

Fresh BD820,000 boost for sickle cell care

Contract went to Cigalah Pharmacy

● The procurement will help ensure a steady supply of medicines

● Cigalah also secured a similar BD819,000 deal in September

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain is reinforcing its commitment to sickle cell care with a new BD819,999.600 contract for medicines, bringing government spending on treatment for the inherited blood disorder to about BD1.64 million in less than a year.



The latest contract, awarded by the Health Ministry and listed among the Tender Board's April awards, went to Cigalah Pharmacy, which also secured a similar tender worth nearly BD819,000 in September last year.

The procurement will help ensure a steady supply of medicines for patients with sickle cell disease, a lifelong inherited blood disorder that requires continuous treatment

SICKLE CELL DISEASE

An inherited blood disorder that affects red blood cells

SICKLE CELL DISEASE is a genetic condition that affects haemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen.

NORMAL vs SICKLE CELL		COMMON SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT & CARE
NORMAL RED BLOOD CELL  Round and flexible. Moves easily through blood vessels.	SICKLE CELL  Hard and sticky. Can block blood flow and reduce oxygen supply.	Pain crises Anaemia (low red blood cells) Organ damage (spleen, kidneys, lungs, brain, etc.) Higher risk of infections	MEDICINES Help manage pain, prevent complications and reduce crises. REGULAR CHECK-UPS Routine medical care, blood tests and vaccinations are essential. HYDRATION & NUTRITION Drinking plenty of fluids and a balanced diet support overall health.

WITH EARLY CARE, REGULAR TREATMENT AND SUPPORT, PEOPLE WITH SICKLE CELL DISEASE CAN LEAD HEALTHY, FULFILLING LIVES.

Bahrain has launched its first national sickle cell disease registry to support improved healthcare planning, research, patient follow-up, and evidence-based policy development.

and regular medical follow-up. The condition can cause severe pain, anaemia, organ damage and other serious complications, making uninterrupted access to medication essential.

The investment comes as Bahrain continues to strengthen services for sickle cell patients through the Hereditary Blood Disorders Centre, updated treatment protocols,

regular follow-up programmes and improved emergency and inpatient care for severe cases.

The Kingdom has also expanded access to advanced therapies. The Royal Medical Services recently announced the successful treatment of a second sickle cell patient using gene therapy under the hereditary blood disorders gene therapy and stem cell transplant programme at the Bahrain Oncology Centre, following Bahrain's first successful case under the same programme.

While gene therapy and stem cell transplants are available only to selected patients, regular medication remains the mainstay of treatment for the wider sickle cell population.

Care is provided through the Health Ministry, government hospitals, the Royal Medical Services and the Bahrain Oncology Centre, with medicine supply contracts forming a key part of the healthcare system.

Alongside treatment, Bahrain has stepped up efforts to reduce inherited blood disorders through premarital screening and public awareness campaigns. It has also launched the country's first national sickle cell disease register to support healthcare planning, research and patient follow-up, while a dedicated transition clinic helps young patients move from paediatric to adult services without interruptions in care.

US revises 2026 first-quarter GDP growth up to 2.1%

Washington, United States

The US economy expanded at a higher rate than previously estimated in the first quarter, data showed Thursday, with a downward estimate of imports boosting the figures.

Gross domestic product in the world's largest economy rose at an annual rate of

2.1 percent in the first three months of the year, the Commerce Department said in its third estimate of growth data.

Its previous estimate had put growth at 1.6 percent, and the new figures were more in line with the government's first estimate of 2.0 percent growth in the first quarter.

Amazon pledges additional \$13 bn in India AI investment

New Delhi, India

E-commerce giant Amazon announced on Thursday an additional \$13-billion investment by 2030 to expand its artificial intelligence footprint in India, months after declaring plans to invest more than \$35 billion.

The announcement was made following a meeting between company CEO

Andy Jassy and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The \$13 billion will target AI and cloud infrastructure in Mumbai and Hyderabad, the company said in a statement.

"Amazon's cumulative investments in India from 2010-2030 stand at over \$88 billion," the company said.

Jassy said he was "excited" about the future.

Stocks rally on renewed AI optimism, oil price declines

Key figures around 1345 GMT

New York - Dow:	▲ 0.7% at 52,203.56 points
New York - S&P 500:	▲ 0.4% at 7,389.18
New York - Nasdaq:	▲ 0.1% at 25,511.18
London - FTSE 100:	▲ P 0.8% at 10,539.70
Brent North Sea Crude:	▼ 0.4% at \$73.59 a barrel
West Texas Intermediate:	▼ 0.7% at \$69.83 a barrel
Euro/dollar:	▲ at \$1.1368 from \$1.1357 on Wednesday
Pound/dollar:	▲ at \$1.3193 from \$1.3162
Dollar/yen:	▼ N at 161.79 yen from 161.81 yen
Euro/pound:	▼ at 86.14 pence from 86.26 pence

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Stock markets advanced yesterday after bumper earnings from US chip titan Micron helped calm investor worries about promised payoffs from the massive AI investment boom.

The gains were boosted by further declines for oil prices to below levels seen before the US-Iran war, as shipping picks up through the Strait of Hormuz.

Markets have endured a roller-coaster run this week

amid concerns about when the eye-watering sums invested in artificial intelligence will reap returns.

Micron Technology helped turn around the mood by reporting fourth-quarter revenue forecasts of \$50 billion, which blew past expectations, and said its entire stock of high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips for AI computing are sold out for this year.

The report reignited confidence in a sector that has been the key driver of a surge across equity markets this year.

IBM unveils chip technology it says will deliver major performance leap

AFP | New York, United States

IBM unveiled new semiconductor technology Thursday that the company says could

deliver computer chips with 50 percent better performance while dramatically lowering power consumption.

The technology developed

by IBM is not yet ready for industrial use, but the Armonk, New York-based company said it "sees a path to production in as early as the next five years."

The breakthrough could mean a major leap forward as the industry races to cram more computing power into smaller devices.

Online rumours over GTA 6 ban miss a key detail

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Claims that Grand Theft Auto VI (GTA 6) has been banned in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman have gone viral online, but the claims are based on a misunderstanding.

According to Bahraini gaming expert Abdulla Abdulrahman, the confusion stems from Sony's terms for digital pre-orders. The terms state that a free one-month subscription

to GTA+, the game's premium membership service, is not available through PlayStation Stores in Bahrain, China, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia and Taiwan.

Some users interpreted that list as evidence that GTA 6 itself had been banned. However, the restriction applies only to the free GTA+ offer and does not state that the game cannot be sold.

The game's availability in some Gulf countries, however, remains unclear. PlayStation Store pages for Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman list GTA 6 but currently show it as unavailable for purchase. This suggests that pre-orders have either not opened or are restricted to those local stores, rather than confirming an official ban.

In contrast, players in Saudi Arabia and the UAE can already pre-order the game through the PlayStation Store. The Standard Edition is priced at \$79.99, while the Ultimate Edition costs \$99.99.

Rockstar Games has scheduled the release of Grand Theft Auto VI for November 19, 2026, on PlayStation 5 and PlayStation 5 Pro.

So far, neither Rockstar Games, publisher Take-Two Interactive nor government authorities in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait or Oman have issued any public statement confirming that the game has been banned.

Based on the information currently available, claims that GTA 6 has been banned across those Gulf countries are not supported. While the complimentary

GTA+ offer is excluded in several markets and the game is not yet available for purchase on some local PlayStation Stores, there has been no official announcement prohibiting its sale.



The first GTA began as a police-and-racing game called Race 'n' Chase. Developers accidentally discovered that causing chaos was far more fun than obeying the rules—and the game was completely redesigned.

