

NBB recognises excellence and dedication @ First Townhall of 2026



Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) held its first Townhall of 2026, bringing together employees for an engaging session led by Group Chief Executive Officer, Usman Ahmed, who shared key business updates and strategic priorities for the new year.

The event also featured the presentation of the Group CEO Awards, recognising team members for exemplifying NBB's core Values, operational Excellence, and outstanding customer service. A Long Service Awards ceremony was also held to honour employees for their enduring commitment and contributions to the Bank's continued success.

EU parliament to freeze approval of US trade deal: lawmakers

The parliament was planning a vote in the coming weeks on removing tariffs

● The warning shot from the European Parliament comes as the 27-nation bloc weighs how hard to hit back

AFP | Strasbourg, France

EU lawmakers have agreed to hold off ratifying a key trade deal with the United States following President Donald Trump's tariff threats over Greenland, the main political groups said yesterday.

The warning shot from the European Parliament comes as the 27-nation bloc weighs how hard to hit back if Trump follows through against Washington's long-standing allies.

The parliament was planning



European Parliament President Roberta Metsola arrives prior to the presentation of the programme of the Cypriot presidency of the Council of the European Union during a plenary session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France

a vote in the coming weeks on removing tariffs on US industrial goods as part of the agreement.

A delay does not sink the deal, agreed in July with Trump after months of intense wrangling that saw Washington slap 15 percent tariffs on EU goods.

But by suspending approval it does send a strong message of discontent to the White House that EU lawmakers argued would unnerve American businesses.

"It is an extremely powerful

lever -- I don't think companies would agree to give up the European market," Valerie Hayer, president of the centrist Renew group, told journalists.

EU leaders are set to hold an emergency summit in Brussels Thursday evening over the US threats against Denmark's autonomous territory Greenland.

The bloc is weighing different responses if Trump does not back down, including putting last year's trade deal on hold and hitting the United States with

93 billion euros (\$108 billion) in tariffs.

The package of retaliatory tariffs was agreed at the height of the EU-US trade standoff last year, but was ultimately suspended until February 6 to avoid all-out trade war.

Beyond that, French President Emmanuel Macron is pushing to unleash the bloc's potent anti-coercion trade instrument to use in case Trump makes good on his threats.

Global tourism hit new record level in 2025: UN



Tourists looking at the iconic Chocolate Hills on Bohol Island in Central Visayas province in the Philippines.

AFP | Madrid, Spain

Global tourism hit a new record level in 2025 with 1.52 billion international tourist arrivals recorded worldwide, driven by strong increases in Asia and Africa, UN Tourism said yesterday.

"Demand for travel remained high throughout 2025, despite high inflation in tourism services and uncertainty from geopolitical tensions," the secretary general of the Madrid-based body, Shaikha Alnuwais, said in a statement.

"We expect this positive trend to continue into 2026 as global economy is expected to remain steady and destinations still lagging behind pre-pandemic levels fully recover."

The number of international

tourist arrivals last year was 4.0 percent higher than the 1.4 billion recorded in 2024, reaching its highest level in the post-pandemic era and a new record, UN Tourism said.

Africa saw an 8.0 percent rise in arrivals in 2025 to 81 million, with Morocco and Tunisia posting particularly strong results.

International arrivals grew by 6.0 percent in Asia and Pacific to reach 331 million in 2025, some 91 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Europe, the world's most popular destination region, recorded 793 million international arrivals in 2025, a 4.0 percent increase over the previous year and 6.0 percent above 2019, the year before the pandemic paralysed travel.



Trump has threatened to hit six EU countries -- including powerhouses France and Germany -- with tariffs for not going along with his demand to get Greenland.