

Welbeck scores twice to dent Liverpool's top-five hopes

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France stands with Kingdom on security

TDT | Manama

French President Emmanuel Macron reaffirmed his country's solidarity with Bahrain and condemned the Iranian attacks targeting the Kingdom's territory.

He also confirmed France's support for Bahrain's measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and achievements.

The remarks came as His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received a telephone call from President Macron yesterday.

During the call, President Macron extended his sincere congratulations and best wishes to HM the King on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

He wished His Majesty continued health and happiness, and expressed hope for further progress and prosperity for the Kingdom and its people.

Bahrain, US hold talks

TDT | Manama

Lieutenant General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, National Security Advisor, Royal Guard Commander and Secretary-General of the Supreme Defence Council, held a telephone call with Marco Rubio, Secretary of State and Acting National Security Advisor of the United States of America.

During the call, the latest developments regarding Iran's hostile attacks on the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Gulf Cooperation Council states, and the region were reviewed.

Both sides reiterated their condemnation of these attacks and the ongoing escalation, which violate state sovereignty and international laws and norms.

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Trade security

Bahrain and Egypt call for halt to Iranian threats in Strait of Hormuz

TDT | Manama

Bahrain and Egypt stressed the utmost importance of halting Iranian threats aimed at disrupting freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

They described the strategic waterway as vital for global trade and energy supplies.

The statements came during a meeting yesterday between His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Egypt President Abdel Fattah El Sisi.

Meeting

The meeting, attended by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, as well as several ministers, focused on regional security developments and their implications for the Gulf region.

HM the King and President El Sisi emphasised that any interference in the strait constitutes a violation of international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

They underscored the need for coordinated regional and international efforts to safeguard maritime corridors.

Pride

HM King Hamad expressed pride in President El Sisi's visit.

He highlighted the depth of longstanding ties between the two countries and Egypt's role as a fundamental pillar of regional



His Majesty bids farewell to the Egyptian leader

security and stability.

His Majesty also praised Egypt's continuous support to Bahrain and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states in facing challenges posed by ongoing Iranian aggression.

Both leaders condemned the continuous attacks by Iran on regional states, describing them as violations of national sovereignty and international norms that threaten international peace and security.

Support

They reaffirmed their support for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817, which condemns Iranian attacks on Gulf states and Jordan and calls for the immediate cessation of any aggression against

neighboring countries while upholding their inherent right to self-defense.

The meeting also focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation across political, economic, and security domains.

Both leaders underscored the



HM King Hamad welcomes President El Sisi upon arrival

importance of deepening coordination to achieve mutual prosperity and meet the aspirations of their nations' peoples.

Message

His Majesty received a written message from President El Sisi.

In his message, the Egyptian President expressed gratitude

and appreciation to HM the King for the warm reception and generous hospitality extended to him and his accompanying delegation.

He also valued the productive discussions and constructive talks held with His Majesty, which covered a range of regional and international issues of mutual interest.



HM the King holds talks with President El Sisi, in the presence of HRH Prince Salman

Solidarity commitment

UK reaffirms support for Bahrain safety

TDT | Manama

The United Kingdom continues to support Bahrain in safeguarding its security and the safety of its territory, citizens, and residents in the face of hostile Iranian attacks.

This came as His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday received a telephone call from

the Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

During the call, Sir Keir affirmed the UK's unwavering support for Bahrain.

He also reiterated the UK's condemnation of Iran's ongoing attacks on critical national infrastructure and interna-



HRH Prince Salman



Prime Minister Starmer

tional shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, and thanked HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister for Bahrain's continued leadership at the United Nations.

The call also underscored the importance of strengthening joint coordination and cooperation in support of efforts to maintain regional security and stability.



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United front

Al Saleh praises Arab League for over eight decades of supporting regional solidarity



“
The Arab League supports measures aimed at protecting the Kingdom's security and the safety of its people

ALI BIN SALEH AL SALEH, SHURA COUNCIL CHAIRMAN



Arab states stand united for security, stability, and prosperity

● **Boosting joint action to safeguard Arab interests and goals**

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh praised the important role played by the League of Arab States since its establishment more

than eight decades ago in supporting Arab solidarity.

He also highlighted its efforts in strengthening joint action to safeguard shared Arab interests and achieve the aspirations of Arab nations for security, stability, development, and prosperity.

The lawmaker also expressed appreciation for the Arab League's solidarity with the Kingdom of Bahrain in confronting hostile actions.

He further praised its support for the measures taken to protect the Kingdom's security and the safety of its people.

Marking the 81st anniversary of the Arab League, observed annually on March 22, the Chairman extended his congratulations to Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

Al Saleh commended Aboul Gheit's continued efforts and key role in advancing joint Arab

action.

He also praised his work in enhancing cooperation and coordination among Arab states, strengthening unity, and defending Arab causes amid ongoing regional and international challenges.

The Chairman wished the Secretary-General continued health and success in his efforts to serve the progress, prosperity, and well-being of the Arab nation.

Bahrain updates UN on Iranian aggression

TDT | Manama

The Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations in New York continues to keep the international community informed of all developments related to the ongoing Iranian aggression against the Kingdom.

In this regard, the Mission sent a seventh letter to both the UN Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council on 19 March 2026.

The letter reaffirmed that this unjustified Iranian aggression constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bahrain, a serious escalation threatening regional security and stability, and a risk to international peace and security.

It further stressed Iran's disregard for the Charter of the

United Nations, international law, and Security Council resolutions, in particular Resolution 2817 (2026), which was supported by 136 UN Member States.

Statistics

The letter also included the latest developments and statistics related to the ongoing Iranian aggression, which Bahrain has been confronting since 28 February 2026.

These attacks target sites, infrastructure, vital facilities, and residential areas within the Kingdom.

Official reports indicate that these actions are part of successive waves of missile and drone attacks targeting several countries in the region, marking an unprecedented escalation that threatens regional security and stability.

Kingdom praises Syria, Lebanon border measures



H.E. Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiee participates in UN Security Council briefing

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomed the steps taken by the Syrian and Lebanese governments to secure their borders.

It called for the continuation of these efforts to address armed groups, combat the smuggling of weapons and narcotics, and prevent any security instability amid the serious escalations witnessed in the region.

This came in the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiee, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations in New York, during the United Nations Security Council briefing on the political and humanitarian situation in Syria.

The session was chaired by

Ambassador Tom Barrack, the United States Special Envoy for Syria, in light of the United States' presidency of the Security Council this month.

Developments

Briefings were also delivered by Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Syria, and Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, who outlined the latest developments.

At the outset of his statement, the Permanent Representative referred to the difficult circumstances facing the Middle East, including the "unjustified and blatant" Iranian aggression targeting the Kingdom of Bahrain, other GCC member states, and Jordan.

Leave for Safety, Still Pay Rent? Security Fears vs Rental Obligations

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

A distressed call was received by The Daily Tribune two days ago from an expatriate in Juffair, worried about her family's safety.

"We felt it wasn't safe to live near a building that already being targeted in the current situation. How can I stay here with my 3-year-old baby? I moved to another place, but I still have to pay the rent. Please help me, sir," she said, her voice breaking as her baby cried in the background.

The family, living near an area heavily exposed to Iranian aggression, decided to move out on March 7, following many neighbours who also chose to leave.

They had an annual rental agreement, which was adjusted in



MP Mohammed Janahi

January 2026 to a three-month contract ending in April.

Despite moving out, the landlord insisted them to pay the full three months' rent, warning that failure to do so could lead to legal action and travel restrictions.

The family had already paid a one-month advance of BD 280, which they asked the landlord to use to cover the loss, but the land-



Lawyer Jassim Al Issa

lord insisted on the full amount.

But the family described their situation as deeply traumatizing, "Our apartment building is right next to the Juffair base.

During the incidents, we felt the entire building shake. My daughter is traumatized, and we simply cannot go back, we don't feel safe there," the expatriate said.

Lawyer Jassim Al Issa ex-

plained that while a contract is normally binding, extreme circumstances like this can void it under the principle of 'force majeure,' an external event that prevents tenants from using the property.

"If payment is made under these circumstances, it could be considered 'unjust enrichment,' since the tenant couldn't benefit from the property due to reasons beyond their control," lawyer Al Issa said.

While the law generally favors landlords, tenants in such cases could argue that they left for safety reasons, which could protect them from full payment claims.

How can a landlord get help? MP Mohammed Janahi told The Daily Tribune that citizens facing such situations could reach out to MPs for guidance, as well as civil societies and community clubs that support residents. He emphasized that Parliament is committed to serving Bahraini society and acting in the best interest of the Kingdom.

The Daily Tribune learned that after this story was published on the News of Bahrain official platform, it became clear this is not an isolated case.

Many expatriates in the Juffair area have decided to leave their apartments due to the ongoing situation.

At the same time, some real estate companies agreed to waive March rent upon tenants' requests, a move widely praised during this critical time.

I am staying in Juffair heights building, I was vacated March first week due to safety (informed to my owner that I am vacating) I have paid March month rent and one month deposit is there with him already, My flat false ceiling was damaged because of blast vibration, other neighbours also facing the same issue...

Now my owner is threatening me that I have to repair the false ceiling and he was shouted like anything and he is not listening to me

Any legal advise how to handle the situation now (my rental agreement is till May-2026) is appreciated...

1h 12 likes Reply ...

So thankful to Aisha Almoayyed property company. Through all the chaos that was going on they considered the safety of their tenants over greed. They waived the rent payment for march month. Much respect towards this company. That is called humanity in a crisis

1h 11 likes Reply ...

BDF maintains vigilance amid Iranian aggression

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) continues to operate with high efficiency for the twenty-second consecutive day in response to ongoing Iranian attacks, safeguarding the Kingdom's skies, waters, and lands.

The air defense units have demonstrated readiness and precision in protecting the country, reflecting the strategic guidance of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Official reports indicate that since the onset of the aggression, Bahrain's air defense systems have intercepted and destroyed a total of 143 missiles and 242 drones targeting civilian areas and private property.

The success of these opera-

tions underscores the advanced capabilities and professionalism of the Kingdom's defense systems.

Operations

Field footage has highlighted the continuous operations of air defense units, including the advanced Patriot missile system, which operates around the clock to neutralize incoming threats.

Meanwhile, the Royal Mechanized Infantry Battalions remain deployed in strategic positions, providing a steadfast shield for the homeland.

At sea, the Royal Bahraini Navy continues to monitor and secure territorial waters, demonstrating high levels of discipline, vigilance, and operational readiness to counter potential threats.

The Royal Field Engineering Unit has also been performing



The success of the BDF's operations underscores the advanced capabilities and professionalism of the Kingdom's defense systems.

its duties with precision, safely handling foreign objects and securing critical sites, ensuring the protection of citizens and residents.

In parallel, the Royal Medical Services remain fully mobilized, providing continuous support through field teams and advanced facilities, following international medical protocols to enhance the Kingdom's comprehensive response capabilities.

The coordinated efforts of Bahrain's military and security

agencies, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and other authorities, reflect a strong national commitment to safeguarding lives, property, and the stability of the Kingdom.

Threats

The sustained vigilance and readiness of Bahrain's defense and security forces provide reassurance to the public and affirm the Kingdom's ability to repel and thwart threats to its security and stability.

Eskan Bank fee cut rejected

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The government has pushed back against a parliamentary call to cut housing finance charges by 20 per cent, saying the help sought is already in place through Eskan Bank and the Mazaya scheme.

In its written reply to Parliament, the government said housing repayment terms had already been eased by limiting monthly instalments to no more than 25 per cent of a beneficiary's income.

That, it said, means the full cost of the housing service is not recouped, as the amount borne by Eskan Bank to secure the liquidity needed for such finance is higher than the share paid by the recipient.

Interest

It said Eskan Bank does not charge interest on housing finance for citizens.

Instead, the bank uses Islamic finance models across all such services and only takes administrative fees tied to its three Tas'heel products: Tas'heel Aqari, Tas'heel Ta'awon and Tas'heel Al Bait Al Oud.

Those fees, the government said, do not exceed 3 per cent and are applied through a declining balance method with a fixed yearly return.

Beneficiaries

It added that beneficiaries are also given six months before the first instalment falls due after receiving the finance, with no extra charge during that grace period.

As a result, it said, the real return across the repayment term falls below 3 per cent.

The reply said citizens who ask to put off monthly instalments are not charged extra sums, with deferrals allowed for up to two years.

Gap

It also pointed to the Mazaya programme, under which the government pays the gap between the actual instalment set by the lending bank and the monthly sum due from the citizen, so long as the citizen's share does not go beyond 25 per cent of salary.

On that basis, the government said that the aim of the proposal had already been met through the steps now in force.

Waqf honours cover veteran muezzins and preachers

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Veteran Bahraini imams, muezzins and preachers are already receiving recognition through ongoing work by the Sunni and Jaafari Waqf directorates, the government said in reply to a parliamentary proposal calling for them to be honoured.

In its response, the government said it had studied the proposal and said the aim behind it was already being met through work carried out in co-ordination with the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the two Waqf directorates.

It said those serving in mosques held an important place in public life through their service to religion and their part in strengthening values such as tolerance, moderation and co-operation.

The response said those values were among the main sup-



“We must not forget the role played by imams and muezzins, and we hope they receive recognition befitting their role, just like long-serving employees in ministries. They have their own part in educating and guiding our children.”

MP BADER AL TAMIMI

ports of society, as affirmed in the Constitution and the National Action Charter.

Attention

The government said it also placed weight on drawing attention to their standing in society by recognising their service and their religious and social role in the Kingdom.

It said honouring imams, mu-

ezzins and preachers formed part of a wider government policy aimed at backing religious practice and providing support for those entrusted with it.

The response added that the Waqf directorates had already held several gatherings with imams and muezzins that included honours, praise for their work and thanks for their devotion to caring for mosques and serving worshippers.

Recognition

“The aims sought by the present proposal are already being met through the continued efforts of the Waqf directorates in providing recognition and material and moral support to imams, muezzins and preachers in general, and to the veteran among them in particular,” the government said.

Permit sought for rebuilding Al Sakhana Mosque in Al Kawara

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Eight years on, MP Zainab AbdulAmeer is still asking when Al Sakhana Mosque in Al Kawara will finally be rebuilt, after the government agreed with the aim of her proposal but stopped short of giving a date for the work.

Speaking in Parliament, Ms AbdulAmeer thanked the government for agreeing to the request, then pressed for a clear timetable.

She said she had first put the proposal forward eight years ago and added that two other mosques in the village, Al Asal



MP Zainab AbdulAmeer

Mosque and Shaikh Darwish Mosque, were also still waiting for work.

The lawmaker said Al Sakhana Mosque was among the oldest mosques in the area and had long served as the main Friday

prayer mosque for Al Kawara.

It was later demolished after its walls had worn away and were feared to be at risk of falling.

Permit

AbdulAmeer said people from the village, including donors and benefactors, were willing to fund the rebuilding, but the mosque still lacked a building permit.

She said residents hoped the licence for this old mosque would now be issued without further delay.

In its reply, the government said it had studied the proposal calling on the relevant bodies

to issue a building permit for Al Sakhana Mosque in Al Kawara, Block 709, on property number 13060092, so construction could begin.

Rules

It said care for mosques and grand mosques remained a standing matter, covering building, upkeep and repair, within the legal and religious rules in force and in step with the bodies concerned, led by the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Sunni and Jaafari Waqf boards and administrations.

Decree No. 6 of 1985 refers to the management of the Sunni and Jaafari Waqf councils.

Public disturbance



Several drivers were apprehended and their vehicles impounded for 60 days for causing excessive noise, spreading panic among citizens and residents, and disrupting public order. Legal action has been taken against them.

New small vessel rules to tie fees to inspections

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications is drawing up new rules for small vessel registration, with inspection fees for commercial and service vessels to be charged only when ministry teams carry out an inspection.

In its reply to Parliament's Financial Committee, the ministry said a ministerial order is being drafted to cover the registration of small vessels and to fix the fee amounts tied to vessel checks.

It said a single method has already been approved for working out those fees, ending any charge where no inspection takes place on the ground.

The ministry also said it is preparing further ministerial orders to bring in fines and penalties for owners who fail to renew registration certificates, navigation licences and driving permits.

Recommendations

It added that work tied to recommendations on Khalifa Bin Salman Port is nearing its end.

A specialist team has been formed to follow inspection work at the port under the terms of the concession agreement with the operating company.

Extra clauses have also been signed to improve inspection work and the time needed to carry it through.

On aviation, the ministry said



A ministerial order is being drafted to cover the registration of small vessels and to fix the fee amounts tied to vessel checks.

the sector will see major changes in the coming period.

Preparations are under way for the International Civil Aviation Organization verification mission due in 2027, while more inspectors and auditors are being hired, trained and qualified to deal with all remarks listed in the mission report.

The ministry said it is aiming to clear more than 95 per cent of those remarks.

Regulations

It also said a draft ministerial order to amend the executive regulations of the Civil Aviation Regulation Law is being completed.

At the same time, coordination is under way with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to identify all commercial registrations covering aviation-linked activities that do not yet hold the required licence, so their position can be corrected.

The ministry said the owners of those records will be contacted and required to apply for the needed licences from Civil Aviation Affairs.

Programme

It added that work is also under way with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to list all aviation-linked business activities and programme them into the Sijilat electronic system.

A Pause, Not Goodbye



Expatriates receive assistance through a special travel arrangement

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

"The first day was a little panic, but after that we felt we were in safe hands. That confidence came from Bahrain," said an expatriate, summing up how many residents feel today.

Across Bahrain, some expatriates are choosing to travel, but not out of fear. For many, it's simply a temporary decision based on personal needs.

The expatriate explained it best: "It's just a pause."

She said most residents are still in the Kingdom and continue to support Bahrain. Her own departure was only to help her parents travel safely. "Otherwise, we would have stayed," she added.

Assistance

Around 192 expatriates received assistance through a special travel arrangement. This includes families, elderly people, pregnant women, and those with medical needs.

The initiative was organised with the support of Gulf Air, with passengers travelling via Dammam before heading to Chennai.

Community group Annai Tamil Mandram played a key role in making this happen, ensuring that those in urgent situations were given priority. Some workers were even allowed to travel free of cost.

A special flight from Bahrain to Chennai (via Saudi Arabia) was organized to help these people travel safely with support from TVS Travel Agency.

Many expatriates shared the same message, there is no panic. A visitor from Pakistan said he was leaving only to celebrate Eid with family. "This is one of the safest places," he said, adding that he will return again.

Another long-term resident described Bahrain as his "second home," praising how the country handled situations like COVID-19 and continues to ensure safety.

While some are leaving for now, many others are staying back with confidence.

For most expatriates, this moment isn't about leaving Bahrain, it's about taking a short break when needed, while trusting that the Kingdom remains safe, stable, and welcoming.

RIB Community Hosts Blood Donation Drive



Rajasthanis in Bahrain (RIB) demonstrates its commitment to humanitarian causes by organizing a successful blood donation drive at the Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) Central Blood Bank. Members of the RIB community participated in large numbers to bolster the Kingdom's national blood reserves. Organizers extended their gratitude to the SMC medical staff and the selfless donors whose contribution will provide critical support for patients in need.

KPF Bahrain Organizes Blood Donation Drive



Supporting the community during the regional conflict, the Kozhikode District Pravasi Forum (KPF Bahrain) organized a week-long blood donation drive at the Salmaniya Central Blood Bank. Under the theme "Give Blood, Give Life," around 70 members participated in the initiative led by General Secretary Arun Prakash and Vice President Akhil Thamarasery.

Community Support in Action



Bharathi Association and The Indian Club facilitate a Gulf Air chartered flight from Dammam to Chennai for 192 stranded passengers, including the elderly and medical cases, following the temporary closure of Bahrain Airport. Organizers and volunteers provided a warm send-off at the Golden Tulip Hotel before the passengers departed for their 5:00 PM flight.

Road deaths



The Ministry of Interior announced yesterday that a traffic accident involving a vehicle and several bicycles on Al-Zallaq Street resulted in the deaths of two Asian nationals. Competent authorities carried out procedures at the scene.

Jury signals tech titans on hook for social media addiction

● **Jury asks about damages in landmark addiction trial**

● **Plaintiff says YouTube, Instagram fueled depression as child**

● **Trial could set precedent for thousands of suits**

AFP | San Francisco

A question by jurors in a landmark social media addiction trial on Friday signaled Meta or YouTube may have to pay for letting a girl get hooked onto their platforms.

The jury's first full week of deliberations ended with the panel sending the judge a query related to calculating damages in the case, which is expected to set a precedent for thousands of similar suits in the nation.

"We don't start dancing in the streets over what seems to be a good question," said plaintiff's attorney Mark Lanier.

"But we're appreciative of the



Reporters wait outside the Los Angeles Superior Court at US Court House for a verdict in the social media trial

fact that they're on the issues of damages."

To turn their attention to damages, enough jurors had to essentially agree that one or both accused tech platforms was negligently or harmfully designed and users should have been warned, according to ver-

dict forms.

Jurors will return to the Los Angeles courthouse on Monday to resume deliberations.

Since jury deliberations began on March 13, the jury has sent questions to the judge related to the plaintiff's family troubles as well as how much she actually

used Meta-owned Instagram as a child.

Negligent in design?

The verdict could turn on the question of whether familial strife and other real-world trauma, or YouTube and Meta apps such as Instagram, were



The plaintiff, a 20-year-old woman, testified that her obsession began at just six years old, challenging the long-standing "Section 230" legal shield by arguing the apps themselves are defectively designed products

to blame for mental woes of the woman who filed the suit.

A 20-year-old California woman identified as Kaley G.M. testified at trial that YouTube and Instagram fueled her depression and suicidal thoughts as a child, telling jurors that she became obsessed with social media, starting with YouTube videos, when she was six.

Under cross examination, however, Kaley also talked about feeling neglected, berated and

picked on by family members.

A jury form given to jurors asks the panel to decide whether Meta or YouTube should have known their services posed a danger to children or if they were negligent in design.

If so, jurors are to decide if Meta or YouTube were "substantial factors" in causing Kaley's woes and how much they should pay in damages.

Whatever the verdict, the trial highlights "an important tension" between social media platforms and vulnerable young internet users, reasoned University of Pittsburgh marketing professor Vanitha Swaminathan.

"The platforms have to address the concerns of this important segment," Swaminathan told AFP.

The lawsuit is one of hundreds accusing social media firms of luring young users into becoming addicted to their content and potentially suffer from depression, eating disorders, psychiatric hospitalization and even suicide.

Internet titans have long shielded themselves with Section 230 of the US Communications Decency Act, which frees them of responsibility for what social media users post.

French prosecutors suspect Musk encouraged deepfakes row to inflate X value

AFP | San Francisco

French prosecutors said Saturday they had alerted US authorities to a suspicion that tech tycoon Elon Musk had encouraged the controversy over sexualised deepfakes on X to "artificially" increase the value of his company.

The social media network's Grok AI chatbot stirred outrage earlier this year over it generating images of women and girls in minimal attire without their consent.

"The controversy sparked by sexually explicit deepfakes generated by Grok (X's AI) may have been deliberately generated in order to artificially boost the value of companies X and X AI," the Paris prosecutor's office said, confirming a report in Le Monde newspaper on Friday.

This could have been done towards "the planned June 2026 stock market listing of the new entity created by the merger" between Space X and X AI, it added.

The prosecutor's office said



Elon Musk arrives at federal court on March 4 in San Francisco, California, during his trial

it had on Tuesday reached out to the US Department of Justice, as well as French lawyers at the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), a financial market regulation body, to share its concerns.

X's lawyer in France was not

immediately available for comment.

French authorities are investigating X over allegations that its algorithm was used to interfere in French politics, as well as Grok's dissemination of Holocaust denials and the

sexualised deepfakes.

AI chat bot Grok has its own account on the X social network allowing users to interact with it.

For a period, users could tag the bot in posts to request image generation and editing, receiving the image in a reply from Grok. Many sent Grok photos of women or tagged the bot in replies to women's photo posts, giving it prompts such as "put her in a bikini" or "remove her clothes".

'Incitements'

It generated an estimated three million sexualised images -- mostly of women, though also 23,000 that appeared to depict children -- in 11 days, the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), a non-profit watchdog, said in late January.

Le Monde pointed to "several posts by Musk, published at the height of the controversy, which prosecutors interpret as incitements to generate non-consensual images".

SoftBank plans massive US power plant for AI data centres



Racks of GPUs with a closed-loop liquid cooling system are seen inside an operational Microsoft data centre in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia

AFP | Tokyo

Japan's SoftBank Group said Saturday it plans to build a huge new gas-fired power plant in the US state of Ohio to provide energy for artificial intelligence data centers.

Tech investor SoftBank is a major backer of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, and its flamboyant CEO Masayoshi Son is a long-time ally of US President Donald Trump.

The natural-gas plant is part of a broader \$550 billion Japanese investment in the United States that Tokyo agreed to in exchange for reduced trade tariffs.

Construction of the \$33.3 billion power plant with a "large-scale" power generation capacity of 9.2 gigawatts (GW) will take place at the US Department of Energy's Portsmouth site, SoftBank said.

"This is a size bigger than any power plant, I think, in

the world," Son said at a ceremony in Ohio to announce the project, on Friday local time.

"At least in the United States, for sure, this is the biggest power generation in one location," he added.

The goal is to develop "the smartest intelligence in the world", Son said.

The 9.2 GW gas-fired plant is part of an overall plan for the site to power 10 GW of data centre capacity, the US Department of Energy said in a statement.

"Once a cornerstone of America's national security during the Cold War -- enriching uranium for our nation's defense -- the Portsmouth site is now being transformed to help the United States win the AI race," it said.

SoftBank on Saturday announced a consortium with major American and Japanese firms to help build the plant and develop AI infrastructure in Ohio.

United Airlines trims flights as jet fuel costs spike

AFP | New York

United Airlines announced Friday that it was scaling back its flight capacities because of soaring jet fuel costs, which the airline anticipates will keep rising as the war in the Middle East continues.

Benchmark crude prices have surged to around \$100 a barrel in the past three weeks, and United chief Scott Kirby said "our plans assume oil goes to \$175 a barrel and doesn't get back down to \$100 a barrel until the end of 2027"

If prices stay at current levels,

United's fuel bill would balloon by an extra \$11 billion this year, Kirby said in a statement to employees.

In response, the airline will cut flights on routes that are no longer profitable at current fuel prices, representing "about five points of this year's planned

capacity in the short term," Kirby said.

But for now passenger demand remains strong, Kirby said, and United will not cut jobs or costs, or delay investments, and it still plans to take delivery of around 120 new planes this year.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Post-War: The Gulf at a Critical Crossroads



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

Bahrain has long stood as a model of moderation and a consistent advocate of peace, despite facing hostile policies from the Iranian regime. It has remained committed to dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and non-interference—principles that have not always been reciprocated.

In recent years, Bahrain has maintained open channels of communication. In 2024, it extended condolences following the death of the Iranian president, supported efforts to restore relations, and participated in the inauguration of his successor. These steps reflected a genuine commitment to diplomacy and good neighbourliness.

Yet the recent war has exposed a sharp gap between rhetoric and reality. De-escalation has been replaced by force, and commitments to stability have given way to cross-border military actions. Such conduct directly contradicts the core principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the prohibition on the use of force and the obligation to respect state sovereignty.

Strategically, attempts to reshape deterrence through escalation have produced the opposite effect. Rather than weakening Gulf states, they have strengthened cohesion within the Gulf Cooperation Council and reinforced a shared priority: advancing self-reliant defence capabilities, especially in air and missile defence, in line with the inherent right of self-defence under international law.

Iran now appears to be navigating a complex strategic dilemma, attempting to balance diplomatic messaging with actions that intensify tensions—an approach that reflects inconsistency rather than strategic clarity



This contradiction is further highlighted by the gap between official denials and realities on the ground. While responsibility is publicly rejected, developments point to sustained escalation using advanced military tools—raising serious concerns about adherence to international legal obligations.

The implications extend beyond the region. Disruptions to energy supplies are no longer incidental; they are being used as strategic leverage, with direct consequences for global markets and economic stability.

At a broader level, the crisis reveals a recurring flaw in how conflicts are managed: major military actions are often undertaken without sufficient coordination or meaningful consultation with regional stakeholders. The result is predictable—regional states bear the greatest cost, becoming the primary victims of conflicts they neither initiated nor shaped. This raises legitimate questions about compliance with principles of international responsibility and good faith.

Iran now appears to be navigating a complex strategic dilemma, attempting to balance diplomatic messaging with actions that intensify tensions—an approach that reflects inconsistency rather than strategic clarity.

The conclusion is clear: this is no longer a moment for hesitation. Either state conduct aligns with international law and respect for sovereignty, or the region risks prolonged instability. For the Gulf, the path forward requires a decisive shift—from reacting to events to shaping them. A more assertive and coordinated Gulf strategy is no longer optional; it is essential to securing stability and redefining the region's balance of power.

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



A hearse decorated with pictures of (L-R) Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's slain supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iran's new Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei drives past Iranians attending the funeral ceremony of Iran's Revolutionary Guards spokesperson Ali Mohammad Naini

US hits Iran **missile bunker**

Warplanes hit underground facility storing anti-ship missiles

AFP | Tehran

The US military declared yesterday it had taken out an Iranian bunker housing weapons threatening oil and gas shipments in the Strait of Hormuz, as thousands of Iranians marked Eid al-Fitr with prayer.

The US statement appeared designed to calm the concerns of energy markets and of Washington's sceptical international allies, more than 20 of whom issued a statement vowing to back efforts to re-open the key sea lane.

Admiral Brad Cooper, head of US Central Command, said US warplanes had dropped 5,000-pound bombs on an underground facility on Iran's coast that was storing anti-ship cruise missiles, mobile launchers and other equipment.

"We not only took out the facility, but also destroyed intelligence support sites and missile radar relays that were used to monitor ship movements," Cooper said in

a video statement, revealing details of a strike first announced on Tuesday.

As consumers count the cost of attacks on energy facilities in the Gulf, including the world's largest gas hub, US President Donald Trump has slammed NATO allies as "cowards" and urged them to secure the strait.

Iran has choked the channel, through which around a fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas passes during peacetime.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran had only imposed restrictions on vessels from countries involved in attacks against Iran, and would offer assistance to others that stayed out of the conflict.

Iran also denies claims -- cited in the 20-country joint statement -- that it has deployed mines in the channel.

Remarkable endurance?

The standoff has sent crude oil

prices soaring, with a barrel of North Sea Brent crude up more than 50 percent over the past month and now comfortably more than \$105.

Analysts, meanwhile, say Iran's Islamic government has survived the loss of its top leaders and that its strike capacity is proving more resilient than expected, with drones, missiles and launchers apparently able to continue retaliatory strikes for another four to six weeks.

"They're showing a lot of resilience that we didn't perhaps expect, that the US didn't expect, when it took this on," Neil Quilliam of Chatham House told the London-based think tank's podcast.

"But the IRGC, the Iranian regime, it's deep, it has these roots, this institutional strength... it's quite remarkable how they've managed to endure."

Meanwhile, Tehran marked the end of Ramadan as the war entered

its fourth week.

Iran's supreme leader traditionally leads Eid al-Fitr prayers, but Mojtaba Khamenei, who came to power earlier this month after his father was killed in US-Israeli strikes, has remained out of the public eye.

Instead, the head of the judiciary, Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei, attended prayers at central Tehran's Imam Khomeini grand mosque, which was overflowing, with worshippers flooding the streets outside.

The previous evening, airstrikes had darkened the mood as the city celebrated Nowruz, the Persian New Year.

"The atmosphere of the New Year was spreading through the city. Places like Tajrish or Golestan Shahrak, where I went, were full of well-dressed and beautiful women buying flowers," said Farid, an advertising executive, reached by AFP through an online message.

Saudi intercepts more than 20 drones in east: defence ministry

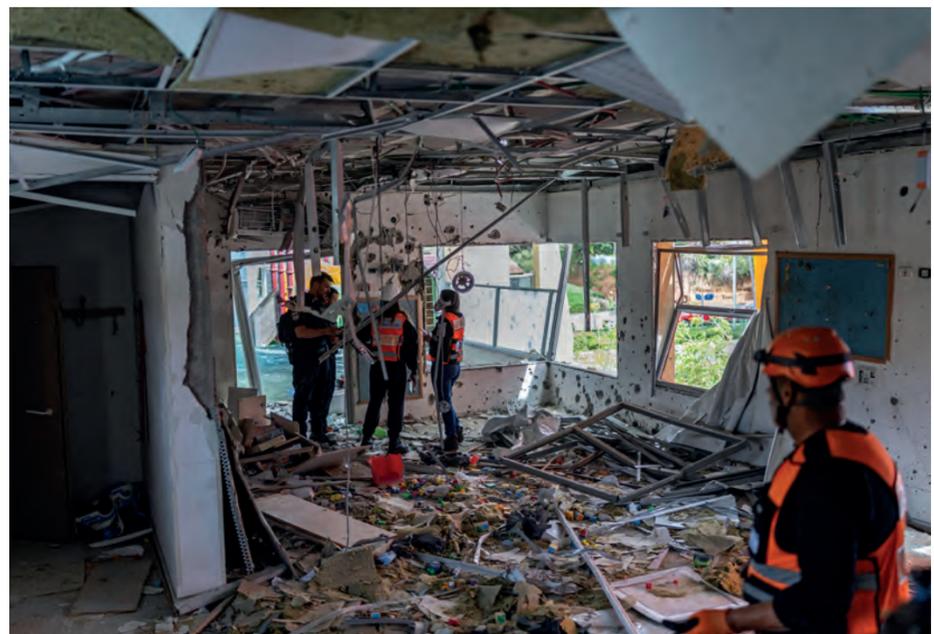
AFP | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia intercepted 22 drones in the east of the country, the defence ministry said yesterday, as Iran continues striking Gulf nations.

"10 drones intercepted and destroyed in the eastern region," the Saudi defence ministry posted on X.

The ministry later posted that its air defences had shot down 12 more drones, also in the east.

Iran has kept up retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia and nearby nations in response to US and Israeli strikes that have sparked a war that has spread across the Middle East since late last month.



Israeli security personnel inspect the damage at a kindergarten that was hit following a strike over Rishon LeZion on the outskirts of Tel Aviv

1622

First American Indian (Powhatan) massacre of Europeans around Jamestown, Virginia, 347 killed

1786

The Emerald Buddha is moved with great ceremony to its current place in Wat Phra Kaew, Thailand



1933

First Nazi concentration camp, Dachau, opens as a camp for political prisoners

1954

Northland Center, the world's largest shopping mall at the time, opens in Oak Park, Michigan

Iran 'unsuccessfully' targeted Diego Garcia base, UK official source

AFP | London

Iran was "unsuccessful" in targeting the joint UK-US Indian Ocean military base at Diego Garcia, a UK official source confirmed yesterday, after the Wall Street Journal reported Tehran fired two ballistic missiles at it.

Diego Garcia, which is around 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometres) from Iranian territory, is one of the two bases the UK has allowed the United States to use for "defensive operations" in its war against Iran.

On Friday, the UK government said it would allow Washington to use its bases in Diego Garcia and Fairford in southwest England to target Iranian "missile sites and capabilities being used to attack ships in the Strait of Hormuz".



A picture shows damaged buildings following an Israeli airstrike that targeted the Haret Hreik neighbourhood in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut

Trump mulls winding down war

President says US "getting very close" to objectives after three weeks of war

AFP | Washington

President Donald Trump said that he was considering "winding down" military operations against Iran, as the United States temporarily eased sanctions on Iranian oil shipments to stem a global supply crisis.

Iran launched a new wave of drone and missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and Israel meanwhile after supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei claimed to have dealt

a "dizzying blow" to his country's enemies.

Trump, in a post on Truth Social, said the United States was "getting very close to meeting our objectives as we consider winding down our great Military efforts in the Middle East."

His post was the strongest indication yet that he may be prepared to soon end hostilities that began on February 28.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, in a post on X shortly after Trump's mes-

"We are getting very close to meeting our objectives as we consider winding down our great military efforts in the Middle East"

DONALD TRUMP

sage, said "the President and the Pentagon predicted it would take approximately 4-6 weeks to achieve this mission."

"Tomorrow marks week 3 -- and the US Armed Forces are doing an exceptional job," Leavitt continued. "Day by day, the Iranian Regime is being crippled, and their ability to threaten the United States and our allies is being significantly weakened."

Amid growing concern over oil prices and global supply shortages, the US Treasury said it was temporarily lifting sanctions on Iranian oil already loaded onto vessels.

The authorization allows for

the delivery and sale of Iranian crude oil and other petroleum products loaded onto ships before March 20 and will last through April 19, it said.

"By temporarily unlocking this existing supply for the world, the United States will quickly bring approximately 140 million barrels of oil to global markets, expanding the amount of worldwide energy and helping to relieve the temporary pressures on supply caused by Iran," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said.

Iran says Natanz nuclear site hit

AFP | Tehran

According to Iran's atomic energy organisation, the US and Israel targeted a plant at Natanz in Isfahan province, which hosts underground centrifuges to enrich uranium for Iran's disputed nuclear programme and was already damaged in last year's June war.

"Following the criminal attacks by the United States and the usurping Zionist regime against our country, the... Natanz enrichment complex was targeted this morning," the organisation said, in a statement carried by the Tasnim news agency.

No leakage of nuclear materials was reported, it added.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, called for "military restraint to avoid any risk of a nuclear accident", but the UN watchdog confirmed that no increase in off-site radiation levels had been reported. Asked about Natanz, the Israeli military said it was "not aware of a strike".

More than 20 countries say want to contribute to efforts for safe passage in Hormuz strait

AFP | Washington

More than 20 countries yesterday said they would contribute to efforts ensuring safe passage in the Strait of Hormuz, condemning Iran's closure of the vital waterway.

"We condemn in the strongest terms recent attacks by Iran on unarmed commercial vessels in the Gulf, attacks on civilian infrastructure including oil and gas installations, and the de facto closure of the Strait of

Hormuz by Iranian forces," said the 22 countries, mostly European but also including the UAE and Bahrain.

"We express our readiness to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait. We welcome the commitment of nations who are engaging in preparatory planning," they said in a joint statement.

After the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, Tehran has retaliated with strikes on its Gulf

neighbours but also on vessels in the strait.

From March 1 to 19, commodities carriers made just 116 crossings, according to analytics firm Kpler -- a decrease of 95 percent from peacetime averages.

Iran's de facto blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 percent of the world's oil and gas normally flows, and the numerous attacks on oil and gas infrastructure in the Middle East, have sent energy prices soaring.

Middle East war risks becoming unpredictable: Switzerland

AFP | Geneva

The Middle East war risks becoming unpredictable in terms of its duration and outcome, Switzerland's foreign minister said in an interview published yesterday.

The conflict is further complicating the situation in the region, Ignazio Cassis told Le Temps newspaper.

"If the goal was to resolve everything with an operation like the one in Venezuela, that hasn't been achieved," he said.

"And we risk getting involved in a war whose duration, intensity, and outcome are difficult to predict. There's also the escalation of the conflict across the entire region, the Middle East. This is precisely what Switzerland has always sought to avoid."

For decades, militarily neutral Switzerland has played a key role in maintaining basic diplomatic contacts between Iran and the United States.

In its role as the so-called protecting power, Switzerland has been representing US interests in Iran since Washington

broke off relations with Tehran after the 1980 hostage crisis, a year after the Iranian revolution.

"The role of communication channel continues; it has not been denounced by either side. But currently, it does not apply, since communication is, unfortunately, carried out by force of arms," said Cassis.

US and Iranian negotiators held indirect talks on Tehran's nuclear programme, through Omani mediators, in Switzerland on February 26.

Two days later, the United States and Israel began their attacks on Iran. Tehran has responded by striking targets across the Gulf region and beyond.

Cassis said he had spoken with the negotiating parties on February 26. "They all seemed to think we still had some time to reach a solution," he said.

"When progress is being made, you obviously can't be happy when a war breaks out just as you're making headway. History shows that most conflicts end up being resolved around a negotiating table."



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Spoke with President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian and conveyed Eid and Nowruz greetings. We expressed hope that this festive season brings peace, stability and prosperity to West Asia. Condemned attacks on critical infrastructure in the region, which threaten regional stability and disrupt global supply chains. Reiterated the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation and ensuring that shipping lanes remain open and secure. Appreciated Iran's continued support for the safety and security of Indian nationals in Iran. @drpezeshkian

@narendramodi

02



Racism exists in every society, country & region of the world. All governments, institutions, businesses & communities must work together to #FightRacism & safeguard the dignity, justice, equality & human rights that belong to every person.

@antonioguterres

03



Chuck was an icon. I am grateful that I was able to work with him in multiple ways over the years, from promoting fitness to sharing the screen together. He was a badass, in real life and in Hollywood. His legend will be with us forever. My thoughts are with his family.

@Schwarzenegger

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

Hezbollah says clashing with Israeli troops in two south Lebanon border towns

Hezbollah fighters engage Israeli troops in direct combat across strategic southern Lebanese border towns

● Direct clashes reported in Khiam and Naqura

● Israeli jets strike Beirut's southern suburbs overnight

AFP | Riyadh

The Iran-backed Hezbollah group said its fighters clashed with Israeli forces in two south Lebanon border towns on Saturday, in the third week of the latest war between the foes.

Lebanon was pulled into the broader Middle East war when Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on March 2 to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Israeli-US attacks.

Israel has responded with heavy strikes across Lebanon and ground incursions in the border area, killing more than 1,000 people according to Lebanese authorities.

Hezbollah in a statement said that for four hours on Saturday,



Fighting vehicles are seen at a staging area near the border with Lebanon in the Upper Galilee in northern Israel

its fighters had been engaging in "direct clashes with forces from the Israeli enemy army in the town of Khiam with light and medium weapons" and rockets.

The strategic town, located around 40 kilometres (25 miles)

inland, overlooks swathes of southern Lebanon as well as parts of northern Israel, and was the first point into which Israeli forces advanced after the start of the latest war.

In recent days, the Shia Mus-

lim movement has repeatedly said it has targeted Israeli forces and vehicles in Khiam and nearby, or clashed with Israeli soldiers there.

Hezbollah also said its fighters clashed with Israeli forces

in the coastal border town of Naqura, home to the headquarters of peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The Iran-backed group said Israeli soldiers "tried to penetrate... towards the Naqura municipality building", adding that its fighters fought them with light and medium weapons.

Israel kept forces in five south Lebanon areas it deemed strategic despite a November 2024 ceasefire that sought to end the previous war with Hezbollah.

One of those positions was in Labbouneh, just around three kilometres from Naqura.

Also on Saturday, Hezbollah said its fighters had targeted Israeli soldiers near the border and in other south Lebanon towns.

Israel's army instead said it struck "a number of Hezbollah headquarters" in Beirut's southern suburbs overnight after issuing an evacuation warning for the area, known as a Hezbollah stronghold.

The strikes came as Shia Muslims in Lebanon began celebrating Eid al-Fitr, a major holiday that follows the holy month of

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Despite the November 2024 ceasefire, Israel still keeps forces in five strategic south Lebanon areas, including near Naqura, where Hezbollah says its fighters repelled Israeli attempts to push toward the town's municipal building

Ramadan.

On Saturday morning, an AFP correspondent in the area's Haret Hreik neighbourhood saw a multi-storey building that had been partly destroyed in one of the strikes.

The Israeli army also said its troops killed several Hezbollah operatives "during a targeted ground operation in southern Lebanon" overnight.

14 killed in South Korea car plant fire



Heavy smoke rise following a fire at a car parts plant in Daejeon

AFP | Seoul

Fourteen people were killed in a fire in a car parts factory in South Korea that also injured 59 others, authorities told AFP Saturday, updating a previous toll of 11 fatalities.

Fire crews were initially unable to enter the factory in the central city of Daejeon to look for survivors due to the risk of the building collapsing.

The response was also hampered by sodium stored at the site, which can explode if improperly handled, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Around 170 workers were at the plant when the fire broke out at about 1:00 pm (0400 GMT) Friday, according to Yonhap.

"We can confirm the latest death toll has risen to 14, with no one reported missing," an official from the interior min-

istry's department that handles fires and other disasters told AFP.

Officials have not said what may have caused the fire, which spread rapidly. A witness told Yonhap about hearing an explosion.

Fire crews could be seen shooting water onto the site from cranes while a thick column of black smoke filled the sky in images released by Yonhap.

The fire was extinguished by Saturday afternoon.

President Lee Jae Myung visited the site and met bereaved families, promising to provide full support for victims and their families, Yonhap said.

"The government will thoroughly investigate the cause of the incident and prepare fundamental measures to prevent such tragedies," Lee wrote on X.

Arab nations condemn Israeli strikes on Syria

Saudi Arabia and regional powers condemn Israeli strikes, urge global intervention

● Strikes hit southern Syria camps

● Saudi calls it "flagrant violation" of international law

AFP | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry condemned on Saturday Israel's strikes on Syrian army camps as "aggression", joining other Arab nations and Turkey in calling on the international community to intervene.

Israel's military said on Friday it had struck southern Syria in response to what it called attacks against the Druze community in Sweida province.

Israel had bombed Syria during a deadly bout of sectarian violence last year, saying it was acting to defend the minority group.

The Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement that the kingdom condemned "the blatant Israeli aggression... in flagrant violation of international law and Syrian sovereignty".

It urged the international community "to put an end to Israel's violations of international laws and norms".

The Turkish foreign ministry earlier called the Israeli attack "a dangerous escalation" that



Iron Dome interceptors go up behind a group of Israeli soldiers along the border with Lebanon, in the Upper Galilee in northern Israel

must be stopped.

Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and Kuwait all joined in condemning the Israeli strikes, stressing the need to ensure Syria's sovereignty and the global community's role in preventing such attacks.

Cairo's foreign ministry urged "the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities and take immediate action to put an end to these ongoing Israeli violations and attacks".

The Israeli strikes came as

war roiled the Middle East after the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, sparking a conflict that has engulfed much of the region, although Syria has avoided being dragged into it.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on Thursday that clashes with government forces in Sweida province left at least four Druze fighters dead.

Israeli shelling later hit residential neighbourhoods in

Sweida city, the Observatory said.

After the overthrow of Syria's longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, Israel moved its forces into the UN-patrolled demilitarised zone on the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, and has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria as well as regular incursions.

The military said on Friday it "will not allow harm to come to Druze in Syria and will continue to act for their protection".

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Carrick 'baffled' by inconsistent penalty calls as Man Utd held

Carrick criticises refereeing decisions after United twice surrender lead

- United draw 2-2 with Bournemouth
- Fernandes scores from penalty
- Diallo denied spot-kick appeal
- Maguire sent off late

AFP | London

Michael Carrick described the inconsistency of penalty decisions in Manchester United's 2-2 draw at Bournemouth as "crazy" after his side twice blew a lead on Friday.

United took the lead from the spot through Bruno Fernandes but were denied a second penalty when Amad Diallo went down inside the box under a challenge from Adrien Truffert.

Bournemouth immediately broke to equalise when Truffert teed up Ryan Christie to level.

A James Hill own goal restored United's lead before Harry Maguire was sent-off and conceded a penalty for bringing down Evanilson.

The contact on the Brazilian striker was remarkably similar to that ignored by the officials



Manchester United's Portuguese midfielder #08 Bruno Fernandes (R) is tackled by Bournemouth's English defender #23 James Hill (L)

for Truffert's challenge on Diallo.

However, VAR did not intervene on any of the calls to ask referee Stuart Attwell to review his decisions.

"To give one and not give the other, I just can't get my head around - it's crazy," said Carrick.

"I can understand that decision (to send off Maguire) but we should have had another

penalty and the game would have been different.

"I thought that was what VAR was for, to clear things up and consistency.

"It's two different decisions, so a bit baffling really."

Despite the disappointment of not stretching clear in third place in the Premier League, United remain well-placed for a return to the Champions League

next season.

With a top-five finish almost certain to secure a place in Europe's elite competition, they lead sixth-placed Chelsea by seven points.

United are not in action again for over three-and-a-half weeks as an international break is followed by the FA Cup quarter-finals.

"We could have had more to-



Two nearly identical penalty incidents were judged differently in the same match – one awarded, one ignored – with VAR choosing not to review either, sparking Carrick's frustration



I can understand that decision (to send off Maguire) but we should have had another penalty and the game would have been different. I thought that was what VAR was for, to clear things up and consistency

MICHAEL CARRICK

night but it's not the end of the world," added Carrick.

"We'll come back stronger after the break."

US newcomer Anthony crowned world indoor sprint king



Jordan Anthony

AFP | Torunv

US newcomer Jordan Anthony announced himself on the global stage by scorching to gold in the men's 60m at the world indoor championships in Torun, Poland, on Friday.

The 21-year-old American champion clocked a season's best of 6.41 seconds for a stunning win.

"Winning the gold feels great but, to be honest, I feel more excited for the fans than for myself," said Anthony, who switched to track after playing American football.

"The final was a great race but I still have a lot left in the tank. Most importantly, I did my debut right and I am bringing the gold medal back to the USA."

Anthony added: "This felt easy for me. This proves to me I picked the right sport. I am looking forward to the outdoor

season."

Jamaica's Kishane Thompson, the world and Olympic 100m silver medallist, came in second in a personal best of 6.45sec as the Caribbean island's gold medal drought in the event continued.

American Trayvon Bromell, who won the 60m back in 2016 and was part of the world gold medal-winning 4x100m relay team last year in Tokyo, claimed bronze in a photo finish with Thompson.

Defending champion Jeremiah Azu of Britain was fourth in 6.46sec.

Anthony has made an electrifying start to his professional career after years of accolade in the 60m and 100m events at the NCAA US collegiate level.

This month he won the 60m at the USATF Indoor Championships in 6.45sec, ahead of Bromell and his training partner Noah Lyles, the Olympic 100m champion, who clocked 6.51.

Di Giannantonio takes Brazil MotoGP pole ahead of Bezzecchi, Marquez



(L to R) Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing Team's Italian rider Fabio Di Giannantonio, Prima Pramac Yamaha's Turkish rider Toprak Razgatlioglu and Ducati Lenovo's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia compete

AFP | Goiania, Brazil

Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio took pole position for the Brazilian Grand Prix yesterday, as reigning MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez was third fastest in qualifying.

Di Giannantonio, who had to come through the first qualifying session, seized his first pole since 2022 with an early lap of 1:17.410.

He will line up just in front of compatriot Marco Bezzecchi.

Marc Marquez, bidding for a record-equalling eighth top-class world title this year, was one of several big names to crash but still managed to complete the front row.

The Spaniard is bidding to bounce back after being forced to retire from the first race of the season in Thailand three weeks ago.

Fabio Quartararo was fourth and will be joined on the second row by Jorge Martin and Ai Ogura.

The sprint race was set to take place later yesterday, with the main event Sunday as MotoGP returns to Brazil for the first time since 2004.

Former world champion Francesco Bagnaia slid off the track during one of his laps in Q2, as did rising star Pedro Acosta.

Acosta, who claimed his maiden MotoGP win in the

sprint race in Buriram earlier this month before finishing second in the Grand Prix to lead the early standings, could only qualify in ninth, two places better than Bagnaia.

Japan's Ogura was fastest in the third and final practice session ahead of Alex Marquez and Quartararo.

Bezzecchi, who won the season-opener at Buriram but had previously struggled for pace this weekend, was then quickest in the first qualifying session to reach Q2.

In the battle for pole, Ducati's Marc Marquez quickly went second quickest, before crashing a couple of minutes later.

Alcaraz, Sabalenka win Miami openers

World number one Alcaraz overcomes Fonseca as Sabalenka and Gauff advance

● Alcaraz beats Fonseca 6-4, 6-4

● Aryna Sabalenka beats Ann Li 7-6, 6-4

● Coco Gauff rallies to reach third round

● Ethan Quinn upsets 11th seed Casper Ruud

● Alcaraz to face Sebastian Korda next

AFP | Miami

World number one Carlos Alcaraz was dialed-in on Friday, powering past rising Brazilian talent Joao Fonseca 6-4, 6-4 to reach the third round of the Miami Open.

The 22-year-old Spaniard used an early break in each set and saved all three break points he faced in a confident performance at Hard Rock Stadium, where 19-year-old Fonseca was cheered by a raucous contingent of fans.

"I was really good from the beginning until the last ball," Alcaraz said. "I know how good Joao is and that's why I was really focused, every point, every shot, trying to figure out what is the best possible shot for me."

Alcaraz bounced back from his semi-final loss to Daniil Medvedev at Indian Wells last week to improve to 17-1 in 2026.

That includes an Australian Open title that made him the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam and a title in



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain returns a shot against Joao Fonseca of Brazil

Doha.

Alcaraz gained the upper hand against 39th-ranked Fonseca with a break for 2-1 in the opening set, delivering a blistering forehand service return winner on break point.

He closed out the set with a love game, broke Fonseca to open the second and secured the victory with his eighth ace on match point.

It was extra satisfying since Alcaraz was stunned in his Miami opener by David Goffin last year.

"He had a lot of chances to stay in the match to (keep it) tight, so I'm just happy to stay calm, stay positive at these moments," said Alcaraz, who next faces American Sebastian Korda,

"I was really good from the beginning until the last ball. I know how good Joao is and that's why I was really focused, every point, every shot, trying to figure out what is the best possible shot for me"

CARLOS ALCARAZ

a 6-0, 6-3 winner over Camilo Ugo.

Women's number one Aryna Sabalenka held off determined American Ann Li 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 to launch her Miami title defense.

The Belarusian was pleased to get through in straight sets against her 39th-ranked foe in a match moved to the third show court as organizers hustled to get the rain-hit tournament back on schedule.

She needed more than an hour to pocket a first set in which she led 4-1 and wasted seven break points in the eighth game.

"I was there, I was fighting no matter what, even though my game probably wasn't the best one that I have," Sabalenka said.

Fourth-seeded American Coco Gauff and sixth-seeded compatriot Amanda Anisimova also reached the third round.

French Open champion Gauff rallied to beat Elisabetta Cocciaretto 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 in a match

delayed several hours by rain.

Anisimova outlasted Australian veteran Ajla Tomljanovic 6-1, 5-7, 6-4.

It was Gauff's first match since she retired during her third-round match at Indian Wells with "scary" pain in her left arm.

Gauff said the injury was improving.

"I might feel it sometimes on court, but I definitely feel it less and less every day," said Gauff, who took some time to find her rhythm against the aggressive Cocciaretto.

"She takes the ball so early, you don't have a lot of time to react," Gauff said. "Today, once I got adjusted to the tempo of play I was able to control the rallies when they went the distance."

In other men's action, 56th-ranked American Ethan Quinn upset Norway's 11th-seeded Casper Ruud 6-4, 7-6 (9/7), saving seven set points in the sec-



ond set on the way to victory. Japanese wildcard Rei Sakamoto bagged his maiden ATP match win, converting his fifth match point in a 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9/7) first-round victory over Aleksandar Kovacevic.

The 19-year-old ranked 164th booked a showdown with in-form Indian Wells finalist Medvedev.



Aryna Sabalenka returns a shot to Ann Li of the United States

Tottenham's Kinsky could return as Vicario set for hernia operation

AFP | London

Antonin Kinsky could be thrown into Tottenham's battle for Premier League survival after the club revealed number one goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario requires a hernia operation.

Vicario is still expected to start Sunday's crucial clash against fellow strugglers Nottingham Forest before undergoing surgery.

"The minor procedure for the Italy international goalkeeper has been timed to have as minimal an impact on our season as possible," Spurs said in a statement.

"Guglielmo will commence his rehabilitation with our medical staff immediately, and it is hoped that he could return to action within the next month."

After Sunday, Tottenham do not play again until April 11 due to no FA Cup fixture on the weekend after the March international break.

Kinsky was substituted by interim Spurs boss Igor Tudor just 17 minutes into his Champions League debut against Atletico Madrid last week.

The Czech under-21 international made two glaring errors



Tottenham Hotspur's Argentinian defender #17 Cristian Romero comforts Tottenham Hotspur's Czech goalkeeper #31 Antonin Kinsky after his substitution (file photo)

to gift the Spanish side two goals in their 5-2 first leg victory that propelled them into the quarter-finals.

Vicario has also made a series of high-profile errors in recent weeks, but has reportedly been playing through the pain barrier.

Tottenham sit just one point above the relegation zone with

eight games remaining.

Forest sit outside the bottom three only on goal difference ahead of their showdown at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Tottenham have not fallen outside English football's top tier since 1978 but are the only Premier League side without a league win this year.

Tudor hopes the club's medical staff can deliver some "nice surprises" over the next few weeks.

James Maddison, who has not played a single minute this season due to a knee injury, could be back before the end of the campaign.

Winger Mohammed Kudus is set to be available after the March international break.

"Maddison is already doing interesting things as well," Tudor told reporters. "With the ball and sprinting as well. I saw him, he is positive."

"We have this big three weeks after the game on Sunday... we need to check but (Kudus) is progressing very well."

"Rodrigo (Bentancur) as well... We hope the medical staff will make us some nice surprises in the next weeks which would be very important to have."

Tudor should have Dominic Solanke available after a minor hip issue and Joao Palhinha took part in training on Friday after being sidelined due to concussion protocols.

A Tottenham fan groups initiative titled "Show Up, Sing Up, Stay Up" aims to produce a raucous pre-match atmosphere in London on Sunday.

Pistons top Warriors to clinch NBA playoff berth



Golden State's Draymond Green blocks a shot attempt by Jalen Duren

AFP | Los Angeles

The Detroit Pistons beat the Golden State Warriors 115-101 on Friday to become the first Eastern Conference team to clinch an NBA playoff berth.

Jalen Duren scored 23 points and Daniss Jenkins added 22 for the Pistons, who grabbed their 51st victory of the season despite the absence of star guard Cade Cunningham, who is out for at least two weeks with a collapsed lung.

Ausar Thompson came up with seven of the Pistons 16 steals. In all the Warriors had 26 turnovers, leading to 32 Detroit points.

"That was a point of emphasis for us going into the game, trying to figure out how our

defense can create that chaos that we're looking for," said Pistons coach J.B. Bickerstaff.

The Boston Celtics maintained their hold on second place in the East with a 117-112 come-from-behind victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

Jaylen Brown scored 30 points and reserve Luka Garza scored 11 of his 22 in the fourth quarter as the Celtics held off the injury-depleted Grizzlies.

Memphis took a four-point lead into the fourth quarter and were up 103-102 with 5:33 remaining. But Boston unleashed a 10-0 scoring run to snatch the victory and stay ahead of the third-placed New York Knicks -- who edged the Brooklyn Nets 93-92.

Welbeck scores twice to **dent** Liverpool's top-five hopes

Brighton edges closer to European football while Liverpool grapples with fresh injury concerns

● Brighton win fourth in five

● Liverpool missing Salah, Alisson

● Ekitike forced off injured early

AFP | Brighton

Danny Welbeck scored twice as Brighton beat Liverpool 2-1 yesterday to deal a major blow to the Reds' push for a Champions League spot next season.

Arne Slot's men came into the match on the sunny south coast in buoyant mood after hammering Galatasaray 4-0 in midweek to reach the Champions League quarter-finals.

But a goal in each half from the evergreen Welbeck gave the home team a fourth win in five Premier League matches, keeping alive their own hopes of European football next season.

Liverpool were missing both goalkeeper Alisson Becker and forward Mohamed Salah at the Amex Stadium.

And they suffered a further injury blow early in the game



Brighton's English striker #18 Danny Welbeck scores their second goal

when topscorer Hugo Ekitike hobbled off with an apparent dead leg after a firm challenge from former Liverpool stalwart James Milner.

The champions found themselves behind when Welbeck

scored his 11th Premier League goal of the season in the 14th minute, nodding home from close range after Diego Gomez headed a cross-field pass back across goal.

That made the 35-year-old

former Manchester United and Arsenal forward the top English goalscorer in the league this season.

Liverpool found some rhythm after falling behind and Alexis Mac Allister went close to an

BETTER YOU KNOW

At 35, Danny Welbeck is now the Premier League's top English scorer this season – his best-ever top-flight campaign since debuting back in 2008

equaliser in the 22nd minute but Brighton goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen got down smartly low to his left to claw the ball away.

However, the visitors were level in the 30th minute after some clever opportunism from left-back Milos Kerkez, capitalising on an error from Brighton captain Lewis Dunk, who paid the price for heading a high ball back to his goalkeeper without looking behind him.

Hungary defender Kerkez nipped in and produced a composed finish, flicking the ball over the stranded Verbruggen.

Brighton started the second

half brightly and were back in front in the 56th minute, with Welbeck again on the score-sheet.

Yankuba Minteh's pinpoint cross was played into Welbeck's path by Jack Hinshelwood and he finished confidently, with the goal confirmed following a VAR check.

Welbeck, who made his Premier League debut for United in 2008, is enjoying his highest-scoring season in the league.

Slot threw on teenager Rio Ngunmoha, Andy Robertson and Federico Chiesa in a desperate search for an equaliser but it was Brighton who remained the more threatening team.

Defeat leaves Liverpool fifth in the Premier League, two points behind Aston Villa and one ahead of Chelsea, with the top five almost certain to qualify for the Champions League next season.

The club's Premier League title defence collapsed earlier in the season but they remain alive in the Champions League and face Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals early next month.

Liverpool's Brazilian international goalkeeper Alisson posted on social media that he would be "out of action for a while".

Pogacar ends long wait for Milan-San Remo glory after edging epic



UAE Team Emirate's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar celebrates as he crosses the finish line

AFP | San Remo

Tadej Pogacar claimed another landmark victory by edging a thrilling Milan-San Remo yesterday, finally adding a fourth of road cycling's five "Monument" races to his collection.

Pogacar pipped Tom Pidcock in an enthralling two-man sprint climax, even after his race strategy was blown

to bits by crashing a few kilometres before the key Cipressa climb, the penultimate ascent of the race and the one where everything was expected to be decided.

UAE rider Pogacar crossed the line on Via Roma in San Remo with Pidcock right on his wheel after a brilliant battle between the pair from the final Poggio di San Remo climb, with Wout Van Aert rounding off the podium.

Mbappe 100 percent, Bellingham fit, says Real Madrid's Arbeloa

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said yesterday he has "maximum confidence" in French superstar Kylian Mbappe ahead of the derby clash against Atletico Madrid.

Mbappe returned from a knee sprain as a substitute against Manchester City on Tuesday after missing five games and Arbeloa said he was excited to have the forward back at 100 percent, along with fit-again England international Jude Bellingham.

The duo will be in Madrid's squad for Sunday's La Liga game against Diego Simeone's Atletico at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"I already told you that the day (Mbappe) came back would be when he was at 100 percent," Arbeloa told reporters.

"I think that in the minutes we saw him in Manchester, with the two or three bursts of pace he made, every one of those actions showed he's in great shape and, above all, (it's about) his own feelings..."

"We have maximum confidence, maximum security, maximum excitement to have a player like him back, so decisive and



Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe reacts during a match (file photo)

at 100 percent."

Mbappe is Madrid's top goalscorer this season with 38 goals in 34 games across all competitions.

Arbeloa said he was happy that the French national team have called up Mbappe for matches against Brazil and Colombia next week in the United States.

"I think it's fantastic. He's a player who's available to the coach, who has already played with us, who's definitely going to play tomorrow, so I don't see

any problem with him going with his national team," added Arbeloa.

England coach Thomas Tuchel called up Bellingham for international duty even though the midfielder has not played since February 1 because of a hamstring injury.

"He's now available, he'll be in the squad tomorrow. We'll see if he plays. I think he will, he's available and I'm really looking forward to seeing him out on the pitch," said Arbeloa.

"From there it's normal that

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I already told you that the day (Mbappe) came back would be when he was at 100 percent. I think that in the minutes we saw him in Manchester, with the two or three bursts of pace he made, every one of those actions showed he's in great shape and, above all, (it's about) his own feelings

ALVARO ARBELOA

he can go with his national team.

"It's clear that Jude Bellingham is a very intelligent player, he knows especially well what he's doing at every moment and the situation he's in, but from my side I'm very happy that he'll be available tomorrow and ready to help us."

Madrid will be without goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who is set to miss several weeks with a thigh injury, but Arbeloa said he had faith in his replacement Andriy Lunin.