

After 326 days at sea across the Caribbean and Middle East, the USS Gerald R. Ford returns home following one of the US Navy's longest deployments in decades. | P7

THE DAILY tribune



Bahrain Football Association unveils promotion-relegation play-off schedule

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BUSINESS

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Al Salam Bank Group Launches Recovery and Growth Program

Bahrain condemns UAE drone attack

TDT | Manama

Bahrain strongly condemned the drone attack targeting the United Arab Emirates that caused a fire near the Barakah nuclear power plant in the Al Dhafra region.

The Bahraini Foreign Ministry described the incident as a "serious terrorist attack" and a clear violation of international law, the UN Charter, and UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

It praised the UAE's air defence forces for their "high professionalism" in handling the incident and taking precautionary measures that prevented any injuries or radiation impact. (Read More on page 12)



Peaceful Policy Reaffirmed

Armed forces and security services lauded after regional tensions

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, supreme commander of the armed forces, met on Sunday with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, to review national developments and ongoing government work.

The meeting, held in the presence of senior officials, discussed domestic issues and efforts to advance the kingdom's development across various sectors and strengthen national achievements.

During the talks, His Majesty praised HRH the Crown Prince's efforts in driving Bahrain's development agenda, highlighting his continued oversight of government initiatives and commitment to improving public



services and economic progress.

His Majesty also commended the Bahrain Defence Force, the National Guard, and security agencies for their role in responding to what he described as Iranian attacks targeting the kingdom's territory.

He expressed pride in the professionalism, courage, and dedication of Bahrain's security personnel, describing them as a protective shield for the country's stability, development, and achievements.

Reaffirming Bahrain's position, His Majesty the King said the

country would remain committed to development and stability, stressing national unity and cohesion as key pillars of progress.

He added that Bahrain maintains a consistent policy in favour of peace, expressing hope for wider regional and global stability.

5,000-dinar theft case solved



TDT | Manama

Police arrested four people accused of stealing a vehicle and personal belongings worth around 5,000 Bahraini dinars from a home in the Juffair area.

The Ministry of Interior said the suspects were detained following a house burglary report, after officers from the Capital Governorate Police Directorate launched an investigation and collected evidence and information.

According to authorities, swift inquiries led to the identification of the suspects, who were later apprehended in possession of the stolen vehicle and the missing items.

Bahrain shuts three tourism establishments

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority ordered the closure of three tourism establishments after inspectors detected multiple violations of laws and regulations governing tourism activities in the kingdom.

The authority stated that administrative measures were taken against the establishments following the detection of breaches during inspection campaigns across Bahrain.



It said the action was part of ongoing efforts to regulate the tourism sector, maintain the quality of services offered by tourism facilities and ensure compliance with approved standards and requirements.

The authority added that it would continue conducting inspection visits and regular monitoring campaigns, coordinating with relevant authorities to verify that establishments across the kingdom comply with existing laws and regulations.

Bahrain Reviews 2026 Investment Plans

EDB Reports Strong 2025 Results

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB), chaired the Board of Directors meeting in Bahrain Bay.

His Royal Highness highlighted the importance of continuing national efforts undertaken by Team Bahrain to follow global economic developments, transforming any challenges into positive opportunities that support the Kingdom's comprehensive development goals, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

His Royal Highness commended the board's achievements in 2025, which reflect the Board's vital role in supporting economic development and enhancing Bahrain's international and regional competitiveness.

His Royal Highness noted that these achievements reflect



the national efforts of Team Bahrain, and speak to their efficiency, flexibility, and ability to continue delivering across various circumstances, strengthening the foundations of economic growth, expanding quality opportunities, raising productivity levels, and reinforcing the sustainability of economic diversification to support the Kingdom's development aspirations.

The meeting reviewed the Bahrain Economic Development Board's objectives for 2026, in addition to the latest developments in attracting in-

vestments across priority sectors, future initiatives aimed at highlighting Bahrain's competitive advantages in key international markets, and efforts to consolidate the Kingdom's international investment standing while showcasing the resilience of Bahrain's economy amid various challenges.

His Royal Highness went on to underscore that Bahraini citizens remain at the heart of all the Kingdom's far-reaching development plans and programmes, noting their importance as the primary drivers of growth.

During the meeting, HE Noor bint Ali Alkhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development and Chief Executive of Bahrain EDB, gave a presentation showcasing the EDB's key achievements in 2025.

In 2025, the EDB attracted its highest level of investment since its establishment, totaling BHD 942 million (USD 2.5 billion) in local, regional, and global direct investments, stemming from 107 investment projects. These cumulative investment commitments are expected to create over 5,800 employment opportunities over three years.



Bahrain Chamber Opens Registration for 31st Term Sectoral Committees

PAGE 03

Bahrain, Kuwait boost security ties

Joint commitment to Gulf stability underlined

TDT | Manama

Kuwait and Bahrain reaffirmed their close security cooperation on Sunday as Bahrain's Interior Minister visited Kuwait and held high-level talks with senior officials, including the Crown Prince and the acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister.

The discussions focused on regional developments and joint security coordination.

Shaikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Bahrain's Interior Minister, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khal-



General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa was received by senior Kuwaiti officials upon his arrival in Kuwait City during an official visit to Kuwait, which underscored

the "deep-rooted historical ties" between the two countries and their shared commitment to regional stability.

The Bahraini minister conveyed greetings and best wishes from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to the Kuwaiti leadership and people, wishing them continued prosperity and development.

During the visit, Shaikh Rashid also met with Kuwait's acting Prime Minister and Interior Minister Shaikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al Sabah, who wel-

comed the Bahraini delegation and reaffirmed Kuwait's backing of Bahrain's security efforts.

They discussed ways to strengthen security cooperation and reviewed the latest regional and international developments, highlighting the importance of joint action to support stability in the Gulf region.

They also stressed the importance of enhancing Gulf security integration and unifying efforts to address current challenges, while underscoring the advanced level of bilateral relations and ongoing cooperation across security fields.



Life sentence in IRGC-Hezbollah case

Sensitive data shared to Iran-based accounts, court hears

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

The court sentenced a defendant to life imprisonment after convicting him of communicating with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Lebanon's Hezbollah in connection with plans to carry out hostile acts against the kingdom.

The High Criminal Court also ordered the confiscation of seized materials after finding the defendant guilty of sharing sensitive information with a foreign entity and supporting activities deemed harmful to Bahrain's national security.

According to the Head of the Terror Crimes Prosecution, the case involved intelligence provided to the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science, which later confirmed that the defendant had been recruited by Hezbollah while residing in Bahrain.

Investigators said he attempted to join the group and was instructed to transmit photographs, videos, and other data linked to the aftermath of alleged Iranian attacks on Bah-



rain. The material was reportedly sent to electronic accounts operated from Iran under the supervision of the IRGC and Iranian intelligence services.

Authorities said the information could have been used by hostile actors and posed a threat to national security and the safety of citizens and residents.

The Public Prosecution said the defendant later confessed during questioning, and forensic examinations of seized electronic devices supported the charges. Witness testimonies were also heard during the investigation and trial.

Prosecutors added that the case was heard over several sessions, with all legal procedures observed and defence representation present.



- Defendant allegedly recruited by Hezbollah while in Bahrain
- Sent photos and videos linked to alleged attack aftermath
- Data reportedly transmitted to IRGC-linked accounts in Iran
- Forensic evidence supports the prosecution's claims.

Eleven Societies Dissolved by Ministerial Order

Banks and members are barred from dealing with society funds without approval

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Social Development Minister Osama Al Alawi has dissolved the Islamic Enlightenment Society after a final criminal ruling found it had carried out offences and grave breaches linked to Bahrain's public fundraising law.

Decision No 19 of 2026, published in the Official Gazette, cited criminal case No 192/2025/7 and said the society's conduct was a grave breach of Decree-Law No 21 of 2013 on raising money for public purposes.

Eight other civil associations were also dissolved by force after a ministry memo found that they had stopped their work, lost their active role, and failed for more than 10 years to hold general assemblies or renew their boards.

They are Namaa Development Forum Society, Al Eskafi Society for Beautifying Bahrain, Al Insan Society, Bahrain Welsh Society, Kerala Muslim Society, Al Hadaf Social Society, Al Nahda Youth Society, and the Bahrain Natural History Society.

Two other bodies, the Professional Fishermen Co-operative Society and Furjan Muharraq Society, were dissolved vol-



Osama Al Alawi, Minister of Social Development

untarily after filing requests through the legal process.

Muzafar Certified Accountants, company registration No 50861-1, has been named liquidator for all the societies listed in the decision.

The firm must wind up the societies, settle their affairs, and distribute the outcome of the liquidation under the law and each society's own rules within two months from the date the decision takes effect.

It must also preserve the societies' money and rights, collect sums owed by members or third parties, pay their debts, and submit a final account to the ministry.

From the date the order takes effect, members, managers and employees of the dissolved societies are barred from carrying on their work or dealing with

their funds. Those in charge must hand all documents and records to the liquidator.

The decision also bars employees, banks holding the societies' money, and debtors from taking any step involving the societies, their rights or their funds without written approval from the liquidator and in line with the law.



- The decision followed a final criminal ruling linked to fundraising violations.
- Eight other civil associations were also dissolved due to long-term inactivity.
- Some groups had not held meetings or renewed their boards for over 10 years.
- Two co-operative societies were voluntarily dissolved through legal procedures.
- A total of eleven societies are included in the ministerial decision.

Bahrain Chamber Opens Registration for 31st Term Sectoral Committees

Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, Nabeel Kanoo, announced the opening of registration for membership in the Chamber's Sectoral Committees for the 31st term, starting today, Monday, May 18, until Wednesday, June 17, 2026. This comes as part of the Board of Directors' efforts to further develop institutional work and enhance private sector participation across various economic sectors.

Kanoo emphasized that opening nominations for the sectoral committees represents an open national invitation for business owners and private sector leaders to become active partners in economic decision-making and contribute to shaping the next phase.

He affirmed that this step reflects a vision focused on strengthening partnership with the business community by involving experienced professionals in developing the economic environment and proposing solutions and initiatives that support different sectors. He added that the sectoral committees serve as a platform that brings together national expertise to support legislative development, advance national development efforts, and strengthen Bahrain's economic position.

He also noted that the committee formation for the current term is based on criteria en-



The committee formation for the current term is based on criteria ensuring fair and comprehensive representation of economic sectors and business activities, with particular focus on key and non-oil sectors supporting the national economy.

Nabeel Kanoo, Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber

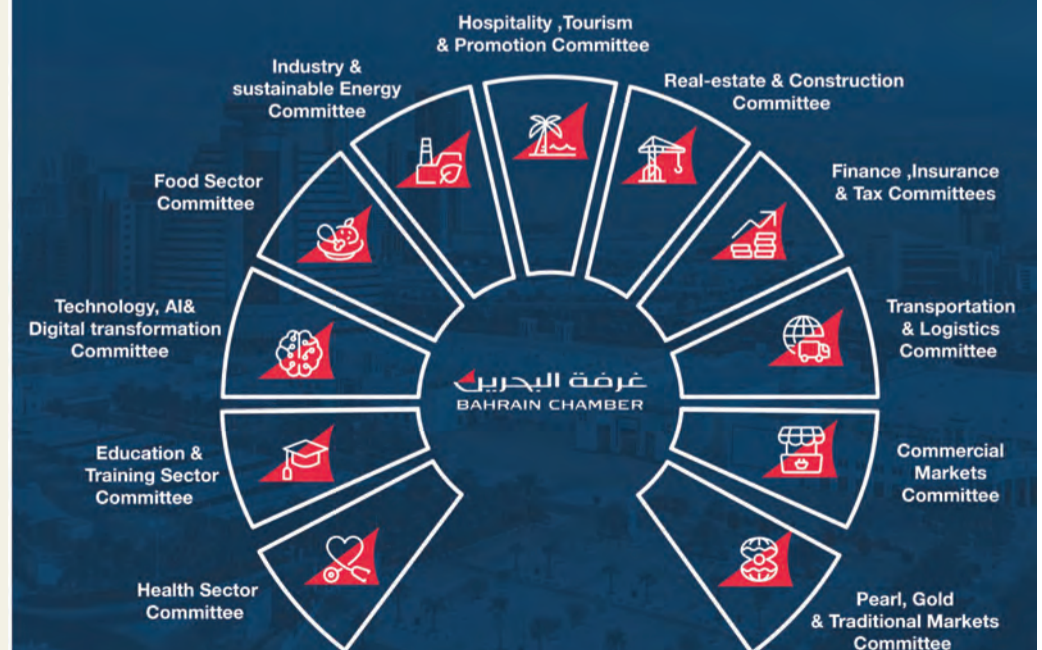
suring fair and comprehensive representation of economic sectors and business activities, with particular focus on key and non-oil sectors supporting the national economy. The 31st term includes 11 specialized committees covering health-care, education, technology, food, industry and sustainable energy, tourism, real estate, financial services, transportation, commercial markets, and pearls, gold, and traditional markets.

He stated that registration will be conducted electronically through the Chamber's official website: <https://www.bahrainchamber.bh/en/Committee-Nomination>

Kanoo explained that applicants must have relevant experience in the sector they wish to join and be actively engaged in the committee's field of work. Membership is open to business owners, as well as experts and specialists who are not Chamber members, to maximize the benefit of national expertise across various sectors.

He added that the sectoral committees are a key mechanism for strengthening engagement with the business community, supporting economic initiatives, and submitting recommendations that contribute to the development of economic legislation and policies, while enhancing Bahrain's economic and investment competitiveness.

Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry is pleased to invite business community to apply for membership in the Sectoral Committees for the 31st session, during the period from 18 May to 17 June 2026.



For inquiries, please contact:
17380058 / 17380006
Or via email:
committees@bahrainchamber.bh

Eid aid to reach hundreds of families in Bahrain



Hassan Ibrahim Kamal (left) and Wael Ali Sayyar
Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Hundreds of low-income families across Bahrain are set to receive sacrificial meat this Eid Al Adha as the Bahrain Charity Society prepares its annual distribution drive to support vulnerable households.

The society said preparations are in their final stages for the project, which aims to strengthen social solidarity and bring festive relief to families in need during the Eid period.

Secretary-General Hassan Ibrahim Kamal said volunteer teams were working intensively to ensure the initiative is carried out in an organised and efficient manner, with attention to quality standards and the dignity of beneficiaries.

Financial Secretary Wael Ali Sayyar described the programme as one of the society's most important annual initiatives, citing its humanitarian and social impact in easing financial pressure on low-income families and enabling them to share in Eid celebrations.

He urged donors and philanthropists to contribute to the campaign, saying broader community support would help extend assistance to a larger number of households.

BD494,000 breast cancer unit planned in Bahrain

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Bahrain plans to strengthen its women's healthcare services by establishing a dedicated breast cancer screening unit in public hospitals to improve early detection and diagnosis.

According to the Tender Board, Yusuf Mahmood Husain Company will carry out the project, valued at around BD494,000.

The new facility will focus on providing specialised and faster screening services for breast cancer, one of the most common cancers affecting women in the kingdom.

Health authorities state that early detection remains critical, significantly increasing the chances of successful treatment and recovery when the disease is identified in its initial stages.

The project includes the design, construction and full operation of the unit, along with all associated civil works.

It also covers the supply and installation of medical equipment, as well as the integration of digital systems linked to diagnostic services.

Officials said the development will be delivered on a turnkey basis, ensuring the unit



This image is for illustrative purposes only



Breast Cancer Screening Unit

- Cost: BD494,000
- Type: Turnkey public hospital project
- Purpose: Dedicated breast cancer screening unit
- Services: Screening, imaging, diagnosis, follow-up care

is fully operational upon completion with all required clinical and support services in place.

Currently, breast cancer screening in Bahrain is primarily conducted through primary healthcare centres, with refer-

als made to specialised facilities when necessary.

The new unit is expected to streamline this process by offering a more integrated diagnostic pathway within public hospitals.

Women lured by fake jobs, forced into exploitation

Investigations reveal organised exploitation network

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

A Facebook job advertisement led two young women into a human trafficking case in Bahrain, after they were allegedly deceived with false employment promises and forced into sexual exploitation, according to court records.

The High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld earlier rulings sentencing two defendants to five years in prison each, along with fines of BD2,000. The court also ordered them to cover the costs of repatriating the victims before deportation after serving their sentences.

The defendants were convicted of trafficking two Arab women and exploiting them for prostitution.

Court documents showed that one of the victims, a 23-year-old woman, responded to a Facebook advertisement offering a restaurant job in Bahrain. After contacting

one of the defendants, travel arrangements were made for her and another woman who had also been recruited through similar claims.

Upon arrival, the victims were received at the airport and taken to an apartment, where they later testified they were held and forced into prostitution. They said clients were brought to them and that the defendants controlled the proceeds, providing only limited payments under the pretext of repaying travel and visa costs.

Bahrain's Anti-Human Trafficking Directorate said investigations revealed the victims had been lured under false promises of work before being coerced into sexual exploitation.

One defendant admitted to recruiting women for prostitution, while the other acknowledged assisting in managing the operation and collecting money for the first defendant.

Strategic education ties



Minister of Education and Chairman of the Higher Education Council, Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Juma, on Sunday received the United States Ambassador to Bahrain, Stephanie Hallett, in Manama. During the meeting, the minister highlighted the depth of the long-standing relations between Bahrain and the United States, underscoring what he described as a strong strategic partnership between the two countries. He stressed the shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation across various sectors, particularly in early childhood education, general education, and higher education.

ICAI Bahrain Launches CA Masterclass Series



Pradeep Puravankara
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) successfully commenced its highly anticipated CA Masterclass Series with an inaugural session titled "Time to Get Future Ready."

The event took place at Epix Cinema, Dana Mall, Bahrain.

The first episode of the series focused extensively on IFRS 18: Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements.

The session provided critical and insightful perspectives on

the evolving financial reporting landscape and the practical implications of the new standards for accounting professionals.

The event drew an overwhelming response, bringing together more than 110 enthusiastic members from the local finance and accounting fraternity.



The chapter extended its gratitude to the esteemed keynote speakers, CA Mahesh Balasubramanian and CA Mukta Kulkarni, for sharing their valuable expertise.

The active participation of the members contributed significantly to the grand success of the inaugural masterclass.

Shura, Representatives review tech transformation



Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Senior officials from Bahrain's two parliamentary chambers met to review ongoing digital transformation initiatives aimed at modernising legislative work through advanced technologies, according to an official statement.

The Secretary-General of the Shura Council of Bahrain, Her Excellency Karima Mohammed Al Abbasi, held talks with the Secretary-Gen-

eral of the Council of Representatives, Eng. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Sisi Al Buainain, focusing on digital projects supporting the shift toward a fully digital parliament.

The discussions highlighted systems and infrastructure upgrades implemented under the Shura Council's strategic plan for 2024-2026, which aims to improve efficiency, speed, and accuracy in parliamentary processes through modern technologies, including artificial intelligence applications.

Kindergarten Family Day



TDT | Manama

Bhavans Bahrain Indian School marked the International Day of Families with a lively Kindergarten Family Day celebration, bringing

together students, parents, and teachers for a programme focused on bonding, shared activities, and community values. The campus filled with music, games, and interactive events designed to

highlight the importance of family relationships.

School officials said the celebration reinforced the importance of strong family engagement in early childhood development. Princi-

pal Saji Jacob thanked parents for their active participation, noting that such events help build a supportive learning environment and strengthen the connection between home and school.

Proposal Calls for Second Review Panel in Medical Error Cases

Move aims to balance patient protection and professional rights

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A proposal submitted in Bahrain calls for establishing a second review committee so that doctors and dentists can challenge findings related to medical or ethical errors before further disciplinary action proceeds.

The initiative, put forward by MP Jameel Mulla Hassan, seeks to introduce an additional grievance mechanism for medical professionals to appeal decisions issued by the technical committee responsible for reviewing professional conduct cases.

Under the proposal, practitioners in medicine and dentistry would be able to contest findings before a second panel prior to escalation through disciplinary procedures or referral to the courts.



Jameel Mulla Hassan, MP

Mulla Hassan said the aim is to strengthen legal protections for healthcare professionals while maintaining safeguards for patients, stressing the need for a “balance between protecting the patient and preserving the professional rights of the doctor.”

He argued that the technical committee’s decisions are highly specialised and can have significant consequences, including license suspension, in-



- Disciplinary penalties are approved by the Supreme Council of Health or take effect after 30 days if unchallenged.
- Criminal cases are referred to courts via the courts.
- Proposal introduces a second review committee for appeals.
- Aim is to improve fairness, trust and reduce court disputes.

terruption of medical practice, reputational damage, or potential criminal proceedings.

The proposal also calls for improved procedural safeguards, stating that an additional review stage could reduce the risk of inaccurate assessments and ensure fairer outcomes in complex

medical cases.

It references Law No. 38 of 2009 governing the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), which outlines disciplinary procedures and the role of the Supreme Council of Health in overseeing decisions and approvals.

Bahraini-Owned Firms Made Up 77pc of Cancelled Registrations



Abdulla Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce



Basema Mubarak, MP

TDT | Manama

Bahrainis owned 22,568 of the new commercial registrations issued between January 2023 and December 2025, while fully expat-owned businesses accounted for 19,057, Industry and Commerce Ministry figures show.

In a written answer to MP Basema Mubarak, the ministry stated it issued 55,004 new registrations against 26,227 cancellations over the three years. Gulf nationals accounted for another 1,843 new registrations, while partnerships accounted for 11,536.

Among the cancelled registrations, Bahraini-owned businesses made up 77pc of the total. Fully expatriate-owned businesses accounted for 9pc, Gulf-owned registrations for 3%, and partnerships for 11%. The

ministry stated the main reasons for cancellation included owners requesting to ‘cancel, merge or liquidate’ a registration, along with ‘bankruptcy or insolvency’.

It also cited changes in the commercial market, legal restrictions on trading, taking a job, selling or giving up the business, leaving the country, and the death of the owner.

New registrations for Bahrainis and expats were spread across ten main fields, led by management consultancy and management work. General trading followed, then food and drink services and interior decoration.

Other common fields included integrated facilities work, excluding guarding and security, cargo handling, marketing and promotion, advertising, real estate work involving owned or leased property, and building construction.

CBSE Announces Student Support Measures Alongside Class XII Results

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) rolled out new student support services after announcing the Class XII examination results for 2026, combining academic updates with fresh post-result assistance measures.

To help students cope with result-related stress and queries, CBSE introduced a toll-free tele-counselling helpline (1800-

11-8004) and an official email support system at resultcbse2026@cbseshiksha.in.

The Board urged students and parents to rely only on verified channels, warning against unauthorised contacts.

This year, CBSE recorded an overall pass percentage of 85.20%, a drop of 3.9 percentage points compared to last year.

A total of 18,57,517 students appeared for the examinations.

Girls once again led academic performance with an 88.86%

pass rate, while boys recorded 82.13%. Transgender students achieved a perfect 100% success rate.

Region-wise, Trivandrum topped the chart with 95.62%, followed by Chennai at 93.84% and Bengaluru at 93.19%. In Delhi, the West region posted 92.34%, while East recorded 91.73%.

Institution-wise, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas continued their strong performance, securing 98.55% and 98.47% pass rates

respectively.

Alongside the results, CBSE also announced a major academic shift under the National Education Policy 2020.

From July 1, Class IX students must study three languages, including at least two Indian languages.

The third language will be assessed internally, with no board exam in Class X, marking a significant curriculum change aimed at broader linguistic learning.

Garage Suspicion Uncovers Drug Network

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

High Criminal Court of Appeal is set to issue its verdict on June 22 in a drug trafficking and possession case involving four defendants, following an investigation that began after a garage owner reported suspicious activity at his workshop.

According to case details, the owner became concerned after noticing repeated visits by

individuals who did not bring vehicles for repair, raising suspicions of possible illegal activity involving one of his employees.

The case escalated when the owner confronted the worker, who failed to provide clear explanations for the frequent visits. Shortly afterwards, three men arrived at the garage asking for the employee before fleeing when questioned about possible drug-related activity.

The owner later escorted the

employee to the police and filed a report. Security forces subsequently searched the suspect’s residence, where they found 195.3 grams of cannabis hidden in packaged form.

Investigations by the Anti-Narcotics Directorate suggested the first defendant was part of an organised trafficking network using a “dead drop” method to distribute drugs without direct contact between buyers and sellers.

The Court of First Instance had previously sentenced the main defendant, a garage worker, to 10 years in prison, fined him BD5,000, and ordered his deportation after serving his sentence. He was convicted of drug possession, sale, and trafficking.

Three other defendants received one-year prison sentences and fines of BD1,000 each for drug possession and use of psychotropic substances.

Attendance is now key in unemployment aid cases

TDT | Manama

Yousif Khalaf, Minister of Labour, told Parliament that attendance at job interviews, rather than disputed claims of rejected offers, is now the determining factor in how unemployment benefits are assessed in Bahrain, amid calls for tighter oversight of jobseekers’ cases.

The ministry said reports that jobseekers’ files are being “closed” were incorrect, stressing that all records remain active in its employment system until a person is officially registered as employed with the Social Insurance Organisation.

According to the ministry, jobseekers are classified into those eligible for unemployment insurance under the law and those who do not meet its conditions, but in both cases their records remain open and included in national employment statistics.

The clarification came in response to a parliamentary proposal calling for additional safeguards to ensure that claims of rejected job offers are properly verified before impacting unemployment aid. Lawmakers cited concerns



Yousif Khalaf, Minister of Labour

raised by jobseekers who said employers had reported work refusals that the jobseekers denied. Some of these cases were later challenged in court, where rulings reportedly supported the jobseekers due to lack of evidence.

In response, the ministry said it had already revised its approach and, since 30 November 2025, now relies solely on recorded attendance at job interviews — marked simply as attended or not attended — rather than conflicting accounts between employers and applicants.

It added that interviews are conducted in the presence of ministry staff, who also guide unsuccessful candidates towards alternative employment or training opportunities.

Two Women on Trial for ‘Bribery’

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Two women have been remanded in custody and referred to criminal court after allegedly offering a bribe to officials during a restaurant inspection in the Capital Governorate, the Public Prosecution said on Sunday.

According to prosecutors, the case began after inspectors from the Bahrain Tourism and

Exhibitions Authority identified violations at a restaurant in Umm Al Hassam.

As the inspectors were issuing a fine, the two accused women allegedly offered them money in exchange for halting legal action and withholding the violation report. The inspectors immediately informed their supervisor and documented the incident. Police officers later arrived at the scene and completed the necessary procedures.

Cultural Exchange Tribute



The Embassy of Russia in Bahrain hosted an award ceremony honouring participants of the World Youth Festival 2024, held in Sochi from March 1 to 7. Russian Ambassador Dr. Alexey Skosyrev presented a commemorative medal and certificate to Abdulaziz Rashid Al-Sindi, Chairman of the Bahrain Voluntary Work Society. The festival serves as a platform for youth from around the world to promote friendship, cultural exchange, and cooperation across various fields.

New Screening Rules for Medical Fellowships

TDT | Manama

Bahraini doctors working in government health institutions must pass new screening procedures—including examinations, interviews and conduct checks—before being selected for residency or subspecialty fellowship training, under a new decision issued by the Supreme Council of Health.

Decision No. 28 of 2026 sets out updated rules governing the nomination of doctors for the resident doctor programme and medical fellowship training. The regulation will take effect one month after its publication.

The rules apply to all doctors in government health institutions, existing civil service regulations will apply where

no specific provision is stated.

Under the residency pathway, applicants must be Bahraini nationals, hold a valid licence from the National Health Regulatory Authority, and pass a selection exam where applicable, in addition to a personal interview.

Selection will be based on a combination of exam results, interview performance and curriculum vitae assessment. The exam will serve as a primary measure of medical knowledge and readiness to practise.

The interview will assess leadership skills, ethical awareness, stress management, communication abilities and career objectives, while the CV review will include academic performance, training courses and research experience.

Big risks and rewards in upcoming IPOs at SpaceX, OpenAI, Anthropic

● SpaceX is targeting an initial public offering that would raise up to \$80 billion, roughly double the funds generated from all 2025 IPOs.

● OpenAI and Anthropic are eyeing IPOs raising \$60 billion

● The trio is poised to enter public markets as the Middle East war adds to inflationary pressures and fogs the geopolitical landscape.

AFP | New York, United States

Wall Street is licking its chops over an unprecedented slate of massive IPOs set to arrive in the coming months, beginning with Elon Musk's SpaceX in June.

That is expected to be followed by artificial intelligence rivals OpenAI and Anthropic. The trio of mega listings, each eyeing valuations around \$1 trillion or more, constitutes a heady period of elevated risk and reward.

SpaceX is targeting an initial public offering that would raise up to \$80 billion, roughly double the funds generated from all 2025 IPOs.

OpenAI



2026: THE YEAR OF MEGA IPOs?

SpaceX, OpenAI, Anthropic... 2026 could end up being a pivotal year for the IPO market, driven by tech giants whose valuations could shatter all records.



THE 10 LARGEST IPOs ON RECORD (BY FUNDS RAISED)

Rank	Company	Funds Raised (Billion)	Exchange	Date
1	Saudi Aramco	\$25.6	Riyadh Stock Exchange	DECEMBER 2019
2	Alibaba	\$21.8	New York Stock Exchange	SEPTEMBER 2014
3	SoftBank Group	\$21.3	Tokyo Stock Exchange	DECEMBER 2018
4	中国农业银行	\$19.2	Shanghai & Hong Kong Exchanges	JULY 2010
5	ICBC	\$19.1	Shanghai & Hong Kong Exchanges	OCTOBER 2006
6	NTT	\$18.1	Tokyo Stock Exchange	OCTOBER 1998
7	VISA	\$17.9	New York Stock Exchange	MARCH 2008
9	AIA Group	\$17.8	Milan & New Exchange	NOVEMBER 1999
10	Meta (Facebook)	\$16.0	New York Stock Exchange	MAY 2012

IPO = Initial Public Offering | Figures represent total funds raised by the company in its IPO. Source: Various media reports, stock exchange data

namica "winter of exits."

A poor performance by the new entrants could hit the valuations of these private companies, Zheng said.

By going public, the companies will also subject themselves to greater scrutiny from investors.

The market will "be laser-focused on the performance of those stocks from an operational perspective," Roberts said. "So they can't miss their earnings."

Ritter predicted all three companies could see volatility.

"There's going to be big upswings and big downswings, because nobody knows the future," he said. "Owning these stocks is not for the faint of heart."



SpaceX became the first private company in history to send astronauts into orbit when its Crew Dragon spacecraft carried NASA astronauts to the International Space Station in May 2020.

SpaceX's reusable Falcon 9 rockets have landed successfully hundreds of times, dramatically reducing launch costs and helping make frequent space missions possible.

The company's massive Starship is designed to be the largest and most powerful rocket ever built, standing about 120 metres tall – taller than the Statue of Liberty including its pedestal.

and Anthropic are eyeing IPOs raising \$60 billion, also huge numbers compared with the norm.

"We're really in unprecedented times," said Emily Zheng, an analyst for PitchBook, a research platform specializing in private capital. "And this concentration is more extreme than ever."

The trio is poised to enter public markets as the Middle East war adds to inflationary pressures and fogs the geo-

political landscape.

But that factor is not expected to impede the arrival of SpaceX, OpenAI and Anthropic.

"These three companies are kind of unique," said Jay Ritter, a specialist in IPOs at the University of Florida.

Mark Roberts, managing partner at the Blueshirt Group, also expects the offerings to be well subscribed.

"There's enough capital to enthusiastically embrace these three companies if they are priced correctly," Roberts said.

Nasdaq, where SpaceX will trade, announced earlier this spring that it would speed up the timeframe for including such mega listings in its main benchmark index.

The shift is expected to prod additional stock purchases of SpaceX from investment funds built around the index.

Reward or reckoning?

Among portfolio

managers for larger funds, SpaceX "is probably viewed as a must-have stock," said Roberts.

In anticipation of the listings, there has been a throng activity on secondary markets where investors are buying unlisted securities, pushing Anthropic's theoretic value to more than \$1 trillion.

Both OpenAI and Anthropic have warned investors against securities not authorized by the companies.

Once they begin trading on public markets, their performance will serve as a gauge of the market's appetite for additional offerings, particularly in the AI market.

"If these companies do really well -- especially the AI ones, like OpenAI

and Anthropic -- it would be a confirmation of these really massive private-market valuations," Zheng said.

"But the opposite could also be true," she added. "If the companies don't perform well, investors might conclude they're overvalued."

Some investors who have backed the three heavyweights in private markets are poised to cash out, potentially positioning them for the next round of tech companies.

Private equity firms currently hold more than 30,000 companies that they hope to exit, a backlog that has slowed availability of capital for new prospects. A recent Wall Street Journal article highlighted the slowdown, citing one firm that called the

Chief Executive of the National Cyber Security Center Welcomes CTM360 CEO and Lauds Its Historic Inclusion in Gartner's Magic Quadrant

Manama

His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Chief Executive Officer of the National Cyber Security Center, received Mr. Mirza Asrar Baig, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of CTM360, to extend his congratulations on the company's historic achievement of being recognized among 17 leading global firms in the field of Cyber Threat Intelligence (CTI). This recognition came in the inaugural Gartner Magic Quadrant™ report dedicated to this domain, published on the 4th of May 2026.

During the meeting, His Excellency commended this distinguished accomplishment,



noting that it marks the first of its kind for a technology and software company from the Arab world. He emphasized that the recognition stands as

a source of pride for the Kingdom of Bahrain and reflects the growing stature of Bahraini national talent within the global cybersecurity landscape. His Excellency further remarked

that this milestone embodies the fruitful outcomes of the wise leadership and visionary direction of the Kingdom of Bahrain, alongside the innovation-driven ecosystem the country has cul-

tivated, which has empowered national companies to compete at the highest international levels.

For his part, Mr. Mirza Asrar Baig expressed his sincere appreciation to His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Mohamed Al Khalifa for the gracious reception and for the continued support that the cybersecurity sector receives from the National Cyber Security Center. He affirmed that this achievement is the culmination of a journey spanning more than a decade of dedicated work, and a reflection of the nurturing environment that the Kingdom of Bahrain has provided to foster and advance technological innovation.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration between the National Cyber Security Center and leading national companies operating in this vital sector a partnership that contributes to consolidating the Kingdom of Bahrain's position as a regional and international hub for cybersecurity, and to advancing the digital transformation journey in line with the Kingdom's Economic Vision 2030. His Excellency renewed his best wishes to CTM360 for continued success and excellence, and for sustaining its role in elevating the name of the Kingdom on the global technology stage.

Al Salam Bank Group Launches Recovery and Growth Program to Support Institutional Clients Impacted by Recent Regional Developments

Manama

Al Salam Bank Group has announced the launch of the Recovery and Growth Program, a coordinated, group-wide initiative designed to support corporate and SME clients impacted by the recent regional developments, while reinforcing the group's commitment to stability, continuity, and the financial resilience of clients.

Bringing together the combined capabilities of Al Salam Bank, Solidarity Bahrain, and ASB Capital, the Recovery and Growth Program delivers an integrated support framework designed to address the challenges faced by clients, including business disruption, supply chain pressures, and changing market dynamics. Delivered through a unified group approach, the program aims to provide bespoke support while enabling recovery and long-term financial resilience through a comprehensive suite of solutions spanning banking, takaful, and financial advisory.



Under the Recovery and Growth Program, Al Salam Bank will offer flexible banking solutions, including targeted rescheduling and liquidity support, aimed at easing financial pressures and supporting financial continuity. Solidarity Bahrain will provide takaful advisory and solutions assisting clients to review and strengthen their insurance coverage, safeguard assets, navigate claims, and establish a structured path

to recovery and long-term protection. In parallel, ASB Capital will deliver financial and investment advisory, enabling clients to stabilize their financial positions, restructure their holdings, and build sustainable long-term growth strategies.

Together, these offerings form an integrated support model designed to address the full spectrum of client needs from immediate relief and protection to financial recovery and future

growth.

Commenting on the launch, Anwar Murad, Deputy Group CEO Banking at Al Salam Bank, said: "The banking solutions offered under the Recovery and Growth program are designed to address the specific financial pressures corporates and SMEs are currently experiencing. Through targeted financing rescheduling, liquidity support, and trade finance solutions, Al Salam Bank is committed to

providing its clients with the financial foundation required to maintain operational continuity and progress towards recovery."

Ahmed Saif, Group Chief Strategy Officer at Al Salam Bank, said: "In times of uncertainty, the role of financial institutions extends beyond transactions. At Al Salam Bank Group, we are committed to supporting clients by offering meaningful and coordinated support. Through the Recovery and Growth Program, and backed by ASB Capital's DCM, ECM, and investment banking track record, ASB Capital is ready to support clients with bespoke financial advisory solutions to optimize their standing and prepare for long-term recovery and growth."

Jawad Mohammed, Chief Executive Officer of Solidarity Bahrain, added: "Optimized insurance coverage plays a fundamental role in achieving financial stability, particularly during periods of challenges and rapidly changing economic condi-

tions. Through this initiative, we are committed to ensuring that customers receive specialized advice, appropriate insurance coverage, and the necessary support to enable them to protect assets, mitigate potential risks, and maintain business continuity with efficiency and confidence. We also strive to raise awareness about the importance of proactive planning and risk management, helping customers make informed decisions that support their financial stability and empower them to face future challenges with greater resilience and flexibility."

The launch of the Recovery and Growth Program underscores Al Salam Bank Group's role as an integrated financial platform, capable of delivering coordinated solutions that go beyond traditional banking. By combining financial relief, protection, and advisory within a single framework, the group is reinforcing its commitment to supporting clients through complex economic conditions.

General Poultry Company (GPC) and the company's labor union honored with recognition on Labour Day 2026

Manama

As part of the 2026 Labor's Day celebrations in Bahrain, the General Poultry Company and its labor union received two prestigious awards from the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions. The company won the "Management Excellence Award," while the labor union was honored with the "Labor Union Excellence Award."

The recognition is considered especially significant given the traditionally complex relationship that can exist between management and trade unions across industries. At GPC, both parties have continued to work in alignment towards a shared national objective: supporting Bahrain's food security through the production of quality, nutritious eggs for the local market.

The company stated that the awards reflect years of collaboration, mutual respect, and a collective commitment to continuity, operational excellence, and the wellbeing of employees.



From left to right: Yousef Al-Maqahwi - Deputy General Secretary-General Federation of Bahrain Trade Union, Haider Habib - Head of the General Poultry Company Labor Union, Wael Itani - CEO, Yasser Al-Damistani - Maintenance Technician (One of the employees honored by the GFBTU), Abdulqader Al-Shehabi - General Secretary-General Federation of Bahrain Trade Union, Jaffar Naji - Assistant General Secretary-General Federation of Bahrain Trade Union, Ahmed bin Ali - Assistant General Secretary for Working Youth

In addition to the organizational awards, two employees were individually honored in recognition of their outstanding contribution and performance during 2026. Ms. Amna Abdel Wahab from the Packing Department and Mr. Yasser Al-Demistani from the Maintenance Department were recognized for their dedication and service.

GPC also highlighted its con-

tinued investment in employee development through ongoing training and skills enhancement programs across departments, ensuring that its workforce remains equipped with the latest operational knowledge and industry practices required to meet future challenges.

The company acknowledged the continued support of its stakeholders, including

Mumtalakat and GHITHA, whose long-term commitment has contributed to strengthening GPC's position as one of Bahrain's key food production companies.

The recognition also comes at a time when the region has faced periods of uncertainty and disruption. During the recent Iran conflict and its wider impact across the region, GPC continued operations without inter-

ruption, with employees across departments working together to ensure that consumers across Bahrain continued to have daily access to fresh eggs.

Commenting on the recognition, Mr. Wael Itani, CEO of GPC, said: "This recognition is meaningful because it reflects the collective effort of our entire organization. At GPC, continuity is not simply about maintaining production. It is about people working together with a shared sense of responsibility towards Bahrain's food security. The recent regional challenges demonstrated the resilience and commitment of our teams, who ensured that fresh eggs continued to reach consumers across the Kingdom every single day."

Ms. Jalila Al Derazi, HR & Admin Manager added: "What makes this achievement special is the spirit of cooperation behind it. The relationship between management and the Trade Union at GPC has continued to evolve through dialogue, mutual respect, and a common understanding that the com-

pany's success depends on the wellbeing and contribution of its people. This recognition belongs to every employee who continues to support GPC's journey."

Mr. Abdulqader Al Shehabi, General Secretary of GFBTU stated: "This award demonstrates what can be achieved when employees and management work towards the same goal. Mr. Haider Habib, head of GPC's labor union added, "At GPC, there is a genuine understanding that every department and every individual plays an important role in ensuring continuity of operations and maintaining the trust of consumers in Bahrain. We are proud of the workforce and proud to be part of the company's journey towards its 50th year."

As GPC approaches its 50th anniversary in 2027, the company stated that the awards represent another important milestone in its journey and reinforce its commitment to continuity, resilience, and serving the interests of Bahrain and its stakeholders for the next 50 years and beyond.

The American University of Bahrain and American University in Washington DC Sign Agreement to Expand Graduate Academic Pathways

TDT | Manama

The American University of Bahrain (AUBH) has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with American University's Kogod School of Business, a top-ranked business school located in Washington, DC, USA, aimed at strengthening academic cooperation and providing distinguished educational pathways for students enrolled in AUBH's Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. Under the agreement, eligible MBA students at AUBH will have the opportunity to continue their graduate studies in the Master of Science in Sustainability Management (MSSM) and Master of



Dr. Wafa Almansoori, Interim President and Provost of the American University of Bahrain

Science in Business Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (MS-

BAAI) programs at American University's Kogod School of Business.

As outlined in the agreement, American University's Kogod School of Business may admit AUBH MBA students into the MSSM and MSBAAI programs, allowing students pursuing the MSSM to transfer up to 9 credit hours from their AUBH MBA coursework toward the degree requirements, while students pursuing the MSBAAI may transfer up to 12 credit hours. Upon completing the MBA requirements at AUBH, transferring the approved credits, and meeting American University's Kogod School of Business academic requirements, students will be

awarded a dual degree.

The Memorandum of Agreement further stipulates that students nominated by the American University of Bahrain will be considered for admission to the MSSM and MSBAAI programs in accordance with the admission criteria applied by the Kogod School of Business. Accepted students will be evaluated for a merit-based scholarship valued at USD 14,000, distributed over the duration of the program, in addition to receiving a waiver of the application fee.

Dr. Wafa Almansoori, Interim President and Provost of the American University of Bahrain, commented: "We are

extremely proud of our collaboration with the American University in Washington, DC, which represents a strategic step within our vision to enhance international partnerships and provide high-quality academic pathways for postgraduate students grounded in excellence and globally recognized accreditation. Enabling postgraduate students to pursue further study at one of the United States' leading universities through a well-defined academic pathway reflects our commitment to offering programs that combine academic depth, structure, and a strong international learning environment."

Dr. Ayman Omar, Associate

Dean for Graduate Programs and Professor in the Department of Information Technology and Analytics stated: "Our collaboration with AUBH reflects our shared commitment to expanding cross-border higher education and offering flexible, high-quality academic opportunities that align with students' aspirations and the evolving needs of the global economy. By enabling AUBH MBA students to pursue MSSM and MSBAAI programs, we reaffirm our dedication to preparing future leaders with the advanced knowledge and skills needed to drive meaningful and sustainable impact within their organizations and communities."

Iranian World Cup team to depart

Iran's World Cup squad will travel to Turkey on Monday for a training camp, friendlies and to complete visa applications before heading to the United States, head coach Amir Ghalenoei said on Saturday. Iran and the US cut diplomatic ties in 1980, and the players are expected to use their time in Turkey to complete the necessary procedures for obtaining visas before their kick off game against New Zealand on June 15 in Los Angeles.

Israeli soldier killed in Lebanon

Israel's military said Saturday that one of its soldiers had been killed in combat in southern Lebanon, bringing its losses to 21 personnel since the war with Hezbollah began in early March.

Israel strikes Lebanon

Israel launched new airstrikes against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, a day after the two countries agreed to extend a truce following talks in Washington.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported strikes on at least five villages in the south, preceded by an exodus of residents towards the southern city of Sidon and the capital Beirut.

Pakistan minister arrives in Tehran

Pakistan's interior minister arrived in Tehran on Saturday "to facilitate" the peace talks between Iran and the United States that have stalled despite a fragile ceasefire, Iranian media reported.

His visit to Tehran comes days after that of Pakistan's influential army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir.

Spacecraft to probe how Earth fends off raging solar winds



The Smile spacecraft (gold) fixed to a Vega-C rocket adaptor (black cone) in Kourou, French Guiana, in preparation for liftoff from Europe's Spaceport.

AFP | Paris, France

A joint European-Chinese spacecraft is set to blast off Tuesday to investigate what happens when extreme winds and giant explosions of plasma shot out from the Sun slam into Earth's magnetic shield.

Particularly fierce solar storms can knock out satellites, threaten astronauts -- and create colourful auroras in the skies of northern and southern latitudes. To find out more about this little-understood space weather, the van-sized SMILE spacecraft is tasked with making the first-ever X-ray observations of Earth's magnetic field. The spacecraft is sched-

uled to launch on a Vega-C rocket at 0352 GMT on Tuesday from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, on the northeastern coast of South America.

Lift-off was originally planned for April 9, but was postponed due to a technical issue.

SMILE -- or the Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer -- is a joint mission between the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"What we want to study with SMILE is the relationship between the Earth and the Sun," explained Philippe Escoubet, an ESA scientist working on the project.

UK police detail arrests after far-right rally and counter demo

AFP | London, United Kingdom

London police said yesterday officers arrested 20 people the previous day at a march organised by far-right activist Tommy Robinson and 12 people at a counter-demonstration fused with a pro-Palestinian protest.

The city's Metropolitan Police -- which had already disclosed making 43 arrests Saturday after tens of thousands people attended the duelling events -- added 11 of those detained were either non-affiliated or their links was unconfirmed.

The force had mounted its biggest operation in years to manage both Robinson's "Unite the Kingdom" march and the anti-fascism rally organised by the Stand Up to Racism group combined with protests marking Nakba Day.

The latter commemorates the 1948 displacement of Palestinians during the creation of Israel.

Police had feared clashes after violent confrontations at Robinson's last London event in September, when up to 150,000 people



On Whitehall, supporters of British far-right activist Tommy Robinson, real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, take part in a march organised by Unite The Kingdom, in central London

turned out, and various incidents at dozens of pro-Palestine demonstrations since 2023.

Around 60,000 attended Saturday's Unite the Kingdom event while 15,000 to 20,000 were at the Nakba Day gathering, according to Met estimates cited by UK media.

Organisers of both marches had claimed far greater turnouts.

In its arrests update Sunday, the Met said there were 11 arrests for hate-crime related offences, with nine of those at the Unite the Kingdom event and two at the Nakba Day march.

"They included offences motivated by race, religion, sexuality and disability," the force said, adding a further seven suspected hate crimes at the pro-Palestinian protest remain under investigation.

The other arrests at Robinson's rally ranged from public order and drunk and disorderly offences to suspects being held for previous grievous bodily harm and telecommunications offences.

There were two arrests for assault on an emergency worker and one for possession of an offensive weapon.

At the Nakba Day demonstration, the arrests included three for failing to remove a face covering, one for assault on an emergency worker and one for supporting a proscribed organisation.

Robinson -- a former football hooligan turned anti-Islam activist whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon -- had urged his attendees not to wear masks or drink excessive alcohol, and to be "peaceful and courteous".

USS Gerald Ford returns home

After 326-day deployment

AFP | Washington, United States

The USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier, dispatched to the Middle East ahead of the outbreak of war with Iran, returned home to the United States on Saturday after a 326-day deployment, the Pentagon said.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth was on hand

in Norfolk, Virginia to welcome home the largest aircraft carrier in the world, the US military said on X.

It was the longest deployment for a US carrier strike group since the Vietnam War.

The Ford's deployment saw it take part in US operations in the Caribbean, where Washington's forces have carried out

strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats, interdicted sanctioned tankers and seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

It was then dispatched to the Middle East to participate in combat operations against

Iran.

The carrier's long deployment included a fire in a laundry room on March 12, which injured two sailors and caused major damage to some 100 beds, according to the US military.

The carrier also reportedly suffered significant problems with its toilet system while at sea.



The carrier is powered by two nuclear reactors and can operate for more than 20 years without refuelling.

100,000
It is the largest warship ever built, stretching about 337 metres (1,106 feet) long and displacing more than 100,000 tonnes.

Instead of traditional steam catapults, it uses the futuristic EMALS (Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System) -- essentially a giant magnetic launcher for fighter jets.

The carrier can carry around 75 to 90 aircraft, including F-35 stealth fighters, helicopters and surveillance planes.

Inside, it functions like a floating city with thousands of sailors, medical facilities, workshops, gyms, sleeping quarters and even its own postal system.

After 100 years of Crusader control, the last Crusader stronghold of Acre is reconquered and destroyed by the Mamluks under Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil

Napoléon Bonaparte is proclaimed Emperor of France by the French Senate



India becomes the sixth nation to detonate an atomic bomb

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are defeated by the Sri Lankan government, ending the Sri Lankan Civil War and almost 26 years of fighting between the two sides

US senator loses primary bid to Trump-backed challenger

AFP | Washington, United States

A US senator from Louisiana bidding for a third term has lost his Republican primary, in the latest demonstration of US President Donald Trump's hold over his party.

Trump had targeted Bill Cassidy and endorsed an opponent in retaliation for the senator voting to impeach him five years ago.

With 99 percent of votes counted in Saturday's primary election, Cassidy was trailing in third place behind Trump-endorsed challenger Julia Letlow, a congresswoman, and state treasurer John Fleming, effectively shutting Cassidy out of a June 27 runoff.

"Congratulations to Congresswoman Julia Letlow on a fantastic race, beating an Incumbent Senator by Record



Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), with his wife Dr. Laura Cassidy by his side

Setting Numbers," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

The 79-year-old president was also quick to celebrate Cassidy's fall, writing: "His disloyalty to the man who got him elected is now a part of legend, and it's nice to see that his political career is OVER!"

Cassidy delivered some pointed remarks in his concession speech. Without mentioning Trump by name, the

lawmaker said American politicians, when they lose a race, don't whine and "don't claim that the election was stolen."

"Our country is not about one individual, it is about the welfare of all Americans," he said. "And if someone doesn't understand that, and attempts to control others through using the levers of power, they are about serving themselves, they're not about serving us."

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

A logistics chain that moves and protects

CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD



For decades, global logistics was the invisible plumbing of the world economy—noticed only when it failed. Today, that perception has shifted radically. Logistics is no longer a background service; it is a primary instrument of national security and economic sovereignty. The recent surge of nearly 7,000 missile and drone attacks in the Gulf has transformed shipping lanes into frontlines, proving that the true value of a supply chain lies not in its speed, but in its resilience.

The crisis in the Strait of Hormuz has forced a reckoning. When urea prices jump 40% and LNG flows stall, the impact ripples far beyond the shoreline, threatening global food security and pushing developing nations toward sovereign debt crises. As GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi recently highlighted, the Council has moved swiftly to safeguard these vitals by activating a "Logistics Fast Track." This emergency blueprint hinges on multimodal diversion: rerouting shipments away from volatile Gulf ports toward stable terminals on the Red Sea and Arabian Sea. This is supported by unprecedented regional cooperation, including coordinated customs facilitation designed to keep energy and fertilizers moving despite the blockade.

The transition must focus on Green Corridors. As the GCC expands land-based routes to bypass the Strait, these blueprints should integrate low-emission transport and "smart" customs technology to reduce the idling time of heavy vehicles.

However, as we build these new "logistics blueprints," we face a second, quieter crisis: the environmental cost of rapid infrastructure expansion. Balancing emergency logistics with ecological concerns is the next great challenge. We cannot trade maritime security for environmental degradation.

The transition must focus on Green Corridors. As the GCC expands land-based routes to bypass the Strait, these blueprints should integrate low-emission transport and "smart" customs technology to reduce the idling time of heavy vehicles. Furthermore, any expansion of Red Sea port capacity must adhere to strict "Blue Economy" standards to protect fragile marine ecosystems. By embedding sustainability into these alternative routes now, the GCC can ensure that the race for security doesn't come at the expense of the planet. In this new era, a truly "strong" logistics network is one that is both unbreakable and sustainable.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

Palestinian president's son elected to Fatah leadership body

AFP | Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

The son of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas won a seat on Fatah's top decision-making body yesterday, as initial results emerged from the Palestinian movement's first congress in years.

Yasser Abbas, 64, a businessman who spends most of his time in Canada, secured a place on the central committee after being appointed around five years ago as his father's "special representative" — a role that marked his gradual emergence on the political scene.

Jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti topped the preliminary results, retaining his seat on the committee with the highest number of votes, according to figures seen by AFP. Jibril Rajoub was reelected as the secretary-general of the

committee, retaining the seat he has held since 2017.

Palestinian vice president Hussein Al-Sheikh, Fatah deputy leader Mahmoud Al-Aloul and ex-Palestinian intelligence chief Tawfiq Tirawi also held their seats on the body.

Among the newcomers was Zakaria Zubeidi, 50, a former commander of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades -- Fatah's armed wing in the Jenin refugee camp -- who was freed from Israeli prison last year under a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

Two women also won seats, including Ramallah governor Laila Ghannam. The three-day congress, held simultaneously across Ramallah, Gaza, Cairo and Beirut, drew 2,507 voters -- a turnout of 94.64 percent, organisers said. Fifty-nine candidates competed for 18 seats on the central committee, while 450 vied for 80 seats on the revolutionary council.

'No tangible concessions'

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iranian media said yesterday that the United States had failed to make any concrete concessions in its latest response to Iran's proposed agenda for negotiations to end the war.

The Fars news agency said Washington had presented a five-point list which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States.

The US also refused to release "even 25%" of Iran's frozen assets abroad or pay any reparations for the damage inflicted on Iran during the war which broke out on February 28, according to Fars.

The report added that the US had conditioned the cessation of hostilities on all fronts on the start of negotiations.

The Mehr news agency, meanwhile, said: "The United States, offering no tangible concessions, wants to obtain concessions that it failed to obtain during the war, which will lead to an impasse in the negotiations."

In its proposal, Iran had called for an end of the war on all fronts including Israel's

campaign in Lebanon, as well as a halt to the US naval blockade on Iranian ports in place since April 13.

It also called for lifting all of the US sanctions and the release of Iranian assets frozen abroad under longstanding US sanctions, according to the Iranian foreign ministry in a press conference last week.

Fars said the Iranian proposal had emphasised that Tehran would continue to manage the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy conduit which it has largely kept closed since the start of the war.

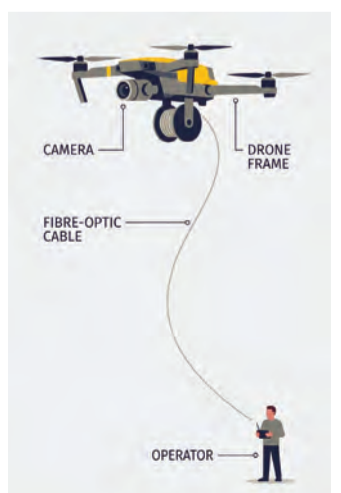
Hezbollah fired 200 projectiles over the weekend at Israel: army official

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

An Israeli military official said yesterday that Hezbollah had fired around 200 projectiles at Israel and its troops over the weekend, despite Israel and Lebanon agreeing to extend a ceasefire.

"Over the weekend, Hezbollah launched approximately 200 projectiles toward the State of Israel and IDF troops, in a clear and ongoing violation of the ceasefire understandings," the official said, in a statement to AFP.

Fighting between Israel-



li forces and Hezbollah has continued even as envoys from both the countries agreed on Friday to extend the ceasefire by another 45 days.

In recent weeks, Hezbollah has repeatedly deployed low cost fibre-optic first person view (FPV) drones targeting Israeli forces, posing a new challenge for the Israeli military.

"Today, we are facing the challenge of neutralising FPV drones," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the opening of the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



PM Kristersson and I witnessed an Indo-Swedish Musical Orchestra Presentation by Ron Davis Alvarez and his students. Music is a great way to bring our people together!

@narendramodi

02



Digital technologies are lifelines connecting people to safety, services & one another — especially when disaster strikes. On World Telecommunication & Information Society Day, let's invest in digital infrastructure, so communities can prepare for, respond to & recover from crises.

@antoniogetterres

03



This bond of commerce and respect that stretches back 250 years is the foundation for a future that benefits both of our nations." - President Donald J. Trump

@WhiteHouse

04



We are delighted that His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has confirmed his trip to France. This visit next September will be an honor for our country, a joy for Catholics, and a great moment of hope for all.

@EmmanuelMacron

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

Mass Ukrainian drone barrage kills four in Russia

Russian Air defences shot down 556 drones overnight

● One of the victims was an Indian citizen working in Russia

● These interceptions -- far above the few dozen more often reported -- took place across 14 Russian regions

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

A wave of almost 600 Ukrainian drones attacked Russia overnight killing four people, authorities said yesterday, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the barrage an "entirely justified" retribution for Moscow's own pummelling of Ukraine.

Air defences shot down 556 drones overnight across the country, Russia's defence ministry said, with another 30 drones intercepted after dawn in one of the largest Ukrainian barrages of the ongoing conflict so far.

These interceptions -- far above the few dozen more often reported -- took place across 14 Russian regions, as well as the Crimean peninsula annexed from Ukraine and the Black and Azov seas, the ministry added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv's attack on Russia -- days after a massive drone and missile bombardment of the Ukrainian capital killed at least 24 people -- was "entirely justified".

"Our responses to Russia's prolongation of the war and its attacks on our cities and communities are entirely justified. This time, Ukrainian long-range sanctions reached the Moscow region, and we are clearly telling the Russians: their state must end its war?"

The Ukrainian defence ministry said

UKRAINE-RUSSIA CONFLICT: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- 1. DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AT A STANDSTILL**
Diplomatic efforts to end the conflict have been at a standstill, with Kyiv unwilling to accept Moscow's maximalist demands for territory in the eastern Donbas region, saying it would be tantamount to surrender.
- 2. TALKS STALLED AS US FOCUS SHIFTED**
While the United States has pushed for both sides to come to the negotiating table, the talks have noticeably stalled since Washington's attention turned to the US-Israeli war on Iran in late February.
- 3. TRUCE EXPIRED, ATTACKS RESUME**
After the expiration of a US-brokered three-day truce on Tuesday to mark the anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II -- which both sides accused the other of violating -- Moscow and Kyiv have returned to trading attacks.
- 4. DAILY BOMBARDMENTS BY RUSSIA, STRIKES BY UKRAINE**
In response to daily bombardments by the Russian military for more than four years, Ukraine has regularly struck within Russia.
- 5. TARGETING RUSSIA'S OIL REVENUES**
Kyiv frequently claims long-range strikes that it says target oil processing facilities in a bid to dent the oil revenues that fund Russia's war chest.
- 6. LATEST ATTACK**
The latest attack on Sunday hit "the Moscow Oil Refinery, the Solnechnogorsk oil depot, and several microelectronics manufacturing facilities for the first time", Ukraine's defence ministry said on social media.
- 7. ALLIES CRITICISE RUSSIA**
Kyiv's allies have accused Russia of mocking diplomatic efforts to end the conflict.



Ukrainian rescuers work to extinguish a fire following an air attack on an industrial infrastructure facility in Zaporizhzhia

strike capabilities to the fullest extent possible against a wide range of military targets," Commander of Ukraine's Unmanned Forces, Robert Brovdi, told AFP in a recent, exclusive interview before the strikes.

In Russia's capital region, "a woman was killed as a result of a UAV hitting a private house," governor Andrey Vorobyov posted on Telegram, adding that the early morning attack also claimed the lives of two men.

One of the victims was an Indian citizen working in Russia, the Indian embassy in Moscow said in a statement. Vorobyov added that infrastructure facilities had been targeted.

Within the capital, local authorities reported that air defence systems had intercepted more than 80 drones overnight, wounding 12 people.

One of the strikes wounded construction workers at a job site near an oil and gas refinery, Mayor Sergei Sobyenin

said. "Refinery production has not been disrupted. Three residential buildings were damaged," he added.

While the capital region is often subjected to drone attacks, the city of Moscow, around 400 kilometres (250 miles) from the Ukrainian border, is less frequently targeted.

"The hit was so powerful that it almost knocked me out (of bed), and I weigh a lot. I opened my window and saw smoke rising," Konstantin, a 39-year-old resident of the area where a high-rise was damaged in the Putilkovo neighbourhood, outside Moscow, told AFP on the site.

In the Belgorod region which borders Ukraine, one man was killed overnight in the Shebekino district in a drone attack on a lorry, regional authorities said.

The Ukrainian air force said meanwhile it had intercepted 279 Russian drones out of a total of 287 launched.

'Toxic' males Trump, Putin, Netanyahu to blame for wars, says star Bardem

● Bardem has been one of most outspoken film stars against Israel's war in Gaza

● Other cinema figures, including acclaimed actress Susan Sarandon, have previously complained about their work drying up after their public statements

AFP | Cannes, France

Spanish superstar Javier Bardem, who is winning rave reviews for his latest film role, slammed the "toxic masculinity" of Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday which he said was



responsible for their wars. Bardem plays an overbearing film director with an explosive temper in "The Beloved" by

Rodrigo Sorogoyen, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival on Saturday to widespread praise from critics.

In an expletive-laden outburst at a press conference yesterday, Bardem said part of his character's flaws were due to "toxic masculinity" which led to men killing their ex-wives and girlfriends -- and starting wars.

"That problem also goes to Mr Trump and Mr Putin and Mr Netanyahu," Bardem, 57, said, referring to the US, Russian and Israeli leaders.

"The big boss man saying, 'My C*** is bigger than yours and I'm going to bomb the s*** out of you'," he added, saying that it was "creating thousands of dead people".

Bardem has been one of most outspoken film stars against Israel's war in Gaza since 2023, triggered by a deadly Hamas

attack in Israel that year.

A "genocide" is "still being committed", Bardem said.

"It's a fact. You can try to justify it, explain it, but it's a fact. If you justify it with your silence or your support, you are pro-genocide."

Israel denies genocide. Its assault and invasion of Gaza came after Hamas staged the worst-ever attack on it, in which 1,221 people were killed, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

Speaking to AFP on Saturday, Bardem said he was "getting more work than ever" despite his public campaigning against Israel's war in Gaza, something he attributed to "the narrative changing" around the conflict.

Other cinema figures, including acclaimed actress Susan Sarandon, have previously complained about their work drying

BETTER YOU KNOW

The Israeli campaign has devastated the Palestinian territory and killed more than 72,000 people, more than half of them women and children, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

up after their public statements and decision to sign petitions denouncing Israel's actions in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

WHO declares international emergency as **Ebola outbreak** kills more than 80

Fears of further spread grew when a laboratory on Sunday confirmed a case in the major eastern DRC city of Goma

● A total of 88 deaths and 336 suspected cases of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever have so far been reported

● WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed deep disquiet as the reported cases rise.

● Medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said it was preparing a "large-scale response"

AFP | Kinshasa, DR Congo

The World Health Organization declared an international health emergency yesterday over an outbreak of an Ebola strain in the Democratic Republic of Congo that has killed more than 80 and for which there is no vaccine.

Fears of further spread grew when a laboratory on Sunday confirmed a case in the major eastern DRC city of Goma, which is controlled by the Rwanda-backed M23 militia.

A total of 88 deaths and 336 suspected cases of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever have so far been reported, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Africa) said in an update on Saturday.

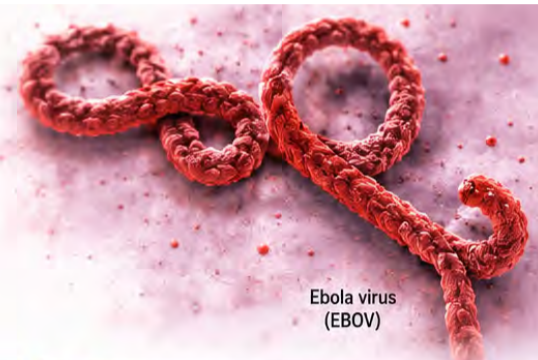
"A positive case in Goma has been confirmed by tests carried out by the laboratory. It involves the wife of a man who died of Ebola in Bunia, who travelled to Goma after her husband's death whilst already infected," Professor Jean-Jacques Muyembe, director of the Congolese National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB), told AFP.

WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed deep disquiet as the re-

EBOLA A DEADLY VIRUS.

KNOW IT. PREVENT IT. STOP IT.

Ebola is a rare but severe and often fatal illness in humans. Early awareness, prevention and treatment can save lives.



Ebola virus (EBOV)

WHAT IS EBOLA?

- Ebola is a severe, often fatal haemorrhagic fever.
- It is caused by the Ebola virus.
- First identified in 1976 in Democratic Republic of Congo (near the Ebola River).
- There are 6 known species of Ebola virus, 4 of which cause disease in humans.

First identified in 1976 in DR Congo

HOW IS EBOLA SPREAD?

The virus spreads to humans through close contact with:

- Blood or body fluids of an infected person (sweat, vomit, urine, feces, semen, etc.)
- Infected or dead animals (bats, primates, forest antelope)
- Contaminated objects (such as needles) and surfaces

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms appear 2 to 21 days after exposure.

- Sudden fever
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Internal & external bleeding

Symptoms can range from mild to severe. Early treatment improves survival.

PREVENTION

- Avoid direct contact with the blood or body fluids of sick people.
- Avoid contact with dead bodies. Use protective equipment if necessary.
- Avoid contact with wild animals such as bats, monkeys and forest antelopes.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Use gloves, masks and protective clothing if caring for a sick person.
- Seek immediate medical care if you have symptoms or have been in contact with an infected person.

TREATMENT

There is no specific cure for Ebola. Treatment focuses on:

- Supportive care (fluids, oxygen, and blood pressure support)
- Treating symptoms
- Preventing complications

Early access to care and supportive treatment can greatly improve survival.

OUTBREAKS & IMPACT

Major outbreaks have occurred in Africa, especially in West Africa (2014-2016) — the largest and most complex outbreak in history.

11,000+ DEATHS in 2014-2016 outbreak

Ebola causes huge loss of life and livelihoods, affecting health systems, economies and communities.

KEY FACTS

- Ebola is NOT spread by air. It requires direct contact with infected body fluids.
- It is NOT spread by mosquito bites.
- Survivors can transmit the virus through semen for months after recovery.
- Research is ongoing for vaccines and treatments. The rVSV-ZEBOV vaccine has been effective in controlling outbreaks.

AWARENESS. PREVENTION. COMPASSION. TOGETHER, WE CAN END EBOLA.

ported cases rise.

"I determine that the epidemic constitutes a public health

emergency of international concern," Ghebreyesus posted to X, albeit adding that as yet it

"does not meet the criteria of pandemic emergency" as defined by existing international

health regulations (IHR).

As things stand therefore, the Geneva-based WHO has declared its second-highest level of alert under IHR -- a pandemic being the highest -- with the global health body warning the scale of the current outbreak remains unclear.

"There are significant uncertainties to the true number of infected persons and geographic spread," the WHO noted.

Medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said it was preparing a "large-scale response", calling the rapid spread of the outbreak "extremely concerning".

"The Bundibugyo strain has no vaccine, no specific treatment," DR Congo's Health Minister Samuel-Roger Kamba said. "This strain has a very high fatality rate, which can reach 50 percent."

Patient zero

The strain -- first identified in 2007 -- has also killed a Congolese national in neighbouring Uganda, officials said Saturday.

Vaccines are only available for the Zaire strain, which was identified in 1976 and has a higher fatality rate of 60-90 percent.

Health officials had confirmed the latest outbreak Friday in Ituri province in northeastern DRC, bordering Uganda and South Sudan, according to CDC Africa.

"We've been seeing people die for the past two weeks," said Isaac Nyakulinda, a local civil society representative contacted by AFP by phone.

"There is nowhere to isolate the sick. They are dying at home and their bodies are being handled by their family members."

According to Kamba, patient zero was a nurse who reported to a health facility in Ituri's provincial capital Bunia on April 24, with symptoms suggesting Ebola.

Symptoms of the disease include fever, haemorrhaging and vomiting.

"The number of cases and deaths we are seeing in such

a short timeframe, combined with the spread across several health zones and now across the border, is extremely concerning," says Trish Newport, MSF Emergency Programme Manager, which is mobilising medical and support staff to the area.

Large-scale transport of medical equipment is a challenge in the DRC, a country of more than 100 million people which is four times the size of France but has poor communications infrastructure.

High risk of spread

It is the 17th Ebola outbreak to hit the DRC, and officials warned of a high risk of spread.

With the outbreak largely concentrated in difficult to access areas few samples have been lab tested.

But the WHO said the high positivity rate of initial samples, the confirmation of cases in two countries, and the increasing reports of suspected cases "all point towards a potentially much larger outbreak than what is currently being detected and reported, with significant local and regional risk of spread".

The previous outbreak of Ebola was last August in the region, with at least 34 people dying before it was declared eradicated in December.

The disease, over the past 50 years, has killed around 15,000 people in Africa, despite advances in vaccines and treatment.

Nearly 2,300 people died in the deadliest outbreak in the DRC between 2018 and 2020.

Ebola, believed to have originated in bats, can cause severe bleeding and organ failure.

Outbreaks over the past half century have seen a mortality rate among those affected of between 25 percent and 90 percent, according to WHO

The virus spreads from person to person through bodily fluids or exposure to the blood of an infected person, who become contagious only once they display symptoms. The incubation period can last up to 21 days.

Qantas flight diverted after man bites flight attendant



AFP | Sydney, Australia

Australia's Qantas was forced to divert a flight bound for the United States over a disruptive passenger, with local media reporting the man bit a flight attendant.

The flight from Melbourne was headed to Dallas on Friday when it was forced to make a stop-off in Papeete, the capital of French Polynesia, due to the disruptive passenger.

The man was restrained by

fellow passengers, with local media including national broadcaster ABC reporting he bit a member of Qantas staff.

The man was met by local authorities on arrival and has been slapped with a no fly ban on all Qantas planes.

"The safety of our customers and our crew is our number one priority and we have zero tolerance for disruptive or threatening behaviour on our flights," a Qantas spokesperson told AFP on Sunday.

Bulgaria's 'Bangaranga' wins Eurovision, with Israel second

AFP | Vienna, Austria

Bulgaria won the Eurovision Song Contest yesterday with Dara's catchy floor-filler "Bangaranga" sweeping the 70th edition of the world's biggest live televised music event and pushing into second place Israel, whose participation had triggered a major boycott.

Bulgaria had missed the last three editions of the glitzy extravaganza but took the crown in Vienna for the first time ever, overtaking Israel at the very end as the points came in, with Romania finishing third.



Winner Darina Nikolaeva Yotova, aka Dara and representing Bulgaria with the song 'Bangaranga' poses with the trophy

Pop singer Darina Yotova, known as Dara, was not among the favourites going into Eurovision week but the 27-year-old gained traction following a strong performance in the semi-finals, with her highly-choreographed dance routines.

"Everything is possible: Bulgaria just won Eurovision!" Dara told a press conference.

"I really like breaking rules. I'm really good with following my rules -- not anybody else's."

"We wanted to give to the audience something new and fresh, something that is not expected."

Drone strike sparks fire near UAE nuclear plant

Abu Dhabi says incident is “unacceptable act of aggression”

The United Arab Emirates said on Sunday that a drone strike triggered a fire near its nuclear power station, describing the incident as a “dangerous escalation” as authorities opened an investigation into its source.

The defence ministry said three drones had entered UAE airspace from what it described as the “western border direction”.

According to officials, two drones were intercepted, while the third struck an electrical generator located outside the inner perimeter of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in Abu Dhabi, causing a fire.

Local authorities said the blaze was brought under control and confirmed that no injuries were reported. They also stressed that the facility’s radiological safety levels were not impacted.



The foreign ministry condemned the incident as an “unacceptable act of aggression”, adding that the UAE retained the right to respond to any hostile actions.

It said targeting civilian nuclear energy infrastructure was

“a flagrant violation of international law, the UN charter, and the principles of humanitarian law”.

The defence ministry added that the country would “firmly confront any attempts to undermine the country’s security”.

Officials did not identify the origin of the drones. However, the UAE has previously accused Iran of being behind attacks on its energy and economic infrastructure since regional tensions escalated in recent years.

Qatar, Pakistan Discuss Ceasefire Efforts

Qatar’s Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani held a phone call on Saturday with



Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, discussing regional developments and efforts to reduce tensions, according to an official statement.

The two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and explored ways to strengthen cooperation between Doha and Islamabad across various fields.

They also exchanged views on the latest regional situation, with particular attention to Pakistani-led mediation efforts aimed at de-escalation and promoting stability.

During the call, Sheikh Mohammed expressed Qatar’s appreciation for Pakistan’s

diplomatic initiatives and for the efforts of other parties involved in mediation that contributed to reaching a ceasefire between the United States and Iran, the statement said.

He reaffirmed Qatar’s full support for Pakistan’s mediation role, stressing the importance of continued engagement by all sides to create conditions conducive to negotiations.

The Qatari premier also emphasized the need for a comprehensive agreement that ensures lasting peace and stability in the region through peaceful dialogue and diplomatic solutions.

Syrian delegation explores Qatar’s policing and security systems

Security and specialized departments at the Ministry of Interior in Qatar have received a delegation from the Ministry of Interior of Syria as part of efforts to strengthen security cooperation and exchange expertise between the two countries, officials said.

The visit aimed to familiarise the Syrian delegation with Qatar’s advanced practices in security and public service operations, according to the Qatari Ministry of Interior.

During the tour, the delegation visited sev-



eral key departments, including the Criminal Evidence and Information Department, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Airport Security Department, and the Economic and Cyber Crimes Prevention Department.

Officials briefed the visiting delegation on operational procedures, service delivery mechanisms, and the latest

technologies and systems used to enhance policing efficiency and improve investigative capabilities.

The visit reflects what both sides described as a shared commitment to expanding security cooperation and promoting the exchange of expertise and best practices across specialised technical and security fields.

UAE, Australia Deepen Ties

The United Arab Emirates and Australia pledged to deepen cooperation in defence, security and maritime safety during high-level talks in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, as both sides reviewed regional and global developments.

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan received Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles, where discussions focused on expanding bilateral ties and strengthening coordination in areas of mutual strategic interest.

According to official remarks, the meeting emphasized defence and security collaboration, reflecting



shared priorities in addressing evolving regional challenges and safeguarding international stability.

Both sides also exchanged views on developments in the Middle East and their wider implications for global security, underscoring the importance of continued dialogue amid ongoing regional tensions.

Maritime security featured prominently in the talks; both

countries highlighted the need to protect key sea lanes and ensure the free flow of trade across critical international shipping routes.

The meeting comes as the UAE and Australia continue to broaden cooperation across defence, economic and diplomatic sectors, reinforcing what officials described as a shared commitment to stability and international partnership.

Barakah plant attack sparks GCC condemnation



On Sunday, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) strongly condemned the “blatant and hostile attack” on the United Arab Emirates involving three drones, one of which targeted the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the Al Dhafra region.

GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohammed Al-Budaiwi said the attack represented a “serious escalation” and a direct threat to regional security and stability.

He warned that targeting the Barakah facility amounted to a clear violation of international laws and norms governing the protection of critical and nuclear infrastructure. He noted that such actions could have catastrophic consequences for regional and international security, as well as for civilians, the environment, and global energy supplies.

Al-Budaiwi reaffirmed the GCC’s full support for the UAE, stressing that member states stand firmly behind all measures taken by the country to safeguard its security, stability, and the safety of its citizens and residents.

IAEA warns on nuclear site safety risks

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that the United Arab Emirates informed it that radiation levels at the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant remain normal following a drone strike that caused a fire in an electrical generator outside the site’s inner perimeter on Sunday morning.

No injuries were reported in the incident, which affected infrastructure located beyond the nuclear facility’s protected core area.

According to UAE authorities, emergency diesel generators activated to supply power to Unit 3 of the plant, ensuring continued operational stability.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said it is closely monitoring the situation and remains in constant contact with Emirati officials, adding that it stands ready to provide technical assistance if



required.

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi expressed “grave concern” over the incident, warning that any military activity near nuclear facilities poses serious risks.

He reiterated that military actions threatening nuclear safety are “unacceptable” and called for maximum restraint in the vicinity of nuclear power plants to prevent the risk of a potential nuclear accident.

The UAE, a member state of the IAEA, continues to operate the Barakah facility under international safeguards, with officials maintaining that nuclear safety systems remain fully functional.

UAE–India Seal Strategic Deals

Agreements span defence, energy, and advanced computing

The United Arab Emirates and India on Sunday reinforced their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with a series of agreements spanning energy, defence, technology, maritime cooperation and investment, officials said.

The exchanges were witnessed in Abu Dhabi by UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, underscoring deepening ties between the two nations.

In the energy sector, agreements included cooperation between the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) and ADNOC on strategic petroleum reserves, as well as a long-term liquefied petroleum gas supply arrangement between Indian Oil Corporation and ADNOC.

Defence cooperation was also expanded through a framework agreement establishing a strategic defence partnership between the two countries’ ministries of defence.

In technology, a major initiative



was announced involving G42, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence and India’s C-DAC to develop an eight-exaflop supercomputing cluster in India, aimed at boosting high-performance computing capabilities.

Maritime and skills development cooperation included a partnership between Cochin Shipyard and Drydocks World to establish a ship repair cluster at Vadinar, alongside a memorandum of understanding on training and skills development in the sector.

On investment, several large-scale commitments were outlined, including Emirates NBD’s AED

11.02 billion investment for a 60 percent stake in RBL Bank. The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) also committed AED 3.67 billion to India’s National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, while International Holding Company (IHC) announced an AED 3.67 billion investment in Sammaan Capital.

Officials said the agreements reflect growing convergence between the UAE and India across energy security, digital infrastructure, defence cooperation and maritime industry development, further strengthening one of the region’s most significant bilateral relationships.

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Fernandes equals assist record as Man Utd edge Forest thriller

Portuguese midfielder claims twentieth assist of season to help secure third-place finish

● **United beat Forest 3-2 at Old Trafford**

● **Mbeumo handball controversy unpunished**

● **Casemiro received a standing ovation upon exit**

AFP | Manchester

Bruno Fernandes equalled the Premier League record of 20 assists in a season as Manchester United secured third place with a 3-2 win over Nottingham Forest yesterday.

Fernandes moved alongside Thierry Henry and Kevin De Bruyne in the single-season assist list when his cross was turned in by Bryan Mbeumo for United's third goal at Old Trafford.

Mbeumo was also involved for the game's most controversial moment when his handball in the build-up to Matheus Cunha's strike went unpunished despite a VAR review.

Luke Shaw volleyed United in front after just five minutes, but Forest did level seven minutes into the second half when Elliot Anderson's cross was headed in by Morato.

United raced down the other end and Cunha swept home after the ball rebounded off Mbeumo's thigh onto his arm.

Fernandes' record-equaling



Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder #08 Bruno Fernandes (R) vies with Nottingham Forest's English midfielder #10 Morgan Gibbs-White (L)

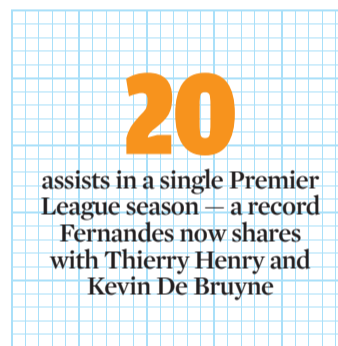
moment arrived 14 minutes from full-time when Mbeumo prodded in his drilled cross for his first goal since February.

Morgan Gibbs-White reduced the deficit in the 78th minute.

But United held on to add another victory to their impressive run since interim boss Michael Carrick arrived in January to replace the sacked Ruben Amorim.

Carrick is expected to sign a two-year contract to remain in charge on a permanent basis.

"Over the coming days there'll be clarity in the situation," the former United midfielder said of his future.



20 assists in a single Premier League season — a record Fernandes now shares with Thierry Henry and Kevin De Bruyne

European dreams

Elsewhere, Leeds midfielder Anton Stach's World Cup hopes are in jeopardy after the German was stretched off in the 1-0

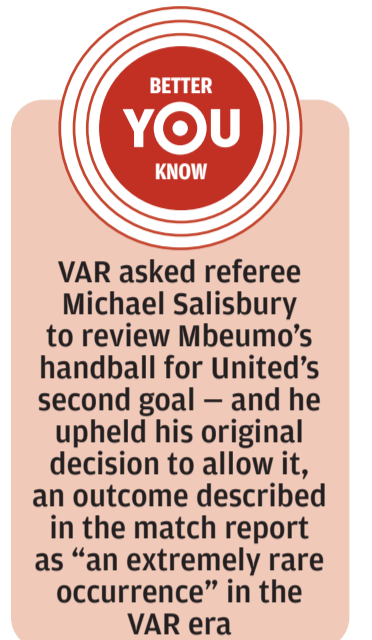
victory against Brighton.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored Leeds' winner in stoppage-time at Elland Road to damage seventh-placed Brighton's hopes of European qualification.

Brentford, in eighth place, also suffered a blow to their European ambitions in a 2-2 draw against Crystal Palace.

Ismaila Sarr's sixth-minute penalty put Palace ahead before Dango Ouattara hauled Brentford level in the 40th minute.

Adam Wharton restored Palace's advantage with his first goal for the club in the 52nd minute, but Ouattara struck



again in the 88th minute.

Sunderland are in contention for European qualification after a 3-1 win at Everton that dented the hosts' own ambitions of making it into continental competition.

Merlin Rohl cast a spell on the Sunderland defence with his deflected 43rd-minute opener.

But Brian Brobbey equalised in the 59th minute and Enzo Le Fee put ninth-placed Sunderland ahead in the 81st minute before Wilson Isidor wrapped up the points in stoppage-time.

Fulham's dreams of Europe were hampered by a 1-1 draw at relegated Wolves.

Wolves took the lead through Mateus Mane's 25th-minute blast, with Antonee Robinson equalising with a penalty in first-half stoppage-time.

Kohli, Venkatesh dazzle as Bengaluru qualify for IPL play-offs



RCB's Virat Kohli plays a shot

AFP | Dharamsala

Virat Kohli and Venkatesh Iyer struck half-centuries to help defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru become the first team to qualify for the IPL play-offs with a 23-run win over Punjab Kings yesterday.

In-form Kohli struck 58 off 37 balls before Venkatesh hit an unbeaten 73 to steer the team to 222-4 after being invited to bat first in the Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala.

The bowlers, led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar, then restricted Punjab to 199-8 despite a

late batting charge by Marcus Stoinis, who hit 37, and Shashank Singh, who made 56.

Bengaluru, who won their first IPL title in 18 attempts last year, consolidated top spot in the points table and secured their place in the play-offs.

Runners-up last year, Punjab, who started the season with six victories and one no-result, suffered their sixth successive defeat and are no longer in control of their fate.

The top four teams at the end of the league stage will make the playoffs in the 10-team tournament.

Roma near Champions League return with derby triumph, Napoli secure top four

AFP | Rome

Roma took a huge step towards returning to the Champions League by beating local rivals Lazio 2-0 yesterday in a feisty derby which finished with both teams down to 10 men, while Napoli won 3-0 at Pisa to secure a top-four spot.

Gianluca Mancini smashed home two headers from corners, one in each half, at the Stadio Olimpico to move Roma up to fourth thanks also to Juventus' shock 2-0 home defeat to Fiorentina.

Roma haven't played in the Champions League since being knocked out in the last 16 by Porto in 2019, an absence which has left the capital club lagging behind their rivals.

But a win next weekend at relegated Verona will guarantee Roma a spot in Europe's elite club competition thanks to a two-point gap separating them from both fifth-placed Como, 1-0 winners against Parma, and Juve who are now sixth.

"We should be happy because now it depends on us, we no longer have to rely on other teams' results," Roma coach Gian Piero Gasperini told reporters.

"Today can be happy for win-



Roma's Italian defender #23 Gianluca Mancini heads the ball and scores his team's second goal

ning the derby and then we'll get to preparing for the next match, which is huge."

The derby and all four other fixtures were pushed forward by half an hour to avoid a clash with the men's final at the Italian Open tennis tournament, which will take place a stone's throw from the Olimpico later this afternoon.

A massive security presence was on show all around the stadium but the atmosphere in the ground was one-sided with the Lazio fans continuing

their months-long boycott of matches in protest against owner Claudio Lotito.

Roma's loud home support belted out song after song after a potentially massive win which yesterday meant much more than just local pride.

The volatile nature of the derby was highlighted by Nicolò Rovella and Wesley both being sent off in a scrap shortly after Mancini bulleted home the decisive second goal from Paulo Dybala's corner in the 66th minute.

BFA announces play-off schedule

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Football Association (BFA) has announced the schedule for the 2025–26 promotion and relegation play-offs, which will determine the two teams that will compete in next season's Nasser bin Hamad Premier League.

Taking part in the play-offs are Premier League sides Al Najma and Budaiya, alongside First Division clubs Al Ittihad and Manama. Al Najma finished 10th in the top flight with 22 points, while Budaiya placed ninth on the same number of points but with a superior goal difference. In the First Division, Al Ittihad secured third place with 46 points, while Manama finished fourth with 44 points.

Under the approved format, the four teams will compete in a single round-robin league system. The teams finishing first and second in the final standings will earn spots in next season's Nasser bin Hamad Premier League, while the remaining two sides



Yousif Mojob in action during Al Najma's most recent fixture

2025–26 Promotion & Relegation Play-Offs

(All Matches 7PM)

Date	Fixture	Venue
May 21	Budaiya vs Manama	Bahrain National Stadium
May 21	Al Najma vs Al Ittihad	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 25	Budaiya vs Al Najma	Bahrain National Stadium
May 25	Manama vs Al Ittihad	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 30	Al Ittihad vs Budaiya	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 30	Al Najma vs Manama	Bahrain National Stadium

will compete in the First Division.

The play-offs are set to begin on Thursday, May 21. Budaiya will face Manama at Bahrain National Stadium, while Al Najma take on Al Ittihad at Al Ahli Club Stadium. Both matches are scheduled for 7pm kick-offs.

Action continues on Monday, May 25, with Budaiya meeting Al Najma at Bahrain National Stadium, while Manama face Al Ittihad at Al Ahli Club Stadium.

The play-offs will conclude on Saturday, May 30, when Al Ittihad face Budaiya at Al Ahli Club Stadium, while Al Najma take on Manama at Bahrain

National Stadium. Both fixtures will kick off at 7pm.

The upcoming play-offs are expected to deliver intense competition, with Al Najma and Budaiya aiming to preserve their top-flight status, while Al Ittihad and Manama seek promotion to Bahrain's premier division.

Meanwhile, Al Ittifaq and East Riffa have already secured automatic promotion to the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League for the 2026–27 season. Al Ittifaq clinched the First Division title after finishing one point ahead of runners-up East Riffa.

Youssef Kamal finishes runner-up in Dhahran Open



TDT | Manama

Youssef Kamal claimed second place in the under-16 category at the Dhahran Open Tennis Championship, held at Aramco courts from May 14 to 16 with the participation of young players from Gulf and Arab academies and clubs.

The Bahraini youngster reached the final after a strong

run in the competition before losing to Jordanian player Saif Hashem of Tennis Point Academy in straight sets, 6-2, 6-2.

The Bahrain Tennis Federation fielded 13 junior players in the tournament as part of its efforts to provide emerging talents with greater exposure to competitive regional events and help them gain experience through official matches.

Federation officials said the



participation achieved its developmental objectives by allowing players to compete in high-level matches and adapt to the demands of tournament play, while improving their technical and physical readiness for future competitions.

The event forms part of the federation's wider programme aimed at strengthening Bahrain's junior tennis base and preparing young players to represent the kingdom in regional and international tournaments.

Xabi Alonso appointed Chelsea manager on four-year deal



Xabi Alonso reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Chelsea appointed Xabi Alonso as the club's manager yesterday on a four-year deal from next season with the Spaniard the latest coach tasked with turning around the club's fortunes.

The Blues lost the FA Cup final to Manchester City on Saturday and lie ninth in the Premier League with two games of the campaign to go.

Alonso rose to prominence as one of Europe's brightest coaches by guiding Bayer Leverkusen to an unbeaten German league and cup double in the 2023/24 season.

However, he lasted just seven months in the Real Madrid hotseat. Appointed last year, he departed the Spanish giants in January.

"Chelsea Football Club is delighted to announce the appointment of Xabi Alonso as manager of the men's team," Chelsea said in a statement. "The Spaniard will begin his role on July 1, 2026, having agreed a four-year contract at Stamford Bridge."

Alonso faces a huge task to get Chelsea back in the running for major honours.

Chelsea did win the Club World Cup and the UEFA Conference League last year but have little else to show for well over one billion pounds (\$1.35 billion) of spending on players since US consortium BlueCo took over in 2022 following Roman Abramovich's



Liverpool fans had lobbied heavily for Alonso to return to Anfield – where he starred as a player for five years – to replace the under-pressure Arne Slot

trophy-laden ownership of the club. Defeat at Wembley on Saturday means they have now gone eight seasons without a domestic trophy.

'Great talent'

"Chelsea is one of the biggest clubs in world football and it fills me with immense pride to become manager of this great club," said Alonso.

"From my conversations with the ownership group and sporting leadership, it is clear we share the same ambition. We want to build a team capable of competing consistently at the highest level and fighting for trophies.

"There is great talent in the squad and huge potential at this football club and it will be my great honour to lead it. Now the focus is on hard work, building the right culture and winning trophies."

Bahrain Excels at Asian Weightlifting Championships



Minasyan celebrates his triple-medal haul with manager Tariq Al Bastaki

TDT | Manama

At the Asian Weightlifting Championships 2026, Bahrain delivered a strong all-round showing, collecting multiple medals across both men's and women's competitions in Ahmedabad, India.

In the men's super heavyweight category, Bahrain's campaign was spearheaded by

Gor Minasyan, who produced a commanding performance to win the overall title with a total of 457kg. He secured gold in the snatch, silver in the clean and jerk, and finished top of the podium in a closely contested field.

The spotlight of the event came from Iran's Alireza Yousefi, who claimed clean and jerk gold with a world record lift of 261kg, becoming the first re-



Aline Maruschack competes in the women's 86kg category

cord-holder in the newly established +110kg category. Despite that historic lift, he finished with overall silver on 445kg after taking bronze in the snatch. South Korea's Song Yeonhwan completed the podium with bronze in the overall standings on 416kg.

Bahrain also made an impact in the women's 86kg category through Aline Maruschack, who secured silver

overall with a total of 265kg. China's Peng Cuiting claimed gold with 270kg, while South Korea's Jang Hyeonju took bronze.

Maruschack's performance stood out for its balance across lifts, earning her silver in the snatch, gold in the clean and jerk, and silver in the overall standings, reinforcing Bahrain's presence in the women's competition.

Bahrain Boost Medal Tally at GCC Games

TDT | Manama

On day six of the GCC Games, Bahrain's delegation built on an already strong campaign, dominating the final athletics events before carrying that momentum into table tennis and volleyball.

The athletics programme at Qatar Sports Club ended in emphatic fashion, with nine medals collected in total: five gold, three silver and one bronze, as the team asserted control across multiple disciplines.

On the track, a clean sweep came in the women's 200m. Raihanah Garoubah took gold in 23.23 seconds, with Aisha Abdulla claiming silver in 23.40 after a closely fought finish. Qatar's Dana Salem finished third in 24.44. In the men's 200m, Ali Haji secured bronze in 20.80 seconds, behind Oman's Ali Al Balushi and Saudi Arabia's Abdulaziz Atafi.

Strength in depth was again evident in the middle and long-distance events. Nelly Koriri won the women's 1500m in 4:22.56, while Tigest Mekonen added silver in 4:37.76, finishing ahead of Kuwait's Amal Al Roumi. In the men's 5000m, a one-two finish followed, with Abdikani Hamid taking gold in 14:54.95 and Dawit Vikado securing silver in 15:03.19. UAE's Obaid Al Nuami took bronze.

In the field events, Noora Jassim claimed gold in the shot put,



Bahrain's women's 4x400m relay team celebrate gold

adding to the medal tally and underlining control of the athletics programme. The session ended with the women's 4x400m relay team sealing a commanding victory in 3:34.29, well clear of Qatar's 3:56.95, rounding off a dominant day on the track.

At the Aspire Dome, Rayan Rashid added a bronze in the women's table tennis singles, beating compatriot Dana Al Khayyat 3-2 in the third-place play-off.

In volleyball at the Aspire

Women's Sports Hall, the team maintained a perfect start under coach Ivan Joksimovic, following an opening win over Oman with a straight-sets victory against the United Arab Emirates, 25-18, 25-16, 25-15.

Despite squad rotation and the introduction of new players including Abdulla Mohammed Jaafar, control was maintained throughout. Sayed Hashim Ali produced a standout moment with a powerful spike to close the second set, while Mahmood

Abdilhussain secured the win in the third.

Bahrain will now move on to a clash against Saudi Arabia at 6:30 PM tonight, with Qatar expected to pose their strongest challenge in the race for the gold medal. Speaking about their rivals, middle blocker Hassan Ali Al Warqaa said: "We know what to expect from Qatar. They have a relatively unchanged core roster for 15 years and are very experienced. Insha'Allah, we will achieve the title."

Standings

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Qatar	39	38	32	109
2	Saudi Arabia	24	19	18	64
3	Bahrain	23	20	12	55
4	Oman	10	4	11	25
5	Kuwait	8	15	22	45
6	UAE	7	12	22	41



Bahrain volleyball team celebrate a point during victory over UAE

Bahrain Victorious' Eulalio holds Giro lead despite Vingegaard attack



Bahrain - Victorious Portuguese rider Afonso Eulalio, wearing the best young rider's white jersey (Maglia Bianca), celebrates on the podium

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Victorious rider Afonso Eulalio retained the Giro d'Italia leader's jersey yesterday after limiting his losses to Jonas Vingegaard on the demanding ninth stage to Corno alle Scale.

The Portuguese rider, one of the revelations of this year's race, finished fifth on the mountainous 184km stage from Cervia as Jonas Vingegaard claimed victory with a late move on the final climb. Despite conceding 40 seconds to the Dane, Eulalio preserved an overall lead of just under two minutes and 30 seconds.

Eulalio, who seized control of the race with a strong ride

on stage five, again showed resilience against the Giro favourite and the other general classification contenders on a long and gradual 28km ascent in warm but breezy conditions.

Austria's Felix Gall finished second, 12 seconds behind Vingegaard, while Davide Piganzoli took third and Ineos rider Thymen Arensman crossed fourth. Eulalio rounded out the top five, managing to contain the damage on a stage expected to favour the pure climbers.

Italian veteran Giulio Ciccone animated the stage with an attack from the early break-away 10 kilometres from the summit, although the peloton eventually reeled him in on the final slopes.

Bahrain Handball team look to build momentum

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's handball team face Saudi Arabia tonight at 6:30 PM at the Duhail Handball Hall in Doha in a key GCC Games clash that could influence the early standings.

Bahrain opened their campaign in impressive fashion, defeating Kuwait 30-21 after taking control early and maintaining their intensity throughout. A 14-10 half-time lead set the tone, before a dominant second half saw them pull away comfortably. Mohammed Rabia and Salman Alshowaikh helped drive the early rhythm, while Ahmed Kadhem's impact after



Bahrain coach Robert Hedin during their previous game

the break ensured Bahrain never let the momentum slip.

Coached by Swedish tactician Robert Hedin, Bahrain enter the

tournament with growing confidence after a landmark year in which they captured their first-ever Asian Men's Handball

Championship title in Kuwait.

Alshowaikh acknowledged the challenge ahead, pointing to the rivalry between the sides:

"Saudi Arabia are a strong side. We've faced them before in the Islamic Solidarity Games and the Asian Championship, and every time they've caused us difficulties. We're taking it one game at a time."

Tonight's fixture is expected to be Bahrain's toughest test so far in the round-robin format, with further matches against hosts Qatar and the UAE still to come. Qatar currently lead the standings, with both Bahrain and Saudi Arabia on two points after the opening round.

Gulf Cup Draw to Be Held in Jeddah

TDT | Manama

The draw for the 27th edition of the Arabian Gulf Cup ("Khaleeji 27") will take place on Tuesday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, ahead of the tournament scheduled from September 23 to October 6.

The ceremony will be held at Cultural Square, within the Arts Center of the Red Sea International Film Festival.

Matches will be played across two venues: King Abdullah Sports City Stadium and Prince Abdullah Al-Faisal Stadium.

Eight national teams will compete: the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia (hosts), Oman, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, and Yemen.



Bahrain celebrate Gulf Cup title in January

Teams will be placed into four seeding pots based on the latest FIFA rankings released on April 1. Pot 1 includes Qatar (55th)

and Iraq (57th), Pot 2 features Saudi Arabia (61st) and the UAE (68th), Pot 3 contains Oman (79th) and Bahrain (91st), and

Pot 4 consists of Kuwait (134th) and Yemen (149th).

Each group will contain one team from each pot, with sides from the same pot unable to meet in the group stage. As hosts, Saudi Arabia will lead Group A, while the UAE will head Group B as the second seeded team.

The tournament will feature two groups of four teams in a single round-robin format, with the top two from each group advancing to the semi-finals.

In the last four, the Group A winner will face the Group B runner-up, while the Group B winner meets the Group A runner-up. The winners will advance to the final to decide the champion.