

Strategic Alliance: **Alba and Hydro** strengthen Alumina-Supply partnership

- Partnership on the sidelines of the Fastmarkets International Aluminium 2025 Conference in Barcelona
- The agreement was signed in the presence of senior leadership from both companies

Manama

Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest aluminium smelter on one site, has successfully renewed the alumina supply agreement with Hydro, reaffirming their strategic partnership on the sidelines of the Fastmarkets International Aluminium 2025 Conference in Barcelona.

Commenting on the agree-



ment, Alba's CEO, Ali Al Baqali, stated: "Our partnership with Hydro is built on trust, transparency, and a mutual drive for sustainability. Renewing this agreement ensures a reliable supply of high-quality alumina for our operations and reinforces our position as a responsible and forward-looking aluminium producer."

Hydro's Senior Vice President Commercial - Bauxite & Alumina, Jonathan Hadley added: "We are delighted to continue supporting Alba's operations through this extended agreement. It reflects our shared values and also the vision of Hydro to be the supplier of choice to strategic customers like Alba."

The agreement was signed in the presence of senior leadership from both companies, underscoring the strategic importance of this collaboration in securing consistent raw material supply for Alba's smelting operations.

US Fed opens key meeting after Trump aide sworn in as governor

AFP | Washington, United States

The US Federal Reserve started a key interest rate meeting Tuesday, hours after Donald Trump's new appointee narrowly won confirmation to join the central bank -- while another top official fights her removal by the president.

Stephen Miran, the chair of Trump's Council of Economic Advisers, took the oath of office as a Fed governor early Tuesday, the bank said, as its rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) began a two-day policy gathering.

Miran narrowly won a Senate vote on Monday night, making him one of the FOMC's 12 voting members. Economists expect he will not radically shift this week's outcome.

There is little doubt that the Fed will make its first interest



Stephen Miran and Donald Trump

rate cut of 2025 after the latest gathering, as policymakers pivot towards shoring up a deteriorating jobs market.

But concerns about political influence targeting the independent central bank will loom over the gathering, as Trump

repeatedly bashes Fed Chair Jerome Powell over his rate decisions, and after he moved to fire governor Lisa Cook, sparking a legal battle.

On Tuesday, Trump told reporters that the Fed should "listen to smart people like me."

The last-minute addition of Miran is unlikely to drastically alter the meeting's result, said Oxford Economics' chief US economist Ryan Sweet.

Sweet also cast doubt on whether Miran would have joined in time to submit an economic projection and path for monetary policy.

Miran has come under fire from Democratic lawmakers over his plan to take only a leave of absence from his White House role, rather than resign.

He is serving out a Fed term

which expires in just over four months, filling governor Adriana Kugler's term after she stepped down.

Court appeal

Trump has separately sought to oust Fed Governor Cook, claiming that mortgage fraud allegations are sufficient "cause" for her removal.

So far, Cook, who was appointed by former president Joe Biden, has managed to remain in place for the FOMC meeting.

Trump announced in August that he was removing her, and she has been in a legal battle with the president since -- a fight that could have broader implications for the Fed moving forward.

While a federal appeals court ruled late Monday that she could remain in position while her

legal challenge proceeds, the Trump administration is likely to take the case to the Supreme Court.

"The administration will appeal this decision and looks forward to ultimate victory on the issue," White House spokesman Kush Desai told AFP.

Although Trump pointed to a criminal referral in announcing Cook's removal, she has not been charged with a crime and the alleged incidents took place before she was a Fed governor.

Since its last cut in December, the Fed has held the benchmark lending rate at a range between 4.25 percent and 4.50 percent as policymakers monitor the effects of Trump's tariffs on the economy.

But markets widely expect a 25 basis points cut at the end of discussions on Wednesday.

Batelco by Beyon becomes **first in Bahrain** to launch Eco-SIM cards

All new SIM cards will be made from recycled plastic, reinforcing the Company's sustainability commitments

Manama

Batelco by Beyon has announced the launch of Eco-SIM cards made from 100% recycled plastic, becoming the first operator in the Kingdom of Bahrain to introduce this environmentally friendly innovation.

This milestone reflects Batelco's ongoing commitment to reducing its environmental footprint and supports Beyon



Group's wider sustainability goals.

Going forward, all new SIM cards will be Eco SIM's with the card bodies manufactured using recycled polystyrene sourced mainly from discarded refrigerators and other appliances. At the end of their lifecycle, the Eco-SIMs can be recycled to produce new SIM cards, creating a circular economy model that reduces the need for virgin plastic and helps cut

CO2 emissions. By shifting to Eco-SIMs, Batelco will play a tangible role in decreasing plastic waste and supporting Bahrain's environmental protection efforts.

Batelco General Manager Aseel Mattar said, "We are delighted to introduce Bahrain's first Eco-SIM cards in support of Beyon's drive to embed sustainability across its companies. While we continue to expand eSIM services for the growing

number of compatible devices available on the market, the majority of mobile customers still require physical SIM cards. The Eco-SIM launch is therefore a key step in Batelco's broader sustainability journey, complementing initiatives already underway across Beyon. It underscores our proactive role in addressing environmental challenges and driving innovative solutions for a greener future."