Islamic republic has also fired on commercial ships passing through the Strait of

Hormuz, a crucial sea passage for the global fuel trade, in a bid to inflict pain on the global economy.

Yesterday, Iran's military vowed to launch more strikes against US and Israeli economic targets in the region, including banks, after overnight attacks hit an Iranian bank.

Since the start of the war, at

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## Driver stabbed, car stolen in alleged knife attack

Rehab Mohammad  
TDT | Manama

A routine evening for a private driver waiting inside his parked vehicle turned violent last October when a man allegedly threatened him with a knife, stabbed him in the shoulder and drove away with his car, according to prosecutors.

The case is now before Bahrain's High Criminal Court, where a 26-year-old defendant appeared this week and denied charges of robbery by coercion.

During the hearing, the defendant told the court that he had gone out earlier with others and later fell asleep in the back seat of the vehicle, claiming he was heavily intoxicated at the time of his arrest and had no recollection of the alleged attack.

The First High Criminal Court adjourned the case until March 17 to appoint a defence

lawyer for the defendant.

Judges ordered that he remain in custody until the next hearing.

According to the Public Prosecution, the incident occurred in October 2025, when the defendant allegedly approached a private driver waiting inside a car parked near an exchange company.

Prosecutors say the suspect threatened the driver with a knife before stabbing him in the shoulder, forcing the victim to abandon the vehicle.

The attacker then allegedly drove away with the car.

The injured driver later reported the incident to authorities and identified the defendant as the person who carried out the assault.

Investigators said the knife recovered from the suspect matched the weapon used in the attack.

Police later located the stolen vehicle in the defendant's possession.

## Fight ends with three-year jail term over nose bite

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

A fight at a stable that left one man with part of his nose gone has ended with Bahrain's top court upholding a three-year prison term for the other man.

The Court of Cassation backed the sentence after a clash between a 42-year-old and a 30-year-old turned into a brawl on the ground. The younger man was left with a lasting injury put at 10 per cent.

An earlier ruling by the High Criminal Court of Appeal had also upheld a BD50 fine for one man and a three-year jail term for the other.

The older defendant said the other man had gone for him more than once and had started the fight.

He told the court he did not mean to bite him, saying he was pinned down and only trying to break free.

The case began when an Asian worker heard shouting and rushed over. He found the two men wrestling on the ground and tried to pull them apart.

By the end of it, the younger man was bleeding from the face. The older man then drove away from the stable, while the witness stayed behind to help stem the bleeding from the man's nose.

# Infant tragedy

Parents face trial over death of premature baby buried near workplace

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

A premature baby who prosecutors say was denied medical care and later buried in a patch of ground near his parents' workplace has become the centre of a criminal case now before Bahrain's High Criminal Court.

Judges are expected to deliver a verdict on April 14 in the case involving an Asian couple accused of failing to protect their newborn child and concealing the infant's death.

Prosecutors allege that the 35-year-old mother and 26-year-old father did not seek medical help when the baby was born prematurely at roughly six to seven months of pregnancy — a stage at which specialists say survival would normally require intensive medical care.

### Neglect

Authorities say that neglect ultimately led to the child's death, though not intentionally.

Also charged is a 39-year-old co-worker of the mother, accused of helping the parents bury the baby without notifying authorities before any official investigation could take place.

The woman and the mother also face separate charges of remaining in Bahrain illegally after failing to renew their residence permits.

Defence lawyers asked the court to acquit all three defendants. The mother did not attend the most recent hearing.

The case first came to light when a colleague who worked with the mother approached investigators.



Image used for illustrative purposes only

### Pregnant

The woman told police she had realised in mid-2025 that the mother was pregnant and later asked about the child.

In August, the mother reportedly told the colleague she had delivered a healthy baby.

But when the colleague returned in December carrying gifts for the child, she instead encountered the third defendant, who informed her that the baby had died.

According to the witness's account, the infant died two days after birth and had been buried in an open area near the workplace.

### Witness

The witness also told investigators that the mother had previously claimed the baby had been sent to her husband's home country.

A police captain from the Capital Governorate Police Directorate testified that authorities received information indi-

cating a baby had been buried in the Adhari area.

Investigators later questioned the couple and several co-workers, eventually locating the burial site and exhuming the remains.

### Body

A forensic doctor who examined the body told the court the remains measured roughly 40 centimetres and showed signs consistent with a foetus of six to seven months' gestation.

The body had decomposed significantly, making it impossible to determine the precise cause of death.

However, the umbilical cord had been cut and tied using non-medical thread, indicating that the birth likely occurred without medical supervision.

At that stage of development, the doctor said, a premature infant would normally require specialised treatment to survive.

The forensic doctor also said that, when the mother was examined by a specialist, it was



The couple did not seek medical help when the baby was born prematurely at roughly six to seven months of pregnancy. That neglect ultimately led to the child's death.

found that her hymen was still intact and had been so for a long time, while there were also signs consistent with previous vaginal births, though their timing could not be fixed with certainty.

He added that there was nothing medically to rule out her having been pregnant at the time in question, and a separate forensic assessment placed the pregnancy at about six months to the start of the seventh month.

### Role

During questioning by prosecutors, the mother admitted her role and said the third defendant assisted with the burial while the father searched for a suitable place.

The father acknowledged involvement but claimed the two women carried out the burial themselves.

DNA testing later confirmed that the couple were the biological parents of the foetus.

The court is scheduled to deliver its ruling on April 14.

## War and disaster losses 'excluded' from Bahrain insurance cover: Lawyer

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

War damage and other large-scale losses are usually left outside standard insurance cover in Bahrain unless the policy says otherwise in plain terms, lawyer Siddiqa Al Mawali said, urging people and firms to check the small print before relying on a claim.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, she said the starting point in Bahrain, as in much of the world, is simple: losses caused by war, political unrest and military action are often excluded from cover.

"The general rule in the insurance sector, in Bahrain and in most countries, is that the risks of war, political unrest and military operations are treated as basic exclusions in insurance policies," she said.

"This means insurance companies are not bound to pay for



“Careful reading of insurance documents is important for both individuals and firms, above all when war or other major disasters are in view.”

— SIDIQA AL MAWALI, LAWYER

damage caused by such events unless the policy states in clear terms that they are covered." She said many policyholders

assume market oversight means insurers must meet every kind of claim. That is not how it works.

In her account, the first and last guide remains the contract itself.

"The insurance policy remains the main reference in deciding the scope of cover and the duties shared between the insurer and the insured," she said. "Regulatory oversight does not in itself mean that insurance companies must cover every kind of risk."

### Rules

In Bahrain, the sector falls under the Central Bank of Bahrain, which lays down rules meant to keep the market sound and to protect policyholders.

Those rules cover risk management and financial solvency, with the aim of making sure insurers can meet claims that fall within the agreed cover.

غرفة البحرين  
BAHRAIN CHAMBER

انتخابات  
غرفة البحرين  
BAHRAIN CHAMBER  
ELECTIONS  
2026

### Invitation to the members of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry to elect the Board for the 31<sup>st</sup> Session

The Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Bahrain Chamber) is pleased to invite its registered members to elect the members of the Board of Directors for the 31<sup>st</sup> session in accordance with Article (53) of the bylaw of the Law of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry issued by Resolution No. (156) for the year 2013.

The election of the BCCI members of the Board of Directors for the 31<sup>st</sup> session will be by direct secret ballot undertaken under the supervision of the Election Commission and attended by representatives of official bodies and civil society institutions, on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026 from 8:00 in the morning until 22:00 in the evening at Exhibition World Bahrain in Sakhir. The Election Committee will declare the election result immediately after the completion of the counting process. To exercise the voting right, the Chamber member must pay all their Chamber's dues within a period not less than seven days prior to the date of election, in accordance with Article (14) of the Chamber's Bylaw, taking into account the following:

- 1- The member in the election process is represented by the owner of the establishment or the legal representative for the chamber member company, and if they multiply, they shall delegate one of them to elect.
- 2- The member exercises the right to vote by himself, and the member may not delegate or authorize others.
- 3- Each member shall have a number of votes restricted by his capital in accordance with the Commercial Registration at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and according to the voters' list.
- 4- Each member has the right to elect any number of candidates for the membership of the Board of Directors, but not exceeding eighteen candidates, otherwise, his vote will be null and void.
- 5- Non-Voters and non-organizers shall not attend the Election Hall.
- 6- The member must present an identity document (Identity Card or Passport) of the individual establishment and the legal representative of the member companies when attending the election.
- 7- The ballot paper that a member signs or mark will not be considered.

For more information, or to see Decree law No. (48) for the year 2012 concerning the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and industry and its implementing Bylaws, and the Voters' List, please visit the Chamber's website: [www.bahrainchamber.bh](http://www.bahrainchamber.bh).

Sameer Abdulla Nass  
Chairman of Bahrain Chamber



# Rescue obstruction

**Verdict set in driver crash case**

● **Appeal court to rule on 27 April**

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Curious crowds making emergency operations more difficult for first responders

**Hassan Barakat**  
TDT | Manama

When an emergency unfolds, flashing lights and sirens often draw crowds. But what begins as curiosity can quickly become an obstacle for rescue teams working against the clock.

According to Col. Dr Osama Bahar of Bahrain's Ministry of Interior, managing onlookers during emergencies has become one of the most difficult challenges for security personnel.

Unlike organised gatherings, curious crowds form quickly and without coordination.

## Presence

People gather simply to see what has happened, yet their presence can unintentionally disrupt rescue operations.

Standing too close to the scene, slowing traffic, or parking vehicles in the wrong places can block access routes needed by ambulances, Civil Defence units, and other emergency responders rushing to save lives.

"In rescue operations, seconds matter," Bahar said, noting that even noise from bystanders can



**"Stay away from rescue areas, avoid stopping near incident sites and keep roads clear for emergency vehicles."**

— COL. DR OSAMA BAHAR



Aftermath of a recent Iranian drone attack in the Kingdom

ing a recent incident in which one of the hostile Iranian drones fell in Bahrain.

A witness at the scene told The Daily Tribune that many people gathered near the site shortly after the incident.

According to the witness,

say the issue extends beyond immediate safety concerns.

The Daily Tribune has received complaints from residents who reported suspected phone hacking after filming or storing footage related to such incidents.

According to these complaints, some individuals received suspicious links that later compromised their phones, allowing photos and videos to be extracted from their devices.

So far, the identity of the parties responsible for these alleged phone breaches remains unclear.

## Way

Colonel Bahar said the most effective way for citizens and residents to assist during emergencies is simple: stay away from rescue areas, avoid stopping near incident sites and keep roads clear for emergency vehicles.

Helping, he added, does not always mean moving closer.

Sometimes the most responsible action a person can take is to step back and allow rescue teams the space they need to save lives.

interfere with the work of rescue teams.

## Sound

Emergency personnel often rely on sound to detect victims trapped under rubble or behind collapsed structures, he explained.

The issue became visible dur-

some individuals even drove into the area to get a closer look, while others stood nearby filming or taking photographs.

Authorities have repeatedly warned about the dangers of filming and sharing videos during security incidents. Officials

# 'Digital reach is better', says Council for Environment

Supreme Council for Environment backs litter boards

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Boards saying glass can sit in the wild for 4,000 years have won backing from the environment council, but it says people are more likely to take note through their phones than from signs on a wall.

The Supreme Council for Environment said it had no objection to a plan for awareness boards showing how long common rubbish takes to break down, though it added that newer media would reach a far bigger share of the public.

In a written reply, Amna Hamad Al Rumaihi, chief executive of the council, said teaching people about the harm caused by every-



**"Teaching people about the harm caused by everyday waste is part of pushing for more careful spending and less rubbish."**

— AMNA HAMAD AL RUMAIHI, COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE

day waste was part of pushing for more careful spending and less rubbish.

## Harm

She said the council saw value in making people aware of

"the impact of waste resulting from consumption, whether organic, plastic or otherwise", with the aim of cutting the amount thrown away and easing the harm done to the environment.



**"The aim is to keep public spaces free of rubbish, keep clean areas looking as they should, and draw people to the coast for leisure."**

— MOHAMMED AL ABBAS, COUNCIL BOARD MEMBER

But while she backed the idea in principle, she made clear that screens would beat signboards for reach.

The council, she said, "has no objection" to placing awareness boards at waste collection and

sorting sites, yet believes "the use of modern media would be more effective, as it would reach larger sections and groups within society".

Her reply followed talks at the Capital Trustees Board, which

had looked at a recommendation from its Services and Public Utilities Committee on putting up signs to show how long litter stays in nature.

The plan was pitched as part of a drive to strengthen care for the environment and the look of the capital.

Mohammed Al Abbas, the board member behind the idea, said the aim was to keep public spaces free of rubbish, keep clean areas looking as they should, draw people to the coast for leisure, and shield wildlife from waste that animals can swallow or get trapped in.

He also said it would help cut pollution caused by rubbish being thrown carelessly into public places and the sea.

## Threat to property and civilian safety

● **Capital Municipal Council condemns Iranian attacks**

**Hasan Barakat**  
TDT | Manama

The Capital Municipal Council strongly condemned the recent Iranian attacks targeting the Kingdom of Bahrain, describing them as acts that threatened residential areas and endangered the safety of citizens and residents during the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement issued by the council, members expressed their firm support for the lead-

ership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and affirmed their confidence in the measures taken by the government under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to confront the aggression and protect the Kingdom.

The council said the attacks extended into residential areas within the Capital Governorate, affecting communities in Juffair, Manama, Sitra and Seef, where the incidents resulted in fatalities, injuries and damage to private properties.

## Solidarity

Members of the council also praised the field visits carried

out by HRH Prince Salman, alongside ministers and the Governor of the Capital Governorate, highlighting their directives to strengthen the readiness of state institutions, ensure the continuity of essential services and safeguard stability across the Kingdom.

The council further welcomed the directive issued by His Royal Highness that the government will cover the costs of repairing homes damaged by the attacks, describing the decision as an important step to support affected families and restore normal life.

The statement hailed the Bahrain Defence Force for its readiness and efficiency in confronting the attacks.

## Works complaints make up most Isa Town and Tubli cases

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Road works made up most of the 295 requests, complaints and proposals logged for Isa Town, Tubli and Jurdab between January 2024 and December 2025, figures reviewed by the Capital Trustees Board yesterday show.

Of the cases sent to the Ministry of Works, 67 were for pavements and road maintenance, 10 dealt with water pooling and nine concerned the building or upkeep of speed humps.

Other requests covered sewerage, barriers, traffic and di-



Capital Trustees Board meeting in progress

rection signs, reflective mirrors, red paving bricks, parking spaces, iron fencing and access openings. Residents and citizens accounted for the biggest share of cases, submitting 170.

The national suggestions and

complaints system, Tawasul, accounted for 63, while MPs for the Capital Governorate sent 43.

A further 12 came from field visits, four from board members and three from a civil society body.

# MPs approve higher unsafe homes grant

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

A call to raise support for repairing unsafe homes to BD20,000 was approved by Parliament after MPs heard that the current grant no longer covers repair costs for many low-income families.

The proposal, put forward by MP Mohammed Mousa, concerns the home restoration scheme run by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture.

It calls for the private sector to help fund the increase, lifting the grant from BD10,000 to BD20,000 for those who qualify.

Mousa told the chamber the scheme had been running for more than 15 years, but rising building material prices and higher contractor charges had left the current amount too low to cover the repair of damaged homes.

He said the aim was to bring in private-sector funding so the grant could be doubled and families could better meet the real cost of repairs.

## Scheme

The scheme is for citizens earning less than BD600 a month and is meant to improve living conditions in older homes that



Image used for illustrative purposes only

pose health and structural risks.

MPs heard that many families now struggle to carry out repairs properly because the grant falls short of the real cost.

In its reply, the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture said it had no objection to moving ahead, so long as there

was community backing and private-sector support through coordination with the Capital Trustees Board and municipal councils.

## Support

The ministry said it continues to support the Cities and Villag-

es Development Project as one of the schemes aimed at meeting the needs of Bahraini families.

It said the project, running since 2006, had helped repair more than 3,000 homes and provided rain insulation for more than 8,000 homes across the kingdom in cooperation with



“The aim is to bring in private-sector funding so the grant could be doubled and families could better meet the real cost of repairs.”

— MP MOHAMMED MOUSA

Commerce and Industry said it had earlier received a proposal on private-sector support for work linked to traditional markets and Manama Souq, and had written to the Bahrain Association of Banks, which responded positively.

Chamber representatives suggested linking the two proposals to draw on that experience, and called for a specialist body to be formed to shape the plan, follow it up, oversee it and assess its performance.

According to the explanatory memorandum, the unsafe homes restoration scheme is one of the government's main housing support programmes for families on limited incomes.

## Inflation

But higher inflation and a sharp rise in building costs have left the current grant short of the amount now needed for proper repairs.

The proposed increase is meant to help families carry out restoration works properly, improve the state of ageing houses, strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors in social development projects, and cut the health and structural risks faced by those living in such homes.

## Majalis Al-Noor: A village united by Holy Quran



Majalis Al-Noor in full spirit

**Ghadeer Alkumaish**  
TDT | Manama

In the heart of Nabih Saleh, Ramadan isn't just about fasting; it's about a special tradition that has lit up the village for the past 15 years.

Known as “Majalis Al-Noor” (The Councils of Light), this gathering has grown from a small local dream into a beloved landmark that everyone looks forward to as soon as the crescent moon appears.

It all started back in 2011. One of village residents had a simple but beautiful idea: why not bring the whole island together for a collective Quranic recitation during the holy month?

He took his vision to the

Imam Ali (as) Center for Islamic Education and Culture, and they didn't hesitate for a second. By 2012, the dream became a reality at Al-Hirz Ma'atam.

The beginning wasn't easy. The first year was quiet, and the turnout wasn't exactly what the organizers had hoped for. But instead of giving up, the team at the Center decided to aim higher.

They believed that the people of Nabih Saleh deserved something truly special.

Partnering with the “Iqra” Association for Quranic Sciences, they completely transformed the program.

They brought in some of the finest reciters from across Bahrain.

## 295 requests highlight residents' daily concerns

### Seventh District

**Hasan Barakat**  
TDT | Manama

A total of 295 requests, complaints and proposals reflecting residents' everyday concerns in the Seventh District were reviewed during the Capital Municipal session, with community voices forming the largest share of cases presented to the council.

According to the figures discussed, 170 requests were submitted directly by citizens and residents, while 63 were received through the Nation-

al Suggestions and Complaints System (Tawasul).

Another 43 requests were forwarded by MPs representing the Capital Governorate, alongside 12 issues identified through field visits, four submitted by council members, and three by civil society organisations.

### Services

A large portion of the requests was related to services overseen by the Ministry of Works, which accounted for 155 cases addressing infrastructure and public facility concerns across the district.

Among the most common requests were 67 cases related to road and pavement mainte-



Additional individual cases included installing an iron fence and removing concrete barriers, reflecting specific safety concerns raised by residents.

nance, reflecting residents' calls for smoother and safer streets.

### Humps

Another nine requests concerned the construction or maintenance of speed humps, while five cases involved street posts or barriers.

Drainage issues were also raised, with 10 complaints related to water accumulation and eight cases linked to sewage systems.

Other requests included four cases concerning red brick pavement maintenance, four requests to open road access points, two parking-related issues, two requests for installing reflective mirrors, and two traffic guidance signs.

## Land reclassification in Al Kharijiyah approved

**Hasan Barakat**  
TDT | Manama

Urban planning decisions often begin with maps, codes and technical terms, yet their true meaning is felt most clearly in the daily lives of residents.

During the Capital Municipal

session, members approved a proposal to reclassify a property in the Al Kharijiyah area, a step aimed at improving services and organisation within the neighbourhood.

The decision concerned a property with a total area of approximately 501.7 square me-

tres.

The land had previously been classified as RHB, a connected residential classification, but the council endorsed a recommendation to change its designation to PIC, a category used for public infrastructure and service corridors.

While the discussion involved planning terminology and regulatory classifications, the objective behind the decision was practical.

Reclassifying the land allows it to be used for service access and major infrastructure support.

# IEA says members to **release** 400 mn barrels from oil reserves

Stocks will be made available to the market over a timeframe

● **Japan would release reserves as early as Monday**

● **The strait normally carries about 20% of the world's oil and gas supplies**

● **Middle East is now pumping less oil -- around six percent less**

AFP | Paris, France

The International Energy Agency said Wednesday its member countries would unlock 400 million barrels of oil from their reserves to ease the impact of the Middle East war, the biggest such release ever.

"The oil market challenges we are facing are unprecedented

in scale, therefore I am very glad that IEA member countries have responded with an emergency collective action of unprecedented size," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said.

The IEA-coordinated release exceeded the 182 million barrels of oil that member countries of the Paris-based global energy body released in 2022 when Russian leader Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine.

"The emergency stocks will be made available to the market over a timeframe that is appropriate to the national circumstances of each member country and will be supplemented by additional emergency measures by some countries," the IEA said.

The announcement came as leaders of the Group of Seven advanced economies discussed the widespread economic fallout from the US-Israeli war with Iran, now into its second week, at a video conference meeting chaired by French President

Emmanuel Macron.

Earlier Wednesday, Japan -- whose strategic oil reserves are among the world's largest -- and Germany said they would tap into their oil reserves.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Japan would release reserves as early as Monday, while Germany's Economy and Energy Minister Katherina Reiche said her country planned to do the same, without specifying a date.

"Without waiting for a formal decision on coordinated international stock releases with the IEA, Japan has decided to take the lead in easing supply and demand in the international energy market by releasing strategic reserves as early as the 16th of this month," Takaichi told reporters.

"Given Japan's exceptionally high dependence on the Middle East (for oil) and as we will be severely impacted, we plan to utilise Japan's strategic petroleum reserves," she said.

Reiche said a total of 2.4 mil-

lion tons would be released.

'Perfect time'

The crude market has been hit by wild volatility since the United States and Israel began striking Iran at the end of last month, with Tehran retaliating by attacking targets across the oil-rich Gulf and effectively shutting down the Strait of Hormuz.

The strait normally carries about 20 percent of the world's oil and gas supplies.

US Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said the trans-

problem was "temporary."

"What we have here is not a shortage of energy in the world. We've got a transit problem," he said.

A French official said earlier G7 members wanted to move in lockstep.

"There is no oil shortage today, but a price problem, so the idea is more to send a signal to the markets, and for that signal to be strong, it is better if it is coordinated," he said.

'Pumping less oil'

Ipek Ozkardeskaya, a senior analyst at trading platform Swissquote Bank, said 400 million barrels would still be a "meagre"

International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Fatih Birol



amount compared with the roughly 45 million barrels that IEA countries consume every day.

"It would therefore be a temporary fix," she said, adding the announcement helped keep oil prices in check on Wednesday.

"The Middle East is now pumping less oil -- around six percent less -- in reaction to the Iran war."

Countries around the world have been left scrambling in response to the oil price spikes.

Bangladesh has deployed the army to guard oil depots, India has imposed tighter controls over natural and cooking gas and French officials conducted inspections at petrol stations and fined those found to be inflating prices.

The 32 members of the IEA hold over 1.2 billion barrels of public emergency oil stocks, with a further 600 million barrels of industry stocks held under government mandates.

NATIONAL HOTELS COMPANY (B.S.C)



## Update to the Invitation to Attend the Annual General Meeting

Due to the exceptional circumstance, The Chairman of the Board of Directors of National Hotels Company B.S.C. wishes to notify our valued shareholders of an update regarding the **Ordinary Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for Thursday, 26th March 2026, at 10:00 AM.** Therefore, the shareholders can participate via remote access using the virtual communication technology "Zoom" rather than at the previously announced physical venue.

Accordingly, All other agenda items remain unchanged.

### Important notes to the shareholders:

- Any shareholder whose name is registered in the Company's Shareholders' Register on the date of the meeting is entitled to attend in person or to authorize (in writing) any person to attend and vote on his behalf, provided that the authorized person is an individual other than the Chairman, member of the Board of Directors, or company employee.
- Shareholders should send their request to attend the meeting along with a copy of their identity card or a clear copy of their passport or their representative's, as well as the proxy card to [info@nhcbahrain.com](mailto:info@nhcbahrain.com) at least 24 hours before the date of the meeting in order to verify the identity of the attendee.
- In case the shareholder is an institutional shareholder, the representative attending the meeting must submit a letter of authorization from the institutional shareholder, signed by an authorized signatory of the company. The proxy must be sealed by the institutional shareholder's stamp.
- After receiving all documents, an electronic link through the virtual communication technology "Zoom" will be provided before the aforementioned meeting to enable the attendee to take the necessary steps to virtually attend the meeting.
- The proxy card must be deposited at least 24 hrs prior to the date of the scheduled meeting at **KFin Technology W.L.L.(Bahrain)** Address (Office 74,7th Floor - Zamil Tower) P.O. Box 514 Manama - Kingdom of Bahrain. The proxy card may be delivered by hand, mail, fax - 17212055, or email [Bahrain.helpdesk@Kfintech.com](mailto:Bahrain.helpdesk@Kfintech.com), and must be delivered before the end of the specified time.
- It is worth noting that the proxy card presented after the deadline is considered invalid for the purpose of the meeting.
- You can get the financial statements for the year ended on 31st December 2025 and the proxy card through the company website at [www.nhcbahrain.com](http://www.nhcbahrain.com) or the Bahrain Bourse website at [www.bahrainbourse.com](http://www.bahrainbourse.com).
- For any inquiries, please contact the department of Public & Investor Relations at 17530838 - 17530839.

Faisal Ahmed Al Zayani  
Chairman

## Strategic oil reserves are a crisis cushion

Paris, France

Strategic oil reserves act as a cushion in case of economic shocks or disruptions. Here is an explainer on how and why they came about.

### Why store oil?

Oil powers cars, boats and planes. Covering around one third of global energy needs, oil is also the primary resource making up a raft of plastic-based daily items.

That makes it essential to the economy and oil also plays a crucial role in times of conflict, as Yves Jegourel, co-director of the CycLOpe think tank, pointed out in January.

Sufficient supplies of oil, along with other raw materials such as aluminium, are necessary for conducting a war.

Countries, especially those which do not produce oil, usually build up a reserve supply in the event of geopolitical upheaval or supply chain disruption.

### What role for the IEA?

The role of the IEA, set up in 1974 following the first oil shock of 1973, is to ensure the secure supply of energy.

Around 30 countries are members, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and the United States.

Each member has "an obligation to hold oil stocks equivalent to at least 90 days of net oil imports," that

can be mobilised if a crisis arises.

That "may include stocks held exclusively for emergency situations as well as stocks held for commercial purposes," be they crude oil or refined products, according to the IEA.

The aim is to "mitigate the negative economic impacts" of shortages or disruptions to supply.

### Precedents

The IEA must agree on collective action once it has assessed the disruption and current market conditions.

It has acted on five occasions: in the run-up to the Gulf War in 1991, after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, during the Libyan civil war in 2011 and twice since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The price of a barrel of crude of US benchmark West Texas Intermediate raced first past \$100 and then \$110 in recent days, before slipping back.

How much in current stocks?

The global oil market has been in surplus since the beginning of 2025, according to the IEA.

Global stocks last year topped 8.2 billion barrels, providing a "significant safety cushion against potential disruptions," it said.

The planet consumes around 100 million barrels of oil daily. IEA members hold more than 1.2 billion barrels of public emergency stocks, the organisation says, as well as some 600 million additional barrels of stocks which governments oblige the industry to hold.

### What of non-members?

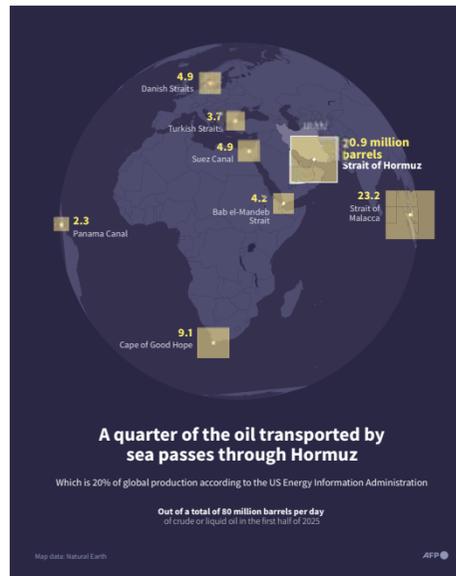
In Asia, which relies more heavily upon Middle Eastern oil imports, the situation may be more concerning.

According to Bloomberg, China asked key refiners in early March to suspend their exports of diesel and gasoline.

A huge consumer of oil, particularly from the Middle East, China has accumulated significant crude reserves of around 1.2 billion barrels over recent years, according to intelligence analysis from Kpler.

This amounts to "around 115 days of its crude oil imports by sea".

Another large-scale consumer, India, has obtained a US waiver to buy 30 days of Russian oil supplies normally subject to international sanctions.



# War transforms Saudi oil pipeline into economic lifeline



Representative picture

● The 750-mile network of pipes connects two waterways crucial for global commerce -- the Gulf in the east and the Red Sea to the west

● According to Bianco, the Petroline carried roughly one million barrels a day before the war

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Faced with an unprecedented crisis in shipping its oil to clients overseas, Saudi Arabia is moving rapidly to activate a decades-old contingency plan -- pumping millions of gallons across vast tracts of desert to reach tankers on the Red Sea.

With the vital Strait of Hormuz all but closed, the region's petroleum-exporting monarchies are facing a potentially disastrous situation as Iran targets energy installations, storage capacity fills and production is throttled due to the shipping paralysis caused by the Middle East war.

To help manage the fiasco, Saudi Arabia is ramping up the use of the Petroline, its east-west pipeline bisecting the kingdom, Saudi state energy giant Aramco said during an earnings call this week.

"While we have faced disruptions in the past, this one by far is the biggest crisis the region's oil and gas industry has faced," Aramco CEO and president Amin H. Nasser said, warning of "catastrophic consequences for the world's oil markets the longer the disruption goes on".

The CEO said the company was working hard to increase flows to the Petroline in the coming days, with the infrastructure's capacity reported to

**"While we have faced disruptions in the past, this one by far is the biggest crisis the region's oil and gas industry has faced," Aramco CEO and president Amin H. Nasser said, warning of "catastrophic consequences for the world's oil markets the longer the disruption goes on".**

be an estimated seven million barrels a day.

The 750-mile network of pipes connects two waterways crucial for global commerce -- the Gulf in the east and the Red Sea to the west.

"This will not 'fix' the Strait of Hormuz problem," warned Jim Bianco, president and founder of Bianco Research, in a note posted on X.

According to Bianco, the Petroline carried roughly one million barrels a day before the war -- meaning just six million more can be added.

That total is a fraction of the roughly 21 million barrels of oil that passed through the Gulf before the war.

## 'No Plan'

The situation the Gulf finds itself in was unthinkable just weeks ago.

Despite the presence of an archipelago of US military bases dotting the region, Iran was able to effectively close the Strait of Hormuz and cause widespread disruptions in just a matter of days.

With a mix of missile strikes and drone barrages, Iran has wreaked havoc on the Gulf's energy production and commercial aviation -- two economic cornerstones -- all while weathering punishing bombing raids by the US and Israel.

In a line stretching from Kuwait City to Abu Dhabi, Iran has methodically knocked major refineries offline and forced Qatar to shutter LNG installations that provide roughly a fifth of the world's liquefied natural gas.

The stranglehold only appears to be deepening, with the US appearing to acknowledge this week that Iran has begun mining the Strait of Hormuz -- a chokepoint where around 20

percent of global energy passes.

"Strait of Hormuz will either be a Strait of peace and prosperity for all or will be a Strait of defeat and suffering for warmongers," Iran's national security chief Ali Larjani wrote in posts in multiple languages Tuesday on X.

Murmurs from Washington have suggested that no immediate solution to the strait's issues is coming soon.

"On the Strait of Hormuz, they had NO PLAN," Democratic US Senator Chris Murphy wrote on social media after a classified briefing this week.

"I can't go into more detail about how Iran gums up the Strait, but suffice it [to] say, right now, they don't know how to get it safely back open. Which is unforgivable, because this part of the disaster was 100% foreseeable."

Back in the Saudi Arabia, the plan to bypass the Strait of Hormuz is not without risks.

Finished in the 1980s when the Gulf was rattled by the Iran-Iraq war, the Petroline was constructed as a strategic contingency to get around any blockage of the Strait.

But the conduit transfers oil to export terminals on the Red Sea coast, which lies squarely in the Houthi rebels' crosshairs.

For nearly two years, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen held the Red Sea hostage and halted much of maritime traffic there using similar tactics to those now being embraced by their sponsors in Tehran.

The Houthis have yet to enter the war, but their decision could be significant.

"How soon before Iran/Houthis hit the alternate export terminals and pipelines," analyst Michael Knights mused on X.

# Companies evacuate Dubai financial district

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

US group Citi, consultancies Deloitte and PwC and other firms in Dubai have closed offices or asked employees to evacuate Wednesday after Iran threatened US and Israel-linked economic assets in the Middle East.

The evacuations at the heart of the Middle East's financial hub come as the Gulf but especially the UAE has borne the brunt of Iran's attacks in response to US-Israeli strikes.

Iran's military threatened on Wednesday to attack US and Israeli economic targets in the region, including banks, after overnight attacks reportedly hit an Iranian bank.

Employees were asked to evacuate Citi offices in the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and in Oud Metha, a source with knowledge of the evacuations told AFP.

British consulting group PwC will close offices in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and Kuwait for the remainder of the week as a "precaution", a second source with knowledge told AFP.

Deloitte, another British consultancy, told its staff to vacate their DIFC offices on Wednesday afternoon, a third source with knowledge told AFP.

Employees at two other com-



Agents work on computers in the crisis unit room of the Crisis and Support Center (CDCS) of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris

panies in DIFC told AFP their offices had been evacuated as a precaution.

They all spoke on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter.

Iran's central operational command, Khatam Al-Anbiya, said "the enemy has given us free rein to target economic centres and banks belonging to the United States and the Zionist regime".

It urged people across the region to refrain from going within one kilometre (half a mile) of banks.

Tehran has targeted US assets in the Gulf but also civilian infrastructure including airports, ports, hotels and landmarks.

Iran has targeted Gulf energy infrastructure and choked

shipping in the strait -- which normally carries nearly 20 percent of global oil production -- prompting wild swings in prices.

"Two drones fell in the vicinity of Dubai International Airport a short while ago, resulting in minor injuries to two Ghanaian nationals and one Bangladeshi national, and moderate injuries to one Indian national," the Dubai Media Office said.

"Air traffic is operating as normal."

UAE presidential advisor Anwar Gargash said Iran "is lying when they claim to be targeting US bases in the Gulf" and slammed the attacks on "civilian infrastructure... with no regard for civilians and innocent people".



## Updated invitation to the Annual General Assembly Meeting of Zain Bahrain B.S.C.

Zain Bahrain's Board of Directors (Commercial registration number 50603) is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend the Company's Annual General Assembly Meeting ("AGM"), to be held at 1:00 PM on Sunday, 15 March 2026 virtually through Microsoft Teams (following the instructions mentioned in Note 6), to discuss the agenda outlined below and to take the necessary decisions thereon. In line with the requirements of the Commercial Companies Law, in the absence of a quorum on the first scheduled date for the AGM, a second meeting will be scheduled on Sunday, 29 March 2026; and in the absence of quorum on such second date for the meeting a third meeting will be scheduled on Sunday, 12 April 2026, at the same venue and time.

### The Agenda of the Annual General Assembly:

- To read and ratify the minutes of the previous annual general assembly meeting held on 19 March 2025.
- To discuss and approve the report of the Board of Directors on the Company's activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To listen to the external auditor's report on the financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To discuss and approve the financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To approve the recommendation of the Board of Directors for the allocation of the net profits for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 as follows:
  - Transferring BD 561 thousand to statutory reserve.
  - Cash dividend distribution to shareholders of BD 3,275 million for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 at 9 Fils per share (excluding treasury shares), or 9% of the paid-up capital, in accordance with the following dates:
 

Cum-Dividend Date (Last day of trading with entitlement to dividends)	25 March 2026
Ex-Dividend Date (First day of trading without entitlement to dividends)	26 March 2026
Record Date (The Day on which all shareholders whose names are on the share register will be entitled to dividends)	29 March 2026
Payment Date (The Day on which the dividends will be paid to the entitled shareholders)	12 April 2026
- Transfer of BD 2,151 million as retained earnings for the following year.
- To approve the remuneration of the members of the Board of Directors with a total amount of BD 223,612 for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To discuss and ratify the corporate governance report for the year 2025 and its compliance to the requirements of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Central Bank of Bahrain.
- To update the general assembly of transactions carried out during the financial year ended 31 December 2025 with any of the related parties as shown in note no. 24 of the financial statements in line with Article 189 of the Commercial Companies Law.
- To discharge the members of the Board of Directors from any liability arising in connection with their duties for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.
- To approve the re-appointment of the Company's external auditor and for the financial year ending 31 December 2026 and authorize the Board of Directors to determine their remuneration.
- To discuss any other matters in accordance with Article 207 of the Commercial Companies Law.

**zain** Ahmed bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

### Important Notes to Shareholders:

- Zain Bahrain's annual report for the year of 2025 and a copy of the Proxy Form will be available on the Company's website: www.zain.com and through the Registrar, Bahrain Clear, located at the Bahrain Financial Harbor, Harbor Mall, fourth floor, telephone +9737208833, fax +9737228061, e-mail: registry@bahrainclear.com. Additionally, the audited financial statements and the corporate governance report will be available on the Bahrain Bourse website.
- Any shareholder who is registered in the Company's register is entitled to attend the meeting or to nominate in writing any person to attend the meeting and vote on his behalf, taking into account that this proxy may not be issued by the Chairman or a member of the Board of Directors or an employee of the Company.
- The Proxy Form must be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting to the Registrar, Bahrain Clear. The Proxy Form can be delivered by hand, courier or e-mail. It should be noted that if the Proxy Form is delivered after the deadline, it shall not be valid for the purposes of the meeting.
- By submitting the proxy form, the proxy confirms that as of the date of submission, the shareholder on whose behalf the proxy is attending is not deceased.
- Corporate shareholders shall issue a signed and stamped authorization letter appointing its authorized representative. The authorization letter must be submitted by the specified time.
- We kindly request our shareholders to follow the following steps to attend the AGM:
  - Request to attend the AGM by registering through the following link (the link will be open 2 hours before the scheduled meeting time):

<https://teams.microsoft.com/join/378593655893627?ui=en41GbwY0vUvM1s0at>

Meeting ID: 378 593 655 893 62  
Passcode: F1Ug9P7s

\* The attendee must enable video call and camera must be switched on. The attendee will be required to provide their investor number/shareholder number and a valid passport or valid ID card along with a proxy form, if required.

For any queries, please contact the Communications and Investor Relations Department by phone at +97336031000, via e-mail at [ir@bh.zain.com](mailto:ir@bh.zain.com)

bh.zain.com

A Wonderful World

**Drones hit Oman port**

Drones struck fuel tanks at Oman's Salah port on Wednesday, state media reported.

# War enters 13th day

**On shore, drones fell near Dubai airport, injuring four people, the city's government said.**

**U-TURN WITH UK**

**Let the cash move**



P. UNNIKRISHNAN

"Hey man, what's up?"  
"All good. What about you?"  
"Not bad... going as usual," I replied.  
"So what's happening?" I asked my friend casually.  
"Just trying to finish some work — and making sure not to be part of the rumour mills!" he laughed.  
"Still staying at the same place?" I asked curiously.  
"Yes, of course."  
"You mean the apartment on the ninth floor?"  
"Yes," he said.

There was a brief pause before he added quite calmly:  
"Life is becoming more colourful these days. From my window, I can occasionally see a few missiles heading somewhere in the distance."  
"Isn't that scary?" I asked.

"Not really," he replied.  
"I know Bahrain is trying its best to protect us. I have faith in the system."  
The answer came so naturally that it caught me slightly off guard.  
"What about food?" I asked, shifting the conversation to something more practical.  
"Talabat is active," he said with a laugh. "The delivery boys are right on time. No worries."  
"Any plans to travel back home?" I asked.  
"What for?" he laughed again. "Our highways back home are more dangerous than these missiles."  
His humour was disarming.  
"So when do you think this war will end?"  
"Honestly, I don't bother about that," he said.  
I found myself quietly admiring his perspective. Just then, he paused.  
"Hold on a second," he said.  
The doorbell rang. It was the food delivery.  
A minute later, he returned to the call, smiling.  
"You know," he said, "I usually give the delivery guy one dinar as a tip. These days I give two."  
"Why the upgrade?" I asked.  
"Let the cash move, man," he laughed. "That's my way of supporting the economy."  
"So how do you spend your time these days?" I asked.  
He turned his phone camera around. Two of his friends were sitting in the room watching a cricket match.  
"We're just chilling," he said.  
"What do you expect will happen next?" I asked.  
He thought for a moment.  
"This time will also pass," he said calmly. "Maybe one day, instead of missiles, Iranian drones will start flying to Bahrain carrying Fesenjan and saffron rice — or perhaps some other delicious food."  
He started laughing too.  
"Good night," he said. "Sleep tight."  
As I pulled the blanket over my head, I heard another loud sound in the distance — perhaps the interception of yet another drone.  
But instead of fear, I felt something else growing inside me: a quiet sense of comfort and confidence.  
And in that moment, his words echoed again in my mind.  
This time will also pass.

*"This time will also pass," he said calmly. "Maybe one day, instead of missiles, Iranian drones will start flying to Bahrain carrying Fesenjan and saffron rice — or perhaps some other delicious food."*

## Iran's new leader hurt in strike that killed his father: report

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Iran's new supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei was injured in an air strike that killed his father at the start of the US and Israel's attack on the country, the Iranian ambassador to Cyprus told The Guardian newspaper yesterday.  
"He was also there and he was

**Ayatollah 'safe and sound'**

"I heard news that Mr Mojtaba Khamenei had been injured. I have asked some friends who had connections.

They told me that, thank God, he is safe and sound," said Yousef Pezeshkian, son of Iran's president, in a post.

injured in that bombardment but I haven't seen that reflected in the foreign news," ambassador

Alireza Salarian told the London-based newspaper. "I have heard that he was

injured in his legs and hand and arm... I think he is in the hospital because he is injured."

The daytime air strike on the first day of the war on February 28 on a compound in Tehran killed his father, former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as well as his mother and wife.



Military ground personnel transport Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) to a US Air Force (USAF) B-1 Lancer bomber on the tarmac at RAF Fairford in south-west England

**Macron urges G7 action to restore Hormuz strait navigation 'as soon as possible'**

## US military warns of possible strikes on Iran's civilian ports along Hormuz Strait

**Iran Guards warn of 'war of attrition' with US, Israel**  
Tehran, Iran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned on Wednesday of a long "war of attrition", as the conflict with the United States and Israel presses on.

"They (the enemies) must consider the possibility that they will be engaged in a long-term war of attrition that will destroy the entire American economy and the world economy, and will cause all of its military capabilities to be eroded to the point of destruction," Ali Fadavi, advisor to the Guards' Commander-in-Chief, told state television.

## Targeting mistake led to US missile strike on Iranian school: report

Washington, United States

The United States was responsible for a Tomahawk missile strike on an Iranian school because of a targeting mistake, The New York Times reported on Wednesday.

The newspaper, citing US officials, said the investigation into the February 28 strike was ongoing but preliminary findings were that the United States was responsible.

The US military was conducting strikes on an adjacent Iranian base of which the school building was formerly a part and target coordinates were set using outdated data, it said.

President Donald Trump suggested earlier this week that Iran itself may have been responsible but later said he could "live with" whatever the investigation reveals.



Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) sit next to a US Air Force (USAF) B-1 Lancer bomber (behind) on the tarmac at RAF Fairford in south-west England

Iran has said the strike on the elementary school in the southern city of Minab killed more than 150 people.

Members of the United Nations Security Council listen as Ambassador Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN, speaks during a meeting on the conflicts in Iran at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The Security Council is holding meetings on the ongoing conflict in Iran that has escalated with Israel attacking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. The Council will also be voting on draft resolutions that call for an immediate end to all strikes and threats against neighboring states, including through proxies, the first since Israel and the U.S. launched airstrikes on Iran.



Residents receive aid from World Food Programme (WFP) at Al-Omada neighbourhood of Omdurman, the twin city of Khartoum. A pick-up truck carrying dozens of people to a funeral in Sudan's southern Kordofan region was hit by a drone strike, killing 40, a medical source at the local hospital told AFP



# All eyes on Hormuz

## Iran military says ships of US, Israel, allies in Hormuz strait 'legitimate targets'

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran's military on Wednesday said any ships belonging to the United States, Israel or their

allies passing through the strategic Strait of Hormuz will be targeted.

"Any vessel whose oil cargo or the vessel itself belongs to

the United States, the Zionist regime or their hostile allies will be considered legitimate targets," said the military's central operational command,

Khatam Al-Anbiya, in a statement carried by state TV.

It reiterated that Iran's armed forces "will not allow a single litre of oil to transit" through the

strait, adding that the "closure of this strait is the result of conditions imposed by the US and the Zionist regime," referring to Israel.

Analysts say a prolonged closure of the strait, which also carries a third of the fertiliser for world food production, would have a devastating effect on the global economy, particularly in Asia and Europe.

### Iran hits two commercial ships, one vessel on fire

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran fired on two commercial ships in the Gulf on Wednesday, setting at least one vessel on fire, as it pressed its campaign against its energy-exporting neighbours and forced world governments to dip into their strategic oil reserves.

As the conflict entered its 13th day, Iran vowed to target "economic centres and banks" that it deems wvlinked to US

and Israeli interests, and all eyes were on the Strait of Hormuz, the vital sea lane connecting Gulf oil and gas export terminals to the world economy.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it had struck the Liberian-flagged container ship Express Rome and the Thai bulk carrier Mayuree Naree because they had entered the Strait of Hormuz "after ignoring the warnings of the IRGC naval forces".

Thailand's navy said the Mayuree Naree was attacked while transiting the strait. Oman's navy rescued 20 crew members, but efforts were underway to find three more. Pictures shared by the Thai navy showed black smoke pouring out of the vessel.

IRGC naval commander Alireza Tangsiri said in a social media post that "any vessel intending to pass must get permission from Iran".

Saudi Arabia intercepted drones targeting the Shaybah field, crucial to its production, while explosions also rang out over Qatar. Saudi Arabia also said it intercepted seven ballistic missiles targeting its eastern region and the Prince Sultan Air Base, where an American service member was fatally wounded on March 1.

In the past few days, Saudi Aramco's sprawling Ras Tanura facility, home to one of the Middle East's largest refineries, was targeted as well as the UAE's Ruwais refinery -- one of

the largest in the world.

Iranian attacks already forced state-owned QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest producers of liquefied natural gas, to halt production last week and

declare force majeure.

Energy producers in Kuwait made similar declarations, which are a warning that events beyond their control may lead them to miss export targets.

### US has 'practically nothing left to target' in Iran, Trump

There is "practically nothing left to target" and the war will end "soon," Trump was quoted as saying in an interview with Axios. "Any time I want it to end, it will end."



smoke rising from the Thai bulk carrier 'Mayuree Naree' near the Strait of Hormuz after an attack

### IEA says members to release 400 mn barrels from reserves

The International Energy Agency said Wednesday its member countries would unlock 400 million barrels of oil from their reserves to ease the impact of the Middle East war, the biggest such release ever.

"The oil market challenges

we are facing are unprecedented in scale, therefore I am very glad that IEA member countries have responded with an emergency collective action of unprecedented size," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said.



Soldiers of an Israeli artillery unit are deployed at a position in the upper Galilee in northern Israel near the Lebanon border

### 16 mine-laying vessels destroyed

The Pentagon said US forces had carried out strikes that destroyed 16 mine-laying vessels that could have been used to block the strait, but Iranian attacks with drones or missiles continued on Wednesday with at least

three ships hit. "If for any reason mines were placed, and they are not removed forthwith, the military consequences to Iran will be at a level never seen before," US President Donald Trump posted on social media.

### Ukrainian anti-drone teams working in Qatar, UAE, Saudi: Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukrainian anti-drone experts have begun working in three Gulf states targeted by Iranian attacks, President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday.

Kyiv has sought to leverage its expertise in downing Russian drones to help the Gulf nations, which are being at-

tacked with the same Iranian-designed Shahed drones that Russia fires on Ukraine.

"Three of our teams have gone -- strong teams of experts, military personnel, engineers, different people. Today the military are already communicating and already working," Zelensky told reporters, including journalists from AFP.

● Switzerland said Wednesday it was temporarily closing its embassy in Tehran due to the Middle East war but was maintaining its "open line" of communication between the United States and Iran.

● Drones struck fuel tanks at Oman's Salalah port on Wednesday, state media reported, as Iran continues to target Gulf infrastructure in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks. "A security source reported that several drones were shot down, while others struck fuel tanks at the port of Salalah," the Oman News Agency said, adding that no casualties were reported.

● Deloitte evacuates staff at Dubai office as Iran threatens US, Israel-linked economic targets

● PwC closes offices in Gulf countries this week as a 'precaution'

### UAE refinery

The region's biggest single-site oil refinery, at Ruwais in the United Arab Emirates, was closed as a precaution after a drone attack on the industrial complex that houses it caused a fire, a source familiar with the situation told AFP.

A driver working at the complex, who asked not to be named, told AFP they saw "bursts of fire rising from the complex, with loud sounds like explosions".

### Fuel queues

Tanker drivers in Pakistan said they were facing long waits at depots due to a shortage of fuel, as the government played down fears of another rise in prices over the war.

### Iran's armed forces threaten to target regional ports if its own attacked

Tehran, Iran

Iran's armed forces threatened on Wednesday to target regional ports if its own ports were attacked during the war with Israel and the United States.

"If our ports and docks are threatened, all ports and docks in the region will be our legitimate targets," state television quoting an armed forces spokesman as saying, without naming him.



About one-fifth of the world's oil consumption passes through the Strait of Hormuz, making it the most important oil transit chokepoint in the world.

The strait connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

It is bordered by Iran to the north and Oman and the United Arab Emirates to the south.



Around 17-20 million barrels of oil per day move through it on tankers. At its narrowest point, the strait is only about 33 km wide, with shipping lanes even narrower.

# Under Iran fire, UAE president writes poem to nation's defenders

The musical tribute is titled 'Men, by God, Truly Men'

AFP | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

The UAE President wrote a patriotic poem that was performed by the national orchestra, state media said yesterday, as his country faced the attacks unleashed by Iran after US-Israeli strikes.

"The UAE National Orchestra has released a special musical tribute, titled 'Men, by God, Truly Men', featuring the poem 'Rijal Wallah Rijal' written by President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, honouring those who dedicate themselves to protecting the nation," WAM said.

WAM shared a video of the performance, which kicked off with a recent interview in which Sheikh Mohamed said the UAE had "thick skin and bitter flesh. We are no easy prey".

Men dressed in dark kanduras, the traditional dress for men in the Gulf, and white head-dresses, then went on to sing, accompanied by an orchestra that included foreigners as well as women.

The footage was interspersed with shots of fighter jets.

"We call the honourable, the brave. The Sons of Zayed answer the call. Theirs is victory, no matter the cost," one of the verses says, referring to Sheikh Mohamed's father and founder



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan meeting with Vice President and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid al-Maktoum at al-Marmoom in the gulf emirate of Dubai

**"The UAE National Orchestra has released a special musical tribute, titled 'Men, by God, Truly Men', featuring the poem 'Rijal Wallah Rijal' written by President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, honouring those who dedicate themselves to protecting the nation," WAM said.**

of the nation.

Since Iran's attacks began on February 28, the UAE has seen 262 ballistic missiles and roughly 1,500 drones target its territory -- more than all of the other nations that have faced Iranian attacks combined.

Most have been intercepted.

A total of six people were killed, mostly civilians, but also two Emirati troops who died when a helicopter malfunctioned.

The UAE has sought to reassure its population, roughly 90

percent of whom are foreigners, that the country is safe and able to defend itself.

Last weekend, in an interview with Abu Dhabi TV, Sheikh Mohamed said the UAE will emerge "stronger" after the Middle East war.

## Lebanon says war toll rises to 634 dead, more than 800,000 displaced

# Oil prices jump despite strategic reserve release

● **Tehran has retaliated to US and Israeli attacks that began on February 28 by attacking targets across the oil-rich Gulf**

AFP | London, United Kingdom

A record release of oil from strategic reserves by IEA nations failed to ease concerns about the impact from the Middle East war, with crude prices pushing further higher and stocks sliding yesterday.

The move to release oil stocks came as Iran said it was ready for a long war of attrition that would "destroy" the world economy, after firing on two commercial ships and threatening any vessels from the US or its allies.

The International Energy Agency announced its member countries would unlock 400 million barrels of oil from their reserves to ease the impact from a lack of supplies transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

Tehran has retaliated to US and Israeli attacks that began on February 28 by attacking targets across the oil-rich Gulf and effectively shutting down the crucial Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 20% of the world's oil usually transits to world markets.

Despite the IEA announce-

ment oil prices added to gains.

While it may be a record reserves release, it still only replaces part of the lost supplies, noted analyst Helge Andre Martinsen at DNB Carnegie.

He estimated that releases from strategic reserves could total 1.75 million barrels per day, while lost supply is approximately 11 million barrels per day of crude and around four million barrels per day of oil products.

"Hence, it will help, but it won't make a massive difference for the very short-term global oil balance," he said.

Equity markets were not

reassured either. Wall Street was mostly lower in afternoon trading and European markets closed in the red.

"With the IEA's record oil reserves release unable to push prices lower today, this is keeping risk appetite downbeat, with stock markets struggling and currencies of oil importing regions lower," said Forex.com analyst Fawad Razaqzada

Oil volatility

Fears that the conflict could drag on -- choking off energy supplies -- sent both main crude contracts soaring on Monday to within a whisker of \$120 a barrel, the highest since 2022.

### Key figures at around 1630 GMT

Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 5.6% at \$92.74 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 5.5% at \$88.03 per barrel
New York - Dow:	▼ 0.9% at 47,292.13 points
New York - S&P 500:	▼ 0.3% at 6,764.60
Nasdaq Composite:	■ at 22,695.84
London - FTSE 100:	▼ 0.6% at 10,353.77 (close)
Paris - CAC 40:	▼ 0.2% at 8,041.81 (close)
Frankfurt - DAX:	▼ 1.4 percent at 23,640.03 (close)
Tokyo - Nikkei 225:	▲ 1.4% at 55,025.37 (close)
Hang Seng Index:	▼ 0.2 at 25,898.76 (close)
Shanghai - Composite:	▲ 0.3% at 4,133.43 (close)
Euro/dollar:	▼ at \$1.1574 from \$1.1612 on Tuesday
Pound/dollar:	▼ at \$1.3407 from \$1.3415
Dollar/yen:	▲ at 158.81 yen from 158.06 yen
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.33 pence from 86.48 pence

Natural gas prices also rocketed.

Prices dropped on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump said the war was "going to be ended soon", before turning higher again.

"Markets are likely to grow increasingly fearful over the long-term implications with each day that passes," said Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Scope Markets.

Forex.com's Razaqzada said the markets were paying attention to Iran's warnings to disrupt oil flows and a reported shift to continued attacks from retaliatory strikes.

Such a move "suggests the conflict could intensify rather than cool", he said.

New attacks hit three commercial ships in the Gulf on Wednesday, officials said, leaving one vessel in flames as Iran pressed its campaign against its oil-exporting neighbours.

Sentiment was also dampened by US group Citi, consultancies Deloitte and PwC and other firms in Dubai, which closed offices or asked employees to evacuate Wednesday after Iran threatened US and Israel-linked economic assets in the Middle East.

The evacuations at the heart of the Middle East's financial hub come as the Gulf but especially the UAE has borne the brunt of Iran's attacks in response to US-Israeli strikes.

## Russia says internet outages to last as long as 'necessary'

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Mobile internet outages in Russia will last as long as "necessary" to ensure citizens' safety, the Kremlin said yesterday, after network disruptions were recorded in Moscow and other Russian cities.

It is the latest in a string of curbs imposed by the Russian authorities on internet access, after Moscow ordered restrictions on messaging apps WhatsApp, owned by US social media giant Meta, and Telegram.

Russia cited the need to combat criminal activity and has been pushing state-backed Russian rival Max instead. But Kremlin critics say it is an attempt to bolster surveillance online.

When asked at a daily briefing about how long the outages will last, Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov said "as long as additional measures are necessary to ensure the safety of our citizens."

He also accused Ukraine of using "increasingly sophisticated attack methods" and said that "more technologically advanced counter-measures are needed" to repel them.

Russian security services have frequently claimed that Ukraine was using Telegram to recruit people or commit acts of sabotage in Russia.

The outages have "gotten worse lately", Nikolay, a 20-year-old student who refused to give his full name, told AFP in Moscow, adding that "using the internet has become less convenient".

"I have problems with messaging apps, I can't contact my loved ones," he said.

## UN urges 'humanitarian exemptions' to get aid through Strait of Hormuz

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The United Nations aid chief warned yesterday that the Middle East war was impacting aid routes and urged "exemptions" so humanitarian supplies could get through.

The war in the Middle East has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, while fuel supply disruptions are sending freight rates soaring.

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher warned that the escalating war and the impact on the strait was having "a direct impact on our humanitarian supplies, including going to areas of key need in sub-Saharan Africa".

"I'm worried that further escalation will damage other supply routes," he told reporters in Geneva, warning

that this was happening as the war "drives up the prices and... drives more people into greater need".

"So we're appealing to all the parties to try and secure those routes, including the Strait of Hormuz for our humanitarian traffic... so we can reach anyone, anywhere, on the basis of greatest need, and not on the basis of politics." "We're living through a moment right now of grave peril," Fletcher said.

"We're seeing these crises escalate rapidly and increasingly collide in dangerous ways," he said, calling for "calmer heads to prevail".

The last two weeks of fighting are further confirmation that "we're living in a time of brutality, impunity and indifference", he said.

## Spain without ambassador to Israel in new blow to ties

AFP | Madrid, Spain

Spain has formally dismissed its ambassador to Israel, further degrading poor relations after recalling her six months ago in a spat over the Gaza war, according to a decree released yesterday.

Ana Maria Salomon was officially relieved of her duties on Tuesday at the proposal of Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, in a decree signed by King Felipe VI and published in the official state journal.

She was recalled from Tel Aviv in September after Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez unveiled measures aimed at stopping what he called "genocide" in Gaza,

where Israel fought a devastating war following the 2023 attacks by Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar then accused Sanchez of antisemitism and barred two of his ministers from entry, plunging already frayed ties to new depths.

Israel withdrew its ambassador to Madrid in 2024 after Spain's recognition of Palestinian statehood and has since been represented by a charge d'affaires.

Sanchez, one of the most vocal critics of Israel's war in Gaza, has also opposed the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran launched on February 28.

## Three brothers arrested over US embassy blast in Oslo: police

AFP | Oslo, Norway

Norwegian police said yesterday that three brothers had been arrested on suspicion of a "terrorist bombing" over a weekend explosion at the US embassy in Oslo.

Police prosecutor Christian Hatlo told a press conference the brothers, who were

Norwegian citizens of Iraqi origin, had been arrested in Oslo.

"We are still working from several hypotheses. One of them is whether this is an order from a government entity" because of the target, Hatlo said. He added that police were not ruling out further arrests.

# Trump's 'racist hate speech' fuelling rights abuses: UN watchdog

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

A UN watchdog warned yesterday that racist hate speech by US President Donald Trump and other political leaders coupled with intensified immigration crackdowns were fuelling grave rights violations.

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlighted the growing "racist hate speech" targeting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the United States.

It also pointed to the use of "derogatory and dehumanising language" and harmful stereotypes targeting the same people.

These groups have been portrayed "as criminals or as a burden, by politicians and influential public figures at the highest level of the state party, particularly its president", the group said in an urgent report.

This "fosters intolerance and may incite racial discrimination (and) hate crimes", it warned.

The CERD also voiced grave concern over the "systematic use of racial profiling" by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other officers deployed in Trump's immigration crackdown.

The targeting of "persons of Hispanic/Latino, African or Asian origin and arbitrary iden-



A "Titanic"-themed satirical statue of U.S. President Donald Trump and late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein is shown on the National Mall on March 10, 2026 in Washington, DC.

tity checks... have reportedly resulted in the widespread arrest of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and persons perceived as such", it said.

At least 675,000 people had been deported since January 2025, when Trump returned to power, it noted.

The CERD is composed of 18

independent experts tasked with monitoring how countries implement an international convention on eliminating racism.

## 'Excessive force'

Denounced the "excessive use of force during immigration enforcement operations", the committee noted that at least eight

people had died since January during ICE operations or while in ICE custody.

The CERD report followed an urgent

submission from the American Civil Liberties Union in February asking it to investigate rights violations during the Trump administration's dramatic immigration crackdown in Minnesota and elsewhere.

That request was filed under the CERD's early warning and urgent action procedure, which allows it to address urgent matters arising between its regular sessions.

Thousands of federal agents including ICE agents earlier this year carried out weeks of sweeping raids and arrests in Minnesota in what the Trump administration claimed were targeted missions against criminals.

The controversial operation ended last month after growing outrage over the killings of two US citizens, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, and the arrest of

a five-year-old.

## 'Inhuman conditions'

Wednesday report from the CERD called on Washington to "ensure accountability, including by conducting effective, thorough and impartial investigations" into all alleged abuses.

It also condemned the "drastic increase" in the number of detainees held at immigration detention facilities. The numbers reportedly rose from 40,000 in late 2024 to around 73,000 at the start of this year.

It voiced concern too over reports of "inhuman conditions and inadequate medical care" in such facilities, noting that at least 29 migrants had died in detention in 2025, and six in January this year.

The committee also expressed alarm at Washington's decision to rescind longstanding guidelines and policies limiting immigration enforcement operations and arrests near schools, hospitals and faith-based institutions. In its recommendations, CERD urged the United States to suspend all such operations and to conduct a rights-based review of its legislative measures adopted since January 2025.

It also called on Washington to publicly condemn racial discrimination and racist hate speech.



## Man set himself alight in fatal Swiss bus fire: prosecutor

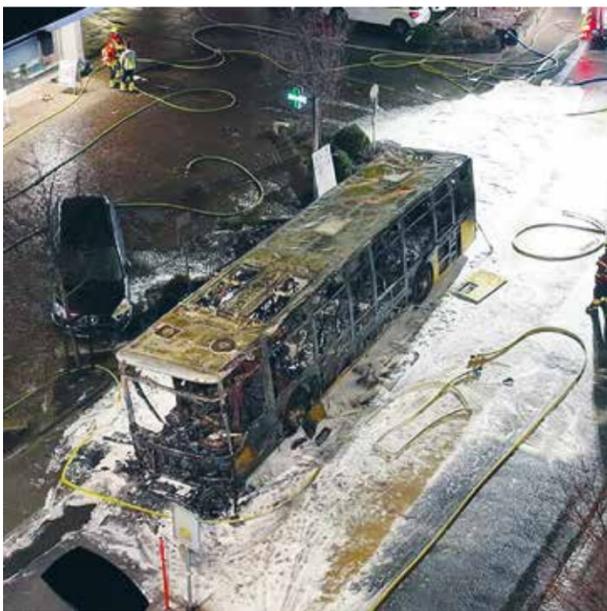
AFP | Fribourg, Switzerland

An inferno on a Swiss bus that killed six people was seemingly started by a "disturbed" man on board who set himself alight, the investigating prosecutor said yesterday.

The blaze happened on Tuesday evening in the small town of Kerzers, around 20 kilometres (12 miles) west of the capital Bern.

Videos shared on social media showed flames several metres high bursting out of the windows, and black smoke rising into the sky.

"A witness statement indicated that a man... of Swiss origin boarded the bus carrying bags. At some point, he doused himself with a flammable substance and set himself alight," Fribourg canton's public prosecutor Raphael Bourquin told a press conference.



He said the family of the man, who was from Bern canton and in his sixties, had recently "reported his disappearance", and

"current evidence describes him as a marginalised and disturbed individual".

"There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that this could be a terrorist act," he said, adding that "it appears that this person is among the deceased".

Fribourg police chief Philippe Allain said detectives were trying to work out who got on and off the bus along its route from the nearby town of Dudingin, to pinpoint how many people were on board at the time.

The potential victims were born between 1961 and 2009, he said.

Two still in hospital Besides those killed, the fire injured five people. Three people were taken to hospital; two are in a serious condition and the other has since returned home.

Two other people were treated at the scene by emergency responders.

Several ambulances and a helicopter were sent to the scene, with investigators working late into the night, and three injured people were taken to hospital.

Before dawn on Wednesday, the charred shell of the bus had been removed from the road, leaving a few traces of melted tar on the ground and a faint smell of burning in the air.

A hotline has been opened for witnesses to come forward, as authorities try to determine the exact circumstances of the fire.

Fribourg police said a criminal investigation had been opened by public prosecutors.

## 'Terrible tragedy'

It is the second major multiple-casualty fire in Switzerland in less than three months.

In the early hours of January 1, a bar in the ski resort of Crans-Montana caught fire as people celebrated the New Year.

A total of 41 people died, with another 115 injured.

"I am shocked and saddened that people in Switzerland have once again lost their lives in a serious fire," Swiss President Guy Parmelin said on X.

"I would like to express my condolences to the families of those who died in Kerzers. My thoughts are also with the injured and the emergency services."

The bus involved was a Post-Bus, a feature of Swiss rural life.

The distinctive yellow buses serve more remote areas, connecting them with towns, while also carrying letters and parcels. They are used by around half a million people every day, notably schoolchildren.

PostBus chief executive Stefan Regli called it a "terrible tragedy" and said their employees were "shocked".

## Arctic sea ice among lowest on record: AFP review of US data

AFP | Paris, France

Arctic sea ice is headed for one of its smallest winter peaks on record, an AFP review of US data showed yesterday, as climate change shrinks the region's frozen cover and heightens geopolitical tensions.

Formed when ocean water freezes, Arctic sea ice melts naturally in summer and reforms in winter, but the amount that returns has been declining due to human-induced planetary

warming.

The maximum sea ice extent in the Arctic reached nearly 14.22 million square kilometres (5.5 million square miles) on March 10, according to the data from the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC).

If the trend continues before winter ends later this month, it would rank among the five smallest ice covers in four decades of satellite monitoring, possibly even breaking last year's

record.

While ice has gone down in the last few days, it can still go back up, said Seamus McAfee, an NSIDC spokesman.

"But so far, it is looking like it could be a very significant extent, perhaps one of, if not the lowest, in the record," McAfee told AFP.

Last year, Arctic sea ice reached an all-time low on March 22, at 14.31 million square kilometres, according to the

NSIDC. Previous lows were set in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The NSIDC has yet to have an exact date for the 2026 maximum sea ice extent, McAfee said, adding that it would issue a press release once that becomes clearer.

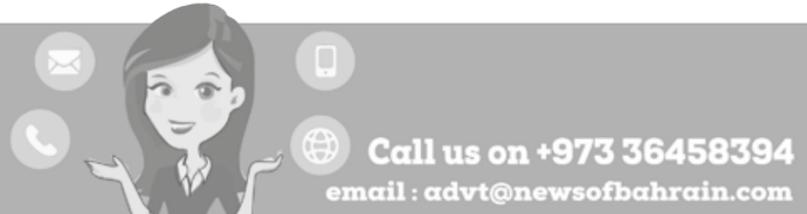
Samantha Burgess, strategic lead for climate at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, told AFP that this year would be among the lowest five on record.



Gilles Garric, polar oceanographer at French climate research institute Mercator Ocean Toulouse, said this winter was among the "top three" so far.

"The sirens are blaring that we're headed for a hothouse planet with massive devastation around the world," said Shayne Wolf, climate science director at the Center for Biological Diversity, a US-based environmental group.

# Classifieds



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# China sprint race presents 'huge challenge' in F1's new era

Shanghai's layout demands different battery strategy for new 50/50 hybrid cars

● Shanghai hosts season's first sprint

● Only one practice before sprint qualifying Friday

● Shanghai's long straight, multiple complex turns tests batteries

● George Russell requests active wing adjustments

● Verstappen investigates early-season battery power loss

● McLaren works to close massive performance gap

AFP | Shanghai

Formula One's new era heads into its first sprint in Shanghai this weekend, with the Chinese Grand Prix promising a very different test to Melbourne, where George Russell led home a Mercedes one-two.

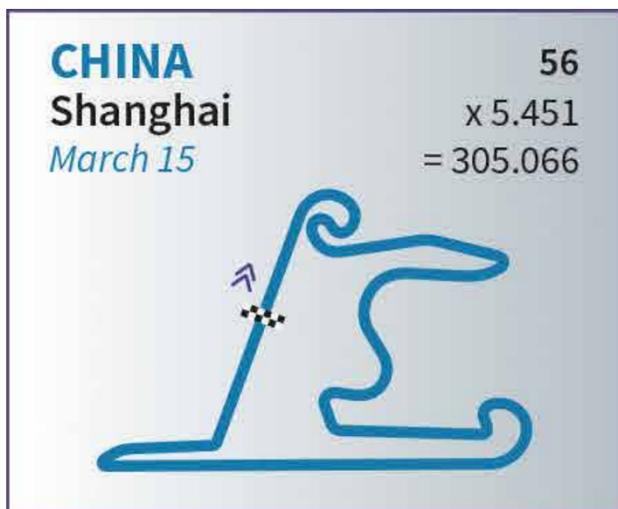
The Silver Arrows dominated the season-opener, Russell winning from Kimi Antonelli and followed home by the Ferrari pair of Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton in the first race under sweeping new regulations.

Lando Norris and McLaren struggled, the British world champion trailing home fifth and teammate Oscar Piastri failing to even start after crashing on his way to the grid.

Red Bull's four-time champion Max Verstappen carved his way through the field to sixth after starting 20th on the grid following a qualifying crash.



Drivers compete in the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix 2025 at the Shanghai International Circuit (file photo)



The Shanghai International Circuit, unlike the Albert Park track in Melbourne, has one long straight and several complexes

of turns. It will require a different approach to battery deployment and energy harvesting in the

new cars, which have a 50-50 split between conventional and electrical power.

But with only one practice session before sprint qualifying on Friday, the teams will have little time to hone their set-ups and strategies.

Saturday morning will see the sprint race over 19 laps of the 5.451km circuit and grand prix qualifying in the afternoon.

Sunday's grand prix will be over 56 laps, and if the race in Melbourne is anything to go by, it could be very eventful.

"Shanghai is going to be important to be straight on point with deployment, with everything, because obviously we get only one practice and then we go into qualifying," said Antonelli.

"The rate of development is going to be massive and it's going to be important to not put any

wrong step because the situation can flip very quickly."

Leclerc agreed: "To have a sprint race so early on in a season like this will be a huge challenge for everybody. It's going to be very tricky."

Race-winner Russell said his only reservation about the 2026 cars was a lack of control when the active front wing was opened up under the new "straight mode".

Introduced this season to reduce drag and give a boost of speed akin to the now-defunct DRS system, Russell said it made the cars skittish.

## 'Pretty big gap'

"The only thing I would request from the FIA is that the front wing doesn't drop as aggressively," said Russell.

"When we open 'straight mode' we will have lots of un-



George Russell has formally requested the FIA modify the "straight mode" active aero, reporting dangerous levels of understeer and a total loss of front-end grip when pulling out of a rival's slipstream

dersteer, and when I was behind Charles and I was trying to duck out of his slipstream it was like my front wing wasn't working.

"So, I think from a safety aspect that would make the racing safer, better. I don't see a downside of doing it."

Norris was highly critical of the new cars.

McLaren, so dominant last season, were off the pace all weekend in Australia.

"The gap to the guys ahead is pretty big and we clearly have a lot of work to do," said the world champion.

Verstappen admitted Red Bull also have problems to address.

"I had some issues at the start with the battery so as soon as the clutch was dropped, I had no power, so that is something we need to understand," said the Dutchman.

"It was a decent comeback from P20 and we will work as a team to close the gap further."

New to the grid, Cadillac were encouraged by Sergio Perez finishing 16th on the team's much-anticipated debut.

"It was great to see the Cadillac Formula 1 Team bring its first car home," said team principal Graeme Lowdon.

# Brilliant Adebayo scores 83 points, second highest in NBA history

AFP | Miami

Bam Adebayo erupted for a jaw-dropping 83 points -- the second highest total in NBA history -- as the Miami Heat thrashed the Washington Wizards 150-129 on Tuesday.

Adebayo's astonishing performance surpassed the 81 points scored by the late Kobe Bryant for the Los Angeles Lakers against Toronto in 2006, and is second only to Wilt Chamberlain's iconic 100-point haul against the New York Knicks in 1962.

Adebayo served notice that a special performance could be on the cards with an electric first quarter, where he poured in 31 points from 10-of-16 shooting.

By half-time he had reached 43 points and he kept the pedal down after the interval with 19



Bam Adebayo celebrates on his way to an astonishing 83-point performance in Miami's win over Washington

points in the third quarter to take his tally to 62.

At that juncture it became a question of whether Adebayo

could threaten Bryant's 20-year-old tally of 81 points.

Adebayo duly eclipsed that record late in the fourth quarter. Two free throws saw him draw level with Bryant's total, and two more took him to 83 with just over a minute remaining.

That was the cue for Adebayo to be subbed out, leaving the court to a standing ovation from a disbelieving home crowd at Miami's Kaseya Center.

"Man, I wish I could relive it twice," Adebayo said, adding his individual masterpiece would not have been possible without the support of family, fans and his teammates.

"Somebody had to pass me the ball. I appreciate coach for drawing up plays for me and I got it going tonight."

Adebayo admitted he had

sensed a historic performance was beckoning after his first-half display, ranking it as the highpoint of his career.

"This is number one, for sure," Adebayo said.

Adebayo also took special satisfaction at surpassing his boyhood idol Bryant's mark of 81.

## 'Surreal moment'

"It's Wilt, me and then Kobe -- that sounds crazy," Adebayo said, adding that he had reflected on how Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash in Los Angeles in 2020, would have responded to his performance.

"To me it's wondering what he would say," Adebayo said. "My mind is like 'What would he say to me?' Because I've always wanted to have a conversation with him."

"He'd probably say 'Do it

again'. Just a surreal moment being in the company of somebody you idolized growing up."

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra described Adebayo's virtuoso display as "just an absolutely surreal night."

"We've been blessed to have been a part of a lot of big moments in this arena, and this one, it just happened," Spoelstra said.

"I'm grateful that we were all able to witness it."

Spoelstra said Miami had sought to stick to their game plan during Adebayo's 43-point first half, but gradually pivoted towards helping him chase a historic total.

"At half-time we talked about continuing to play our game," Spoelstra said. "In the second half I was a little bit more intentional trying to get him some touches."

# English clubs stumble

Yamal denies Newcastle, Liverpool lose and Atletico thrash Spurs in Champions League

● **Yamal scores 96th-minute penalty for Barcelona**

● **Newcastle draw 1-1 after Harvey Barnes opener**

● **Atletico Madrid beat Tottenham 5-2**

● **Bayern Munich thrash Atalanta 6-1 in Italy**

● **Liverpool lose 1-0 to Galatasaray again**

AFP | Paris

Lamine Yamal's last-gasp penalty earned Barcelona a 1-1 draw at Newcastle United in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie on Tuesday, while Liverpool lost 1-0 to Galatasaray in Istanbul for the second time this season.

Atletico Madrid piled more misery on Tottenham Hotspur by winning 5-2 on a nightmare evening for visiting goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky, while Bayern Munich are all but through to the quarter-finals after thrashing Atalanta 6-1 in Italy.

At St James' Park, Newcastle were heading for a night to savour when Harvey Barnes broke the deadlock on 86 minutes as he turned in a Jacob Murphy cross for his sixth Champions League goal this season.

However, Barcelona were awarded a penalty deep in injury time when Dani Olmo was tripped by Malick Thiaw and Yamal -- a peripheral figure



Barcelona's Spanish forward #10 Lamine Yamal passes the ball whilst under pressure from Newcastle United's English midfielder #20 Lewis Hall

throughout the game -- converted with the last kick of the match in the 96th minute.

That will make Newcastle's task harder going to the Camp Nou for the return next Wednesday as they aim to reach the quarter-finals for the first time. "There's hope, of course there is. We believe in ourselves, we believe in our capabilities. I think we've shown that today," said Newcastle manager Eddie Howe.

The winners of that tie look likely to face Atletico in the last eight, after Diego Simeone's side tore apart Spurs at the Metropolitan, with Julian Alvarez scoring twice.

It was a horrible night for struggling Tottenham and an especially dreadful one for their

Czech goalkeeper Kinsky, whose two previous appearances this season had come in the League Cup.

His slip when attempting to clear led to Marcos Llorente slotting in Atletico's sixth-minute opener, and Antoine Griezmann then took advantage of a Micky van de Ven slip to grab another for the hosts.

The game was just 15 minutes old when Kinsky made a complete mess of an attempted first-time pass, gifting the ball to Alvarez for 3-0.

The 22-year-old Kinsky's humiliation was compounded as he was then substituted by coach Igor Tudor, but replacement Guglielmo Vicario could not keep out Robin Le Normand's header to make it 4-0 midway

through the first half.

Pedro Porro pulled one back, but Alvarez ran half the length of the pitch following a superb Griezmann lay-off to get Atletico's fifth early in the second half.

Dominic Solanke fired in on 76 minutes to make it 5-2, perhaps giving Spurs a glimmer of hope for the return.

## Brilliant Bayern hit six

However, it is hard to see how they arrest a slump which has seen them lose all four games under new coach Tudor, and six on the bounce overall.

"Unfortunately, it happened in this big game, these mistakes. So we paid for this start of the game, it was too much for us," lamented Tudor, who said he needed to "preserve" the devastated Kinsky by taking him off.

"I've been coaching for 15 years, I've never done this. It was necessary to preserve the guy, preserve the team."

Earlier, Liverpool lost by a single goal to Galatasaray, just as they had when the clubs met in Turkey in the league phase.

Mario Lemina scored the only goal for the Turkish league leaders, heading in from close range after Victor Osimhen nodded down a corner.

Osimhen had the ball in the net again in the second half, only for an offside decision to come to Liverpool's rescue.

The Anfield side will need to do much better if they are to turn the tie around next week at home.

"It's already a difficult place to come to, but when you're 1-0 down it makes it even harder," said Liverpool boss Arne Slot.

Bayern confirmed their status as one of the leading contenders to win the competition by crushing Atalanta in Bergamo, with Michael Olise in inspired form.

Harry Kane played no part as Josip Stanicic tapped in an early opener and Olise applied a great finish to make it 2-0 midway through the first half.

Olise set up Serge Gnabry to make it 3-0 before half-time, and the latter also hit the bar late in the first half.

Nicolas Jackson got the fourth early in the second half, and the outstanding Olise curled in the fifth, his 15th of the season.



Tottenham Hotspur's Czech goalkeeper #31 Antonin Kinsky (R) is hugged by Tottenham Hotspur's Italian goalkeeper #01 Guglielmo Vicario as he is substituted

“Unfortunately, it happened in this big game, these mistakes. So we paid for this start of the game, it was too much for us. I’ve been coaching for 15 years, I’ve never done this. It was necessary to preserve the guy, preserve the team”

TOTTENHAM COACH IGOR TUDOR

Jamal Musiala netted the sixth, and there is surely no way back for Atalanta, even if Mario Pasalic got one back in stoppage time.



In a move described as a mercy substitution to “preserve” the player, Tottenham coach Igor Tudor pulled 22-year-old goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky after just 15 minutes following three catastrophic errors that gifted Atletico a 3-0 lead



Bayern Munich's French midfielder #17 Michael Olise tries to score against Atalanta's Italian goalkeeper #29 Marco Carnesecchi

## Olise could be world great, says Kompany

AFP | Bergamo

Vincent Kompany said that Michael Olise could become one of the world's best footballers after the France international starred with a brace in Bayern Munich's 6-1 thumping of Atalanta.

Olise was all over the pitch and drew applause from Atalanta's passionate home sup-

port when he crashed home his second of the night, and Bayern's fifth in the 64th minute.

"He arrived with a mentality that gives him a chance to be one of the best players in the world," Kompany told reporters.

"I don't want to compare the players, because they are not the same players at all. But the mentality, when I played with

Kevin De Bruyne, I was lucky to watch him come through as a young player and see him become a superstar, a world star.

"It is that obsession for detail. And Michael has that. It's not enough. So I think we have to push him to do more. But he's on a very good trajectory and it's a pleasure to witness it."



Atletico Madrid's French forward #07 Antoine Griezmann (R) scores his team's second goal

## Griezmann dreaming big at Atletico

AFP | Madrid

Atletico Madrid star Antoine Griezmann confirmed he plans to stay at the club and dreams of "doing something big" after thrashing Tottenham 5-2 yesterday.

The French forward, 34, had been heavily linked with a move to MLS side Orlando City before the end of March, when the American league's transfer window closes.

However Griezmann found the net in Atletico's big last 16 first leg triumph and, with a Copa del Rey final to come in April, is dreaming of silverware.

"I am very good here, enjoying myself a lot, what I do

on the pitch speaks for itself," Griezmann told Movistar.

"We will see, but the idea is to go until the final and let others talk.

"(Playing in the Copa del Rey final) is my dream, my objective and I hope we can do something big."

Atletico, who finished as runners-up in the 2014 and 2016 Champions League finals, have a great chance to reach the quarter-finals.

"We took advantage of some errors of theirs, they were slipping a lot on the pitch and we're used to it," said Griezmann.

"We wanted to press them a lot, and we did, the errors came from our pressing."

# Ruthless Sinner subdues Fonseca to reach Indian Wells quarter-finals

Fonseca goes toe-to-toe with Sinner before Italian prevails in two tiebreaks

● Jannik Sinner beats Joao Fonseca 7-6, 7-6

● Sinner to face Learner Tien in quarter-finals

● Fils upsets Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 7-6

AFP | Indian Wells

Four-time major champion Jannik Sinner edged talented Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/4) in a scintillating Stadium Court clash on Tuesday to reach the quarter-finals at Indian Wells.

The first meeting between the world number two Sinner and the big-hitting 19-year-old lived up to expectations, the fireworks sparking a raucous response from a crowd packed with enthusiastic Brazilian fans.

Sinner will face another fast-rising youngster in 20-year-old Learner Tien of the United States for a place in the semi-finals.

Fonseca went toe-to-toe with the Italian in a tense first set but was unable to convert his lone break chance and Sinner failed to capitalize on two.

A couple of uncharacteristic Sinner errors helped Fonseca power to a 6-3 lead in the tie-



Jannik Sinner of Italy serves against Joao Fonseca of Brazil

breaker, but the Italian responded, denying one set point with an ace to launch a run of five straight points that sealed the set.

Sinner looked headed to a comfortable victory with a break for 4-2 in the second, but Fonseca wasn't about to go quietly.

He broke Sinner to love in the ninth game and held for 5-5 as they went to a second tiebreaker.

An ace gave Fonseca a 4-3 lead

in the decider, but Sinner surged home with four straight points, polishing off the win with a masterful forehand service return.

"I felt like trying to be as aggressive as possible was the key," said Sinner, who is chasing a first title in the prestigious Masters 1000 event in the California desert.

"Joao's an incredible talent, very powerful from both sides. He was serving very well.

"Maybe he dropped a little bit at the end of the second set, but I'm very happy to get through," Sinner added.

Tien saved two match points to reach his first Masters 1000 quarter-final with a 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) victory over Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

"Honestly, after saving match points going into the tiebreak, just felt like I was playing with house money almost, really had

**”**  
I felt like trying to be as aggressive as possible was the key. Joao's an incredible talent, very powerful from both sides. He was serving very well. Maybe he dropped a little bit at the end of the second set, but I'm very happy to get through

JANNIK SINNER

nothing to lose," said Tien, a Southern California native who has fond memories of attending the tournament as a child.

Arthur Fils's injury comeback gathered pace as the Frenchman upset ninth-ranked Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 7-6 (11/9) to book a quarter-final meeting with fourth-ranked Alexander Zverev.

Germany's Zverev downed American Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4.

Fils is in the Indian Wells last eight for the second straight year, but it's been a twisting road to arrive there.

## Tough competitor

Back trouble kept him off the courts for eight months, but since a return at Montpellier last month he has impressed with a run to the final in Doha.



Joao Fonseca led the first-set tiebreak 6-3 and had a set point, but Jannik Sinner saved it with an ace before winning five straight points to seize control of the match

The 21-year-old, now ranked 32nd in the world, appeared to be in control with a 4-2 lead in the second set. But he let that advantage slip away and trailed 0-5 in the tiebreaker before he steadied, saving five set points before wrapping up the straight-sets win.

"I was at 0-5 in the tie-break and I was going to my box and complaining and complaining," he said, adding that the advice he got was to stop complaining and focus on the match.

"I tried to focus as best I could. Not too much emotion, celebration. Just tunnel vision and I am happy with it," said Fils, who let the emotion emerge again with a mighty chest thump after putting away match point.

# Sabalenka powers past Osaka, sets last-16 clash with Mboko

● Aryna Sabalenka beats Naomi Osaka 6-2, 6-4.

● Mboko beat Amanda Anisimova 6-4, 6-1

● Australian qualifier Gibson stuns Paolini

AFP | Indian Wells

World number one Aryna Sabalenka powered into the Indian Wells quarter-finals on Tuesday with a statement 6-2, 6-4 victory over former champion Naomi Osaka in a battle of Grand Slam winners.

It was another straightforward, straight-sets victory for Sabalenka, who fired 31 winners with eight aces.

"Overall I'm happy that I put so much pressure on her, that I brought variety today on the court," said Sabalenka, who mixed her booming groundstrokes with effective forays to the net.

"I think she was a little confused in the key moments, and I'm happy to see that," Sabalenka said. "I'm happy that my serve worked well, on the return I played really great tennis."

Sabalenka wrapped up the first set with two breaks of serve



Sabalenka expressed surprise she and Osaka have only met twice, but predicted more clashes ahead as Osaka, now ranked 16th, regains momentum after taking 2023 off to have daughter Shai

before Osaka began to find her rhythm.

But the Japanese star was unable to crack the serve of Sabalenka, who saved both break points she faced in the second set and grabbed a break for 4-3 with a pair of forehand winners.

It was just the second meeting between the two, both four-time Grand Slam champions. Osaka won the first back in 2018 on the way to her first major title at the US Open.

"That's actually crazy," Sabalenka said of the fact they haven't met more often. But she predicted there were more clashes in their future as Osaka, now ranked 16th, regains her momentum on the WTA Tour after taking off all of 2023 and



Aryna Sabalenka returns a shot to Naomi Osaka of Japan

having daughter, Shai, in July of that year.

Sabalenka, runner-up at Indian Wells in 2023 and 2025, will continue her pursuit of a first title in the prestigious ATP and WTA Masters 1000 event against 10th-seeded Victoria Mboko.

The 19-year-old Canadian saw off sixth-seeded American Amanda Anisimova 6-4, 6-1 to earn a shot at Sabalenka, who beat her in the fourth round of

the Australian Open.

"It was a big eye-opener playing her in the Australian Open," Mboko said. "Hopefully I can hold my ground a bit more against her."

## 'Completely speechless'

Australian qualifier Talia Gibson's dream run in the California desert continued as she belted 42 winners in a 7-5, 2-6, 6-1 victory over seventh-ranked Italian Jasmine Paolini.

The 21-year-old's first victory over a top-10 player propelled her into her first WTA quarter-final.

She'll face 14th-ranked Czech Linda Noskova, who swept past Alexandra Eala of the Philippines 6-2, 6-0 in just 55 minutes.

Gibson, ranked 112th, used a late break to pocket the first set, closing it out with her 18th winner of the opening frame.

Paolini sped to a 3-0 lead in the second as Gibson's errors

**”**  
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ARYNA SABALENKA

mounted and it looked as if the experienced Italian, a two-time Grand Slam finalist, had seized control.

But Gibson unleashed another barrage of winners in the third, including a stinging forehand service return on match point.

"Honestly, just completely speechless," said Gibson, who beat top-20 players Ekaterina Alexandrova and Clara Tauson on the way to the fourth round.

Gibson came into 2026 with just two WTA main-draw wins and had to save two match points in a qualifying victory just to give herself a chance to bag a few more at Indian Wells.

"I know that with my aggressive game, often I am able to create a lot of opportunities for myself in points," she said.

"But that being said, I think I have surprised myself a little bit with how well I have been able to play for quite a few matches in a row."

## Muharraq hold off Ahli rally to take Game One



Muharraq's Bader Malabes pushes forward on a fast break

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Holder Muharraq moved a step closer to defending their Khalifa Bin Salman Cup crown after claiming a hard-fought 93-87 victory over Al Ahli in Game One of their semi-final series at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

The night featured two semi-final clashes, with the later matchup between Manama and Al Najma concluding after TDT's print deadline, preventing coverage in this edition. Both series are played in a best-of-three format, with the first team to win two games advancing to the championship game.

In last night's first match, Muharraq overcame an early deficit and eventually took control with a strong middle stretch before withstanding a late Ahli push. With the win, the Red Wolves now hold a 1-0 lead in the series and need just one more victory to reach the final. Game Two is scheduled for Saturday, with a deciding Game Three, if required, set for March 18.

Al Ahli had a bright start and briefly led in the opening period, but Muharraq gradually settled into the contest, closing the first quarter with a 25-16 advantage. The reigning champions continued their momentum in the second frame, stretching the lead to double digits and entering halftime ahead 58-32 after a dominant offensive display.

Muharraq extended their cushion in the third quarter to as many as 27 points, appearing set for a comfortable victory. However, Ahli staged a spirited comeback in the final period, with Hesham Sarhan's scoring trimming the deficit to just four points in the closing seconds. Muharraq held firm to secure the win.

German coach Peters Schomers' side received balanced contributions across the roster. Nicholas West led with 16 points off the bench and added eight rebounds, while Wayne Chism contributed 14 points and nine boards. Captain Bader Abdulla scored 12, and both Mohamed Ameer and Ali Hussain Rashed chipped in 10 points each.

# Nasser bin Hamad Premier League resumes tonight

TDT | Manama

The Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier League returns tonight after more than two weeks without action, following recent disruptions and the staging of the King's Cup quarter-finals.

Two matchday 16 fixtures headline the return: Muharraq meet Riffa in a matchup steeped in recent history at 9:30pm at Khalifa Sports City, while Sitra face Budaiya at the same time at Bahrain National Stadium.

### Muharraq vs Riffa

The evening's marquee clash sees reigning champions Muharraq take on Riffa, two of the league's title contenders. Muharraq sit second with 36 points from 15 matches, level with leaders Al Khaldiya but trailing on head-to-head, while Riffa are third on 33 points.

Tonight also marks the first meeting between the sides since Riffa's triumph over Muharraq in the Khalid bin Hamad Cup final, adding an extra layer of intrigue. Both clubs have also advanced to the semi-finals of the 49th King's Cup, where a potential final rematch could occur.

The Red Wolves return to league play in red-hot form. In their last NPL fixture, they thrashed Bahrain Club 7-0 with goals from Sami Frioui, Edimar Ribeiro da Costa, Elliot Simoes, Soufiane Mahrouk, Abdoul Diarra, Facundo Tobares, and a second from Simoes.



Muharraq squad returns to the training pitch

Riffa, under Kuwaiti coach Mohamed Mashaan, come into tonight's fixture buoyed by a 3-0 win over Budaiya, with goals from Rodrigo Yuri, Ebrahim Al Khattal, and Ali Hassan Saeed. The victory kept them firmly in the title hunt.

### Sitra vs Budaiya

Elsewhere, Sitra, 10th on 15 points, face seventh-placed Budaiya, who have 18 points, at Bahrain National Stadium. Budaiya will aim to bounce back from their defeat to Riffa, while

Sitra seek vital points to climb out of the lower half of the table as the campaign resumes.

With the top three sides separated by just three points, tonight's action promises a crucial stage in the race for the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League title.

## Rana takes five wickets as Bangladesh crush Pakistan in ODI opener

AFP | Mirpur, Bangladesh

Bangladesh pace sensation Nahid Rana claimed his first five-wicket haul in one-day internationals to lead his team to a crushing eight-wicket win over Pakistan in their opening match yesterday.

Rana returned figures of 5-24 to skittle out Pakistan for 114, a total Bangladesh overhauled in 15.1 overs of the 50-over contest in Mirpur to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Opener Tanzid Hasan hammered an unbeaten 67 off 42 balls and put on a second-wicket partnership of 82 with Najmul Hossain Shanto, who made 27, in a statement win.

Saif Hassan fell early for four, while Litton Das remained unbeaten on three with Tanzid.

Earlier, Nahid laid the platform for victory with his outstanding spell in his seven overs to bowl out Pakistan for their lowest ODI total against Bangladesh, eclipsing the previous 161 during the 1999 World Cup.

The 23-year-old Nahid ripped through Pakistan's top order, becoming the first Bangladeshi bowler to dismiss the opposi-



Bangladesh's Nahid Rana (L) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Pakistan's Shamyul Hussain

### Scorecard

Bangladesh 115 for 2 (Tanzid 67\*)  
beat Pakistan 114 (Faheem 37,  
Farhan 27, Rana 5-24, Mehidy 3-29)

Senior quicks Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman took one wicket each.

Number eight Faheem Ashraf offered brief resistance with

his 37 before being dismissed by Mustafizur as Pakistan were eventually bowled out in 30.4 overs. The performance marked a breakthrough in Nahid's young ODI career since his debut in 2024.

He had taken only five wickets in his first five matches before producing the five-wicket haul in his sixth appearance.

## India T20 hero dons disguise for unexpected train home

AFP | Mumbai

Indian cricket fans were stumped to discover that star all-rounder Shivam Dube could have been travelling incognito on a train with them, fresh from delivering a record third T20 World Cup crown.

Dube, who slammed an unbeaten 26 off just 8 balls in Sunday's final against New Zealand, was left stranded in Ahmedabad on Monday when flights to Mumbai were booked solid.

It meant he took a berth in a shared sleeper train for a seven-hour journey home -- something almost unheard of in India, where top cricketers are major celebrities and often mobbed by fans when they appear in public.

Dube told the Indian Express yesterday that he went to great lengths to get back to his son, 4, and daughter, 2, cobbling together a disguise to avoid detection from fellow passengers.

"I wore a cap, a mask, and a full-sleeved t-shirt," the 32-year-old told the newspaper.

As he snuck onto the train with his wife and a friend in tow, Dube clambered onto the



India's Shivam Dube in action (file photo)

top bunk of his assigned carriage and wrapped himself in a blanket to remain concealed for the duration of the trip.

His cover was nearly blown however when an unwitting ticket collector asked if he'd just spotted the T20 hero, before being distracted by Dube's wife.

As the journey finished Dube said he was escorted by police so "things were easy and the exit was smooth".

"They thought I was landing at the airport, but were surprised when I told them that I was travelling by train."