



Bahrain reinforces strategy for security and stability

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, emphasised the importance of strengthening proactive plans to preserve Bahrain's security and stability in light of current regional and international developments.

He underlined the continued enhancement of civil protection and public safety systems to ensure the wellbeing of all citizens and residents.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he visited yesterday the Main Operations Room at the Ministry of Interior (MOI).

Upon arrival, the Deputy Supreme Commander was received by His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, along with several senior officers from the Ministry.

Senior officials

His Royal Highness was accompanied by His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Minister of the Prime Minister's Court; His Excellency Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy; and a number of senior officials.

HRH Prince Salman was briefed on the role of the Ministry of Interior's Main Operations Room in responding to reports, coordinating with relevant authorities, and executing its strategic responsibilities.

These efforts reflect the Kingdom's preparedness to effectively manage challenges in light of current regional and international developments.



HRH Prince Salman visits the Main Operations Room of the Ministry of Interior

ly manage challenges in light of current regional and international developments.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister expressed pride in the commitment of Bahraini

citizens to the Kingdom's advancement, noting that any challenge can be overcome through the wisdom of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the

Armed Forces, and the steadfast determination of Bahraini citizens.

His Royal Highness stressed that relevant authorities are implementing all necessary measures across all levels to preserve national security, maintain stability, and guarantee the uninterrupted availability of essential services for both citizens and residents.

Gratitude

H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah expressed his gratitude for His Royal Highness's visit, noting its positive moral impact on the Ministry's personnel. His Excellency commended His Royal Highness's continuous support for the police force's ongoing efforts to safeguard the Kingdom.

The Interior Minister affirmed that all entities within the Ministry are intensifying efforts to enhance preparedness, strengthen civil protection, and maintain public order.

Stranded Bahrainis return home after crossing borders



TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the successful facilitation of the return of several Bahraini nationals who had been stranded overseas.

A group of them arrived in the Kingdom yesterday via land border crossings.

The move was part of the Kingdom of Bahrain's ongoing commitment to the welfare and protection of its citizens abroad.

The Ministry affirmed that it continues to intensify its efforts to secure the return of citizens still abroad, in direct coordination with Bahrain's diplomatic missions and the concerned countries, while easing the necessary travel procedures.

It is also in direct contact with Bahraini nationals currently stranded in Iran, including those seeking to return via Iraq or requiring assistance to obtain entry visas to Turkmenistan.

The Ministry stressed the importance of relying on official channels for accurate information, and noted that its 24-hour hotline (+973 17227555) remains available to respond to inquiries and provide the required support.

US patience is 'wearing thin'

Trump demands Tehran to 'surrender' as Israel presses attacks for fifth day



Smoke billows in the distance from an oil refinery following an Israeli strike on the Iranian capital Tehran. (AFP)

TDT | Washington

Israel traded fire with its arch foe for a fifth day yesterday as President Donald Trump said the US would not kill Iran's supreme leader "for now" and appeared to demand Tehran's surrender.

The comments marked a dramatic escalation in Trump's rhetoric against Iran and its leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, fuelling questions as to whether Washington would join Israel's attacks after insisting it had no hand in the campaign.

Israeli warplanes targeted drone and missile sites with at least two waves of strikes in western Iran yesterday, the military said.

Casualties

It also said it had killed senior Iranian commander Ali Shadmehri in an overnight strike on a "command centre in the heart of Tehran", just four days after his predecessor, Gholam Ali Rashid, was killed in Israel's initial surprise attack.

The attacks drew retaliatory fire from the Islamic republic,

with explosions heard over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and air raid sirens sounding around Dimona, a southern town home to a nuclear power plant. There were no immediate reports of hits.

"We don't want missiles shot at civilians, or American soldiers. Our patience is wearing thin."

- US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

Days after a senior US official said Trump had told Israel to back down from plans to assassinate Khamenei, the US president appeared to put the option back on the table with a post on his Truth Social platform.

"We know exactly where the so-called 'Supreme Leader' is hiding. He is an easy target, but is safe there - We are not going to take him out (kill!), at least not for now," Trump said.

Attempt to change Iran regime will bring 'chaos'

AFP | Kananaskis, Canada

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday warned any attempt to change the regime in Iran would result in "chaos" as US ally Israel traded fire with its arch foe.

Macron was speaking at a G7 summit in Canada shortly after President Donald Trump said the US would not kill Iran's supreme leader "for now."

Macron said that Trump had a critical role in restarting diplomacy with Tehran and said he believed the US leader favors a ceasefire between Iran and Israel.

Talks

"I believe we need the United States of America to bring everyone back around the table," Macron told reporters.

Meanwhile, the US is setting up a round-the-clock task force to help Americans in the Middle East during the Israel-Iran conflict, officials said yesterday.

"The Department of State has established the Middle East Task Force to help coordinate support for us, citizens, our US diplomatic missions and personnel and diplomatic engagement," spokeswoman Tammy Bruce told a press briefing.

"The task force is operating 24 hours a day over the past week to help keep us citizens informed. We have issued more than 30 security alerts to countries in the region and updated travel advisories for Iraq and Israel," she said.



Proactive, integrated measures to enhance Kingdom civil security



HRH Prince Salman visits the Al-Madar Center at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, highlighted Bahrain's ongoing efforts to enhance civil security in light of the rapidly evolving regional landscape.

He noted the importance of taking proactive and integrated measures across all levels.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he visited yesterday the Al-Madar Center at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Upon arrival, His Royal Highness was received by HE Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Alzayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a number of the Ministry's senior officials.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister affirmed that the Kingdom, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, remains committed to resolving crises through dialogue and diplomacy, and supports all regional and international efforts that promote peace and stability.

forts that promote peace and stability.

Commitment

His Royal Highness emphasised the Kingdom's commitment to a comprehensive approach to civil emergency management, which includes strengthening institutional readiness, enhancing the efficiency of relevant agencies, fostering inter-agency coordination, and deepening cooperation with allied nations to safeguard shared interests and regional stability.

During the visit, he reviewed the Center's progress and its role in supporting the Ministry's coordination with Bahrain's diplomatic and consular missions abroad, particularly in advancing the Kingdom's foreign policy objectives and reinforcing national security.

His Royal Highness commended the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Al-Madar Center, praising their contribution to the Kingdom's diplomatic goals.

Promoting independent arbitration and mediation

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Bahrain is committed to fostering an environment that supports independent arbitration and mediation, which enhances fairness, stability, and sustainable development.

This was reaffirmed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, as he met yesterday with His Excellency Dr Marcin Czepelak, Secretary-General of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, at Riffa Palace.

HRH Prince Salman underscored the Kingdom's continued efforts to strengthen its



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister with H.E. Dr Marcin Czepelak

partnerships with countries and arbitration-related institutions, in line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to position the country as a leading global hub for ar-

bitration.

His Royal Highness highlighted the vital international role of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and emphasised Bahrain's dedication to enhancing

cooperation with global judicial and arbitration bodies across all levels.

He also emphasised the importance of exchanging expertise and best practices serves to reinforce Bahrain's standing as a trusted partner in promoting international judicial initiatives and peaceful dispute resolution, and contributing to global efforts toward fairness and development.

Czepelak expressed his appreciation for His Royal Highness's commitment to advancing cooperation with the Permanent Court of Arbitration, noting that such efforts contribute to shared objectives.

Bahrain Celebrates Eye Surgical Breakthrough

Bahrain's first Preserflo surgery

Glaucoma care gets safer

Dr. AlMeer returns with mission

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

A cutting-edge eye surgery has opened a new chapter in Bahrain's medical history, with the successful implantation of the country's first

Preserflo MicroShunt, a device transforming the treatment of glaucoma.

The milestone procedure was performed by Dr. Ahmed AlMeer, a Bahraini eye surgeon who recently returned from Canada after completing advanced training.

Conducted at Dr. Haifa Eye Hospital, the surgery marks Bahrain's entry into a global shift towards safer and less invasive glaucoma treatments.

Dr. AlMeer said he felt confident as he held the tiny Preserflo device in his hands, aware of the significance of the moment.

"I had already performed this surgery many times abroad, so I



Dr. Ahmed AlMeer

felt well-prepared. What I felt more than pressure was a deep sense of responsibility," he said.

Glaucoma, a chronic eye disease that can lead to irrevers-

ible blindness, is traditionally treated with trabeculectomy, a procedure that involves creating a larger drainage opening in the eye.

This method often results in longer recovery times and increased risk of complications.

The Preserflo MicroShunt, however, is a minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) device just 8.5 mm in length.

It creates a controlled outflow for fluid, reducing intraocular pressure with minimal disruption to the eye's anatomy.

According to Dr. AlMeer, this translates to quicker healing, fewer complications, and better comfort for patients.

Laurels Celebrates NIOS Success Stories

Flexible education models win student and parent trust

NIOS sees rising success

Students post strong results

Centre promotes inclusivity

TDT | Manama

More students in Bahrain are proving that success doesn't have to come from a mainstream classroom.

Laurels Centre for Global Education has announced that its latest batch of Grade 12 students under India's National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) have cleared their board exams, many with standout results.

The milestone reflects a quiet shift in how academic achievement is viewed across the Kingdom.

NIOS, originally created to support those who needed a second chance at education, is gaining traction among students who want a more flexible and personalised learning model.

"I congratulate the students and assure them of the high quality of our tutorials," said



Aujoy Kumar: 79%



Shefester: 74%

P. Unnikrishnan, Chairman of Laurels Center for Global Education.

Hard work and commitment

"Continuing the winning streak is not easy. It is the result of hard work and commitment. Our students and teachers are doing a commendable job,"



Meraj Ali: 78%



Sayad Fizan: 73%

said Adv. Abdul Jaleel Abdulla, Director of Laurels Centre for Global Education.

"NIOS is a great platform for any students to pass 10th and 12th grades in open stream and continue their pursuit in becoming a graduate. It is approved for qualifying for NEET, JEE, CAT and all other entrance



Fathima Hiba: 76%



examinations and college admissions in India, Canada, US and Europe."

New path forward

"These results speak volumes about what can happen when students are given space to learn at their own pace," said the Centre Head at Laurels. "NIOS is no longer just an alternative, it's



Noshan Naeem Ahmad: 75%



becoming a preferred route for many."

Students like Aujoy Kumar, who scored 79%, and others including Meraj Ali at 78%, Fathima Hiba at 76%, and Noshan Naeem Ahmad at 75%, are setting a new benchmark for academic comeback stories.

Each result is a reflection of resilience, support, and the val-

Established in 1989 by India's Ministry of Education, NIOS offers open schooling worldwide, and Laurels Centre has been delivering its programmes in Bahrain for years, helping students access flexible, globally recognised education beyond traditional classrooms.

ue of stepping outside the one-size-fits-all schooling system.

Beyond results

The centre recently hosted a celebration for students, marking not just the end of a school year but the beginning of new academic and professional aspirations.

Many graduates are now preparing for college applications and further training.

With new enrolments open, Laurels Centre is doubling down on its mission to provide student-led, inclusive education through the NIOS programme. For more information, contact the centre directly at 36458340.

MP calls for move to fast-track visa issuance to help stranded Bahrainis fly home

TDT | Manama

Bahraini citizens stranded abroad are calling for a way home, and MP Basema Mubarak says the answer lies in fast-tracking visas to countries with working airports.

She said she had received a number of appeals in recent days from nationals unable to return to the Kingdom due to heightened tensions in the region.

Many, she added, are struggling with the prospect of long and exhausting overland travel, particularly those accompanied by elderly relatives, young children or people with chronic health conditions.

Human toll

The journeys, she warned, are taking a human toll: physical, emotional and medical.

“We urge the relevant authorities to facilitate entry visas to countries with accessible airports,” she said, “so that Bahraini citizens can fly back safely. This would provide a practical and humane solution for those unable to reach home by other means.”

Mubarak called for immediate coordination among the responsible agencies to implement workable alternatives,



“We urge the relevant authorities to facilitate entry visas to countries with accessible airports so that Bahraini citizens can fly back safely.”

- MP BASEMA MUBARAK

saying urgent humanitarian steps were needed to protect those affected.

She expressed confidence that the matter would be given the attention it deserved.

New maternity charges for visitors at public hospitals



Salmaniya Medical Complex

TDT | Manama

Non-Bahraini visitors and non-residents will be charged new rates for childbirth at government hospitals from 1 July 2025, under a decision by the Supreme Council of Health (SCH).

Natural births will cost BD425, while caesarean sections will be priced at BD1,025.

The change follows a detailed review carried out with the relevant bodies to re-examine the cost of maternity care.

The figures were adjusted to match the actual outlay, including pay for medical staff, supplies used during delivery, and supporting services.

Those living in Bahrain and women employed in the public sector are not affected by the revised prices.

They will continue to receive maternity services as per the current rules.

The Council said the move is part of its push to improve how services are shared out and to ensure the quality of care can be maintained over time.

Move to set up national halal certification system

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KMH Afaaq has submitted the lowest bid at BD211,750 to design Bahrain’s halal certification system, as part of a public tender launched by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture.

The Animal Wealth Affairs is overseeing the process, which

also attracted a BD242,880 offer from Gulf Innovations for Consulting and Technical Services, according to figures published by the Tender Board.

The chosen consultancy will be expected to lay down the framework for a national system, setting out how it should operate and what rules must apply.

Return routes

Bahrain seeks second overland option to repatriate citizens from Iran

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Repatriation of Bahraini citizens from Iran is in motion, with authorities exploring return routes through both Iraq and Turkmenistan, according to MP Jalal Kadhem.

One route has already been secured via the Iran-Iraq border, with arrangements in place to exempt Bahrainis from Iraqi visa charges.

A second path, through Turkmenistan, is still being negotiated.

Reply

Talks are ongoing, and Bahrain is awaiting a reply from Turkmen authorities to allow its citizens to cross by land and return home by air.



Kadhem said Bahrain’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs is handling the matter, with the country’s non-resident ambassador to Turkmenistan, Bassam Al Marzooq, who is based in Ankara, overseeing efforts to establish a safe passage.

Discussions with neighbouring countries are said to be advancing, with the focus on opening a secure and practical route.

“Bahrain’s conduct during previous events had shown it would not leave its citizens behind, and that current steps were in keeping with that approach.”

- MP JALAL KADHEM

Work

He added that work continues with those currently in Iran, as well as their families back home, who are being kept informed of the latest.

The embassy has asked those

wishing to travel through Turkmenistan to send their personal details using its hotline: +90 539 353 54 03, or via email at ankara.mission@mofa.gov.bh.

Kadhem said the response from government departments had been quick and cooperative.

Calm and patient

He urged families to remain calm and patient while coordination continues.

Bahrain’s embassies, he added, are still active on both the Iraq and Kuwait fronts as additional overland options.

He said Bahrain’s conduct during previous events had shown it would not leave its citizens behind, and that current steps were in keeping with that approach.

‘COVID Legacy Powers Safety’

● COVID-19 shaped safety model

● Digital tools aid preparedness

● MPs join civil defence training

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic has laid the foundation for a far-reaching transformation in civil protection and crisis governance, according to a senior lawmaker.

MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen said the Kingdom’s pandemic response had demonstrated how trust, innovation, and citizen participation could be channelled into a long-term national safety strategy.

That experience, she noted, has now evolved into an integrated civil defence model focused on readiness, technology, and shared responsibility.

She pointed to current efforts that embed digital tools into emergency response frameworks, while simultaneously



MP Dr. Maryam Al-Dhaen

empowering society at large to play a greater role in public safety.

Smart tools, safer citizens

One of the most visible changes is the rollout of the ‘BeAware Bahrain’ mobile application, which offers users real-time alerts, safety guidance, and interactive support in emergency scenarios.

Dr. Al-Dhaen described the app as a key part of Bahrain’s shift from reactive crisis response to proactive community protection.

Complementing the app is the National Civil Protection Platform, an institutional framework designed to unify state and community efforts under a



In 2021, Bahrain was among the top five countries globally in COVID-19 testing per capita, according to the WHO.

common strategy.

The platform, she said, reinforces Bahrain’s advanced security culture and promotes an environment of resilience and awareness.

Shared responsibility

The government’s civil protection efforts also include expanding the scope of preparedness across different sectors.

Dr. Al-Dhaen highlighted the recent civil defence training sessions conducted for Members of Parliament, calling it a clear sign that the responsibility for public safety is being shared across institutions.

“The concept of safety in Bahrain has become a shared responsibility between state institutions and society,” she said, noting that awareness campaigns and simulations have now reached multiple levels of government and civil society.

Leadership and coordination

Dr. Al-Dhaen credited His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for leading a crisis governance model that prioritises regional stability and domestic readiness.

She also praised the active role of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in monitoring emergency procedures and enhancing national preparedness.

She further commended the Civil Defence Council, chaired by His Excellency Lieutenant General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior, for its role in strengthening preventive measures and coordination across agencies.

In closing, Dr. Al-Dhaen said Bahrain’s civil protection system today reflects the lessons of its pandemic response, turning past challenges into future safeguards.

Bahrain-US strategic partnership



Her Excellency Noor bint Ali AlKhulaif, Minister of Sustainable Development Chief Executive of the Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB), received H.E. Steven C. Bondy, Ambassador of the US to the Kingdom of Bahrain. During the meeting, Minister AlKhulaif reaffirmed the longstanding strategic partnership between Bahrain and the US, underscoring the shared commitment to advancing economic development and sustainable growth. Discussions focused on topics of shared interest and explored means to expand existing cooperation to support mutual aspirations and goals.

BDF drill set for today

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The Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) General Command announces the execution of a training firing drill at the Southwestern Naval Area that extend from south of Ra's Al Muta-lah to Ras Al Bar for a distance of 7 kilometres from the shore.

The exercise is scheduled for today between 7am and 10am.

The General Command, through the Directorate of Media and Moral Guidance, urges all concerned to exercise caution and avoid the designated firing area during the specified time for their safety.

Highway upgrade

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The Ministry of Works announced that the improvement works on Al Fateh Highway necessitate the full closure of the left turn flyover leading from Al Fateh Highway to Prince Saud Al Faisal Avenue towards Juffair Area.

The closure will be effective starting from Friday, June 20, at 12:30 am to Sunday, June 22, at 05:00 am.

All road users are requested to observe and obey the traffic rules for the safety of all.

BSA satellite payload project

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Space Agency (BSA) has announced the completion of the second phase of its project to develop a satellite payload for monitoring carbon dioxide, in collaboration with the University of Leicester and British company Geo-spatial Insight.

Care worker to face trial for ‘abusing’ disabled children

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A man working at a care centre for children with disabilities is to stand trial for alleged abuse, after being caught on camera mistreating those in his charge, the Public Prosecution announced yesterday.

Prosecutors said the suspect, a national of an unnamed Arab country, has been referred to criminal court following an investigation triggered by a complaint from the Ministry of Social Development.

Inspectors from the ministry, carrying out a routine visit to the rehabilitation facility, reported that the worker was seen mishandling the children



Image used for illustrative purposes only

physically and emotionally.

He was tasked with looking after young people with disabilities at the centre.

The prosecution took up the matter without delay.

Testimonies were taken from the ministry's inspection officer

and the head of the centre.

Security footage was also reviewed, and was said to capture scenes of abuse.

The defendant was questioned, and following the inquiry, the case was passed to the criminal courts for trial.

Textbook distribution preparations completed

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Education has confirmed that all public schools across the Kingdom have finalised preparations for the distribution of textbooks for the upcoming 2025–2026 academic year.

The distribution process is scheduled to begin on Sunday, June 22, 2025, allowing students and their parents to collect textbooks from their respective schools in accordance with each school's designated schedule and guidelines.

The Ministry stated that distributing textbooks ahead of the summer vacation will enable students to review the curriculum in advance, better preparing them for the new academic year.

It will also help schools ensure a smoother start to the school year by reducing the logistical pressures of textbook distribution upon students' return.

Dedication and coordination

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak Juma, Minister of Education, praised the dedication and coordination of educational and administrative teams who completed the preparations in line with the approved plan and deadlines.

He expressed his heartfelt appreciation to all those involved — across various roles and specializations — for their efforts in curriculum development, textbook design and production, logistical supervision, and school-level readiness.

Dr. Juma noted that more than two million textbooks will be distributed to students across all public schools as part of the Ministry's commitment to delivering high-quality educational resources and ensuring a smooth start to the academic year.



All set for the new academic year

Bahrain embraces sustainable AI innovation

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

Dr. Jassim Haji, President of the International Group of Artificial Intelligence (ICOAI), Head of the Tech National Group, delivered an inspiring and informative speech during a recent AI-focused event held at the Art Hotel.

The event welcomed many distinguished guests, including Nibras Mohammed Talib, CEO of the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), who was the guest of honor.

He emphasized the growing importance of artificial intelligence and praised the visionary leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and



Dr. Jassim Haji with distinguished guests, including Nibras Mohammed Talib, CEO of the LMRA

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, whose support has been pivotal in Bahrain's technological development.

Dr. Haji spoke proudly about Bahrain's first locally established AI center, launched four years ago, which has developed over 38 proprietary AI solutions entirely in-house.

This achievement highlights Bahrain's commitment to sustainable innovation and maximizing productivity with efficient investment.

He took the audience on a fascinating journey through history, linking Bahrain's ancient contributions to early automa-

tion practices dating back 5,000 years.

He noted that early forms of automation such as stamping and document exchange laid the groundwork for today's advanced technologies.

Spirit of solidarity



The Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Make-A-Wish Foundation UAE, aiming to fulfil the wishes of children aged 3 to 18 with critical health conditions who are receiving treatment in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This initiative reflects the strong ties between Bahrain and the UAE and reinforces the values of humanitarian giving. The MoU was signed by H.E. Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Secretary-General of the RHF, and Hani Al Zubaidi, CEO of Make-A-Wish Foundation UAE. Under the agreement, the RHF will provide Make-A-Wish UAE with lists of eligible children and nominate members of its staff to volunteer with the foundation's team. These volunteers will be responsible for direct communication, preparing files, coordinating with supervising doctors, and accompanying children throughout the wish-fulfilment process, following Make-A-Wish UAE's policies and procedures.

Fostering dialogue and legal cooperation



The Honourable Dr. Hab. Marcin Czepelak, Secretary-General of The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), has arrived in the Kingdom of Bahrain on his first official visit to the region since assuming his role as Secretary-General, to explore avenues for collaboration in the vital field of international dispute resolution. The Permanent Court of Arbitration, headquartered in the iconic Peace Palace in The Hague, is one of the world's most respected institutions for the peaceful resolution of disputes between states, as well as between states and investors. The visit by Dr. Czepelak underscores the PCA's commitment to advancing its mission of global conflict resolution in new regions and signifies a milestone in fostering dialogue and legal cooperation with Bahrain. Dr. Hab. Marcin Czepelak was received by Professor Marike Paulsson, Secretary General of the Council for International Dispute Resolution of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Huawei leads Bahrain's 5G-AI transformation

Regional tech edge deepens

” This partnership reflects our shared vision for innovation through 5G-Advanced and AI. Together, we will deliver transformative technologies that empower industries, enable new services and support Bahrain's national ambitions

STEVEN YI, HUAWEI SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

● Huawei inks Bahrain pact

● AI networks to expand

● National digital shift boosted

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

Huawei has deepened its role in shaping the region's digital future by signing a strategic partnership in Bahrain that will spearhead the deployment of next-generation 5G-Advanced and AI-powered technologies. The agreement with stc Bahrain reinforces Huawei's position as a global leader in driving smart connectivity and intelligent infrastructure across the GCC.

The partnership, signed on Sunday, aims to transform Bah-



rain into a regional benchmark for 5G-A and AI integration. Huawei will lead efforts to deliver personalised digital services, smarter private networks and real-time enterprise tools that redefine industry standards.

Accelerating digital innovation

At the core of the agreement is Huawei's commitment to

pushing the boundaries of what next-generation networks can deliver. The collaboration covers joint R&D, product innovation and the deployment of AI-driven Mobile Private Networks across key sectors such as logistics, manufacturing and critical infrastructure.

"This partnership reflects our shared vision for innova-

tion through 5G-Advanced and AI," said Steven Yi, Huawei Senior Vice President. "Together, we will deliver transformative technologies that empower industries, enable new services and support Bahrain's national ambitions."

Smart networks and enterprise tools

Huawei's technology will drive network optimisation, cloud-edge integration and intelligent automation, enabling faster service delivery and advanced connectivity for businesses. The deployment of AI-powered private networks is expected to bring mission-critical reliability, lower latency and improved efficiency to a wide

range of industries. stc Bahrain, acting as a local partner, will contribute market insights and implementation capacity. Its leadership welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Huawei on building future-ready services for the Kingdom.

Investing in Bahrain's future

In addition to infrastructure, the agreement prioritises talent development and ecosystem growth. Huawei plans to support local innovation by offering AI training programmes and collaborative research, helping to cultivate a new generation of Bahraini tech professionals.

For Huawei, this milestone reaffirms its regional leadership in emerging technologies. For Bahrain, it marks a major leap toward building a resilient, AI-driven digital economy that is ready to lead in the Gulf and beyond.



Huawei invested over USD 22 billion in research and development in 2023, making it one of the top global spenders in next-generation technologies.

Indian PM visits Croatia with EU trade on agenda

AFP | Zagreb, Croatia

Narendra Modi will visit Croatia today, the first time an Indian prime minister has toured the Balkan nation, in a sign of increasing ties with the European Union.

Modi will visit the EU member on his way back from the G7 Summit in Canada, following an earlier stop in Cyprus.

Croatian newspaper Vecernji List reported on Tuesday that a key focus of discussions will be a proposed trade route between Europe, the Middle East and India -- an investment touted to rival Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.

"As the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Croatia, it will open new avenues for bilateral cooperation," Modi said in a statement ahead of the trip.

He will meet Croatian counterpart Andrej Plenkovic and President Zoran Milanovic in Zagreb during a visit that was initially scheduled for mid-May, but got pushed back because



Modi said he held wide-ranging talks with President Nikos Christodoulides, covering the full range of India-Cyprus relations in a tweet. "It's widely known that bilateral ties between our nations are time-tested. Today, we talked about cooperation in areas like defence, security, trade, technology, healthcare, renewable energy and climate justice."

of an escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan.

European leaders are increasingly looking to other trading partners in response to US President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs on the bloc, which are

now flagged to increase in July.

The EU is India's second-largest trading partner, accounting for 120 billion euros (US\$138 billion) worth of trade in goods in 2024 -- more than 11 percent of total Indian trade, according



Landed in Calgary, Canada, to take part in the G7 Summit. Will be meeting various leaders at the Summit and sharing my thoughts on important global issues. Will also be emphasising the priorities of the Global South, Modi wrote in a tweet

to the EU.

First proposed in 2023, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor would be a railway and maritime route linking the regions and is seen

as a potential counter to growing Chinese investment.

Although trade between India and Croatia remains relatively small, Croatia, suffering from a chronic workforce shortage,

has been attracting more Indian workers.

China has pumped billions of dollars into the Balkans in recent years to expand its economic footprint in central Europe.

Vision, Innovation

Earn Arab Bank Award

Strategy earns global praise

- Recognised for strategic execution
- Celebrated for financial strength
- Honoured for market expansion

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

A bold mix of innovation, strategic agility and customer focus has earned Arab Bank the title of 'Best Bank in the Middle East 2025' from New York-based Global Finance magazine, reaffirming the bank's stature as a regional financial leader.

The award was announced following

extensive consultations with corporate financial executives, analysts and consultants worldwide. Evaluation criteria included asset growth, product innovation, geographical coverage and strategic partnerships. Arab Bank stood out for its

ability to adapt to change while sustaining profitability and expanding market presence.

Building global credibility

This recognition comes shortly after another major accolade, as The Banker magazine, pub-

lished by the Financial Times, named Arab Bank 'Bank of the Year in the Middle East 2024'. Together, the honours reinforce the bank's position as one of the region's most globally respected financial institutions.

Commenting on the Global

Finance award, Arab Bank CEO Randa Sadik said it reflected the bank's evolving brand and its forward-looking ethos. "This global recognition affirms the vision and commitments embedded in our refreshed brand identity," she said. "It reflects our unwavering commitment to customer-centricity, innovation and agility." She added that the bank remains focused on enabling both customers and communities to thrive in an increasingly dynamic world.

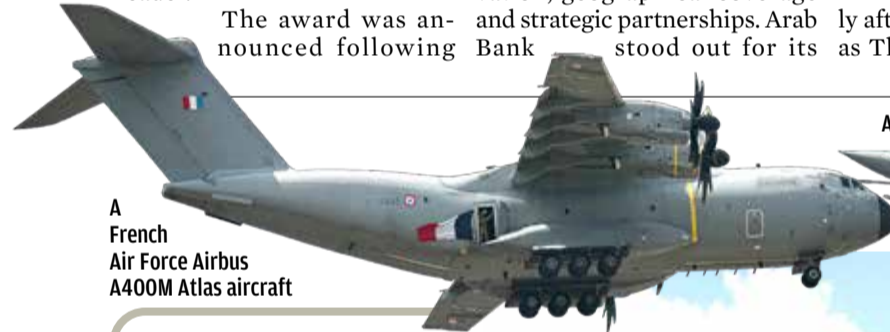
Legacy and leadership

Founded in 1930 and headquartered in Amman, Arab Bank today operates one of the world's largest Arab banking networks, with over 600 branches. Its footprint covers key global financial centres including London, Geneva, Paris, Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney, Dubai and Manama.



Global Finance magazine has been naming top banks for over 30 years and is widely followed by corporate financial leaders and analysts across more than 150 countries.

With awards now under its belt from both Global Finance and The Banker, Arab Bank has shown that its blend of legacy and innovation continues to resonate across markets and borders.

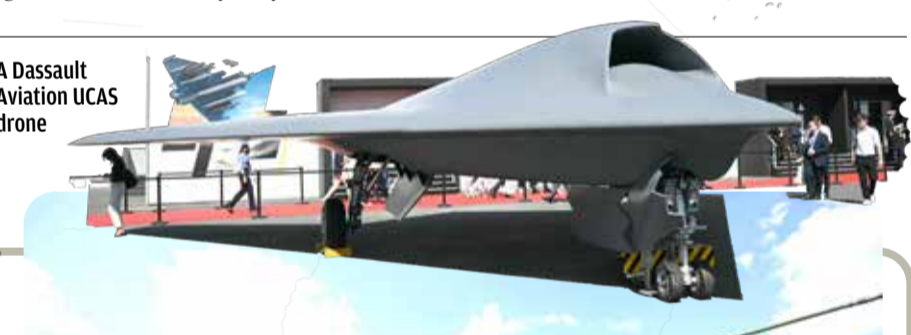


A French Air Force Airbus A400M Atlas aircraft

A Rafale fighter jet



A Dassault Aviation UCAS drone



Vietnam's Vietjet orders 100 Airbus A321neo planes

AFP | Le Bourget, France

Vietnamese carrier Vietjet has ordered 100 single-aisle A321neo jets from Airbus, the European plane maker said Tuesday in the latest deal announced at the Paris Air Show.

The deal would be worth almost \$13 billion under 2018 catalogue prices.

It includes an option for Vietjet, Vietnam's largest private airline, to buy a further 50 of the jets at a later date.

"This new agreement marks a significant milestone in our strategic partnership with Airbus," said Vietjet chairwoman Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao.

"These modern and efficient aircraft have been instrumental in Vietjet's growth, helping us make air travel more accessible and affordable for millions, while strengthening our role as a connector for economic devel-



a C-17 aircraft of the 105th Airlift Wing (105 AW), a unit of the New York Air National Guard, on display during the Paris International Air Show



a military aircraft Embraer KC-390 Millennium of the Brazilian Air Force



An Airbus Helicopter VSR700



an Airbus Helicopter H225M



France's Turgis and Gaillard Group's collaborative long-range strike system Foudre



Leonardo and Baykar LBA Systems' Bayraktar Akinci combat drone

opment, cultural exchange and global connectivity," she added.

Airbus executive vice president Benoit de Saint-Exupery noted the deal followed hot on the heels of a new order by Vietjet for 20 A330neo widebody aircraft.

"Together the A321neo and A330neo will be perfect partners for Vietjet to continue to spread its wings, efficiently matching capacity more closely to demand across its network,"

he said in a statement.

Vietjet operates a fleet of more than 100 Airbus aircraft.

As of the end of May, more than 7,000 A321neo aircraft -- the largest of Airbus' best-selling A320neo family -- have been ordered by over 90 customers worldwide, Airbus said.

The Vietjet deal came a day after Airbus announced orders for a total of more than 100 planes from Saudi companies

Riyadh Air and AviLease and Polish airline LOT.

Those deals were worth nearly \$20 billion at 2018 catalogue prices -- which Airbus has since phased out, as final sale prices vary according to contract terms and the version of an aircraft.

Airbus rival Boeing has meanwhile said its focus at the Paris Air Show is on "supporting customers" after the Air India crash last week.

NBB and Batelco join to advance Cashless Bahrain

Partnership drives payment reform



Officials during deal signing

● **Cashless tools gain reach**

● **Connectivity meets fintech edge**

● **SMEs benefit from bundling**

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) and Batelco by Beyon have signed a strategic partnership aimed at accel-

erating Bahrain's transition to a cashless economy by bundling fintech-powered payment tools with advanced telecom solutions for businesses.

At the heart of the agreement is the integration of NBB GO, a SoftPOS application, into Batelco's business packages. This allows corporate clients to access tap-to-pay payment capabilities alongside enterprise-grade connectivity in a single offering, helping small and mid-sized businesses go fully digital.

Bundling financial and digital tools

NBB GO turns any Android

phone with NFC capabilities into a point-of-sale terminal, enabling merchants to accept contactless payments without traditional hardware. The app is available on the Google Play Store and offers a low-cost entry into cashless transactions for retailers, startups and field-based businesses.

By embedding this fintech solution into its telecom bundles, Batelco aims to reduce complexity for SMEs while strengthening digital inclusion and business agility.

Serving development goals

NBB's Group Chief Executive

for Markets and Client Solutions, Hisham AlKurdi, said the partnership supports Bahrain's broader national vision. "We are enabling businesses to embrace secure, efficient payment systems that complement their communication needs and align with Bahrain's digital transformation goals," he said.

Batelco's General Manager of Enterprise, Abdulla Danesh, added that the collaboration redefines business enablement. "This agreement is about more than bundling services, it's about creating the infrastructure that empowers companies to grow and innovate."

Vision-led digital shift

The MoU aligns with Bahrain's national plans to modernise the economy through digital payment systems and reduce dependence on cash. NBB and Beyon are jointly building a framework that helps local en-

terprises embrace cashless tools that scale with their ambitions.

For Bahrain's SME sector, the partnership offers a practical, accessible path into the digital economy, one that connects financial innovation with telecom reliability to meet the demands of a new era.



According to McKinsey, countries that transition to digital payments see up to a 3 percent boost in GDP due to increased financial inclusion, reduced cash handling costs and improved transparency

Trump says EU not offering 'fair deal' on trade

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that the European Union had yet to offer a "fair deal" on trade, as Washington negotiates tariff agreements with friends and foes alike.

"We're talking but I don't feel that they're offering a fair deal yet," Trump said of the EU, speaking to reporters on board Air Force One before arriving back in the United States from a G7 summit in Canada.

"We're either going to make a good deal or they'll just pay whatever we say they will pay."

Shortly after taking office, Trump upended the global economic order by accusing the United States' trading partners of unfair practices and he announced huge global tariffs.

Trump imposed a blanket 10 percent tariff on most US trading partners and unveiled higher individual rates on dozens of economies, including India and the European Union -- although he swiftly paused the elevated rates.

The pause on those higher



(L/R) French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, US Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the Group of Seven (G7) Summit at the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada

duties is due to expire on July 9, though the White House has indicated it could extend the deadline for countries that it believes are negotiating in good

faith.

The US president also imposed additional sector-specific levies on cars, steel, and aluminum that have hit many US trading

partners hard, including the EU. World leaders at the Group of Seven summit in Canada on Monday pushed Trump to back away from his punishing trade

war, arguing that it posed a risk to global economic stability.

The US president left the G7 talks early, citing the crisis between Iran and Israel, and was

back in Washington on Tuesday morning.

Before his departure, Trump and EU Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen met for a few minutes on the sidelines of the G7 in what the European leader told reporters was a "good and intensive discussion" on trade.

"Of course, it's complex, but we are advancing and that is good," von der Leyen said after Trump's criticism of the EU's position.

The EU chief added that negotiations between the US and Europe were ongoing, including on the sidelines of the G7 on Tuesday, and that both sides were working hard to strike an agreement by the July deadline.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stayed behind after Trump left, spearheading negotiations on trade with the other G7 countries. "From the very beginning, I have been very clear that a negotiated solution is my favorite solution," she said, though adding that the EU was ready to retaliate with countermeasures if talks broke down.

News in brief

◆ **Twenty-four crew have** been rescued after two oil tankers collided off the UAE, sparking at least one fire, the United Arab Emirates coastguard and a shipping company said yesterday. British maritime security monitor Ambrey said the incident, which took place at a time of high tensions as an air war rages between nearby Iran and Israel, was “not security-related”. Shipping company Frontline said a fire was extinguished on its Front Eagle tanker after the collision with Adalynn, another oil transporter, 15 nautical miles off the UAE’s Gulf of Oman coast. “We are (also) aware of reports of a fire onboard the Adalynn following the collision,” a Frontline statement said, adding: “There have been no reports of pollution at this time.” The UAE coastguard carried out “an evacuation mission involving 24 crew members of the oil tanker ADALYNN, following a collision between two ships in the Gulf of Oman”, the UAE National Guard posted on X.



24 rescued as oil tankers collide off UAE, sparking fire

◆ **A plane carrying** hundreds of hajj pilgrims back from Saudi Arabia was diverted in Indonesia yesterday after an email bomb threat was sent to authorities, Indonesia’s aviation body said. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation said it received a report from Indonesia’s airport operator “regarding a bomb threat sent by an unidentified person via electronic mail”. The email at 07:30 am

(0030 GMT) contained a threat to “blow up” Saudia Airlines flight SV 5276 which was flying from the Saudi city of Jeddah to the Indonesian capital Jakarta, it said in a statement. After 10:00 am the pilot diverted the plane from its destination of Jakarta’s Soekarno-Hatta International Airport to Kualanamu International Airport in Medan, a city on Sumatra island in western Indonesia. The flight was carrying 442 hajj pilgrims, including 207 men and 235 women, it added.

◆ **A major power** outage that paralysed the Iberian Peninsula in April was caused by “overvoltage” on the grid that triggered “a chain reaction”, according to a government report released yesterday. The blackout had “multiple” causes, Ecological Transition Minister Sara Aagesen told reporters following a cabinet meeting, adding the system “lacked sufficient voltage control capacity” that day. Overvoltage is when there is too much electrical voltage in a network, overloading equipment. It can be caused by surges in networks due to oversupply or lightning strikes, or when protective equipment is insufficient or fails. When faced with overvoltage on networks protective systems shut down parts of the grid, potentially leading to widespread power outages. Aagesen singled out the role of the Spanish grid operator REE and certain energy companies she did not name which disconnected their plants

Spain says ‘overvoltage’ caused huge April blackout



SPOTLIGHT

Trump mulls extending travel ban to 36 more nations: source

AFP | Washington, United States

The United States is considering extending its travel ban to 36 more countries, a person who has seen the memo said Monday, marking a dramatic potential expansion of entry restrictions to nearly 1.5 billion people.

The State Department early this month announced it was barring entry to citizens of 12 nations including Afghanistan, Haiti and Iran and imposing a partial ban on travelers from seven other countries, reviving a divisive measure from President Donald Trump’s first term.

But expanding the travel ban to three dozen more nations, including US partners like Egypt along with other countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific, appears to escalate the president’s crackdown on immigration.

The Washington Post said it reviewed the internal memo and reported it was signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and sent to diplomats who work with the countries.

A person who has seen the document confirmed its accuracy to AFP.

It reportedly gives the governments of the listed nations 60 days to meet new requirements established by the State Department.

The countries include the most populous in Africa -- Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania -- as well as Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Saint Lucia, South Sudan, Syria and Vanuatu.

Should the ban expand to include all countries cited in the memo, nearly one in five people worldwide would live in a country targeted by US travel restrictions.

The 19 countries facing full or partial entry bans to the United States, combined with the 36 cited in the latest memo, account for 1.47 billion people, or roughly 18 percent of the global population.

The State Department declined to confirm the memo, saying it does not comment on internal deliberations.



When the initial ban was announced this month, Trump warned it could be expanded to other countries “as threats emerge around the world.” The ban at first did not include Egypt, although the proposed follow-up list does.

Wants ‘Real end’

Iran and Israel traded fire for the fifth day

● Explosions were heard over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

● Israeli military said it killed senior Iranian commander Ali Shadmani

● China accused Trump of “pouring oil” on the conflict

● Israeli attacks have killed at least 224 people and wounded more than 1,200 in Iran

● Jordan’s King Abdullah II warned that Israel’s widening of its Middle East offensive to include Iran posed a “threat to people everywhere”

● Chinese President Xi Jinping said he was “deeply worried” by Israel’s military action against Iran, as Beijing accused Trump of “pouring oil” on the intensifying conflict

● Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei he risked “a fate similar to Saddam Hussein”, the Iraqi president who was toppled and later executed

● G7 leaders, including Trump, had issued a call on Monday for “de-escalation” of the conflict

● Trump again warned Iran against targeting US troops and assets in the Middle East, saying “we’ll come down so hard, it’d be gloves off”

● Czech, Slovak planes evacuate 139 people from Israel

● Trump convenes National Security Council on Iran Tuesday: White House

AFP | Tehran, Iran

US President Donald Trump said he wants a “real end” to the conflict between Israel and Iran, not just a ceasefire, as the arch foes traded fire for a fifth day yesterday.



A woman checks the destruction in the northern Arab-Israeli city of Tamra

The escalating clashes saw Israeli warplanes target military sites in Iran, killing a senior commander and drawing retaliatory missile fire from Iran.

Explosions were heard over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem shortly after air raid sirens sounded in many parts of Israel following missile launches from Iran, the Israeli military said.

The air force was “operating to intercept and strike where necessary to eliminate the threat”, the military said.

About 20 minutes later, it said people could leave shelters as police reported debris fell in the Tel Aviv area and the fire brigade said it was tackling a blaze in the surrounding area.

The Israeli military said it killed senior Iranian commander Ali Shadmani in an overnight strike on a “command centre in the heart of Tehran”, just four days after his predecessor, Golam Ali Rashid, was killed in a similar Israeli attack.

It also said it targeted multiple missile and drone sites in west Iran, including infrastructure, launchers and storage facilities, with black-and-white footage showing some of them exploding.

Despite mounting calls to de-escalate, neither side has backed off from the missile blitz that began Friday, when Israel launched an unprecedented aerial campaign targeting Iranian nuclear and military facilities.

A new wave of Israeli strikes on Tehran -- including a dramatic hit on state television headquarters that the broadcaster said killed three people -- prompted both sides to activate missile defence systems overnight.

A cyberattack on Tuesday crippled Sepah Bank, one of Iran’s main state-owned banks, the Fars news agency reported.

‘Complete give-up’

Trump said yesterday that he wanted a “complete give-up” by Iran in return for peace.

“I’m not looking for a ceasefire, we’re looking at better than a ceasefire,” he told reporters on the plane home after cutting short his attendance at a Group of Seven summit in Canada.

Trump again warned Iran against targeting US troops and assets in the Middle East, saying “we’ll come down so hard, it’d be gloves off”.

Trump had earlier is-

sued an extraordinary warning on his Truth Social platform, saying: “Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran!”

Trump has repeatedly declined to say if the United States would participate in Israeli military action, although he has said Washington was not involved in initial strikes.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said the United States was deploying “additional capabilities” to the Middle East.

The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz left Southeast Asia Monday, scrapping a planned Vietnam port call, amid reports it was heading to the region.

China accused Trump of “pouring oil” on the conflict.

“Making threats and mounting pressure will not help to promote the de-escalation of the situation, but will only intensify and widen the conflict,” said foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun.

Trump says won’t kill Iran supreme leader ‘for now’

Washington, United States

President Donald Trump said yesterday that the United States would not kill Iran’s supreme leader “for now” but warned Ayatollah Ali Khamenei against further attacks, as he appeared to demand Tehran’s unconditional surrender.

“We know exactly where the so-called ‘Supreme Leader’ is hiding. He is an easy target, but is safe there -- We are not going to take him out (kill!), at least not for now,” Trump said on

Truth Social.

“But we don’t want missiles shot at civilians, or American soldiers. Our patience is wearing thin. Thank you for your attention to this matter!” said Trump, later posting a message saying: “UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!”



Coronation of the Chinese governor Li Yuan as Emperor Gaozu of Tang, the new Emperor of China, initiating three centuries of Tang Dynasty rule over China

War of 1812 begins as the US declares war against Britain



Battle of Waterloo; Napoleon Bonaparte and France defeated by British forces under Duke of Wellington and Prussian troops under Field Marshall von Blücher

American aviator Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean (as a passenger), landing at Burry Port, Wales

‘Not ceasefire’

Israeli warplanes target military sites in Iran



An Israeli firefighter douses a bus carcass at the impact site of an Iranian missile at a bus depot in Herzliya near Tel Aviv



People arrive with their luggage before the departure of buses slated to evacuate foreign passport holders, mainly European and Polish, out of Israel, at a meeting point in Tel Aviv

Israel lays out objectives



People visit the site of an Iranian missile attack in central Tel Aviv which left several destroyed buildings

Netanyahu said Israel was “changing the face of the Middle East” with its military campaign, which could lead to “radical changes” in Iran.

Israel was “pursuing three main objectives: the elimination of the nuclear programme, the elimination of ballistic missile production capability, and the elimination of the axis of terrorism”, he said, referring to Iranian-backed militant groups

in the Middle East.

“We will do what is necessary to achieve these goals, and we are well coordinated with the United States,” he said.

He has also not ruled out killing the supreme leader.

Iran has said its targets in Israel included “sensitive and important” security sites as well as “the residences of military commanders and scientists”.

Evacuations

China called on its citizens to leave Israel “as soon as possible”, while India urged its citizens to leave the Iranian capital.

Israel earlier issued an evacuation order for Tehran’s northern District 3, home to state broadcaster IRIB -- which was later hit in an Israeli strike.

The broadcaster said on Tuesday that three people were killed in the attack.

Residential areas in both countries have suffered deadly strikes.

Israel has carried out repeated strikes on Iran’s key nuclear sites, despite warnings from the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, that such military action is in breach of international law.

The IAEA said Tuesday that it had detected the first signs of “direct impacts” to the larger, underground part of Iran’s uranium enrichment facility at Natanz.

“Based on continued analysis of high resolution satellite imagery collected after Friday’s attacks, the IAEA has identified additional elements that indicate direct impacts on the underground enrichment halls at Natanz,” it said.

Qatar says monitoring radiation

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Qatar has been monitoring radiation levels in the Gulf as Israeli air strikes pound Iranian nuclear facilities, a foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday.

“We are monitoring this on a daily basis,” foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari told a news conference. “We have nothing to be concerned about right now, but obviously prolonged escalation will have unpredictable consequences.”



A Palestinian man carries a wounded child in Al-Bureij camp in the central Gaza Strip after the area was targeted by an Israeli strike

Gaza rescuers say Israel army kills more than 50 people near aid site

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Gaza’s civil defence agency said Israeli forces yesterday killed more than 50 Palestinians near an aid centre in the territory’s south, the latest such incident amid severe shortages after more than 20 months of war.

The war since October 2023 between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas has ravaged the Gaza Strip, with shortages of food, fuel and clean water.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that at least 53 people were killed and some 200 wounded as thousands of Palestinians gathered to receive flour at a World Central Kitchen (WCK)

centre in the southern city of Khan Yunis.

“Israeli drones fired at the citizens. Some minutes later, Israeli tanks fired several shells at the citizens, which led to a large number of martyrs and wounded,” he said.

Mohammad Abu Amer, who was present at the scene, told AFP that “ordinary, unarmed people” were targeted.

“They went to buy bread and flour for their children, and (Israeli forces) killed them in cold blood”, he said from Nasser Hospital in the city where the dead and wounded were taken.

The Israeli army said it looking into “reports regarding a number of injured individuals” from its fire.

Iran Guards say targeted Israeli air bases in fresh attack

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said they launched on Tuesday an attack targeting Israeli air bases from which they claim fighter jets have taken off to strike the Islamic republic. “In the new wave of attacks, a large-scale missile operation was carried out against the air bases of the Zionist regime’s army, which are the bases from which the regime’s fighter jets take off towards our beloved country,” the Guards said in a statement carried by state TV.



A woman carries a baby next to a girl in front of a building hit during an Iranian missile strike in Haifa



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Thank you Cyprus! This visit will always be remembered for the positive outcomes for India-Cyprus friendship. [@narendramodi](#)

02



Triggered by unrelenting conflicts, economic & climate shocks, acute food insecurity is projected to worsen this year. As hunger intensifies across 13 hotspots, we need global support to keep saving lives. [@antonioгутеррес](#)

03



War is not the answer; it breeds destruction and despair. We must seek political solutions and engage in dialogue to foster peace and understanding. #Peace-First

[@DrTedros](#)

04



REPORTER: “What are you looking for here?” [@POTUS](#)

• “An end. A real end. Not a ceasefire — an end.”

[@VP](#)

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

Israel 'doing dirty work for all of us' in Iran: German Chancellor

AFP | Kananaskis, Canada

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday expressed strong support for Israel in its military campaign against Iran as he spoke with German media on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Canada.

"This is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us," Merz said in an interview with the ZDF broadcaster.

"We are also victims of this regime. This mullah regime has brought death and destruction to the world," he said.

In a separate interview with Welt TV, Merz also suggested Israel's attacks on Iran could lead to the demise of the Islamic republic's leadership.

"I assume that the attacks of



Mourners react during the funeral of victims of an Iranian missile attack which destroyed a three-storey building in the northern Arab-Israeli city of Tamra on the weekend killing four women, during a funeral in Tamra

the last few days have already weakened the mullah regime considerably and that it is unlikely to return to its former strength, making the future of the country uncertain," Merz

said.

"To be honest, I can hardly imagine the mullah regime returning to its old functions," he added.

"Large parts of the military leadership and the so-called Revolutionary Guards are no longer alive, so things will not be the same as they were."

Asked whether he thought the United States might get involved in the military campaign against Iran, Merz said he believed there was "no decision yet from the American government".

"It now depends very much on how far the mullah regime is prepared to return to the negotiating table," he said. "If not, there could be further developments of this kind."

Israel on Friday launched a surprise aerial campaign targeting sites across Iran, saying the attacks aimed to prevent its enemy from acquiring atomic weapons.

But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also suggested the campaign could have wider aims.

Netanyahu on Monday said Israel was "changing the face of the Middle East" with its campaign, which could lead to "radical changes" in the country.

Iran has been ruled by clerical leaders since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and has long been accused by Western countries of human rights abuses and brutally repressing dissent.

The leaders of the G7 industrial democracies on Monday called for "de-escalation" in the Middle East starting with the Israel-Iran conflict, stressing that Israel "has a right to defend itself" and that civilians needed to be protected on both sides.



How much damage has Israel inflicted on Iran's nuclear programme?



AFP | Vienna, Austria

Israel's strikes on Iran have targeted several of its nuclear facilities as it claims the country is seeking to develop nuclear weapons -- an accusation Tehran denies.

Experts told AFP that while the attacks had caused some damage to Iran's nuclear programme, they are unlikely to have delivered a fatal blow.

Here is an update on Iran's nuclear sites as of Tuesday.

What is the extent of the damage?

Israel's operation included strikes on Iran's underground uranium enrichment sites at Natanz and Fordow, and on its Isfahan nuclear site, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said, citing Iranian officials.

A key, above-ground component of Iran's Natanz nuclear

site has been destroyed, including its power infrastructure, the IAEA reported Monday.

The UN watchdog added Tuesday that satellite images indicated possible "direct impacts" on the underground section of the plant, where thousands of centrifuges are operating to enrich uranium.

At the underground Fordow enrichment plant, Iran's second uranium enrichment facility, the IAEA said it observed "no damage" following the attacks.

At the Isfahan nuclear site, however, "four buildings were damaged" -- the central chemical laboratory, a uranium conversion plant, the Tehran reactor fuel manufacturing plant, and a metal processing facility under construction, the IAEA said.

Significant uranium stockpiles are believed to be stored around the Isfahan site.

Ali Vaez, the International Crisis Group's Iran project

director, told AFP that if Iran managed to transfer significant quantities to "secret facilities," then "the game is lost for Israel".

Iran's only nuclear power plant, the Bushehr plant, was not targeted, nor was the Tehran research reactor.

Can the programme be destroyed?

While "Israel can damage Iran's nuclear programme... it is unlikely to be able to destroy it," Vaez said, saying that Israel did not have the massively powerful bombs needed "to destroy the fortified, bunkered facilities in Natanz and Fordow".

Destroying those would require US military assistance, added Kelsey Davenport, an expert with the Arms Control Association.

She also noted that Israel's unprecedented attack would not erase the expertise Iran had built up on nuclear weapons, de-

spite killing nine Iranian nuclear scientists.

What are the risks to the Iranian population?

The IAEA has not detected any increase in radiation levels at the affected sites.

"There is very little risk that attacks on Iran's uranium enrichment facilities would result in a harmful radiation release," Davenport said.

But an attack on the Bushehr plant could "have a serious impact on health and the environment", she said.

After Israel launched its strikes, IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said that nuclear facilities "must never be attacked" and that targeting Iranian sites could have "grave consequences for the people of Iran, the region, and beyond".

Is Iran close to developing a nuclear bomb?

After the United States under President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from a landmark deal that sought to curb Tehran's nuclear activities, Iran has gradually retreated from some of its obligations, particularly on uranium enrichment.

As of mid-May, the country had an estimated 408.6 kilograms (900 pounds) enriched to up to 60 percent -- just a short step from the 90 percent needed for a nuclear warhead.

Iran theoretically has enough near-weapons-grade material, if further refined, for about 10 nuclear bombs, according to the definition by the Vienna-based IAEA.

Iran is the only non-nuclear-armed state producing uranium to this level of enrichment, according to the UN nuclear watchdog.

How much damage has Israel inflicted on Iran's nuclear programme?

While the IAEA has been critical of Iran's lack of cooperation with the UN body, it says there are "no credible indications of an ongoing, undeclared structured nuclear programme".

Tehran has consistently denied ambitions to develop nuclear warheads.

But Davenport warned that the strikes could strengthen factions in Iran advocating for an atomic arsenal.

"Israel's strikes set Iran back technically, but politically the strikes are pushing Iran closer to nuclear weapons," she said.

Classifieds



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Ex-Argentina midfielder Almeyda named Sevilla coach



Matias Almeyda

AFP | Madrid

Sevilla announced the appointment of former Argentina international Matias Almeyda as the Spanish club's new coach on a three-year deal.

The 51-year-old Almeyda joins Sevilla after three seasons with Greek side AEK Athens, where he won a league and cup double in 2022-23.

He also had a spell in Major League Soccer with the San Jose Earthquakes after coaching River Plate and Banfield in his homeland, as well as Mexican club Guadalajara.

Almeyda returns to the club he represented as a player almost three decades ago. He played for Sevilla in 1996-97 before stints with Lazio, Parma, Inter Milan and Brescia in Italy.

The former midfielder made 40 appearances for Argentina.

Almeyda takes over from Joaquin Caparros, who was brought in for a brief fourth spell at Sevilla in April after the dismissal of Francisco Garcia Pimenta.

Sevilla finished 17th in LaLiga and just one point above the relegation zone.

Ligue 1 club Nantes name Portugal's Castro as boss



Luis Castro

AFP | Nantes

Nantes have appointed Portuguese boss Luis Castro as their head coach for next season, the Ligue 1 club announced.

The 45-year-old has signed a two-year deal and leaves Dunkerque after taking the club to the second-tier play-offs and the French Cup semifinals last season.

Castro's Dunkerque led Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 in the Cup last-four clash before losing 4-2.

He had been linked with a possible move to Brazilian giants Botafogo, currently playing in the Club World Cup, earlier this year.

Nantes avoided relegation from the French top flight on the final day of last season with a victory over Montpellier.

Previous coach Antoine Kombouare was sacked after that match, ending his second spell in charge.

Boca denied by late Benfica fightback

Argentine internationals Di Maria and Otamendi deny Boca victory in Miami

● Boca led 2-0 with first-half goals

● Di Maria penalty halved deficit before halftime

● Otamendi equalizes with late header

AFP | Miami

Goals from two Argentine internationals denied Boca Juniors victory over Benfica on Monday, as the Buenos Aires side were forced to settle for a 2-2 draw in a stormy Club World Cup Group C clash.

An Angel Di Maria penalty on the stroke of half-time and an 86th-minute header from Nicolas Otamendi earned the 10-man Lisbon side a point from a fiercely contested encounter in what was a de facto home game for Boca.

The Argentine club had led 2-0 thanks to goals from Miguel Merentiel and Rodrigo Battaglia and looked set for a night of celebration after Benfica went down to 10 men in the 72nd minute.

Boca fans had taken over Miami Beach over the weekend, thousands of them gathering on the seafloor for a traditional 'banderazo', singing, drinking and waving flags for hours in the searing heat.

A video of Boca fans jumping and chanting in a local Walmart supermarket, to the bemusement of regular shoppers, had captured the mood but it was nothing compared to the atmosphere at Hard Rock Stadium.

The home of the Miami Dolphins was turned into a Bombonera by the beach, with 90% of the 55,574 crowd decked out in blue and yellow and bringing a level of constant noise rarely, if ever, heard for NFL games here.

When the action got underway it was clear that the en-



Benfica's Argentine midfielder #11 Angel Di Maria shoots a penalty kick and scores his team's first goal

thusiasm from the stands was going to be matched on the field with Boca confirming the feeling that South American clubs in this tournament are out to prove a point against European opponents.

Boca's midfield buzzed around, they attacked at pace and tackled with aggression and the first huge roar came when Benfica's Argentine World Cup winner Di Maria received a rough challenge from behind.

Equaliser drama

But the physicality was laced with skill too and clever work from Lautaro Blanco down the left created the opening goal in the 21st minute.

Blanco cut in from the left flank, nutmegging Benfica defender Florentino and zipping a low ball in which was expertly flicked home by Merentiel.

The goal lifted the volume even higher and Benfica were struggling to cope -- six minutes later they fell 2-0 behind when from a deep Kevin Zenon corner, Ayrton Costa headed towards the back post were the

YOU KNOW WHAT

More than 90% of the 55,574 fans in Miami's Hard Rock Stadium supported Boca Juniors, transforming an NFL arena into a deafening, blue-and-yellow fortress in a match that felt like Buenos Aires by the beach

alert Battaglia nodded home from close range.

Two-time European champions Benfica desperately needed to get a foothold in the game and they were gifted one when Boca's Carlos Palacios mistimed a challenge on Otamendi and after a VAR review - which included a red card for protesting

from the already substituted Boca midfielder Ander Herrera - a penalty was awarded.

The 37-year-old Di Maria showed all his experience to send Agustín Marchesín the wrong way as he gently slotted home to reduce the deficit.

The tempo slowed after the break but Boca had a chance to restore their two-goal lead in the 69th but Battaglia headed wide from a promising position.

Benfica found themselves further in trouble when Andrea Belotti, a half-time sub, was sent off in the 71st minute after a wild, high-footed kick into the head of Ayrton Costa.

But then with six minutes remaining Boca's defence failed to pick up Otamendi at a corner kick and the Argentine veteran met Orkun Kokcu's cross with a thundering header to level the game.

A disappointing result for Boca was compounded by a late red card for Nicolas Figal, who was dismissed for an ugly challenge on Florentino.

Group C also features Bayern Munich and Auckland FC.

Thunder hold off Pacers to take 3-2 NBA Finals lead

AFP | Los Angeles

Jalen Williams erupted for 40 points as the Oklahoma City Thunder held off the Indiana Pacers to score a 120-109 victory and move to within one win of clinching the NBA Finals on Monday.

An enthralling game-five battle in Oklahoma saw the Pacers climb out of an 18-point first-half hole to get within two points of the Thunder in the fourth quarter.

But just as Indiana threatened the latest in a series of trademark comebacks, the Thunder found an extra gear with Williams and NBA Most Valuable Player Shai Gilgeous-Alexander steering the team to a pivotal victory.

The win leaves the Thunder 3-2 up in the best-of-seven se-



Jalen Williams celebrates a three-pointer

ries, meaning they can seal the NBA crown with victory in game six in Indianapolis on Thursday.

Williams finished with 40 points, six rebounds and four

assists while Gilgeous-Alexander co-starred with 31 points and 10 assists, four blocks and two steals.

"My team-mates instill a lot

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My team-mates instill a lot of confidence in me to go out and be me. And (coach) Mark (Daigneault) has done a good job of telling me to just be myself. I don't got to be anything more and that's given me a lot of confidence

JALEN WILLIAMS

of confidence in me to go out and be me," Williams said. "And (coach) Mark (Daigneault) has done a good job of telling me to just be myself.

"I don't got to be anything more and that's given me a lot of confidence."

Chelsea cruise past LAFC

Chelsea secures 2-0 victory over LAFC in Club World Cup opener despite sparse attendance

● **Pedro Neto, Enzo Fernandez score for Chelsea**

● **Nearly 50,000 seats remain empty**

AFP | London

Chelsea kicked off their Club World Cup campaign with a solid 2-0 victory over Los Angeles FC on Monday in Group D, although there were nearly 50,000 empty seats in the stadium in Atlanta.

Pedro Neto and Enzo Fernandez's goals got the Blues off to a good start in a competitive clash against one of the three qualified MLS teams.

New signing Liam Delap made his debut as a substitute and helped set up Fernandez's strike, with Chelsea hoping to reestablish themselves among the elite after their UEFA Conference League triumph and Champions League qualification.

Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca said it was a "very good result" and was happy with Delap's display.

"The good thing about Liam is he knows the way we want to play, so the process is quite quick," said the Italian.

After a solid start to the tournament regarding attendance numbers over the opening weekend, a sparse crowd of just over 22,000 settled in at the stylish 71,000 capacity Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Behind former Tottenham Hotspur stopper Hugo Lloris' goal in the first half, a couple of hundred LAFC 'ultras' helped provide an atmosphere with a drum beat and constant song.

The closed stadium roof offered refuge from the Georgia humidity and mid-afternoon summer sun which Paris Saint-Germain and Atletico Madrid stars roasted under on Sunday at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

However, the attendance suffered badly because of the 3:00 pm local time kick-off.

Despite regular strong crowds



Chelsea's Portuguese midfielder #07 Pedro Neto (L) fights for the ball with LAFC's French forward #99 Denis Bouanga

for MLS side Atlanta United, the best supported US team, few locals decided to take a Monday off work for the tournament's first weekday afternoon game, seemingly chosen to suit a British television audience.

After beating Club America in a play-off to qualify for the competition as late as May, LAFC took the place of the banned Mexican side Club Leon, and play none of their three group games at home in California.

The top ring of the stadium was entirely shut and other levels were only partly filled, despite ticket prices dropping in the days ahead of the game.

It was the first real blow for organisers FIFA's expanded competition, which is also being viewed as a trial run ahead of the 2026 World Cup, hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico.

Chelsea took control from the start, with Lloris saving from

The good thing about Liam is he knows the way we want to play, so the process is quite quick

CHELSEA COACH ENZO MARESCA

Nicolas Jackson and Noni Madueke, while Cole Palmer whistled a strike narrowly over.

With new signing Delap looking on from the bench, Jackson played like a man determined to keep his starting spot.

The striker was instrumental in Neto's opener, releasing the Portuguese winger with an excellent through ball.

Neto chopped in the box to leave LA defender Ryan Hollingshead stumbling helplessly out of sight and then buried a powerful strike past Lloris low at the near post.

Delap debut

Former Chelsea striker Oliver Giroud came on at half-time for the Americans and Steve Cherundolo's team improved in

the second half.

Jackson came close with a header and LA almost levelled but Sanchez made a fine save with his outstretched leg to thwart 2023 MLS golden boot

'Strange' to play in front of 50,000 empty seats: Chelsea's Maresca

Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca labelled the atmosphere in his team's opening Club World Cup game on Monday "strange" after the Blues triumphed in front of nearly 50,000 empty seats.

Only 22,000 fans present at the 71,000-capacity Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

"The environment was a bit strange, the stadium was almost empty, not full," Maresca told reporters.

"We are professional, we have to adapt to the situation, to the environment..."

"It's important the behaviour of the players, the attitude, and once again they showed how professional they are."

The Chelsea coach said his team had expected a larger crowd, but were hopeful they would get that in their second game against Flamengo of Brazil in Philadelphia.

"We prepared this game also thinking that the environment was a bit different, but no doubt that the next one will be a nice one, because we know that the Brazilian teams, they always bring many, many fans," he added.

Over 60,000 spectators attended the opening match between Lionel Messi's Inter Miami and Al Ahly on Saturday, while 80,000 were present at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Sunday for the clash between

UEFA Champions League winners Paris-Saint Germain and



General view inside the stadium with empty seats in the stands

The environment was a bit strange, the stadium was almost empty, not full

ENZO MARESCA

Atletico Madrid.

Plenty of Boca Juniors fans created a raucous atmosphere later on Monday for their match against Benfica at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami.

With Chelsea playing at 3:00 pm local time on a working Monday, the Mercedes-Benz Stadium was under a third full.

MLS side Atlanta United average nearly 45,000 fans at their matches and are the best sup-

ported US team.

"PSG against Atletico, in front of a big crowd at the Rose Bowl...so I don't know if there's just more fans in Los Angeles who are into this tournament than here, or if it's the pairing tonight," said LA coach Steve Cherundolo.

However the American said it was too early to judge FIFA's new expanded competition on the basis of just one match.

"Regarding crowds I think it's kind of different each game you look at, so I don't think we should be talking about this right now," he added.

"I think we should wait until the end of the tournament... (to make) an opinion about it as a whole, as opposed to one game."



LAFC's US forward #27 Nathan Ordaz (L) fights for the ball with Chelsea's English defender #24 Reece James



Despite the stadium's 71,000 capacity, only 22,000 fans attended—leaving the top ring closed and large sections empty, a stark contrast to Atlanta United's usual packed MLS games

winner Denis Bouanga after he shook off Neto.

Maresca brought on 22-year-old striker Delap for his Chelsea debut after the hour mark, having begun the game with all of the club's new faces on the bench.

The forward drove into space and tried to tee up Fernandez with a promising first move in a Chelsea shirt since his arrival from relegated Ipswich Town.

Chelsea star Palmer, who had shown occasional flashes of brilliance, hammered over before Fernandez grabbed Chelsea's second.

Running into the six-yard box, the Argentine midfielder controlled Delap's cross from the right and beat Lloris to put the game to bed.

Ramos backs Madrid for Club glory

Sergio Ramos declares former club Real Madrid favourites for the Club World Cup

● **Ramos praises Alonso's appointment**

● **Backs Mbappé for future Ballons d'Or**

● **Prefers avoiding Madrid matchup**

AFP | Pasadena

Veteran Monterrey defender Sergio Ramos said Monday his former team Real Madrid must be considered favourites to win the Club World Cup. Paris Saint-Germain recently won the UEFA Champions League by thrashing Inter Milan in the

final, with Liga MX side Monterrey set to face the Italians in their opener yesterday at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. However Ramos, now 39, believes his former club, Spanish giants Madrid, are the real team to beat. "Real Madrid are always favourites in the big competitions," Ramos told reporters ahead of the Group E clash against Inter. "Real Madrid are the best in the world, for the level the club and players have, for the mentality that's been sewn in there for so many years." Madrid have a new coach in Xabi Alonso as well as recent arrivals Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dean Huijsen. "Xabi's arrival will be interesting,

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Despite playing for Monterrey, Sergio Ramos openly tipped his former club Real Madrid to dominate the Club World Cup—and predicted Kylian Mbappe will win "four or five" Ballon d'Ors soon

“Real Madrid are the best in the world, for the level the club and players have, for the mentality that’s been sewn in there for so many years. Xabi’s arrival will be interesting, he won it all as a player and he knows how the club works That could help him a lot in this new era

SERGIO RAMOS

Ramos. "That could help him a lot in this new era."

Ramos said Madrid's failure to win a major trophy this season was not down to last summer's marquee signing Kylian Mbappe, whom he played with at PSG. "In the next five or 10 years, I'd wager that Kylian will take four or five Ballon d'Or awards home," said Ramos. The former Real Madrid captain departed in 2021 and said he would prefer not to face his former side in the United States. "Facing off against your old team-mates is always nice but if we won't meet that would be a lot better -- and both them and us can avoid that discomfort," he added. Madrid open their campaign in Miami today against Saudi Arabian side Al Hilal.

Sergio Ramos



Dominant Flamengo open with victory at Club World Cup

● **Flamengo beat Esperance 2-0**

● **Set for Chelsea showdown**

AFP | Philadelphia

Brazilian giants Flamengo set themselves up for a Club World Cup showdown with Chelsea by easing to a 2-0 win against Esperance of Tunisia in their opening game at the tournament on Monday. Goals either side of half time from Uruguayan international Giorgian de Arrascaeta and Luiz Araujo gave a dominant Flamen-



Flamengo's Italian midfielder #21 Jorginho controls the ball

go -- coached by former Chelsea player Filipe Luis -- a deserved victory in the Group D clash in Philadelphia. Flamengo, who qualified for the tournament as a recent winner of the Copa Libertadores, fielded a strong side featuring several Brazil internationals and gave a debut to Italy midfielder Jorginho following his recent arrival from Arsenal. Jorginho will come up against former club Chelsea when the

teams meet in their second match on Friday, with the Premier League club fresh from beating Los Angeles FC 2-0 earlier Monday. De Arrascaeta opened the scoring for the Rio de Janeiro outfit in the 17th minute at Lincoln Financial Field when he finished first time from a Luiz Araujo assist. That set off wild celebrations among the Flamengo fans, who made up the majority of the 25,797 crowd in a stadium which

can hold close to 70,000. Flamengo had chances to increase their lead while Tunisian champions Esperance created little of note before their Algerian winger Youcef Belaili almost equalised midway through the second half. Shortly after that Flamengo scored again, as Luiz Araujo found a pocket of space in the box in the 70th minute, turned and curled a low shot into the far corner to make it 2-0.

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Flamengo's victory marked Jorginho's debut for the club, setting up a reunion with former team Chelsea—where he won the Champions League—in just his second match for the Brazilian side

Sabalenka apologises to Gauff for ‘unprofessional’ French Open comments

AFP | Berlin

World number one Aryna Sabalenka apologised yesterday for statements she made after losing the French Open final to Coco Gauff earlier in June. Sabalenka lost to Gauff in three sets at Roland-Garros, with the American coming back from a set down to win her first French Open title. Speaking with reporters after the loss, the 27-year-old said the match was "the worst final I've ever played". "I don't think she won the match because she played incredibly well, but because I made all those mistakes." In an interview with Eurosport broadcast yesterday ahead



Winner US Coco Gauff (R) holds the trophy as she poses on the podium with Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka

Sabalenka's Euro-sport apology comes just days before she could face Gauff again in Berlin, setting up a high-stakes rematch with added emotional context

of this week's WTA tournament in Berlin, the Belarussian said the comments were "simply completely unprofessional of me." "I let my emotions guide me. I absolutely regret what I said back then," she added. Sabalenka is the number one seed in the German capital and could face second seed Gauff again in the final.

Ruba Al Omari wins bronze in Tunisia para-athletics



Ruba Al Omari and her team at the podium

● **Over 500 athletes compete in Tunisia**

● **Event boosts global experience and exposure**

TDT | Manama

Ruba Al Omari won a bronze medal in the F55 javelin competition at the Tunisia International Para Athletics Meeting, held from 16 to 18 June at the Rades Stadium. The F55 classification includes athletes with impairments affecting their lower limbs, competing in seated throwing events. The Tunisia International Para Athletics Meeting is one of the key events on the calendar for para-athletes worldwide. This year's edition saw over 500 athletes from 61 countries take part. For competitors like Al Omari, it's an opportunity to test themselves against the world's best, absorb valuable experience, and represent their nations. Bahrain's para-athletics programme continues to grow in both ambition and reach, with athletes like Al Omari at the forefront of that progress.

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The Tunisia International Para Athletics Meeting in Rades welcomed over 500 athletes from 61 nations, making it one of the largest para-athletics gatherings on the African continent this year

Filippo Inzaghi confirmed as Palermo coach after leaving promoted Pisa

AFP | London

Filippo Inzaghi was hired yesterday by Palermo after the former World Cup winner left Pisa following their historic promotion to Serie A. In a statement, Palermo said that Inzaghi had signed a "multi-year contract" starting

from next month. According to Italian media reports, Palermo paid Pisa nearly one million euros (\$1.1 million) to take Inzaghi as the Sicilians, owned by the City Football Group which also owns Manchester City, attempt their own return to Serie A.

Bahrain Beat Thailand to Launch Nations Cup Bid

Hosts make strong start with 3-1 win in Riffa opener, Indonesia Next

Bahrain's men's national volleyball team opened their 2025 AVC Men's Volleyball Nations Cup campaign with a comfortable 3-1 win over Thailand last night at Isa Bin Rashid Arena in Riffa. Backed by a vocal home crowd, the hosts now take early control of Group A.

Key Performers Step Up

Ali Ebrahim led the scoring for Bahrain with composed attacking displays and strong serves, while Anan and Mohammed Yaqoob added vital experience and consistency in key phases. Mahmood Alafyah and Ayman Harwana also made significant contributions, both in defence and transition, helping Bahrain regain momentum after drop-

Set scores:

25-21 Bahrain

21-25 Thailand

25-19 Bahrain

25-22 Bahrain



Bahraini players celebrating the win at full time

ping the second set. The result gives Bahrain a major boost heading into their next group fixture against Indonesia, who they face at 7pm tomorrow night.

Home Crowd Makes a Difference

With fans filling the stands and generating a lively atmosphere,

Bahrain's players fed off the energy throughout the match. The support mirrored scenes from last year's Arab Championship and proved crucial during tight moments, particularly in the fourth set.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the knockout rounds. Victory over

Thailand, a former Nations Cup champion, puts Bahrain in a strong position to qualify—especially with only Indonesia left to face in pool play. The eventual tournament winner will also earn a place in the 2026 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, the next step on the road to the 2028 Olympics.

Bahrain face Spaniards in Junior Handball World Championship opener

TDI | Manama

The 25th IHF Men's Junior World Championship begins today in Poland, and for Bahrain, the stakes couldn't be higher. Placed in Group H alongside tournament heavyweights Spain and Egypt, as well as Gulf rivals Saudi Arabia, the national U21 side are aiming to reach the main round of the tournament for the first time in their history. It's a tall order. Only the top two teams from each group will advance, and Bahrain's path starts with a daunting opener against Spain in Kielce, followed by Egypt on June 19 and Saudi Arabia on June 21. Every point matters, and there's little margin for error.

The Competition

Bahrain begin their campaign against one of the most consistent junior teams in handball. Spain are past champions (2017) and five-time silver medallists. The Spaniards hold a highly structured system with quick ball circulation, and they enter the group as clear favourites. For Bahrain, slowing the tempo and staying composed will be critical if they're to stay competitive. The second test vs Egypt on Thursday is also a tough task. The reigning African champions bring a direct, physical style of play that has caused problems for European sides in recent years. Winners in 1993 and



Bahrain's handball team making the final preparations in Poland ahead of today's opener

bronze medallists in 1999 and 2019, Egypt often overwhelms teams who fail to match their intensity. Their 13th continental title in 2022, showed they're still a force at junior level, and they'll be eyeing a top-two finish in the group just as much as Spain. If Bahrain are to break new ground, their final group game against Saudi Arabia may

well be the key. While not as decorated as their other opponents, Saudi Arabia qualified through the 2024 Asian Championship and have a long history of close matches with Bahrain. One such encounter came in the 2018 Asian Junior Championship, where Bahrain won 29-28. Another close match is expected in Kielce — and this



Team during a discussion

Bahrain's squad:

Elyas Mohamed (Al Ittihad)	Mahmood Jaleel
Ahmed Al Fardan	Sayed Hussain Fadhel (Barbar)
Ali Redha (Al Tadamun)	Sayed Mahmood Al-Falahi
Hussain Shouqi (Al Dair)	Sayed Mohammed Al-Falahi
Abdullah Sameer	Mohammed Shamlouh (Tubli)
Maitham Ahmed	Mohammed Maitham, Ali Al Madani (Al Ittifaq)
Mohammed Ayad	Abbas Hussain (Samahij)
Salman Al Shoyoukh	

time, a main round berth may hang in the balance.

Backing the Next Generation

Coach Ali Al Falahi has brought a focus on organisation and patience in attack, building a squad that doesn't shy away

from physical contests. Players like Ali Redha, Abbas Hussain and Mohammed Ayyad will be key in Group H. The federation, under president Ali Issa, has backed this development with visible support, including domestic train-

ing camps and more preparation leading into Poland. A Chance at History Realistically, Bahrain are underdogs in this group. Both Spain and Egypt have proven quality at this level, and Saudi Arabia's familiarity adds more pressure. But there is a belief that if they can remain composed and clinical, especially in the final third, this could be the year Bahrain makes it to the main round. No team can afford to slip up in Group H. For Bahrain, it's a chance to rewrite their place on the world stage, but it will take three disciplined performances to make that happen.