

**BFM reports results, announces dividend**



**P5**

**NBB full-year profit grows 4%**



**P6**

**HM King receives new ambassadors' credentials**



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received the credentials of five newly appointed ambassadors to the Kingdom of Bahrain during a ceremony held at Al Sakhir Palace yesterday. HM the King accepted the credentials of H.E. Naif bin Bandar Al Sudairi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; H.E. Dr. Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye; H.E. Sumate Chulajata, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand; H.E. Mohammad Rais Hasan Sarower, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; and H.E. Tatjana Garcevic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia. HM King Hamad highlighted the strong bilateral relations between Bahrain and their countries, noting the continuous progress and cooperation across various sectors. He wished them success in their diplomatic duties to further strengthen ties with Bahrain.

# Fake Builders Boom

Construction's Dirty Secret: Housewives own permits, workers run projects, safety leaves town.

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

**M**ore than half of Bahrain's building trade licences are held by housewives with no link to the industry, MP Ali Saeer Al Dosari told Parliament yesterday, warning that the sector has become a front for illegal business cover-ups.

"There are around 13,000 contractors in the country, yet more than half — between 50 and 70 per cent — of trade licences are in

the names of women who have no stake in the work," he said.

**Practice**

Al Dosari pointed to a practice where licence holders receive payments ranging from BD100 to BD200 from Asian workers who use their names to operate.

"The workers are the ones signing contracts, taking on legal duties, and running the show, while the licence holders sit on the sidelines," he said. "When something goes wrong, or when workers abscond, it leaves a



**MP Ali Saeer Al Dosari**

mess in the courts."

The size of many registered con-

tracting firms was also a concern.

"Seventy per cent of contractors have no more than five workers listed under their licences. That might be enough for small repair jobs, but not for construction, extensions, or demolition work," he said.

Al Dosari also raised the lack of engineering oversight in the field.

"More than 80 per cent of building licences don't have a single licensed engineer tied to them," he said. "This means a big chunk of the sector is work-

ing without proper supervision, which can't be left as it is."

**Disputes**

Court cases linked to construction disputes are piling up, he warned.

"People are getting caught out — whether it's unfinished work, shoddy structures, or contractors disappearing with the money."

Al Dosari called for tighter rules to stop unqualified operators from running the trade.

"No contractor should be li-

censed unless a qualified engineer is in charge of all work under clear, written agreements that protect everyone involved," he said. "We can also take lessons from Gulf and Arab countries that have already tackled these problems."

He pointed to the sheer size of the industry.

"This sector is expected to be worth over \$3 billion this year — about BD1.2 billion. Fixing its flaws isn't just about keeping order; it's about making sure people don't get burned," he said.

**Bahrain welcomes UN resolution on Russia, Ukraine lasting peace**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain welcomed the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2774, which calls for a swift end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and encourages a lasting peace.

220 fils (includes VAT)



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**Safeguarding mangroves**



His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa highlighted Bahrain's commitment to adopting modern practices to address global climate change challenges, in line with the ambitious vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister. HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman yesterday chaired a meeting on the latest developments of the Bahrain Mangroves Initiative, at Riffa Palace. He emphasised the importance of national efforts in supporting environmental sustainability by integrating strategies and practices and enhancing joint cooperation among all stakeholders to achieve the goals of the National Action Plan, including carbon neutrality. A number of senior officials also attended the meeting.



## HM King receives Azerbaijan president's daughters



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received Leyla Aliyeva and Arzu Aliyeva, daughters of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, along with Anar Alakbarov, Assistant to the President, at Sakhir Palace yesterday. The meeting took place during their visit to Bahrain at the invitation of Shaikh Rashid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Chairman of the National Council for Arts, to attend the MAMA 'Mother Nature' International Art Exhibition. Leyla and Arzu conveyed His Majesty the greetings and appreciation of President Aliyev, along with his best wishes for Bahrain's continued progress and prosperity. HM the King welcomed Leyla and Arzu and wished them a pleasant stay in the Kingdom of Bahrain. His Majesty also relayed his greetings and best wishes to President Aliyev, wishing the Azerbaijani people further development and prosperity. HM King Hamad praised the strong bilateral relations between Bahrain and Azerbaijan and the ongoing progress in various domains.

# Investing in pure talent

Labour Undersecretary highlights ongoing training to sharpen skills of Bahraini private sector workers

**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour, said Bahrain has come a long way in strengthening its training system, developing skills, and ensuring the labour market benefits from capable

Bahraini workers across private sector firms.

He pointed to the role businesses play in refining workplace skills through steady professional training, drawing on the programmes run by the Ministry of Labour and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen).

#### Shifts

These efforts, he noted, are



HH Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa honours Human Resources Management graduates

aimed at sharpening the abilities of Bahraini workers in private firms and keeping them ready for the shifts in job patterns and workplace needs.

The event was organised by Origin Group in partnership with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Bahrain Society for Human Capital Management.

His remarks came during a ceremony for graduates of the Professional Certificate in Human Resources Management from various private

The training programmes are aimed at keeping Bahraini workers ready for the shifts in job patterns and workplace needs.

na, Origin Group's CEO, as well as specialists and human resources figures from public and private organisations.

The graduates were awarded a professional qualification from SHRM, covering various areas of strategic human resources management.

Shaikh Khalifa presented certificates to the graduates and wished them success in their careers.

## ICAI Bahrain Chapter organises successful 'Money Matters' forum



ICAI Bahrain Chapter officials with finance professionals

TDT | Manama

factors as primary growth catalysts. India's demographic dividend, coupled with strategic inflation and interest rate management, are pivotal for sustained expansion. Resilient Indian economy, recognized as the fastest-growing major globally, is propelled by robust public and private CapEx, further enhanced by regulatory reforms and strategic development policies.

#### Objectives

Disciplined Wealth Creation

Framework Imperative: Advocated for a structured wealth accumulation approach: Define objectives, strategize meticulously, and implement rigorous progress monitoring. Optimal asset allocation and a constructive market outlook are crucial for long-term investors. Indian markets projected for substantial index appreciation in the medium-term.

Yield Investment Frontier: Startup investments present compelling return potential, balanced with considerations of ticket size, mortality rates, and inherent risk profiles. Strategic entry into India's burgeoning startup landscape offers opportunities for superior Internal Rates of Return (IRRs).

The "Money Matters" session proved to be an exceptional platform for finance professionals to gain practical investment strategies and valuable market foresight directly from industry leaders.

ICAI Bahrain extends its sincere gratitude to Mr. Anand Rathi, Mr. Ankur Mittal, and event Emcee CA Chintan Seth, the Ex-com, the sub committee members and all the participants for their invaluable contributions, and to all attendees for making this event a resounding success.

Esteemed speakers, Mr. Anand Rathi, Chairman of the Anand Rathi Group, and Mr. Ankur Mittal, Co-founder of Inflection Point Ventures, provided invaluable perspectives and actionable insights.

#### Key Technical Highlights:

Macroeconomic Levers for Economic Acceleration: Session underscored macroeconomic

Startup Ecosystem: High-

For any queries, please contact the Communications and Investor Relations Department by phone at +973 3603000, via email at [ir@zain.com](mailto:ir@zain.com).

## 30-day window, half the price for traffic fine

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After some back and forth between those arguing for leniency and those pushing for deterrence, Parliament yesterday approved a bill to extend the discount period for traffic fines from seven days to 30.

If enacted, the change would allow drivers who accept reconciliation to settle fines at half the minimum rate for up to a month, rather than only within the first week.

Supporters of the move said the extra time would encourage more offenders to settle their fines, easing pressure on courts and cutting the number of cases going to trial.

They argued the one-week window was too short for many to find the money, especially as living costs rise.

Extending the timeframe, they said, would lead to better compliance and help clear minor offences more quickly.

The government opposed the change, saying it weakened deterrence and risked making penalties less effective.

Justice Minister, H.E. Nawaf Al Maawda, defended the existing system.

# No licence, no mercy

Bahrain cracks down on misleading advertising with BD20,000 fine and jail time

Mohammed Darwish

TDT | Manama

**A** BD20,000 fine and jail time could face advertisers who mislead authorities or operate without a licence under a government-drafted bill tightening Bahrain's advertising rules.

The proposal, now before Parliament's Public Utilities and Environment Committee, seeks to curb harmful practices and smooth the licensing process.

The bill, amending Decree-Law No. 14 of 1973, would place stricter controls on advertising, particularly roadside promotions and commercial displays under the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs.

A memorandum from the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission outlines that the law aims to improve efficiency, protect the sector from harmful outfits, and set up clearer rules for obtaining permits.

### Punishment

Those who breach the rules face jail terms or fines between BD1,000 and BD20,000.

This applies to advertising without a licence, breaking licence conditions, providing false information, or using unlawful means to secure a permit.

Obstructing ministry inspectors or concealing records and documents needed for oversight would also attract penalties.

Each breach would be treated



Image used for illustrative purposes only

**The bill would place stricter controls on advertising, particularly roadside promotions and commercial displays.**

Advertisers would receive at least 15 days' notice before removal, and they would be required to cover the cost of restoring the site.

The ministry could also cancel an advertising licence permanently or for a set period.

Penalties would apply to each offending advertisement.

### Cost

Courts would be required to order the removal of adverts that breach the law, with advertisers bearing the cost of restoring the affected sites.

Anyone who removes, damages, or defaces a licensed advertisement, or any part of it, would face a separate fine of up to BD1,000.

separately, with courts ordering the removal of unauthorised adverts at the advertiser's expense.

The proposed law defines advertising as any medium designed to inform the public or a specific group about a product, service, or offering.

This includes visual, audio, or illuminated adverts, as well as

those made from materials such as wood, metal, paper, fabric, plastic, or glass.

Advertisers would need prior approval from the relevant authority before displaying content.

The ministry would have powers to inspect advertisements and remove those that break the rules.

Al Hawaj said.

He confirmed that government backing had been secured for a long-term plan to strengthen the country's transport links, with Riffa Avenue among the key routes identified for work.

He said while preparations were in motion, electricity infrastructure in the area needed to be addressed before construction could begin.

"Roadworks are moving ahead quickly," he noted.

## Cabinet supports nationwide road upgrades

TDT | Manama

**C**ountrywide roadworks have been approved by the Cabinet, with Riffa Road set to be widened to four lanes as part of a drive to ease congestion and

improve Bahrain's transport network, the Works Minister, His Excellency Ibrahim Al Hawaj, told Parliament yesterday.

The expansion, which includes redesigned junctions and upgrades to key links such as

Shaikh Isa bin Salman Highway, will be handled by a specialist firm brought in to oversee the design and construction.

"The ministry is pressing ahead with a full-scale upgrade of roads across all governorates,"

## INVITATION TO THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

سیف شیعی

The Board of Directors of Seef Properties B.S.C. is pleased to invite you to attend its Ordinary General Meeting that will be held on **Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 01:00 pm in Al Liwan Cinema** to discuss and resolve the agenda items set out below. If the required quorum is not met for the abovementioned meeting, a second meeting will be held on **Wednesday 26 March 2025** or a third meeting, if required, will be held on **Sunday 6 April 2025** at the same time and venue.

### FIRST: ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Read and ratify the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting dated 1 July 2024.
2. Discuss and approve the Board of Directors' Report on the Company's activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.
3. Listen to the External Auditor's Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.
4. Discuss and approve the Company's consolidated audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024.
5. Approve the recommendation of the Board of Directors for the appropriation of the net profits for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 in accordance with the following: Distribution of cash dividends of **9% (9 Fils per share)** excluding treasury shares amounting to a total of **BD 4,087,844.856** to be distributed in accordance with the following:
- a. Allocation of **BD 170,000** in support of charitable and community causes under the Company's Corporate Social Responsibility Programme; and
- b. Transfer of **BD 1,108,899** to retained earnings for the coming year.
6. Approve the recommendation of the Board of Directors to approve Directors' remuneration in the aggregate amount of **BD 240,000** for the financial year ended 31 December 2024, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.
7. Discuss and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 in compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Central Bank of Bahrain.
8. Present the Related Party Transactions carried out during the financial year ended 31 December 2024 as stated in note (29) of the Company's consolidated audited financial statements in accordance with Article (189) of the Commercial Companies Law Decree No. (21) of 2001.
9. Discharge the Directors of the Company from liability arising in connection with their duties during the financial year ended 31 December 2024.
10. Elect six (6) Board Member for a three (3) year term (2025-2028), and the four (4) remaining positions to be appointed by the Company's shareholders.
11. Approve the re-appointment of Ernst & Young as External Auditor for the financial year ending 31 December 2025 and authorise the Board of Directors to set their fees, subject to the approval of the relevant regulatory authorities.
12. Discuss any other matter in accordance with Article (207) of the Commercial Companies Law Decree No. (21) of 2001.

Event	Date
Cum-Dividend Date	26 March 2025
Ex-Dividend Date	27 March 2025
Record Date	02 April 2025
Payment Date	16 April 2025

### IMPORTANT NOTES TO SHAREHOLDERS:

1. Shareholders can download the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024, the Corporate Governance Report, all other related documents and the Proxy Form from the following websites:
  - a. Bahrain Bourse (Company Announcements) [www.bahrainbourse.com](http://www.bahrainbourse.com)
  - b. The Company's website <https://www.seef.com.bh/investor-relations/general-meetings/>
2. Shareholders whose names are registered on the Company's shareholders' list on the date of the Meetings are entitled to attend in person or appoint a proxy from amongst the shareholders or otherwise, to vote their behalf, provided that the proxy may not be the Chairman, director or employee of the Company, unless the proxy is a first degree relative of the concerned shareholder.
3. The Proxy Form must be filled and signed by the shareholder/shareholder's legal representative, in which case the notarised/legalised Power of Attorney must be attached to the Proxy Form. If the shareholder is a corporate entity, the Proxy Form must be executed by a duly authorised representative of the said entity and the stamp of the respective corporate shareholder must be affixed on the Proxy Form.
4. Shareholders must ensure that the proxy forms are submitted to the Company's Share Registrar, Messrs. Bahrain Clear B.S.C.(C), at least twenty-four (24) hours before the date of the meetings either via hand delivery or e-mail as indicated below. Proxy forms received after twenty-four (24) hours will be considered invalid for the purpose of the meeting.
  - a. Address: Bahrain Financial Harbor, Harbor Gate (4th Floor). King Faisal Avenue P.O. Box 3203, Manama- Kingdom of Bahrain.
  - b. Hotline: +973 17108775/ 17108833
  - c. WhatsApp: +973 33510008
  - a. Email: [registry@bahainclear.com](mailto:registry@bahainclear.com) (copy to [investors@seef.com.bh](mailto:investors@seef.com.bh))
5. Shareholders or their proxies are requested on the day of the meeting to present clear and valid identify cards or passports for inspection as proof of identity.
6. For more information, please contact Investor Relations on +973 77911111 and email [investors@seef.com.bh](mailto:investors@seef.com.bh)



# Bahrain Flour Mills Company B.S.C.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION At 31 December 2024

	2024 BD	2023 BD
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	7,541,233	6,997,749
Intangible assets	93,117	-
Right-of-use assets	4,553,229	1,205,026
Investment securities	3,918,414	1,889,001
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>16,105,993</b>	<b>10,091,776</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Equity</b>		
Share capital	2,481,877	2,481,877
Share premium	1,350,000	1,350,000
Statutory reserve	1,241,625	1,241,625
Other reserves	3,463,628	3,463,628
Retained earnings	18,326,466	18,539,295
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>26,863,596</b>	<b>27,076,425</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Employees' end of service benefits	146,531	153,320
Lease liabilities - non-current portion	4,496,510	1,196,722
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,643,041</b>	<b>1,350,042</b>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>39,713,717</b>	<b>35,548,935</b>

## STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 BD	2023 BD
Revenue		
Cost of revenue		
<b>Gross loss before Government subsidy</b>		
Government subsidy		
<b>Gross profit</b>		
Other operating income		
Other operating expenses		
Charge for expected credit losses		
<b>Operating (loss) profit</b>		
Net change in fair value of investment securities at fair value through profit or loss		
Interest income from investment securities at amortised cost - net		
Finance costs		
Other income		
<b>Net profit and total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>432,791</b>	<b>2,501,179</b>
<b>Basic and diluted earnings per share ( fils)</b>	<b>17.43</b>	<b>100.75</b>

The financial statements were audited by Ernst & Young - Middle East, approved by the Board of Directors on 25/02/2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Mr.Basim AlSaie  
(Chairman)

Mr. Salah Mohamed Al Kulaib  
(Vice Chairman)

Mr. Wayne Henry Craig  
(Chief Executive Officer)

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Share capital BD	Share Premium BD	Reserves		Retained earnings BD	Total BD
			Statutory reserve BD	Other reserves BD		
At 1 January 2024	2,481,877	1,350,000	1,241,625	3,463,628	18,539,295	27,076,425
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-	432,791	432,791
Charity approved for 2023	-	-	-	-	(25,000)	(25,000)
Dividends for 2023	-	-	-	-	(620,620)	(620,620)
<b>At 31 December 2024</b>	<b>2,481,877</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,241,625</b>	<b>3,463,628</b>	<b>18,326,466</b>	<b>26,863,596</b>

	Share capital BD	Share Premium BD	Reserves		Retained earnings BD	Total BD
			Statutory reserve BD	Other reserves BD		
At 1 January 2023	2,481,877	1,350,000	1,241,625	3,463,628	16,683,756	25,220,886
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	-	-	2,501,179	2,501,179
Charity approved for 2022	-	-	-	-	(25,000)	(25,000)
Dividends for 2022	-	-	-	-	(620,640)	(620,640)
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<b>2,481,877</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,241,625</b>	<b>3,463,628</b>	<b>18,539,295</b>	<b>27,076,425</b>

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 BD	2023 BD
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Net profit for the year		
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation on property, plant and equipment		
Amortisation of intangible assets		
Depreciation on right-of-use-assets		
Net change in fair value of investment securities at fair value through profit or loss		
Interest income from investment securities at amortised cost- net		
Interest income from bank balances and short-term deposits		
Finance costs		
Charge for slow moving and obsolete inventories		
Charge for expected credit losses		
Provision for employees' end of service benefits		
Operating profit before working capital changes		
Working capital changes:		
Inventories		
Trade receivables and other assets		
Trade payables and other liabilities		
Net cash used in operations		
Employees' end of service benefits paid		
Donation paid		
Net cash flows used in operating activities		
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		
Purchase of intangible assets		
Purchase of investment securities at amortised cost		
Redemption of investment securities at amortised cost		
Interest income received from investment securities at amortised cost- net		
Interest income received from bank balances and short-term deposits		
Net cash flows used in investing activities		
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Payment of principal portion of lease liabilities		
Term loan availed - net		
Repayment of import finance loans		
Import finance loans availed		
Amount paid to the Government		
Advance received from the Government		
Finance costs paid		
Dividend paid		
Net cash flows from financing activities		
<b>NET CHANGE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT 31 DECEMBER</b>		

**Bahrain braces for cold wave as temperatures drop to 4 degrees**

**TDT | Manama**

Bahrain is currently experiencing unusually cold weather, with medium to strong winds and an apparent temperature dropping to just 4 degrees Celsius.

Most areas have reported actual temperatures ranging between 12 and 14 degrees, marking a significant drop not seen in recent times.

According to official data from the Meteorology Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, along with global weather model forecasts, the cold wave is expected to reach its peak at dawn today.

### Rising dust

The weather will remain very cold throughout the day, with rising dust in some areas and a chance of scattered rain at night.

The minimum temperature will be 10 degrees, with a maximum of 16 degrees.

Winds will be northwesterly, reaching speeds of up to 27 knots, and wave heights are expected to range from two to three feet along the coast, and four to seven feet at sea.

### Wind gusts

The highest wind gusts were recorded yesterday at King Fahd Causeway Station, where 39 knots were noted, followed by Bahrain International Airport at 37 knots, Rashid Equestrian Club at 36 knots, and several other locations around the Kingdom.

## RHF campaign for solidarity

**TDT | Manama**

The Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) launched its annual Ramadan campaign, "Changing Their Lives," to encourage community support for its charitable projects during the holy month.

Mai Ahmed Al Sa'ai, Director of Charitable Resources Development at RHF, noted that the campaign aligns with the foundation's strategy to engage society in humanitarian initiatives and promote social solidarity.

This year, contributions will support healthcare, including insulin pumps for children and cataract surgery; education, through scholarships for RHF beneficiaries; and economic empowerment, by assisting productive families in achieving financial independence.

Additionally, 325 daily Iftar meals will be prepared by 17 RHF mothers and children in collaboration with Netaj Khair Al Bahrain.

The RHF encourages community participation, providing multiple donation channels, including in-person contributions at its Seef headquarters, its website, and digital payment platforms such as BenefitPay, Talabat, STC Pay, Bankily, and Sadad, as well as donation kiosks in shopping malls.

# BFM reports results, announces dividend

Steady growth in assets as new mill project advances



TDT | Manama

Bahrain Flour Mills Company (Al-Matahin) (BFM) yesterday reported quarterly and Full year 2024 results, which the company said was impacted by decrease in investment income from listed securities, booked depreciation for the new production line at the mill as well as increase in other operating expenses.

In line with results, the Board of Directors meeting, chaired by Mr. Basim AlSaie, Chairman of the Board of Directors, recommended the distribution of a cash dividend of BHD 620,620 equivalent to 25% of its paid-up capital, subject to approval by the General Assembly and regulators.

for Q4 2024 versus fils 35.75 for the same period in 2023.

Operating loss for Q4 2024 was BD (322,841) versus BD (35,887) loss for the same period in 2023. The reason for the decrease in operating profits for the period is due to the increase in operating expenses followed by capitalization of the new mill project and the depreciation costs, in addition to lease cost provisions relevant to the leased land reserved for the planned new mill plant.

BFM generated Q4 sales of BD 1,868,459 versus BD 1,954,288 in Q4 2023 - decreased by 4%, basically, relevant to market demand on uncontrolled flour products and decrease in bran production.

(208,663) versus BD 488,989 for the same period in 2023.

BFM generated sales of BD 7,605,900 in 2024 versus BD 7,677,225 in 2023 - decrease by 1%.

Total equity decreased by 1% to BD 26,863,596 compared with BD 27,076,425 as recorded on 31 December 2023.

The total assets for the year ended 31 December 2024 reached BHD 39,713,717 compared to BD 35,548,935 at the end of the same period in 2023, being an increase of 12% due to capitalization of new mill project and recording of new lease agreements that includes the planned new Mill land lease.

## Full year results

For the year ended 31st December 2024, BFM reported a Profit of BD 432,791 versus BD 2,501,179 for the same period in 2023 - decrease by 83%. The decrease in net income for the year 2024 in comparison to the year 2023 relates to the increase in the market valuation of equity investment and increase in operating & non-operating expenses, besides the increases on finance cost.

Earnings per Share was fils 17.43 versus fils 100.75 for the same period in 2023. Profit per Share was fils 3.86

Operating loss was BD

50,000 versus BD 1,000 for the same period in 2023.

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# NBB full-year profit grows 4%

● The Board of Directors proposed a cash dividend of BHD 79.2m or 35% per share equivalent to 35 fils, inclusive of 10% interim dividend

TDT | Manama

National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has reported a 19% reduction in net profit attributable to shareholders reaching BHD 16.2 million (USD 43.0 m) for the fourth quarter ended 31 December 2024, compared to BHD 20.1 m (USD 53.3 m) in the same period of 2023. The decrease was partially influenced by timing differences as some transactions that contributed to overall performance materialised in previous quarters affecting the year-over-year quarterly comparison. The Group continued to maintain a strong balance sheet in the fourth quarter with total assets continuously exceeding BHD 5.5 billion (USD 14.6 bn).

Earnings per share decreased to 7 fils (USD 2 cents) for the fourth quarter of 2024 compared with 9 fils (USD 2 cents) in the same quarter of 2023.

Total comprehensive income



Hala Yateem, Chairperson of NBB

attributable to NBB's shareholders for the quarter increased by 70% to BHD 19.6 m (USD 52.0 m) compared to BHD 11.5 m (USD 30.5 m) in 2023. The increase is mainly attributable to the mark-to-market movements of the bond and equity portfolios.

#### Year-to-date

NBB has reported a 4% growth in its net profit attributable to the shareholders for the year ended 31 December 2024, recording BHD 81.9 m (USD 217.3 m) compared to BHD 79.1 m (USD 209.8 m) in 2023. The increase in net profit is mainly due to higher

net interest income driven by a 19% customer loan growth and higher gains from investment securities and treasury activities.

Earnings per share increased to 36 fils (USD 10 cents) for the year compared with 35 fils (USD 9 cents) in 2023.

Total comprehensive income attributable to NBB's shareholders for the year increased by 22% to BHD 91.0 m (USD 241.4 m) compared with 74.8 million (USD 198.4 m) in 2023. The increase is mainly attributable to the positive mark-to-market movements of the bond and equity portfolios.



Usman Ahmed, Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB

#### Balance sheet

The Group's total equity attributable to shareholders of 31 December 2024 is at BHD 583.8 m (USD 1,548.6 m) compared to BHD 565.0 m (USD 1,498.7 m) reported as of 31 December 2023.

The Group's total assets increased by 3% during the year to BHD 5,522.2 m (USD 14,647.8 m) compared to BHD 5,372.5 m (USD 14,250.7 m) recorded on 31 December 2023. The increase was mainly due to loans and advances registering a growth of 19% from 31 December 2023.

Following the Group's strong performance, the Board of Directors proposed a cash dividend of BHD 79.2 m or 35% per share equivalent to 35 fils, inclusive of 10% interim dividends announced during August 2024.

The appropriations are subject to the approvals of the regulatory authorities and the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

On the occasion, Mrs. Hala Yateem, Chairperson of NBB said, "2024 marked a record year for NBB Group as we closed

with an attributable profit of BHD 81.9 million, representing a 4% increase from 2023. Our 14.3% return on average equity reflects our commitment to deliver consistent value to our shareholders. We remain focused on strengthening our market position and advancing initiatives that support Bahrain and the wider region's long-term economic growth. We look forward to building on our strengths, adapting to evolving market needs, and creating new opportunities for sustainable progress."

Usman Ahmed, Group Chief Executive Officer of NBB commented, "Our continued growth trajectory in 2024 reflects the trust of our customers across Bahrain, UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Our operating profit of BHD 90.5 million was driven by an increase of 19% and 7%, respectively in loans and customer deposits. During the year, we continued to invest and innovate, introducing digital solutions, such as the digital Yalla family account and the NBB Go mobile point-of-sale product. Our strategy for the future remains centered around serving the evolving needs of our customers while advancing our sustainability agenda and delivering long term value for our shareholders."

## Recommendation of Declaration of Dividends

The Board of Directors of National Bank of Bahrain B.S.C. resolved, at its meeting held on 25 February 2025, to recommend the distribution of dividend for the year ending 31 December 2024 to the shareholders whose names are registered on the Bank's register on the Record Date. This is subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities and the Bank's shareholders at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. The proposed distribution is as follow:

- Cash Dividend:** 35% of share nominal value, equivalent to 35 fils per share amounting to BD 79.2 million\* (includes interim cash dividend of 10 fils per share that has already been distributed to the shareholders on 29 August 2024).

Below are the key dates to be taken note of:

Event	Date
<b>General Meeting Date</b> (Shareholders' approval date)	27/3/2025
<b>Cum-Dividend Date **</b> (Last day of trading with entitlement to dividends)	2/4/2025
<b>Ex-Dividend Date **</b> (First day of trading without entitlement to dividends)	3/4/2025
<b>Record Date **</b> (The day on which all shareholders whose names are on the share register will be entitled to dividends)	6/4/2025
<b>Payment Date</b> (The day on which the dividends will be paid to the entitled shareholders)	15/4/2025

\*Based on the number of shares outstanding (net of treasury shares) as of 31 December 2024.

\*\* If a public holiday falls on any of the specified dates above, the recommended date will be moved to the next business day.

**Mrs. Hala Ali Husain Yateem**  
Chairperson  
25/2/2025

(+973) 17 228800 | [nbbonline.com](http://nbbonline.com)

## BisB Partners with Majestic Car Centre for Auto Deals



Officials during a group photo opportunity following the deal signing

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), the leading provider of innovative Islamic financial solutions for simplifying money matters in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has signed a partnership agreement with Majestic Car Centre to offer exclusive Auto Finance deals.

The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Abdulla Yousif Bahzad, Acting Head of Priority Banking at BisB, and Mr. Ebrahim Abdulla Al Senan, Owner of Majestic Car Centre, along with senior officials from both organisations.

This partnership provides BisB customers with exclusive benefits when purchasing vehicles from Majestic Car Centre. Customers visiting the showroom will gain access to preferential rates and tailored financing solutions designed to enhance affordability and con-

venience. As part of the agreement, BisB customers will enjoy a repayment grace period of up to six months, ensuring greater financial flexibility. Additionally, the collaboration extends for three years, from 16th February 2025 to 16th February 2028, providing customers seeking lucrative financing solutions the best competitive profit rates.

During the upcoming holy month of Ramadan, customers visiting Majestic's dealerships

will also benefit from exclusive in-store offers, further enriching their vehicle purchasing experience.

The initiative aligns with BisB's ongoing efforts to enhance its service offerings by establishing strong partnerships with key market players. By collaborating with Majestic Car Centre, the Bank reinforces its commitment to delivering tailored financial solutions that cater to the evolving needs of its customers.



## Consolidated Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

### National Bank of Bahrain B.S.C.

T: (+973) 17 228800

www.nbonline.com



#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
	BHD millions	USD millions	BHD millions	USD millions
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash and balances at central banks	184.8	490.2	181.3	480.9
Treasury bills	196.1	520.2	186.1	493.6
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	625.9	1,660.2	1,038.9	2,755.7
Loans and advances	3,020.0	8,010.6	2,535.1	6,724.4
Investment securities	1,167.6	3,097.1	1,155.0	3,063.7
Investment in associates	44.1	117.0	26.3	69.8
Interest receivable and other assets	158.3	419.9	127.6	338.4
Property and equipment	74.3	197.1	70.3	186.5
Goodwill and other intangible assets	51.1	135.5	51.9	137.7
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>5,522.2</b>	<b>14,647.8</b>	<b>5,372.5</b>	<b>14,250.7</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Due to banks and other financial institutions	579.7	1,537.7	671.0	1,779.8
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	384.8	1,020.7	460.7	1,222.0
Customer deposits	3,743.8	9,930.5	3,504.8	9,296.6
Interest payable and other liabilities	216.9	575.3	158.8	421.2
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>4,925.2</b>	<b>13,064.2</b>	<b>4,795.3</b>	<b>12,719.6</b>
<b>Equity</b>				
Share capital	226.6	601.1	226.6	601.1
Treasury shares	(2.5)	(6.6)	-	-
Shares unallocated under share incentive scheme	(0.5)	(1.3)	(0.9)	(2.4)
Share premium	15.1	40.1	13.6	36.1
Statutory reserve	113.3	300.5	113.3	300.5
General reserve	32.4	85.9	32.4	85.9
Other reserves and retained earnings	199.4	528.9	180.0	477.5
<b>Equity attributable to the shareholders of the Bank</b>	<b>583.8</b>	<b>1,548.6</b>	<b>565.0</b>	<b>1,498.7</b>
Non-controlling interest	13.2	35.0	12.2	32.4
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>597.0</b>	<b>1,583.6</b>	<b>577.2</b>	<b>1,531.1</b>
<b>Total liabilities and equity</b>	<b>5,522.2</b>	<b>14,647.8</b>	<b>5,372.5</b>	<b>14,250.7</b>

#### Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
	BHD millions	USD millions	BHD millions	USD millions
Interest income	308.2	817.5	267.7	710.1
Interest expense	(164.8)	(437.1)	(126.3)	(335.0)
<b>Net interest income</b>	<b>143.4</b>	<b>380.4</b>	<b>141.4</b>	<b>375.1</b>
Net fee and commission income	15.4	40.8	12.9	34.2
Other income	32.9	87.3	29.7	78.8
<b>Total operating income</b>	<b>191.7</b>	<b>508.5</b>	<b>184.0</b>	<b>488.1</b>
Staff expenses	52.3	138.7	49.3	130.8
Depreciation, amortisation and equipment expenses	21.7	57.6	20.5	54.4
Other operating expenses	27.2	72.1	26.2	69.5
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>101.2</b>	<b>268.4</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>254.7</b>
<b>Profit before results of associates, impairment, other provisions and tax</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>240.1</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>233.4</b>
Share of profits from associates, net	1.4	3.7	1.1	2.9
Loans, placements and securities impairment, net	(9.1)	(24.1)	(6.5)	(17.2)
Other impairment and provisions, net	0.5	1.3	(1.2)	(3.2)
<b>Profit before tax</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>221.0</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>215.9</b>
Tax expense	(0.3)	(0.8)	-	-
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>220.2</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>215.9</b>
<b>Attributable to:</b>				
Shareholders of the Bank	81.9	217.3	79.1	209.8
Non-controlling interest	1.1	2.9	2.3	6.1
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>220.2</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>215.9</b>
<b>Basic and diluted earnings per share attributable to the shareholders of the Bank</b>	<b>36 fils</b>	<b>10 cents</b>	<b>35 fils</b>	<b>9 cents</b>

#### Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
	BHD millions	USD millions	BHD millions	USD millions
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>220.2</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>215.9</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income:</b>				
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Fair value through other comprehensive income (debt instruments)				
Net change in fair value	13.6	36.0	11.8	31.3
Net amount transferred to profit or loss	(9.5)	(25.2)	(10.5)	(27.8)
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Net change in fair value of equity FVOCI instruments	5.0	13.3	(5.6)	(14.9)
<b>Total other comprehensive income / (loss) for the year</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>(4.3)</b>	<b>(11.4)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>244.3</b>	<b>77.1</b>	<b>204.5</b>
<b>Attributable to:</b>				
Shareholders of the Bank	91.0	241.4	74.8	198.4
Non-controlling interest	1.1	2.9	2.3	6.1
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>244.3</b>	<b>77.1</b>	<b>204.5</b>

The above consolidated statement of financial position, consolidated statement of profit or loss, consolidated statement of comprehensive income, consolidated statement of cash flows and consolidated statement of changes in equity have been extracted from the Group's consolidated financial statements audited by KPMG, who expressed an unqualified opinion on 25 February 2025.

Reviewed by KPMG - 25 February 2025

#### Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Other reserves and retained earnings									Total equity			
	Share capital	Treasury shares	Unallocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Fair value reserve	Donation and charity reserve	Retained earnings	Total owners' equity	Non-controlling interest	BHD millions	USD millions
<b>Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>226.6</b>	-	(0.9)	13.6	113.3	32.4	28.5	13.4	138.1	565.0	12.2	<b>577.2</b>	<b>1,531.1</b>
2023 appropriations:													
Cash dividend at 20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(45.2)	(45.2)	-	(45.2)	(119.9)
Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0	(4.0)	-	-	-	-
2024 appropriations:													
Cash dividend at 10%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(22.7)	(22.7)	-	(22.7)	(60.2)
<b>Balance after 2023 &amp; 2024 appropriations</b>	<b>226.6</b>	-	(0.9)	13.6	113.3	32.4	28.5	17.4	66.2	497.1	12.2	<b>509.3</b>	<b>1,351.0</b>
Employee shares assigned	-	-	0.4	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	1.9	-	1.9	5.0
Movement in treasury shares	-	(2.5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2.5)	-	(2.5)	(6.6)
Comprehensive income for the year:													
Profit for the year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81.9	81.9	1.1	83.0	220.2
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.1	-	9.1	-	9.1	24.1
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>244.3</b>
Utilisation of donation and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3.2					

## News in brief

◆ Smartphones will be banned at schools under new legislation proposed in Denmark, the education minister announced yesterday. "We have decided to give the government's support to this idea and that's why we are starting to prepare a change in the law." Matthias Tesfaye told the Danish daily newspaper Politiken. The details of the law have not yet been signed off but Tesfaye said "mobile phones and personal tablets will not be allowed at school, neither during break times nor during lessons". "I believe screens are robbing many of our children of their childhood," culture minister Jakob Engel-Schmidt said at a press conference. The plan follows recommendations from a youth well-being commission, which also recommended restricting the use of smartphones to those aged 13 and older. Rasmus Meyer, president of the commission, said the age restriction was "clearly not something that should be decided by law".



Denmark announces plans to ban smartphones at schools

◆ Republican billionaire businessman Vivek Ramaswamy kickstarted his campaign for governor of Ohio on Monday, one month after quitting US President Donald Trump's Department of Government Efficiency. Ramaswamy had co-led the DOGE with tech entrepreneur Elon Musk, the world's richest person and Trump's biggest donor, in its mission to gut federal staffing and spending. "President

Trump is reviving our conviction in America, we require a leader here at home, who will revive our conviction in Ohio," Ramaswamy said in a speech on Monday. A former 2024 presidential primary candidate, Ramaswamy went on to endorse Trump, who returned the favor by appointing him to the DOGE. His departure from the commission was announced soon after Trump's inauguration in late January. There were already reports then that he intended to run for governor of the state.

◆ US President Donald Trump on Monday called for the revival of the controversial Keystone XL Pipeline project opposed by environmental activists that was blocked under his predecessor Joe Biden. Biden formally rescinded a permit for the pipeline - first proposed in 2008 -- by executive order on his first day in office in January 2021 over environmental concerns, reversing course from Trump during his first term. While the project had long been backed by Canada, Keystone XL had been opposed by environmentalists and Indigenous groups, who organized rallies against it in Washington, Ottawa and in other affected areas. "The company building the Keystone XL Pipeline that was viciously jettisoned by the incompetent Biden Administration should come back to America, and get it built - NOW!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, referring to the Canadian company involved in the project.

Trump calls for revival of Keystone XL Pipeline project axed by Biden



◆ Israeli opposition leader: Egypt should run Gaza for 8 years



A Palestinian child receives a polio vaccine at a camp for displaced people in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip

Washington, United States

Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid said yesterday that Egypt should run the Gaza Strip for at least eight years once the war is over, in exchange for massive debt relief.

"The solution is Egypt will take responsibility for the management of the Gaza Strip for eight years with an option to extend to 15 years," he told the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) think tank in Washington.

"At the same time, its foreign external debt will be paid off by the international community and regional allies," Lapid, a former Israeli prime minister, continued.

Egypt would lead a "peace force" of the Gulf states and the international community "for the management and re-building of Gaza," he said.

They later reported at least five people were wounded and multiple buildings were damaged.

Authorities in neighboring Poland said they scrambled military aircraft in response to the missile attack.

The solution is Egypt will take responsibility for the management of the Gaza Strip for eight years with an option to extend to 15 years," he told the hawkish Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) think tank in Washington.

"At the same time, its foreign

# Fake video of Trump sucking Elon Musk's toes prompts investigation

● The video was "briefly" played on screens at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

● An inscription that read "Long Live the Real King" was superimposed over the video

● The looping footage appears to have been produced using artificial intelligence.

TDT | Washington

Trump calls for revival of Keystone XL Pipeline project axed by Biden



Screen grab from the video posted online

A AI-generated video of US President Donald Trump sucking Elon Musk's feet was shown inside the headquarters of a US government department, prompting an investigation, a

spokesperson said. The video was "briefly" played on screens at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on Monday, the New

York Times reported. It criticized Trump's close relationship with Musk, the world's richest person, who has been put in charge of the Department of

Government Efficiency (DOGE) and tasked with cutting federal staffing and spending.

An inscription that read "Long Live the Real King" was superimposed over the video, referencing a message Trump posted on his Truth Social platform to celebrate his government's nixing of the New York City congestion pricing plan.

A HUD spokesperson said on social media that the stunt was "abusing taxpayer resources" and that the department was planning to investigate and fire those responsible.

The looping footage appears to have been produced using artificial intelligence.

It came on the same day as

Musk's deadline for federal workers to explain their work achievements in an email.

The deadline passed with much confusion among an already anxious workforce after several US federal agencies -- including some led by prominent Trump loyalists -- told staff to ignore the email, at least temporarily.

Musk told US federal workers

they had "another chance" to

justify their work or lose their

jobs in a post on his social media platform X on Monday.

In response to the video, the Democrat House Committee on Financial Services said in a post on X: "Not all heroes wear capes."

A HUD spokesperson said on social media that the stunt was "abusing taxpayer resources" and that the department was planning to investigate and fire those responsible.

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# UN warns of last chance for two-state Israeli-Palestinian solution

● Kaag called on Hamas and Israel to agree on the second phase of the ceasefire

AFP | United Nations, United States

The Middle East is undergoing changes that could represent the last chance for the long-sought goal of a two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a UN official said Tuesday.

Sigrig Kaag, the UN envoy for the peace process in the region, also warned against calls for Israel to annex the occupied West Bank.

"The Middle East today is undergoing rapid transformation -- its scope and impact remain uncertain, but it also presents a historic opportunity," Kaag told the UN Security Council.

"The people of the region can emerge from this period with peace, security, and dignity. However, this may be our last chance to achieve the two-state solution," said Kaag.

She said Israeli settlement building in the West Bank, Israeli military operations in this

occupied territory "and continued calls for annexation, present

an existential threat to the prospect of a viable and independent

Palestinian State and thereby the two-state solution."

Kaag called on Hamas and Israel to agree on the second phase



Mourners attend the funeral procession of 14 Hezbollah fighters killed during battles with the Israeli army in southern Lebanon



Hezbollah, once Lebanon's most powerful military and political force, suffered major setbacks in more than a year of hostilities with Israel including two months of all-out war, including an Israeli ground invasion, that halted with a November 27 ceasefire.

of the ceasefire in the Gaza war and avoid a resumption of fighting.

The international community must ensure that Gaza -- which President Donald Trump wants to put under US control, displacing its entire population -- must be part of a future Palestinian state joining it with the West Bank and east Jerusalem, she said. "Palestinian civilians must be able to resume their lives, to rebuild, and to construct their future in Gaza," said Kaag.

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## Ailing pope works on canonisations as Catholics pray for recovery

AFP | Vatican City, Holy See

Pope Francis has approved the canonisation of two new saints from his hospital bed, the Vatican said Tuesday, as the 88-year-old pontiff, who has pneumonia in both lungs, remained hospitalised for a 12th day.

Despite his critical condition, the leader of the world's nearly 1.4 billion Catholics has striven to keep up with Church matters during his stay, according to the Vatican.

After revealing a "slight improvement" in the Argentine pope's condition Monday evening, the Vatican said Tuesday that he had received its secretary of state Cardinal Pietro Parolin the day before, and his number two, Venezuelan Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra.

Francis approved the canonisation of two Venezuelan and Italian laymen who died in the early 20th century, while authorising the first steps towards sainthood for three 19th-century priests from Spain, Italy and Poland, the Vatican said.

The pope has been working from his special papal suite on the 10th floor of Rome's Gemelli hospital, where he was admitted February 14 with breathing difficulties.

His condition worsened, with asthmatic respiratory attacks at the weekend that required high levels of oxygen and blood transfusions to combat anaemia.

Catholics across the globe have gathered to pray for the



Pope Francis takes a throat sweet from a tin box during the weekly general audience

pope as some expressed hope he may have turned a corner on what doctors warn could be a long path to recovery.

The Vatican's Monday update offered a glimmer of light, saying that Francis had suffered no new respiratory attacks that required "high-flow oxygen", and that his laboratory tests had improved.

He had also called the Gaza parish priest, as he has routinely done since the war broke out, the Vatican said. This time, he was thanking him for a video the parish sent him.

"The whole world is praying for you... and everyone wishes you good health", the priest said in the video, which was published on Vatican News and showed him surrounded by his flock.

The pope remains fragile, and his medical team has cautioned

it will take time for drug treatments to show positive effects.

"Considering the complexity of the clinical picture," his doctors decline to "decide on the prognosis", the Vatican said Monday.

Hundreds of faithful are expected to gather again in St Peter's Square on Tuesday evening.

Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, a former coordinator of the pope's Council of Cardinals, told La Repubblica daily Tuesday he felt hopeful the pope would pull through.

"It's not yet time for him to go to heaven," Maradiaga said.

"He is someone who does not back down in the face of difficulty, does not get discouraged, does not freeze, and does not stop moving forward," he told the paper.

# Celebs

**George Clooney 'didn't think he had a chance' with Amal Clooney because of the age gap**



George and Amal Clooney  
Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

**G**eorge Clooney "didn't think he had a chance" with wife Amal because of the age gap.

The 63-year-old actor tied the knot with lawyer Amal Alamuddin, 47, in 2014 and they have seven-year-old twins, Alexander and Ella together but he admitted that he thought the fact that he was 17 years older than her may have been a problem,

He told the New York Times: "I wasn't really in the market for being a dad. Then I met Amal and we fell in love.

"I have to say that, after that, everything made sense.

"[When we first met] I was like 'Oh my God!' Then I didn't really think I'd have much of a chance with her because I was 17 years older and she seemed to have everything she needed."

The former 'ER' star addressed his age with Amal on his last milestone birthday

He said: "I had this conversation with Amal when I turned 60 as he shared his concerns with her that he will not be able to do all the things he does now as the years roll on.

"I said, 'Look, I can still play full-court basketball. I can still run around. I can still do pretty much everything I did when I was 30. "But in 30 years, I'm 90. There are some things you're not doing [at that age] no matter how many granola bars you eat."

## Amy Adams had 'a very specific idea of how to parent'

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

**A**my Adams used to have a "very specific idea" of how to parent her daughter.

The 50-year-old actress - who has Aviana, 14, with her husband Darren Le Gallo - admits that her approach to parenting has evolved over time.

The 'Big Eyes' star - who has been married to Darren since 2015 - told OK! magazine: "Strangely, I think I had a more succinct idea of how I thought I should do everything when she was younger - a very specific idea of how I would parent."

Amy believes parenthood has actually helped her to become more patient.

The Hollywood star explained: "Each person brings their own special skill set and it gets developed over time.

"I have become more patient because I learned that skill through parenting."

Amy also revealed that she's made a specific promise to her daughter.

She

shared: "I've promised I won't talk too much about her now and how she is. I'll talk about her in the past, but not now.

"I

just try to stay available to her so that when she is in these moments where she wants to talk and share, I'm present for them."

Amy recently acknowledged that motherhood has changed her life and her career.

The actress explained that her daughter has become the focus of her attention, rather than her career in the movie business.

She told Variety: "Every mom needed to be dedicated to the care and keeping of my child.

"Motherhood did redirect my priorities. And I think that changed some relationships. That was hard, but I don't think it's uncommon."

Amy also enjoys the experience of being an older actress in Hollywood.

Amy Adams



## Cate Blanchett 'never imagined' she would be an actress

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

**C**ate Blanchett "never imagined" she would be a professional actress.

The 55-year-old star has been on the silver screen for decades and won two Academy Awards during the course of her Hollywood career but admitted that acting was just something she enjoyed doing in her youth, and it never occurred to her that she could actually make a living out of it.

She told The Guardian: "We had an amazing drama teacher. It was really messy and it felt circus-like, with all the girls who didn't fit into other groups, all the mismatched ragamuffins. We just made stuff, and when you make people laugh it's quite addictive."

"But I never, ever, ever thought it was something I would do, or that I could do, that one did with one's life."

The 'Borderland' star had every intention of getting a "proper job" after she left finished her education but ended up auditioning for

Cate Blanchett

drama school on a whim, and actually got a place.

She said: "I was doing it for fun, and then I was going to go and get a proper job. This is where it's a vocation I think - it sounds very precious these days when you say that - but in the sense that I didn't pursue it, it pursued me. Someone suggested I try out for drama school and I did, kind of as a dare, and I got in."

Prior to that, the 'Tar' actress had studied fine arts and economics at the University of Melbourne simply so she could "be around artists"

but admitted that she is "not a painter" and doesn't show anyone anything she does these days.



## Justin Bieber is 'happiest he has been in a while', despite recent public behaviour, says insider

Bang Showbiz | Los Angeles

**J**ustin Bieber is "happier than he has been in a long time", according to an insider.

The 30-year-old pop star - who is married to model Hailey Bieber, 28, and has six-month-old son Jack with her - has insisted that he is a "happy camper" right now and is in a good place.

A source told Us Weekly: "Justin is a happy camper right now, he's happier than he's been

Justin Bieber

in a long time."

In recent weeks, the 'Peaches' hitmaker has caused some concern amongst fans after he unfollowed his wife on Instagram, and has been spotted leaving a spa in LA looking disheveled on more than one occasion.

But the insider insisted that these are not the signs of a "breakdown" and he "doesn't care" what others think anyway.

The source added: "There's no breakdown, and he just really doesn't care what people think. He knows he looks strange leaving spas shirtless, but it's just him. And after the rumors he's doing it out of spite now, he's just being himself and won't create a squeaky clean image

just because the public wants him to."

In early January, Justin insisted that his unfollowing of Hailey on Instagram was a result of a hacking.

He said: "Someone went on my account and unfollowed my wife. S\*\*\* is getting suss out here."

Just days before that, the 'Baby' singer declared that he would go "anywhere" with his significant other, as he appeared to brush off speculation that they had split.

He commented on a series of photos posted by Hailey on Instagram to ring in 2025, which showed her posing in a bikini: "Um. Goin anywhere with u b. Happy new year."

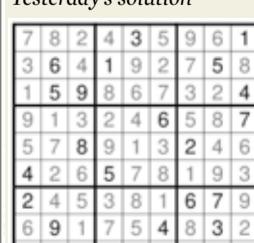
Hailey captioned her carousel of images: "Wake up, it's 2025!"

It included snaps from her and Justin's New Year's Eve party, which included caviar-topped In-N-Out burgers and martinis.

### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution



### How to play

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### CROSSWORD

#### Across

1- Kind of committee; 6- "Dancing Queen" quartet; 10- Self-image; 13- Capital of Egypt; 14- Snare; 15- Sp. ladies; 16- Command to the band; 17- Frozen rain; 18- Yarn; 19- Shade trees; 20- 100 years; 22- Chaucer pilgrim; 24- Rarely; 28- Polite refusal; 31- Chapter's partner; 32- Sheriff's band; 34- Convent dweller; 36- Pouches; 37- Cartoon Chihuahua; 38- Part of a gun; 41- Pas' partners; 42- Formerly, once; 44- The whole shebang; 45- Rose oil; 47- Perfect; 49- Hang around; 51- Spice; 53- Put up a fight; 56- Version; 59- Restaurateur Toots; 61- Makes a blunder; 64- Bank transaction; 65- Video game pioneer; 66- Misbehavin'; 67- Low-cal; 68- Vixen's master; 69- Color TV pioneer; 70- Arctic transport; 71- Slippery as ...

#### Down

1- Painful throb; 2- Every 24 hours; 3- Blackjack request; 4- Prayers; 5- Small bed; 6- Goddess of wisdom; 7- Fiber source; 8- Can of worms; 9- Great grade; 10- Slice of history; 11- Guy's partner; 12- Sugar suffix; 15- Fashions; 20- Photographic device; 21- Gun the engine; 23- The majority of; 25- Pulitzer category; 26- Movie award; 27- Pigsty; 29- ...Saxon; 30- Drinking cup; 32- Remaining out of sight; 33- Get-go; 35- Tidy up; 37- Bridle strap; 39- Under the weather; 40- Hwy.; 43- Least feral; 46- Isolde's love; 48- ...Zeppelin; 50- Pressed; 52- Breathing organs of fish; 54- Classic Alan Ladd western; 55- Rich cake; 57- Work hard; 58- Must've been something ...; 60- Iranian coin; 61- Auditory apparatus; 62- Rock's Oceans; 63- Genetic messenger; 65- Al Jolson's real first name;

Yesterday's solution



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PANORAMA CONTRACTING & ENGINEERING SERVI has a vacancy for the occupation of BLACKSMITH, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17729935 or AHMED@PANORAMABH.COM

SEVENTIES KARAK has a vacancy for the occupation of SANDWICHES MAKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39664667 or KARAK1977.BAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

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SHAW NASS PIPE FABRICATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of QUALITY INSPECTOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17725522 or yousif@aannass.net

Alwadi Gold weld fabrication has a vacancy for the occupation of WELDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33982567 or JSAR-HAN123@GMAIL.COM

NOOR ALWLAYA RESTAURANT & GRILLS CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SANDWICHES MAKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17630089 or NOOR.ABDUL-LA2018@GMAIL.COM

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HASZONE DYNAMIC SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of PRINTING SETTER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33179654 or MURSHAD5933357@GMAIL.COM

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YASSAF CONSTRUCTION has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION).GENERAL, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39858068 or H610047566@GMAIL.COM

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MAYSAAA BEAUTY SALON has a vacancy for the occupation of HAIRDRESSER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37767717 or Maysaalon@gmail.com

BATSCO CO.W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17822202 or hr@BATS-CO.NET

Daisy Cake has a vacancy for the occupation of CHEF, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17210135 or ahmed@btsbah.com

ALBASMA RESTAURANT has a vacancy for the occupation of COOK(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17562810 or KHA-LIDZAINALDIN@GMAIL.COM

PROBUILD BS CONTRACTING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33374837 or d.eleven.11@outlook.com

Home Care Contracting has a vacancy for the occupation of ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36221177 or MURAD.RAMADAN@GMAIL.COM

AL RAWNAQ PALACE TRADING has a vacancy for the occupation of STOREKEEPER ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17703190 or aidarwish1974@gmail.com

UNISKILLS W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17224578 or INFO@JANIKINGBAHRAIN.COM

Secure Me W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SECURITY GUARD, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17749697 or secure.me@live.com

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Seven colors for buying and selling cars has a vacancy for the occupation of SALES OFFICER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36311147 or KHALIDSAYAA@GMAIL.COM

ALHAIF CAFE has a vacancy for the occupation of PREPARER(COFFEE), suitably qualified applicants can contact 38384444 or TARIQALTHAWADI@GMAIL.COM

BAHRAIN FOAM FACTORY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MACHINE OPERATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17295511 or AH.ZAYANI@GMAIL.COM

Royal Ambassador Property Co. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORKER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17786500 or pasha@okbahrain.com

SM BAKERY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of BAKER(GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 34597798 or SMBAKER@GMAIL.COM

MOHAMED JALAL CONTRACTING CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MASON, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17536956 or RASHID\_BUALI@JALAL.COM

PAHLWAN CAFETERIA has a vacancy for the occupation of WAITER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39093227 or SADIQKHANNY@GMAIL.COM

MARABEE CONSTRUCTION OF UTILITY PROJECTS CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33805197 or OFFICE@MARABEEGCC.COM

LENO BEAUTY LOUNGE SALOON has a vacancy for the occupation of HAIRDRESSER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38300340 or masooma.shubber.1990@gmail.com

ALREEF MAZALI RESTAURANT has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17292662 or LAYALIBAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

JOMASS TRADING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38288188 or 501308781@qq.com

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NAAZ AL NAJMA CONTRACTING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39767786 or naazkhan.12334@gmail.com

TULEEN CARPENTRY & UPHOLSTERY has a vacancy for the occupation of CARPENTER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 3903911 or Tuleencarpentry@gmail.com

ELITE FACILITY MANAGEMENT CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 17382228 or MUSTAFA@ELITEFM.COM

FIXIT FACILITY MAINTENANCE SOLUTIONS W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MARKETING EXECUTIVE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39193918 or faisal9193918@gmail.com

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PURE WORLD INTERIOR DECORATION W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(PAINT FINISHER), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36159366 or AM5374706@GMAIL.COM

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KAHRAMANA COMPANY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of KITCHEN AIDE, suitably qualified applicants can contact 35585215 or ASAADALJOBORY@GMAIL.COM

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OCEAN CREST SERVICES CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of DRIVER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36200540 or ABDULLAH9375647@GMAIL.COM

Eastern Asphalt & Mixed Concrete Co. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CONSTRUCTION WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17252078 or S.RADHI@EAMCO.BH

HAFIZABAD PART TWO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36919050 or RAI-FIA294@GMAIL.COM

SMART SPACES MANAGEMENT OF REAL ESTATE CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 37557761 or SHAHIDARSHAD448@GMAIL.COM

CIRCLE INTEGRATED SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17822218 or INFO@CIRCLE.BH

LIFE POINT SERVICES has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33055666 or MARIAMCR2005@GMAIL.COM

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KUWAIT GARAGE has a vacancy for the occupation of PAINTER(METAL PARTS), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36636161 or MUAATHALAIYD@GMAIL.COM

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# Classifieds

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WESTMINSTER GULF CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SCAFFOLDER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17533311 or AIRMECH.BAHRAIN@AIRMECH.NET

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ALMAHARY ALUMINUM AND WELDING SMITHERY WORKSHOP has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER (TURNING WORKSHOP), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39847247 or ALMAHARY@HOTMAIL.COM

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Thai house see food restaurants has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 37771124 or y.alkayat@hotmail.com

DHAWA CAFETERIA W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(JUICE & SANDWICHES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 39572671 or MANORANJMANU@GMAIL.COM

KHALID REPAIR OF ELECTRONIC CO W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ELECTRICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36375516 or KM466188@GMAIL.COM

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ERA CONSTRUCTION WLL has a vacancy for the occupation of ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17500331 or hr@eraprojects.net

AHA CAR SPA has a vacancy for the occupation of CAR WASHER/CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 36308383 or HAMAD-B02@LIVE.COM

GEORGEINA ELECTRCAL CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 17321000 or R.ALNASS@RMEDIACO.COM

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# Salah's Ballon d'Or hopes tied to silverware: Slot

Liverpool boss Slot says trophies are key to Salah's chances of winning award

● Salah favorite for Ballon d'Or after stellar season

● 30 goals, 21 assists so far this campaign

AFP | London

Arne Slot says Mohamed Salah will have a "far better chance" of winning the Ballon d'Or if runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool win silverware this season.

The Egyptian superstar, 32, is favourite to win the award, regarded as the top individual prize in football, after a sensational campaign so far.

Salah, who is yet to sign a new deal to keep him at Anfield beyond the end of this season, has scored 30 goals and provided 21 assists in all competitions during the current campaign.

But Liverpool manager Slot said yesterday that despite those stellar numbers, the club need to win major trophies to help their forward win his first Ballon d'Or.

"It's a good thing that Mo is in the discussion because it means he does well and it means we are doing well," the Dutchman said yesterday.

"But for him to stay in that discussion, he should bring in the same performances as he's done for seven or eight months now.

**It's a good thing that Mo is in the discussion because it means he does well and it means we are doing well. But for him to stay in that discussion, he should bring in the same performances as he's done for seven or eight months now**

MOHAMED SALAH

"And I think, in general, someone that wins the Ballon d'Or needs to win something as well, so it's a great challenge in front of us, but also in front of him."

Liverpool, who host Newcastle on Wednesday, are 11 points clear of second-placed Arsenal at the top of the Premier League with 11 games to go but Slot said he does

not fear complacency.

"We all know these players are so long in this competition, even much longer than me, so they know how difficult every single game is, and if you have to play 11, it's still a long way to go," he said.

Liverpool are also in the final of the League Cup, where they will face Newcastle again, and will meet Paris Saint-Germain in the last

16 of the

Champions League.

Slot was asked at his pre-match press conference whether

Salah's current form could be compared with that of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi at

If Salah wins the Ballon d'Or, he would become the first African player to claim the award since George Weah in 1995

their peak but he shied away from direct comparisons.

"He (Salah) has had some outstanding seasons here at Liverpool, and we hope he can continue this for a longer period of time, but to do that he first has to extend his contract of course," he said.

The Liverpool boss was also asked whether Salah's red-hot form would make it easier or more difficult for the club to agree a new deal.

"You can look at it in both ways," he said. "You can say the better he does, the more expensive he might become, and if he would do really worse, we would have second thoughts if we wanted to extend his contract.

"So I think for everyone it's the best that he brings in the performances he does now.

Maybe only for the one that has to pay him it's not the best, but for everyone else it's the best."

## Bahrain's FIBA Asia Cup dreams on the line after Syria loss

TDT | Manama

The road to Jeddah just got tougher for Bahrain. The national team is grappling with the reality of missing out on direct qualification for the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 after a tough 76-67 loss to Syria in Doha on Monday night. While the defeat ends their automatic bid, Bahrain's journey isn't over yet—there's still one last shot at redemption.

Last night's showdown against Syria was a must-win for Bahrain in Group F. Entering the game at 2-2, Bahrain had a direct path to qualification but fell victim to a fourth-quarter collapse. Syria's Myron Gordon turned the game on its head, leading a late surge that erased Bahrain's early lead and sealed the 76-67 upset.

Bahrain had previously battled hard in this final qualification window, losing 84-78 to Lebanon in Manama before heading to Doha. The Syria loss dropped them to 2-3, tied with the UAE but edged out on tiebreakers. Meanwhile, Syria (2-3) clinched the second qualification spot behind Lebanon (5-0), leaving Bahrain's fate hanging.

**Jeddah Dream: Not Over Yet**

The FIBA Asia Cup 2025, set for August 5-17 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, already has 12 qualified teams, including Lebanon,



Action from the match

Japan, China, and Australia. Four more spots remain, and Bahrain's only way in now is through the Final Qualifying Tournament later this year.

This last-chance tournament will feature Bahrain, India, Kazakhstan, Guam, Mongolia, and the UAE—all third-place finishers from the qualifiers—along with pre-selected teams Iraq, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei.

The stakes mean only four teams will make it to Jeddah.

**What's Next**

The focus shifts immediately to rebuilding and preparation. The defensive lapses and late-game struggles that cost them against Syria will need addressing. Coaches will have time to fine-tune Bahrain's approach,

while players like Ahmed Salman and Wayne Chism—who led the charge in past qualifiers—will be crucial.

Bahraini fans are already reacting online, with some calling the Syria loss a wake-up call while others remain hopeful for a Jeddah comeback.

Afghanistan's cricket players are facing a "tricky situation" and know there are "things that are not correct" in their country, the team's English coach told media yesterday.

Afghanistan is set to face England in Lahore on Wednesday in their second group-stage match of the Champions Trophy, marking their debut in the tournament.

Ahead of the contest, more than 160 British politicians have called for England to boycott the game in protest against the Taliban government's restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan.

"They know the difference between right and wrong. It is a real tricky situation for them," head coach and former England batsman Jonathan Trott told the BBC from Lahore.



Afghanistan's head coach Jonathan Trott

# Hamilton's Ferrari era begins

Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton makes Ferrari debut at Bahrain testing, igniting F1's 2025 season

Hamilton drives Ferrari SF-25 for the first time

Bahrain's track offers ideal testing conditions

Red Bull's Verstappen debuts RB21 alongside rivals

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Lewis Hamilton makes his long-awaited Ferrari debut today at the Bahrain International Circuit, kicking off Formula 1's 2025 season with a bang. The seven-time world champion takes the wheel of the scarlet SF-25, ushering in a new phase of his illustrious career. With the paddock abuzz and fans locked in, the 2025 season starts under Bahrain's desert sun.

Lewis Hamilton's switch to Ferrari dominates 2025 headlines. After 12 years and six world titles with Mercedes, his Maranello arrival reverberates across the sport. Today, he drives the SF-25 in an official session for the first time, a milestone eagerly awaited since the transfer news broke. This debut signals the start of a partnership poised to influence the championship battle. Observers will



Key Elements to Observe

Teams are focused on reliability checks, ensuring their cars function smoothly, and showcasing new technologies, including aerodynamic designs and energy recovery systems. The driver market's biggest

track Hamilton's adjustment to Ferrari's car and team, with the test offering an initial look at this landmark transition.

Perfect Proving Ground

The Bahrain International Circuit stands out as an optimal testing venue. Its 5.41-km layout includes high-speed corners, demanding braking zones, and a rough surface that tests cars and tires alike.

Unlike Europe's chilly, erratic February weather, Bahrain's warm, steady conditions allow teams to maximize track time and collect consistent data. From today, the 2025 cars undergo their first real-world evaluation here, setting the stage for the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne and the Bahrain Grand Prix from April 11-13.

On-Track Action

The pit lane opens this morning, kicking off three days of essential testing. Teams unveil their 2025 contenders, with drivers rotating through sessions. Ferrari and Aston Martin, among others, completed private shakedowns in the last 24 hours to confirm basic reliability.

The final 90 minutes unfold under floodlights, mirroring the night-race setup of the upcoming Bahrain Grand Prix. Hamilton joins drivers like reigning champion Max Verstappen, who debuts Red Bull's RB21, on track.



A McLaren in action at BIC

move, Lewis Hamilton's transition to Ferrari, is a key point of interest. While teams are yet to reveal their full potential, long runs and tire management data provide initial clues about performance. The testing period will offer early indications of whether any team can challenge Red Bull's dominance.

Hamilton's adaptation to Ferrari draws intense focus, as does the SF-25's performance compared to his dominant Mercedes tenure. His past with Mercedes yielded six titles and countless accolades, setting a high bar. Now, his integration into Ferrari's setup and the car's competitiveness against his former team fuel anticipation for 2025.

Ferrari Gamble

Hamilton's arrival bolsters Ferrari's championship aspirations. His experience and skill elevate the team's prospects against Red Bull's stronghold, led by Verstappen. Meanwhile, Mercedes recalibrates without their long-time star. The testing



Lewis Hamilton's move to Ferrari marks the first time since 1954 that a seven-time world champion has switched teams, adding historic significance to the 2025 season

in Bahrain marks the first step in gauging how this move reshapes the title fight.

Innovations

Teams are expected to introduce new aerodynamic designs, suspension setups, and energy recovery systems during testing. These advancements hold potential to significantly alter

the competitive order. Bahrain offers the initial platform to observe these developments in action, hinting at their impact on the season ahead.

A Season of Anticipation

Hamilton's Ferrari chapter heightens the stakes for 2025. Ferrari's potential to disrupt Red Bull's reign, alongside Mercedes' response to Hamilton's exit, stirs excitement. The grid brims with change—months of design and development now face reality across these three days. The midfield, featuring teams like Aston Martin and McLaren, also aims to narrow the gap to the leaders.

Engines roar to life this morning, signaling the official start of F1 2025. The Bahrain test serves as a crucible—not just for the cars, but for the stories defining the season. Hamilton in Ferrari red, Verstappen defending his title, and a field ripe with unknowns all converge today. The track awaits, the tension builds, and Formula 1 returns.

## Rain washes out Australia-South Africa Champions Trophy match

AFP | Rawalpindi

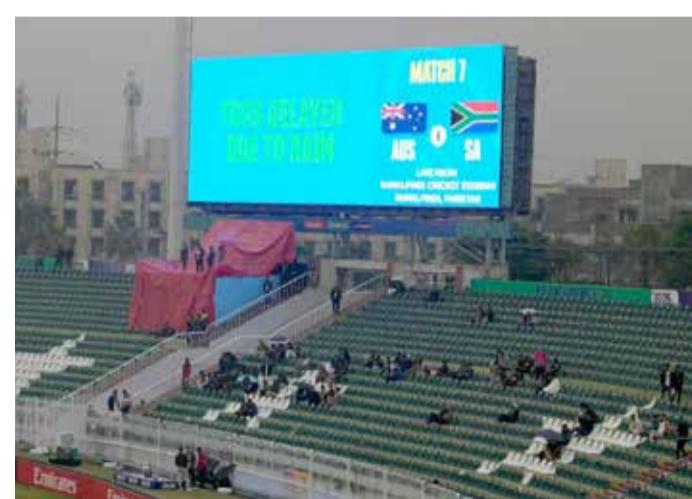
The Champions Trophy clash between Australia and South Africa was abandoned without a ball being bowled because of rain at the Rawalpindi Stadium yesterday.

Rain began to fall from early morning and despite being relenting into light drizzle the weather continued to worsen with bad light, delaying the toss scheduled for 1:30 p.m. local time (0830 GMT).

With rain not stopping and the ground staff unable to remove pools of water from covers protecting the playing surface, umpires took the decision to abandon the Group B match.

A handful of spectators with South African and Australian flags waited anxiously for the start of the match but had to leave without watching any action. With one point each from this match, Australia and South Africa are both well placed for the semi-finals, having both won their opening fixtures in the tournament.

South Africa, who beat Afghanistan in their first match by 107 runs, are top of the table with three points and a net run-rate of 2.14. Australia are second on the same number of points and a net run-rate of 0.475.



Spectators leave the stands after the match abandoned due to rain



I did look at the Apple weather and it showed rain for the next few days but didn't expect it to be a wash-out, you can't do much about it

STEVE SMITH

England face Afghanistan in Lahore on Wednesday in a must-win match for both teams after they lost their opening games.

Australia captain Steve Smith said the rain-out at least left his team knowing that a victory over Afghanistan on Friday would secure their place in the semi-finals.

"I did look at the Apple weather and it showed rain for the next few days but didn't expect it to be a wash-out, you can't do much about it," said Smith.

"The equation is pretty simple now, on to the next one against Afghanistan and if we win we are locked into top four."

South African skipper Temba Bavuma said the abandonment was disappointing for all involved.

"Yeah, it's frustrating, we wanted to have some cricket and so did the fans, also wanting to watch two sides in confidence," said Bavuma, adding that batter Heinrich Klaasen had fully recovered from a sore elbow.

"Klaasen is fit and adds value to our team. We will watch England play Afghanistan (in Lahore on Wednesday) to have an idea against them in our last match (in Karachi on Saturday day)."

India and New Zealand qualified for the semi-finals from Group A on Monday as title-holders Pakistan and Bangladesh crashed out of the tournament.

## Injured champion Martin to miss MotoGP season opener

AFP | Paris

World champion Jorge Martin will miss the opening MotoGP race of the season in Thailand at the weekend after suffering several fractures in a fall in training, his Aprilia team said.

The Spaniard was already recovering from fractures to his right hand and left foot sustained in a horror crash on his



Aprilia during the opening day of pre-season testing in Malaysia earlier this month.

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# Bahrain gears up for F1 milestone

● Gulf Air and BIC unveil plans for a star-studded race weekend in April

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain International Circuit and Gulf Air announced preparations for the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2025, marking the 75th anniversary of Formula 1. The race, the fourth round of the 2025 season, will take place from April 11th to 13th.

The race weekend will feature international racing, family entertainment, and concerts, with the official slogan "The Desert Pulse Never Stops." Formula 1 Aramco pre-season testing will be held at the circuit from Wednesday to Friday, with the public invited on Thursday and Friday. Supporting races include Formula 2, Formula 3, and the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East. A charity auction featuring Formula 1 memorabilia will also be held. Corporate lounges are sold out, with high demand for hospitality and grandstand



BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa and McLaren F1 driver Oscar Piastri during the press conference

tickets.

The announcement was made at a launch event attended by McLaren Formula 1 driver Oscar Piastri, Bahrain International Circuit Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa, Gulf Air Chairman Khalid Hussain Tagi, Gulf Air Chief Customer Experience Officer Hanadi Al Ali, and Formula 1 presenter

Laura Winter.

Shaikh Salman emphasized the huge interest in the 75th-anniversary event. Al Ali highlighted Gulf Air's pride in its 75th-year alongside Formula 1, noting its role in promoting global presence and tourism in Bahrain.

The "Desert Pulse Never Stops" slogan reflects the unique qualities of the Bahrain Grand

Prix, a night race with a unique desert backdrop. Shaikh Salman explained the circuit's goal to integrate Bahraini culture into the Grand Prix identity.

Formula 1 pre-season testing at the Bahrain International Circuit from February 26th to 28th will feature all ten Formula 1 teams. The public can attend on Thursday and Friday. Tick-

ets are available online and via the circuit hotline. Formula 1 Grand Prix ticket holders purchased before December 7th, 2024, can attend the tests for free.

Supporting races will feature Formula 2 and Formula 3 championships, and the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East. Family entertainment will include circus acts, stage shows, carnival games, and a giant Ferris wheel.

Children's activities will feature Sonic and Snoopy shows. The charity auction will raise funds for the Royal Humanitarian Foundation, featuring

elements of our culture and surroundings into the race weekend

SHAikh SALMAN BIN ISA AL KHALIFA

Gulf Air's 75-year milestone aligns with F1's, boosting Bahrain's global spotlight with a signed Bottas glove up for auction



unique Formula 1 memorabilia and donations from Gulf Air. Items include a signed 2024 Bahrain Grand Prix number board, a signed Mercedes F1 car design board, signed racing gloves from Valtteri Bottas, and commentary notes from David Croft.

Shaikh Salman confirmed that corporate lounges are sold out and grandstand tickets are in high demand. He noted that last year's race drew record crowds, with 37,000 attendees on race day and 100,000 over the weekend, including 11,000 international visitors.

**THE DESERT** Never Sleeps

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**Bahrain International Circuit**