

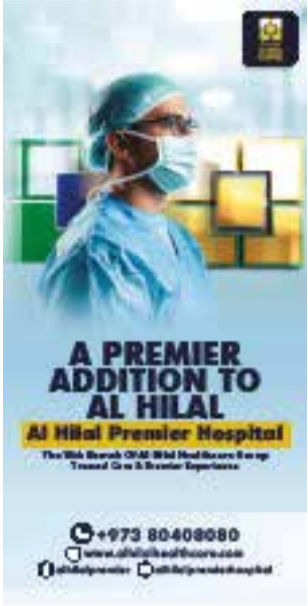
France Outlast Senegal After Second-Half Fireworks

France edged Senegal 3-1 in their 2026 World Cup opener at MetLife Stadium, going top of Group I ahead of Iraq and Norway. | P12

WORLD 6 Iran says talks on final US deal to begin this week

'All the way': Egypt dare to dream after gritty Belgium draw 11 SPORTS

BUSINESS 5 NBB rewards International Spend this summer with up to 5% cashback



Gulf states help turn the tide

Trump commends Gulf leadership as Iran agreement edges closer

Health Minister joins Ebola outbreak meeting



TDT | Manama

Health Minister Dr Jaleela bint Al Sayed Jawad Hassan joined a high-level virtual meeting of African leaders and international partners to discuss the Ebola (Bundibugyo) outbreak and response efforts.

Organised by the Africa CDC and chaired by African Union Chairperson and Burundian President Évariste Ndayishimiye, the meeting included representatives from the WHO and international organisations.

Dr Jaleela stressed the importance of global cooperation, surveillance, early detection, stronger healthcare systems and uninterrupted medical supply chains in tackling the outbreak.

Participants reviewed the latest developments and challenges before adopting a joint statement supporting efforts to contain the disease and safeguard global health.

FM holds back-to-back regional diplomacy talks

TDT | Manama

Foreign Minister Dr Abdullahatif bin Rashid Al Zayani held separate telephone talks with his counterparts in Jordan and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, focusing on bilateral relations and regional developments.

During his call with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, the two ministers reviewed ties between the two countries, discussed ways to enhance cooperation, and exchanged views on regional issues and their impact on peace and security. They also discussed Arab coordination and joint action.

In a separate call, Dr Al Zayani and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud reviewed Bahrain-Saudi relations, Gulf cooperation and ongoing efforts to strengthen regional stability and security.

US-Iran deal to be signed in Switzerland

Geneva, Switzerland

A US-Iran deal aimed at ending the Middle East war will be signed at Switzerland's mountainside Burgenstock resort on Friday, the Swiss foreign ministry said.

Tehran and Washington announced Sunday they had agreed a memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the conflict, which broke out on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran and engulfed the Middle East.



US president warns Iran of severe consequences if it seeks to acquire a nuclear weapon under the proposed agreement.

UAE hailed as a 'powerful ally' during summit talks

TDT | agencies

Qatar and the United Arab Emirates received strong backing from US President Donald Trump during a series of high-level meetings at the G7 Summit in Évian-les-Bains, as Gulf diplomacy took centre stage in efforts to secure regional stability and advance a landmark agreement with Iran.

Meeting separately with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim

bin Hamad Al Thani and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Trump praised both leaders for their roles in addressing regional challenges and supporting diplomatic efforts.

Trump credited Qatar with helping advance negotiations that led to a US-Iran agreement aimed at preventing Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

"Working with Qatar was really a pleasure," Trump said, describing the country as a key partner in efforts to reduce tensions and promote stability. He also praised Doha's support during a critical period, noting Qatar's proximity to Iran and its role in helping maintain diplomatic momentum.

He said the agreement would ensure Iran does not develop, purchase or acquire a nuclear weapon, warning that "all hell will rain down" if Tehran violated its commitments. Trump

added that the deal was moving into a second phase of negotiations and expressed confidence that Iran wanted to move forward quickly.

Sheikh Tamim welcomed the progress, saying continued momentum could deliver important benefits for the region and contribute to long-term stability. He reaffirmed Qatar's readiness to support efforts aimed at securing a lasting agreement.

In a separate meeting, Trump described the UAE as a "powerful ally" and praised Sheikh Mohamed's leadership.

"I just want to say His Highness is a warrior," Trump said. "He's a courageous man, and he has a fantastic country."

Trump also highlighted the strength of US-UAE ties, describing relations as "outstanding" and noting the UAE's significant investments in the United States.

Trump expressed confidence that the Strait of Hormuz would

be fully open by Friday under the emerging agreement with Iran.

He said shipping traffic through the strategic waterway had already begun moving normally, while oil exports were resuming and prices were easing, developments expected to reduce pressure on global energy markets and regional trade routes.



The proposed US-Iran agreement aims to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. In return for compliance, the deal envisages sanctions relief, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to commercial shipping, and renewed Iranian oil exports.

A New Era in Clinical Training

University of Bahrain launches clinical simulation centre

TDT | Manama

The University of Bahrain (UoB) has inaugurated an Advanced Clinical Simulation Centre designed to strengthen healthcare education and help prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals.

The facility was inaugurated by Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health.

He described the centre as a strategic investment in national talent that will enhance the quality of healthcare education and training while supporting the delivery of sustainable, high-quality healthcare



services. Education Minister and UoB Board of Trustees Chairman Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma said the centre reflects the university's commitment to experiential learning.

UoB President Dr Fuad Mohammed Al Ansari said the fa-

and Sport Sciences, said clinical simulation plays an increasingly important role in improving patient safety and the quality of care.

The centre features 15 advanced simulation models that support realistic training and multidisciplinary learning. It serves undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programmes in areas including emergency care, critical care, paediatrics, maternity care, mental health and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).



Dr Lina Mohammed Khanji, Dean of the College of Health



Cricket in Bahrain is no longer at the mercy of the summer heat



Opening ceremony attended by the Ambassadors of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, along with special invitees of the evening.

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

A new indoor academy in Salmabad is giving players year-round access to training and competition through a fully air-conditioned facility equipped with modern coaching and practice systems.

The KHK Cricket Academy was inaugurated in the pres-

ence of diplomats, ambassadors, sports officials, business leaders and members of Bahrain's cricket community, reflecting the sport's growing popularity in the Kingdom.

Academy Chairman Mohammed Mansoor said the facility addresses one of the biggest challenges facing the sport, as extreme summer temperatures have long restricted outdoor

training.

He said the academy aims to make cricket more accessible by providing a suitable environment for players of all ages to train throughout the year.

The facility features multiple practice lanes, training nets and specialised equipment designed to support both beginners and advanced players. Participants will also benefit from structured

coaching programmes delivered by qualified coaches.

Mansoor stressed that the academy is not only about infrastructure but also about building a strong cricket community, encouraging families to introduce their children to the sport.

Beyond cricket, the venue is designed to host a range of sports and community activities, expanding its role as a wider



Mohammed Mansoor - The chairman of the KHK Cricket Academy in Bahrain



Muhammad Shahid - KHK Sports CEO and BRAVE Combat Federation president

sporting hub.

KHK Sports CEO and BRAVE Combat Federation President Muhammad Shahid hailed the vision of His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Chairman of the General Sports Authority, and President of the Bahrain Olympic Commit-

tee, in supporting sports development, describing the academy as an important step in growing cricket, creating opportunities for young players and strengthening Bahrain's talent pipeline. Officials believe the facility will help expand participation and strengthen Bahrain's cricket ecosystem through year-round training opportunities.



Arab Ministers discuss legal cooperation

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, Fawzia Zainal, participated in the 76th meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Justice Ministers, which included justice ministers and executive bureau members from several Arab countries.

The meeting was convened to prepare for the 42nd session of the Council of Arab Justice Ministers and the 77th meeting of its Executive Bureau, both scheduled for Algeria. Discussions focused on drafting the agenda, following up on council resolutions, sup-

porting the development of the Arab legal system, and coordinating positions on issues of common interest to strengthen judicial and legal cooperation among member states.

During the meeting, participants reviewed a report from the council's technical secretariat on implementing decisions adopted during the 41st session of the Council of Arab Justice Ministers. They also discussed ways to enhance Arab cooperation in combating terrorism, including the implementation of the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and mechanisms to ensure its effective application.

Authorities Finalise Ashura Plans



Bahrain's annual meeting for the Ashura season was held with the participation of representatives from official government entities and heads and officials of ma'tams from across the Kingdom's governorates, as part of preparations for the Ashura season of 1448 AH.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Yousif bin Saleh Al Saleh, Deputy Chairman of the Islamic Endowments Affairs Council, affirmed that the continuous support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to monitor and address the needs of communities during the Ashura season are reflected

in the efforts of ministries and concerned authorities to ensure the occasion is observed in the best possible manner each year.

The meeting was attended by officials from ministries and government entities across Bahrain's governorates and brought together around 300 heads and officials of ma'tams.

Al Saleh praised the efforts of the Ministry of Interior and its various departments under the supervision of General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior. He commended the ministry's role in maintaining stability, ensuring public safety and security, protecting national achievements, and safeguarding the wellbeing of all members of society.

Interior Ministry wins Global award for employee happiness

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ministry of Interior has won the Global Continual Improvement Award 2025 in the "Happiness and Engagement" category, recognising its efforts to enhance employee wellbeing and workplace engagement.

The award was presented to the ministry's Human Resources Directorate by the Dubai Quality Group in the United Arab Emirates.

The achievement was highlighted during a meeting between Shaikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, and Major-General Adel Abdullah Ameen, Assistant Undersecretary for Human Resources.

Shaikh Nasser said the award reflects the ministry's commitment to institutional excellence and the adoption of best administrative practices that support a positive work environment and sustainable development.

He added that the achievement aligns with the vision of General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, which focuses on investing in human capital,



The Human Resources Directorate received the award in recognition of initiatives promoting employee happiness and engagement.

improving workplace environments and enhancing institutional performance.

Major-General Ameen said the recognition acknowledges a range of initiatives and specialised programmes aimed at improving employee happiness while promoting

participation, innovation and teamwork.

He attributed the achievement to the support of the Minister of Interior, the Chief of Public Security and the ministry's leadership, noting that their backing has helped strengthen a culture of contin-

uous improvement across the organisation.

The Global Continual Improvement Award is an international platform that promotes the exchange of best practices, innovation and continuous improvement among organisations worldwide.

Students can now cancel transfer requests instantly online at UoB

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Students at the University of Bahrain can now cancel academic transfer requests instantly through a new digital service, reducing a process that previously took two working days to complete.

The service, launched through the Student Information System (SIS), allows students to withdraw transfer requests and remain in their current academic programmes after transfer decisions have been issued.

It covers all types of academic transfers, including transfers between colleges, between

programmes within the same college, and from associate diploma or associate degree programmes to bachelor's degree programmes.

According to the university, the upgraded service enables immediate processing following OTP verification, eliminating delays associated with manual procedures.

The initiative forms part of ongoing government efforts to improve service quality and streamline administrative processes through digital transformation.

The university said the number of required documents has been reduced by 50 per cent,



Dr. Fouad Mohammed Al Ansari, President of the University of Bahrain

while service performance has improved by at least 25 per cent. The process has also been fully digitised.

Additional enhancements

include a redesigned user interface, simplified procedures and unified service information across all channels.

University President Dr Fouad Mohammed Al Ansari said the service reflects the institution's commitment to adopting innovative digital solutions that improve operational efficiency and enhance the student experience.

He added that reducing processing times from two working days to instant completion supports the university's broader digital transformation objectives.

Bahrain, 78 nations condemn drone attack near UAE nuclear plant

Joint statement warns of radiological risks and calls for accountability

TDI | Manama

Bahrain joined 78 countries and the European Union in condemning a drone attack targeting electrical infrastructure near the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the UAE, describing it as a serious threat to international peace and security.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, the countries denounced the May 17 attack, carried out by Iraqi armed groups, and warned of the potential radiological and environmental risks posed by strikes near nuclear facilities.

The statement described the attack as a flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, stressing the need to protect critical infrastructure associated with peaceful nuclear programmes.

Signatories called for accountability and urged the international community to prevent attacks on nuclear facilities, warning that such incidents could endanger civilian lives and have consequences extending beyond national borders.

The targeted facilities were located outside the Barakah plant's inner perimeter but close enough to trigger international

This attack entailed serious risks to the lives of civilians and the potential for severe cross-border radiological consequences

JOINT STATEMENT

Iran's attacks harmed millions, GCC tells UN Council

TDI | Manama

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Jordan have accused Iran of violating the rights of millions of people through attacks on civilian infrastructure during a United Nations Human Rights Council session in Geneva.

The statement was delivered by Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva, Ambassador Abdullah Abdullatif Abdullah, on behalf of the GCC member states and Jordan during a High Commissioner's oral briefing held under Human Rights Council Resolution 61/1.

The bloc said the attacks caused significant damage to civilian infrastructure and disrupted essential services, affecting citizens and residents across the region.

It warned that the impact extended beyond the immediate damage, with disruptions to energy facilities and other critical infrastructure affecting economic stability and access to essential services.

The GCC and Jordan held

concern over potential safety risks.

The statement brought together a broad coalition of countries from across five continents,



Targeting civilian infrastructure is not just physical destruction—it is a violation of the fundamental rights of millions.

Iran responsible for the broader humanitarian consequences, describing the attacks as violations of state sovereignty, international law, the UN Charter and the principles of

good neighbourliness. The statement reaffirmed the bloc's commitment to peace, dialogue and diplomacy as the means to resolve disputes and maintain regional stability.

The countries reaffirmed their

commitment to international law and collective efforts to safeguard global security and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Gulf states attacks raised at UN Rights Council



Faisal Fulad, Secretary-General of the Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society

Call for compensation, documentation, and international accountability

Pradeep Puravankara
TDI | Manama

The International Coalition to Counter Iranian Regime Aggression has called for compensation for victims, stronger documentation of alleged violations and greater international accountability during the 62nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

A delegation led by Faisal Fulad, Secretary-General of the Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society (BHRWS), is participating in the session under Resolution 61/1, which is examining the impact of recent regional

attacks. During the proceedings, the Deputy UN High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered an update on the effects of the attacks on civilians, regional stability and international maritime navigation, including security concerns in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a statement submitted to the Council, the coalition urged the international community to thoroughly document alleged violations, secure compensation for affected individuals and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

The group also called for measures to safeguard international shipping routes and prevent future violations through stronger international oversight.

Fulad said accountability and proper documentation were essential to ensuring justice for victims and preventing impunity.



The Barakah Nuclear Power Plant is the Arab world's first operational nuclear power plant, located in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Man, 22, arrested over alleged online exploitation of minor

TDI | Manama

A 22-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of luring and exploiting a young girl through a social media platform, the Ministry of Interior announced.

The arrest was made by the Cyber Child Protection Unit at the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security following an investigation launched after authorities received a report of the incident.

According to the ministry, investigators carried out search and inquiry operations and gathered evidence that led to the identification and arrest of the suspect. Legal procedures have been completed and the case is being prepared for referral to the Public Prosecution.

The ministry said the case highlights the risks children can face online and renewed

The arrest was made by the Cyber Child Protection Unit at the General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Electronic Security following an investigation launched after authorities received a report of the incident.

calls for greater parental supervision of social media use.

The Cyber Child Protection Unit urged parents to educate children about the dangers of interacting with strangers online and sharing personal information or photographs with unknown individuals.

It also encouraged the public to report suspicious communications or any attempts to lure children through digital platforms.

Nani Mohammed Butti, Assistant Undersecretary for Support and Initiatives at the Ministry of Youth Affairs, attended the closing ceremony of the Model United Nations (MUN) programme organised by the North Sehla Youth Empowerment Centre. During the event, Butti honoured participants and winners, affirming the ministry's commitment to supporting initiatives that equip young people with leadership, communication and decision-making skills. She commended the programme's o



Fake designer caps seized at Bahrain border ordered destroyed

Mohammed Darwish
TDI | Manama

A court has ordered the destruction of 119 counterfeit LACOSTE caps seized at a Bahrain land port after finding they could mislead consumers into believing they were genuine products.

The caps, packed in 36 parcels and imported by a discount shop, were intercepted by the Land Ports Customs Di-

rectorate after officials found they carried the LACOSTE trademark.

The case was brought by lawyer Hanan Hammoudah on behalf of the trademark owner, seeking to prevent the goods from being released and requesting their destruction.

The court heard that the caps were manufactured outside Bahrain and bore the French brand's crocodile logo without

authorisation. The claimant submitted photographs of the seized goods, a customs report and the shop's commercial registration documents.

Although the defendants were legally notified, they did not appear before the court. Citing Bahrain's GCC Trade Marks Law, the court said trademark owners have the right to prevent the release of goods suspected of carrying counterfeit or misleading marks. After

comparing the seized caps with the registered LACOSTE trademark, the court found that their appearance was likely to cause confusion among consumers and create the impression of a connection to the protected brand.

The court ordered the destruction of the 119 caps at the expense of the discount shop and directed it to pay court costs, including BD50 in legal fees.

Not just horsepower

Haya Shaheen's journey from rider to mentor and community builder



Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

“Horses help women discover their inner strength,” believes Haya Shaheen. It is a conviction born from years spent in the saddle, where she learned lessons in patience, discipline and self-confidence. What began as a childhood fascination with horses evolved into a lifelong journey of riding, training and mentoring others, eventually leading her to co-found “Saddle Club”, a growing community for horse enthusiasts.

Founded with a group of women riders, the club is about more than equestrianism. Through activities, camps and educational programmes, it aims to build confidence, encourage learning and create meaningful connections among women, children and horse lovers alike.

A unique bond

For Haya, humans and horses share a unique relationship. It is this connection that transformed a childhood passion into a lifelong journey encompassing riding, training, teaching and community building.

That journey took a professional turn in 2014.

“For me, equestrianism was never just a sport, but a real school that taught me patience, discipline, confidence and responsibility,” she said.

“It helped shape my personality and the way I approach life.” Over time, her passion expanded beyond riding into teaching and training.

“I enjoy seeing my students grow step by step,” she said, adding that there is “real happiness in sharing knowledge and helping others build confidence in themselves.”

Beyond the saddle

Haya also believes learning is a continuous process. “A good trainer is someone who never stops learning. I always try to educate myself and stay updated with the latest practices in equestrianism,” she said.

That philosophy continues to shape Saddle Club, which she co-founded with a group of women riders.

Founded with a group of women riders, the club serves

as a platform for horse lovers to learn, connect and grow together.

“It brings horse enthusiasts together in a supportive and inspiring environment through activities, camps and educational programmes,” she said.

Through its initiatives, the club seeks to strengthen the equestrian community while promoting knowledge-sharing and mentorship.

Focus on children

Children remain a special focus for Haya.

“I believe equestrianism helps children build their personality, confidence and social skills,” she said.

Working with children, she added, is a responsibility that requires awareness, care and precision.



Empowering women

Speaking about the impact of equestrianism on women, Haya said horses offer far more than a sporting experience. “They create a space of calm, balance and confidence, helping women step away from daily stress and

reconnect with themselves,” she said.

According to Haya, horses are both strong and sensitive. “They deserve respect, understanding and care.”

For this reason, she promotes a culture of kindness towards animals and encourages relationships built on trust and mutual respect between rider and horse.

For Haya, equestrianism is more than a sport.

“It is a passion, a mission and a continuous journey of learning and making a positive impact on others.”



Lawmakers seek review of university fees hikes

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Growing complaints from students over rising University of Bahrain fees have prompted MPs to seek a review of charges imposed on summer courses, extended study periods and re-enrolment.

Parliament's Services Committee has approved a proposal urging the government to reconsider a series of fees introduced or increased by the national university, saying they have placed an added financial burden on students and their families, particularly those from low-income households.

The proposal calls for university fees to be aligned with students' living costs and seeks to uphold the principle that higher education should remain accessible to all citizens.

The committee said all members present voted in favour of the proposal on public interest grounds.



“Obliging students to buy designated books runs contrary to the principles of university education, which should encourage the use of diverse academic sources.”

ABDULWAHID QARATA, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENT'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

According to the explanatory memorandum, the proposal is based on Article 7 of Bahrain's Constitution, which requires the State to support science, literature, the arts and scientific

research. MPs said the move followed numerous complaints from students about fee increases at the University of Bahrain.

Among the concerns cited were new charges for summer courses, the doubling of course fees for students who have exceeded 10 semesters, higher re-enrolment fees and requirements to purchase specific textbooks.

They argued that obliging students to buy designated books runs contrary to the principles of university education, which should encourage the use of diverse academic sources.

The proposal calls on the government to cancel or amend decisions that MPs say have increased the cost of diploma and bachelor's degree programmes while generating additional revenue for the university.

The Services Committee has recommended the proposal for approval.



Bahrain, Canada discuss security cooperation

Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) during talks with Brigitte Fournier, Security Adviser at the Embassy of Canada accredited to the Kingdom of Bahrain, along with her accompanying delegation. Discussions focused particularly on emergency and crisis management plans. They also reviewed opportunities for cooperation and joint coordination in related fields aimed at enhancing the exchange of expertise, developing work mechanisms, and achieving shared objectives.

Court clears three men in illegal fishing nets case

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A fisherman and two Asian crewmen have been cleared of charges related to unlicensed fishing nets and evading a Coast Guard inspection after a court found no conclusive evidence linking them to the seized gear.

The Lower Criminal Court ruled that prosecutors had failed to prove the three men possessed the prohibited nets recovered at a fishing site, acquitting them of all charges.

The case stemmed from a Coast Guard patrol in September 2025. According to witness accounts, officers approached a fishing boat for inspection, but those on board allegedly fled, leaving behind nets later identified as prohibited three-layer nylon gear.

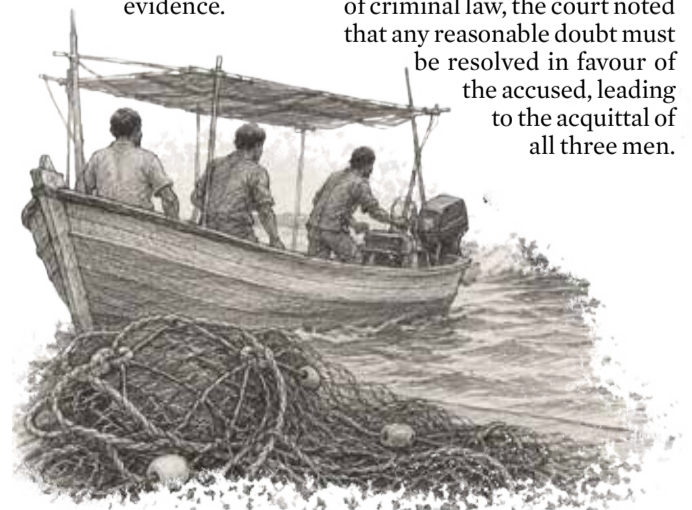
The fisherman was also accused of refusing to stop for the

patrol boat. Defence lawyer Mohammed Al Mahdi argued that neither his client nor the two crewmen had any connection to the nets, maintaining that the seized gear did not belong to them. He also requested Coast Guard footage of the incident and called for the charges to be dismissed due to a lack of evidence.

In its ruling, the court found that witness testimony established only that a boat had been spotted, an inspection had been attempted and nets were later recovered.

That, it said, was not enough to prove ownership or possession of the fishing gear by the accused.

Reaffirming a key principle of criminal law, the court noted that any reasonable doubt must be resolved in favour of the accused, leading to the acquittal of all three men.



BIS felicitates AISSCE 2025-26 achievers



Pranav Bobby Sekhar emerged as School Topper with 97.8%, securing the highest Physics score in Bahrain. He also qualified for JEE Advanced after clearing JEE Main. Sakshi Lal secured second position with 97.6%, followed by Ishan Pande with 97.4%, who also qualified for JEE Main and JEE Advanced. Pranav topped the Science stream, Sakshi led Humanities, and Aysha Yusra Shamim topped Commerce with 95.6%. Other notable performers included Ishan Pande (second in Science), Harshil Jain (second in Commerce), and Ahmad Suhail Wani (third in Science). The school recorded several centum scorers. Perfect scores in English were achieved by Darwina Manoj, Dhruv Satishkumar, Ishan Pande, Amruta Varshinee Murugan, and Sakshi Lal. Mathematics centums went to Pranav Bobby Sekhar, Ishan Pande, and Darwina Manoj, while Ishan Pande, Pranav Bobby Sekhar, Ahmad Suhail Wani, and Yuvraj Agarwal scored 100 in Computer Science. Suchika Panjwani earned 100 in Informatics Practices, and Sakshi Lal secured a centum in History. Among subject toppers were Darwina Manoj (Biology, 99), Amruta Varshinee Murugan and Vaishnavi Vinayakumar (Economics, 99), Sakshi Lal (Psychology, 99), Ahmad Suhail Wani (Chemistry, 96), and Sakshi Lal (Applied Mathematics, 93). Pranav's 96 in Physics was the highest in Bahrain. The school also commended nine students who achieved A1 grades in all subjects, reflecting exceptional consistency and academic excellence.

NBB rewards International Spend this summer with up to 5% cashback

TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has launched its Summer Cashback Campaign, giving credit cardholders a rewarding way to maximise their international spending during the peak vacation season. Running until 15th September 2026, the initiative offers customers competitive cashback on overseas spending, along with an exclusive travel voucher raffle through Points by NBB.

The campaign offers up to 3.5% cashback on all purchases made overseas, ensuring cardholders gain greater benefits from every transaction. In addition, those holding credit cards linked to Thara'a Prize Accounts can enjoy an increased cashback rate of up to 5%, giving them even greater returns on their savings and international spending.

To unlock these rewards, customers simply need to register for the offer through the Points by NBB app before they begin spending with their credit card. This digital integration ensures a seamless activation process while allowing users to access the wider lifestyle rewards available through the Points by NBB App.



In addition to the cashback offering, eligible NBB credit cardholders will also have the chance to enter a raffle draw for travel vouchers worth a total of BHD 3,000, with three winners each receiving vouchers valued at BHD 1,000. The opportunity is available for both primary and supplementary NBB credit card-

holders who have spent outside of Bahrain during the campaign period. For every BHD 100 transaction, cardholders will receive one raffle ticket, while those who have linked their credit cards with the Thara'a account will receive two raffle tickets on Points by NBB App upon issuing the card during the campaign period. Customers may also redeem every 500 Base or Bonus Points for one raffle ticket.

Commenting on the launch, Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani, Chief Executive – Retail Banking at NBB, said, "Summer is a prime period for international travel and shopping, and our goal is to ensure our clients get the most value from their holiday spending. Through cashback, exclusive Thara'a benefits, and enhanced travel perks, we transform international spending into a more valuable and memorable experience."

The initiative reinforces NBB's position as a rewards-driven leader in retail banking, focusing on customer convenience, flexible digital solutions, and high-value card propositions. To learn more about the campaign's terms and conditions, please visit nbbonline.com, call 1721 4433, or visit any NBB branch.

Microsoft launches AI agent with pay-as-you-go pricing

AFP | San Francisco, United States

Microsoft is changing how it charges for its software for the first time in two decades, moving to bill customers with a pay-as-you-go model each time they use its new AI agent.

The change, prompted by the soaring cost of artificial intelligence, came Tuesday as the company launched Copilot Cowork -- an AI "agent" that can independently carry out office tasks like drafting documents, building spreadsheets and sending emails.

The tool still requires a paid Microsoft 365 Copilot subscription, but now every task it runs is billed separately, based on how much computing power it consumes.

Copilot Cowork is Microsoft's take on so-called "agentic" AI, a wave that has gripped Silicon Valley and turned the simple chatbot into an assistant capable of acting on a user's behalf.

Like rival tools on Google's and Amazon's enterprise platforms, it can be handed an assignment and run with it on its own, sometimes for several hours.

Brent oil price drops under \$80 on US-Iran deal

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Oil prices fell to a three-month low yesterday on optimism over the expected reopening of the Strait of Hormuz after a peace deal between the United States and Iran.

Brent North Sea crude, the international benchmark, dropped 4.0 percent to \$79.87 a barrel, dipping below \$80 for the first time since early March.

The main US oil contract, West Texas Intermediate, slid 4.5 percent to \$77.16 a barrel.

US President Donald Trump said the Strait of Hormuz would "completely open" once Washington and Iran sign their peace agreement on Friday in Switzerland.

Iran had effectively halted tanker traffic through the vital waterway in retaliation for US and Israeli strikes launched in late February, choking off

oil and gas traffic and sending crude prices skyrocketing.

"Traders are pricing in the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz as the most immediate and positive result of any peace deal," said David Morrison, senior market analyst at broker Trade Nation.

While Iranian officials have threatened to impose tolls on ships passing through the crucial channel, "as far as oil traders are concerned, they see a market which is loosening up at last," Morrison said.



Thaker calls for 'Look East' strategy to drive private sector growth

TDT | Manama

With non-oil activities accounting for 85.8 per cent of Bahrain's real GDP in 2025, expanding the international reach of Bahraini businesses has become essential to sustaining private sector growth, according to a senior Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) official.

Bob Thaker, Board Member and Executive Committee Member of the BCCI, said the growing contribution of non-oil sectors to the national economy underscores the need to help Bahraini companies access new markets and investment opportunities abroad.

Citing figures from the Ministry of Finance and National Economy's Bahrain Economic Report 2025, Thaker said long-term business success increasingly depends on diversifying revenue streams, entering new markets and capitalising on commercial opportunities across the region and beyond.

He highlighted the importance of a "Look East" strategy, aimed at strengthening trade and supply-chain links with the fast-growing economies of Asia and the wider East.



A strong domestic foundation must now be matched by a deliberate push into regional and Eastern markets – backed by practical support for SMEs

BOB THAKER, BOARD MEMBER AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER OF THE BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (BCCI)

According to Thaker, rising demand, manufacturing capacity and investment activity in these markets present significant opportunities for Bahraini companies, which are well positioned to serve as a gateway between Asia and the GCC.

He pointed to the Chamber's SME Support Centre as a

practical step towards helping local businesses expand beyond Bahrain. The centre was established to provide small and medium-sized enterprises with support and guidance to improve their competitiveness in regional and international markets.

Thaker said SMEs play a vi-

tal role in employment and economic activity and must be equipped to compete beyond the domestic market.

He also highlighted Bahrain's growing attractiveness as an investment destination, noting that the Kingdom's stock of foreign direct investment reached approximately BD17.7 billion by the end of 2025.

The figure, he said, creates greater scope for partnerships, co-investment opportunities and joint ventures between Bahraini and international companies.

Thaker stressed that expanding the global presence of Bahraini firms will require continued investment in institutional capabilities, compliance with regulatory requirements in overseas markets and the development of strategic partnerships that support sustainable growth.

He reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to initiatives that help Bahraini businesses strengthen their commercial and investment ties abroad, saying a stronger international presence would support economic growth, boost exports and create new opportunities across the private sector.



The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) is the oldest chamber of commerce in the Gulf region, having been established in 1939 to represent and support Bahrain's private sector.

Ethiopia Promotes Tourism Potential at Bahrain Forum



Travel industry stakeholders explored new cooperation opportunities

Ghadeer Alkumaish TDT | Manama

The Ethiopian Consulate and Ethiopian Airlines hosted a Tourism and Travel Forum in Bahrain, bringing together travel agencies, tour operators, and tourism professionals to strengthen tourism ties between Bahrain and Ethiopia.

Held at the Golden Tulip Hotel, the forum showcased Ethiopia's tourism offerings, highlighting its cultural heritage, historical landmarks, UNESCO-recognized sites, and year-round moderate climate. Participants were introduced to major attractions in Addis Ababa and other destinations, including Harar Jugol, Sof

Omar Caves, Lalibela, Gondar, and Aksum.

The event also featured a range of tourism packages covering cultural, historical, adventure, nature, and Islamic tourism experiences.

Yoftahie Araya, Area Manager of Ethiopian Airlines Bahrain, said the forum aimed to connect tourism stakeholders from both countries and create new opportunities for collaboration. He noted that Ethiopian Airlines offers tourism, business, medical, and stop-over travel packages for Gulf travelers.

Araya added that plans are underway to organize a familiarization trip to Ethiopia and a roadshow in Bahrain to further promote tourism and strengthen partnerships between the two countries.

The forum concluded with networking sessions focused on expanding cooperation and increasing tourism flows between Bahrain and Ethiopia.

India braces for El Nino-linked dry conditions

AFP | New Delhi, India

India will prepare contingency plans to help farmers weather potential low rainfall linked to the El Nino weather system, ag-

riculture officials said yesterday. El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure and rainfall patterns. In India and Southeast

Asia, it typically causes drier conditions.

The last El Nino helped make 2023 and 2024 the two hottest years on record.

"Full preparations should be

made in advance in those districts where there is a possibility of low rainfall or uneven rainfall," Agriculture Minister Shivraj Chouhan said, according to an official statement.

China's Xi says 'firmly supports' Myanmar in safeguarding sovereignty

AFP | Beijing

Chinese leader Xi Jinping pledged support yesterday for Myanmar in safeguarding its sovereignty, state media reported, as he met with President Min Aung Hlaing in Beijing.

China is Myanmar's most crucial ally and a rare enduring partner after Min Aung Hlaing's 2021 coup ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, prompting Western nations to cut ties with the Southeast Asian nation.

Beijing has emerged as a key power-broker in the civil war sparked by the coup, and also vocally backed recent polls that excluded Suu Kyi's party and returned a walk-over win for pro-military MPs -- who elected Min Aung Hlaing as president.

Xi said that China "firmly supports" Myanmar in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as he met Min Aung Hlaing at Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People yesterday following a welcome ceremony, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The Myanmar leader's trip -- his second state visit since taking over as civilian president in April -- comes as ties with Beijing have frayed in recent years over internet scam centres along the countries shared border areas that have targeted Chinese citizens, analysts say.

India blocks Telegram before retest exam to curb cheating

AFP | New Delhi

India blocked access to Telegram messenger yesterday ahead of a retest of a nationwide medical college entrance examination, after a scandal last month over a question paper leak.

The failure of the hugely competitive exam, along with a separate marking fiasco in high school tests, sparked outrage and fuelled youth protests demanding the education minister's resignation.

The Ministry of Electronics issued the order restricting access to Telegram until June 22, the day of the retest. Message-editing features, which allow users to alter existing posts, will remain restricted until June 30.

Iran says talks on final US deal to begin this week

Trump signals Hormuz reopening as both sides prepare to sign accord

- **Switzerland tipped for signing**
- **Hormuz restrictions set to end**
- **Nuclear dispute remains unresolved**
- **Sanctions relief under discussion**

AFP | Washington

Iran said yesterday that talks with the United States on its nuclear programme and sanctions relief would likely begin later this week, as President Donald Trump said the Strait of Hormuz would "completely open" once the two countries sign their deal.

Officials say negotiations over a final deal would take place in a 60-day window after the memorandum of understanding aimed at ending nearly four months of conflict involving US and Israeli strikes on Iran is physically signed.

"Likely on Friday, at a location to be determined... a new round of negotiations between Iran and the United States to reach a final agreement will begin," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

"In the final agreement, decisions will be made on the nuclear issues and the lifting of sanctions."

According to Iran's deputy foreign minister, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the Islamic republic's top negotiator, will attend the signing in Switzerland.

The US side will be represented by Vice President JD Vance, who said Trump himself might also attend.

The developments came after Trump said restrictions affect-

A memorandum to end the conflict paves the way for final nuclear negotiations

SIGNING & TALKS TIMELINE

- MoU SIGNED ELECTRONICALLY**
Iran and the US have signed a memorandum of understanding.
- SIGNING IN SWITZERLAND**
The deal will be signed on Friday, June 19, at the Burgenstock resort.
- NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN**
Final nuclear and sanctions talks expected to start likely on Friday.

BURGENSTOCK, SWITZERLAND
Friday, June 19

KEY PARTICIPANTS

IRAN
Abbas Araghchi
Foreign Minister
Top negotiator to attend signing

UNITED STATES
JD Vance
Vice President
Representing the US (Trump may attend)

“The Strait of Hormuz will completely open once the deal is signed.”
— President Donald Trump

60

days are expected for negotiations on a final agreement after the memorandum of understanding is signed

ing traffic through the crucial Hormuz Strait oil and gas route would be fully lifted by the same day, which would be a major boost to the global economy.

The United States had previously imposed restrictions on Iranian ports.

"Ships are starting to move, many loaded up with Oil, out of the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said Monday, adding later that he did not "think we will need much help" keeping the waterway open.

Sporadic episodes of violence since an April ceasefire had

threatened progress toward a deal, but weeks of indirect negotiations mediated by Pakistan and Qatar built momentum for an interim agreement.

Yet a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and Western sanctions remains unresolved.

Washington and close ally Israel are pressing for the removal of Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium, which US officials say was targeted by strikes last year, while Iran has insisted on its right to enrich uranium.

The agreed framework has, however, paved the way for talks on those key disputes.

'Powerful document'

Asked at the G7 in France when the text would be released, Trump said: "It's a very powerful document, and I want it to be released. So probably pretty soon."

But he told The New York Times the US was still negotiating whether Iran would suspend enrichment for 20 years, hinting

YOU

KNOW WHAT

Trump told The New York Times the US was still negotiating whether Iran would suspend enrichment for 20 years, hinting he might settle for 15 years instead

he might settle for 15.

Iranian military officials described the accord as a success, saying it had dealt a setback to US and Israeli objectives, while President Masoud Pezeshkian called it "a great achievement" for the region.

The ultraconservative newspaper Vatan-e Emrooz described the agreement as a "Trump sur-

render document".

But Araghchi struck a more cautious note.

"We have a history of broken commitments... we have a history of agreements being torn up. All of this is present in our minds," he said.

A senior US administration official, however, said Trump, Vance and negotiator Ghalibaf had already signed the text electronically.

In a series of interviews promoting the deal, Vance said no US taxpayer money would go to Iran under the agreement, as Iranian media reported that \$12 billion of frozen assets would be released.

Vance told NBC that US and UN nuclear inspectors would be allowed to enter Iran.

"One of the core parts of the agreement is that the (International Atomic Energy Agency) and the United States are going to help Iran destroy the highly enriched stockpile, and that's something that's spelled out very clearly" in the MoU, Vance said.

Alleged plot to attack White House fight night foiled: FBI

AFP | Washington

US law enforcement yesterday said it had foiled a plot to attack the White House during a crowded mixed martial arts event attended by President Donald Trump and other top officials.

"Thanks to the rapid action of this FBI, our partners, and the Department of Justice in a multi-state operation, multiple individuals are now in custody and allegedly planned attacks were stopped cold," FBI Director Kash Patel announced on X.

His post included a caption of a Fox News headline reading: "FBI disrupts alleged explosive-drone plot targeting White



US military jets perform a flyover as US President Donald Trump attends the "UFC Freedom 250" mixed martial arts event on the South Lawn of the White House

House UFC event, officials say."

Trump on Sunday joined thousands of fans at the unprecedented White House fights, where a temporary arena dubbed "The Claw" was erected on the South Lawn.

Fox News reported that five people had been taken into custody, according to unnamed US officials, with investigators identifying 23 people in a "potential network of plotters" who allegedly communicated in a Signal group chat.

The plan allegedly would have involved using drones to hit buildings near the White House during the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) contest, thereby prompting a mass evac-

uation that would "steer crowds toward a pre-staged sniper team," Fox News said.

There were also allegedly plans to storm the White House gates with a "second wave," the report said.

It was not clear if people involved in the alleged plot had taken any steps to carry out an attack. The White House is protected by intense surveillance, fencing, checkpoints, anti-air-attack capabilities, snipers and a permanent group of quick-reaction forces.

Asked for further details about Patel's announcement, the FBI told AFP "we have nothing to add to the post at this time."

656

Ali ibn Abu Talib elected the 4th Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate

1527

Pánfilo de Narváez departs Spain to explore Florida with five ships and 600 men; by 1536, only four men are still alive

1631

Mumtaz Mahal dies during childbirth. Her husband, Mughal emperor Shah Jahan I, then spends more than 20 years building her tomb, the Taj Mahal



1837

Charles Goodyear obtains his first rubber patent

Israeli minister strips Palestinians of control over Hebron holy site

Palestinian Authority fiercely condemns Israel's unilateral move as a direct breach of international law

● Far-right minister Bezelel Smotrich led move

● Hebron municipality loses powers

● Annexation concerns intensify

AFP | Hebron

Israel's Finance Minister Bezelel Smotrich said yesterday he had stripped Palestinians of authority over the site of the Cave of Patriarchs, known to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque, in the occupied West Bank.

The move to transfer management of the site to an Israeli committee controlled by the far-right minister, drew swift condemnation from the Palestinian Authority.

In a statement posted on his Telegram channel, Smotrich said the site will no longer be administered by the municipality authority in the West Bank city of Hebron.

"The meaning of this decision is that many authorities previously granted in Hebron and at the holy sites -- including the very foundation of our existence, the Cave of the Patriarchs -- are



Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israel's far-right finance minister Bezelel Smotrich, raise a large Israeli flag during a cornerstone laying ceremony for a new settlement on Mount Tarousa, near the town of Dura west of Hebron

no longer under the control of the Hebron Municipality," Smotrich said.

Smotrich posted his remarks as he attended an event marking the laying of the foundation stone of a new Israeli settlement near Hebron.

"This is much more than a planning step, it is a step... of practical sovereignty, of governance," Smotrich said, according

to footage of the ceremony released by his party.

Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank, the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

The Cave of the Patriarchs sits inside H2, an Israeli-controlled sector of the city housing roughly 40,000 Palestinians alongside some 200 Israeli settler families. It is venerated by Jews, Mus-

lims and Christians alike as the burial site of Abraham and other biblical patriarchs.

A 1997 protocol left management of most of the complex in Palestinian hands, an arrangement Palestinian officials say Israel has steadily eroded in recent years.

"What Smotrich did is he controls the Higher Planning Council, which set a meeting last

YOU

KNOW WHAT

The Cave of the Patriarchs is venerated by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike as the burial site of Abraham and other biblical patriarchs, and has been under a 1997 protocol managing its oversight

Wednesday where they decided that these responsibilities in Hebron will go from the Palestinian municipality of Hebron to Israel," Yonatan Mizrahi, co-director of Peace Now, an Israeli settlement watchdog, told AFP.

Minutes from the planning meeting confirm this decision.

The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority, led by president Mahmoud Abbas, rejected the move outright.

"Such unilateral measures are rejected and condemned, and constitute a violation of signed agreements with the Israeli side, as well as a breach of international law," Abbas's office said.

G7 finds 'unity' on upping Russia pressure to end Ukraine war

AFP | Evian

G7 leaders agreed yesterday to intensify pressure on Russia to end more than four years of war against Ukraine, with US President Donald Trump saying Moscow should "make a deal" and indicating Washington could re-impose waived sanctions.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky joined the summit at the French resort of Evian, with both increased sanctions and the possibility of a face-to-face meeting between the Ukrainian leader and Russian President Vladimir Putin in discussion.

Analysts say Ukraine is increasingly holding up well on the battlefield but its cities are still the target of deadly Russian attacks in a conflict that has now lasted longer than World War I.

The summit of the G7 group of world powers notably brought Zelensky together with Trump, who has sought to reach out to Putin but also showed signs of losing patience with Moscow.

"Russia should make a deal" to end the war against Ukraine, Trump said after meeting Zelensky.



Participants pose for a family photograph during the G7 summit

He pointed to the high casualties on both sides in the conflict, the deadliest on European soil since World War II.

"The whole thing is ridiculous. So, yeah, I'm going to do whatever I can," Trump added.

He said the US will soon be able to reimpose sanctions against Russian oil after Washington imposed and then extended a sanctions waiver for Russian oil cargoes already at sea, troubling European allies.

"Soon we will be able to do that as the oil is now flowing" through the Strait of Hormuz after the deal with Iran to end the Middle East war, Trump said.

'Things are changing'

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said all the G7 powers were "in the same place" and there was "a real sense of unity in the G7, a sort of shared consensus that things are changing".

"Ukraine has shown that it's able not just to defend itself but to take territory back and inflict quite significant losses on Russia," he told Times Radio.

Starmer said Britain was imposing a raft of new sanctions against Russia, including on tankers that transport LNG, in a bid to pressure Moscow into halting the war against Ukraine.

US military to build war-ready stockpile in Australia: documents



Australia's landmark Opera House (background R) is seen past an MH-60 Seahawk flown by Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23 on the flight deck of the US Navy's USS Tripoli (LHA-7) amphibious assault ship while docked at fleet base in Sydney

AFP | Sydney

The US military is planning a permanent war-ready weapons stockpile for its Marine Corps on Australia's south-east coast beyond the range of most Chinese missiles, tender documents show and officials confirmed to AFP.

The development of the stockpile, a first for the Marine Corps in Australia, comes as the United States is keen to leverage the continent's strategic location in the South Pacific

to counter China's rapid military build-up, analysts said.

The US Marines Corps began global repositioning of military supplies during the Cold War - using floating stores on ships and caves in Norway where weapons, ammunition and vehicles to sustain thousands of troops are kept.

The first land stockpile in the Asia-Pacific is expected to open in 2026 in the Philippines, close to potential flashpoints in the South China Sea.

TOP
4
TWEETS

01

Securing a just and lasting peace for Ukraine and Europe. That's our focus this morning at the G7 Summit here in Evian, France.
[@MarkJCarney](#)

02

The President has been clear from day one: Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. Once again, President Trump's efforts to establish peace have paid off for the American people, despite countless attempts to thwart it by people who hate America and President Trump.
[@VP](#)

03

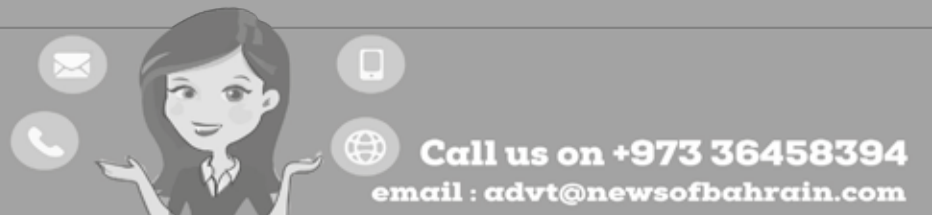
My thoughts are with the victims, their families, and the entire Edwards Air Force Base community impacted by this tragic incident. Grateful to the first responders and emergency crew currently on the ground.
[@CAGovernor](#)

04

The lives of children continue to be upended by the impact of heatwaves, wildfires, droughts & floods. Strengthening systems that children rely on, including health & education, can protect them from today's climate threats & help secure their future.
[@unicefchief](#)

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

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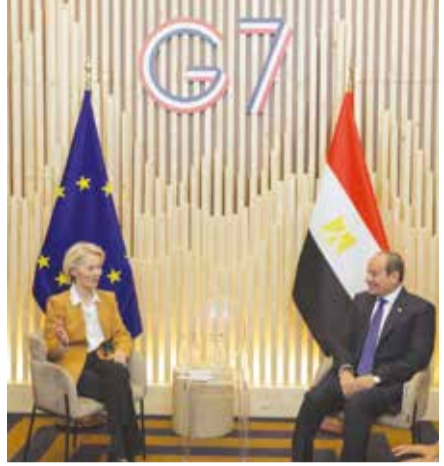
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region

EU Reaffirms Support for Egypt's Reform Agenda

The European Union has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening ties with Egypt, describing the country as a key and stable partner for Europe amid ongoing regional challenges.



In a statement following talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, highlighted the rapid implementation of the EU-Egypt partnership launched in 2024. As part of the agreement, 1.5 billion is set to be disbursed this month to support Egypt's economic reform programme. The EU also noted that approximately 8 billion in investments have already been mobilised under the partnership, reflecting growing economic cooperation between the two sides.

They expressed support for the swift implementation of the agreement reached between the United States and Iran, stressing the importance of de-escalation and regional security. The talks also focused on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, with both sides emphasizing the need for meaningful progress in recovery and reconstruction efforts following the conflict. The meeting underscored the strategic importance of EU-Egypt relations and the shared commitment to fostering economic development, regional stability, and peace.

Qatar PM, UN Chief Discuss Regional Security



Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, received a phone call from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to discuss bilateral cooperation and the latest developments in the region. During the conversation, the two sides reviewed the partnership between the State of Qatar and the United Nations and explored ways to further strengthen cooperation across various fields. They also discussed recent regional developments, focusing particularly on the agreement reached between the United States and Iran, as well as ongoing

efforts to enhance security and stability across the region. Sheikh Mohammed reaffirmed Qatar's full support for all initiatives and constructive efforts that contribute to regional peace and stability. He stressed the importance of resolving outstanding issues through dialogue and peaceful means, in accordance with international law and the principles of good neighbourliness. The Prime Minister noted that sustainable solutions and diplomatic engagement can help open new opportunities for cooperation, development and prosperity, while serving the shared interests of the peoples of the region and the wider international community.

OIC Condemns 'Somaliland' Embassy Opening in Jerusalem

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the opening of an embassy by the so-called "Somaliland" in occupied Jerusalem, describing the move as illegal and a clear violation of the United Nations Charter and relevant international resolutions.

power, has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem. It stressed that all measures and decisions aimed at changing the city's political, legal, or demographic character are null and void under international law.



In a statement, the OIC said the establishment of the diplomatic mission undermines international law and contradicts longstanding international positions regarding Jerusalem's status. The organization reiterated that Israel, as the occupying

The OIC also reaffirmed its full solidarity with the Federal Republic of Somalia and expressed unwavering support for the country's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity. The General Secretariat called on the international community to take a firm stance against what it described as an illegal move and to prevent actions that could further complicate the situation.

Araujo rescues Uruguay with late equaliser against Saudi Arabia



Uruguay's Maxi Araujo celebrates after scoring the equaliser

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Uruguay were forced to settle for a 1-1 draw against Saudi Arabia in their opening Group H match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with Maxi Araujo's late equaliser cancelling out Abdulrahman Al-Amri's first-half strike in Miami.

After Spain and Cape Verde played out a surprise goalless draw earlier in the day, both sides knew a victory would

have sent them to the top of the group. Instead, the result leaves all four teams level on one point after the opening round of matches.

Uruguay began brightly and almost took an early lead inside five minutes when Araujo struck from the edge of the area, forcing Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al-Owais into a sharp save.

Saudi Arabia gradually settled into the contest and looked dangerous on the counterattack. Salem Al-Dawsari fired wide af-

ter cutting in from the left, while Al-Owais remained busy at the other end, producing another important stop to deny Federico Vinas' diving header.

The breakthrough arrived four minutes before halftime. Musab Al-Juwayr's corner found Mohamed Kanno, whose header was saved by Fernando Muslera, but defender Abdulrahman Al-Amri reacted quickest to bundle home the rebound and give the Green Falcons a shock 1-0 lead.

The goal was a historic one for



Abdulrahman Al-Amri #4 of Saudi Arabia scores his team's first goal past Fernando Muslera #23 of Uruguay

Saudi Arabia, marking the first time they had scored the opening goal in a World Cup match since defeating Belgium in 1994.

Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa responded with two halftime substitutions and saw an immediate improvement from his side after the restart.

Vinas twice went close with headers, while Manuel Ugarte rattled the post from long range as Uruguay increased the pressure. Federico Valverde also became more influential, forcing

Al-Owais into another save from a free-kick.

Saudi Arabia defended resolutely but eventually conceded with 10 minutes remaining. Al-Owais produced yet another save from a Vinas header, but Araujo reacted fastest to the loose ball and fired home from close range to level the scores.

Uruguay pushed for a winner in the closing stages, with Brian Rodriguez narrowly missing the target before Al-Owais produced perhaps his finest save of the

evening, stretching out a hand to keep out a powerful Valverde effort in stoppage time.

The Saudi goalkeeper finished as one of the standout performers of the match, preserving a valuable point with a series of crucial interventions.

Uruguay will remain in Miami for their next Group H fixture against Cape Verde on June 22 at 1am, while Saudi Arabia travel to Atlanta a day earlier to take on Spain at 7pm. All times are Bahrain.

Bahrain competes at Asian Open Water Swimming Championships



Robert Bonsall greets a tournament official during the championship in Bali

Bahrain was represented at the 12th Asian Open Water Swimming Championships in Jimbaran Bay, Bali, Indonesia, with swimmer Robert Bonsall competing in both the 5-kilometre and 10-kilometre races against some of Asia's leading athletes.

Bonsall took part in the men's 5km event on June 13 before returning to compete in the 10km race on June 15, as the championship brought together 78 swimmers from 18 countries across the continent.

The Bahraini delegation was headed by Bahrain Aquatics Federation board member Yousif Ahmed, while William

Bonsall served as coach.

In the men's 5km race, China's Tianchen Lan claimed the gold medal, while Vietnam's Huy Hoang Nguyen and Tran Tuan Anh Mai secured silver and bronze respectively.

Lan went on to complete a dominant championship by also winning gold in the men's 10km event, finishing in a time of 1 hour, 53 minutes and 21.1 seconds.

Bahrain's participation formed part of the federation's continued efforts to provide its swimmers with exposure to elite continental competition and strengthen the Kingdom's presence on the Asian stage.

Iran begin fraught World Cup with 2-2 New Zealand draw

AFP | Los Angeles

Iran twice battled back for a 2-2 draw with New Zealand on Monday in their frenetic opening match of a World Cup campaign that has been utterly overshadowed by war, politics and protests.

The Iranian team's very presence at the Los Angeles Stadium had long felt uncertain, after months of military conflict between their nation and the United States.

At last able to focus on the football, the Iran players twice found themselves trailing to the tournament's lowest-ranked team, thanks to goals from New Zealand striker Elijah Just.

But with a vocally pro-Iran crowd drowning out planned protests by anti-government demonstrators, equalizers from Ramin Rezaeian and Mohammad Mohebi spared Team Melli any further blushes.

The Iran team have dealt with a gamut of obstacles before even arriving at this World Cup, from delayed and refused US visas, to moving their training camp to Mexico at the last minute.

Hundreds of protesters against Iran's ruling regime demonstrated outside the venue Monday, saying the team does not represent their people.

Many inside the stadium sported anti-government emblems, nonchalantly flouting



New Zealand's forward #11 Elijah Just celebrates scoring his team's second goal

FIFA rules against political messaging, and the Iran anthem received boos and cheers.

Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei had insisted on the eve of the game his players would not "pay attention to any of the hype."

But his side was stunned by an early New Zealand goal on the counter created by veteran striker Chris Wood.

Collecting a long pass in the seventh minute, the Nottingham Forest target man expertly held up the ball, turned and played in the onrushing Elijah Just.

After a sharp exchange of passes with Sarpreet Singh and Wood, Just leapt and smashed a volley into the net.

Iran's star forward Mehdi Taremi nearly levelled in the 23rd minute, the former Inter Milan man's long-range effort

ricocheting off the right post.

They came close again as Kiwi keeper Max Crocombe was tackled outside his box, only able to watch as a lobbed effort at his open goal faded wide.

Iran's equalizer did come in the 32rd minute with a poacher's finish from wingback Rezaeian.

Rezaeian latched onto a rebound following Saman Ghodos' smart pass into Shahriyar Moghanlou, whose shot on the turn was blocked by the outstretched leg of Finn Surman.

Iran defender Ali Nemati thought he had scored in first-half stoppage time, but his header from a free kick was comfortably offside.

New Zealand retook the lead in the 55th minute. Motherwell striker Just bagged a brace via a

crisp one-two with Wood, after Liberato Cacace had stolen the ball on the halfway line.

But they were again pegged back nine minutes later, as Mohebi's leaping header from Rezaeian's superb cross glanced off the inside post.

The game's final half hour saw Iran on the front foot, but unable to grab a winner due to a combination of sloppy finishing and dogged New Zealand defending.

The draw dents Iran's hopes of progressing to the knockouts for the first time, though fellow Group G contenders Egypt and Belgium also drew Monday.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's wait for a first World Cup win goes on.



Despite FIFA rules strictly banning political messaging, many fans inside the stadium nonchalantly displayed anti-government emblems and heavily booed the Iranian national anthem

'All the way': Egypt dare to dream after gritty Belgium draw

AFP | Cairo

When Egypt took the lead against Belgium in their opening World Cup match on Monday, decades of doubt gave way to belief for 62-year-old Bahgat Abbas.

Standing beneath the historic arcades near the Basilica in Cairo's eastern Heliopolis district, Abbas leapt with the crowd as cups rattled across tables and the roar from television screens spilled into the street.

"I remember watching Egypt in 1990," Abbas told AFP, waving an Egyptian flag as car horns blared around him.

"Back then, just being at the World Cup felt special. Tonight feels different. Tonight feels like we can actually achieve something."

Egypt were ultimately held to a 1-1 draw by one of Europe's most respected footballing nations, but the performance lifted spirits across the country and renewed belief that a near-century wait for a World Cup breakthrough may finally be within reach.

Much of that hope has centred on Mohamed Salah, Egypt's tal-



A popular Egyptian World Cup commercial features Mohamed Salah enduring pharaoh-themed dad jokes from a local comedian, who quips that Egypt will play so well foreigners will ask, "What Isis?"

isman who turned 34 on Monday and may be playing his final World Cup.

"When we scored, I thought maybe this was finally our night," Abbas said, smiling. "Maybe next time. We've got a good team around Salah."

Seven-time Africa Cup of Nations champions Egypt have never won a World Cup game.

This is their fourth appearance at the tournament and, with Group G fixtures still to



Emam Ashour #8 of Egypt celebrates with teammates after scoring

come against Iran and New Zealand, they will hope to break that hoodoo in North America.

'We'll go all the way'

At the final whistle, there was little sign of disappointment.

In Cairo's densely populated

Sharabiya district, Taha Omar said it was the first time at a World Cup he had seen Egypt do more than "just defend".

"We played positively, against a team like Belgium, with big-name players."

During the match, heads

snapped towards the screen with every Egyptian break, hands lifting, then dropping with groans or applause. Each tackle drew claps, each near-miss a sharp intake of breath.

For Egyptian fans, the World Cup has long represented both

hope and frustration.

Egypt were the first African and Arab nation to appear at the tournament in 1934, but exited early.

It then took 56 years to return, leaving Italy 1990 without a win. Their most recent appearance, in Russia in 2018, ended with three group-stage defeats.

Many fans arrived at this tournament carrying familiar fears.

Yet in the weeks leading up to the opening match, television screens were filled with advertisements urging supporters to dream bigger.

One of the most widely shared commercials featured Salah on a video call with a comedian firing off pharaoh-themed dad jokes.

In one scene, he quips that Egypt should play so well foreigners will ask: "What Isis?" -- a reference to the ancient Egyptian goddess.

Another campaign showed Egypt players predicting a run beyond the group stage under the slogan: "To all the doubters, this time we'll go all the way."

In Sharabiya, fans held on to that optimism.

"We'll keep going until the end," Mohamed El-Gendy said.

Tunisia replace coach Lamouchi with Renard after one World Cup game

AFP | Los Angeles

Tunisia have responded to their 5-1 World Cup thrashing by Sweden by sacking coach Sabri Lamouchi and replacing him with Frenchman Herve Renard, the federation announced on national TV on Monday.

Lamouchi is the first coach in World Cup history to be sacked after just one game.

Renard guided Saudi Arabia



Sabri Lamouchi

to a shock win against eventual winners Argentina at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and has since coached the France women's team.

"The president of the Tunisian Football Federation, Moez Nassari, announced that an official agreement had been reached with French coach Herve Renard for him to take charge of the national football team until the end of the 2026 World Cup," the Tunisian public

broadcaster announced.

Lamouchi, 54, had only been in charge since January.

The former French international player won just one of his five games in charge, a 1-0 victory over Haiti.

The heavy defeat by Sweden on Sunday leaves Tunisia with a tough task to reach the knockout round.

They face Japan in their next Group F match on Saturday before taking on the Netherlands.

No panic, says De la Fuente after Spain held by Cape Verde



Spain coach Luis de la Fuente looks on

AFP | Atlanta

Spain boss Luis de la Fuente said he is still convinced La Roja will go far at the World Cup despite failing to break down debutants Cape Verde in a 0-0 draw to open their tournament.

The European champions badly missed the spark of Lamine Yamal, who was deemed only fit enough for a second-half cameo on his return from injury, as they struggled to even create chances against a side ranked 67th in the world.

"We are completely calm, convinced that there is a long way to go. As we see it, we have seven games left," said De la Fuente.

"We lacked freshness and precision."

Spain are now 32 competitive games unbeaten, stretching back to March 2023.

But the lacklustre nature of the performance brought back painful memories of their meek exits to Russia and Mo-

rocco on penalties at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups when they dominated possession but failed to score.

"Tomorrow I'll bring up that magic number," added De la Fuente of his side's long unbeaten run.

"We have to stick to our philosophy and get key players back that will play a crucial role as the tournament progresses."

Yamal's introduction immediately injected life into the Spain attack and lifted the majority of the nearly 70,000 crowd who were desperate to see the Barcelona superstar.

Yet, even he was snuffed out as Cape Verde doubled and at times even trebled up on the 18-year-old.

After an injury-plagued season at Athletic Bilbao, Nico Williams was also kept in reserve until the 87th minute.

"They are two game-changing players, but the ones we've had on the pitch are too. They bring different qualities to the table," said De la Fuente.

Bahrain Special Olympics Team Heads to Tunisia

The Bahrain Special Olympics delegation departs today for Sousse, Tunisia, where it will compete in the triathlon event at the Regional Beach Games, part of the 10th Special Olympics Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Games.

The Games adopt a new, innovative year-long format hosted across five countries, with competitions staged in multiple cities rather than a single centralized event. The 2026 edition features 19 sports spanning beach, athletics, racket, team, and performance disciplines, aiming to strengthen inclusion, sustainability, and competitive opportunities throughout the region.

The sports included in the 10th MENA Regional Games are: beach volleyball, open water swimming, and triathlon; athletics, cycling, swimming, and MATP (Motor Activity Training



The Kingdom's representatives at the Regional Beach Games

Program); table tennis, tennis, badminton, and golf; football, basketball, volleyball, and bocce; as well as equestrian, powerlifting, artistic gymnastics, and rhythmic gymnastics.

The Bahrain delegation is led

by Special Olympics Bahrain Sports Director Redha Sabt, with coach Mubarak Mohammed serving as part of the technical staff. The athlete lineup includes Mahmood Mohsen and Sayed Ali Hussein, along

with unified partner athlete Al Baraa Mohammed, all of whom will compete in the triathlon event.

In addition, Hussain Al Ma-dooob will serve on the championship's technical committee.



France Outlast Senegal After Second-Half Fireworks

Hussain Almaskati

France were made to work hard before edging Senegal 3-1 in their opening match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup at MetLife Stadium. The result puts the two-time world champions top of Group I, which also includes Iraq and Norway.

Senegal were the brighter side throughout a dominant first half but were left frustrated by missed chances, including a shot off the post from Nicolas Jackson and a glaring opportunity for Ismaila Sarr just before the break. France, meanwhile, struggled to impose themselves and went into half-time level at 0-0 having offered little in attack.

The second half, however, delivered a complete shift in momentum. Ten minutes after the restart, Didier Deschamps' side were rocked by VAR controversy when a potential penalty for Kylian Mbappé was overturned after a foul by Sadio Mané in the box.

Mbappé then broke the deadlock in the 66th minute when he latched onto a perfectly weighted pass from Michael Olise and finished clinically to make it 1-0.



Mbappé celebrates his second goal, becoming France's all-time top scorer

Senegal thought they had equalised immediately afterwards when Nicolas Jackson found the net with a powerful finish, but the goal was ruled out for offside, denying them a quick response.

Substitute Bradley Barcola added a second in the 82nd minute, producing a composed lobbed finish after an excellent assist from Adrien Rabiot,

giving Les Bleus control of the contest.

Senegal refused to fold and pulled one back deep into stoppage time when Ibrahima Konate produced a brilliant solo effort to make it 2-1, setting up a tense finish. However, Mbappé immediately responded in spectacular fashion, smashing home a long-range strike to complete his brace and seal a 3-1 victory

for France. The goal saw him become France's all-time leading goalscorer with 58 international goals, surpassing Olivier Giroud.

France now turn their attention to Iraq, whom they face on June 23 at 12am in Philadelphia, while Senegal meet Norway later that day at 3am, again at MetLife Stadium. Both times are Bahrain time.

England begin World Cup campaign against familiar opponents Croatia



Harry Kane battles former Spurs teammate Luka Modric during 2018 World Cup in Russia

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

England begin their 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign tonight when they face Croatia in their Group L opener at Dallas Stadium, with kick-off scheduled for 11pm Bahrain time.

It is a heavyweight opening fixture for both sides, with England aiming to launch their tournament with authority and Croatia once again looking to underline their reputation as one of international football's most battle-tested sides.

This marks England's 17th World Cup appearance and their eighth in succession, continuing their longest uninterrupted run since missing the 1994 edition when the tournament was last held in the United States.

Thomas Tuchel's side arrive after a near-perfect qualifying campaign. They were one of only two UEFA nations to win all eight matches, and the only team to do so without conceding a single goal.

However, the challenge now is translating qualifying dominance into tournament success. Since winning the World Cup in 1966, the Three Lions have reached the semi-finals only twice, finishing fourth in both 1990 and 2018.

One encouraging trend is their strong record in opening matches, losing just one of their last eight World Cup curtain-raisers (W3 D4), a 2-1 defeat to Italy in 2014.

Leading the line once again is Harry Kane, who remains England's focal point in attack. The captain continues to set scoring benchmarks on the international stage and will make his 30th appearance in a major tournament tonight, more than any other England player.

Croatia arrive with a proven tournament pedigree and a reputation for thriving under pressure. Competing at their seventh World Cup, they remain a constant presence among international football's elite under Zlatko Dalic.

Their World Cup record is strikingly inconsistent yet impressive: three group-stage exits balanced by three podium finishes across their last six appearances, including runners-up in 2018 and third place in 2022. Only France have matched their consistency in reaching the semi-finals in successive tournaments.

Croatia have, however, struggled in openers, winning just one of their last five World Cup first matches (D1 L3). Still, they arrive in solid form after an unbeaten qualifying campaign featuring seven wins from eight games.

Creative responsibility will again fall on Luka Modric and Ivan Perišić, whose experience remains central to Croatia's ambitions on the global stage.

The last World Cup meeting between the sides remains iconic: Croatia's dramatic 2-1 extra-time victory over England in the 2018 semi-final.

Portugal seek winning start against returning DR Congo

Doubts remain over Cristiano Ronaldo's role as a starter at the 2026 World Cup

● Group K also includes Columbia and Uzebeskitan

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Portugal begin their 2026 FIFA World Cup campaign today when they face DR Congo in their Group K opener at Houston Stadium, with Roberto Martinez's side aiming for a strong start against a nation making its first World Cup appearance in 52 years.

Kick-off is scheduled for 8pm Bahrain time.

Portugal arrive in the United States under

significant expectations after another impressive qualifying campaign. One of only a handful of European nations to feature at every World Cup since 2002, they have reached the knockout stages in four of the last five editions and sealed qualification with 20 goals in six matches.

As ever, the focus will fall on Cristiano Ronaldo. The 41-year-old captain is set to become the first outfield player in history to appear at six World Cups, further extending one of football's most extraordinary international careers.

He also remains the only player to have scored in five separate World Cup tournaments and finished as Portugal's top scorer in qualifying.

Despite ongoing debate over whether his inclusion strengthens or limits the team, Ronaldo continues to lead a Portugal side that has scored in 10 of their last 11 World Cup matches. The only exception was the 1-0 defeat to Morocco in Qatar four years ago, a result that ended their quarter-final run.

Around him, Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, João Neves and Rafael Leão give Martínez a wealth of attacking options, while recent warm-up wins over the United States, Chile and Nigeria have further strengthened confidence in the squad.

Martínez himself brings a strong tournament pedigree, having previously guided both Belgium and Portugal on the international stage. Yet history shows that converting promise into deep World Cup progress has often eluded Portugal. Their best finish remains third place in 1966, with just one semi-final appearance since then coming in 2006.

Opposing them are one of the tournament's most compelling

stories.

DR Congo are back on football's biggest stage for the first time since 1974, when they competed as Zaire. Their return follows a dramatic qualification journey that saw them finish behind Gabon in the second round of African qualifying before eliminating Cameroon and Nigeria to reach an intercontinental play-off against Jamaica. Axel Tuanzebe's extra-time winner secured a 1-0 victory and ended a 52-year wait for a World Cup appearance.

The Leopards carry attacking threat through Cédric Bakambu and Yoane Wissa, who combined for 12 goal contributions during qualification, and both will be eager to score DR Congo's first-ever World Cup goal.

Their matches are typically tight and competitive: 10 of their 13 qualifiers were decided by a single goal or less, underlining a disciplined side capable of frustrating more favoured opponents.

This will be the first-ever meeting between Portugal and DR Congo, adding further intrigue to a clash between an established World Cup contender and a side determined to announce themselves on the global stage.



Ronaldo scored only once at the 2022 World Cup – a penalty against Ghana in Portugal's opener

Ronaldo in training ahead of Portugal's Group K opener

World Cup Schedule

Today			
Time	Match	Group	Venue
8PM	Portugal vs DR Congo	K,	Houston Stadium
11PM	England vs Croatia	L,	Dallas Stadium
Tomorrow			
2AM	Ghana vs Panama	L,	Toronto Stadium
5AM	Uzbekistan vs Columbia	K,	Mexico City Stadium
7PM	Czechia vs South Africa	A	Atlanta Stadium
10PM	Switzerland vs Bosnia and Herzegovina	B,	Los Angeles Stadium

(All games in Bahrain time)