

Emotional Antonelli wins maiden grand prix with Mercedes 1-2 in China

Nineteen-year-old converts record pole into maiden victory ahead of Russell and Hamilton | P16

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THE DAILY **tribune**

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HRH Prince Salman issues circular on Eid Al-Fitr holidays



HRH Prince Salman
TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday issued a circular on the Eid Al-Fitr holidays.

The circular stipulates that the Kingdom's ministries and public institutions will close on the day of Eid Al-Fitr and the two days that follow.

Since the official holidays will fall on a Friday and Saturday, they will be compensated by extending the holiday by two more days.

Death penalty for Iran 'spies'

TDT | Manama

Public prosecutors demanded the death penalty for defendants accused of spying for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and providing it with sensitive information on key economic and residential sites in Bahrain.

Officials said the intelligence allegedly supplied by the defendants contributed to attacks on these locations during the Iranian aggression against the Kingdom.

During closing arguments before the competent court yesterday, the prosecution presented evidence it said confirmed the defendants' involvement

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Safe passage

GCC and UK ministers stress safeguarding regional skies and maritime routes

TDT | Manama

Foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the United Kingdom emphasised the importance of protecting regional airspace, maritime routes, and freedom of navigation.

They also highlighted the need to ensure the safety and security of supply chains, shipping operations, and seafarers, while safeguarding the stability of global energy markets.

The ministers underscored the intensive diplomatic efforts undertaken by GCC countries prior to the attacks and reaffirmed their commitment that their territories would not be used to launch attacks against Iran.

They highlighted the role of sustained dialogue and diplomacy in seeking a resolution to the crisis.

Meeting

The joint statement was issued following an extraordinary meeting chaired by His Excellency Dr. Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister of Bahrain, and attended by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary, Her Excellency Yvette Cooper.

The ministers welcomed the adoption of United Nations



H.E. Dr. Al Zayani chairs the online meeting



Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), which condemned Iranian attacks targeting GCC states and Jordan, including strikes on civilian areas and critical infrastructure, resulting in casualties and property damage.

Officials expressed gratitude to the UK for its steadfast sup-

port of GCC security and territorial integrity and praised the unprecedented international solidarity demonstrated by 136 UN member states backing the resolution.

Ministers reaffirmed the strategic partnership between the GCC and the UK, announced at the GCC-UK Summit in Bahrain

in 2016, and welcomed progress in ongoing free trade agreement negotiations.

Commitment

The ministers reiterated their commitment to regional stability, protection of civilians, and full adherence to international law and humanitarian obligations.

They urged Iran to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, refrain from destabilizing activities, and cease interference in the internal affairs of states.

GCC ministers also affirmed the right of member states, individually and collectively, to defend themselves under Article 51 of the UN Charter and con-

demned any Iranian threats to maritime navigation in strategic waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Security

Highlighting the broader implications, the ministers stressed that Gulf security is a cornerstone of global economic stability and closely linked to the security interests of the United Kingdom and the wider international community.

They commended the UK's contributions, including the recent deployment of Royal Air Force Typhoon aircraft to enhance defense capabilities in the region.



The GCC and UK ministers highlighted the role of sustained dialogue and diplomacy in seeking a resolution to the crisis.

Harmony appeal

MP calls for calm amid regional tensions

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

MP Jalal Kadhem called for an end to sectarian abuse and urged the public to direct comments on sensitive regional issues to the state bodies responsible for addressing them. He warned that "reckless rhetoric can fuel division inside Bahrain".

The lawmaker said Bahrain had long been known for coexistence and social accord, and said any speech that insults sects or

blames a whole group for the acts of a few people is "wrong and against the country's interest".

Kadhem said abuse, slander and insults traded on social media between people from the same society should not be dressed up as patriotism.

"True patriotism rests on sober words and measured speech that brings people together," he said, "not language that drives them apart or strips them of dignity." He said a personal mistake "must stay personal" and should

not be pinned on an entire sect or social group.

All parts of Bahraini society, he said, had helped build the



"True patriotism rests on sober words and measured speech that brings people together."

— MP JALAL KADHEM



state and had played their part in its growth and stability over many years.

"Fairness means holding the

wrongdoer to account as an individual, not as part of a wider group," he said.

Linking some of the harsher exchanges to the strain across the region, Kadhem said regional tensions and conflict had split opinion between those who support different states.

That divide, he said, had spilled into debate in some societies and had reached Bahrain and other Gulf states through media rows and social media exchanges.

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Security, defence forces remain on 'high alert'

Legal action taken against 45 drivers for causing public disturbance

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Authorities in Bahrain said security, defence and public service systems remain on alert as officials continue to monitor regional developments and maintain readiness to protect the public.

Speaking during the National Communication Centre daily briefing, Captain Abdullah Al-Mannai of the Ministry of Interior, said the General Di-

rectorate of Traffic has taken legal action against 45 drivers for deliberately producing loud and disturbing noises from their vehicles.

He said the behaviour caused fear among residents and disrupted public calm, adding that the violations were addressed in accordance with traffic regulations.

Al-Mannai said Bahrain's military and security authorities continue to operate around the clock as part of an integrated



system aimed at safeguarding the Kingdom and its residents.



"Bahrain's military and security authorities continue to operate around the clock as part of an integrated system aimed at safeguarding the Kingdom and its residents."

— CAPTAIN ABDULLAH AL-MANNAI, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

He also noted that the Interior Minister, His Excellency Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, recently visited the General Directorate of Civil Defence to

review operational readiness.

During the visit, the Minister condemned the Iranian aggression and conveyed the appreciation of His Majesty King Ham-

ad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to Civil Defence personnel for their efforts in protecting the community.

Al-Mannai also clarified that emergency sirens and wireless alert systems are activated only when a direct threat to targets within Bahrain is detected. He said the systems are not used unless there is an immediate risk.

CBSE cancels Class 12 exams in Gulf



Image used for illustrative purposes only

● **Students await fair evaluation**

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has cancelled the Class 12 board examinations that were scheduled in several Gulf countries, including Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The decision affects thousands of Indian students studying in CBSE-affiliated schools across the region.

Authorities said the decision was taken after reviewing the current situation in the Middle East, with student safety and well-being cited as the primary reason for cancelling the exams.

CBSE is expected to announce an alternative evaluation method soon.

While parents across the Gulf recognize the need for caution, the sudden cancellation has left many anxious about their children's academic future after months of preparation for board exams, hoping that CBSE provides a fair evaluation system soon.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Rashmi, a parent of a Class 12 CBSE student, said, "our major concern now is eligibility for entrance exams for higher education, especially for competitive exams where percentages and marks play a



"While some students perform better in board exams than in pre-boards, we trust CBSE to come up with a student-friendly formula, so there's no need for stress or apprehension."

— DR. K. GOPINATH MENON, PRINCIPAL OF NEW INDIAN SCHOOL

big role. If model exam marks are used as the evaluation criteria, they may not fully reflect students' actual performance, as students tend to perform better in the final board examinations than in model or pre-board tests."

School leaders, however, say there's no need for panic, expecting CBSE to adopt a fair evaluation system.

Dr. K. Gopinath Menon, Principal of New Indian School, said, "We are awaiting further details on the evaluation."

125 missiles, 211 drones destroyed

● **BDF air defence systems counter Iranian attacks**

TDT | Manama

The General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force announced that through the unwavering vigilance of its personnel, the BDF's air defence systems continue to successfully counter successive waves of the hostile terrorist Iranian aggression.

Since the onset of hostilities,

air defences have intercepted and destroyed 125 ballistic missiles and 211 drones targeting the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The General Command expressed its pride in the exceptional combat readiness and vigilance demonstrated by BDF personnel, and commended their sustained operational effectiveness in defending the Kingdom.

The performance of Bahrain's forces continues to inspire confidence that the Kingdom's skies remain secure.

The General Command urged all members of the public to

The use of ballistic missiles and drones to target civilian areas and private property constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter.

exercise the utmost caution for their personal safety.

Citizens and residents are advised to: Keep clear of affected areas and any suspicious objects; refrain from filming or

photographing military operations or debris sites; avoid spreading unverified information; and consult only official and government media channels for updates, alerts, and advisories.

The General Command further emphasised that the use of ballistic missiles and drones to target civilian areas and private property constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter.

These indiscriminate attacks represent a direct threat to regional peace and security.

UK updates travel advice for citizens

TDT | Manama

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has updated its travel guidance for British citizens in the Kingdom of Bahrain, citing current regional developments.

In a statement obtained by Al-Ayyam, the ministry urged citizens to avoid areas near security or military installations, as well as facilities belonging to the US government, due to the ongoing escalation in the region.

Officials noted that Iran continues to target civilian infrastructure across several countries, including hotels, roads, bridges, energy facilities, oil production sites, water systems, and airports. The FCDO reiterated its advice to avoid travel to Bahrain except in cases of extreme necessity.

British nationals in the country are also urged to register their presence and subscribe to the alerts service via the UK Foreign Office's travel advice page, which provides guidance on emergency procedures.

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BAHRAIN COMMERCIAL FACILITIES COMPANY BSC



NOTICE OF VENUE CHANGE Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) Wednesday, 25 March 2026

Due to current circumstances, Bahrain Commercial Facilities Company B.S.C. wishes to inform its esteemed shareholders that the venue for the Ordinary General Meeting (OGM), scheduled on Wednesday, 25 March 2026 at 10:00 AM, has been changed to Sayer Ballroom, 1st Floor Lobby Level, Sofitel Bahrain Zallaq Thalassa Sea & Spa Hotel, Kingdom of Bahrain, instead of Gulf Hotel, Manama. The meeting will continue to be held in person. All other arrangements remain as per the original notice. Shareholders are kindly requested to take note of this change.

For further information: 80008000

'Unacceptable'

Shura Council rejects draft laws to shift state-linked company profits to general budget

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Two draft laws to move more state-linked profits into Bahrain's general budget were rejected by the Shura Council yesterday after members heard that the plan ran against current law, cut into company independence and could leave state firms borrowing to meet budget payments.

The two draft laws, both based on proposals first sent by Parliament, sought to send more public money into the state's main account.

One would have changed Article 10 of Decree-Law No. 39 of 2002 on the general budget so that the revenues of all public authorities and institutions, along with the State's net profits from wholly owned companies and its share of profits in other firms after the legal reserve was set aside, would go into the public account.

The other would have required at least 50 per cent of the State's net profits from Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company and Bapco Energies to be entered in the general budget after the legal reserve was deducted.

Route

Opening the case against the bills, Financial and Economic Affairs Committee chairman Khalid Al Maskati said the committee agreed with the aim of using public income, "especially non-oil revenues", to help cut the budget deficit, but said the route taken in the bills was



"The plan cut against the whole purpose of creating public bodies and state firms with their own finances."

— JAMAL FAKHRO, FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN



"The institutions would have to borrow what they need to meet their obligation to the budget."

— KHALID AL MASKATI, FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

wrong.

Fixing a set share of Mumtalakat and Bapco Energies' net profits, he said, would mean "the institutions would have to borrow what they need to meet their obligation to the budget".

He added: "That is not acceptable to the committee, nor to the council."

First deputy chairman Jamal Fakhro said the plan cut against the whole purpose of creating public bodies and state firms with their own finances.

"If we create a public institution, that means it is responsible for its revenues and expenses," he told the chamber.

"How can I tell that institution to transfer its revenues to the government and then bear its own expenses?"

Funds

He said such bodies were created in part so the Finance Ministry would not have to handle all those funds itself, asking what sense there was in pulling all their money into the state budget only to send money back to them later.

"I believe the draft law has not been studied sufficiently," he said.

After studying both drafts and hearing from the Ministry of

Finance and National Economy, Mumtalakat and Bapco Energies, the committee said the purpose behind the proposals was already met under laws now in force.

It said state-owned companies were already subject to the National Audit Office and were already required to submit their budgets and final accounts to the Finance Ministry, meaning the draft laws would repeat rules already in force rather than bring in a new form of control.

Al Maskati also objected to the part dealing with financial statements, saying government company accounts were already prepared in line with internationally recognised accounting rules and reviewed through the current system.

Warning

"There is no need to burden the legislative authority with these reports," he said, warning against adding steps that would restrict work. He also spoke of his trust in the Finance Ministry's role.

The committee said the proposed amendment ran against the budget law, which already excludes some funds from remittance where other laws provide for that, and could affect the financial and administrative independence granted by the Constitution to public bodies and institutions.

In the committee's view, the draft laws took a course at odds with Bahrain's current financial order.

Ministers oppose fixed state firm levy

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Ministers pushed back against a draft law to fix the share of state-owned company profits paid into the state budget. They said they support the idea of public firms contributing to the treasury but have concerns about implementing a rigid legal rate.

Officials argued that tying the payment to a fixed percentage in law could create problems during market fluctuations, making it difficult for companies to adjust to changing economic conditions.

Minister of Cabinet Affairs, His Excellency Hamad Al Malki, said the government's dispute was with the method in the bill, not the main idea behind it.

Budget

He said there is already an agreed way for government-owned companies to pay into the general budget during preparation of the state budget every two years, with the legislature taking part in that process.

The Minister said a fixed share written into law would not take enough account of the ups and downs faced by companies and the way results change



H.E. Hamad Al Malki

from one year to the next.

He said the current way allows a set amount to be agreed after looking at trading conditions and company performance, and added that it is reviewed from time to time with the legislative authority involved.

Mechanism

"The government agrees with the principle of state-owned companies contributing to the general budget of the state," H.E. Al Malki said. "But we differ with the draft law in the mechanism proposed."

He said fixing a share of net profit in law would hurt company growth plans and would also make it harder for the Ministry of Finance and National Economy to work out the budget with



H.E. Mohammed bin Daina



H.E. Al Malki said the government's dispute was with the method in the bill, not the main idea behind it.

precision.

"Setting a fixed percentage of companies' net profits would have a negative effect on their expansion plans," he said, adding that it would also affect the

ministry's ability to determine budget figures accurately.

H.E. Al Malki said Mumtalakat Holding Company has paid BD240 million into the state budget since 2017.

Sum

He said the sum began at BD10 million in 2017, rose over time and reached BD40 million in 2024, with another BD40 million paid in 2025.

Oil and Environment Minister, H.E. Mohammed bin Daina, said state-owned firms already pass through layers of financial review and legal scrutiny.

He said each board of directors draws up its company's budget, which is then approved by the board, checked by internal auditors and audited by outside auditors before going to the shareholder, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, for approval.

"Each board of directors is responsible for setting the company's budget," H.E. Bin Daina said. "The budget is approved by the board of directors, and there are internal auditors for all company accounts, audited by external auditors."

He said company accounts also fall under the Companies Law and that all accounts are audited.

Five 'spies' for Iran arrested

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior announced that the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science has arrested five individuals and identified a sixth, a fugitive abroad, for their involvement in collecting and passing sensitive information to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) through terrorist elements based in Iran.

Authorities said the suspects were also involved in recruiting terrorist operatives to participate in plots targeting Bahrain.

These acts were intended to undermine the state's sovereignty, target security authorities and economic entities, spread fear and panic among citizens and residents, and risk the country's security and safety.

The arrestees are: Abbas Abdullah Habib (39), Yousif Ahmed Mansoor Sarhan (25),

Mohammed Fadhel Hameed (39), Sahlan Abdulredha Ali (27), Mohammed Hadi Hassan (37), and Ahmed Yousif Jassim Sarhan (37, fugitive abroad).

According to the confession of the first suspect, whose criminal record indicates his involvement in terrorist crimes during previous years, he had received intensive training at IRGC camps in trafficking persons and recruiting operatives to participate in implementing terrorist plots.

Locations

He and the other suspects also photographed and recorded coordinates of several vital locations, as well as certain hotels in Bahrain, and sent those images and coordinates to the IRGC, which assisted in the targeting of those sites during the Iranian aggression.

Legal proceedings were taken, and the five arrestees were referred to the Public Prosecution.

Shura Council rejects nursery licensing bill

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Shura Council members rejected a bill yesterday that would have made it a clearer criminal offence to open a nursery without a licence, run one without approval, or change its site or specifications without the Ministry of Education's consent.

The council concluded that a new law already covers those acts, making the proposed bill unnecessary.

The proposed amendment to Bahrain's Child Law was meant to spell out, in plainer terms, which nursery-related breaches would bring punishment and to link them more clearly to the penalties in the law.

But the Women and Child Affairs Committee said those same matters are now governed by the Private Educational Institutions Law, issued as Law No. 4 of 2026 on 28 January.

Breaches

Presenting the committee's report, rapporteur Hala Ramzi said the bill aimed to "enhance the supervisory role of the Ministry over nurseries" by defining more clearly the breaches that warrant punishment.



Hala Ramzi

Ramzi also said that it would "expressly criminalise the establishment of nurseries without a licence, their operation, or changing their location or specifications without the approval of the Ministry of Education".

The lawmaker told members the committee had still urged rejection because the legal ground had shifted while the bill was under study.

Provision

During that period, she said, the Private Educational Institutions Law was issued, and Article 5 of its promulgation text repealed earlier rules on private educational institutions and "every provision that conflicts with its rules", showing a move to place the sector under one legal frame.

Ramzi said the new law had brought nurseries within one rulebook.

Safe return



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is intensifying efforts to facilitate the return of Bahraini citizens abroad through land ports, as part of its ongoing monitoring of regional developments and commitment to citizen safety and security. These efforts are being carried out in coordination with relevant Bahraini authorities, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) counterparts, and Bahraini embassies abroad. The embassies continue to monitor conditions of Bahraini citizens in GCC countries and provide support to ease border-crossing procedures and ensure their safe and efficient return.

Saraya Sanad villa expansion rules already in place

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Homeowners in Saraya Sanad's Block 815 already have room under existing planning rules to build further on their villas, the government has told Parliament in reply to a proposal seeking changes to setback and building ratio rules.

The reply said the aim behind the proposal is already met under Prime Minister's Decision No. 93 of 2023, which sets the planning rules for Bahrain's different areas.

In the government's view, the rules now in force already deal with smaller plots in Private Housing Areas (A), including those in Saraya Sanad.

Decision

Ministers pointed to Article 8 of the decision, which lays down special rules for plots below given sizes.

For land under 300 square metres, or with a front or side width of 12 to 15 metres, building is allowed up to one side boundary.

For plots with a front width of less than 12 metres, or an area below 200 square metres, building is allowed up to both side boundaries.

In those cases, the front setback stays at three metres if the plot lies on a road less than 20 metres wide, and two metres if the road is 20 metres wide or more.

'Stay calm, care for one another'

First aid coach Husnia Karimi says in moments of danger, humanity is tested

Ghadeer Abdulla
TDT | Manama

Since 28 February in Bahrain, life has changed in a way no one could have imagined.

Fires, explosions, and sudden injuries have touched families and communities, leaving fear and uncertainty in their wake.

Recent fires in Muharraq and the injuries reported in Sitra have reminded us of this fragile reality.

In the face of danger, what defines us is not only how we survive, but how we care for one another.

Reminder

These moments are a powerful reminder of our shared humanity. In moments of danger, our humanity is tested.

In an exclusive discussion, first aid coach Husnia Karimi shared how small acts of care during fires, smoke inhalation, and injuries can save lives.

"I have been actively involved in first aid training for several years, offering professional courses and community workshops," she said.

Karimi emphasized staying calm and prioritizing safety.

"If a fire breaks out at home



Image used for illustrative purposes only



“Small acts of care during fires, smoke inhalation, and injuries can save lives.”

— HUSNIA KARIMI, FIRST AID COACH

or outside, the very first step is to stay calm and call emergency services immediately. Evacuate safely, avoid elevators, and alert others nearby," she advised. "Always ensure your own safety first. Cover your nose and mouth,

stay low to avoid smoke, and only assist others if you are not putting yourself at serious risk."

Inhalation

For smoke inhalation, she recommends moving the per-

son to fresh air, loosening tight clothing, keeping them calm, and monitoring breathing.

"If they are not breathing, begin CPR if trained," she said. Essential tools include fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits, flashlights, bottled water, and emergency blankets.

Regarding injuries from explosions or rockets, Karimi explained, "Ensure the area is safe before approaching the injured. Control bleeding with clean cloths or bandages, stabilize embedded objects, keep the person calm, and monitor for shock. Temporary stabilization is key until emergency responders arrive."

Evacuation

She stressed protecting children and the elderly: "Prepare evacuation plans, assign someone to assist vulnerable family members, and practice drills regularly. Age-appropriate training ensures everyone knows how to respond calmly."

Karimi added: "Always prioritize safety and prevention. First aid and fire safety training is essential. When every household member is trained, response becomes faster, coordinated, and far more effective in saving lives."

Online service launched for rain damage compensation requests



Abdullah Ashoor

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

A new electronic service has been launched by the Ministry of Works allowing citizens to submit compensation requests for damages caused by heavy rainfall through its official website.

The service follows a proposal submitted by Northern Municipal Council member Abdullah Ashoor during council discussions after severe rain affected parts of Bahrain on April 15, 2024.

Heavy rainfall that day led to flooding in several areas, with water accumulating in streets and neighbourhoods.

Some residents reported damage to homes and personal property as rainwater entered houses and vehicles stalled in flooded roads.

Ashoor said he had submitted an urgent proposal to establish a dedicated electronic platform that would allow citizens to submit compensation requests related to rain damage.

Eid-shopping crowds fill malls and markets

Families prepare for celebrations

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Shopping malls and markets across Bahrain witnessed a surge of activity over the past three days as families rushed to complete their preparations for Eid Al Fitr during the weekend.

A tour of several shopping centres and local markets revealed noticeably larger crowds.

Corridors were filled with families and shoppers moving between stores from the evening hours until late at night.

The scene reflected the traditional peak of consumer activity that accompanies the final days of Ramadan.

Outfits

Clothing and footwear stores were among the busiest, particularly those selling children's outfits for Eid.

Many shops were packed with customers trying on clothes and selecting festive attire.

Shoppers could be seen car-



Busy shopping scenes ahead of Eid Al Fitr

rying bags after moving from one store to another inside the malls.

Sweet shops and chocolate stores also reported strong demand, with families purchasing a variety of desserts commonly associated with Eid celebrations.

Presents

Perfume and gift stores experienced a similar increase in visitors, as many people chose to buy presents or fragrances to mark the occasion.

Restaurants and cafés inside the malls were equally lively.

Many families combined their shopping trips with social

gatherings after Iftar, creating a vibrant atmosphere across food courts and café seating areas.

Parking areas around some shopping centres were nearly full during the evening peak, reflecting the high turnout.

Preparations

The final days of Ramadan traditionally mark the busiest shopping period of the year, as residents hurry to complete their Eid preparations.

This weekend was no exception, with markets and malls remaining active late into the night as shoppers continued their search for the finishing touches to their celebrations.

A verification code that turned into resignation

Five Bahrainis out of work

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

In a case that reveals how technology and language barriers can be exploited, five Bahrainis suddenly found themselves out of work after a simple verification code was used to submit their resignations without their knowledge.

The incident began after the contract of a security compa-

ny that supplied workers to a building affiliated with the Ministry of Labour came to an end.

A supervisor at the company asked the workers to come to the company's office, telling them it was to arrange their transfer to a new workplace.

Inside the office, the workers were called in one by one.

Message

The supervisor told each of them that they would receive a text message related to the job transfer process and asked them to provide the verification

code included in the message.

Since the message was written in English and the workers did not understand the language, they simply gave him the code.

What they did not know was that the message was not about transferring them to another workplace.

Instead, it was a message confirming an electronic resignation.

By using the verification codes, the supervisor was able to electronically sign resignation letters in their names without their knowledge.

Ramadan to complete full 30 days

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Astronomical calculations indicate that Ramadan this year will complete the full 30 days.

Eid Al Fitr is expected to fall on Friday, 20 March, according to Dr Waheeb Al Nasser, Professor of Applied Physics and Vice President of the Bahraini Astronomical Society.

Dr Al Nasser explained that committees responsible for



Dr Waheeb Al Nasser

sighting the Shawwal crescent across the Gulf will meet on the evening of Wednesday, 18

March, which marks the 29th day of Ramadan, in line with the Prophetic tradition of visually confirming the new moon.

However, he noted that the astronomical conjunction marking the birth of the Shawwal crescent will occur at 4:25 a.m. Mecca time on Thursday, 19 March, meaning the moon will not yet be present in the sky at sunset on Wednesday.

Consequently, Thursday is expected to complete the thirtieth day of Ramadan.

Alba initiates controlled and safe shutdown of reduction Lines 1, 2 and 3

Manama

Aluminium Bahrain B.S.C. (Alba), the world's largest aluminium smelter on one site, has initiated a controlled and safe shutdown of Reduction Lines 1, 2 and 3, which together represent 19% of Alba's total production capacity of 1,623,000 metric tonnes per annum, as an operational measure



to preserve business continuity amid ongoing supply and transit disruptions affecting the Strait of Hormuz.

This targeted, line-specific action is designed to optimise the utilisation of Alba's existing raw materials inventory and prioritise operational stability across Reduction Lines 4, 5 and 6. By concentrating strategic raw materials' inputs on the most sustainable operating configuration, Alba aims to maintain production resilience, manage working capital prudently, and develop alternatives to reduce exposure to near-term supply volatility.

As part of the controlled and safe shutdown strategy, Alba will use the opportunity to implement structured asset care and maintenance for Reduction Lines 1, 2 and 3, including comprehensive housekeeping and cleaning activities, to maintain equipment integrity laying the

foundations for the decision to safely restart the affected lines, once overall conditions improve. The controlled and safe shutdown is being executed in a manner intended to minimise health, safety, environmental, and operational risks, while safeguarding the long-term performance of the affected assets. Alba continues to monitor and respond to the situation

and will provide updates to the market as appropriate. The Company is also working closely with suppliers and customers to manage commitments and mitigate disruption. The safety of Alba's employees and contractors' personnel, the protection of its assets, and the reliability of supply to customers remain Alba's highest priorities.

Zain Bahrain holds Annual General Assembly meeting virtually

Manama

Zain Bahrain B.S.C, a leading Bahraini provider of innovative technologies and digital lifestyle experience held its annual general assembly meeting (AGM) virtually.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Khalifa, Zain Bahrain Chairman, attended by the shareholders, members of the board of directors, representatives of the regulatory authorities, and the external auditors.

During the meeting, shareholders reviewed and approved several agenda items, including the minutes of the



also discussed and approved the Board of Directors' report on the Company's activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 and listened to the external auditor's report on the financial statements for the same period. Shareholders further approved the Company's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025, as well as the Board of Directors' recommendation for the allocation of net profits for the financial year ended 31 December 2025.

Commenting on the occasion, His Excellency Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali Al Khalifa, Zain Bahrain Chairman, said: "In 2025, Zain Bahrain continued to play a key role in advancing the Kingdom's national digital transformation, directly supporting Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 and enhancing the Kingdom's competitiveness both regionally

and globally. Zain Bahrain also maintained its leadership in technological innovation through a strategic investment of USD 100 million to further develop its digital infrastructure, in alignment with the Telecommunications, Information Technology, and Digital Economy Sector Strategy.

The Company also continued its commitment to supporting Bahrainization as a strategic priority and a key pillar of long-term sustainability, achieving a Bahrainization rate of 93.33%."

The meeting concluded with shareholders reaffirming their confidence in Zain Bahrain's strategy and its continued commitment to delivering sustainable value to shareholders while supporting the Kingdom's digital transformation journey.

previous Annual General Assembly held on 19 March 2025. The meeting



AGM Reminder and Virtual Meeting announcement

Delmon Poultry Company announced that the Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting will be held in Al Dana Hall at the Gulf Hotel, in addition to holding it via electronic means at 11:30 on Tuesday, March 17, after it was scheduled to be held in person only at the same time and date.

The company explained that the decision to change the meeting came in light of the current exceptional circumstances and situation, as it was decided to hold the meeting virtually, allowing shareholders to participate remotely, through the following steps:

- Send an e-mail request titled "Delmon Poultry Company B.S.C. Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting with the Investor's Number/Shareholder Number and a copy of a valid passport or ID card of the shareholder or the person representing him as an agent by e-mail to Bahrain.helpdesk@kfintech.com at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled date of the meeting. Please also include the contact number and email address of the person who will be participating in the online meeting.
- After receiving the required documents and information, an electronic link will be provided to enable those wishing to participate to take the necessary steps to join the session through the electronic communication network, noting that the device used to participate in the session must be compatible with the requirements of operating video and remote communication services.

We also urge shareholders to adhere to the instructions to ensure that the meeting runs quickly and smoothly in line with applicable laws and regulations.

Takaful International Earns Great Place to Work Certification for the Fourth Consecutive Year



Manama

Takaful International Company is delighted to announce its achievement as a Certified™ Great Place to Work® for the fourth year in a row following a comprehensive evaluation conducted by Great Place to Work® Middle East. This prestigious certification is based on direct feedback from employees through an ex-

tensive and anonymous survey, reflecting their workplace experience.

Great Place to Work® is a renowned global authority that specializes in recognizing high-trust and high-performance workplace cultures. With its exclusive assessment tools, advisory services, and certification programs, Great Place to Work® identifies and acknowledges the best

workplaces around the world.

Commenting on the achievement, Mr. Essam Al Ansari, Chief Executive Officer of Takaful International, said: "Receiving this certification reflects Takaful International's ongoing commitment to fostering a workplace culture built on trust, collaboration, and the empowerment of talent. Our employees remain the cornerstone of our success, and we are dedicated to providing a motivating work environment that encourages innovation and professional growth, enabling the company to achieve its aspirations and continue its journey towards greater excellence."

Al Ansari added that the company will continue investing in the development of its human capital and strengthening a positive and sustainable workplace culture, supporting the achievement of its strategic



Strategic oil stocks to be released 'immediately' in Asia and Oceania: IEA

AFP | Paris, France

Strategic oil reserves will be released "immediately" in Asia and Oceania, and as early as the end of March in America and Europe, the International Energy Agency said yesterday. IEA members agreed on March 11 to tap oil stockpiles to cushion the surge in prices caused by the war in the Middle East, in by far the largest-ever response of its kind.

"Individual implementation plans have been submitted to the IEA by Member countries.

These plans indicate that stocks will be made available by IEA Member countries in Asia Oceania immediately," said the IEA.

"Stocks from IEA Member countries in the Americas and Europe will be made available starting from the end of March," it added.

The IEA said a total 271.7 million barrels of government-managed stocks would be released worldwide.

"The war in the Middle East is creating the largest supply disruption in the history

of the global oil market," it said.

It called the emergency stockpile release -- the sixth in the history of the global energy body, and the first since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 -- a "significant and welcome buffer".

The announced releases have not had a significant impact on the price of oil, which hovers around \$100 a barrel, the highest since 2022 and up from below \$70 before the start of the war.

Seef Properties' Annual General Meeting Approves BD 4.52 Million in Cash Dividends at 10% to Shareholders



Manama

Seef Properties held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday March 15, 2026, at 1 p.m. via videoconference to review and approve the agenda items.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Essa Mohamed Najibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and attended by board members, CEO Mr. Ahmed Yusuf, members of the executive management team, as well as representatives

from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Central Bank of Bahrain, and Bahrain Bourse. Discussions focused on the company's financial results, key developments, and achievements during 2025.

The Ordinary General Assembly approved the financial statements for the year ending on 31 December 2025, as well as the Board of Directors' recommendations, including a cash dividend of 10% of the nominal share value, equivalent to 10

files per share, totalling BD 4.52 million after deducting treasury shares. Additionally, the Assembly approved allocating BD 170,000 for charitable and community donations as part of the company's corporate social responsibility.

Seef Properties reported net profits and comprehensive income attributable to shareholders worth BD 5.94 million for the fiscal year ending on 31 December 2025, compared to BD 5.61 million the previous year, representing an increase

of approximately 5.96%. Basic and diluted earnings per share reached 13.10 fils, up from 12.23 fils in the previous year, while operating profits amounted to BD 11.52 million.

At the beginning of his remarks, Mr. Essa Mohamed Najibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Seef Properties, commended the wise leadership in managing external security challenges and rapid regional developments, as well as the national efforts exerted by the esteemed government to

safeguard the nation's security and protect its achievements. He also praised the regulatory directives and guidelines issued by the relevant authorities, which contributed to enhancing the readiness of the commercial sector and consolidating its stability.

The company emphasised its commitment to sustainability, having launched the largest solar energy project within its operational portfolio last year, besides joining the national "Kafa'a" programme,

supporting Bahrain's goal of achieving net-zero energy by 2060.

operational efficiency

Seef Properties CEO Mr. Ahmed Yusuf stated, "In 2025, we focused on enhancing operational efficiency and improving visitor experience across our assets. This included expanding our tenant base, diversifying and attracting new high-quality brands, and hosting activities and events to boost footfall and commercial activity."

BisB announces Eid Banknotes "Eidiya" at ATMs and Branches

Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), a leading provider of innovative and digital Islamic banking services in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has announced the availability of new banknotes in preparation for the upcoming Eid Al-Fitr. The banknotes will be made available across BisB's branches and financial malls, in addition to a number of the bank's ATMs.

The bank confirmed that the new banknotes will be accessible through ATMs located at BisB's financial Mall located at Hamad Town, Arad, Riffa, and Budaiya. Customer service teams will also continue providing the service across the previously announced branches during official working hours.

Through this service, customers will be able to conveniently obtain Eid banknotes, enabling a smoother and more comfortable banking experience during this festive occasion.

BisB noted that the quantities



of the new banknotes are limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, allowing customers to benefit from this seasonal service efficiently.

This initiative reflects Bahrain Islamic Bank's ongoing commitment to enhancing its banking services and delivering practical and innovative

solutions that meet customers' needs, particularly during peak seasons and special occasions when demand for fast and flexible banking services increases.

War-related oil squeeze a 'short-term pain,' US official insists

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump's top energy official said Sunday that Americans will have to endure the "short-term pain" of higher prices at the pump as US forces conduct their war against Iran.

Now in the third week of a multi-dimensional Middle East conflict that has seen US and Israeli forces pound Iran's military targets, and Tehran responding with missile and drone attacks against several neighboring states, global energy prices have soared.

And concern has swelled that a lengthy blockage by Iran of the critical Strait of Hormuz could send crude prices

through the roof.

"President Trump needed to act now... to stop the killing of American soldiers, to stop the destabilization of the region, and to end Iran's ability to threaten energy markets," US Energy Secretary Chris Wright told ABC News talk show "This Week."

He said economic conditions would grow dramatically worse without the ongoing military operation "to defang the Iranian regime" and ensure it can no longer threaten the world with nuclear weapons.

"This is short-term pain to get through to a much better place where the Middle East can no longer be held hostage by the one rogue nation in Iran,"

Wright added.

The energy secretary also said he predicted the war could end "in the next few weeks, and we'll see a rebound in (fuel) supplies and a pushing down of prices after that."

Since the war began, gas prices have soared in the United States, where Trump in 2024 campaigned relentlessly on a vow to lower fuel costs for Americans. The issue is a critical one for US voters, who head to the polls in November for the country's mid-term congressional elections.

Gas prices have jumped 25 percent in the past month, to \$3.70 per gallon, according to the American Automobile Association.

S E E F / سيف

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION OF CASH DIVIDENDS FOR 2025

The Board of Directors of Seef Properties B.S.C. is pleased to invite the shareholders whose names are registered in the Share Register as of the Record Date on **Sunday 29 March 2026** to arrange a prior appointment with the Company's Share Registrar and Dividend Agent, Messrs. Bahrain Clear B.S.C.(C) through the Hotline indicated below or via the appointment booking application (Skiplino) to receive the cash dividends for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 from **Sunday 12 April 2026**. The shareholders shall carry with them on the date of the appointment their ID card, passport and original share certificates. For shareholders who have previously made arrangement for the transfer of dividends via bank transfer to their IBAN, the cash dividends shall be deposited directly into their bank accounts.

Share Registrar and Dividend Agent

Messrs. Bahrain Clear B.S.C.(C)

Bahrain Financial Harbour, Harbour Gate
4th Floor, King Faisal Highway
Building No. 31, Road 383, Block 305
P.O. Box 3203
Manama - Kingdom of Bahrain
Hotline: +973 17108786
WhatsApp: +973 33510008
Email: edividend@bahrainclear.com

No winners in this war



Experts say war may end in fragile ceasefire once both sides claim 'minimum victory'

The conflict may eventually produce a "cold peace", in which tensions persist and Iran continues to show willingness to activate proxy groups and maintain pressure on its adversaries

MAHDI GHULOOM, A BAHRAINI GEOPOLITICAL RESEARCHER AND JUNIOR FELLOW IN GEOPOLITICS AT ORF MIDDLE EAST IN DUBAI



The likeliest way this ends is as an armed pause rather than a peace settlement. Once energy disruptions become sufficiently costly and battlefield gains begin to diminish, Washington could face mounting pressure to de-escalate.

DR ROBERT MUGGAH, A BRAZIL-BASED SECURITY SPECIALIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE IGARAPE INSTITUTE IN RIO DE JANEIRO



It is likely that upon the end of fighting there will be stalemate rather than a clear victory. Such an outcome could leave the underlying tensions unresolved and create conditions for further rounds of confrontation

JOOST HILTERMANN, SPECIAL ADVISER FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AT THE BRUSSELS-BASED INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP



Even if a ceasefire silences the guns, it may fail to address the deeper tensions driving the conflict. Iran may believe that prolonging confrontation serves its strategic interests, even as its military capabilities face gradual degradation

ALI VAEZ, DIRECTOR OF THE IRAN PROJECT AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP AND A WIDELY CITED IRAN ANALYST BASED IN WASHINGTON



Analysts interviewed for this report from research institutions in North America, Europe and the Middle East say wars of this nature often end not through clear battlefield triumph but through a fragile pause once the costs of continuing begin to outweigh the gains.

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

Strategic analysts say the current conflict in the Middle East is unlikely to produce a decisive military victor, and may instead end when both sides reach what experts describe as a 'minimum victory' - a point at which they can halt the fighting while still claiming success domestically.

Analysts interviewed for this report from research institutions in North America, Europe and the Middle East say wars of this nature often end not through clear battlefield triumph but through a fragile pause once the costs of continuing begin to outweigh the gains.

Rising energy prices, disruption to global energy and shipping markets and mounting political pressure on governments involved in the conflict could push the war toward de-escalation, even as the deeper strategic rivalry between the parties remains unresolved.

Possible Endgame

Dr Robert Muggah, a Brazil-based security specialist and co-founder of the Igarapé Institute in Rio de Janeiro, said the most plausible way the war ends is not through a formal peace settlement but through what he described as an "armed pause".

"The likeliest way this ends is as an armed pause rather than a peace settlement," he said, explaining that once energy disruptions become sufficiently costly and battlefield gains begin to diminish, Washington could face mounting pressure to de-escalate.

Dr Muggah, who has advised organisations including the United Nations, the World

Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank on conflict and security issues, said such an outcome could take the form of a ceasefire built on "deliberate ambiguity".

In that scenario, Iran could receive informal assurances against further strikes while the United States and Israel preserve the right to act if Tehran re-arms or threatens strategic shipping routes.

Uneasy Pause

Other analysts say the conflict is unlikely to produce a decisive military outcome.

Joost Hiltermann, special adviser for the Middle East and North Africa at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, a global organisation focused on conflict prevention, said the war will most likely end when the attacking side concludes it has achieved its main objectives or when the costs begin to outweigh the achievable gains.

"It is likely that upon the end of fighting there will be stalemate rather than a clear victory," he said, warning that such an outcome could leave the underlying tensions unresolved and create conditions for further rounds of confrontation.

Ali Vaez, director of the Iran Project at the International Crisis Group and a widely cited Iran analyst based in Washington, said several outcomes remain possible, including ceasefire, stale-

mate or prolonged confrontation.

Mr Vaez said that even if a ceasefire silences the guns, it may fail to address the deeper tensions driving the conflict.

Iran may believe that prolonging confrontation serves its strategic interests, even as its military capabilities face gradual degradation, he said.

Taken together, analysts say the conflict is unlikely to end through decisive military victory but through a fragile pause once both sides believe they have achieved enough to stop fighting.

Minimum Victory

Experts say the war is likely to end once both sides are able to present a politically acceptable outcome to domestic audiences.

For the United States and Israel, analysts say that threshold would involve demonstrating that Iran's nuclear, missile and maritime capabilities have been significantly degraded.

For Tehran, however, the bar may be lower.

Iran's minimum victory would be survival and the ability to claim that it imposed meaningful costs on a materially stronger coalition.

Mr Hiltermann said Iran surviving the conflict despite sustained attacks could allow Tehran to frame the outcome as resistance rather than defeat.

Economic Pressure

Eco-

nommic pressures could also accelerate the search for an exit.

Dr Muggah said rising fuel prices, disruptions to shipping routes and strains within political coalitions could increase pressure for what he described as a "near-term off-ramp".

Mr Vaez said Iran may attempt to increase the economic and political costs of the war by injecting uncertainty into global energy markets and by increasing pressure on U.S. allies in the region.

Dr Muggah also warned that the economic effects of the conflict could extend well beyond oil supply.

He said the war has disrupted not only energy markets but also parts of global trade infrastructure including shipping insurance, LNG contracts, fertiliser inputs, aviation routes and industrial logistics.

Such disruptions could trigger wider economic consequences including higher freight costs, inflationary pressures and weaker economic growth in vulnerable economies.

Regional Impact

Mahdi Ghuloom, a Bahraini geopolitical researcher and junior fellow in geopolitics at ORF Middle East in Dubai, said the conflict could drift into a prolonged stalemate shaped partly by political calculations in Washington.

The Observer Research Foundation Middle East is a regional policy institute that studies security, diplomacy and economic trends affecting the Gulf and wider Middle East.

"Domestic political pressure and economic volatility could accelerate the push to end the war," Mr Ghuloom said.

Mr Ghuloom said the conflict may eventually produce what he described as a "cold peace", in which tensions persist and Iran continues to show willingness to activate proxy groups and maintain pressure on its adversaries.

Cold Peace

Even if the fighting stops, analysts warn the geopolitical consequences could reshape regional security.

Dr Muggah said the conflict could weaken confidence in U.S. security guarantees and encourage smaller states to place greater emphasis on deterrent capabilities rather than relying on external assurances.

He added that outside powers such as Russia and China could quietly benefit from the conflict, with higher energy prices helping Moscow while Beijing observes the strain placed on the U.S.-led international order.

The longer-term economic consequences could also extend far beyond the battlefield.

Energy market disruption, rising shipping insurance costs and instability across trade networks could continue to affect the global economy even after the fighting ends.

History suggests that wars between rival powers rarely end through decisive victory but through negotiated pauses once the costs of continuing become politically unsustainable.

In this conflict, analysts say the most likely outcome may therefore not be victory for either side but an uneasy pause in which both claim they have achieved enough to stop fighting.



1659

First known cheque written (£400), now on display at Westminster Abbey

1840

American Charles Wilkes discovers the Shackleton Ice Shelf in Antarctica



Tutankhamun's Burial Chamber Found

Howard Carter opens the inner burial chamber of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb and finds the sarcophagus

1923 1959

Fidel Castro becomes the 16th Prime Minister of Cuba after overthrowing Fulgencio Batista

The wreck of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier Arctic Metagaz, which is adrift between Malta and Lampedusa.

The vessel, which was hit by "sudden explosions followed by a massive fire" according to Libyan port authority, was sanctioned by the United States and the European Union for being one of Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" of ageing tankers that carry its oil and gas around the world, skirting Western restrictions. Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kyiv of having carried out a "terrorist attack" on the Arctic Metagaz. All 30 crew members were rescued, Moscow said.



Global oil prices have surged by 40 percent as Iran has choked off the vital sea passage and attacked energy and shipping industry targets in its Gulf neighbours.

Iran wants deal: **Trump** No reason for talks: Iran

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran was not interested in talks with the United States, pushing back on President Donald Trump's stance that Tehran wants a deal to end the war. "We are stable and strong

enough. We are only defending our people," Araghchi told CBS's "Face The Nation," in an interview aired Sunday. "We don't see any reason why we should talk with Americans, because we were talking with them when they decided to at-

tack us. "There is no good experience talking with Americans." Trump on Saturday said Iran wanted a deal, but that he was not prepared to make one on current terms, without giving further details.

"We never asked for a ceasefire, and we have never asked even for negotiation," Araghchi said. He added that Iran was ready to talk to countries who want to negotiate for selected oil tankers to pass through the key

Strait of Hormuz export route. "I cannot mention any country in particular, but we have been approached by a number of countries who want to have a safe passage for their vessels," he said.

'Just for fun'

Trump said he might, again, bomb targets on Iran's oil hub, Kharg Island, "just for fun". "Iran wants to make a deal, and I don't want to make it because the terms aren't good enough yet," Trump told NBC News.

Iran warns against wider war as Trump asks allies to escort ships

Tehran, Iran

Iran yesterday warned countries against getting involved in its war with the United States and Israel, after President Donald Trump urged world powers to escort oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint in the Gulf.

Tehran also sent a stern message to its Arab neighbours, telling them that the Islamic republic has what its foreign minister called "ample evidence" that US bases on their territories were being used to launch attacks.

"This war will end when we are certain that it will not be repeated and that reparations will be paid," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Arabic-language news platform Al-Araby Al-Jadeed. "We experienced this last



A man is watched by a child as he clears debris from his damaged home, following a military strike on the Iranian capital Tehran

year: Israel attacked, then the United States," he said, recalling Israel's 12-day air war in June last year, which briefly drew in US forces for a night of strikes on Iranian nuclear sites.

Trump responded by urging "China, France, Japan, South Korea, the UK and others" to send ships to escort tankers, while the US military continues to pound drone, boat and missile

launch sites in Iran on the north shore.

But the countries he listed have given only guarded responses, and Araghchi, in a call with French counterpart Jean-

Noel Barrot, warned them to "refrain from any action that could lead to escalation and expansion of the conflict".

The UK defence ministry was non-committal, saying "we are currently discussing with our allies and partners a range of options to ensure the security of shipping in the region".

Britain's minister for energy security, Ed Miliband, told the BBC the "plan now has to be to de-escalate the conflict... We are talking to our allies. There are different ways in which we can make maritime shipping possible."

South Korea said it was monitoring Trump's remarks on social media, while the policy chief of Japan's ruling party, Takayuki Kobayashi, said the bar for sending Japanese navy ships to the region under existing laws was "extremely high".



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Muslims worldwide often face institutional discrimination, socio-economic exclusion, biased immigration policies & unwarranted surveillance & profiling. This International Day to Combat Islamophobia, let's re-commit to the equality, human rights & dignity of every person, no matter their faith.

@antonioguterres

02



Bombing a hospital or a school isn't a "miscalculation."

Killing a paramedic isn't "collateral damage." Starving civilians isn't "negotiating tactic."

These are war crimes. Full stop.

Call it what it is.

@DrTedros

03



Over the past week alone, the Russians struck Ukraine with 1,770 attack drones, more than 1,530 guided aerial bombs, and 86 missiles, including more than 20 ballistic ones. Each of these missiles contains at least 60 foreign components supplied to Russia in circumvention of sanctions.

@ZelenskyyUa

04



We have homicides in this country at the lowest level they have been in 125 years."

@VP

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

Estidamah Bloc Announces Official Candidacy for BCCI Elections

Kanoo: A Strategic Alliance to Unite the Business Community and Shape the Future Economy

Manama

Members of the Estidamah Bloc have formally submitted their candidacy applications for the elections of the Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) for its 31st cycle. The submission took place today, Saturday, at the Chamber's headquarters in Sanabis.

In addition to the Bloc's Chairman, Mr. Nabeel Khalid Kanoo, the Estidamah Bloc includes the following business leaders: Mr. Mohammed Al Kooheji, Mr. Nawaf Al Zayani, Mr. Yousuf Salahuddin, Mrs. Sonya Janahi, Mrs. Sawsan Abulhassan, Mrs. Abeer Almoayyed, Mr. Ahmed Al Saloom, Mr. Jameel Al Ghanah, Professor Waheeb Al Khaja, Mr. Abdulwahab Al Hawaj, Mr. Mohammed Adel Fakhro, Mr. Shaker Al Helli, Mr. Rashad Zainal, Mr. Mohammed Nader Diwani, Mr. Hassan Bader Kaiksow, Mr. Khalid Abdulrahman Juma, and Mr. Khalid Engineer.

Through this diverse group of candidates, the Bloc brings together a blend of elite business leaders, professional expertise, and ambitious emerging talent united under a shared vision to support stability and sustainable growth for Bahrain's business community.

Estidamah: One Voice for One Business Community

On this occasion, Mr. Nabeel Kanoo delivered a press statement in which he emphasized that the official submission of the Bloc's candidacy represents both a responsibility and a commitment towards the merchants and members of the Chamber's General Assembly, and stated: "We in the Estidamah Bloc recognize that the current phase presents several challenges for the commercial sector, particularly in light of the regional circumstances and economic shifts taking place across the region. This makes it increasingly important to strengthen cooperation and effective coordination between the Bahrain Chamber and the esteemed government to ensure the continued stability and growth of the commercial sector.

"We also wish to acknowledge the government's significant efforts and initiatives in support of the Kingdom's economic sectors, foremost among them the commercial sector. These measures have made a meaningful contribution to safeguarding the stability of the national economy. We are confident that, just as the government stood alongside the business community during the COVID 19 pandemic by introducing support packages that helped mitigate its impact, it will continue to play an important role in the coming phase by launching further programs and initiatives that support commercial activity."

"If we earn the confidence of the business community and are elected to the Chamber's Board of Directors, we will serve as an active and credible



voice for the commercial sector. Our approach will be rooted in constructive collaboration with the relevant authorities to help shape practical responses, support impactful initiatives, and champion programs that strengthen the sector's stability

and growth, advance the interests of merchants, and contribute to the broader progress and long-term sustainability of Bahrain's economy."

Bridging Generations and Shaping the Future

Estidamah Bloc is distinguished by its ability to connect the legacy of Bahrain's commercial history with the technologies shaping the economy of the future. The Bloc includes businesspeople from long established business families who

contributed to the development of Bahrain's economic prosperity, alongside entrepreneurs and professionals representing a new generation of economic leadership. This diversity seeks to create a professional platform that transfers accumulated ex-

perience to younger generations while opening the door for emerging leaders to contribute to innovation and advancement within the commercial sector.

The Bloc also stresses that strengthening entrepreneurship begins with closer alignment between education and labor market needs. It also extends to supporting initiatives that enhance the business environment and create new growth opportunities for entrepreneurs and SMEs.

A Practical and Forward-Looking Electoral Program

The Bloc's electoral program offers a compelling roadmap that skillfully balances pragmatic solutions with bold ambition. At its core, the strategy seeks to fortify the national economy by revitalizing productive sectors and modernizing the business landscape through rapid digitalization.

Central to the Bloc's vision is the conviction that the knowledge economy has transitioned from a strategic choice to an essential foundation for long-term prosperity. To drive this transition, Estidamah prioritizes the digital evolution of SMEs, the expansion of e-commerce infrastructure, and the strategic promotion of Bahraini exports across regional and global markets.

Supporting Key Economic Sectors

The Bloc's champions a strategic vision tailored to sharpen the competitive edge of Bahrain's vital economic sectors. A key pillar of this approach is the advancement of a flexible regulatory framework that ensures operational costs remain proportional to business revenue, while simultaneously lowering barriers for local enterprises to secure major projects and government tenders.

Beyond regulatory reform, the Bloc identifies food security and logistics as critical national priorities. Estidamah's program prioritizes strengthening supply chain resilience and modernizing market and warehousing infrastructure to support market stability and ensure the uninterrupted availability of essential goods under all circumstances.

A Call for Active Participation

In concluding his remarks, Mr. Kanoo called on the business community to participate actively in the elections scheduled for 28 March, underscoring that the strength of the Chamber derives from the unity of its members and their engagement in its democratic processes, and said: "Estidamah Bloc will continue its meetings with the business community to present its electoral program and listen to their views and observations. The ultimate objective is to reinforce the Chamber's role as a unified platform for the private sector and an effective partner in supporting the continued progress of Bahrain's national economy."

Living under the shadow of missiles and drones

Experts say anxiety, sleep disruption and heightened alertness are natural responses during periods of conflict

Ghadeer Alkumaish
TDT | Manama

Sudden noises, flashing lights, or distant echoes can make some residents pause and brace for danger.

"Every sudden sound makes the heart jump," said Dr Hasan Ebrahim, a clinical psychologist, describing the emotional strain many people in Bahrain have experienced since missile and drone attacks began nearly two weeks ago.

In an interview with The Daily Tribune, Dr Ebrahim said many residents are experiencing what psychologists call an exaggerated startle response — a heightened reaction following frightening or threatening events.

"When people experience danger, the brain begins to

associate certain sounds or signals with threats," he said. "Even when there is no immediate risk, the body may react strongly. This is not an over-reaction. It is the brain's natural defence system keeping us alert."

For many, the impact goes beyond momentary fear. Some have become unusually sensitive to everyday noises. According to Dr Ebrahim, such reactions can reflect collective trauma when an entire community experiences the same distressing events.

"When a community goes through a shared frightening experience, the emotional impact is shared as well," he said. "It can temporarily affect how safe people feel in daily life."

Another common reaction is hypervigilance, a state in which

the nervous system remains constantly alert.

"In this condition, the brain keeps scanning the environment for potential danger," Dr Ebrahim said. "Even minor sounds or movements can trigger a strong fear response. This is a recognised reaction after highly stressful or traumatic events."

The lingering tension many feel is linked to the body's biological response to stress. During threatening situations, the brain releases hormones such as adrenaline, activating the fight-or-flight response that prepares the body to react quickly.

In some cases, delayed reactions may appear weeks or months later. "The brain does not process time the same way our conscious think-

ing does," he explained. "It may take time for the body and mind to fully calm down after stress."

According to Dr Ebrahim,



common short-term reactions include difficulty sleeping, irritability, sudden crying, anger, and recurring memories of frightening moments. "A person may seem calm at first," he said. "But once

pressure eases, the brain begins to process the experience more deeply. That response is normal."

Mental health specialists recommend simple strate-

gies to manage stress during uncertain periods, including slow breathing, grounding techniques such as the "five-four-three-two-one" method, limiting exposure to distressing news, and maintaining daily routines.

"If symptoms persist for more than a month, interfere with daily life, or lead to repeated panic attacks, professional help should be considered," Dr Ebrahim said.

Family and community support, he added, can play an important role in helping people regain stability. "Listening without judgment, offering reassurance, and engaging in calm activities can help the nervous system settle. Just as fear can spread among people, calm and reassurance can spread as well."

Italy-US airbase in Kuwait hit by drone, no injuries: Rome



US Military personnel take away Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), removed from a US Air Force B-1 Lancer bomber at RAF Fairford in south-west England

AFP | Rome, Italy

Italy's military said yesterday there had been a drone attack on the Ali Al Salem airbase in Kuwait hosting Italian and US forces, but said all its personnel were safe.

"This morning, Ali Al Salem base in Kuwait, which hosts American and Italian personnel and capabilities, was the target of a drone attack," Chief of the Defence General Staff, General Luciano Portolano, said in a statement posted by the military on X.

It "hit a shelter housing a remotely piloted aircraft of the Italian Task Force Air (TFA), which was destroyed".

"At the time of the attack, all personnel were safe and uninjured."

The statement posted by the

Armed Forces General Staff said the number of personnel had been reduced in recent days in response to the "evolving security situation in the area".

"The personnel remaining at the base are being deployed to carry out essential mission activities," it said.

"The affected aircraft was an essential asset for operational activities and remained deployed at the base to ensure the continuity of operations."

An Italian military base in Iraqi Kurdistan also came under drone attack last week, although there were no injuries.

Afterwards, Rome said it was temporarily withdrawing its personnel -- numbering less than 300 -- who were in Erbil training local security forces as part of an international force.

Netanyahu mocks social media rumours about his death

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu published a short video on Sunday making light of rumours on social media that he was dead.

"I'm dead for coffee," he said sarcastically on his official X account as he received a steaming cup at a cafe outside Jerusalem, employing a colloquial Hebrew expression meaning to love something to death.

He then raised his hands to the camera, asking, "Do you want to count the number of fingers?" -- a reference to speculation on social media that his latest televised address was gen-



An Israeli self-propelled howitzer artillery gun fires rounds towards southern Lebanon from a position in the upper Galilee in northern Israel near the border

erated by AI as he appeared to have six fingers on one hand.

The premier then urged Israeli citizens to respect safety

instructions in the event of incoming rockets, adding their resilience "gives strength to me, to the government, to the army, to the Mossad (spy agency)."

"We are doing things that I cannot share at this moment, but we are striking Iran very hard, and also Lebanon," he added.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) threatened on Sunday to kill Netanyahu, as the war against the Islamic republic led by Israel and the US entered its third week.

"IRGC vows to pursue and kill 'child-killer' Netanyahu if he is still alive," Iran's IRNA news agency said in a post on X.

War with US, Israel to end when Iran 'certain' it cannot be repeated: FM

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in an interview published on Sunday that the war pitting his country against the United States and Israel will only end when Tehran can be certain it will not be restarted.

"This war will end when we are certain it will not be repeated and that reparations will be paid. We experienced this last year: Israel attacked, then the United States... they regrouped and attacked us again," Araghchi told Arabic-language news outlet Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, referring to Iran's war with Israel and the US in June 2025.

Gaza hospital says Israeli strike on police vehicle kills eight

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

A hospital in Gaza said it had received the bodies of eight people killed when a police vehicle was hit by an Israeli strike in the centre of the territory yesterday.

The strike came as a Hamas delegation was due to meet with Egyptian officials in Cairo, according to a source from the Palestinian Islamist movement, and as Gaza's civil defence agency reported another four people killed in an earlier Israeli strike.

When asked by AFP about both incidents, the Israeli military said it was looking into the reports.

The Al-Aqsa hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah said in a statement that "eight martyrs arrived as a result of the targeting of a police vehicle in the town of Zawaida in the central Gaza Strip". Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry confirmed the toll, saying all those killed were policemen, including the head of police in the central governorate, Colonel Iyad Abu Yousef.

Iran has 'ample evidence' US bases in Mideast used in attacks: FM

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in an interview published Sunday that Tehran has "ample evidence" US bases in the Middle East have been used to target the Islamic republic.

"We have ample evidence of this: satellite imagery and electronic surveillance demonstrate that US bases in this region are being used for attacks," Araghchi told Arabic-language news outlet Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, claiming that missiles had been launched from the UAE to attack Kharg Island, a vital Iranian oil hub.

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Rosenior unhappy with referee after bizarre huddle incident in Chelsea loss



Chelsea players huddle around referee Paul Tierney

AFP | London

Liam Rosenior criticised Paul Tierney after the referee bizarrely gate-crashed Chelsea's pre-match huddle before Saturday's 1-0 defeat against Newcastle.

Newcastle won at Stamford Bridge for the first time in 14 years as Anthony Gordon's 18th-minute strike punished sloppy Chelsea defending.

But the focus after the game was on the curious incident before kick-off when Tierney stood in the centre of a circle of Chelsea players as Blues captain Reece James spoke to his team.

Rosenior said he will contact PGMOL, the referees' body, to seek clarity on why Chelsea's pre-game ritual was disrupted.

Newcastle were due to kick off and Tierney was standing next to the ball near the centre spot, seemingly refusing to move as the home team congregated around him.

"I want to protect my players," said Rosenior after fifth-placed Chelsea's top four bid suffered a major blow.

"I'm respectful to the game. My players made a decision that they wanted to be around the ball, to respect the ball and show unity and leadership.

"That is not my decision.

"I want to protect my players. I'm respectful to the game. My players made a decision that they wanted to be around the ball, to respect the ball and show unity and leadership. That is not my decision. That is a decision between the leadership group and the team. There is nothing that they're doing with that huddle that is disrespectful to the opposition"

LIAM ROSENIOR

That is a decision between the leadership group and the team. There is nothing that they're doing with that huddle that is disrespectful to the opposition."

It has become a ritual under Rosenior for Chelsea players to gather in the centre circle before kick-off.

Rosenior has previously said the initiative came from the players, and it has already provoked controversy, with Aston Villa fans booing his side before their recent 4-1 win at Villa

Park.

Rosenior has also accused Arsenal's coaching staff of disrespecting his team by encroaching into Chelsea's half during their warm-up at the Emirates Stadium in January.

"Do you know what's amazing?" said Rosenior. "Before the game we had a meeting with the referee. My assistant goes in. The first thing he talks about is our huddle.

"He said about when I complained about Arsenal being in our half. It wasn't the (Arsenal) goalkeeper coach that was in our half, and people that were at that game at Arsenal know why I said what I said."

Rosenior took another swipe at Tierney by claiming Chelsea should have had a penalty when Cole Palmer went down under a challenge from Nick Woltemade in the second half.

"If Paul had focused more on his job, which was to make the right decision, we'd have a penalty today," he said.

"I don't think anyone can say that Woltemade doesn't kick Cole Palmer down in the box.

"I didn't speak to Paul today, I didn't think it was the right thing. But I'll be speaking to PGMOL. I'll be speaking to the refs. Just trying to get an understanding of what happened."

Arsenal hero Dowman no 'normal' 16-year-old, says Arteta

AFP | London

Mikel Arteta described Max Dowman becoming the Premier League's youngest ever goalscorer as a "magical moment" after Arsenal struck late to beat Everton 2-0 on Saturday.

The Gunners closed in on a first Premier League title for 22 years after Dowman also provided the cross for Viktor Gyokeres to finally break the deadlock on 89 minutes.

Dowman then ran from deep inside his own half to slot into an empty net after Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford ventured forward for a corner in stoppage time.

In doing so he set a new record for the youngest scorer in Premier League history at 16 and 73 days.

Dowman has already set records this season as Arsenal's youngest ever starter and the Champions League's youngest ever player, both when still 15.

"It was a great moment, especially with the way the goal built up. We had 10 or 15 seconds to really enjoy what was



Arsenal's English midfielder #56 Max Dowman scores their late second goal

about to happen," said Arteta.

"It was magical, all the bench and players together jumping up with the crowd, it was a beautiful day."

Victory opened up a 10-point lead for Arsenal over Manchester City, who have two games in hand, at the top of the table.

However, not for the first time this season, Arteta's men were devoid of a creative spark until Dowman's introduction off the bench 16 minutes from time.

"He changed the game every time he got the ball. He made things happen and we looked like more of a threat," added Arteta.

"To do it at that age, in this context, with the pressure and expectations to win the game, it's just not normal.

"It's natural for him. He doesn't feel the pressure -- that's the best thing. He does what he feels and when you have such a talent, I'm sure good things are going to hap-

Medvedev snaps Alcaraz win streak, sets Indian Wells final with Sinner

Russian wins 6-3, 7-6 to end world number one's 16-0 start to 2026

● **Medvedev avenges 2023, 2024 final losses**

● **Jannik Sinner beats Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-4**

AFP | Indian Wells

Daniil Medvedev ended Carlos Alcaraz's perfect start to 2026, stunning the world number one 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) Saturday to book an Indian Wells title clash with Jannik Sinner.

Medvedev avenged losses to Alcaraz in back-to-back Indian Wells finals in 2023 and 2024, using an impressive service display and aggressive play from the baseline to keep the Spanish star on the back foot throughout.

"Super happy to beat someone as strong as he (is)," Medvedev said. "It's a great feeling."

He'll have his work cut out for him again in Sunday's clash with four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner, who beat fourth-ranked Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-4.

Alcaraz, 22, became the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam with his Australian Open triumph this year. He followed with a title in Qatar and took a 16-0 2026 record into



Daniil Medvedev returns against Carlos Alcaraz of Spain

Saturday's contest.

But Medvedev was up to the challenge, last month's Dubai champion running Alcaraz ragged in the intense desert heat as he pushed his own ATP win streak to nine matches.

"I just felt like the long rallies, especially when you play against Daniil, that the rallies are long, that you have to increase all the

power in almost every shot," Alcaraz said.

"So it feels like you're wasting extra energy after every shot. And with the heat, sometimes it's really tricky to deal with all of that."

After Medvedev needed just one break of serve to pocket an opening set in which he didn't face a break point himself, Al-

caraz made some adjustments broke first in the second for a 3-1 lead.

But Medvedev broke back immediately, and his control in the rallies had Alcaraz gasping after one long point in the ninth game.

"The first set ... he just made it that I had to struggle a little bit," Alcaraz said. "In the second set, I started to feel much better.



Medvedev, who slumped as low as 18th in 2025, now rides a nine-match win streak into his third Indian Wells final

I realized what I have to do. I realized that I have to suffer, and I accept it."

Alcaraz hung on to hold serve for a 5-4 lead in the second set, but he was unable to convert a pair of set points in the next game and they went to a tiebreaker that was all Medvedev.

"He was playing aggressive, and he didn't even miss," Alcaraz said of Medvedev, who raced to a 6-1 lead in the tiebreaker to book his third shot at the title.

"He's an amazing player with amazing shots, defense, attack, serve, return, everything," Medvedev said. "So you need to be at your best -- and I was."

High level

Medvedev's form, after a dis-

appointing 2025 campaign in which he fell as low as 18th in the world, has caught Sinner's eye.

"He's back to very, very high level, very big serve. He's returning very well, very deep," Sinner said of the 2021 US Open champion.

The Italian was delighted to finally punch his ticket to the final after falling to Alcaraz in the semis to Alcaraz in 2023 and 2024.

And he was delighted with his play in his sixth straight win over Zverev, the world number four from Germany.

"It was a great performance - very solid from the back of the court," said Sinner, who saved the only break point he faced in a commanding display of precision and power.

Zverev delivered two impeccable service games before he began to falter.

Sinner broke him twice as the German's errors began to climb, and Zverev cut a dejected figure after Sinner pocketed the opening set.

Zverev found renewed energy after fending off three break points in the opening game of the second set, but Sinner saved a break point in the sixth game with an ace and broke Zverev in the next game to gain the only advantage he needed.

Title race not over, insists Man City boss Guardiola



West Ham United's Greek defender #15 Konstantinos Mavropanos (C) heads home their first goal

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola insisted the Premier League title race is not over despite a damaging 1-1 draw at West Ham that left Manchester City trailing nine points behind leaders Arsenal on Saturday.

City squandered the lead given to them by Bernardo Silva in the first half at the London Stadium as Konstantinos Mavropanos headed West Ham's equaliser before the interval.

Just hours after Arsenal scored twice in the final minutes of their 2-0 victory over Everton, Guardiola's side were unable to muster a response.

Second-placed City have a game in hand on Arsenal and

host the leaders in April, but with just eight matches left for the spluttering challengers many pundits have written them off.

However, Guardiola remains defiant, claiming City will not throw in the towel.

"It's not over. Who said that? We didn't lose. We will continue," he said.

"Nine points is a lot against Arsenal but it happened. We have the game at home so we have to try until the end.

"When it is not possible then we congratulate the champion but we have to try."

The only team to win a Premier League title having ended a match at least nine points behind the leaders having played 30 or more games was City in 2013-14.

Vingegaard wins Paris-Nice as Martinez claims final stage

AFP | Nice

Two-time Tour de France winner Jonas Vingegaard claimed his first Paris-Nice title as Frenchman Lenny Martinez pipped him in a sprint finish to win yesterday's final stage.

Vingegaard had already won two stages earlier in the eight-day race but left his charge for the line a fraction too late in the two-up sprint after the pair had broken away on the final climb of the hilly 145-kilometre eighth stage that started and finished in Nice on the French Riviera.

After the peloton reeled in the last of the day's breakaway riders, Frenchman Valentin Paret-Peintre, Vingegaard attacked 21km from the finish, with only Martinez able to hang onto his wheel.

The Dane crested the final climb, the Cote du Linguador, first to seal victory in the King-of-the-Mountains competition to go with his inevitable overall victory.

But when it came to the sprint finish, Martinez launched his bid for the line early and Vingegaard simply did not have the power to overhaul him.

Still, with three victories from his first eight days of racing this season, Vingegaard is in fine form ahead of his tilt at a Giro



Bahrain - Victorious' French rider Lenny Martinez celebrates as he crosses the finish ahead of Team Visma - Lease a Bike's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard (R)

d'Italia-Tour de France double.

And having won two of the three Grand Tours -- adding the 2025 Vuelta a Espana to his 2022 and 2023 Tour victories -- he has also now won three of the sport's major one-week stage races -- claiming the Criterium du Dauphine in 2023 and Tirreno-Adriatico a year later.

Colombian Harold Tejada, who won Friday's sixth stage, took third on the day, coming home in a small group seven seconds after the winner.

Fellow Colombian Daniel Martinez, who crashed more than 50km from the finish and lost touch with the leading peloton, battled through pain

to limit his losses and came home 51sec back to preserve his second place overall, more than four minutes behind Vingegaard.

German Georg Steinhauser took the final spot on the podium some six minutes off the pace, holding off Frenchman Kevin Vauquelin.

Khalifa bin Salman Cup final locked in

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Defending champions Muharraq and Manama will meet in the final of the 2025-26 Khalifa Bin Salman Cup after both teams completed clean sweeps in their best-of-three semi-final series on Saturday night.

Manama were first to advance, defeating Al Najma 77-75 in Game 2 to take the series 2-0, having won Game 1 by 78-66 under head coach Salman Ramadan.

Muharraq followed suit with a 96-80 victory over Al Ahli, completing their 2-0 sweep after a 93-87 win in Game 1. The championship match is now scheduled for March 23 at Khalifa Sports City Arena, the BBA announced yesterday.

Manama's win over Najma featured a remarkable turnaround. Najma dominated early, leading 26-19 after the first quarter and 42-29 at halftime, extending their advantage to 50-33 in the third quarter.

Manama chipped away steadily, and a late third-quarter surge set the stage for the final period, when Hasan Nowrooz hit a decisive three-pointer to give his team a 65-61 lead. Najma briefly tied the game, but Manama pulled away in the closing minutes.

Nowrooz finished with 18 points, including four three-pointers off the bench, while captain Ahmed Salman added 16, and MVP Ali Jaber contributed 15 points, nine rebounds, and five assists.

Najma's Mohammed Hussain scored 20 points with nine rebounds, supported by Donovan Smith's 16.



Passionate Manama celebrations at final buzzer

Manama will also be hoping for the recovery of Subah Hussain, who left the court with a snapped left knee after a natural collision in Game 2. "We know the final will be very challenging," said Salman. "Muharraq are the defending champions and a strong team, so it won't be easy. But we will prepare well and give everything we have."

Later, Muharraq reinforced

their status as title favourites with a Game 2 win over Al Ahli. They led 22-13 after the first quarter and 46-34 by halftime, stretching the lead beyond 20 points in the third quarter.

Bader Abdulla led the winners with 19 points, Mohamed Ameer added 15, Nick West 13, and Wayne Chism dominated the boards with 11 rebounds.

Al Ahli's Anthony Fairley

scored 19 with 10 rebounds, Maitham Jameel 14, and Kenneth Kadji 12.

The Red Wolves had led the series for 74 minutes and 30 seconds before closing out in Game 2, demonstrating control throughout both semi-final matches.

Under the guidance of German coach Peter Schomers, Muharraq reached the final with



Muharraq's Nick West lands a dunk in semi-final

authority. "We're proud to reach the final again," said Muharraq captain Bader Malabes.

"Manama are a strong opponent, but we promise to give everything we have to retain the title."

With both teams advancing in style, Manama, three-time winners, will face defending champions Muharraq, who hold two titles, for the season's top prize.

A win for Manama would give them the outright record for the most Khalifa Bin Salman Cup titles, while a Muharraq victory would allow the defending champions to retain the crown.

The March 23 clash at Khalifa Sports City Arena will decide which of Bahrain's most successful basketball clubs claims the prestigious trophy this year.

Man Utd sink Villa to boost top-four bid

AFP | London

Manchester United bolstered their bid to qualify for the Champions League with a vital 3-1 win against top-four rivals Aston Villa on yesterday.

Michael Carrick's side took the lead through Casemiro's second-half opener at Old Trafford before Ross Barkley hauled Villa level.

United finished strongly, with Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko scoring in the closing stages to seal Carrick's seventh win in nine games since taking over as interim boss.

Sitting third in the Premier League, United are three points clear of fourth-placed Villa in the race to reach the Champions League via a top-four finish.

United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe this week praised Carrick's "excellent" work, but stopped short of committing to the former Old Trafford star on a long-term basis.

But Carrick making a strong case to earn the job on a permanent basis after stabilising United following Ruben Amorim's sacking.

United's latest victory came after an 11-day break since the first defeat of his reign at Newcastle and Carrick celebrated with a jig of delight on the touchline after Sesko wrapped up the points.

Spluttering Villa have lost their last three league games



Manchester United's Brazilian striker #10 Matheus Cunha (R) shoots to score the team's second goal

and have just one win in seven top-flight matches, leaving them three points above fifth-placed Chelsea with eight games left in the battle for European places.

After a lethargic first-half, United finally prised open the Villa defence in the 53rd minute.

Bryan Mbeumo's stinging strike was palmed away by Emiliano Martinez, earning a corner that brought the opener.

Bruno Fernandes curled a corner to the near post and Casemiro made a perfectly timed run

to glance a header past Martinez for his league goal this season.

With Casemiro likely to leave when his contract expires at the end of the season, United fans serenaded the Brazilian midfielder with chants of "one more year".

United lost focus and surrendered the lead in the 64th minute.

In his first Premier League start for 14 months, Barkley slammed a superb strike past Senne Lammens from 12 yards

after United failed to clear the danger.

Assist king Fernandes

But Cunha netted in the 71st minute to ensure Carrick's men didn't pay for their stumble.

Bursting onto Fernandes' sublime pass into the Villa area, the Brazilian forward slotted a fine finish into the far corner.

It was Fernandes' 16th Premier League assist this term, moving the United captain past David Beckham's previous club



Bruno Fernandes' 16th Premier League assist of the season broke David Beckham's 26-year-old club record of 15, set in 1999-2000, while reaching 100 assists for United since 2020

record of 15 in 1999-2000.

He has 100 assists for United in all competitions since signing from Sporting Lisbon in 2020.

Sesko came off the bench to prove a point to Carrick after being dropped, the Slovenian striker firing home with a deflected effort in the 81st minute.

Nottingham Forest climbed out of the relegation zone after a 0-0 draw against Fulham at the City Ground.

Still waiting for their first win under Vitor Pereira, fourth-bottom Forest, who have had four managers this term, are above third-bottom West Ham on goal difference.

Ten-man Leeds held on for a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace de-

spite Dominic Calvert-Lewin's missed penalty and a bizarre red card for Gabriel Gudmundsson.

Calvert-Lewin shot wide from the spot after Will Hughes' handball, before Gudmundsson was sent off on the stroke of half-time.

Gudmundsson had already been shown a yellow card when he committed another foul on Ismaila Sarr that referee Thomas Bramall deemed worthy of a booking.

Bramall had forgotten the first booking before he was told through his earpiece to show the red card.

Later yesterday, troubled Tottenham headed to Liverpool with only goal difference keeping them outside the relegation zone.

Tottenham interim boss Igor Tudor had lost all four of his matches since replacing the sacked Thomas Frank.

In grave danger of playing into the second tier for the first time since 1977-78, Tottenham are without a win in their last 11 league matches, losing five in a row.

They suffered an embarrassing 5-2 defeat at Atletico Madrid in the Champions League last-16 first leg in midweek.

Sixth-placed Liverpool would go fourth with a victory that would push Tottenham deeper into the relegation mire.

Emotional Antonelli wins maiden grand prix with Mercedes 1-2 in China

Nineteen-year-old converts record pole into maiden victory ahead of Russell and Hamilton

● Verstappen retires with issues

● McLaren cars fail to start

AFP | Shanghai

An emotional Kimi Antonelli won a grand prix for the first time yesterday in China ahead of Mercedes teammate George Russell and Lewis Hamilton, who made his maiden podium for Ferrari.

The 19-year-old Antonelli converted being the youngest pole-sitter in Formula One history into victory after both McLaren's dramatically failed to start the Shanghai

race.

Antonelli briefly lost the lead at the start but once he got back in front he controlled the pace to cruise home to the chequered flag by more than five seconds from Russell. Charles Leclerc was fourth in the second Ferrari.

"I'm speechless, I'm about to cry to be honest," said Antonelli as he choked back tears.

"Thank you to the team for helping me to achieve this dream."

It was an almost flawless drive from the youngster, apart from one heart-fluttering moment when he locked up at the hairpin on his penultimate lap.

But he recovered to avoid anything more damaging than a



At 19 years, six months and 18 days, Antonelli is placed second on the youngest race-winners list, behind Max Verstappen, who won in Spain in 2016 at the age of 18 years, seven months and 15 days

small excursion off track.

"I really wanted to bring Italy back to the top and we did today. Even if I gave myself a little bit of a heart attack towards the end a flat spot," Antonelli added.

Early championship leader Russell was full of praise for his young teammate after the dominant Mercedes team secured a one-two for the second race running.

"A huge congratulations to Kimi because it's always very special to win your first race," said Russell, whose lead has been cut to four points by Antonelli.

The Italian replaced Hamilton at Mercedes and the seven-time world champion said he could not be more pleased for the teenager and his old team.

"I'm so so happy for you buddy, and I'm so honoured to be able to share this moment with him," said Hamilton.

"He took my seat obviously, at this great team. So big congratulations to Mercedes.

"They're really pulling ahead at the moment. We've got a



Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli celebrates his victory

lot of work to do to try and keep up."

Hamilton, as he had done in Saturday's sprint, got a great start and had taken the lead by the time the teams emerged from the first complex of turns.

Leclerc also launched brilliantly and managed to get past Russell, who started second on the grid.

The top four swapped places multiple times before a safety car on lap 11 brought them all into the pits.

McLaren, Red Bull woe

Once the dust settled and they went racing again, Antonelli led from Hamilton, with Leclerc third and Russell fourth.

By lap 29 Russell had got past both Ferraris and up to second and set off trying to catch his young Italian teammate, who was by now more than seven seconds up the road.

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen continued Red

"I'm so so happy for you buddy, and I'm so honoured to be able to share this moment with him. He took my seat obviously, at this great team. So big congratulations to Mercedes. They're really pulling ahead at the moment. We've got a lot of work to do to try and keep up"

LEWIS HAMILTON

Bull's poor start to the new season when he was told to retire his car on lap 46.

Oliver Bearman was fifth in the Haas, followed home by Pierre Gasly (Alpine) and Liam Lawson (RB).

Rounding out the top-10 points scorers were Isack Hadjar (Red

Bull), Carlos Sainz (Williams) and Franco Colapinto (Alpine).

Current world champion Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri both failed to start because of separate issues that left McLaren without a car in the race.

Norris had an electrical problem that prevented him getting to the grid.

Piastri did get round to the grid but was pushed back into the garage a few minutes later with a different problem.

"Unfortunately we identified separate issues on both cars which prevented them from starting the Chinese GP," said McLaren in a statement.

It has been an awful start to the season for the constructors' world champions.

Last weekend only one McLaren took part in the opening race in Melbourne after Piastri crashed on his way to the grid, meaning the Australian is yet to race in a grand prix this season.

Bahrain and Saudi Arabian Grands Prix will not take place in April

Manama

It has been confirmed that, after careful evaluations, due to the ongoing situation in the Middle East region, the Bahrain and Saudi Arabian Grands Prix will not take place in April.

While several alternatives were considered, it was ultimately decided that no substitutions will be made in April. The Formula 2, Formula 3 and F1 Academy rounds will also not take place during their scheduled times. The decision has been taken in full consultation with the FIA and respective promoters.

Stefano Domenicali, President and CEO of Formula 1, said:

"While this was a difficult decision to take, it is unfortunately the right one at this stage considering the current situation in the Middle East. I want to take this opportunity to thank the FIA as well as our incredible promoters for their support and total understanding as they were looking forward to hosting us with their usual energy and passion. We cannot wait to be back with them as soon as the circumstances allow us to do so."

Mohammed Ben Sulayem, FIA President, said:

"The FIA will always place

the safety and wellbeing of our community and colleagues first. After careful consideration, we have taken this decision with that responsibility firmly in mind. We continue to hope for calm, safety and a swift return to stability in the region, and my thoughts remain with all those affected by these recent events.

"Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are incredibly important to the ecosystem of our racing season, and I look forward to returning to both as soon as circumstances allow. My sincere thanks to the promoters, our partners, and our colleagues across the champi-



"We fully support the decision by Formula 1, and we are grateful to them and to the FIA for their support and enduring partnership. We look forward to welcoming fans from all around the world back to Bahrain when F1 returns"

SHAIKH SALMAN BIN ISA AL KHALIFA

onship for the collaborative and constructive approach that has led to this decision."

Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, Chief Executive of the Bahrain International Circuit said:

"We fully support the decision by Formula 1, and we are grateful to them and to the FIA for their support and enduring partnership. We look forward to welcoming fans from all around the world back to Bahrain when F1 returns. On behalf of all of us at BIC, I take this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks to all those in the F1 community who have taken the time to send us

messages of support."

HRH Prince Khalid bin Sultan Al-Abdullah Al-Faisal, Chairman of the Saudi Automobile and Motorcycle Federation (SAMF) and Chairman of the Saudi Motorsport Company (SMC), said:

"The Saudi Automobile and Motorcycle Federation respect the decision taken by Formula 1 regarding the 2026 race calendar. Fans across the Kingdom were once again looking forward to the Formula 1 STC Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah this April, but we understand the considerations behind this decision and remain in close partnership with Formula 1."