

Blades from Bahrain Captivate the World

Heritage meets global spotlight

- Exhibition held in Russia
- Dagger craft takes focus
- Culture ties gain strength

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Bahrain's centuries-old tradition of sword and dagger craftsmanship took centre stage at one of the world's most iconic museums this week, as the Kingdom unveiled a cultural exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, spotlighting its rich artisanal heritage before a global audience.

Hosted on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2025, the exhibition titled 'From Bahrain's Heritage: The Art of Sword and Dagger Making' presented intricately handcrafted Bahraini blades by Depaj Factory, a showcase of heritage deeply rooted in symbolism, strength, and identity.

Living tradition

The displays highlighted ancient techniques passed down through generations, tracing how these weapons evolved beyond their martial function into revered artistic forms. Officials, international guests, and investors at the exhibition experienced the craftsmanship as an



expression of Bahrain's cultural identity and precision artistry. H.E. Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities,

said the event was a reflection of enduring cultural ties between Bahrain and the Russian Federation. "The traditional craft of sword and dagger making is one of the most vivid expressions of



our heritage, embodying meanings of strength, dignity, beauty, and artisanal precision," he said. He added that hosting such an event at the Hermitage, one



of the world's greatest cultural institutions, demonstrated Bahrain's commitment to preserving its intangible cultural legacy and sharing it with the world.

Cultural engagement

Alongside the exhibition, a modern Bahraini dinner titled 'Pearls of the Gulf' was curated by Chef Yusuf Qumber. Guests were treated to a five-course meal inspired by the flavours and stories of Bahrain, designed to immerse diners in the country's history and traditions through food and storytelling. Sara Buheji, CEO of the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority, said the event was part of a broader strategy to elevate Bahrain's cultural brand internationally. "We are positioning the Kingdom as a premier global destination that blends Bahraini heritage with world-class cultural experiences," she noted. By bridging ancient traditions with contemporary platforms, Bahrain continues to affirm its cultural presence on the global stage, one crafted blade at a time.

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The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, founded in 1764, is one of the world's largest and oldest museums, with over 3 million artefacts spanning global civilisations.

High at sea

Drugged boatman jailed for deadly Umm as Sabaan collision

Mohammed Darwish
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The man found guilty of sailing under the influence of drugs and causing an accident at sea that claimed the lives of two Bahraini fishermen has been sentenced to seven months in jail. The court also slapped him with a BD1,150 fine. He could, however, avoid jail by posting a BD100 bail, though his boat and fishing gear will be confiscated for operating with banned 'karaf' trawling nets and sailing without a mandatory satellite navigation tracker. The verdict was issued by the Lower Criminal Court, which found the skipper guilty of manslaughter, reckless boating, and navigating under the influence of pregabalin, a controlled substance. He was sentenced to six months in prison for breaching

The deadly incident occurred in the waters off Umm as Sabaan islet, also known as Al-Muhammadiya, following a collision between two boats. Both Bahraini fishermen on board one of the vessels were killed.

marine safety laws that led to the deaths, and an additional one month for drug possession. He was also fined BD1,000 for operating with banned 'karaf' trawling nets and sailing without a mandatory satellite navigation tracker. An additional BD50 fine was imposed for failing to provide life jackets, a fire extinguisher, and a first-aid kit on board. The deadly incident

occurred in the waters off Umm as Sabaan islet, also known as Al-Muhammadiya, following a collision between two boats. Both Bahraini fishermen on board one of the vessels were killed. Two Asian crew members involved in the crash were each sentenced to 40 days in jail for illegal trawling, followed by deportation. They also received 10-day sentences for overstaying their visas.

The case came to light when Coast Guard officials responded to reports of a boat collision. They found the skipper attempting to tow the damaged vessel to Malkiya beach, with one victim's body still aboard. The second body was later recovered near Budaiya port. Investigators faced challenges due to unclear marine reports and outdated tracking data from the cybercrime unit, which failed to show the boats' movements on the day of the incident. A marine inspector noted that some findings were speculative rather than based on concrete evidence. compensation Meanwhile, compensation claims filed by the victims' families have been referred to the civil court, with no fees charged.

Lavender-sprayed clothes fail to mask drug haul; smuggler jailed for 15 years

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An Asian man in his thirties has been sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined BD5,000 for attempting to smuggle nearly four kilogrammes of marijuana into Bahrain using a suitcase packed with lavender-sprayed clothes to disguise the drug's scent. The court also ordered the confiscation of his luggage and his permanent deportation following the completion of his sentence. The man was arrested at Bahrain International Airport after a customs officer noticed irregularities during a routine luggage scan. Inside the suitcase were twelve plastic-wrapped parcels concealed among folded clothing, emitting a strong scent of cannabis despite the lavender spray. The total weight of the drugs was

3.9 kilogrammes. When questioned, the defendant claimed the suitcase belonged to someone from his home country and said he had been instructed to deliver it to an unnamed person in Bahrain. The matter was handed over to the Drug Control Directorate. Investigations revealed he was acting as part of a smuggling network, tasked with transporting the shipment into Bahrain for onward distribution. He later confessed to knowing the contents of the bag and said he had agreed to the job in return for 20,000 rupees. Further evidence was uncovered on his mobile phone, including messages about using lavender to mask the smell and photos and videos showing marijuana being packed into the suitcase — all taken by the accused. Lab analysis confirmed the seized material was narcotic.