



Email slip-up sinks BHD 11,000 lawsuit



Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

A commercial dispute over unpaid invoices worth about BHD 11,000 was dismissed after the court found the amount had already been fully paid. The case was filed by a supplier, which claimed it had not received around BHD 11,057 for raw materials delivered to a plastics company. However, the defendant argued that all dues had been settled through bank transfers.

The defence, represented by attorney Bashayer Al Naqeeb, presented bank records showing that all invoices had been cleared. It also submitted an email from a representative of the claimant company confirming receipt of payment, along with an account statement showing a zero balance.

After reviewing the evidence, the court ruled in favour of the defendant.

It held that the email constituted valid written proof with full legal weight, equivalent to official documentation, and could not be challenged unless there was evidence of fraud, error or coercion — none of which was established.

The court concluded that the acknowledgment of payment was clear and decisive, leaving no legal basis for the claim. The lawsuit was therefore dismissed, confirming that the defendant had met all its financial obligations.

Tesla starts 'robotaxi' production: Musk
Washington, United States

Tesla's much-touted autonomous "robotaxi", called the Cybercab, has started production, CEO Elon Musk said on Friday, the same week that the carmaker reported first-quarter profits that beat expectations. Musk posted a promotional video on X accompanied by the brief caption, "Cybercab has started production."

Royal Praise After Thrilling Final

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa extended congratulations to the officials, players, and supporters of Al-Muharraq SC following their victory in the HM the King's Cup for Football, after defeating Al-Riffa SC.

His Majesty praised Al-Muharraq's strong and consistent performances throughout the competition, highlighting the team's technical quality and the collective efforts of players and coaching and administrative staff that led to the champion-



ship title. He also acknowledged Al-Riffa's commendable display in the

final, describing their performance as competitive and spirited, and wished the team success in upcoming tournaments.

The King commended both sides for the high level of football shown in the final, noting that the match reflected the continued progress of Bahraini football and its growing standards across domestic competitions.

He further praised the significant turnout of fans from both clubs, saying their presence and encouragement contributed to the final's intensity and spirit.



Muharraq Crowned King's Cup Champions

Riffa Left Frustrated as Red Wolves End Six-Year Drought

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Muharraq are King's Cup champions for the 20th time after beating Riffa 2-1 at Bahrain National Stadium yesterday in the 49th edition of the final. The match carried added weight given Riffa's victory over Muharraq in February's Khalid bin Hamad Cup final, but this time Fernando Santos' side delivered the response they were searching for.

Riffa struck first through an own goal by Soufiane Mahrouk, before Muharraq equalised via Mohammed Al Hardan. Elliot Simoes then scored the second-half winner to seal the victory for Muharraq. The result secures Muharraq the competition's top prize of 100,000 BHD, with Riffa collecting 50,000 BHD as runners-up.

Respectful start

Before kick-off, both teams walked out alongside front-line personnel who had served the Kingdom during recent difficult circumstances, a gesture that set a respectful



HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa with the trophy alongside Waleed Al Hayyam and Sayed Mohammed Jaffar

tone inside the stadium before the football took centre stage. Muharraq began the brighter side. Elliot Simoes had an early sight of goal in the second minute after being played in behind, but his effort was blocked and cleared for a corner. Edimar Ribeiro da Costa also looked sharp in the opening exchanges, linking play well and probing the Riffa defence, while Gervasio Olivera tested range with a long-distance volley that sailed over.

Riffa, however, struck first against the run of play. In the 12th minute, Wellington Moreira delivered an inswinging corner and Soufiane Mahrouk inadvertently turned the ball into his own net under pressure, handing Mohamed Mashaan's side the opening goal.

The match soon became disrupted for Riffa. Jassim Al Shaikh was stretchered off in the 20th minute after suffering a fracture in the upper chest area, forcing an early reshuffle. Dejan Georgovic also departed shortly after in a double substitution that unsettled their structure. After that,

the Red Wolves got their teeth into the game. In the 28th minute, Mohammed Al Hardan reacted quickest to a loose ball after a corner was cleared and struck a sensational volley past Riffa goalkeeper Dziugas Bartkus to make it 1-1.

Missed chances

Soon after, the match turned into an end-to-end contest, delivering plenty of excitement for the thousands in attendance. Rodrigo Yuri went close for Riffa from a similar set-piece situation, while Muharraq's Edimar da Costa continued to threaten at the edge of the area, narrowly missing the target in the 33rd minute.

Muharraq then came within inches of taking the lead before half-time. Edimar Ribeiro da Costa held off pressure in the box and squared for Abdulwahab Al Malood, who had the goal at his mercy from just a couple of yards out, but he blazed over with only the goalkeeper to beat.

Moments later, Muharraq did have the ball in the net when Soufiane Mahrouk was played through and finished well, but the assistant's flag cut short the

celebration for offside. At the interval, the match remained level at 1-1, with Muharraq left to reflect on a major missed opportunity.

Second-half breakthrough

After the break, they wasted no time in pressing again, and thought they had taken the lead just after the restart. Edimar finished calmly after rounding the goalkeeper, but VAR intervened, ruling the goal out following a foul in the build-up involving Ali Haram and Soufiane Mahrouk.

The reprieve did not last long for the Blues. In the 49th minute, Muharraq struck the winner. Elliot Simoes found space despite being surrounded by three defenders and drove a powerful shot into the near post, restoring Muharraq's lead at 2-1. From there, Riffa pushed forward but struggled to create clear chances in open play. The game instead turned on key penalty decisions and VAR checks. In the 76th minute, Vinicius Vargas went down under a challenge from Mahrouk on the edge of the box. Referee Ahmed Khalil reviewed the play

but waved away appeals for a penalty.

Deep into stoppage time, Riffa had another penalty claim dismissed after Ebrahim Al Khalasi accidentally struck Wellington Moreira while attempting to clear the ball. The referee was again sent to the monitor, but the incident was ruled offside in the build-up, ending Riffa's final push.

Muharraq Hold On

As the final whistle sounded, Muharraq's bench poured onto the pitch to celebrate a hard-earned victory after a strong second-half display. It was not a straightforward performance, with missed chances and sustained pressure from Riffa, but Simoes' winner ultimately proved decisive.

For Portuguese manager Fernando Santos, it is a significant triumph over a familiar rival and a measure of redemption after recent cup disappointment. As for Riffa, it was a missed chance to complete a domestic double, as Muharraq lifted the King's Cup for a record 20th time — their first since the 2019-20 season.



Captain Waleed Al Hayyam goes to lift the King's Cup title



Emotional celebrations at full-time



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BD84m in Unpaid Utility Bills

Electricity Costs Soar as Bahrain Subsidises One-Third of Supply

● **Government tariff support totals BD175.3 million**

● **Electricity revenue BD375.5 million**

● **Generation cost BD416.8 million**

Overdue utility bills in Bahrain have climbed to BD84 million, as the cost of electricity supply surged to more than BD550 million in 2024, according to figures submitted to Parliament.

In a written reply to MP Hassan Ebrahim, Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Yasser Humaidan said total electricity costs reached BD550.8m, including BD416.8m for generation, BD79m for transmission and BD55m for distribution.

Despite revenues of BD375.5m, the government covered a shortfall of BD175.3m in tariff support—around 32 per cent of total costs.

Subsidies remained heavily concentrated on Bahraini households, particularly for lower consumption. The first residential account received the largest share, with support covering up to 89 per cent of



“In 2024, the total cost of electricity production reached BD550.8 million.”

YASSER HUMAIDAN, MINISTER OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER AFFAIRS

costs for usage below 3,000 kilowatt-hours.

Meanwhile, unpaid bills reached BD84.01m, with the largest share linked to Bahraini households. The ministry said arrears span multiple years, making annual comparisons difficult.

The ministry said flexible payment plans are available, including instalments and a fixed-payment scheme designed to help households manage seasonal spikes in electricity use, particularly during summer.

Efforts to curb demand in-



Hassan Ebrahim, MP

clude public awareness campaigns and ongoing solar energy projects.

Demand for Solar Grows

Bahrain is accelerating its push into clean energy, with dozens of new renewable projects underway as part of a broader strategy to expand solar power and cut emissions.

The Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) said it is currently working on 54 renewable energy projects that will help raise distributed generation capacity to around 500 megawatts (MW). This comes on top of 372 projects already completed, with a combined capacity exceeding 141MW.

The authority also confirmed plans for large-scale solar developments across the kingdom, including the expansion of the



Mohammed Al Rifaie, MP



- National plan launched: 2017
- Renewable energy target: 20% by 2035
- Net-zero goal: Carbon neutrality by 2060

Al Dur renewable energy project and a tender for Bahrain's first utility-scale solar power station.

EWA said demand for solar installations has grown steadily, particularly after simplifying procedures and moving applications fully online through the Benayat platform. Since 2023, around 400 net-metering applications have been completed, with installa-

tions rising each year.

Across the country, renewable systems now contribute more than 230 gigawatt-hours of electricity annually, supported by regulations that allow homes and businesses to generate power and feed excess energy back into the grid in exchange for bill credits.

State Covers 32% of Power Costs

The government is covering a significant share of electricity and water costs in Bahrain, with consumers paying only part of the actual price, according to the Electricity and Water Authority (EWA).

In a written reply to Parliament, EWA said customers pay about 68 per cent of electricity costs, while the remaining 32 per cent is subsidised by the state. For water, consumers cover around 48 per cent, with the government funding the majority share.

The authority also reported savings of roughly BD170 million over the past three years, achieved through efficiency measures rather than tariff increases. Cost reductions reached about BD30 million in 2022, followed by BD70 million in both 2023 and 2024.

EWA said the improvements were part of efforts to balance revenue and expenditure under the Government Programme, adding that the measures remain in place and are reviewed regularly.

Despite these savings, the total

WHAT'S NEXT ON PARLIAMENT'S AGENDA?

By Mohammed Darwish



Jameela Mulla Hassan, MP



Water Loss Reduction Progress

• Down from 25.3% (2022) To 23.77% (2024)

- Improvements linked to:
- Early leak identification
- Modernised infrastructure
- Smart monitoring systems

cost of electricity production, transmission and distribution reached BD551 million in 2024, while water costs stood at BD162 million. Similar levels are expected in 2025.

The authority noted that recent tariff adjustments for some users were aimed at maintaining service continuity and supporting infrastructure upgrades.

EWA Details Action in Certificate Fraud Case

The Electricity and Water Authority (EWA) clarified that an expatriate engineer later found to have used a forged academic certificate was hired and retained based on his extensive experience and professional record, not the document in question.

In a response to MP Dr Hisham Al Ashiri, the authority said the employee had previously worked in established electricity sector organisations before joining EWA. At the time of recruitment, he submitted multiple academic and professional qualifications, prioritizing his practical experience in the field.

EWA said the same criteria were applied during contract renewals, with reviews focusing on job performance, operational needs and the availability of qualified Bahraini alternatives. It added that no concerns were raised during his period of employment.

The authority stated that all

“The employee was appointed based on his extensive field experience, proven track record in the electricity sector, and multiple verified qualifications submitted at the time—not on the certificate later found to be questionable.”

ELECTRICITY AND WATER AUTHORITY (EWA)

hiring procedures at the time complied with existing regulations and there were no indications of irregularities in the submitted documents then.

Following suspicions regarding one certificate, EWA launched a full review of qualifications held by expatriate engineers, which revealed signs of



Dr Hisham Al Ashiri, MP

forgery in the document linked to the employee.

The case was subsequently referred to the Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Interior in October 2023. A court ruling was issued against the individual on 26 August 2025.

EWA added that internal oversight mechanisms and performance monitoring prevented any financial or administrative impact on the organisation. It also noted that strengthened national regulations governing engineering practices have since enhanced oversight and compliance, with no similar cases identified.

Bill Targets Cleaner Shipping Standards

Parliament is set to debate a draft law at its next session on Bahrain's accession to Annex VI of the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships under Decree No. 7 of 2026.

The proposed move would bring the Kingdom into the section of the MARPOL framework that regulates air pollution from ships, including limits on exhaust emissions, fuel quality standards, energy efficiency requirements, and carbon intensity controls in international shipping.

Annex VI also aims to reduce the environmental impact from maritime transport while helping Bahraini vessels avoid repeated inspections and delays in foreign ports that have already ratified the agreement.

According to the government, accession would strengthen Bahrain's environmental commitments, support its net-zero 2060 target, and align with national and economic development strategies. It is also expected to enhance the country's role within the International Maritime Organization and improve the international standing of Bahraini-flagged vessels.

MPs to Vote on Shadow Company Liability Law

Parliament is set to debate a new decree-law on Tuesday that would hold individuals who effectively run companies personally liable for misconduct, even if they do not hold formal titles.

Decree-Law No. 38 of 2025, which amends the Commercial Companies Law, seeks to strengthen corporate governance, improve transparency, and close legal gaps ahead of Bahrain's upcoming Financial Action Task Force (FATF) review in March 2026, according to the government.

Under the proposed changes, company managers, board members, and individuals who exercise “actual management” of a firm could be held personally responsible for damages caused by gross negligence, serious misconduct, or violations of law or company statutes. In cases involving multiple parties, liability may be joint.

The law also targets mohassa companies—informal or undisclosed partnerships not listed



Ahmed Al Salloum, Chairman of Parliament's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee

in the commercial register—requiring existing arrangements to regularise their status within three months. Notaries would be barred from registering new mohassa contracts once the law takes effect.

Additional reforms include allowing company meetings and voting to take place electronically, provided identity verification and proper documentation are ensured. The legislation also permits establishing single-shareholder closed joint-stock companies and extends the timeframe for businesses to decide on continuation after structural changes to 90 working days.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said the concept of “gross negligence” is already established in Bahraini jurisprudence, while “actual management” refers to individuals who effectively control company decisions without formal appointment.

No System Failure in Job Fill Rate

The Labour Ministry rejected claims that it is responsible for thousands of unfilled job vacancies in 2025, telling MPs that hiring outcomes depend on employers' requirements and jobseekers' choices rather than direct government placement.

Responding to a parliamentary question about more than 19,000 unfilled vacancies, the ministry said it does not appoint workers to jobs. Instead, it operates the National Employment Platform, where employers post vacancies and candidates apply based on

their own preferences, companies make the final selection.

The ministry said 33,406 vacancies were registered in 2025, of which 14,089 were filled through the platform and another 11,641 were filled directly by employers for the same roles. It said this brings the overall fill rate to 78 per cent, argu-



ing that the remaining gap does not indicate system failure when viewed in full context.

It added that some vacancies receive no applicants, while others remain unfilled because applicants do not meet employer conditions such as language or skill requirements. In such cases, jobseekers may be referred to training programmes.

The ministry also clarified that unem-

ployment-related procedures, including missed interview cases and appeals over suspended benefits, are reviewed manually and not fully automated. It said jobseekers can submit excuses with supporting documents, and most accepted appeals involve valid explanations provided later.

However, a parliamentary inquiry committee presented a different assessment in its final report. It said only 42.2 per cent of vacancies in 2025 were filled through the platform, leaving 19,317 unfilled posts, and argued that more than half of listed va-

cancies did not result in direct employment.

Over a three-year period from 2023 to 2025, the committee said more than 100,000 vacancies were recorded but only 41,310 jobs were filled, leaving 59,177 unused. It said the ministry had not provided sufficient technical analysis to explain the shortfall.

The committee also criticised limits on access to some documents, including appeals records and internal reports, saying these limits restricted its ability to fully assess performance.

Bahrain, Pakistan move to allow prisoners to serve terms at home

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Prisoners from Bahrain and Pakistan may soon be allowed to serve their sentences in their home countries under a new law set to be reviewed by Parliament.

The proposal, issued under a royal decree, will come up in the next parliamentary session and aims to formalise an agreement between the two countries on transferring convicted persons.

Officials say the move would help prisoners stay closer to

their families, supporting their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

The Justice, Islamic Affairs and Waqf Ministry said the plan follows international practice and similar agreements signed by Bahrain.

Transfers would take place

only with the consent of both countries and the prisoner, and after a final court ruling.

Most of the costs involved would be covered by the country receiving the prisoner.

The National Institution for



Hassan Eid BuKhammas, Chairman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee

Human Rights has backed the proposal, saying it is in line with the Constitution and international standards.

Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee has recommended approval of the draft law.

Why Arad Fort walkway may soon look very **different**

This plan could be a game-changer for local businesses

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

If plans proceed as expected, the Arad Fort walkway may soon take on a livelier character, with kiosks offering made-in-Bahrain goods adding colour and activity to the seafront.

The proposal has already cleared an important step, having been passed by a majority vote of the Muharraq Municipal Council's Services and Facilities Committee, and will now move to the full council for further discussion and a final decision.

As you might have guessed, these kiosks are set to be run by productive families.

They will bring with them a range of handcrafted items, offering visitors something distinctly local in what is already a high-traffic public space.

If realised, the initiative could shape up as a win-win — opening new doors for small, family-run businesses while giving visitors to one of Muharraq's most popular coastal destinations a richer, more authentic experience.



At its core, the plan seeks to organise retail spaces that allow locally made goods to be sold directly to the public.

Ahmed Mohammed Al Maqahwi, who tabled the proposal, said the idea is to support small-scale enterprises while also

enhancing visitor engagement along the waterfront.

Committee members, clearly encouraged by the possibilities,

voiced strong support for the project. They noted that such an initiative would strengthen the role of productive families



Ahmed Mohammed Al Maqahwi

in the local economy, offering them greater visibility and easier access to customers seeking Bahrain-made products.

It would also, they added, inject fresh vibrancy into the walkway.

Beyond that, the project aims to expand the range of services available at the site, forming part of broader efforts to enhance tourism and further develop public spaces across Muharraq.



Arad Fort dates back to the late 15th century, making it one of Bahrain's oldest surviving forts

It was built in a typical Islamic military style, with a square layout and four corner towers.

- * Constructed using coral stone and limestone, traditional materials suited to the Gulf climate.
- * The fort has been carefully restored using original techniques, preserving its authentic character.
- * The restoration is often cited as a model for heritage conservation in Bahrain.



- * Today, the fort is a major cultural and tourist landmark in Muharraq.
- * Arad fort is illuminated at night, creating a striking visual along the waterfront.
- * The site is sometimes used for cultural events and gatherings.

GCC, Jordanian Ambassadors to Russia meet Belarus First Deputy Foreign Minister



The Ambassadors of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and Jordan accredited to the Russian Federation, headed by Ahmed Abdulrahman Al Saati, Ambassador to Russia and its non-resident Ambassador to Belarus, met Sergey Lukashевич, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus. The meeting addressed cooperation relations between the GCC member states and Jordan with Belarus. It also discussed ways to enhance coordination on regional and international issues of mutual concern, with emphasis on the importance of sustained diplomatic engagement in consolidating security and stability and advancing constructive cooperation.

Bahrain, Egypt underline unity in facing regional challenges

TDT | Manama

Joint Arab action in addressing current regional challenges took centre stage during a phone call between Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Badr Abdelatty, Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptians Abroad.

The two ministers discussed ways to enhance coordination and cooperation in confronting ongoing developments, with a view to supporting regional security and stability.

- Ministers explore closer coordination to tackle regional challenges
- Talks focus on boosting cooperation to safeguard regional stability
- Bahrain and Egypt look to deepen coordination amid unfolding developments

They also reviewed the strong Bahraini-Egyptian relations and explored opportunities to further strengthen cooperation across various fields.

The discussion touched on the latest regional developments and their implications, underscoring the importance of continued consultation and

unified efforts.

The talks come as Bahrain holds the presidency of the current session of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, chairs the Arab League Council at the ministerial level, and serves as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

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● Offer allows clients benefiting from the 3-month installment deferment program to transfer their financings from any other bank to Al Salam Bank

● Al Salam Bank invites clients interested in benefiting from this offer to visit any of its branches starting from Saturday

TDI | Manama



Al Salam Bank announced the launch of its special finance transfer offer, enabling new and existing clients to receive instant additional cash when transferring their financings from other banks while maintaining the Central Bank of Bahrain's 3-month deferment period with no changes, as part of the Bank's ongoing efforts to enhance the banking experience and provide practical benefits that add real value to clients' everyday financial needs.

This offer allows clients benefiting from the 3-month installment deferment program to transfer their financings from any other bank to Al Salam Bank

without any changes to the deferred period, while enjoying instant cash, competitive profit rates on financings, and flexible repayment options, in addition to instant approval and simplified, fast disbursement procedures. This offer includes Al Salam Bank clients benefiting from the installment deferment service, as well as new clients who will transfer their financing to the bank. The offer reflects the Bank's commitment to providing banking solutions that align with market needs, contributing to greater financial

flexibility and enabling clients to manage their obligations with ease and convenience.

Al Salam Bank invites clients interested in benefiting from this offer to visit any of its branches starting from Saturday, 25 April 2026, and apply directly to take advantage of these benefits, within a seamless banking experience built on convenience, speed, and meeting their diverse financial needs.

It is worth noting that clients benefiting from this offer will also be automatically eligible for Al Salam Bank's "Finance Set-

tlement" campaign, launched in celebration of the Bank's 20th anniversary and running throughout 2026.

The campaign offers clients monthly opportunities to win prizes, including the settlement of their outstanding finance balance (subject to the campaign's terms and conditions), in addition to monthly prizes covering 3 installment payments for multiple winners, with more than 50 prizes dedicated to social housing program clients, covering 3 installment payments each.

Tender Board opens bids for major government contracts

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Tender Board opened 30 bids across five contracts covering cleaning services, hotel linen, IT support, utility parts, and industrial chemicals.

The most competitive tender was for cleaning services at Exhibition World Bahrain, attracting 14 bids. Offers ranged from BHD 1.00 million to over BHD 47 million, with several bids still under review or marked conditional.

Four bids were received for hotel linen supply, with prices starting from BHD 96,886. IT support services for the Ministry of Social Development drew six bids, ranging from BHD 15,048 to BHD 250,173.

Bapco Upstream's chemical supply contract for triethylene glycol saw five bidders, with

Quick Facts

Total bids opened: 30
Key sectors: Cleaning, linen, IT, utilities, chemicals
Cleaning contract bids: 14 (highest competition)
Lowest IT bid: BHD 15,048
Hotel linen lowest bid: BHD 96,886
Highest chemical bid: BHD 3.19 million
Utility contract: 1 bid only
All bids: under evaluation

prices reaching over BHD 3.19 million. Meanwhile, one bid was received for utility parts supply at the Electricity and Water Authority.

Officials said all bids are subject to technical and financial evaluation before final awards.

Small Vessel office handles over 2,000 transactions in two months

TDI | Manama

The Small Vessel Registration Office processed 2,175 transactions in January and February 2026, with activity declining in February.

January recorded 1,216 transactions, falling to 959 in February. Driving licence services made up the largest share in both months, followed by boat registrations and vessel inspections.

The office also handled ownership transfers, certificate updates, jet ski registrations, number plate issuance, and deregistrations.

Despite the overall drop in activity, number plate issuance and jet ski registrations increased slightly in February.

Quick Facts

Total transactions: 2,175
January: 1,216
February: 959
Biggest category: Driving licence services
Boat registrations (Jan): 184
Boat registrations (Feb): 159
Jet ski registrations: 11 (Jan) - 14 (Feb)
Number plates issued: 82 (Jan) - 86 (Feb)
Overall trend: Down in February



Representative image

Chinese EVs, flying cars take centre stage at world's biggest auto show

AFP | Beijing, China

Thousands squeezed into the world's biggest car show Friday, snapping selfies beside Chinese electric vehicles as automakers showcased AI, humanoid robots and flying-car ambitions in a cut-throat market.

Rows of influencers posed in front of gleaming models at the capital's cavernous international exhibition centre, darting to suitcases stuffed with outfit changes, while animated CEOs worked the crowds in front of massive LED screens.

Legacy overseas brands such as Volkswagen, Toyota and BMW once dominated in China, but have lost market share in past years to domestic firms that beat them to the electric vehicle revolution and undercut them on price.

Chinese manufacturers including BYD, Xiaomi and XPeng are now also at the forefront of integrating AI software and autonomous driving technology into their EVs.

The Auto China exhibition, hosted at two side-by-side venues, spans 380,000 square metres (four million square feet), according to organisers -- more than 50 football pitches.

More than 1,400 vehicles from hundreds of Chinese and for-



eign companies are on display from Friday, when the show opened to industry professionals and the media, and later to the public from April 28 until May 3.

While traditional leading brands like Germany's BMW and Mercedes held sweeping areas of the vast halls, most of the event's mega stages were dominated by Chinese brands including BYD and battery giant CATL.

Robots, flying cars

At the sprawling expo, crowds cheered as XPeng chief executive He Xiaopeng unveiled the

company's new GX, a six-seat electric SUV.

The imposing 5.2-metre vehicle incorporates AI technology and is aimed at breaking into the luxury market, He said.

It would soon be followed by humanoid robots this year, He promised, and eventually by flying cars, which XPeng hopes to mass-produce.

Foreign automakers are increasingly collaborating with Chinese firms to stay competitive.

BMW has partnered with CATL, while Audi is using Huawei's driving assistance systems and Volkswagen is co-develop-

ing EVs with Guangzhou-based XPeng.

XPeng President Brian Gu said companies were "leveraging their respective strength to collaborate with China" a trend he said would continue.

Gu has his eyes set on export markets including the Gulf and Europe, where he anticipates growth to accelerate.

"In the last year, we started local production, and this year we are going to launch even more new products for the European market" which he said was responsible for half of XPeng's global sales in 2025.

Porsche exits sports car maker Bugatti Rimac

AFP | Berlin, Germany

German carmaker Porsche announced yesterday the sale of its stakes in sports car manufacturer Bugatti Rimac to a consortium led by a US fund founded by the Egyptian billionaire Sawiris family.

The amount of the transaction, which still has to be approved by regulators, has not been disclosed.

The announcement comes after the German luxury car brand warned it would face a difficult year under pressure from competitors and US tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

Under the terms of the

agreement, Porsche will sell all of its 45 percent stake in Bugatti Rimac, a joint venture founded in 2021 with Croatian "supercar" manufacturer Rimac, which holds the remaining 55 percent.

"Following completion, Rimac Group is set to take control of Bugatti Rimac and form a strategic partnership with HOF Capital and BlueFive Capital to support its continued growth," according to a statement from the German carmaker.

Porsche, which is part of the Volkswagen Group, will also sell its 20.6 percent stake in Rimac Group.



EU preps 'blueprint' for mutual aid clause amid Trump worries

AFP | Nicosia

The EU will lay out a "blueprint" for how its mutual assistance clause works if a country is attacked, Cyprus' leader said yesterday, as President Donald Trump casts doubt on the US commitment to NATO.

Attention has increased on Article 42.7 of the EU's governing treaty -- meant to help any member state that comes under attack -- as Trump has deepened questions over whether Washington would help defend NATO allies.

US soldier allegedly bet on Maduro operation using intel

AFP | Washington

A US soldier faces charges for using classified information to bet on online prediction markets related to the US operation to capture former Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro, the Department of Justice said Thursday.

US Army soldier Gannon Ken Van Dyke, 38, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, allegedly made over \$400,000 by using the online platform Polymarket to bet on outcomes related to US forces arriving in Venezuela's capital Caracas and deposing Maduro -- an operation he helped plan and execute, according to justice officials.

US invites Putin to G20 summit but Trump doubts he'll come

AFP | Washington

The United States will invite Russian President Vladimir Putin to a G20 summit in Miami, a US official said Thursday, but President Donald Trump said he doubted his counterpart would come.

The invitation would mark a major easing of international pressure on Putin, who has been shunned by most of the West but not Trump since ordering the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.



Rescue teams work to remove rubble from a building previously hit by the Israeli army, in the southern Lebanese village of Hanaouay

Lebanon truce extended as Araghchi heads to Pakistan talks

Trump announces three-week truce extension despite Hezbollah warnings

● Violence continues despite truce

● Hezbollah rejects extension terms

● Strait of Hormuz tensions persist

AFP | Washington

Israel and Lebanon extended their shaky ceasefire by three weeks yesterday, as Iran's foreign minister prepared for meetings with officials in Pakistan, which has been mediating efforts to end the wider Middle East war.

US President Donald Trump announced the truce had been prolonged after he met Israeli and Lebanese envoys in Washington, and described himself as confident that a peace deal in that conflict would be an "easy one".

But there was no sign of a breakthrough in the stand-off between rival US and Iranian blockades of the Strait of Hormuz, which has all but choked off maritime trade through a channel that before the war carried around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies.

No date has yet been set for a



I have all the time in the World, but Iran doesn't -- The clock is ticking!

DONALD TRUMP

second round of direct US-Iran talks in Islamabad, but Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is expected to arrive in the Pakistani capital yesterday night, an official source in Pakistan said, without providing details about who he was likely to meet.

'National consensus'

"Iran's foreign minister will begin a regional tour yesterday evening, April 24, travelling to Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow,"

Tehran's official IRNA news agency said, adding that Araghchi would review the latest situation regarding the war launched eight weeks ago by the United States and Israel.

It was not clear whether US Vice President JD Vance or other senior administration officials were planning to return to Pakistan, after he announced he was leaving without a deal after a previous round of talks, but American logistics and security teams are present in Islamabad, the Pakistani official source said.

Oil prices slid yesterday amid hopes that any fresh peace talks would see an end to disruptions to trade through Hormuz and the US blockade of shipping to and from Iranian ports.



Iranians are seen at Suru Beach in Bandar Abbas along the Strait of Hormuz

3 massive American aircraft carriers are now operating in the Middle East following the arrival of the USS George H.W. Bush

In Lebanon, despite Trump's announcement of a renewed ceasefire, Israel confirmed a claim by Hezbollah that it had shot down an Israeli drone with a surface-to-air missile. Mohammed Raad, the head of Hezbollah's parliamentary bloc, urged the Lebanese government to withdraw from direct talks with Israel and warned that a lasting peace deal of the kind sought by Trump "will in no way enjoy Lebanese national consensus".

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has vowed to destroy the Iran-backed movement, said: "We have started a process to reach a historic peace between Israel and Lebanon, and it's clear to us that Hezbollah is trying to sabotage this."

In south Lebanon's Tyre, residents were seen searching through rubble following recent airstrikes shortly before the ceasefire came into effect.

In Washington, Trump spoke in positive terms of peace prospects for Lebanon, voicing hope for a three-way meeting with the Lebanese and Israeli leaders. The two countries have been officially at war for decades and until last week had not met so directly since 1993.

A meeting between the leaders, let alone a peace treaty, would be historic.

'Clock is ticking'

The envoys' meeting came after Trump said he was in no rush to end the parallel war with Iran, adding that "the clock is ticking" for the Islamic republic. "I have all the time in the World, but Iran doesn't," Trump said on social media.

The USS George H.W. Bush aircraft carrier has arrived in the Middle East, the US military said Thursday, bringing to three the number of these floating American warships operating in the region.

A second carrier was operating in the Red Sea on Thursday, while a third is also in the region, according to US Central Command (CENTCOM).

Iran has said it will continue restricting access to the strait while US measures remain in place, rejecting demands from Trump to reopen Hormuz fully or surrender its enriched uranium

1660

English Convention Parliament meets and votes to restore Charles II

1954

Bell Labs announces the first solar battery made from silicon with about 6% efficiency

1953

Francis Crick and James Watson's discovery of the double helix structure of DNA is published in "Nature" magazine



1990

Hubble space telescope is placed into orbit by space shuttle Discovery

Warming El Nino set to return in mid-2026: UN

● Ocean temperatures rising rapidly

● Global heat risks increase

AFP | Washington

The El Nino weather phenomenon, which pushed global temperatures to record highs the last time around, is expected to return in mid-2026, the UN said yesterday.

The United Nations' weather and climate agency said El Nino conditions could well develop as early as May to July.

The World Meteorological

Organization (WMO) meanwhile said early signs indicated a particularly strong event.

El Nino is a naturally-occurring climate phenomenon that warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between.

The last El Nino contributed to making 2023 the second-hottest year on record and 2024 the all-time high.

"After a period of neutral conditions at the start of the year... there is high confidence in the onset of El Nino, followed by

YOU
KNOW WHAT

El Nino typically hinders hurricane formation in the Atlantic Basin while fuelling more storms in the central and eastern Pacific during the middle of the year

further intensification," said Wilfran Moufouma-Okia, the

WMO's climate prediction chief.

El Nino typically occurs every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

The WMO said in its latest monthly Global Seasonal Climate Update that sea surface temperatures are rising rapidly in the equatorial Pacific, "pointing to a likely return of El Nino conditions as early as May-July."

Forecasts indicate a "nearly global dominance of above-normal land surface temperatures" in the next three months.

Temperature spike

"There is no evidence that climate change increases the frequency or intensity of El Nino events," the Geneva-based WMO

said. "But it can amplify associated impacts."

The WMO explained that 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded "because of the combination of the powerful 2023-2024 El Nino and human-induced climate change from greenhouse gases".

While forecasting accuracy improves after April, "what we can say for certain is that the El Nino will be strong", Moufouma-Okia said.

El Nino is typically associated with increased rainfall in southern South America, the southern United States, the Horn of Africa and central Asia, and drought over Australia, Indonesia, and parts of southern Asia.

Shaken by Iran war, EU seeks larger voice on Mideast

Europe deepens ties as Hormuz closure disrupts trade and fuels tensions

● EU meets Middle East partners

● Talks held on Cyprus sidelines

● EU urges reopening of shipping route

AFP | Nicosia

EU leaders vowed to boost security and economic ties with Middle East partners and push for a diplomatic end to the Iran war, after talks in Cyprus focusing on the fallout from the conflict.

Leaders from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Jordan as well as the secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, were in Nicosia to meet their European Union counterparts on the sidelines of an EU summit.

"The current situation clearly underscores how closely Europe's security is linked with that of the Middle East, and how vital our cooperation on security and defence has become," European Council president Antonio Costa told a press conference after the talks.



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (4R) shares a laugh with Cyprus' President Nikos Christodoulides (C) and European Council President Antonio Costa (front, 3R) as they wait for France's President Emmanuel Macron for a family photo

US-Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation, including the direct targeting of US allies in the Gulf, have rattled the global economy, with the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz sending oil prices soaring and crimping supply of jet fuel in Europe.

"The Strait of Hormuz must immediately reopen without restrictions and without tolling, in full respect of international law and the principle of freedom of navigation. This is vital for the entire world," Costa said.

"Diplomacy is the only sustainable way forwards, and European

Union is ready to contribute to all ongoing efforts," he added.

The meeting came after Trump indefinitely extended the ceasefire with Iran this week, but push for fresh peace talks in Pakistan has stalled in recent days.

An extension of a shaky truce between Israel and Lebanon has

YOU
KNOW WHAT

The EU is considering expanding its naval mission, Operation Aspides, from protecting ships to coordinating broader maritime security with Middle Eastern partners

also been agreed on -- but European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said that was "not enough", calling for a permanent settlement.

"You cannot have stability in the Middle East or the Gulf while Lebanon is in flames," she said. "A temporary pause is not enough".

The EU has largely remained on the sidelines in the Middle East war despite US President Donald Trump lashing out at what he says is Europe's lack of support for Washington's efforts to contain Iran.

Over 250 Indians claiming descent from biblical tribe land in Israel

AFP | Tel Aviv

More than 250 Indians claiming descent from a biblical tribe landed at Tel Aviv airport on Thursday, as part of a government operation to relocate them to Israel.

They are the first "Bnei Menashe" ("Sons of Manasseh") to arrive in Israel since the government decided in November to fund the immigration of around 4,600 members of the community from the state of Manipur in northeast India.

The community claims to descend from Manasseh, the forefather of one of the biblical "lost tribes" of Israel exiled in 720 BC by Assyrian conquerors.

The Shavei Israel organization, which seeks to trace the

descendants of the lost tribes, said that some 4,000 Bnei Menashe have already immigrated to Israel since the 1990s, with around 7,000 others still living in India.

Their oral history tells of a centuries-long exodus through Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet and China, all the while adhering to certain Jewish religious practices, like circumcision.



Members of the Bnei Menashe (Sons of Manasseh) community in India arrive at Ben Gurion Airport in Lod, near Tel Aviv



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



One Europe. One Market. We are delivering for people. The ambitious roadmap signed today in Nicosia strengthens our ability to withstand shocks and brings predictability for families and businesses. For a more competitive, resilient European economy.

@EP_President

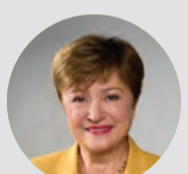
02



Day 2 of the Informal #EUOCO has just started. Thank you, dear Nikos @Christodoulides, for hosting the European Council in beautiful Cyprus, for your hospitality, and for providing such wonderful settings for our meeting.

@eucopresident

03



Many emerging market economies have built strong fundamentals. Independent central banks, fiscal councils, and reforms have shifted them from vulnerability to strength--so when shocks hit, they are far better prepared to withstand them.

@KGeorgieva

04



The UAE exploring a swap line with the US should give us pause that the consequences of the Iran conflict are far greater than what we see priced in markets. Such explorations do not arise lightly, even behind closed doors.

@GitaGopinath

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

Kuwait Airport Reopens

Flights resume after weeks of drone-linked disruptions and emergency shutdowns



Kuwait International Airport is set to gradually resume flight operations starting Sunday, following a temporary suspension of air traffic that began on 28 February as a precautionary measure amid regional tensions and a series of reported drone attacks targeting critical aviation infrastructure.

According to official and media reports, the airport and surrounding facilities were subjected to multiple drone incursions over recent weeks, which authorities described as deliberate violations of Kuwait's airspace and sovereignty. The incidents reportedly disrupted air navigation systems, caused flight suspensions, and led to material damage across several installations, though no major loss of life was recorded.

One of the most significant incidents involved a drone strike

on a fuel storage tank inside Kuwait International Airport, which resulted in a large fire. Emergency response teams managed to bring the blaze under control after extensive fire-fighting operations, preventing further escalation. Authorities confirmed that the damage was primarily material.

Following the incident, rapid response teams from civil defense, the national fire service, and supporting military units worked to contain the situation, secure the site, and assess structural damage.

In response to the escalating situation, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Iranian ambassador on multiple occasions, submitting formal protest notes condemning what it described as repeated attacks on national infrastructure, including airport fuel facilities, and demanding an immediate

halt to such actions.

Senior government officials, including the Minister of Defense, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, and the Prime Minister, conducted on-site inspections of Kuwait International Airport and its affected facilities throughout March. These visits focused on assessing damage, reviewing emergency response operations, and ensuring continuity of critical aviation services. Officials praised the swift action of emergency teams and emphasized the importance of enhancing preventive security measures at vital installations.

The General Fire Force later announced full containment of a major fire at fuel storage tanks after 58 hours of continuous operations, supported by military and oil sector firefighting units. Subsequent incidents reportedly included additional drone

“Kuwait International Airport will gradually resume operations after drone attacks disrupted infrastructure, with no major casualties reported.”

activity affecting radar systems and other airport infrastructure, requiring urgent technical recovery and system rehabilitation efforts.

On 1 April, Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation reported another incident involving a drone strike on fuel tanks, which again caused a large fire and infrastructure damage but no casualties. Emergency teams responded immediately, with initial assessments confirming that the impact remained limited to physical infrastructure.

Arab States Condemn Al-Aqsa Violations



Foreign ministers from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt strongly condemned repeated violations of the historical and legal status quo at Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

In a joint statement, the ministers denounced ongoing incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound by Israeli settlers and extremist figures, carried out under the protection of Israeli police, as well as the raising of the Israeli flag within its precincts.

They described these actions as a clear breach of international law and international humanitarian law, calling them a provocation to Muslims worldwide and an infringement on the sanctity of Jerusalem's holy sites.

The ministers reaffirmed their rejection of any attempts to alter the existing status quo in Jerusalem, stressing the importance of preserving it. They also highlighted the role of Jordan's Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites

in the city. They reiterated that the 144-dunam Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is exclusively a place of worship for Muslims, and emphasized that the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, under Jordan's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, retains sole authority over its administration and access.

The statement also condemned Israel's approval of more than 30 new settlement units, calling it a violation of international law, including relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and a 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The ministers further condemned rising settler violence in the occupied West Bank, including attacks targeting schools and Palestinian children, and called for accountability for those responsible.

They stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Palestinian territories and rejected any attempts at annexation or forced displacement of Palestinians.

Saudi-Swiss Investment Talks in Jeddah



The Ministry of Investment held the Saudi-Swiss Investment Roundtable in Jeddah, bringing together senior officials and leading business figures from both countries to strengthen economic ties and explore new investment opportunities.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Swiss President Guy Parmelin, and Minister of Investment Khalid Al-Falih attended the meeting, along with a high-level delegation of financial and business

leaders from Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.

Discussions focused on enhancing strategic investment cooperation between the two friendly nations, particularly in priority economic sectors, and expanding opportunities for joint ventures and private-sector partnerships.

The roundtable underscored both sides' shared commitment to deepening bilateral economic relations and supporting sustainable investment growth.

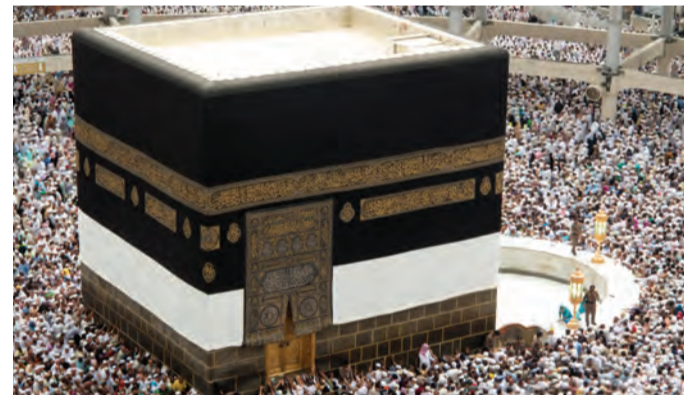
Six Categories Allowed Mecca Entry

Saudi Arabia's General Directorate of Passports announced that six specific categories of individuals are now eligible to obtain electronic permits to enter Mecca during the Hajj season through the Absher Individuals platform.

The measure is part of tightened entry regulations as the Hajj season begins, with authorities restricting access to the holy city to ensure safety, crowd control, and compliance with pilgrimage procedures.

The eligible categories include Premium Residency holders, investors, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizens, non-Saudi mothers of Saudi citizens, non-Saudi family members of citizens, and domestic workers.

The digital service allows applicants to secure entry permits electronically through a sim-



plified process, integrated with Saudi Arabia's broader digital governance systems.

Authorities have confirmed that, since April 19, residents without valid permits are no longer allowed to enter Mecca. Entry is now limited to individuals holding authorised work permits issued within the city, residents of Mecca, or those carrying official Hajj permits.

Saudi Public Security also stated that permits for expatriate workers are issued electronically via the Absher platform and the Muqem portal, fully integrated with the unified Hajj permit system, "Tasreeh."

The measures are part of broader efforts to regulate movement into the holy sites during one of the busiest periods in the Islamic calendar.

Northern Kuwait Hit by Drone Strike

Kuwait's official military spokesperson, Colonel (Staff) Saud Abdulaziz Al-Attawan, announced that two northern land border posts were targeted yesterday in a hostile attack involving two explosive-laden drones.

According to the statement, the drones were remotely guided using fiber-optic cables and originated from Iraqi territory. The incident resulted in material damage to the border facilities, with no human casualties reported.

Authorities confirmed that relevant agencies immediately began implementing the necessary procedures to manage and contain the situation following the attack.



Tough Action on Road-Rule Violations in Dubai

Dubai Police have taken firm action against several motorcycle riders caught performing dangerous stunts and violating traffic regulations on roads across the emirate.

The riders were observed riding on one wheel and weaving between moving vehicles — behaviours authorities said pose a serious risk to both their own lives and other road users.

Brigadier Jumaa Salem bin Suwaidan, Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police, said traffic patrols identified multiple serious violations, including reckless riding and failure to comply with traffic laws.



He stressed that such dangerous conduct can lead to severe accidents and endanger public safety, reaffirming that Dubai Police will continue strict enforcement against all traffic violations.

The motorcycles involved have been impounded, and legal procedures have been initiated against the offenders in accordance with applicable traffic laws.

Ukraine, Saudi Arabia Advanced Defense Ties

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky held high-level talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Friday during a visit aimed at strengthening Kyiv's partnerships in the Middle East.

Zelensky said the discussions focused on expanding bilateral cooperation in key sectors, including security, energy, and infrastructure, as Ukraine continues to broaden its diplomatic and strategic outreach.

The visit followed a previous meeting between the two leaders in Jeddah on March 27, where Ukraine and Saudi Ara-

bia agreed to cooperate on air defense technologies.

In recent months, Ukraine has sought to deepen ties with Gulf nations, particularly in countering drone threats. Kyiv has leveraged its battlefield experience against Iranian-designed drones used by Russian forces, offering expertise in anti-drone systems and defense strategies.

The growing cooperation unfolded amid heightened regional tensions, with Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries facing missile and drone attacks during the recent U.S.-Iran tensions, which are under a fragile ceasefire.



Zelensky's trip followed his participation in a European Union summit in Cyprus, where he sought to reinforce support from European allies. On April 23, the European Union approved a €90 billion (\$106 billion) loan package for Ukraine and introduced its 20th round of sanctions against Russia.

Classifieds



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Bahrain maintain perfect record against Sri Lanka

TDT | Manama

Bahrain extended their unbeaten run in the men's beach handball tournament at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, with a 2-0 victory over Sri Lanka yesterday.

The nationals followed up their dramatic comeback win over the Philippines with a far more controlled display, taking the match in straight sets, 18-14, 10-6, at the Tianya Haijiao Venue Cluster.

With three wins from three, coach AlQaidoom's side sit firmly on top of the group and continue to build momentum ahead of a crucial clash with an equally unbeaten Iranian side.

This time, Bahrain looked composed from the first whistle, avoiding the sluggish start that troubled them in their previous outing. They settled quickly into rhythm in the opening set, with balanced scoring across the squad allowing them to gradually pull clear.

Ali Alhayki and Adam Alnasheet led the charge in attack, while Mahdi Ali once again provided a reliable scoring outlet. Bahrain maintained control in the closing stages to seal the first set 18-14.

The second set saw an even more disciplined performance. Bahrain tightened up defensive-



Mehdi Ali goes for goal

ly, limiting Sri Lanka's opportunities while making the most of key chances. Abdulla Alzaimoor team's organisation proved decisive as they closed out the set

10-6, sealing the match without the need for a shoot-out.

Alnasheet finished as Bahrain's top scorer with eight points, while Alhayki added six. Bilal Askani contributed four, with Abdulla Alzaimoor and Komaail Ghulum adding two points each. For Sri Lanka, Priyantha Chandradasa led with six points, while Anil Hettigoda and Muhammad Ammar scored four apiece.

Reflecting on the result, Komaail Fuad highlighted the team's resilience: "We're grateful to come away with a third straight win. It wasn't easy, but we stayed composed and found solutions at the right moments."

Ali Almwani struck a confident tone looking ahead: "We know there's still more to come from us. We're called the Warriors for a reason, and as long as we're in this tournament, we believe we can go all the way."

Bahrain will now enjoy a rest day before facing Iran in a highly anticipated Group A showdown tomorrow at 11am (Bahrain time). Iran, who have also opened with two wins, will first take on Hong Kong.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals on Tuesday, with the medal matches set for Thursday.

BIC to host Batelco Fitness on Track and Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights on Sunday and Monday



Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East', continues its busy programme of exciting fan experiences with Batelco Fitness on Track and Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and Drift Nights kick starting the new week.

Taking place on Sunday, 26 April, from 6pm to 10pm will be Batelco Fitness on Track, and then Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag

and Drift Nights follows on Monday, 27 April, from 5pm to 11pm.

The latest edition of Batelco Fitness on Track will offer participants of all ages the opportunity to engage in a unique physical activity within the safe and controlled setting of a world-class Formula 1 venue.

It can be done either on foot or on a bicycle, with runners and walkers utilising BIC's 2.554-kilometre Inner Circuit and cyclists enjoying their ride along the 3.543-kilometre Outer

Circuit, with a separate dedicated area available for children's cycling.

The cost to participate is BD2 for cyclists and BD1 for runners. Registration and payment can be completed in advance via the circuit's official website bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

Children under the age of 12 can participate free of charge if accompanied by a paying adult.

Meanwhile, the intensity will be brought up a notch in Ebrahim K Kanoo Drag and



Drift Nights, set to be held both along BIC's world-class quarter-mile drag strip and at the circuit's vast vehicles dynamics area.

This action-packed experience features two of the most popular and adrenaline-pumping forms of motorsport today, and participants will be able to take part in their very own cars or motorbikes.

They can push their vehicles to their limit either down the BIC strip or around the vehicle dynamics area, and also have the option of doing both, making for twice the thrills over a single evening's activity.

Both the drag racing and the drifting can be done for a single fee of BD11. Participation in just the drag racing or just the drifting costs BD8. Passengers can also get into a participant's car for an additional fee of BD4.500.

Registration can be done onbahraingp.com, by calling the BIC Hotline, or on site. Spectators can also watch all the action. Tickets for fans can be bought at bahraingp.com at BD2 apiece.

More information can be found onbahraingp.com, via the BIC Hotline, or on the circuit's official social media accounts.

Joksimovic signs off as Dar Kulaib complete unbeaten title run

TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib wrapped up the 2025-26 Isa Bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League title on Thursday with a 3-0 win over Ma'ameer, securing the championship with one match still to play and extending their unbeaten run to 25 games.

While the result underlined their clear superiority this season, attention around the club is turning to what comes next beyond the domestic campaign.

Montenegrin head coach Ivan Joksimovic, who has overseen Dar Kulaib's title-winning season, is set to bow out of his role at the end of the league campaign to take charge of the Bahrain national team. His final league fixture in charge will be tomorrow at 6:45pm against Al Dair at Isa Bin Rashid Volleyball Arena.

The timing means Dar Kulaib

will complete a historic unbeaten league season under a coach who will immediately transition into the national setup, adding significance to the closing stages of their campaign.

Joksimovic's tenure has also strengthened Dar Kulaib's place in Bahraini volleyball history. With the latest league triumph, he has now guided the club to two Isa Bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League titles (2022-23 and 2025-26), alongside the Crown Prince's Cup title in 2022-23.

That success has contributed to Dar Kulaib's overall haul of four top-flight league crowns, moving them into third place on the all-time list. They now sit just one title behind Al Ahli, who have five, while Muharraq remain well clear at the top with 16 league championships.

Joksimovic has guided a



Coach Ivan Joksimovic (R) and Mahmood Abdulwahed (L) on the court during Dar Kulaib's latest outing

squad built around consistency and cohesion, receiving key contributions throughout the season from Kenyan professional Enock Mogeni and a core of Bahraini players including Hasan Al Warqaa, Mahmood Abdulwahed, Ali Habib, Abbas Abdulla, Ali Marhoon, Ali Mohammed Abdulnabi and Hassan Alaiwi.

Their final match will be followed by Muharraq's meeting with Al Ahli at 8:15pm, a match that will decide the final standings behind the champions, with both sides having won their penultimate games.

Dar Kulaib will then turn their attention to the 2025-26 His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's Cup, where all 14 clubs will compete in a knockout format. As league champions, they will enter the competition with a direct place in the quarter-finals.

Bahrain to stage global Arabian horse event



His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa, President of Bahrain Royal Equestrian And Endurance Federation

TDT | Manama

The Emirates World Arabian Horse Beauty Cup will take place in Bahrain on April 25 and 26, bringing together top Arabian horse breeders and competitors from around the world.

The two-day event will be held at the Bahrain International Endurance Village and is organized by the Bahrain Royal Equestrian and Endurance Federation in partnership with the Emirates Arabian Horse Society.

It is part of an international series of competitions staged



across several continents this year to promote purebred Arabian horses and support their breeders.

His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa, President of Bahrain Royal Equestrian And Endurance Federation, said the Kingdom's selection as a host underscores

its historical and cultural ties to Arabian horses, as well as its growing role in the global equestrian scene.

He pointed to the continued efforts of Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa in advancing equestrian sports and strengthening support for horse

owners and stables across Bahrain and the wider Gulf region.

He also commended the United Arab Emirates for its leadership in the field, highlighting the role of Shaikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan in promoting Arabian horses globally and reinforcing the country's position as a key international hub.

Arsenal face must-win clash vs. Newcastle tonight



Action from the reverse fixture, when Arsenal secured victory

AFP | London

Arsenal will be looking to reclaim top spot in the Premier League when they host a struggling Newcastle United side at 7:30 PM this evening. The Gunners also receive a timely boost with the return of Bukayo Saka and Riccardo Calafiori, adding depth ahead of a crucial stage in the title race.

Mikel Arteta's side were overtaken by Manchester City last weekend and now sit second only on goal difference after the reigning champions secured a midweek win over Burnley, tightening an already intense battle at the top.

With the season approaching its decisive stretch, Arsenal know that any dropped points could prove costly in their pursuit of a first league title since 2004. Their recent performances have fallen short of expectations, but consistency remains crucial if they are to keep pace with Guardiola's side.

Newcastle arrive in London in alarming form, having lost eight of their last 11 Premier League matches since late January. That slump has seen them slide down the table, with Eddie Howe's side now under pressure to rediscover stability and end the season on a stronger note.

Prestianni handed six-match ban for homophobic conduct

TDT | Manama

Benfica winger Gianluca Prestianni has been handed a six-match suspension by UEFA for homophobic conduct during the club's Champions League knockout play-off against Real Madrid in February.

The match at Estádio da Luz in Lisbon was temporarily suspended for around 10 minutes after Real Madrid forward Vinicius Júnior alleged he had been subjected to racist abuse.

Prestianni, 20, denied making any racist remark, claiming Vinicius misheard what was said. However, Real midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni later stated that Prestianni had admitted the comment directed at the Brazilian was homophobic in nature.

UEFA's disciplinary ruling includes a six-game ban, with



The incident in question during the match

three matches already served or suspended over a two-year probation period. The governing body has also requested FIFA to extend the sanction worldwide.

During the incident, Vinicius had earlier scored to give Real a 1-0 lead before being booked for his goal celebration. After the alleged exchange with Prestianni,

he confronted referee François Letexier, who responded by using FIFA's crossed-arms signal introduced in 2024 to indicate suspected discriminatory abuse.

Vinicius briefly left the pitch alongside his teammates following the incident and later posted on social media, stating: "Racists are, above all, cowards."

Had the incident been classified as racist abuse, Prestianni would have faced a minimum 10-match European ban.

Benfica defended their player, describing the situation as a "defamation campaign" and reaffirming their full support for him. Coach José Mourinho, however, said Prestianni's future under his management would be "over" if the allegations were proven.

Separately, FIFA president Gianni Infantino has called for stricter measures regarding on-field communication, suggesting players who cover their mouths during confrontations could face sanctions. The International Football Association Board (IFAB) has also agreed to review potential rule changes aimed at preventing players from concealing what they say to opponents.

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Barcelona must live without teen star Yamal for title run-in

AFP | Barcelona

With teenage star Lamine Yamal out injured for the rest of the season Barcelona visit Getafe on Saturday in La Liga looking for ways to cope without him and protect a nine-point lead on Real Madrid in the Spanish title race.

Hansi Flick's side have a sizeable advantage on their arch-rivals but with wingers Yamal and Raphinha hurt, Los Blancos believe they can turn the heat up on the Catalans.

Barca host Madrid on May 10 in a La Liga Clasico which is a big opportunity for Alvaro Arbeloa's team to make a late surge to claim the trophy.

Flick's team will want to arrive on that day still maintaining their lead on Madrid as insurance against a possible defeat, something they can guarantee as a minimum with wins at Getafe and Osasuna in their next two games.

However, the stricken Yamal has been a decisive figure for his team this season, with 24 goals



Spanish referee Jose Luis Munuera (R) and teammates check on Barcelona's Spanish forward #10 Lamine Yamal

and 18 assists across all competitions in 45 matches.

The Spain international, who

hopes to return from his hamstring injury sustained against Celta Vigo on Wednesday to

play at the World Cup this summer, has nine goals in his last 12 league games.

After a mixed start to the season, in which he was troubled by a groin injury, Yamal hit his stride over the past few months.

"As a coach you have to manage it, you have to live with it. It's a pity that Lamine is injured now," said Flick.

Brazil international Raphinha, a key figure on Barca's left flank, is set to miss the visit to face Getafe, but might return for the trip to Osasuna on May 2.

The onus is on figures who have fallen out of favour under Flick to get Barcelona over the line in the title race.

Sweden winger Rooney Bardghji has barely featured this season, playing fewer than 500 minutes in La Liga, with Yamal the clear first choice on the right flank.

The Spaniard has shown his dismay at being substituted and Flick tends to give the 18-year-old as many minutes as possible, limiting Bardghji's chances.

Barca may have to rely on the former FC Copenhagen winger to provide some of the speed and thrust that Yamal offers, to help break down opposition defences.

On the other flank, Flick seems less keen on utilising on loan Manchester United winger Marcus Rashford than he was in the first half of the season, but that could change again.

In the narrow 1-0 win over Celta in midweek he opted to use central midfielder Gavi on the left, which gave his side a balance problem and a lack of width, particularly once Yamal came off hurt before half-time.

Flick said the Celta game exposed areas where the defending champions can improve during the final weeks of the season and showed them the path to follow.

"I think we can play much better, we have to play much better," said the German coach.

"We have to play with a little more confidence, a little bit cleverer.

"This is what I'm missing today about this situation, but at the end, three points and we fought, as a team, and this is for me very important."

Real Madrid have the chance to dial up the pressure on Barcelona first on Friday when they visit Real Betis.

PSG's Luis Enrique 'couldn't care less' about World Cup



Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique has no intention of easing up on his players ahead of the World Cup as his Ligue 1 leaders look to defend their Champions League crown.

The French champions play Bayern Munich in their Champions League semi-final first leg match next week with the Spanish coach managing a squad which has been beset by injuries this season.

Spanish midfielder Fabian Ruiz made his comeback from three months out injured with a substitute appearance in Sunday's shock 2-1 defeat at home to Lyon.

But Portuguese playmaker Vitinha is unavailable for Saturday's trip to Angers.

PSG played in the Club World Cup in the summer, reaching the final, meaning their

"I'm not interested in that. What I have to manage is the situation at Paris Saint-Germain. Everything else is very clear"

LUIS ENRIQUE

players had only a short break before the season began and have played a lot of football in the last 18 months to two years.

When asked about whether he would manage his players with an eye on the World Cup, which begins in June, Luis Enrique was dismissive.

"I'm the Paris Saint-Germain coach, as for the rest, I couldn't care less," said the 55-year-old, who coached Spain at the 2022 World Cup finals.

Bahrain Start 3x3 Campaign in Sanya

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's national 3x3 basketball team begins its campaign at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya today, opening Group C action against Qatar at 12:10pm Bahrain time, before facing India later in the day at 2:15pm. Kazakhstan complete the group.

The Kingdom's squad in Sanya features Bogdan Dragovic, Nasser Al Mosawi, Austin Ajukwa, and Mohammed Kowayed, who was called up as a last-minute replacement for the injured Milos Supica. The Bahrain Olympic Committee confirmed the change, with Kowayed linking up with the team ahead of tip-off. The team concluded its final preparations



Bahrain's team upon arrival in China

following its return to Sanya on Thursday, after completing an overseas training camp in Hangzhou earlier this month.

Team manager Ahmed Elias, along with members of the administrative delegation, attended the official technical meeting

for the 3x3 basketball competition, where key regulations and competition procedures were confirmed.

Chelsea's Estevao out for season, World Cup in doubt

AFP | London

Brazilian winger Estevao is out for the rest of the English season, with his participation in the World Cup in doubt, Chelsea interim boss Calum McFarlane said on Friday.

The 19-year-old suffered a hamstring injury in last week's 1-0 defeat by Manchester United.

McFarlane, back in charge at Stamford Bridge after this week's sacking of Liam Rosenior, delivered the bleak news about Estevao ahead of his side's FA Cup semi-final against Leeds on Sunday.

"Estevao, unfortunately, won't



Chelsea's Brazilian midfielder #41 Estevao reacts after picking up an injury

play for us (again) this season," he said. "He's going to be out for a little bit of time.

"So that's really unfortunate, especially for someone so young and so talented, but we're here to support him and be around him."

McFarlane was asked whether Estevao would fit for the World Cup, which takes place in Canada, Mexico and the United States from June.

"I'm not sure on that, if I'm honest," he said. "I just know that he won't be available for us, so I'm sure he's very hopeful he can make the World Cup, but I don't know on that."