

**Semi-Finals Heat Up in the Zain Bahrain Basketball League**

The Zain Bahrain Basketball League semi-finals start tonight at Khalifa Sports City Hall, with Manama vs Al Najma at 6 PM and Muharraq vs Al Ahli at 8 PM. | **P16**

**Solidarity for Bahrain security**

TDT | Manama

Pakistan, Bermuda and Bavaria expressed solidarity with Bahrain and their support for measures undertaken to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and national achievements.

This came as His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received messages from Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, Bermuda Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Edward David Burt, and Dr. Markus Soder, Minister-President of the Free State of Bavaria in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In their messages, they condemned the Iranian attacks targeting the territory of the Kingdom.

**Gulf and Jordan condemn Iran's aggression**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Jordan issued a joint statement strongly condemning Iran's acts of aggression.

They described them as violations of sovereignty, territorial integrity, international law, humanitarian law, and the United Nations Charter.

The statement emphasised that the condemnation applies to aggression carried out directly by Iran or through its proxies and armed groups operating in the region.

The signatory states specifically denounced attacks launched from Iraq by Iranian-backed armed groups against multiple countries, targeting civilian facilities and critical infrastructure.

**Strong defense**

HM King Hamad hails BDF 'bravery and dedication' amid hostile Iranian attacks

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Defense Force (BDF) will remain a strong shield for the Kingdom, preserving its security in the face of hostile Iranian attacks.

This was reaffirmed by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, as he visited the injured following the Iranian aggression to oversee their medical care.

HM the King praised the bravery and dedication of BDF personnel.

**Sacrifices**

"These men sacrifice their lives for Bahrain and its people, and their sacrifices will never be forgotten," he said. "The Bahrain Defense Force will continue to uphold our security, peace, and stability, serving as a role model for future generations."

HM King Hamad was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister.

He was received by His Excellency Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the BDF, and H.E. Brigadier General



HM the King visits the injured to oversee their medical care

Dr. Shaikh Fahad bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Commander of the Royal Medical Services.

During the visit, His Majesty

commended the medical teams for their efforts in providing comprehensive care to the injured, describing their work as

"remarkable" and vital to supporting the nation's defenders. He also emphasised the high efficiency, discipline, and re-

sponsibility of the BDF, noting that their steadfastness ensures Bahrain remains a country of peace and harmony.

"The Bahrain Defense Force will continue to uphold our security, peace, and stability, serving as a role model for future generations."

- HIS MAJESTY KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA, THE SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES

**Royal appreciation**

**HM King commends Cyprus for standing with Kingdom**

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa expressed appreciation for the positions of Cyprus and the solidarity expressed by its President, Nikos Christodoulides, towards the Kingdom of Bahrain regarding the Iranian attacks.

This came as HM the King, in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received Dr. Constantinos Kombos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, on the occasion of his visit to the

Kingdom.

During the meeting, they addressed regional developments.

**Solidarity**

Dr. Kombos reiterated Cyprus's solidarity with Bahrain, its condemnation of the Iranian attacks, and its support for measures taken to safeguard the Kingdom's sovereignty, security and stability.

He also commended Bahrain's diplomatic efforts at the United Nations Security Council, including the adoption of Resolution 2817 with support from 136 countries.



HM the King receives Dr. Constantinos Kombos

The Cypriot minister conveyed the greetings of President Christodoulides and his wishes for continued progress and prosperity for the people of

Bahrain. His Majesty relayed his greetings and best wishes to the Cypriot President and the people of Cyprus.

He welcomed Dr. Kombos' visit and underscored the importance of such visits in advancing cooperation and strengthening partnerships in line with existing agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries.

HM King Hamad and the minister reviewed means to further develop relations and advance cooperation across different domains.

Dr. Kombos expressed appreciation for HM the King's role in advancing relations and strengthening ties between the two countries.

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## Urgent debate over Iran's 'systematic aggression' held

Pradeep Puravankara  
TDT | Manama

An urgent debate was held during the 61st session of the Human Rights Council to address the escalating military aggression launched by Iran against the Kingdom of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.

The Coalition's delegation strongly backed Gulf Arab representatives, condemning twenty-six days of treacherous and terrorist attacks.

According to the delegation, Iran has utilized ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles to target vital civilian infrastructure, including airports and residential areas, in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and state sovereignty.

In a statement issued in Geneva, Mr. Faisal Folad, General Coordinator of the Coalition, emphasized that the situation transcends simple military escalation.

### Reckless

He characterized Iran's actions as systematic and reckless conduct designed to undermine the international order.

The Coalition highlighted that these attacks pose a direct threat to civilian safety through strikes on residential zones, as well as to global energy security, the world economy, and international supply chains.

The delegation noted that Iran's strikes have not only targeted declared adversaries but also neighboring countries that have consistently advocated for restraint and diplomatic



Mr. Faisal Folad at the session



**Mr. Faisal Folad characterized Iran's actions as systematic and reckless conduct designed to undermine the international order.**

solutions.

### Strikes

By labeling these actions as retaliatory strikes, Iran is attempting to justify what the Coalition describes as unjustified and irresponsible aggression.

Mr. Folad affirmed that Iran now stands in isolation from its neighbors and the international community, accusing Tehran of a desperate attempt to destabilize the region through hegemonic ambitions in defiance of the UN Charter.

# Charging ahead

Residents turn to power banks and solar options amid outage concerns

## Interior Ministry precautionary advisory prompts practical energy backup measures

Neethu V, Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

A sense of quiet readiness is taking shape, with residents responding calmly to a precautionary advisory issued by the Ministry of Interior outlining safety measures in the event of a possible power outage.

Authorities stressed that the notice is precautionary and not linked to any immediate threat.

Portable power banks and solar-powered alternatives have drawn growing interest, seen as convenient ways to maintain access to communication if needed.

### Services

For many, the focus is not on concern, but on staying prepared and keeping in touch with family and essential services.

Retailers say enquiries have steadily increased, with residents looking for reliable and easy-to-use options that can support them during short-term outages.

### Solution

Speaking with The Daily Tribune, a representative from 7Phone Electronics said solar-powered power banks are often misunderstood and should not be relied on as a primary charging solution.

He explained that the small



Interior Ministry's precautionary advisory



Solar power bank

solar panels built into these devices require extended exposure to direct sunlight, sometimes over several days, to fully charge.

In Bahrain's climate, prolonged exposure to high temperatures may also affect the lithium battery's performance over time or even cause it to explode.

He added that repeated exposure to heat can lead to reduced battery life, swelling, or inconsistent charging performance, particularly in lower-quality

**Portable power banks and solar-powered alternatives are convenient ways to maintain access to communication if needed.**

products.

### Power

The representative further noted that the limited surface area of the solar panels means

they generate only modest amounts of power, which may not be sufficient to charge modern smartphones efficiently, especially when quick access is needed.

Users may experience unstable charging speeds that can affect device performance if used regularly.

He added that the store has opted not to sell such products, prioritising customer safety over expanding its range.

### Choice

According to vendors, high-capacity power banks remain the preferred choice, particularly models with 20,000mAh or higher capacity that can be charged in advance using conventional electricity.

Solar charging should be viewed as an additional feature rather than a primary source of power.

As awareness grows, residents are taking simple, practical steps to stay prepared while maintaining normal routines.

# Royal visit to injured carries 'deep human message'

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

MP Dr Maryam Al Dhaen said the visit by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to those injured in the criminal Iranian attacks sent a human message that showed the enduring bond between the leadership and the people of Bahrain.

She said the visit, made in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Dep-

uty Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister, carried profound human and public meaning.

It showed, she said, that Bahrain does not forget those who sacrifice for its security and stability, and that the leadership holds them in care, respect and gratitude worthy of what they have given.

Dr Al Dhaen said His Majesty's personal visit to check on the injured would raise morale and strengthen the sense of belong-



**"His Majesty's personal visit to check on the injured would raise morale and strengthen the sense of belonging and public unity."**

— MP DR MARYAM AL DHAEN

ing and public unity.

### Tribute

She added that the words addressed to them by HM the King were a lasting tribute to their sacrifices, and a clear message that those who stand on the front line in defence of Bahrain are held in lasting pride and esteem.

The lawmaker said the visit also showed Bahrain's firmness in the face of the attacks, under wise leadership and through firm public institutions, led

by the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), which she said had shown high competence and evident bravery in protecting the country's security.

### Loyalty

Dr Al Dhaen said the visit marked an important public moment, reaffirming loyalty and solidarity at a time of strain, while keeping clear that the security and stability of the Kingdom of Bahrain will always remain a top priority.

## Bahraini youth praised for role in development

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

Bahraini youth have been recognised for their growing role in national development as the Kingdom marked Bahraini Youth Day yesterday.

Officials highlighted the contributions of young people across various sectors, as well as their active participation in community and volunteer initiatives.

MP Ahmed Sabah Al Salloom, Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee at the Council of Representatives, said the occasion reflects the



MP Ahmed Sabah Al Salloom central role youth play in shaping Bahrain's future.

He attributed their progress to the continued support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the backing of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa,

the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Al Salloom said Bahraini youth have demonstrated their readiness to lead, describing them as key partners in national achievements.

He noted that their awareness, adaptability, and innovation have contributed to development across multiple sectors, reflecting sustained efforts to empower young talent.

The lawmaker said the role of youth has become evident, particularly amid ongoing regional tensions, with many actively contributing through professional responsibilities.

## MP backs restriction on recruitment office managers

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

A new decision to restrict recruitment office manager posts to Bahrainis has been welcomed by MP Dr Muneer Seroor, who said the move matches part of Parliament's recommendations on Bahrainisation in the public and private sectors.

Issued by Labour Minister, His Excellency Yousif bin Abdulhussain Khalaf, and published in the Official Gazette, the order adds a new Article 5 bis to the rules on recruitment office licences.

It says recruitment office



MP Dr Muneer Seroor

managers must be Bahraini nationals.

Dr Seroor said the post should stay in Bahraini hands because it stands near the gate of hiring and can shape who gets a first chance in the labour market.

"Some jobs open the way to control over recruitment, so those jobs must be reserved for Bahrainis," he said.

The lawmaker added that experience at work had shown that foreigners often tried to hire members of their own community.

Under the rule, the licence holder must run the office in person. A manager can be appointed only with the authority's approval and only if a set of conditions is met.

The manager must be Bahraini, and must not have had a recruitment office licence revoked before under the law.

## Five-year sentence upheld for two 'police officers'



Image used for illustrative purposes only

### Garage robbery

Rehab Mohammad  
TDT | Manama

The First High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld a five-year prison sentence against two appellants convicted of a robbery involving assault at a garage.

The defendants were found guilty of breaking into the premises at night and stealing belongings from three victims using force.

According to court records, the first and second defendants scaled the garage wall and entered the premises, where they confronted two victims, falsely claiming to be police officers.

### Injuries

They assaulted the victims using their hands and an iron rod, causing injuries as documented in medical reports, in order to immobilize them and prevent resistance before stealing valuables and

fleeing.

The case dates back to when the third, fourth, and fifth defendants were at the second defendant's residence.

The fourth defendant informed them of an Asian man at a garage in Salmabad and suggested robbing him to obtain drugs.

The second defendant then contacted the first defendant, who agreed to participate.

The group drove to the location in a car driven by the first defendant.

### Arrival

Upon arrival, the second, third, and fourth defendants entered the garage after scaling its gate, while the first and fifth remained in the car.

They stormed the victims' room while they were asleep, shouted at them, pretended to be police officers, and assaulted them before stealing mobile phones, a wristwatch, a tablet, BD350 in cash, ID cards, drugs, and the garage's surveillance control device and monitor.

They then locked the victims inside and fled.

# Debt trap

Rising electronics instalment sales leave Bahraini families struggling with mounting financial burdens

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

A growing number of Bahraini families are finding themselves buried in debt as concerns intensify over instalment sales practices in electronics shops.

MPS warn that the issue is no longer purely commercial, but deeply social.

MP Hamad Al Doy confirmed via a post on the social media platform "X" that a formal complaint will be filed with the Public Prosecution next week regarding an ongoing case linked to electronics instalment sales, stressing that the file remains open and continues to affect citizens.

He urged all those impacted to come forward without delay, highlighting that the scale of harm has moved beyond isolated incidents and now affects multiple households.

### Salaries

According to Al Doy, some individuals have lost their entire salaries trying to keep up with repayments, while others have seen debts accumulate to the point of losing their homes.

Behind each case, he noted, are families struggling to maintain stability, with financial pressure spilling into daily life and creating lasting emotional and social strain.



“Weak regulation in this sector risks pushing ordinary citizens into financial commitments they cannot sustain.”

– MP HAMAD AL DOY

actual cash price compared with instalment costs, and confusion over profit rates, administrative fees and penalties for late payments.

Al Doy stressed that electronic devices are no longer luxury items, but essential tools for modern living, warning that weak regulation in this sector risks pushing ordinary citizens into financial commitments they cannot sustain.

He added that vague contract terms and poor transparency not only expose buyers to financial harm, but also open the door to disputes and erode trust in the market.

### Burden

For many, what begins as a simple purchase is turning into a long-term burden, raising urgent questions over consumer protection and the safeguards needed to protect households from slipping further into debt.

### Complaints

He pointed to a rise in complaints involving unclear contracts, poor disclosure of the

## Man held for phone instalment scam and fraud



Suspect

Rehab Mohammad  
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior announced that the Southern Governorate Police Directorate has arrested a 53-year-old man following multiple reports accusing him of fraud and deception.

According to authorities, the suspect sold mobile phones on an instalment basis, then required customers to sign contracts which he later altered by falsifying details and inflating the amounts beyond the actual value of the devices.

The directorate stated that upon receiving the reports, it immediately launched investigations, collecting evidence and identifying the suspect before arresting him.

Legal procedures have been taken, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution.

## Mosquito traps approved for public spaces

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

The Southern Municipal Council has approved the use of electric mosquito traps in open public areas, aiming to address increased insect activity, particularly following periods of rainfall.

The decision was passed by majority vote following a recommendation from the Services and Public Utilities Committee. It includes the deployment of both mobile and fixed traps across residential neighbourhoods and recreational spaces.

Council members said the move responds to concerns from residents regarding mosquito presence in outdoor areas, which has affected the use of public spaces.

## Security and public service sectors maintain operations

TDT | Manama

Security and public service sectors continue to operate without interruption despite ongoing regional tensions and recent attacks targeting the Kingdom, officials said.

Captain Abdulla Waheed Al Mannaei from the Ministry of Interior confirmed that teams across all departments remain on full alert, working around the clock to ensure stability and continuity of services.

He noted that officers are carrying out routine duties while also responding to emerging security developments.



rying out routine duties while also responding to emerging security developments.

Authorities emphasised that daily life has continued across the Kingdom, with roads operational, emergency services functioning, and public assistance available as needed.

### Priority

Officials said maintaining both security and essential services remains a top priority.

The Ministry of Interior has also issued safety guidance to the public, urging residents to follow precautionary measures, particularly during power outages.

These include staying indoors where possible, using battery-powered lighting, and avoiding unsafe practices such as operating generators in enclosed spaces.

### Warning

Officials further warned against the spread of misinformation, stressing the importance of relying on verified sources.

The National Communication Centre continues to provide regular updates to ensure the public receives accurate and timely information.

## Rain response reviewed after Council approval

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

When rain falls, the difference between a clear street and a flooded one is measured in minutes.

This reality came into focus as the Southern Municipal Council reviewed rain response procedures, bringing everyday experiences into the heart of the session.

The review followed a request by Second Constituency member Mubarak Faraj, with members agreeing by majority to open the discussion.

The move reflected a shared understanding that preparedness involves not only plans but also how quickly those plans become effective when needed.

### Reality

During the session, Fourth Constituency member Mohammed Hussain Daraj presented a detailed intervention that moved the discussion beyond procedures into lived experience.

He pointed to the gap that can appear between what is written and what is felt on the ground when rainwater

gathers.

For residents, these moments arrive without warning. A road slows. Water rises at the edge of pavements.

Daily routines pause, not for long, but long enough to be noticed.

The council examined how response systems operate during peak conditions, particularly the deployment of water suction tankers.



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### JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Embassy of India, P.O. Box No. 26106, Manama, Bahrain invites application from interested candidates for the post of Marketing Executive.

For details, please check the Embassy's website at <http://www.eoibahrain.gov.in> or send email to [hoc.bahrain@mea.gov.in](mailto:hoc.bahrain@mea.gov.in) and [adm.bahrain@mea.gov.in](mailto:adm.bahrain@mea.gov.in)

## Thumbs up for Hawrat Anqa sewer network

Hasan Barakat  
TDT | Manama

For years, residents in Hawrat Anqa have lived with a missing service that many neighbourhoods take for granted. The Southern Municipal Council took a decisive step, unanimously approving a recommendation to establish a sewerage network for Block 1062.

The unanimous vote was not a routine approval but a clear recognition of a need that has grown alongside the area itself.

Members of the Southern Municipal Council agreed on the urgency of advancing the project, focusing the discussion on essential infrastructure.

In Hawrat Anqa, the ab-

sence of a full sewage network has shaped everyday life in quiet but constant ways.

### Comfort

It is felt in how areas respond to water, how streets function after rainfall, and the level of comfort families experience in their own homes.

This is not a distant issue. It is part of daily routines, of small adjustments people make without always discussing them.

The approved recommendation is expected to support healthier surroundings, improve environmental conditions, and bring the area in line with the level of services seen across more developed neighbourhoods.

# Housing demand

Waiting list reaches 29,000 applications, reflecting growing need for homes

Mohammed Darwish  
TDT | Manama

Waiting-list in Bahrain's housing system stood at 29,000 applications by the end of 2025, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning told Parliament, saying 17,190 housing services had been allocated and 2,520 applications cancelled during the current legislative term.

The figures came in a reply to MP Khalid Buanaq, who asked about old applications, rejected files and the steps being taken to clear the queue. The ministry said the oldest applications, dating back to 2004 and earlier, are still the hardest to clear.

It said these cases are being handled under a three-choice plan, with allocations made by application date.

### Cases

The remaining cases involving subsidised residential plots depend on infrastructure works being finished on land reserved for that purpose.

Under that plan, applicants may choose a residential plot with BD40,000 in Tas'heel finance and housing allowance

for two years from the date of entitlement; a flat with a BD3,000 grant and a two-year exemption from common-area maintenance fees; or Tas'heel finance of BD70,000 together with a BD10,000 grant.

The ministry said it had finished allocating the second and third choices for all those who wanted them across the kingdom, while the first had so far covered 2002 applications and part of 2003.

### Applications

On cancelled applications, the ministry said 42 per cent were removed after a change in marital status, 29 per cent because the applicant or a family member did not meet the permanent residence requirement in Bahrain, 17 per cent because income exceeded the limit for the service, and 12 per cent because the applicant or a family member owned residential property.

It added that a cancelled application may be revived within two years if the applicant later meets the housing conditions, under Article 69 of Decision No. 909 of 2015 on the housing system.



MP Khalid Buanaq

The ministry said most pending applications are from the first family category, which covers a husband, wife and children, if any, and accounts for 88 per cent of the total.

### Category

The second category makes up 8 per cent, the third 3 per cent and the fourth 1 per cent.

These applications cover housing units, flats and residential plots.

It also gave figures for the fifth category, which is limited to temporary housing.

This category includes divorced women, widows, women deemed abandoned by court order who have no children, and unmarried women who have

lost both parents.

The ministry said 135 applications had been submitted under this category during the current legislative term and 77 had been allocated.

### Health

It said applicants in this category must usually be between 21 and 60 when they apply, though women over 60 may still apply if their health allows them to live alone.

Income must not exceed BD800 at the time of application and allocation, and the monthly payment for temporary housing must not exceed 25 per cent of income, up to a ceiling of BD100. Applications are reviewed individually and referred to the Housing Committee, which can allow exceptions in some cases.

The ministry said it launched an electronic service for fifth-category applications in 2023 through its online services portal, allowing women to apply and track their applications from submission to allocation.

It said text messages are sent at each stage, and where an application is turned down the reason is also sent by text message.

## 'Arsonist' held

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Interior announced that the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science had arrested an Asian for deliberately setting fire to a house in the Gudaibiya area.

The directorate explained that, immediately after receiv-

ing the report, the competent authorities initiated search and investigation procedures and gathered information and material evidence, which led to the identification and arrest of the suspect within 24 hours of the incident.

Legal procedures have been taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.



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### Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2025 (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

|                                     | 31 December 2025   | 31 December 2024   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                       |                    |                    |
| Intangible assets                   | 3,192              | 16,297             |
| Furniture and equipment             | 45,968             | 37,606             |
| Right-of-use assets                 | -                  | 5,133              |
| Investments                         | 460,452,628        | 465,760,465        |
| Policy loans                        | 4,198,516          | 4,447,090          |
| Reinsurance contract assets         | 266,471            | 141,203            |
| Accrued interest income             | 8,324,057          | 8,598,722          |
| Prepayments and other assets        | 111,220            | 94,860             |
| Statutory deposits                  | 645,112            | 648,426            |
| Term deposits with banks            | 11,578,128         | 48,238,264         |
| Cash and cash equivalents           | 36,210,714         | 14,674,538         |
| <b>Total assets</b>                 | <b>521,836,006</b> | <b>542,662,604</b> |
| <b>Equity and liabilities</b>       |                    |                    |
| <b>Equity</b>                       |                    |                    |
| Share capital                       | 65,439,300         | 65,439,300         |
| Statutory reserve                   | 10,235,216         | 9,995,155          |
| Contingency reserve                 | 232,192            | 232,192            |
| Investments fair value reserve      | (594,524)          | (883,497)          |
| Insurance finance reserve           | 88,110,018         | 83,802,383         |
| Reinsurance reserve                 | 35,385             | 31,878             |
| Accumulated losses                  | (45,447,691)       | (47,604,729)       |
| <b>Total equity</b>                 | <b>118,009,896</b> | <b>111,012,682</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                  |                    |                    |
| Employees' end-of-service indemnity | 29,009             | 30,138             |
| Lease liabilities                   | -                  | 5,945              |
| Amounts due to related parties      | 68,052             | 84,884             |
| Insurance contract liabilities      | 401,971,663        | 429,667,626        |
| Zakat and tax provisions            | 592,810            | 789,539            |
| Other liabilities                   | 1,164,576          | 1,071,790          |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>            | <b>403,826,110</b> | <b>431,649,922</b> |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b> | <b>521,836,006</b> | <b>542,662,604</b> |

### Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2025 (Expressed in Bahrain Dinars)

|   | Year ended 31 December 2025 | Year ended 31 December 2024 |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Insurance revenue   | 7,044,083                   | 8,038,136                   |
| Insurance service expenses  | (9,598,625)                 | (5,096,989)                 |
| <b>Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held (a)</b> | <b>(2,554,542)</b>          | <b>2,941,147</b>            |
| Allocation of reinsurance premiums                                    | (35,437)                    | (115,509)                   |
| Amounts recoverable from reinsurers for incurred claims               | (18,860)                    | 106,838                     |
| <b>Net expenses from reinsurance contracts held (b)</b>               | <b>(54,297)</b>             | <b>(8,671)</b>              |
| <b>Insurance service result (a+b)</b>                                 | <b>(2,608,839)</b>          | <b>2,932,476</b>            |
| Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued             | (18,224,506)                | (19,226,833)                |
| Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held             | 2,807                       | 12,433                      |
| <b>Net insurance finance result (c)</b>                               | <b>(18,221,699)</b>         | <b>(19,214,400)</b>         |
| <b>Net financial results from insurance operations (a+b+c)</b>        | <b>(20,830,538)</b>         | <b>(16,281,924)</b>         |
| Realised income from investments, net                                 | 24,124,989                  | 23,567,106                  |
| Unrealised gain on investments at FVTPL                               | 2,316,431                   | 3,046,377                   |
| (Provision)/reversal of impairment on investment securities, net      | (1,174,724)                 | 399,395                     |
| <b>Income from investments</b>  | <b>25,266,696</b>           | <b>27,012,878</b>           |
| General and administrative expenses                                   | (1,478,376)                 | (1,549,517)                 |
| Other income  | 506,447                     | 494,048                     |
| Depreciation of right-of-use assets                                   | (5,133)                     | (6,856)                     |
| Interest expenses on lease liabilities                                | (73)                        | (434)                       |
| (Provision)/ reversal of impairment on other financial assets, net    | (587,902)                   | 86,484                      |
| <b>Profit before zakat and income tax</b>                             | <b>2,871,121</b>            | <b>9,754,679</b>            |
| Zakat and income tax expense  | (470,515)                   | (552,056)                   |
| <b>Profit for the year</b>  | <b>2,400,606</b>            | <b>9,202,623</b>            |
| <b>Other comprehensive income</b>                                     |                             |                             |
| <b>Items to be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</b>        |                             |                             |
| Fair value gain on investments at FVOCI                               | 288,973                     | 446,552                     |
| Insurance finance income for insurance contracts issued               | 4,317,932                   | 7,765,885                   |
| Reinsurance finance expenses for reinsurance contracts held           | (10,297)                    | (27,726)                    |
| <b>Other comprehensive income for the year</b>                        | <b>4,596,608</b>            | <b>8,184,711</b>            |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>                        | <b>6,997,214</b>            | <b>17,387,334</b>           |

A Company incorporated in the Kingdom of Bahrain (C.R. No. - 21606) and licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain as a life insurance company with paid-up capital of BD 65,439,300.

The financial statements have been audited by BDO. A copy of the audited financial statements will be available at the registered office of the Company. The financial statements were approved by Board of Directors and signed on its behalf by:

Mr. R. Doraiswamy  
Chairman

Mr. Debashis Prasad Pattanaik  
CEO & Executive Director

# NBB awards USD 500,000 to 50 winners in February Thara'a draw

Rewarding 50 winners with USD 10,000 each

● With the May grand prize draw approaching, one winner will take home a seafront villa while 100 others will each receive USD 10,000.

## Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has announced the results of



its February 2026 Thara'a Prize Account draw, rewarding 50 winners with USD 10,000 each. The full list of winners is available on NBB's website and social media channels.

### Full transparency

The draw was conducted in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), along with internal and external auditors, ensuring full transparency and regulatory compliance.

Designed to encourage smart

financial habits, the Thara'a Prize Account continues to provide customers with unique opportunities to achieve their personal goals while saving. This draw further reinforces the programme's commitment to delivering tangible value to its account holders.

Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani, Chief Executive – Retail Banking at NBB, said, "Seeing 50 of our customers walk away with exciting prizes is a testament to the trust they place in us. Each win represents a moment

that can make a difference in someone's life, and that is what Thara'a is all about. With the 2026 campaign well underway, we look forward to marking many more milestones with our customers."

### 2026 Thara'a campaign

As the 2026 Thara'a campaign continues to unfold, customers are encouraged to keep saving and increasing their deposits for a chance to win valuable rewards from a prize pool of USD 6 million, featuring six luxury

seafront villas and cash prizes in the millions.

### Seafront villa

With the May grand prize draw approaching, one winner will take home a seafront villa while 100 others will each receive USD 10,000.

To participate, customers can open or manage their Thara'a Prize Account through the NBB App, by visiting any of the Bank's branches, logging on to nbbonline.com, or by calling 1721 4433.

# Khalid Al-Ameen: Iran's aggressive targeting of Gulf states signals a looming global fertilizer crisis

Gulf countries account for approximately 45% of global urea fertilizer exports



بنك البحرين والكويت

## Notice to Shareholders Change of the General Assembly Meeting voting and attendance Format

### Dear Shareholders,

Please be advised that the General Assembly Meeting of Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait B.S.C. scheduled at 10:00 am on Tuesday, 31 March 2026, at the Four Seasons Hotel – Al Manama Hall, Kingdom of Bahrain will be held as is and in light of the current regional developments virtual attendance is available if physical attendance is not possible through the Bahrain Clear eAGM platform.

All shareholders and proxy holders whether attending physically or virtually wishing to attend the meeting and exercise their voting rights need to access the meeting portal through the following link: <https://eagm.bahrainclear.com/en/>

### To participate in the meeting:

1. Visit the portal and select the Company's logo to access the meeting page, where the agenda, reports, proxy form, registration options, and user guide are available.
2. Once registration opens, select the appropriate option (Shareholder Registration or Proxy Holder Registration).
3. Complete the required details, upload the necessary supporting documents, and submit the registration for approval.

### Important:

- Proxy holders must submit the proxy form electronically at least 24 hours prior to the meeting through the same portal.
- Approved shareholders and proxy holders will receive their login credentials via SMS and email prior to the meeting.

For any assistance regarding registration or access to the meeting, shareholders may contact the support team through the contact details available on the eAGM portal.

Tariq Jaleel AlSaffar  
Chairperson

### Notes:

1. All shareholders who intend to attend the meeting, or whomever they authorize, are kindly requested to register in advance to receive the invitation and the meeting link, by adhering to the required steps as per the following link: <https://eagm.bahrainclear.com/en/>
2. Registration of the attendance for the shareholders and proxyholders electronically will start on 26/3/2026 and shall close 24 hours before the meeting time by visiting the above link of Bahrain Clear.
3. Adopting electronic voting exclusively in voting on all agenda items.
4. Electronic copies of the meeting documents will be available on the meeting date at the company website <https://www.bbkonline.com> and at Bahrain Clear website <https://eagm.bahrainclear.com/en/>
5. For any other inquiries related to the Ordinary General assembly meetings, please send an email to the Group Corporate Secretariat [CorporateSecretariat@bbkonline.com](mailto:CorporateSecretariat@bbkonline.com).
6. The meeting will be recorded electronically, in audio and video, for record-keeping purposes.
7. We recommend you to attend the e-meeting from your computer or laptop in order to have better quality service; also, you have the option to attend the meeting using your tablet or smartphone (Mobile).
8. It is not possible for the shareholder to change his/her vote after he/she has voted, and this is based on the resolution of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce No. (63) of 2021 regarding measures for meetings by electronic means and the conditions and controls of the electronic voting system in the general assembly of the joint-stock company.

● We are committed to coordinating with international partners to develop urgent solutions to ensure continued fertilizer flows to global markets

## Manama

The Chairman of the Food Committee at the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Khalid Ali Al-Ameen, called on international organizations to take urgent action to address an unprecedented global fertilizer crisis resulting from Iran's blatant targeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Al-Ameen explained that the Gulf region accounts for nearly 45% of global urea exports, making any disruption to production or transportation through the Strait of Hormuz directly impactful on international

markets and fertilizer prices, with potential repercussions for the agricultural sector and global food security.

He warned that rising fertilizer prices and declining availability in global markets could place increasing pressure on the agricultural sector worldwide, potentially affecting the supply of wheat and other staple grains. He noted that fertilizer prices have risen significantly in recent times due to unjustified Iranian actions in the Strait of Hormuz, increasing agricultural production costs and placing a strain on global food security.



Ameen further highlighted that the Kingdom of Bahrain produces substantial quantities of ammonia, urea, and methanol, with the majority of its production exported to global markets. He noted that Bahrain's annual exports reach most continents, including Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Australia, underscoring the Kingdom's position as a key player in the global fertilizer market through an extensive network of partnerships and international cooperation.

He added that the Bahrain Chamber, in coordination with GCC chambers and international partners, will work on developing urgent solutions to ensure the continued flow of fertilizers to global markets amid current challenges. He emphasized that these efforts come at a time of sharp increases in global fertilizer prices and disruptions in supply chains due to escalating geopolitical tensions, making cooperation among international and regional organizations essential to safeguarding global food security and supporting the agricultural sector, a critical pillar for economic stability and global food markets.

## Top WTO official sounds fertiliser warning over Middle East war

AFP | Yaounde, Cameroon

Disruptions to fertiliser supplies caused by the Middle East war pose a double threat to global food security through scarcity and high prices, a top World Trade Organization official has warned.

"Fertilisers are the number one issue of concern today. If there is no more fertiliser, there is an impact on quantities but also on prices," WTO Deputy Director-General Jean-Marie Paugam told AFP in an interview

in Yaounde.

"The effect compounds the following year: harvests shrink and prices rise."

The Gulf's ample supplies of natural gas, a key ingredient in artificial fertilisers, have made the region a major manufacturer.

But production has been severely impeded by the war, with some major facilities forced to shut down.

Major food exporters such as India, Thailand and Brazil depend on the Gulf for urea, a

nitrogen-based fertiliser, making them vulnerable.

Because the war is only a few weeks old, there is currently no fertiliser shortage, Paugam said.

"But if fertilisers from the Gulf do not circulate, we will feel a direct impact on supplies to major producer countries just as planting seasons begin for the crops that will be harvested next year," he said.

"If the Strait of Hormuz is blocked for three months, the impact will be significant."

# GFH General Assembly approves 10.11% cash dividend

Includes the nominal value of all ordinary shares, excluding treasury shares, amounting to up to US\$100 million



● **Includes the interim cash dividend of US\$0.0053 that was distributed to shareholders on 11 September 2025**

## Manama

GFH Financial Group yesterday announced the successful conclusion of its Annual General Meeting (AGM), held at GFH House, Bahrain Financial Harbour, for the financial year ended 31st December 2025, with shareholders also able to participate via virtual attendance.

During the Annual General Meeting, shareholders approved a number of key resolutions reflecting the Group's strong performance and supporting its strategic growth trajectory. Shareholders endorsed the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends of 10.11% of the nominal value of all ordinary shares, excluding treasury shares, amounting to up to US\$100 million (equivalent to US\$0.0268 / BD0.0101 / AED0.0984 per share) including the interim cash dividend of US\$0.0053 that was distributed to shareholders on 11 September 2025.

Shareholders also ratified the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 20th March 2025, in addition to approving the Board of Directors' report on the Group's activi-

ties for the financial year ended 31st December 2025, the Sharia Supervisory Board report, the external auditors' report and the consolidated financial statements for the year 2025.

In addition, shareholders approved the transfer of US\$14.011 million to the statutory reserve, the allocation of US\$7 million to GFH Foundation and payment of the zakat due on the Group's shares, and the carry forward of approximately US\$19.099 million as retained earnings for the coming year. Other approvals included US\$3 million as remuneration for the Board of Directors, as well as the ratification of the corporate governance report and the Group's compliance with governance requirements issued by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Central Bank of Bahrain, in addition to the disclosure and approval of transactions conducted with related parties or major shareholders pursuant to Article (189) of Bahrain's Commercial Companies Law.

## Repurchase

Shareholders also approved the repurchase of treasury shares not exceeding 10% of the total issued shares, subject to the approval of the Central Bank of Bahrain. The share buyback aims to attract strategic shareholders, enhance market liquidity and support the Group's employee share incentive programme.

Furthermore, shareholders approved the appointment or reappointment of the Group's

external auditors for the financial year ending 31st December 2026, authorising the Board of Directors to determine their fees, in addition to discharging the Board of Directors from liability for their actions during the financial year ended 31st December 2025, and considering any other matters in accordance with Article (207) of the Commercial Companies Law.

Commenting on the outcomes of the meetings, Mr Hisham Alrayes, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of GFH Financial Group, said: "The outcomes of this year's AGM reflect the continued confidence of our shareholders in GFH's strategy and long-term growth trajectory. The approval of a strong cash dividend reflects the Group's financial performance and its continued ability to deliver sustainable value to shareholders, while we continue to evolve our banking and investment model, and strengthen our presence across regional and global markets."

He added: "We remain committed to strengthening our financial and governance framework while broadening our base of strategic shareholders and enhancing the liquidity of our shares in the market. Our share-based incentive programmes also play a key role in attracting top talent and driving institutional performance. Through these initiatives, we look forward to building on our achievements and further expanding our investment portfolio across key sectors to support

the Group's growth in the years ahead." GFH Financial Group currently manages assets and funds valued at approximately US\$24 billion, including a global

investment portfolio spanning the Middle East, Europe and North America, across sectors including logistics, healthcare, education, technology and real

estate. GFH's shares are listed on the Bahrain Bourse, Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, Boursa Kuwait and Dubai Financial Market.

**alBaraka**  
Bank

## Notice to Shareholders

### Change of the General Assembly Meeting to Virtual Format

Dear Shareholders,

In light of the current regional developments, and in the interest of ensuring the safety and convenience of all shareholders, please be advised that the General Assembly Meeting of Al Barak Islamic Bank B.S.C (Closed) scheduled on Sunday 29th March 2026 at 11:00 a.m will be held virtually through the Bahrain Clear eAGM platform, instead of physical attendance.

Shareholders and proxy holders wishing to attend the meeting and exercise their voting rights electronically may access the meeting portal through the following link:

<https://eagm.bahrainclear.com/en/>

### To participate in the meeting:

1. Visit the portal and select the Company's logo to access the meeting page, where the agenda, reports, proxy form, registration options, and user guide are available.
2. Once registration opens, select the appropriate option (Shareholder Registration or Proxy Holder Registration).
3. Complete the required details, upload the necessary supporting documents, and submit the registration for approval.

### Important:

- Proxy holders must submit the proxy form electronically at least 12 hours prior to the meeting through the same portal.
- Approved shareholders and proxy holders will receive their login credentials via SMS and email prior to the meeting.

For any assistance regarding registration or access to the meeting, shareholders may contact the support team through the contact details available on the eAGM portal.

**Sabah Khalil Al Moayyed**  
Chairperson  
Al Baraka Islamic Bank

## China shipping giant Cosco says resumes bookings to some Gulf countries

AFP | Beijing, China

Chinese shipping giant Cosco said yesterday that it was resuming new bookings for container shipments to some Gulf countries, after a three-week suspension in response to the Middle East war.

The state-owned, Shanghai-based firm was among sev-

eral major shipping groups to pause operations in the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway through which one-fifth of the world's oil and gas passes normally.

Cosco "resumed new bookings for general cargo containers for shipments" from the "Far East" to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq "with

immediate effect", according to a company statement.

It did not mention shipments travelling in the opposite direction, from the Gulf.

"New booking arrangements and the actual carriage are subject to change due to the volatile situation in the Middle East region," it added.

Israel said it had struck targets in Tehran as well as a submarine development facility in the central city of Isfahan

Iran would target Red Sea shipping in event of US invasion: local media

Tehran, Iran

Iran would target shipping in the Red Sea, a crucial conduit for global oil and other goods leading to the Suez Canal, if the United States launches a ground invasion, an unnamed military official told local media yesterday.

"If the enemy attempts a ground operation on Iranian islands or anywhere else on our territory, or if it seeks to impose costs on Iran through naval manoeuvres in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, we will open other fronts as a 'surprise,'" the official was quoted as saying by the Tasnim news agency. "The Bab el-Mandeb Strait is among the most strategic straits in the world, and Iran has both the will and the capability to pose a fully credible threat against it," the official said.



Makeshift tent encampments for people displaced from their homes by war are pictured at a parking area near Beirut's waterfront

# 15-point US plan

Trump is moving thousands of airborne troops and extra marines to the Gulf amid speculation that he might order a ground invasion to either seize Iranian oil assets in the Gulf or secure the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The White House meanwhile appeared to stick to the four to six-week timeline it has previously given for the war.

**Trump to 'unleash hell' if Iran fails to make a deal**

## Safe passage

Tehran, in a message circulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), assured safe passage through the strait to "non-hostile vessels". However, the IMO also cited a statement from Iran's foreign ministry as saying no passage would be granted to vessels belonging to "the aggressor parties -- namely the United States and the Israeli regime".

AFP | Tehran, Iran

The White House said yesterday it was still in talks with Iran despite Tehran reportedly rejecting a US plan to end the war -- but warned President Donald Trump is ready to "unleash hell" if there is no deal. Iranian state media cited an unidentified official as saying that the Islamic republic had responded "negatively" to the reported overture from Trump as the Middle East war nears the four-week mark.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt denied that ne-

gotiations with Iran had hit a dead end. "Talks continue. They

## 'Unleash hell'

Leavitt warned that it was time for Iran to make a deal, asserting that Trump was nearing what the White House says are the key US military objectives of "Operation Epic Fury."

"If Iran fails to accept the reality of the current moment, if they fail to understand that they have been defeated militarily and will continue to be,

are productive," Leavitt told a briefing when asked about the

President Trump will ensure they are hit harder than they have ever been hit before," Leavitt said.

"President Trump does not bluff and he is prepared to unleash hell. Iran should not miscalculate again."

Iran's speaker Ghalibaf warned on Wednesday on X of the possible invasion of an Iranian island with the support of

Iranian report. Leavitt said that there were "elements of truth"

an unnamed regional country. Trump announced that his visit to China to meet Xi Jinping had now been rescheduled for mid-May, having postponed it by six weeks to deal with the conflict. "We've always estimated approximately four to six weeks (for the length of military operations against Iran), so you could do the math on that," Leavitt added.

to media reports on the details of a 15-point US plan setting out demands on Tehran, but said some of the reporting was "not entirely factual."

US and Israeli media said the points involved Iran giving up any right to a nuclear program and agreeing to dismantle its ballistic missile arsenal.

Leavitt declined to say whom the US was dealing with in Tehran. Reports have suggested the Trump administration's interlocutor is Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's speaker of parliament and one of its most prominent non-clerical figures.

Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Tuesday that Iran had given him "a very big present worth a tremendous amount of money", which he said demonstrated that "we're dealing with the right people". The US president did not elaborate further but said it was related to the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has largely blockaded in retaliation for US and Israeli strikes.

## UN condemns Gulf strikes

The UN Human Rights Council condemned Iran's "egregious attacks" on its Gulf neighbours, calling for full and swift "reparation" to all victims of its strikes.

The 47-member council backed a resolution condemning Tehran's actions aimed at closing the Strait of Hormuz, and demanding Iran immediately "cease all unprovoked attacks".

## Iran sets five conditions

The Iranian official quoted by Press TV said Tehran has put forward its own five conditions for hostilities to end.

These include ending "aggression and assassinations" against the country and its leaders, setting up a robust mechanism guaranteeing that neither Israel nor the US will resume the war, as well as compensation for the destruction caused.

Iran's conditions also include a cessation of hostilities on all regional fronts and against all "resistance groups" -- an implicit reference to the Tehran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah.

Tehran also wants international recognition and guarantees of Iran's rights to exercise its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz.

## How are ships crossing?

Maritime trackers indicate that a handful of vessels are still crossing daily through the Strait of Hormuz, which is guarded by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) -- most of them leaving the Gulf.

Some have taken a new Iranian-approved route through its waters, dubbed the "Tehran Toll Booth" by leading shipping journal Lloyd's List.

At least one vetted vessel paid \$2 million to use the corridor around Larak Island just off Iran's coast, it reported.

Lloyd's List cited sources as saying that governments from countries including India, Pakistan and China discussed vessel transits directly with Tehran, with the IRGC establishing a registration system of "approved ships".

On Tuesday, IRGC naval commander Alireza Tangsiri said on X the force had "turned back" a container ship "due to failure to comply with legal protocols and lack of permission to pass through".

Ship tracker MarineTraffic showed that the vessel, the Selen, was bound for Pakistan.

Lloyd's List reported Monday that it had tracked more than 20 ships using the emerging route, most of them Greek-owned but others Indian-, Pakistani-owned or linked to China.

## Is Iran acting illegally?

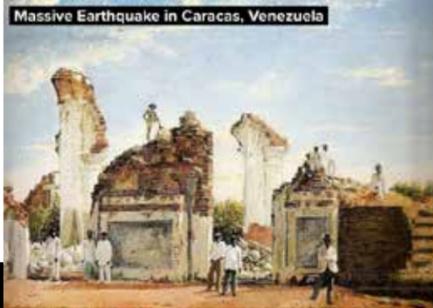
Charging fees to cross the strait would "lack a valid legal basis", Marco Roscini, international law professor at Westminster Law School said. Shipowners risk violating the law and Western sanctions if they pay a toll.

Transit passage rights through straits remain applicable during armed conflicts and suspending commercial navigation through Hormuz "cannot be lawful" barring exceptional circumstances, he added.

However in its statement to the IMO, Iran said it acted in self-defence, taking "necessary and proportionate measures" in line with international law.

Pope John XIX crowns Conrad II as Holy Roman Emperor, founding the Salian dynasty

Earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale destroys 90% of Caracas, Venezuela, and kills an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people



Municipal elections bring revolutionaries to power in Paris who form the short lived Paris Commune government

First "Eichmann transport" to Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps

# Pentagon orders more missiles for Mideast war

AFP | Washington, United States

The US Department of Defense yesterday announced three agreements with defense contractors to boost production of missiles and other parts to replenish dwindling supplies used in the Mideast war.

Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems agreed to a fourfold increase in production of a key component called "seeker heads" for THAAD, a high-altitude anti-missile system that

has seen significant use in the Middle East.

The agreement puts the "industrial base on a wartime footing," the Department of Defense said in a press release.

At the end of January, Lockheed Martin had already announced an acceleration of its THAAD production from around 100 to about 400 a year within a few years. The Pentagon announced a second agreement with Lockheed Martin to "accelerate" production of Precision Strike Missiles, or PrSM, tactical ballistic

missiles used for the first time against Iran. They succeed the previous Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS.

Lockheed Martin confirmed the order to quadruple output of the PrSM missiles, saying it builds on a previous \$4.94 billion contract award from the US Army last year. In a third deal, Honeywell Aerospace agreed to boost the production of "critical components for America's munitions stockpile," including navigation systems, a DoD press release said.

Gulf countries demand Iraq stop attacks by pro-Iran groups from its territory

# Iran talks continue

Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted at least four drones in the kingdom's east.

## Fire at Kuwait airport after drones hit fuel tank: aviation agency

AFP | Kuwait City, Kuwait

Drones hit a fuel tank and sparked a fire at Kuwait International Airport, the Gulf state's civil aviation authority said yesterday, as Iran presses on with its attacks in the nearly four-week regional war.

Citing preliminary information, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said in a statement posted online that the attack had caused only "limited" damage and no casualties.

Firefighters were working to bring the blaze under control, said agency spokesman Abdullah Al-Rajhi.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards

said in a statement carried by state broadcaster IRIB that they had launched missiles and drones at military bases hosting US forces in Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain as well as targets in Israel.

The Kuwait National Guard said in a statement that its forces intercepted six drones early Wednesday, and the army said air defences were "responding to hostile missile and drone attacks".

Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted at least four drones in the kingdom's east.

In Israel, the military said air defences responded to Iranian missiles that triggered

warning sirens across much of the country's central region.

The Kuwait airport is largely closed to commercial flights and has come under attack several times since the regional war began on February 28, when Israel and the United States launched strikes on Iran.

On March 14, the civil aviation authority said an attack with "several drones" targeted the airport and "struck its radar system". No casualties were reported.

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TOP  
3  
TWEETS

01



Spoke with President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and discussed the evolving situation in West Asia, with particular focus on disruptions affecting global energy security. We reviewed progress on key initiatives aimed at strengthening India-Sri Lanka energy cooperation and enhancing regional security.

As close and trusted partners, we reaffirmed our commitment to work closely together in addressing shared challenges.

@narendramodi

02



The transatlantic slave trade was a crime against humanity that struck at the core of personhood, broke up families & devastated communities. Let us reject the false narrative of racial difference & fully commit to human rights, equality & the inherent worth of every person.

@antonioguterres

03



Very good visit to the Garden Island Defence Precinct, Sydney's major naval base. The Indo-Pacific is crucial for the world's security. Any tension here echoes through the whole world. With our Security and Defence partnership, we will be able to carry out joint military exercises on land and at sea. It will also boost our defence industries in terms of production, scale and innovation.

@vonderleyen

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

### U-TURN WITH UK

## The risk you didn't pack!



P. UNNIKISHNAN

It is both unfortunate and unsettling that a pregnant expatriate woman, travelling from Bahrain to Saudi Arabia in a hired taxi, found herself detained at immigration due to circumstances entirely beyond her control. What should have been a routine journey turned into a distressing ordeal when authorities discovered that the driver had allegedly attempted to smuggle liquor bottles into Saudi Arabia, one of the strictest jurisdictions in the region when it comes to prohibited substances.

The woman, unaware of any wrongdoing, was held for nearly 10 hours before she could establish her innocence. Eventually, she was allowed to continue her journey. But the emotional and physical strain she endured raises a larger and more troubling question: in such situations, is innocence enough?

For many expatriates, cross-border travel—especially between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia—is routine. Taxis are hired, journeys are arranged quickly, and trust is placed, sometimes blindly, in drivers or informal travel arrangements. Yet, this incident highlights a harsh reality: at international borders, responsibility is not always determined by intent alone.

It may seem logical to assume that a written declaration between a passenger and a driver, clearly stating that the passenger is responsible only for their own belongings, could offer protection. However, such assumptions do not hold up in practice. Immigration and customs authorities operate under criminal law, not private agreements. Officers are neither obligated to accept nor consider such documents. Instead, all occupants of a vehicle may be treated as part of a shared environment and questioned until clarity is established.

This principle—often referred to as constructive possession—means that even an innocent passenger can be drawn into a legal situation simply by being present in the wrong place at the wrong time. A document may later help during an investigation to establish intent or lack of knowledge, but it does little to prevent immediate consequences such as detention or interrogation.

The more effective safeguard lies in awareness and personal responsibility. Choosing a licensed and reputable transport provider is essential. Informal or unverified taxis, particularly for cross-border journeys, carry risks that are often underestimated. Equally important is verifying the vehicle before departure. A quick check of the boot and the car's visible areas may feel unnecessary, but it can prevent serious complications later.

Passengers should also be mindful of their own belongings. Bags with multiple open pockets can be vulnerable, making it easier for someone to insert prohibited items without the passenger's knowledge. Properly securing luggage reduces this risk.

In today's digital age, even a quick photo or video of the vehicle before departure can serve as useful evidence if questions arise. At a broader level, travel agencies facilitating such journeys must adopt stricter compliance practices, including providing written assurances that vehicles have been checked and are free from prohibited items.

Ultimately, this incident is not just about one driver's wrongdoing. It is a reminder of how vulnerable individuals can become when assumptions replace awareness. For passengers navigating unfamiliar legal environments, caution is not optional—it is essential.

*Choosing a licensed and reputable transport provider is essential. Informal or unverified taxis, particularly for cross-border journeys, carry risks that are often underestimated. Equally important is verifying the vehicle before departure. A quick check of the boot and the car's visible areas may feel unnecessary, but it can prevent serious complications later.*



(The author is the Chairman & Managing Director of The Daily Tribune)

# UN chief says Lebanon must not become next Gaza amid fighting

Guterres also voiced alarm at the wider regional war

● **Named French diplomat Jean Arnault as his special envoy**

AFP | United Nations, United States

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said yesterday that fighting between Israel and Hezbollah must not condemn Lebanon to the same fate as Gaza, the Palestinian territory decimated by years of conflict.

"The Gaza model must not be replicated in Lebanon," Guterres told reporters, also saying the wider war in the Middle East is "out of control," as the United States, Israel and Iran have carried out strikes for more than three weeks.

"Across the region, and far beyond, civilians are enduring



A man walks along a street strewn with building debris at the site of an overnight Israeli airstrike that targeted a neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs

some of these consequences to Lebanon," he said. "There, too, the war must stop.

Hezbollah must stop launching attacks into Israel. And Israel must stop its military operations and strikes in Lebanon, which are hitting civilians the hardest."

In early March, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich threatened Beirut's southern suburbs -- a stronghold of Iran-backed Hezbollah -- with the same devastation that Israel has inflicted on Gaza in its war against militant group Hamas.

Beyond Lebanon, Guterres voiced alarm at the wider regional war triggered by US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February that killed the country's supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

"The conflict has broken past the limits even leaders thought imaginable," he said.

"The world is staring down the barrel of a wider war, a rising tide of human suffering, and a deeper global economic shock. This has gone too far."



Lebanon is home to some of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Cities like Byblos have been inhabited for over 7,000 years, making them among the earliest centres of civilisation.

The UN chief also announced the appointment of French diplomat Jean Arnault as his special envoy to lead UN efforts regarding the conflict and its consequences.

# India boosts climate commitments for 2035

To increase share of non-fossil fuels in electricity capacity to 60% by 2035

● **India has committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2070**

● **The country emitted an estimated 4.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2024**

● **India's per-capita emissions and historical contribution to global warming remain far lower than many developed nations**

AFP | New Delhi, India

India announced a long-awaited upgrade to its climate commitments on Wednesday, pledging to increase the share of non-fossil fuels in its electricity capacity to 60% by 2035.

The world's most populous country and third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases has been facing pressure to curb pollution while meeting rising energy demand.

The announcement came after the cabinet approved India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), a roadmap to achieve climate change goals under the Paris Agreement.

The country will "achieve 60% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fos-



A fisherman returns to shore with his catch at the Hut Bay beach in the Little Andaman island

sil fuel-based energy resources by 2035", the statement from the federal government read.

It also pledged to reduce emissions intensity, a measurement of emissions generated relative to GDP, by 47 percent by 2035, compared with 2005 levels.

India had previously aimed to bring the share of non-fossil fuels to 50 percent of installed power capacity by 2030, but has already met that target.

It had also aimed to create a carbon sink of up to three billion

tonnes by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. The updated pledges expand that plan to between 3.5 and four billion tonnes by 2035.

"India is capitalising on the extraordinary momentum that saw it smash its previous renewable energy goals years ahead of schedule," said climate activist Harjeet Singh.

Like all signatories to the Paris accord, which aims to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, India is required to submit updated NDCs to the United Nations through 2035.

It has committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2070, but remains heavily reliant on coal, which accounts for roughly 75 percent of its electricity generation.

The country emitted an estimated 4.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2024, according to UN data, trailing only China and the United States.

However, its per-capita emissions and historical contribution to global warming remain far lower than many developed nations.

# Skeleton which could be of musketeer d'Artagnan found in Netherlands



A skeleton of what archaeologists say could be that of Charles de Batz de Castelmore has been found

AFP | Amsterdam, Netherlands

A skeleton which could belong to d'Artagnan, the French soldier who inspired the novel *The Three Musketeers*, has been discovered in a church in the Dutch city where he died centuries ago, local media reported yesterday.

The skeleton was found in Maastricht, in the nave of a modern church whose origins date back to at least the 13th century, during repairs related to a partial floor collapse in February, explained L1 Nieuws, a media outlet in the province of Limburg.

Charles de Batz de Castelmore, known as d'Artagnan, the famous musketeer of Kings Louis XIII and Louis XIV, spent his life in the service of the French crown.

The Gascon nobleman inspired Alexandre Dumas's hero in *The Three Musketeers* in the 19th century, a character now known worldwide thanks to the novel and numerous film adaptations.

d'Artagnan was killed during the siege of Maastricht in 1673. His final resting place has remained a mystery ever since.

A French coin was found near the skeleton in Maastricht, according to Deacon Jos Valke, who was present during the initial excavation.

"Furthermore, the location of the grave indicates that this was an important person: the skeleton was found where the altar used to be, and only royalty or other important figures were buried under an altar at that time," he told L1 Nieuws.

The skeleton has been removed from the church and is now in an archaeological institute in Deventer in eastern Germany, the outlet reported.

A DNA sample was taken from the skeleton on March 13 and is currently being analysed in a laboratory in Munich.

Archaeologist Wim Dijkman has been searching for d'Artagnan's remains for 28 years. "I'm always very cautious, I'm a scientist. But I have high expectations," he told L1 Nieuws.

## Trump names tech titans to science advisory council

Washington, United States

President Donald Trump yesterday named some of the biggest names in US technology to his Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, assembling a roster that includes Meta founder Mark Zuckerberg and Google co-founder Sergey Brin.

The council, known as PCAST, will be co-chaired by Trump's AI and crypto adviser David Sacks and Michael Kratsios, a tech investor who previously served as the country's chief technology officer during the president's first term.

The list of appointees includes Oracle chief Larry Ellison and Silicon Valley heavyweight Marc Andreessen, as well as Nvidia boss Jensen Huang and Lisa Su of chipmaker AMD.

"The United States has the opportunity to lead the world in AI. I'm honored to join the president's council and work with other industry leaders to help make this happen," Zuckerberg said in a statement sent to AFP.

The Council, which has existed since president Franklin Roosevelt, is purely advisory: it produces reports and recommendations on topics the president directs it to study.

# Hungary says will phase out gas deliveries to Ukraine

● **Orban -- who is facing parliamentary elections next month -- is blocking a European loan of 90 billion euros (\$104 billion) to Ukraine**

AFP | Budapest, Hungary

Hungary's prime minister said yesterday that Budapest would phase out gas deliveries to Ukraine, the latest salvo in the feud between the two countries over a damaged pipeline transporting Russian oil.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, whose country is a major gas supplier to Ukraine, has accused Kyiv of delaying repairs on the pipeline, effectively stopping the flow of Russian oil to Hungary and its neighbour Slovakia.

"To break the oil blockade and guarantee the security of Hungary's energy supply, new measures are now necessary," Orban said in a video posted on Facebook.

"We are gradually halting gas shipments from Hungary to Ukraine and storing the gas



An employee of the Ukrainian SkyFall company conducts a test flight with a P1-Sun interceptor drone at an undisclosed location in Ukraine on March 19, 2026, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

that remains here domestically. Until Ukraine supplies oil, it will receive no gas from Hungary," he added.

Ukraine said Hungary had not yet halted deliveries and that the only impact would be felt by Budapest from the lost revenue from gas sales.

"Ukraine knows where to obtain the required gas volumes even in the event that Hungary stops its supplies," Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman Georgiy Tykhy told reporters.

Ukrainian officials insist the Druhza (Friendship) pipeline,

which crosses its territory, was damaged by Russian airstrikes on January 27.

### Sanctions blocked

Hungary and Slovakia, which have obtained exemptions from the European Union to continue purchasing Russian oil, accuse Kyiv of dragging their feet to repair it.

In retaliation, Orban -- who is facing parliamentary elections next month -- is blocking a European loan of 90 billion euros (\$104 billion) to Ukraine.

Last week, European Com-

mission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that the EU would help reopen the Druhza pipeline. Budapest and Bratislava are also blocking the official adoption of new economic sanctions against Russia, endorsed by other EU countries.

According to analysts at the pro-government Hungarian Economic Research Foundation (Oeconomus), Hungary has become one of Ukraine's main gas suppliers.

Ukraine imported 2.94 billion cubic metres of gas from Hungary in 2025, the top source for Ukrainian imports, accounting for 45.5 percent of all Ukrainian imports, Ukrainian consultancy ExPro said in a report.



Ukraine's total gas consumption in 2025 was 21 billion cubic metres, the Dixi group consultancy said in a report in March, meaning Hungary accounted for 14 percent of Ukraine's total gas use in 2025.

## Russia pulls more staff from Iran nuclear plant after reported strike

● **A projectile landed within the plant's compound**

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russia has evacuated more staff from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant after a reported strike on the compound Tuesday night, the head of Russia's atomic energy agency said yesterday.

Russia partially constructed the plant and its technicians help operate it.

A projectile landed within the plant's compound late Tuesday



Damage in the Iranian city of Isfahan after a strike on a building linked to Iran's defence sector.



The premises of Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant. (Courtesy of AIR)

but caused no damage, Iran's atomic energy organisation said, accusing the United States and Israel of attacking the plant.

"Today, at approximately 7:20 Moscow time (0420 GMT), 163 people left Bushehr for the Iranian-Armenian border," Rosatom CEO Alexey Likhachev was quoted as saying by the state RIA news agency.

"Right now, about 300 remain... Some people will stay. I think it will be a few dozen people who will oversee the equipment," he added in comments to reporters, including AFP. Rosatom had already withdrawn 150 people working at the plant, amid the threat of US and Israeli airstrikes.

It was in the process of building two new reactors at the plant when the conflict began.

## Brazil unveils first locally made *supersonic fighter jet*

AFP | Gavião Peixoto, Brazil

Brazil yesterday unveiled the first supersonic fighter jet to be produced locally, placing it among a small group of countries able to build such advanced aircraft.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva christened the F-39E Gripen fighter jet from the Swedish group Saab with champagne during a high-profile ceremony in Gavião Peixoto in the state of Sao Paulo.

The Brazilian presidency said the building of the supersonic jet was "unprecedented in Latin America."

"This project allows us to consolidate our deterrent power by enhancing our capacity to ensure national sovereignty and regional security," Brazil's Defense Minister Jose Mucio said during the ceremony.



Brazil has ordered 36 supersonic fighter jets from Saab, 15 of which will be manufactured at the facilities of the Brazilian aerospace manufacturer Embraer in Gavião Peixoto.

Brasilia opted for the Swedish aircraft over the Rafale from France's Dassault Aviation and the F/A-18 Super Hornet from US company Boeing.

The deal -- awarded in 2014 -- was plagued with corruption allegations. Lula was accused of receiving around one million dollars to help Saab win the tender during his first term in office.

However investigations in Brazil and Sweden were closed

with no evidence of wrongdoing found by Saab, while the case against Lula was dismissed.

Brazil has highlighted the importance of boosting defense capabilities in a turbulent geopolitical landscape.

Lula has criticized the war against Iran waged by the United States and Israel.

He has also denounced Washington's actions in Latin America, saying the US attack on Venezuela to oust president Nicolas Maduro crossed "an unacceptable line."

During an official visit by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa earlier this month, Lula warned both nations were at risk of foreign invasion.

"I don't know if comrade Ramaphosa realizes that if we don't prepare ourselves in terms of defense, one day someone will invade us," said Lula.

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# Sinner storms into Miami quarters

Sinner overcomes 5-2 second-set deficit to stay on course for Indian Wells-Miami double

● Sinner beats Michelsen 7-5, 7-6 to reach quarters

● Tiafoe sets quarter-final with Sinner

● Qualifier Martin Landa-luce upset favourite Sebastian Korda

● Zverev advances after twin tiebreak win

AFP | Miami

Jannik Sinner powered into the Miami Open quarter-finals on Tuesday, defeating unseeded American Alex Michelsen in straight sets to stay on course for the "Sunshine Double".

Italian second seed Sinner, who is bidding to follow up his triumph at Indian Wells with victory in Miami, bided his time before completing a 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) win in 1hr 41min.

The four-time Grand Slam champion, who will face 19th seed Frances Tiafoe in the last eight, was made to work hard by the 40th-ranked Michelsen.

After a cagey opening Sinner began to put pressure on Michelsen's serve in the ninth game of the first set, carving out three break points.

Michelsen rode out that storm, but Sinner finally broke through in the 11th game before serving out for the first set.



Jannik Sinner of Italy fades back for a shot against Alex Michelsen of the United States

Michelsen hit back in the second set, breaking Sinner for a 4-2 lead before holding to go 5-2 up.

Michelsen appeared to struggle with the bright late afternoon sunlight on the Hard Rock Stadium's main court and Sinner came roaring back to force a tie-break.

Sinner sealed the win with a thumping serve that Michelsen could only return wide.

"I feel like I served very well

**15**  
aces from Sinner underlined his clutch serving as he adapted from a night match to tricky daytime conditions in Miami

in important moments and that helped me out, especially in the tough moments," said Sinner, who unfurled 15 aces to Michelsen's three.

"But today was not easy -- I played a night match yesterday and today in the daytime, so the conditions were very different."

#### Qualifier advances

Home hope Tiafoe advanced to his quarter-final date with

**”**  
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**”**

JANNIK SINNER

Sinner after battling past France's Terence Atmane 6-4, 1-6, 6-4.

Spanish qualifier Martin Landa-luce, ranked 151st in the world, upset American 32nd seed Sebastian Korda to score a 2-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 victory.

The win marked another impressive victory for the 20-year-old Landa-luce, who eliminated Russian 14th seed Karen Khachanov.

Korda, who had beaten world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the previous round, had a match point late in the second set, but Landa-luce survived to set up a quarter-final against Czech 21st seed Jiri Lehecka.

Landa-luce, who had failed to register a single win at tour level in 2026 before arriving in Miami, dedicated his latest success to his late grandmother.

"She would have been 101 last week, and she passed away a few months ago. I wanted to give her the victory," Landa-luce said.

**YOU**  
KNOW WHAT  
Landa-luce, who arrived in Miami without a single tour-level win this season, beat Khachanov and then saved a match point against Korda to reach the quarter-finals for his late grandmother, who "would have been 101"

Lehecka booked his place in the quarter-finals by ousting sixth seed Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 in 2hr 25min.

"I just felt that in the third set, if I wanted to beat a guy like Taylor, I just needed to go for it and be aggressive," Lehecka said.

American 22nd seed Tommy Paul set up a quarter-final against France's Arthur Fils after cruising past Argentina's Tomas Etcheverry 6-1, 6-3.

Fils beat Monaco's Valentin Vacherot 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4.

Argentina's 18th-seeded Francisco Cerundolo followed up his upset of Daniil Medvedev on Monday with a comfortable 6-4, 6-3 defeat of French 31st seed Ugo Humbert.

Cerundolo will face Alexander Zverev in the last eight after the German third seed defeated France's Quentin Halys 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/1).

# Gauff outlasts Bencic to reach Miami semi-finals

Fourth seed battles to first Miami semi-final despite injury doubts

● Gauff wins 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 vs Bencic

● Faces Muchova in last four

● Muchova beats Mboko in semis

AFP | Miami

Coco Gauff battled past Belinda Bencic to reach the semi-finals of the Miami Open for the first time on Tuesday with a gruelling 6-3, 1-6, 6-3 victory.

Fourth seed Gauff had considered skipping Miami after being forced to pull out during the fourth round at Indian Wells with a left-arm injury.

But the 22-year-old from Florida, who lives in nearby Delray Beach, was determined to play in what she considers to be her hometown tournament where she had never previously gone further than the last 16.

Gauff's sense of determination was on full display at the Hard Rock Stadium's main court on Tuesday as she weathered fluctuating form against the 12th-seeded Bencic to grind out

**BETTER**  
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KNOW  
Gauff nearly skipped the tournament due to injury but pushed through to reach her best-ever result at her hometown event

victory.

"I honestly didn't think I would be in the semis so I'm really happy and proud of myself," Gauff said.

"I think I proved a lot to myself this week, and I feel like with each match I'm getting better.

"Even though I'm still playing three sets, I feel like the level is getting better and better."

Gauff, the French Open champion, will now face the Czech 13th seed Karolina Muchova in the last four as she chases her first Miami final appearance.

Gauff has won all five of her previous matches against Muchova.



Coco Gauff of the United States returns a shot against Belinda Bencic of Switzerland

"You don't think about the head-to-head," Gauff said.

"There's so many matches that we play that could go either way. I don't really think about it -- especially when I play here, because I know how good she is."

Muchova advanced to the last four earlier with a 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) defeat of Canadian 10th seed Victoria Mboko.

The 29-year-old Muchova admitted she had everything to prove against Gauff.

"I don't have the best record

against Coco, but I feel good," Muchova said. "And you never know."

Despite giving away 10 years to the teenaged Mboko, Muchova said she did not feel any sense of disadvantage against her younger opponent.

**”**  
I honestly didn't think I would be in the semis so I'm really happy and proud of myself. I think I proved a lot to myself this week, and I feel like with each match I'm getting better. Even though I'm still playing three sets, I feel like the level is getting better and better  
**”**

COCO GAUFF

**5-0**  
is Coco Gauff's perfect head-to-head record against upcoming semi-final opponent Karolina Muchova  
"I keep getting these questions this week like I'm really old or something," Muchova said.  
"I don't feel that old -- I feel like I'm still pretty young. In my head, I could be 20."

# 'Illustrious' Salah to leave Liverpool at the end of the season

Egyptian forward confirmed exit following record-breaking career and recent managerial tensions

● **Nine-year Liverpool career ends**

● **Third in all-time scorers list**

● **Won multiple major trophies**

● **Form dipped this season**

AFP | Liverpool

Mohamed Salah will leave Premier League champions Liverpool at the end of the season, the Egypt forward announced as he started a farewell to what the club said were nine "illustrious" years at Anfield.

The 33-year-old arrived from Roma in 2017 and has made 435 appearances for Liverpool to date, scoring 255 goals to be third on the club's all-time goalscorers chart behind Ian Rush and Roger Hunt.

Salah has won four Premier League Golden Boots and starred for Liverpool in both their 2019/20 and 2024/25 title triumphs as well as lifting the 2019 Champions League trophy.

His Liverpool honours also include a Club World Cup, UEFA Super Cup, FA Cup and two League Cups.

Salah has scored just five Premier League goals this season, compared with 29 in last term's title-winning campaign.

His Anfield future became the subject of intense speculation after a dramatic bust-up with Liverpool manager Arne Slot in December.

He accused Liverpool of throwing him "under the bus" after he was benched for three games in a row and said he had no relationship with the Dutch boss.



Liverpool's Egyptian striker #11 Mohamed Salah celebrates with the Premier League trophy

## 'The day has come'

Salah, in a video on social media featuring highlights of his time with Liverpool, said: "Hello everyone. Unfortunately, the day has come.

"This is the first part of my farewell. I will be leaving Liverpool at the end of the season.

"I wanted to start by saying that I never imagined how deeply this club, this city, these people would become part of my life. Liverpool is not just a football club.

"It's a passion, it's a history, it's a spirit. I can't explain in words to anyone not of this club."

Salah, who in common with many Liverpool players and

**"This is the first part of my farewell. I will be leaving Liverpool at the end of the season. I wanted to start by saying that I never imagined how deeply this club, this city, these people would become part of my life. Liverpool is not just a football club. It's a passion, it's a history, it's a spirit. I can't explain in words to anyone not of this club"**

MOHAMED SALAH

# 255

goals have been scored by Mohamed Salah during his time at Anfield, placing him third on the club's all-time list behind only Ian Rush and Roger Hunt

staff was deeply affected by the death of team-mate Diogo Jota in a car crash in July, added: "We celebrated victory, we won the most important trophies and we fought together through the hardest time in our life.

"I want to thank everyone who was part of this club throughout my time here, especially the teammates past and present.

"And to the fans, I don't have enough words. The support you showed me through the best time of my career, and you stood by me in the toughest times. It's something I will never forget and something I will take with me always.

"Leaving is never easy. You gave me the best time of my life. I will be always one of you. This club will always be my home, to me and to my family.

"Thank you for everything. Because of all of you, I will never walk alone," insisted Salah in a reference to the Liverpool fans' anthem.



Salah's emotional video referenced teammate Diogo Jota's tragic death and ended with "You'll Never Walk Alone," promising fans he'd remain "one of you" forever

## 'Perfect send-off'

Salah's agent, Ramy Abbas Issa, posted on X: "We do not know where Mohamed will play next season. This also means that no one else knows."

Liverpool said on their website: "Mohamed Salah is to bring the curtain down on his illustrious career with Liverpool at the end of the 2025-26 season.

"The forward has reached an agreement with the Reds that will see him close a remarkable nine-year chapter at Anfield."

Salah was forced off at Anfield last week after scoring in Liverpool's 4-0 victory against Galatasaray, which sealed their place in the Champions League quarter-finals.

Injury meant he missed fifth-placed Liverpool's 2-1 loss at Brighton last weekend.

Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher, in a column for the Daily Telegraph, said Salah would aim to leave in style with victory in the Champions League final.

"Knowing Salah's mindset and competitive spirit, he will be setting his sights on the greatest of all possible goodbyes, inspiring his team to victory in the Champions League final in Budapest," said Carragher.

"Do not bet against the perfect send-off."

## Manchester City star Erling Haaland invests in Norway Chess to launch the new Total Chess World Championship Tour

Oslo | Dubai

Norway Chess has been a driving force for innovation in chess for years and is now taking another major step with the launch of the Total Chess World Championship Tour. The initiative is now gaining a new strategic investor: global football superstar Erling Haaland. Together with Norwegian business leader Morten Borge, Haaland has established the company Chess Mates, which will be a significant partner to help grow new audiences and bring fresh energy to the game.

"Chess is an incredible game. It sharpens your mind, and there are clear similarities to football. You have to think quickly, trust your instincts, and think several moves ahead. Strategy and planning are everything," says Erling Haaland.

"Chess is ultimately about strategy and long-term thinking", says Morten Borge. "Those are qualities that also define both elite sport and the ability to make sound investments over time. In many ways, chess sits right at the intersection of the worlds Erling and I come from. I've even promised to give Erling a bit of chess training!"

With millions of fans around the world, Haaland is already a global sports icon and a natural partner to help grow new audiences and bring fresh energy to the game.

"I'm investing in Norway Chess because I believe the new Total Chess World Championship Tour can turn chess into an even bigger sport for spectators around the world. The team be-



Behind from left, COO of Norway Chess Benedicte Westre Skog, Co-founder of Chess Mates Morten Borge. Below from left, Co-founder of Chess Mates Erling Haaland and CEO of Norway Chess Kjell Madland

hind Norway Chess has already done an impressive job growing the event, and joining the project was too exciting to pass up," says

Haaland. The new championship, featuring the world's best players, is expected to become one of the

most significant developments in modern chess. The Total Chess World Championship Tour will consist of four tournaments each year, hosted by four different cities, and will crown a combined world champion across three disciplines — Fast Classic, Rapid, and Blitz chess. This new World Championship has been approved by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for a minimum of 16 years. A pilot tournament is planned for autumn 2026, followed by a full championship season in 2027. Each season will consist of four events, and a minimum annual prize pool of USD 2.7 million.

Kjell Madland, CEO of Norway Chess and Total Chess, welcomes the investment and involvement of Haaland as a

long-term strategic partner.

"We expect the new championship to become one of the most prestigious events in the global chess calendar. The fact that Erling is joining us as an investor says a great deal about the commercial potential of this tour. Erling has an enormous global following and is truly world-class when it comes to creating magical sporting moments. I am absolutely certain he will bring tremendous value to Total Chess, help generate increased interest in the fascinating world of chess, and attract new audiences. He has already contributed with several great ideas. With Erling on board, we are now entering the final phase of finding host cities for the first tour," says Madland.

# Semi-Finals Heat Up in the Zain Bahrain Basketball League

TDT | Manama

The 2025-26 Zain Bahrain Basketball League semi-finals tip off tonight at Khalifa Sports City Hall in Isa Town, with reigning champions Muharraq facing Al Ahli at 8 PM, and Manama squaring off against Al Najma at 6 PM. Both matchups are best-of-five series, with the finals scheduled for April 5 or April 8 depending on how quickly the semi-finals conclude.

## Red Wolves Hungry for More

All eyes are on Muharraq after their 80-73 victory over Manama in the Khalifa bin Salman Cup final. The game turned on Muharraq's precise tempo control and relentless pressure in the third quarter, where turnovers and disrupted rhythm defined the contest.

Despite their early exit from the FIBA West Asia Super League in February, Muharraq have transformed disappointment into motivation. Power forward and Cup final MVP Mohammed Ameer summed it up: "The league semi-finals are huge for us. While the WASL



Muharraq squad, officials, and fans rejoice in last season's league triumph

is the title I dream of, every game here counts. We want to show we can dominate at home."

The league's final four matchups are separate from the recent cup, but the cup semi-final results offer insight into each team's form. In the Khalifa bin Salman Cup, Manama swept Al Najma 2-0, winning 78-66 in Game 1 and 77-75 in Game 2. Muharraq also swept Al Ahli, taking Game 1 93-87 and Game 2 96-80. These cup victories highlight the strengths and momentum of the teams heading into the league semi-finals tonight.

## Depth Fuels Dominance

Muharraq's strength lies not just in star players but in tactical versatility. Under German coach Peter Schomers, the team can seamlessly shift between structured half-court sets and lightning-fast transition play. Their clean sweep over Al Ahli in the cup semi-finals highlighted the depth and cohesion that make them the team to beat.

Manama, meanwhile, faces a tougher climb. Their narrow victories over Al Najma showcased both scoring firepower and

## Schedule

Applies to both semi-finals

Game 1 - 26 March

Game 2 - 29 March

Game 3 - 1 April

Game 4 - 4 April

Game 5 - 7 April

All matches will take place at Khalifa Sports City

vulnerability under pressure. To challenge the champions, Manama must stay composed, minimize mistakes, and seize every opportunity. Key players will need to deliver under pressure, or small lapses could turn the tide.

## Underdogs Ready to Strike

While Muharraq and Manama enter as favorites, Al Najma and Al Ahli are far from mere spectators. Both underdogs have the talent and tactical awareness to capitalize on any slip-ups. For Al Najma, it is about exploiting gaps in Manama's defense. For Al Ahli, it is finding ways to disrupt Muharraq's rhythm and prevent them from dictating the pace.

## Knicks close on Celtics after Brunson's 32 points



Jalen Brunson reacts during the fourth quarter of the New York Knicks defeat of the New Orleans Pelicans

AFP | Los Angeles

Jalen Brunson scored 32 points as the New York Knicks stretched their winning streak to seven games with a 121-116 defeat of the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday.

Brunson was one of seven Knicks players to finish in double figures, with Karl Anthony-Towns and OG Anunoby finishing with 21 points apiece at Madison Square Garden.

The win saw the Knicks keep up the pressure on the Boston Celtics in the battle for the No.2 seed in the Eastern Conference playoff picture.

With less than three weeks of the regular season remaining, the Knicks are third in the East with a 48-25 record, a fraction behind the Celtics who are second on 47-24. Detroit lead the standings on

52-19.

Zion Williamson scored 22 points to lead the scoring for the Pelicans, who have been eliminated from playoff contention in the West.

In other games, Donovan Mitchell scored 42 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers edged the Orlando Magic 136-131.

The Cavs' fourth straight victory leaves them in fourth place in the Eastern Conference on 45-27.

The Charlotte Hornets remain in the hunt for a playoff spot after thrashing the Sacramento Kings 134-90.

The Hornets are one of three teams in the middle of the Eastern Conference standings with identical 38-34 records.

The Philadelphia 76ers are just above them on 39-33, one spot outside the last automatic playoff place occupied by the Atlanta Hawks (40-22).

## Filipino fighters rally support during Middle East crisis

TDT | Manama

Filipino mixed martial arts fighters Stephen Loman and Drex Zamboanga have expressed concern for Filipino communities in Bahrain and across the Middle East as regional tensions continue to escalate, casting uncertainty over daily life and the sporting calendar.

The situation carries particular significance for Loman, who built a key part of his career under BRAVE Combat Federation and has often described the region as a second home. Between 2016 and 2019, he competed six times for the promotion, including three bouts in Bahrain, highlighted by his bantamweight world title victory in 2017.

Reflecting on the current situation, Loman said: "My heart is heavy seeing what is happening across the Middle East. Bahrain



Stephen "The Sniper" Loman (L) and Drex "The T-Rex" Zamboanga (R)

holds a special place in my journey, and I know so many Filipinos there who are working hard for their families. It is painful to think of what they are going through right now."

Zamboanga, who joined BRAVE CF in 2025, echoed those sentiments, extending his support to overseas Filipinos affected by the crisis. "I offer my prayers to all Filipinos in Bah-

rain and throughout the Middle East. May God surround you with protection, strength, and comfort in these difficult times," he said.

The concern comes amid a significant Filipino presence in the region, with an estimated 2.1 to 2.4 million living and working across the Middle East. Around 86,000 are currently in areas under active crisis alert, raising the possibility of repatriation if tensions persist.

The situation has also begun to affect the sporting calendar, with bouts involving both fighters under BRAVE CF potentially being pushed back to later in 2026.

Despite the uncertainty, both fighters expressed hope that stability would return soon, with Loman looking forward to competing again and Zamboanga remaining optimistic about the future.

## Injury threatens ex-Arsenal ace Tomiyasu's World Cup dream

AFP | Tokyo

Former Arsenal defender Takehiro Tomiyasu on Tuesday pulled out of Japan's squad for friendlies against Scotland and England because of injury, putting his World Cup hopes at further risk.

The 27-year-old was last week called up for the first time in almost two years, but he will now have no chance to play for his country before coach Hajime Moriyasu names his World Cup squad.

Tomiyasu started for his club Ajax against Feyenoord on Sunday, but he signalled to the bench in discomfort after going



Japan's Takehiro Tomiyasu in action (file photo)

down and was substituted in the 73rd minute.

He said in an Instagram post

that it was "part of a process".

"Haste makes waste. Do what you need to do," he wrote.

Japan play Scotland in Glasgow on Saturday before taking on England at Wembley three days later.

They have been drawn in Group F with the Netherlands, Tunisia and a European qualifier at the World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico which begins on June 11.

Tomiyasu left Arsenal in July last year with 12 months remaining on his contract in order to focus on his rehabilitation.

He signed for Ajax in December and returned to action in January for the first time since October 2024, although he has yet to complete 90 minutes for his new club.

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