

Bahrain open Asian handball championship with emphatic win

Bahrain began the Handball Championship with a 32–21 win over Jordan. The tournament is a qualifier for the 2027 IHF World Championship. | P12

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Saudi King Salman undergoes medical tests: royal court



AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia’s 90-year-old monarch King Salman is undergoing medical tests at a hospital in capital Riyadh, the kingdom’s Royal Court said yesterday.

“The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques -- may God protect him -- is undergoing medical examinations today... at King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh,” the court said in a statement shared on state media.

In 2024, the Royal Court said he suffered from lung infections, which he recovered from.

He was hospitalised in May 2022, when he went in for a colonoscopy and stayed for just over a week for other tests and “some time to rest”, the official Saudi Press Agency reported at the time.

He was also admitted to hospital in March 2022 to undergo what state media described as “successful medical tests” and to change the battery of his pacemaker.

In 2020, he underwent surgery to remove his gall bladder.

India looks to finalise ‘mother of all deals’ with EU

AFP | New Delhi, India

A trade deal between India and the European Union will be the “mother of all deals”, Delhi’s Commerce Minister said yesterday, as both sides seek to overcome the final sticking points.

The EU and India’s trade chiefs said last week they were getting closer to reaching a deal after days of talks in Brussels.

“This (India-EU trade pact) will be the mother of all deals,” Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said, according to the Press Trust of India news agency. The leaders of the EU and India are expected to hold a summit at the end of January.

Pakistani President departs Bahrain following official visit



His Excellency Asif Ali Zardari, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, departed Bahrain yesterday, concluding an official visit, during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. The discussions addressed the close relations between the two countries, as well as regional and international developments of common interest. At Bahrain International Airport, the Pakistani President was seen off by Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Amna bint Ahmed Al Rumaihi, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning; Jassim bin Mohammed Al Ghatam, Deputy Governor of Muharraq Governorate; Saqib Rauf, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Bahrain; Mohamed Ebrahim Mohamed Abdulqader, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; along with a number of officials.

Bahrain, EU discuss strengthening ties and regional stability



Manama

Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Bahrain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, held a phone call with Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative and European Commission Vice-President, and Constantinos Kombos, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cyprus, which currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The discussions focused on Bahrain–EU relations and ways to advance cooperation between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council, particularly during Bahrain’s current GCC presidency.

Officials also addressed regional and international developments, emphasising the need to reduce tensions, promote dialogue and diplomatic solutions, and support initiatives that enhance regional and global security and stability.

Sparks fly over Expat ID validity bill

Proposal caps Expat ID validity at residency length

● Government says IDs are already deactivated

● Ministry warns of cost and operational issues

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A contentious bill that could fundamentally alter how Expat ID cards are issued has put lawmakers and authorities at loggerheads, as parliament prepares to debate the measure on Tuesday.

If passed, the amendment would stipulate that “in all cases, the ID card for a non-Bahraini shall be valid for

a period not exceeding the duration of his residence in the Kingdom of Bahrain”—effectively tying the card’s validity strictly to the holder’s lawful residency.

The Parliament’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee has already urged MPs to reject the proposal in principle, underscoring deep divisions ahead of the debate.

Supporters argue the change would strengthen controls on overstays, curb access to ID-linked services and transactions, and increase fee revenue.



Hassan Bukhammas, Chairman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee

The government, however, dismisses the proposal as redundant, stressing that ID cards are already automatically deactivated once residency expires, immediately cutting off access to government services, banking and other dealings that require an active card.

The Ministry of Interior added that individuals leaving Bahrain are granted a 30-day grace period to settle their affairs before their ID cards are deactivated.

It also warned that tying card validity to residency periods would create operational complications, as residence permits vary widely in length, including long-term categories such as the Golden Residence. The ministry further cautioned that the amendment would place added strain on public finances, noting that issuing an ID card costs 14 dinars, while foreign nationals pay 10 dinars under a five-year renewal model.

The National Institution for Human Rights said the proposal does not, in principle, breach equality or directly infringe



A national identity card (CPR) – including for expatriate residents – is generally valid for five years from the date of issuance (and ten years for those aged 70 and above) before it must be renewed. This validity period is not tied to other documents such as a passport or driving licence.

rights and freedoms, but called for a legal mechanism to address humanitarian cases where access to essential services depends on holding a valid ID card.

The Bahrain Bar Society raised no objections, while the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission recommended leaving ID validity periods to executive regulations for greater flexibility, warning that the proposed change could lead to operational difficulties.

Need for land

Trump threatens tariffs on countries that don’t back Greenland takeover plan

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he may impose trade tariffs on countries

that don’t support his plans to take over Greenland, part of the territory of NATO ally Denmark. “I may put a tariff on countries if they don’t go along with

Greenland, because we need Greenland for national security,” Trump said at a health roundtable at the White House. “I may do that,” added Trump.

Trump compared the possible Greenland tariffs to those that he threatened on France and Germany last year over the price of pharmaceutical products.



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