



Hidden in bedcovers

Court to rule on drug parcel case

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The High Criminal Court is set to deliver its verdict on 30 September in a case in which authorities seized 850 grammes of a powdered substance and arrested two men suspected of involvement in a 'dead mail' drug network.

Customs officers discovered the drugs hidden inside bedcovers during an X-ray scan of incoming post. The Anti-Narcotics Directorate was alerted, and a controlled handover was arranged using the phone number on the package and a shared location pin.

A man arrived to collect the parcel and was detained. He told investigators that he was acting on someone else's instructions to deliver the package to their family in Bahrain. Under supervision, he contacted the intended recipient and arranged a meeting at a restaurant.

At the location, two men took possession of the package and were immediately arrested by officers. A search of the first man uncovered 27 A4 sheets soaked in a substance described as CBD, while the

second man was found with two boxes containing the same material. Subsequent searches of their homes revealed additional drugs and tools used for dividing the consignments.

Investigators said the operation appeared to be part of a network led by an unknown organiser, with the two men responsible for receiving, storing, portioning, and passing on the drugs via 'dead mail'.

During questioning, the second man admitted importing and selling the drugs, receiving them from the first man and distributing them under prior instructions. The first man said he collected parcels and left them in pre-arranged locations on the organiser's orders.

Phone checks revealed messages, videos, and images of money transfers on the second man's device, while the first man's search history included queries about empty perfume bottles in Bahrain and CBD oil.

Both men, along with an unidentified person, were charged with importing and possessing narcotic and psychotropic substances with intent to trade. They remain in custody pending the court's ruling.

From Weeks to Minutes

Speed boost places Kingdom at fintech forefront

● Data integration cut drastically

● AI-ready data improves decisions

● Bahrain strengthens fintech hub

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Al Salam Bank has secured a strategic partnership with global data firm Denodo that promises to cut data integration times from weeks to minutes, a leap executives say could transform how Bahrain's banks deliver services and strengthen the Kingdom's fintech ambitions.

From weeks to minutes

The agreement will allow the bank to connect multiple systems instantly, making it easier to launch new services and improve customer experience. Denodo said the shift means everyday banking can feel faster, easier, and more reliable, boosting customer satisfaction.

Gabriele Obino, Denodo's Vice President for Southern Europe and the Middle East, described the breakthrough as enabling "AI-ready data" - information that is accurate, consistent, and instantly accessible.

For banks, it supports quicker decisions and greater efficiency. For customers, it promises services that are faster, more personal, and delivered in real time.

Efficiency and growth

Obino explained that when data is clean and connected, it avoids duplication, reduces costs, and speeds up processes. "What once required going to a branch or

waiting on hold now happens quickly and intuitively through digital channels," he said, noting the benefits for both profitability and customer trust.

Vision 2030 advantage

The partnership aligns with Bahrain's wider Vision 2030 drive to modernize its financial sector and grow its role as a regional fintech hub.

Bahrain's flexible environment - including

sandboxes, open banking, and crypto initiatives - has already set it apart from other Gulf countries in encouraging digital banking innovation.

Al Salam Bank said its choice of Denodo reflects a commitment to modernizing infrastructure, partnering across ecosystems, and advancing innovation through data and AI - an alignment that made the collaboration a natural fit.

Future banking model

Over the next five years, AI-driven data is expected to shift Gulf banking models from reactive to proactive, enabling predictive advice, personalized services, and real-time insights. With a logical data layer at the core, banks will increasingly anticipate customer needs rather than simply respond to them.



Bahrain was the first GCC country to mandate open banking in 2020, a move that positioned it ahead of regional peers in digital finance adoption.

Shared Joy



The Indian Ladies Association (ILA) marked Onam with a special Sadya yesterday, where guests and house help came together in the spirit of joy and giving. The celebration featured music, dance, and smiles, making the festival extra memorable with love, laughter, and togetherness. Pics credit: Anchalo Bensiger