

TDT wishes

The Daily Tribune management and staff extend their best wishes and greetings to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the world on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr.



220 fils (includes VAT)



Gesture of compassion

HM King Hamad issues Royal Decree pardoning 300 inmates for Eid Al Fitr

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a Royal Decree granting a special pardon and release to 300 inmates for Eid Al Fitr.

The pardon includes individuals convicted in various cases who have served a portion of their sentences, as well as those subject to the alternative sentencing programme.

The royal pardon follows the established practice of HM the King on such occasions, providing those included with an opportunity to reintegrate into society and contribute to the Kingdom of Bahrain's comprehensive development under the leadership of His Majesty.



HM the King

Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh said the gesture shows HM King Hamad's humane approach and opens the door for those released to rejoin society and play their part in the Kingdom's progress under His Majesty's reign.

“The gesture shows HM King Hamad's humane approach and opens the door for those released to rejoin society and play their part in the Kingdom's progress.”

- ALI BIN SALEH AL SALEH, SHURA COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

Al Saleh said HM the King's practice of issuing pardons and ordering the release of inmates on different occasions shows paternal care and mercy.

He praised His Majesty's approach in strengthening tolerance, humane values and national unity, while pairing

resolve in defending Bahrain with mercy towards its people.

The lawmaker also praised the work of the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in carrying out HM the King's directions and expanding the use of alternative penalties and open prisons.

He said this has helped Bahrain uphold human rights and prepare convicted persons to return to society, share in the building of the country and take their place in its rise.

Al Saleh added that the Shura Council gives weight to laws linked to human rights, saying they show the high place Bahrain has reached in applying best practice to protect rights for all.

Royal greetings

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received a cable of congratulations from His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr.

HRH Prince Salman extended congratulations to HM the King, wishing further progress for the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people, and for the Arab and Islamic nations.

In response, His Majesty sent a cable to HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister on the occasion, wishing continued prosperity for the Kingdom of Bahrain and its people, and for the Arab and Islamic nations.

HM King Hamad and HRH Prince Salman also exchanged cables of good wishes with the leaders of the GCC, Arab, Islamic and friendly countries.



Our warmest Greetings and Congratulations to

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

The Crown Prince & Prime Minister

The Government and People of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr





Impact of Iranian attacks evaluated

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, remotely chaired the 522nd Government Executive Committee meeting. Plans implemented to address the impact of the hostile Iranian aggression towards the Kingdom of Bahrain were reviewed.

Digital ID option proposed

Bahrain Chamber board elections

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry is considering allowing voters to

use digital identification on mobile phones for the 31st Board of Directors elections, officials announced.

The move aims to prevent business owners from being turned away over forgotten or missing documents.

During a press briefing, Election Committee Chairman Abbas Abdulmohsen Radhi, along-

side members Ghassan Qassim Fakhr and Rashid Abdulrahman Ibrahim, confirmed that voters can also present a national ID card, passport, or driving licence, even if expired, as proof of identity.

Dr. Shaima Abdulla Juma, Director of Legal Affairs, provided details on the legal framework for the elections.

Eid shopping frenzy

Advance salaries draw families to stores ahead of last-minute festival preparations

Customer traffic across Kingdom

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

The early disbursement of salaries, directed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has led to increased activity across markets in Bahrain ahead of today's first day of Eid. With salaries credited in ad-

vance, shoppers moved to complete their purchases in the final days before the holiday.

Shopping centres and retail outlets yesterday reported a higher number of shoppers, particularly in the evening, as families carried out last-minute Eid preparations.

The rise in activity was observed across markets across the Kingdom as the festive period approached.

Outfits

Clothing and footwear stores saw some of the busiest scenes,



Families line up in long queues ahead of Eid holiday celebrations

particularly as families prepared Eid outfits for children.

Inside shops, mirrors were rarely empty, and racks were constantly browsed as shoppers searched for the perfect fit.

Nearby, sweet shops and chocolate counters drew steady attention, as households prepared to welcome guests with traditional treats.

Perfumes and gifts also found their place in shopping bags, as many took the opportunity to complete everything in one visit.

Beyond shopping, the experience carried a social rhythm of its own.

Restaurants and cafes were filled with families choosing to extend their evenings, blending errands with moments of togetherness.

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THE RITZ-CARLTON
BAHRAIN

UNESCO opens applications for King Hamad Prize

For use of ICT in education

Paris
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has announced the opening of applications for the UNESCO King

Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education for 2026.

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak Juma, Minister of Education, highlighted the importance of the international award, launched under the royal initiative of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.



He noted its global role in supporting innovative projects that use technology to enhance education and learning opportunities, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

H.E. Dr. Mubarak said that the 2026 edition carries the theme “Reimagining creativity and critical thinking using artificial intelligence”.

It aims to recognise outstanding projects submitted by individuals, institutions, and non-governmental organisations worldwide that have been implemented for at least one year and use modern technologies to develop and deliver educational services efficiently.

He added that UNESCO has set May 8, 2026, as the deadline

for nominations, which must be submitted through national commissions of UNESCO member states or non-governmental organisations in official partnership with UNESCO.

H.E. Dr. Mubarak noted that two winners will be selected based on the recommendations of an independent international jury.

Repair review

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Housing and Urban Planning Minister, Her Excellency Amna bint Ahmed Al Romaihi, yesterday conducted a field visit to Hidd Housing City to review ongoing repair works.

The visit was in line with the directive of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for the government to address damage to citizens’ homes following recent attacks.

During the visit, the minister assessed progress in restoring affected residential units and stressed the need to accelerate work in line with



H.E. Al Romaihi is briefed on the progress of house repair works

approved timelines, ensuring residents can return to their homes as soon as possible.

She highlighted the government’s commitment to safeguarding citizens and maintaining their stability under these exceptional circum-

stances.

Efforts

The minister stated that these efforts reflect the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of the

HRH Prince Salman to strengthen security and stability, safeguard national achievements, and maintain quality of life for citizens.

She emphasised the importance of intensifying efforts and maintaining coordination among relevant authorities to ensure the work is completed efficiently and in accordance with the highest engineering and technical standards.

H.E. Al Romaihi also visited the temporary alternative housing project in Salman City, where she reviewed the readiness of fully furnished apartments allocated to accommodate affected families until maintenance work on their homes in Hidd and Sitra is completed.

Public warned over fraudulent parcel messages

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications, through Bahrain Post, has warned residents about fraudulent messages impersonating the postal service, particularly on WhatsApp.

Officials said the messages are designed to mislead users into tracking parcels via untrusted links, with the intent of obtaining personal or financial information.

Residents are advised to ignore such messages, avoid interacting with suspicious links, and refrain from sharing private details.

The Ministry confirmed that official Bahrain Post communications are sent only from the number 39750162.

Messages from any other numbers should be considered unreliable.

The public is encouraged to report suspicious messages to help authorities monitor and address fraud cases.



Our warmest Greetings and Congratulations to
His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa
The Crown Prince & Prime Minister

the Royal family, Government and the people of
the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of

Eid al-Fitr



مستشفى الإرسالية الأمريكية
American Mission Hospital

Stronger together

Calm, unity and readiness guide Bahrain's approach in changing times

● Discipline and vigilance vital

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Captain Abdulla Al Mannai of the Ministry of Interior has affirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain continues to strengthen its security readiness amid regional tensions caused by sustained Iranian aggression.

He said the Kingdom is also reinforcing community cohesion, placing public awareness

and discipline at the core of its approach.

Speaking during the National Communication Centre's daily briefing, he highlighted the significance of Community Partnership and National Belonging Day as a reminder of the strong bond uniting society under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Al Mannai pointed to the address delivered by Interior Minister, His Excellency General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, noting that the Kingdom's stability, security and progress are rooted in wise leadership that has long prioritised



unity and shared responsibility.

Values

He said these values are reflected in the everyday cooperation between institutions and



"The citizens and residents must remain calm and act responsibly during emergencies."

- CAPTAIN ABDULLA AL MANNAI,
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

pillar, functioning as an advanced coordination hub that works around the clock to safeguard vital facilities and ensure the continuity of essential services.

This integrated system, he explained, enhances the country's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to any situation.

Emergencies

Al Mannai also called on citizens and residents to remain calm and act responsibly during emergencies, stressing the importance of staying clear of incident sites to allow emergency teams to perform their duties efficiently.

Punished for hiding drugs in seafood

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Two travellers who tried to bring drugs into Bahrain by hiding them inside dried fish and prawns in their luggage were each jailed for 15 years, fined BD10,000 and ordered to be deported after serving their sentences.

The High Criminal Court found the pair guilty of bringing in and possessing narcotic substances for sale in 2025 in cases not allowed by law.

The case began at Bahrain International Airport when a customs officer checking bags from a flight arriving from an Asian country grew suspicious of two suitcases linked to the man and woman.

After marking them for closer inspection, he sent both to the red channel once they had picked up their luggage.

Search

Before the search, each was asked on their own if they had anything to declare. Both said no.

The search then found drugs hidden inside six clear bags placed within dried fish and prawns in one suitcase.

Bahraini man jailed for using counterfeit money

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court sentenced a young Bahraini man to five years in prison for promoting and using counterfeit currency at a hotel and a

supermarket.

Employees at both locations noticed the fake bills and filed reports with the police, leading to the suspect's tracking and arrest.

During the last session, the defendant claimed he did not know the money was counterfeit

and said that another person gave him the bills to settle a debt.

The incident began when the suspect rented a hotel room, paid with a 20 Bahraini dinar bill, and received 10 dinars in change.

The receptionist became suspicious of the bills, informed

the hotel owner, and confirmed the currency was counterfeit, prompting a police report. Hours later, a supermarket employee filed a similar complaint after the suspect used another 20-dinar fake note to buy goods. Police set a trap, monitored his

movements, and arrested him.

In investigations, the suspect admitted that he obtained the counterfeit bills from another individual and used them to pay for hotel rooms and purchases, although authorities could not reach the other person involved.

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Eid is a reminder to be thankful, to share, and to keep learning

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CBSE Class X assessment scheme announced

● Parents await final scores

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

The Central Board of Secondary Education has released its Class X assessment scheme for Middle East students following exam cancellations across countries including Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

To ensure fairness for students at different stages, CBSE has introduced a grading framework based on the number of exams completed.

Students who appeared in all scheduled examinations will have their results declared based on their actual performance across all subjects.

Average

For those who completed four exams, results will be calculated based on the average of their best three performing subjects.

Students who completed three exams will have their results determined by the average of their best two subjects, while those who completed only two exams will have the average of both taken into account.

Additionally, students registered in 2025 or earlier who had registered for up to two subjects and still have pending examinations will be given an opportunity to appear in the second board examinations.



Sandesh Pavannur



Seena



CBSE has introduced a grading framework based on the number of exams completed to ensure fairness for students at different stages.

Reaction

The move has received mixed reactions from parents.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Sandesh Pavannur, parent of a class X CBSE student said, "We initially found it difficult to accept the cancellation of the class X board exams. How-

ever, students seem to be less affected as they had completed key subjects like English, Maths and Science, with only second language and social science cancelled.

"It may, however, impact those planning higher studies in India after Class XII."

Concern

Another parent Seena, expressed concern over how the assessment scheme may impact final percentages.

She said, "In my daughter's case, the remaining cancelled subjects, specifically language and social science are high-scoring subjects, while the ones she already attended, like Maths and Science, were on the tougher end. She was expecting to score around 90% as she believed the last two subjects would help balance her overall performance."

The board also stated that the assessment scheme for Class XII students will be announced separately once finalised.

Al Salam Bank offers up to half-price discount on Keeta Orders for cardholders

● Al Salam Bank clients can enjoy up to 50% discount on their orders through the Keeta app

Manama

Al Salam Bank announced the launch of a new exclusive offer in collaboration with Keeta, the international on-demand food delivery platform backed by global technology leader Meituan, in celebration of Eid Al-Fitr. The offer allows Al Salam Bank Credit and Prepaid cardholders to enjoy special discounts on their orders through the Keeta application.

According to the offer's terms and conditions, Al Salam Bank clients can enjoy up to 50% discount on their orders through the Keeta app when using the Bank's cards for payment through the app's payment gateway. The offer applies to orders starting from BHD 5, where clients will receive



Mr. Aiden Qiao, General Manager of Keeta Bahrain

a BHD 2.5 discount for orders between BHD 5 and BHD 9,999, while they will receive a BHD 5 discount for orders of BHD 10 and above. Each client can benefit from the offer twice during the campaign period starting from the first day of Eid and for five days, and the offer is limited to the first 4,000 orders only.

Commenting on the occasion,

Mr. Mohammed Buhijji, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Al Salam Bank, said: "At Al Salam Bank, we are keen to offer innovative and rewarding promotions that align with various occasions and provide our clients with added value in their everyday transactions. Our collaboration with Keeta comes as part of our ongoing efforts to expand partnerships



Mr. Mohammed Buhijji, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Al Salam Bank

that enhance the card payment experience. We are delighted to launch this special offer on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, allowing our clients to enjoy exclusive discounts when ordering their favorite meals through the Keeta app."

On his part, Mr. Aiden Qiao, General Manager of Keeta Bahrain, said: "At Keeta, we focus on delivering a simple, reliable, and

rewarding delivery experience for users every time they place an order. Through our collaboration with Al Salam Bank, we aim to provide greater value to users during the Eid season and enable them to benefit from special offers on their everyday orders, supported by a smooth and seamless digital experience."

This offer comes as part of Al

Salam Bank's ongoing efforts to introduce the latest promotions and benefits for its cardholders, while promoting the use of digital payment solutions in everyday transactions, in addition to supporting partnerships with digital platforms that provide innovative services meeting clients' needs and keeping pace with their modern lifestyles.

Celebrate Eid at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain

Manama

This Eid al-Fitr, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain invites guests to embrace the spirit of the season with moments of peace, togetherness, and heartfelt celebration. Set against a serene beachfront backdrop, the resort offers a collection of thoughtfully curated experiences designed for families and friends to reconnect and create lasting memories.

Guests can mark the occasion with Eid Cake Delights at The Ritz Gourmet Lounge, featuring a refined selection of festive creations, including Kunafa Cake and individual date cakes—perfect for sharing with loved ones or gifting during visits.

For a more vibrant celebration, Cantina Kahlo presents a lively Eid Fiesta Brunch, where bold Mexican flavors, refreshing beverages, and the vibrant setting come together in a warm



and festive atmosphere, ideal for gathering with family and friends.

Adding to the celebrations, Mother's Day, which falls within the Eid period, offers another meaningful occasion to honor loved ones. At La Gourmandise, guests can discover an elegant selection of whole cakes, crafted

to make the moment both simple and memorable.

Those seeking relaxation can visit to The Ritz-Carlton Spa, where a curated menu of treatments provides tranquility—perfect for unwinding and restoring balance during the holiday.

For an extended stay, the resort's private villas offer the ul-



imate Eid sanctuary. Featuring private pools, direct beach access, and expansive living spaces, each villa creates an atmosphere of exclusivity and comfort, allowing guests to celebrate at their own pace in complete privacy.

This Eid, The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain welcomes guests to slow

down, reconnect, and celebrate the joy of togetherness in an atmosphere of elegance, peace, and genuine hospitality.

For additional information about The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, please call the hotel directly at (+973) 1758 0000, or visit The Ritz-Carlton website at ritzcarlton.com/bahrain. Fol-



low the hotel on Facebook and Instagram @ritzcarltonbahrain and join the conversation using #RCMemories.

Iran: US intel chief sidesteps Trump 'imminent threat' claim

AFP | Washington, United States

The head of US intelligence declined again Thursday to endorse President Donald Trump's claim that Iran posed an "imminent" threat before the United States and Israel launched military strikes.

Testifying on the war in the Middle East before the House Intelligence Committee, Tulsi Gabbard doubled down on her claim from a day earlier that this determination is "the responsibility of the president" -- a position that had already drawn sharp pushback from Democrats.

As with her appearance before senators on Wednesday, the hearing underscored persistent questions on Capitol Hill over

the administration's justification for the war -- and the extent to which it aligns with the intelligence community's own conclusions. "If the president can determine (to) ignore what you're doing, why do you guys even have a job?" California Democrat Jimmy Gomez asked after Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe said Trump ultimately decides on the urgency of a threat.

The exchange capped a hearing dominated by efforts to pin down whether any intelligence supported Trump's justification for the conflict, now entering its third week.

"Not one of your agencies has produced a single report saying that Iran posed an imminent threat to the United States," Jim

Himes, the panel's top Democrat, told Gabbard.

Gabbard, who coordinates the global security information brought to Trump as his director of national intelligence, was previously an outspoken opponent of war with Iran as a Democratic congresswoman.

She sidestepped repeated questions from Democrats on her own view of the immediacy of the danger posed by Iran, allowing only that she had delivered the intelligence community's "objective analysis" to the president.

Iran's intentions

At other points, she appeared to signal increased uncertainty about the direction Iran's depleted leadership would take

following the war's opening strikes.

She said the country's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, had been "very severely" injured in an Israeli attack, adding that decision-making in Tehran was now less clear than it had been two months ago.

"That's an accurate assessment," she confirmed when asked if US officials were now less certain about Iran's intentions.

The hearing also highlighted tensions between Washington and Israel over the conduct of the war.

Gabbard acknowledged that the two allies have differing objectives, with Israel focused on dismantling Iran's leadership while the United States is

targeting its missile and naval capabilities.

Pressed on Israel's decision to strike Iranian energy infrastructure despite Trump urging restraint, she said: "I don't have an answer for that."

The testimony comes amid growing scrutiny of the intelligence underpinning the war, particularly after the resignation of Joe Kent, a senior counterterrorism official who argued in a letter to Trump that Iran did not pose an imminent threat.

Gabbard distanced herself from Kent's claims, saying only that "he said a lot of things in that letter" and emphasizing that the president makes decisions based on intelligence assessments provided to him.

Trump has repeatedly said he ordered the attack on Iran alongside Israel on February 28 because of an "imminent threat."



Trump previously said that a June 2025 US bombing raid on Iran had completely destroyed the country's nuclear sites, but since his latest war he has maintained that Tehran was nonetheless weeks away from a nuclear bomb and that he had to act.

Global food security, trade

The World Trade Organization warned that the war posed a dire threat to global food security and could weigh heavily on already slowing global trade. "Sustained increases in energy prices could increase risks for global trade, with potential spillovers for food security and cost pressures on consumers and businesses," WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said in a statement.

Hormuz 'safe passage'

Six Western allies -- Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands -- said in a joint statement they were ready "to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz".

US has no 'time frame' to end war

US Defense Secretary Peter Hegseth said the US "wouldn't want to set a definitive time frame" to end the war. "It will be at the president's choosing, ultimately, where we say, 'Hey, we've achieved what we need to.'"

'High time' to end war

UN chief Antonio Guterres called on all parties to end the war. "To the United States and to Israel: it's high time to end this war that is risking to get completely out of control," he told reporters at an EU summit in Brussels. "To Iran, stop attacking your neighbours. They were never parties to the conflict."

Qatar PM says gas hub attack 'clear proof' Iran not only targeting US interests

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Qatar's prime minister said on Thursday Iran's attack on the world's largest gas facility in Qatar was "clear proof" against Tehran's claims of having targeted only US interests in the Gulf.

There were "persistent Iranian claims that these attacks are against American interests... and this claim is rejected and cannot be accepted," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said.

"The clear proof of this is the attack that took place yesterday that targeted a natural gas facility in the State of Qatar," he added.



Israeli security personnel secure an area around a rocket partly buried in a field in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights bordering Lebanon.

US approves over \$16 bn in arms sales to Gulf states

Washington, United States

The United States yesterday announced the approval of \$16.46 billion in military sales to the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, two Gulf states that have been hit hard by fallout from the Iran war.

Netanyahu says Iran no longer able to enrich uranium, build ballistic missiles

Iran attacks energy facilities

Iran vowed to hit hard if its energy facilities were attacked again. "ZERO restraint if our infrastructures are struck again," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X.

Iran and US trade threats

Doha, Qatar

After Iran hit the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Qatar and threatened to destroy the region's energy infrastructure, Donald Trump warned of a furious US response if such attacks continued.

Trump, whose country started the war alongside Israel with their attack on Iran on February 28, said Washington did not know about the strike on South Pars.

Israeli media reports oil refinery in Haifa hit after Iran missiles launched

Jerusalem, Undefined

Israeli media reported that an oil refinery in the northern port city of Haifa was hit on Thursday, after the military warned of incoming missiles launched from Iran.

Israel's Kan 11 public

But he warned the United States would itself "blow up" the Iranian gas field if Tehran did not stop attacking Qatar.

broadcaster aired images on television showing a thick plume of dark smoke rising from the area of the refinery. In a post on X, Kan reported that there were no concerns that hazardous materials had leaked.

Iran's military responded yesterday with defiance, saying it had been a "major mistake" to hit South Pars, which supplies around 70 % of the country's domestic natural gas.

"If it is repeated, subsequent attacks against your energy infrastructure and that of your allies will not stop until their complete destruction," operational command Khatam Al-Anbiya said in a statement carried by Fars news agency.

Israel military says struck several Iranian naval ships in Caspian Sea

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The Israeli military said yesterday that its fighter jets had struck several Iranian naval vessels in the Caspian Sea the previous day, including vessels equipped with anti-submarine missiles.

The targets included ships

equipped with missile systems, support vessels and patrol craft, the military said, adding that a port command centre was also hit in the operation.

The targeted Iranian ships were also equipped with aerial surveillance systems and anti-submarine missiles, the military said.

"It is one of the most significant strikes conducted by the IDF since the start of Operation Roaring Lion," the military said in a statement.

"We have for the first time carried out strikes in northern Iran in the Caspian Sea," military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani

told journalists in a separate briefing.

"This is the first time we have done that in our history... We were able to target their naval shipyard where they can fix or build new ships," he said, adding that Israel had struck more than 200 targets across Iran over the past 36 hours.

Oil prices surge, stocks sink on energy shock fears

London, United Kingdom

Energy prices soared and stocks sank yesterday as Iran stepped up attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure, reigniting fears over global supplies and

Brent North Sea Crude:	▲ 3.1% at \$110.67 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▲ 1.8 % at \$97.17 per barrel

inflation as well as the likely damage to economic growth. International benchmark Brent crude rose more than

five percent to top \$115 per barrel and US contract WTI briefly topped \$100 as Tehran targeted regional installations in retal-

iation for an Israeli strike on South Pars field, which it shares with Qatar. European gas prices also soared by more than a third on fears of the impact on energy supplies before edging back down.



ATTACKS ON GAS INFRASTRUCTURE

Iran attacked Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG (liquefied natural gas) facility, in retaliation for an Israeli strike on its South Pars gas field on March 18



Map data: OSM, cloud-free composite of Copernicus Sentinel-2 imagery (Feb-Mar 2026), processed by AFP, GEBCO Source: Environmental Defense Fund

AFP

This war will have a much more lasting impact: **Macron**

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned yesterday the "reckless escalation".

He warned that if Middle Eastern energy "production capacities themselves are destroyed, this war will have a much more lasting impact".

He called for "direct talks between the Americans and Iranians on this matter".

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office also warned that "attacks on critical infrastructure risked pushing the region further into crisis", after talks with Macron and NATO chief Mark Rutte.

Direct threat to global energy security: UAE

Gulf nations had also warned of the fall-out from Israel's attack on Iran's South Pars gas field, which is part of the South Pars/North Dome megafield, the largest known gas reserve in the world that is shared with Qatar.

The United Arab Emirates said that targeting energy infrastructure poses a "direct threat to global energy security".

1602

United Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) is formed and granted a monopoly on all Dutch sea-borne trade with Asia

1800

Alessandro Volta reports his discovery of the electric battery in a letter to Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society of London



1815

Napoleon Bonaparte enters Paris after his escape from Elba and begins his 100-day rule

1854

Republican Party is formally organized in Ripon, Wisconsin



Filipinos fleeing the war in the Middle East disembark from a government chartered flight from Dubai at Villamor Air Base in Pasay, Metro Manila

Tanker hit off UAE near Hormuz Strait

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

A projectile hit a tanker off the coast of the east coast of the United Arab Emirates, causing a fire and leaving the captain missing, officials and maritime monitors said yesterday.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), a naval monitor, said it received a report at 2300 GMT on Wednesday that "a vessel has been hit by an unknown projectile which has resulted in a fire on board" off the UAE port of Khor Fakkan in the Gulf of Oman.

At a meeting of the International Maritime Organization in London later on Thursday, the delegate from Palau identified the vessel as a chemical tanker flagged to that country, the Parimal.

He said 15 crew members were rescued by a Cook Islands-flagged tanker. "However, the master is missing," he added.

Marine intelligence journal Lloyd's List said the Parimal was part of the "shadow fleet" of unregulated vessels under international sanctions.



TOP
2
TWEETS

01



I have two clear messages:

First, to the United States & Israel:

It's high time to end this war that is risking to get out of control, causing immense suffering on civilians, with dramatic effects on the global economy & potentially tragic consequences, especially for the least developed countries.

Second, my message to Iran:

Stop attacking your neighbors, they were never parties to the conflict.

The Security Council has condemned these attacks, has ordered them to stop, as it has order to open the Strait of Hormuz.

The prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz causes enormous pain for so many people around the world who have nothing to do with this conflict.

It's time for the force of the law to prevail over the law of the force.

It's time for diplomacy to prevail over war.

@antonioguterres

02



Conveyed advance Eid wishes to my brother, His Majesty King Abdullah II, the King of Jordan, over phone. We expressed concern at the evolving situation in West Asia and highlighted the need for dialogue and diplomacy for the early restoration of peace, security and stability in the region. Attacks on energy infrastructure in West Asia are condemnable and can lead to avoidable escalation. India and Jordan stand in support of unhindered transit of goods and energy. Deeply appreciated Jordan's efforts in facilitating the safe return of Indians stranded in the region.

@narendramodi

Trump says told Netanyahu not to attack Iran gas fields

Saudi warns military actions

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the Gulf states would accept... blackmail, and escalation will be met with escalation: Saudi foreign minister

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has not ruled out military action in response to repeated missile and drone attacks from Iran, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters following a meeting in Riyadh of foreign ministers from the region, Prince Faisal said that Iran "tries to pressure its neighbours" with attacks.

"The kingdom is not going to succumb to pressure, and on the contrary, this pressure will backfire... and certainly, as we have stated quite clearly, we have reserved the right to take military actions if deemed necessary," he said.

Saudi Arabia reported more Iranian attacks on Wednesday, as the foreign minister hosted his counterparts from about a dozen Arab and Islamic countries for talks on the fallout from the Middle East war.

Several strong blasts were heard in the Saudi capital on Wednesday, according to AFP journalists, while the defence ministry said it had intercepted ballistic missiles.

"The targeting of Riyadh while a number of diplomats are meeting... I think that's the clearest signal of how Iran feels about diplomacy," Prince Faisal said.

"It doesn't believe in talking to its neighbours." The Saudi foreign minister

condemned the repeated "targeting of civilian sites" across the Gulf, dismissing Iran's justification that it was targeting US interests in the region as "weak".

"Neither Saudi Arabia nor the Gulf states would accept... blackmail, and escalation will be met with escalation," he said.

A joint statement from the foreign ministers' meeting in Riyadh condemned "the deliberate use of ballistic mis-

siles and drones targeting residential areas and civilian infrastructure, including oil facilities, desalination plants, airports, residential facilities and diplomatic missions".

The ministers "affirmed that such attacks cannot be justified under any circumstances and reiterated the right of states to defend themselves", the statement added, calling on Iran to "immediately cease its attacks" and de-escalate tensions.

Casualty figures from across the region

The figures are based on numbers released by governments, militaries, health authorities and rescue organisations in the affected countries.

Iran

Iran's government has not released an updated overall casualty toll in recent days.

However, The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said on March 17 that at least 3,114 people had been killed, including 1,354 civilians -- among them at least 207 children -- as well as 1,138 military personnel and 622 people whose status had not been classified.

Israel

Israeli emergency services and authorities say Iranian missile fire has killed 14 people

since the start of the war, including 13 Israelis -- among them four minors -- and one Filipino caregiver.

Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency service, said around 250 people have been injured since Iran began firing missiles at the country in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes.

The Israeli military has separately announced the deaths of two personnel in combat in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon

Lebanon's health ministry said on March 18 that 968 people had been killed and 2,432 wounded since the start of the fighting, including 116 children, 77 women and 775 men.

The ministry said the toll also included 40 healthcare workers. Hezbollah has not announced

its losses.

The Gulf

Authorities in Gulf states and the US Central Command (CENTCOM) have reported 28 people killed -- 15 of them civilians -- since the start of the Iranian attacks.

The rest of those killed were military or security personnel, including seven US service members.

Kuwait's military and health ministry have reported six deaths: two soldiers, two border guards and two civilians, one of them an 11-year-old girl.

The United Arab Emirates' defence ministry has reported eight deaths: six civilians and two military personnel who died as a result of a helicopter crash blamed on a technical malfunction.

Saudi Arabia

Bahrain's interior ministry has also logged two civilian deaths.

Oman's maritime security centre reported the death of a mariner at sea and two other people in a drone attack on an industrial area. Qatar's interior ministry, meanwhile, has reported 16 injuries and no fatalities.

CENTCOM has confirmed six US service personnel killed in Kuwait and one killed in Saudi Arabia.

Iraq

Armed groups and officials have said at least 64 people have been killed in Iraq since the start of the war, according to an AFP tally based on their announcements.

France said an Iranian drone killed a French soldier in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

The US military said a refuelling aircraft crashed in western Iraq, killing all six crew members, in an incident not caused by hostile or friendly fire.

Jordan

In Jordan, security officials said 29 people have been injured by falling debris from Iranian missiles and drones in various parts of the kingdom.

No deaths have been recorded so far.

US injuries across Mideast

The US on Monday said around 200 of its military personnel have been injured in seven countries across the Middle East since the start of the war.

Ten were categorised as seriously wounded and over 180 have already returned to duty, CENTCOM said.

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

Gulf energy attacks 'unacceptable', India says as supply fears mount

AFP | New Delhi, India

India condemned strikes on energy facilities in the Gulf as "unacceptable" yesterday warning they risk worsening global energy flows.

The assault on Qatar's Ras Laffan facility has stoked fears of wider disruptions to fuel supplies, including for India, which relies on Qatar for over 40% of its LNG needs -- crucial for power generation, industry, fertiliser production and household cooking.

The latest strikes were "unacceptable and need to cease", India's foreign ministry said, reiterating New Delhi's call to avoid targeting energy infrastructure.

"Recent attacks against energy installations in different

Treasury chief says US may 'unsanction' Iran oil already being shipped

AFP | Washington, United States

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said yesterday that Washington might "unsanction" Iranian oil that is already being shipped, as energy prices soar due to the war in the Middle East. Bessent's com-

ments to Fox Business came as oil and gas prices made a renewed surge after Iran hit the world's biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Qatar and threatened to destroy the region's energy infrastructure.

Bessent added in the interview that the US government

could also release more oil from its strategic reserves.

Tehran's retaliation brought commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz to a virtual halt, snarling energy supply chains. Around a fifth of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the critical

waterway during peacetime.

Recently, the United States also temporarily allowed the sale of sanctioned Russian oil that is at sea. On Wednesday, Trump temporarily waived a century-old maritime shipping law in an attempt to help ease energy prices.

locations across this region are... deeply disturbing and only serve to further destabilise an already uncertain energy scenario for

the whole world," it said in a statement.

With gas shipments already reduced, New Delhi fears a fresh

supply crunch, rising costs and deeper economic strain across sectors dependent on steady imports.

Energy prices have already spiralled globally since tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, which normally car-

ries around a fifth of the world's oil and LNG, was brought to a near-standstill by the threat of Iranian attacks.

As many as 22 Indian ships with over 600 crew are stuck in the Gulf as the key energy corridor remains disrupted.

Indian foreign ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said the country's energy supplies had already been impacted by the closure of the strait.

"Now with the latest attacks our LNG supply is going to be impacted," he told reporters during a news briefing in New Delhi on Thursday.

"We are in touch with all the stakeholders there to see how best we can secure our energy needs and there can be unimpeded transit for our cargo."

EU summit fails to rally Orban behind stalled Ukraine loan

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

EU leaders failed to persuade Hungary's Viktor Orban to lift his block on a massive loan to support Ukraine's war effort at summit talks yesterday, leaving the much-needed funding in limbo.

Moscow's closest partner in the bloc, the nationalist prime minister has long resisted helping Kyiv to repel Russia's invasion, stalling EU aid and repeated rounds of sanctions.

This time around, Orban is holding up a 90-billion-euro (\$104 billion) loan as leverage in a feud over damage to a pipeline running through Ukraine -- which has choked the flow of Russian oil to Hungary and

Slovakia.

"The Hungarian position is very simple. We are ready to support Ukraine when we get our oil, which is blocked by them," Orban said on arrival at the summit, which Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky addressed by videolink.

Orban had made it clear he planned to play hardball, as he leans into anti-EU and anti-Ukrainian narratives ahead of close-fought national elec-

tions on April 12 -- to the exasperation of fellow EU leaders.

And despite concerted pressure from his counterparts in Brussels, he refused to budge.

"No movement from Orban," summed up an EU diplomat after the Ukraine talks concluded. "We all know it's linked to the elections -- we are going to have to be creative."

The EU's top diplomat Kaja Kallas warned earlier it was "really, really time" to show support by unlocking funding for Ukraine for this year and the next -- which Hungary's leader signed up to in December along with the rest of the bloc.

But only 25 of the bloc's 27 leaders endorsed Thursday summit conclusions reaffirming their intent to begin disbursing the funds next month, with diplomats confirming the holdouts were Budapest and Bratislava.

Leaders agreed to revisit the matter, which requires unanimity, at their next meeting

planned in late April.

Election 'weapon'

At the root of the standoff is a weeks-long dispute in which landlocked Hungary and Slovakia accuse Ukraine of stalling on pipeline repairs -- while Zelensky has called it "blackmail" to link the issue to support for Kyiv's war effort.

The European Commission moved this week to unblock the situation by sending a team to help restore oil transit, but Orban dismissed the scheme as a "fairy tale".

"We are waiting for the oil," Orban told reporters -- calling the matter "existential" for Hungary.

Many of his counterparts see the block as squarely motivated by national politics.

"He's using Ukraine as a weapon in his election campaign, and it's not good. We had a deal," Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo told reporters in Brussels.

Belgium's Bart de Wever likewise said Orban's veto seemed to be "part of his election campaign," calling his U-turn "unacceptable".

Trump says told Netanyahu not to attack Iran gas fields

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he had told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to strike any more Iranian gas fields, seeking to distance himself from an attack by a key ally that has shaken world energy markets.

Trump insisted on social media overnight that he "knew nothing" about Wednesday's strike by Israel on the South Pars gas field in Iran, which retaliated to the attack by hitting Qatari energy sites.

Asked in the Oval Office whether he had talked to Netanyahu about attacking Iranian gas fields, Trump replied: "I did. I told him, don't do that, and he won't do that."

"You know, we're independent. We get along great. It's coordinated, but on occasion, he'll do something, and if I don't like it...and so we're not doing that anymore."

Trump's comments come despite the fact that US sources said on Wednesday that Washington was aware of the attack, although it had not participat-

ed in it.

Trump has previously said the United States is holding off from launching attacks on Iran's energy facilities, as the nearly three-week-old war has already sent global oil prices spiking.

At the same time, he also warned on his Truth Social network late Wednesday that the United States would "massively blow up" the South Pars field if Tehran did not stop attacking Qatar.



Iran holds the world's third-largest proven oil reserves, with about 208-209 billion barrels, accounting for roughly 12% of global reserves.

Oman foreign minister slams US war on Iran, blames Israel

AFP | Paris, France

A negotiated deal between the United States and Iran to avert war "appeared really possible", Oman's foreign minister who mediated talks between the two sides said in an article published on Thursday, while blaming Israel for the ongoing conflict.

Writing in The Economist, Badr Albusaidi abandoned the usual reserve of diplomatic language to call the war a "catastrophe" and said US President Donald Trump's administration had "lost control of its own foreign policy".

Albusaidi claimed the US and

Iran proposals surprised UK team at Geneva talks

Iran's proposals were "significant enough to prevent a rush to war", The Guardian reported earlier, quoting Britain's national security adviser Jonathan Powell, who attended the final round of US-Iran talks

in Geneva.

The UK team was said to have been surprised by the scope of the proposals put forward by Tehran, an anonymous former official briefed on the discussions told the newspaper.

The report added that the US negotiating team included Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, and did not bring along a technical advisory group to address complex nuclear issues.

Islamic republic.

He mediated a second round of indirect negotiations that re-

sumed in Oman on February 6, with the final round held in Geneva on February 26.

"It was a shock but not a surprise when on February 28th -- just a few hours after the latest and most substantive talks -- Israel and America again launched an unlawful military strike against the peace that had briefly appeared really possible," Albusaidi wrote.

The details of what was on the table in Geneva is of major significance, experts say, because Trump justified the war by saying Iran posed an "imminent" threat with its nuclear programme.

Albusaidi blamed "Israel's

leadership" for persuading Trump that "an unconditional surrender would swiftly follow the initial assault and the assassination of the supreme leader" Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the opening salvo of the war.

"The American administration's greatest miscalculation, of course, was allowing itself to be drawn into this war in the first place."

"America's friends have a responsibility to tell the truth," he continued, adding that one of the messages "involves indicating the extent to which America has lost control of its own foreign policy".

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CAMPUS

Ramadan Charity Initiatives at Bhavans-Bahrain Indian School



Manama

As part of its longstanding annual tradition, Bhavans-Bahrain Indian School (BIS) conducted a charity drive during the holy month of Ramadan to support fellow brethren and uphold the true spirit of Ramadan alive.

The BIS fraternity and students came together to donate non-perishable food items to the school's support staff as part of a charitable initiative.

School Management emphasised that such programmes are designed to nurture responsible global citizens who understand the value of compassion and social engagement. "I hope the pious month of Ramadan brings peace and happiness to everyone's life, and we truly believe that this charity will be of great help to the needy," said Mr. Himanshu Verma, BIS Director.

As communities around the

”
I hope the pious month of Ramadan brings peace and happiness to everyone's life, and we truly believe that this charity will be of great help to the needy
MR. HIMANSHU VERMA, BIS DIRECTOR.

”
This donation is a testament to our values and the spirit of compassion we strive to instill in our students
MRS. RITU VERMA, DIRECTOR

world observe Ramadan, BIS stands as a shining example of how educational institutions can play a transformative role in addressing societal needs.

Through its continued efforts, the school reinforces the message that meaningful change begins with collective action and a commitment to serve.

The BIS fraternity and students came together to donate non-perishable food items to the school's support staff as part of a charitable initiative.



Barcelona, Liverpool, Bayern and Atletico reach Champions League quarter-finals

AFP | Paris, France

Barcelona hit Newcastle United for seven to reach the Champions League quarter-finals on Wednesday, while Liverpool overturned a first-leg deficit to beat Galatasaray in their last-16 tie and both Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid advanced to the next round.

Raphinha and Robert Lewandowski both scored twice as La Liga leaders Barcelona tore apart Newcastle at the Camp Nou, winning 7-2 in the second leg of their last-16 encounter to progress 8-3 on aggregate.

A spectacular match saw Anthony Elanga twice score for Newcastle inside the opening half-hour to cancel out goals by Raphinha and Marc Bernal.

However, the Catalans went back in front when Lamine Yamal converted a penalty deep in first-half stoppage time to make it 3-2 on the night, and they never looked back.

Fermin Lopez ran through for 4-2 early in the second half before Lewandowski added a quick-fire double either side of the hour mark, and Raphinha completed the scoring in the 72nd minute.

"The confidence that we got in the second half was good to see," said Barca coach Hansi Flick.

It was a chastening defeat for Newcastle and just the third time since 1955 that an English team has conceded at least eight goals on aggregate in a European tie -- one of the other occasions was this week, when Chelsea lost 8-2 on aggregate to Paris Saint-Germain.

"When the game was effectively over we didn't react well to that, so it became a very difficult second half," said Newcastle coach Eddie Howe.

It was also just the third time Barcelona have scored seven in a Champions League game, and Flick's side can now look



Liverpool's Brazilian goalkeeper #01 Alisson (L) makes a save next to Liverpool's French forward #22 Hugo Ekitike (C) during the UEFA Champions League, round of 16 second leg football match between Liverpool and Galatasaray at Anfield in Liverpool, north-west England



Atletico Madrid's Argentine forward #19 Julian Alvarez attempts to control the ball during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Atletico Madrid at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London

forward to an all-Spanish quarter-final next month against Atletico.

Diego Simeone's men lost 3-2 on the night to Tottenham Hotspur in London, but progressed 7-5 on aggregate thanks to their 5-2 victory last week.

Randal Kolo Muani headed in

on the half-hour to give Spurs the lead on the night and suggest a stunning comeback in the tie was possible.

A superb Julian Alvarez strike just after half-time doused the home side's hopes, even if a fine Xavi Simons effort put Tottenham back in front.



Barcelona's Brazilian forward #11 Raphinha (L) celebrates his team's seventh goal with Barcelona's Spanish defender #18 Gerard Martin during the UEFA Champions League last 16 second leg football match between FC Barcelona and Newcastle United at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona



Bayern Munich's German midfielder #42 Lennart Karl celebrates scoring the 3-0 goal with his teammates including Bayern Munich's German midfielder #20 Tom Bischof (R) during the UEFA Champions League, Round of 16 2nd-leg football match between FC Bayern Munich and Atalanta in Munich, southern Germany

David Hanco headed in Atletico's second on the night, before Simons converted a last-minute penalty for his second of the game as Spurs rescued some pride by ending a run of eight matches without a win.

Half-centuries for Kane, Salah

Liverpool were too good for Galatasaray, overturning a 1-0 first-leg deficit against the Turkish side with a comprehensive 4-0 win at Anfield.

Arne Slot's side went ahead on 25 minutes through a lovely first-time finish at a corner from Dominik Szoboszlai.

Mohamed Salah then had a poor penalty saved in first-half stoppage time, but the Egyptian made up for that in style after the break.

He laid on two goals in the space of three minutes, one for Hugo Ekitike and the other for Ryan Gravenberch.

Salah then scored the fourth himself just after the hour, curling a superb effort into the far corner from the edge of the area from a Florian Wirtz lay-off.

It was his 10th club goal this season was also his 50th in the Champions League, and it sealed a 4-1 aggregate victory which takes the Reds through to a quarter-final against PSG.

That will be a repeat of a last-16 tie a year ago which PSG won on penalties -- the French club have won four knockout ties against English opponents since the start of 2025.

"We could (have) won 10-0, but we did a good job. We can be proud," said Ekitike.

Bayern's progress against Atalanta was never in doubt after their 6-1 win in the first leg in Italy, and they followed that with a 4-1 success in Munich.

Harry Kane opened the scoring with a retaken first-half penalty -- his initial effort had been saved -- and then added a brilliant second on 54 minutes.

The brace took the Englishman to a half-century of Champions League goals, as he joined Salah and Thierry Henry on that overall mark -- Kane has done it in 66 games compared to 97 for Salah.

Teenager Lennart Karl got Bayern's third and Luis Diaz the fourth, with Lazar Samardzic pulling one back as the Germans progress 10-2 on aggregate -- they now face Real Madrid in a heavyweight showdown.

"We don't fear anyone," Kane told DAZN when asked about the prospect of that tie.

'Surreal' for F1 world champion Norris to have Tussauds waxwork

London, United Kingdom

Formula One world champion Lando Norris has said it feels "surreal" he will soon be joining other sports stars and celebrities by having a waxwork likeness unveiled at London's Madame Tussauds.

The 26-year-old British driver has been working with the design team at the nearly 200-year-old attraction to create a detailed replica of Norris from helmet to toe.

Norris, born and raised in



The new figure of Norris will feature in Madame Tussauds London's Culture Capital zone, alongside fellow British Formula One World Champion Lewis Hamilton, and other sports stars including Cristiano Ronaldo, Mo Salah and Anthony Joshua.

Somerset, southwest England, burst onto the Formula One stage in 2019 and last year the McLaren driver won his maiden Formula One world title.

"It's pretty surreal to think I'll have a figure in Madame Tussauds, it's such a big honour," said Norris. "Working with the artists has been awesome, and seeing all the detail they've put into the figure is really impressive. I can't wait for fans to come and see the finished figure in London this summer."

Pogacar targets elusive Milan-San Remo as Van der Poel defends crown

Milan, Italy

Tadej Pogacar and Mathieu van der Poel are set to face off for the first time this season on Saturday as cycling's pre-eminent one-day riders vie for glory at the 298km long Milan-San Remo.

The first "Monument" race of the year homes into view with both world champion Pogacar and last year's winner Van der Poel already showing hot form in Italy.

Pogacar claimed his fourth victory, and third in as many years, at Strade Bianche earlier this month, while Van der Poel won two stages in the Tirreno-Adriatico last week.

The 27-year-old sat out both Paris-Nice and Tirreno-Adriatico in preparation for Milan-San Remo, a rare race in which he can't just blow away the competition with long-range attacks.

India to host 2028 world indoor athletics champs - Coe

AFP | Torun, Poland

The eastern Indian state of Odisha will host the world indoor championships in 2028, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe announced Thursday.

"The World Athletics Council this morning awarded the



The World Indoor Athletics Championships are held on a 200-metre indoor track, which is half the length of a standard outdoor track, making races tighter and often faster-paced due to sharper bends.

next two editions of the event, onships, to Odisha in India the world indoor champi-

stan, in 2030," Coe said ahead of the world indoors in Torun, Poland.

The selection of Odisha, formerly known as Orissa, is the first time the world's most populous nation has hosted a major World Athletics event. The city of Bhubaneswar in Odisha is home to

the Kalinga Stadium Complex which boasts an indoor stadium.

Amdavad, the city also known as Ahmedabad -- in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat -- has been confirmed as host city for the 2030 Commonwealth Games, which will feature a full track and field

programme. When Amdavad was confirmed for the Commonwealths, Coe said at the time that India was "already expressing interest in hosting major global athletics events, and the long-term aspiration to host a World Athletics Championships -- and one day the Olympic Games".

World Cup to 'go ahead as scheduled' amid Iran uncertainty

● Iran's participation has been shrouded in doubt due to the conflict in the Middle East

● Iran's football federation says it has opened talks with FIFA about potentially relocating its matches.

● Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Tuesday that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if required



This view shows the pitch and stands at Akron Stadium, home of the Guadalajara soccer club, in Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico. Akron Stadium will host two World Cup playoff matches next week and will be one of Mexico's three venues for the 2026 World Cup.

AFP | Paris, France

FIFA president Gianni Infantino yesterday underlined the body's commitment to making sure the World Cup goes ahead "as scheduled" with "all teams" taking part amid doubts about Iran's presence at the

tournament.

"FIFA is looking forward to all teams participating at the World Cup to compete in a spirit of fair play and mutual respect," Infantino said from Zurich during an online FIFA Council meeting.

"We have a schedule. We will soon have the 48 competing teams confirmed, and we want

the World Cup to go ahead as scheduled."

Iran's participation has been shrouded in doubt due to the conflict in the Middle East.

They are due to play group games in the United States, against New Zealand and Belgium in Los Angeles and in Se-

attle against Egypt.

However, Iranian football federation president Mehdi Taj indicated that as a result of the US-Israeli attacks on his country he wanted its matches moved to one of the other host nations -- Canada and Mexico will host the World Cup with the United States.

"We will be preparing for the World Cup. We will boycott the United States but not the World Cup," Taj said in the video released on Wednesday.

Iran's football federation says it has opened talks with FIFA about potentially relocating its matches.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Tuesday that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches if required.

"FIFA can't solve geopolitical conflicts, but we are committed to using the power of football and the World Cup to build bridges and promote peace as our thoughts are with those who are suffering as a consequence of the ongoing wars," added Infantino.

Super Al Khaldiya Cruise Past Muharraq



Al Khaldiya captain and goalkeeper Thawadi lifts Super Cup.

TDT | Manama

Al Khaldiya secured the 2025-26 Bahrain Super Cup on Wednesday night with a 3-0 victory over Muharraq at Khalifa Sports City Stadium, claiming the trophy for a fourth consecutive year.

The match pitted Bahrain's two top sides against each other, with Khaldiya entering as 2024-25 King's Cup winners and Muharraq as reigning Nasser Bin Hamad Premier League champions. Both teams largely relied on youthful squads, with only a handful of senior players in action.

The deadlock was broken in the 22nd minute when Moroccan Nizar Elotmani curled a

brilliant free kick from outside the penalty area, the ball striking the crossbar before settling in the top-left corner, leaving Muharraq goalkeeper Ebrahim Sanad rooted.

Despite some early threats from Muharraq, Khaldiya remained in control, and the game was effectively sealed in the 79th minute. Substitute Zahui Winley was fouled in the box, and following a VAR review, Elotmani calmly converted the penalty to double the lead.

The final flourish came in the 89th minute when Elotmani set up Mubarak Khalifa, who struck first-time into the top corner to complete the 3-0 scoreline.

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