

Mercedes tops final Test day

Antonelli leads Russell as Mercedes go fastest to end first three-day session in Formula 1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2026



● **Kimi Antonelli steers Mercedes F1 W17 car to a fastest lap time of 1min 33.669secs**

● **F1 returns to action for second three-day test session from Wednesday to Friday next week at BIC**

Manama

Kimi Antonelli was quickest this evening as Formula 1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2026 wrapped up the first of its two three-day sessions at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

The Mercedes superstar shrugged off two days of limited running due to car trouble earlier this week to top the timesheet today with a fastest lap of 1min 33.669secs. He posted his best under lights, which was also quickest for this week, after taking over for teammate George Russell, who was right behind him on the final classification.

F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2026 continues next week at BIC with the second three days of action from Wednesday to Friday.

It will be the final opportu-

nity for the teams to gather the all-important data they need to get their all-new 2026 cars ready for this year's FIA F1 World Championship, which flags off 6 to 8 March in Melbourne, Australia, with the first of 24 rounds this season.

Antonelli tried to make up for the lost track time from days one and two by going for 61 laps this evening. He finished 0.249s seconds quicker than Russell on the day in the Mercedes F1 W17, with Russell completing 78 laps.

Lewis Hamilton put Ferrari third on the times after testing for the whole day in their SF-26. He was 0.540s off the leader's pace while going for 150 laps.

Oscar Piastri was in the McLaren the full day for back-to-back F1 Constructors' World Champions McLaren. He ranked fourth today 0.880s behind, and was the day's busiest driver with 161 laps.

The Red Bull Racing pair of Max Verstappen and Isack Hadjar followed in fifth and sixth, respectively, in their RB26. Verstappen was 1.672s from Antonelli after running in the morning and Hadjar was 1.941s back.

The top 10 was completed by Esteban Ocon (+2.084s) in Haas's VF-26, Franco Colapinto (+2.137s) for Alpine who ran the whole day in their A526, Oliver Bearman (+2.303s) for Haas, and

Nico Hulkenberg (+2.622s) in Audi's R26.

The rest of the classification featured Alexander Albon (+2.996s) in Williams's FW48, Liam Lawson (+3.139s) as Racing Bulls's lone tester today in their VCARB 03, Carlos Sainz (+3.517s) for Williams, Sergio Perez (+3.696s) in Cadillac's CA01, Gabriel Bortoleto (+3.867s) for Audi, Lance Stroll (+4.496s) driving Aston Martin's AMR26 the full day, and Valtteri Bottas (+5.103s) for Cadillac.

In next week's tests, F1 fans will be able to witness in person F1's contenders on track on the other two open days of testing on Thursday and Friday (Editor's note: 19 and 20 February).

All those attending testing will also be able to enjoy a series of off-track attractions, including dynamic racing simulators, a Batak reaction game, and a stick-catching game. Aside from these, fans visiting BIC will have the chance to see a display of the new 2026 F1 car in its special Bahrain livery.

Tickets to the open days of F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2026 cost BD10 for adults and BD5 for children per day. To buy tickets or to get more information, visit the circuit's official website bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

There is also free access on both open days for all who pur-

chased their tickets to the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026 before 8 September last year.

Exclusive hospitality packages are on offer by BIC for the remaining two public days of the test. These feature the best views of the action along with exceptional food and hospitality in an elegant setting. The hospitality lounge is located right above the F1 pit lane. Full details on BIC's hospitality offerings are available on bahraingp.com. The packages can be booked online or by calling +973-17451086.

Following the season-opener in Australia, The F1 battles will continue with races in China and Japan before heading to

the Kingdom for the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026 from 10 to 12 April – the fourth round of the world championship.

Tickets to the grand prix weekend are selling fast, with seats to the Turn 1 Grandstand already completely sold out and the Main Grandstand already 98 per cent sold. Tickets are also selling out quickly for the Beyond Grandstand, University Grandstand, and Victory Grandstand.

To buy tickets or for more information on F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2026, the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026, or on other events and activities at BIC, visit bahraingp.com, call the BIC Hotline, or follow the circuit on social media.

