

Mercedes teen ace Antonelli wants more of the same after maiden win

Antonelli's China triumph boosts belief as Mercedes duo chase first Suzuka win since 2019 | P12

WORLD 6 Pakistan says 'US-Iran indirect talks taking place'

THE DAILY tribune

Sabalenka and Rybakina to clash again in Miami semi-final 11 SPORTS

BUSINESS 5 NBB to Transition Back to 100% Operational Capacity from 29th March

Bahrain boosts ties, discusses regional issues with UK, Russia



H.E. Dr. Al Zayani
TDT | Manama

Bahrain reviewed the latest regional developments with the United Kingdom and Russia while reinforcing bilateral relations and cooperation.

This followed meetings where His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, received H.E. Alastair Long, Ambassador of the UK to Bahrain, and H.E. Dr. Alexey Skosyrev, Ambassador of Russia to the Kingdom.

During the meetings, H.E. Dr. Al Zayani and H.E. Ambassador Long discussed the longstanding relations and strategic partnership between Bahrain and the UK, and explored avenues for further development across multiple sectors.

H.E. Dr. Al Zayani and H.E. Ambassador Dr. Skosyrev focused on disruptions to international navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and exchanged views on broader international issues.

154 missiles, 350 drones destroyed

TDT | Manama

The General Command of the Bahrain Defence Force announced that through the unwavering vigilance of its personnel, the BDF's air defence systems continue to successfully counter successive waves of the hostile terrorist Iranian aggression.

Since the onset of hostilities, air defences have intercepted and destroyed 154 ballistic missiles and 350 drones targeting the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The General Command hailed the combat readiness and vigilance of BDF personnel, and their sustained operational effectiveness in defending the Kingdom.

'G7 nations should back reopening of Hormuz'

AFP | Joint Base Andrews, US

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said yesterday that it was in the "interest" of all G7 nations to push for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz currently blocked by Iran.

"It's in their interest to help," Rubio said shortly before heading to France where he will attend a meeting of G7 foreign ministers outside Paris today.

It is Rubio's first trip abroad since the US and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran on February 28.

Rubio, who skipped the first day of G7 talks yesterday, said there was "progress" in talks with Iran, but refused to speculate on when or how they might end.

"There are intermediary

countries that are passing messages, and progress has been made," Rubio said, calling it an "ongoing process."

Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan - the other G7 members - yesterday signaled their hope for a diplomatic solution to the situation in Iran, which has rippled through the global economy due to the virtual closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Around a fifth of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the waterway in peacetime.

US President Donald Trump said earlier yesterday at a cabinet meeting that Tehran was more keen to make a deal than he was, noting that the military operation was ahead of schedule and reiterating his criticism of NATO.

Focus on security plans and labour reforms



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, remotely chaired the 524th Government Executive Committee meeting. The Committee reviewed plans implemented to address the impact of the hostile Iranian aggression against the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as initiatives aimed at developing labour market procedures.

Supply security

Bahrain calls for stronger GCC integration to ensure uninterrupted movement of goods

H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed: Transport, logistics key to regional stability, growth

TDT | Manama

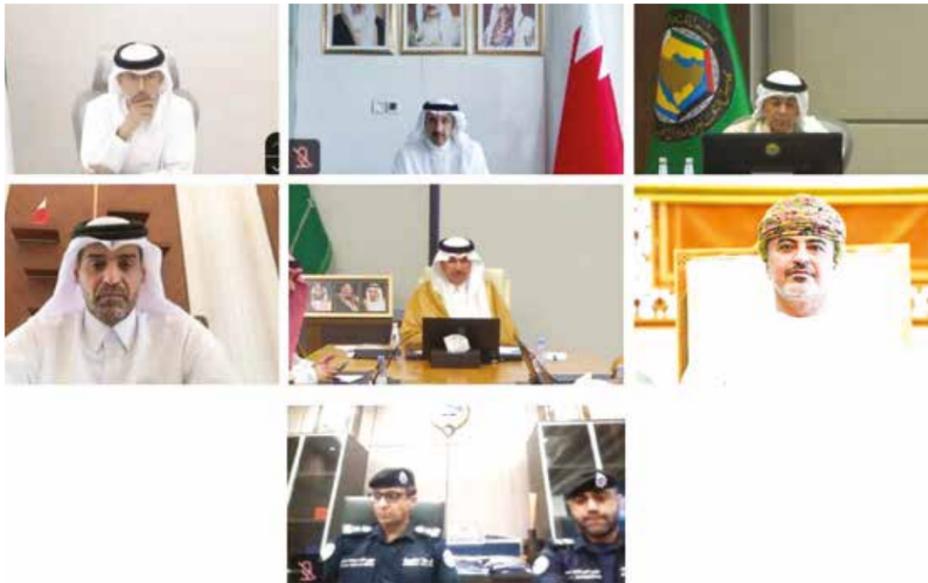
His Excellency Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, emphasised the critical need to consolidate Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) integration across vital sectors, particularly transport and logistics.

He said that this coordination is essential to ensure the continuity of supply chains and the smooth movement of shipments, especially strategic goods.

"The security and prosperity of GCC countries are indivisible, and their destinies are shared," H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed said during the extraordinary GCC Ministers of Transport and Communications meeting held via videoconference. "Strengthening coordination in transport and logistics is essential to maintain uninterrupted flow of essential goods across our states."

Emergency

He also stressed the importance of preparedness for emergency conditions, noting: "We must enhance readiness to safeguard the stability of our countries, protect the interests



H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa chairs the extraordinary GCC meeting

"We must enhance readiness to safeguard the stability of our countries, protect the interests of our peoples, and support the progress of joint GCC action."

- H.E. DR. SHAIKH ABDULLA BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

of our peoples, and support the progress of joint GCC action."

The meeting, convened under Bahrain's presidency of the 46th session of the GCC, brought together ministers and officials responsible for transport, ports,

and logistics sectors across member states.

Discussions focused on the current operational conditions in land and maritime transport, the movement of freight and strategic goods, and the status

of border crossings to ensure uninterrupted transit.

Measures

Participants reviewed measures to activate joint mechanisms, including simplifying procedures at ports and border points, utilising alternative transport routes, and strengthening logistical connectivity between ports and land crossings.

The use of modern technologies to expedite clearance and inspection procedures was also highlighted as a priority to ensure high levels of responsiveness to regional developments.

Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the GCC,

praised Bahrain's convening of the meeting at this critical time.

Projects

He underscored the importance of accelerating joint projects, exchanging expertise, and coordinating policies to enhance infrastructure, logistics services, and economic development across member states.

The ministers reaffirmed the need for continued consultation and cooperation to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of transport and logistics systems, reinforcing GCC integration and maintaining the smooth flow of trade and supply chains amid ongoing regional challenges.



Participants in the online forum discussed the current operational conditions in land and maritime transport, the movement of freight and strategic goods, and the status of border crossings to ensure uninterrupted transit.



Bahrain Metro's plan moves to first phase

Efforts underway to complete all necessary studies and steps before construction begins

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Metro remains one of the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications' top transport projects, with work focused on preparing the first-phase route under the approved plan.

Efforts are currently underway to complete all necessary studies and required steps before construction begins.

That came in the ministry's reply to a Shura Council question from Khalid Al Maskati, head of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee.

It also stated that transport for workers who do not own private vehicles is not within its direct remit.

Role

The ministry said its role is to provide and regulate an integrated public transport network for all passengers, rather than a service aimed at one group, so that travel across Bahrain is safe and smooth for citizens and residents alike.

It said the operation of worker



Image used for illustrative purposes only



Khalid Al Maskati



“The final cost cannot yet be fixed because the detailed designs are still incomplete and market conditions remain subject to change. That figure will be settled once the final studies are approved.”

- MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

transport falls to other bodies, while its own duties cover expanding the public transport network and laying down the rules and technical licensing conditions for transport services.

On the Metro, the ministry said the final cost cannot yet

be fixed because the detailed designs are still incomplete and market conditions remain subject to change.

That figure, it said, will be settled once the final studies are approved.

Network

It also said work is under way on a feeder bus network linked to the metro, using small and medium-sized buses to connect residential districts with metro stations.

Timetables would be matched with train movements to cut waiting times and improve links

between the different modes of transport.

The ministry said that system would widen coverage, raise passenger numbers, reduce reliance on private cars and ease congestion, above all in densely populated districts and busy commercial areas.

It added that the scheme would also include supporting facilities such as Park and Ride sites and dedicated bus lanes.

More widely, the ministry said it is working on plans to expand the public transport network so that it reaches more areas and key destinations.

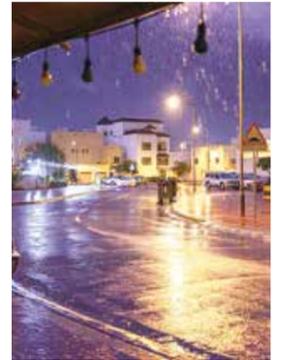
Routes

Existing routes are reviewed regularly, it said, with routes changed or new lines added in line with urban and population growth, as well as demand and passenger numbers.

The ministry also said it is studying, with the relevant authorities, operating measures including high-occupancy vehicle lanes on a number of main roads.

The aim, it said, is to ease peak-time traffic, make better use of road capacity and cut carbon emissions.

Thunderstorms, strong winds continue across Kingdom



Wet roads reported across parts of Kingdom amid light drizzle

● Temperatures set to fall further in coming days

TDT | Manama

Unstable weather conditions continued across the Kingdom of Bahrain for the fourth consecutive day yesterday, with scattered thunderstorms affecting several areas since around midnight, accompanied by strong gusts of wind.

Wind speeds exceeded 40 knots, while temperatures dropped to around 21°C.

The Meteorological Directorate said temperatures are expected to fall further in the coming days, reaching about 18°C tomorrow and Sunday.

Fluctuations

The current conditions are attributed to a low-pressure system affecting the Kingdom, combined with the formation of cumulonimbus clouds and increased wind activity, leading to ongoing weather fluctuations.

Earlier, the Meteorological Directorate at the Ministry of Transport and Communications said thunderstorms with strong winds were expected to continue until noon yesterday.

Meanwhile, the General Directorate of Traffic urged motorists to exercise caution, adhere to speed limits and lanes, maintain safe distances, and avoid distractions to ensure road safety during the unstable weather.

Bahrain, France discuss current regional woes

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain and France discussed regional developments in light of the continued Iranian attacks against the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and their implications for regional security and stability.

The talks also covered the safety of international maritime navigation in the Arabian Gulf, as well as the impact of these attacks on energy security, food supplies, global trade, and the international economy.

This came as His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, received a phone call from H.E. Jean-Noel Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French



H.E. Dr. Al Zayani

Republic.

The two sides discussed the longstanding and friendly relations between Bahrain and France, and opportunities to further strengthen bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors in support of shared interests.

The call further addressed

H.E. Barrot

prospects for enhancing bilateral cooperation and continuing joint consultation and coordination within the United Nations Security Council regarding regional and international issues under discussion, in addition to exchanging views on matters of common interest.

Boosting security cooperation



His Excellency Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), received H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior. The meeting reviewed the cooperation and coordination between the BDF and the Ministry of Interior in all matters related to maintaining security and stability in the Kingdom, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Bangladesh hails strong ties with Bahrain

● Bangladeshis to mark Great Independence and National Day today

TDT | Manama

His Excellency Md. Rais Hasan Sarower, ndc, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Bahrain, expressed pride in the longstanding bilateral relations between the two countries.

He affirmed confidence that these ties will continue to develop and flourish to serve the common interests of both nations.

In a message marking Bang-



H.E. Ambassador Md. Rais Hasan Sarower, ndc

ladesh's Great Independence and National Day today, H.E. the Ambassador extended his congratulations and best wishes to the Bangladeshi community in Bahrain and to the Bahraini people.

He highlighted the sacrifices made by Bangladesh's freedom

fighters, as well as the contributions of mothers and sisters, noting that their legacy continues to inspire future generations to uphold justice, dignity, and patriotism.

H.E. Ambassador Sarower also expressed Bangladesh's solidarity with the people of Bahrain amid current regional challenges, wishing the Kingdom continued peace, stability, and security.

He pointed to the formation of Bangladesh's new government on February 17, 2026, under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, expressing optimism that the new administration would open a new chapter of constructive cooperation between Bangladesh and Bahrain.

Caring gesture

His Excellency Lieutenant General Abdullah bin Hassan Al Nuaimi, Minister of Defence Affairs, accompanied by H.E. Dr. Jaleela bint Al Sayed Jawad Hassan, Minister of Health, visited the injured individuals receiving the necessary and comprehensive medical care following the hostile Iranian attacks, to check on their health condition and follow up on their treatment. The Minister of Defence Affairs conveyed the well wishes of H.E. Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief of the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), for the injured to have a speedy recovery.



Royal care for injured during critical times



MP Ahmed Sabah Al Salloom



MP Mohammed Janahi

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's visit to those injured in the recent Iranian attacks reflects a leadership approach that places citizens at the centre.

This was emphasised by MP Ahmed Sabah Al Salloom while describing the royal visit as a clear demonstration of unity and national solidarity.

HM the King, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, visited the injured to check on their condition and follow up on their treatment.

The visit underscored leadership's commitment to direct engagement during critical times.

Sacrifice

Al Salloom said the visit conveyed "a clear message that every individual matters, every sacrifice is recognised, and nothing given for the nation is forgotten," highlighting the strong bond between leadership and the people.

He added that such moments reinforce Bahrain's internal cohesion and reflect a unified national front, particularly during challenging circumstances.

MP Mohammed Janahi said the visit highlights a consistent leadership approach focused on direct communication and continuous follow-up.

Engagement

"It prioritises checking on citizens and maintaining close engagement in all circumstances," he said, noting that it strengthens national cohesion and alignment across society.

Both MPs stressed that the visit helped boost morale among the injured and frontline personnel, while recognising their role in safeguarding the Kingdom's security and stability.

They also pointed to the high level of preparedness demonstrated by the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) and security authorities in addressing evolving developments, describing it as a reflection of efficiency and professionalism.

Care

Medical teams were commended for maintaining a high standard of care and ensuring the continuity of essential services.

The visit, they noted, reaffirms Bahrain's unified approach in addressing challenges, with leadership and citizens working together to maintain stability and security.

Focus on civilian protection

Geneva session

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Civilian protection took centre stage in Geneva yesterday as the Human Rights Council convened an emergency session addressing the latest developments.

The session concluded with the adoption of a resolution emphasizing adherence to international law, particularly regarding the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Engineer Ali Ahmed Al Dirazi, Chairman of the National Institution for Human Rights described the move as a significant step in highlighting the legal and humanitarian dimensions of the situation.

He commended the Kingdom of Bahrain's role, undertaken on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council states and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in advancing the urgent discussion based on international legal principles.

The initiative, he said, reflects a consistent commitment to safeguarding civilians and reinforcing regional stability.

ed that the additional cost would put extra pressure on pension funds.

The council will debate reports calling for rejection in principle of proposed changes to Article 90 of the Social Insurance Law under Decree-Law No. 24 of 1976, Article 87 of Law

Accused 'prepared' military operations against Bahrain

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Attorney General has referred 14 defendants to criminal trial in four separate terrorism-related cases, including fugitives believed to be in Iran, the Head of the Terrorism Crimes Prosecution announced.

The accused allegedly formed separate terror cells in three cases, while a female suspect was involved in the fourth.

They are charged with communicating and coordinating with Iran's Revolutionary Guard to carry out hostile and military acts against the Kingdom of Bahrain, providing support for such operations, and transferring funds to finance their activities.

Training

One defendant is also accused of receiving military training in affiliated camps.

Additional charges include leaking sensitive defence-related information, spreading false



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news and malicious rumours to incite panic, and promoting and glorifying hostile acts targeting the Kingdom.

Investigations were launched following reports from the Criminal Investigation Directorate, which indicated that the suspects, linked to terrorist groups, were recruited to monitor and photograph vital facilities and key locations across Bahrain.

Operations

The information and images were allegedly transmitted to external operatives and later used in planning hostile operations.

Authorities also identified a social media account that published images of sensitive sites alongside false information and propaganda supporting hostile acts.

Investigations found that the account was operated by one of the suspects, who communicated with external parties and shared maps, images, and coordinates of critical locations through encrypted applications.

Investigations

The Public Prosecution said investigations included questioning the suspects — some of whom confessed — along with examining digital evidence and



The suspects, linked to terrorist groups, were recruited to monitor and photograph vital facilities and key locations across Bahrain.

witness testimonies, which substantiated the charges.

The defendants have been detained and referred to the High Criminal Court.

The prosecution emphasised the seriousness of espionage-related offences, describing them as acts that directly threaten national security and sovereignty.

It affirmed that firm legal action will be taken against those involved.

Authorities also warned against spreading false information and rumours, urging the public to rely on official sources and avoid sharing unverified content that could undermine security and public order.

Four working days 'would widen public and private hours gap'

Three-Day weekend Would Widen Public-Private Hours Gap

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A three-day weekend in Bahrain's public sector would widen the gap with private-sector hours, add to overtime, and risk harming government services, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) said.

The statement was made in reply to a question from Shura Council member Dr Bassam Al Binmohammed.

The bureau was answering a query on whether it had carried out a full study into cutting the working week to four days, with three days off at the weekend.

Pattern

It said the current pattern is



governed by civil service law and related rules.

Staff on normal hours work from Sunday to Thursday, with Friday and Saturday as the weekly rest days.

Their hours run from 7am to 2.15pm from Sunday to Wednesday and from 7am to 2pm on Thursday, making a 36-hour week.

Other staff work longer hours, from 7am to 3pm from Sunday to Thursday. Those on round-the-clock services work three shifts: 7am to 3pm, 3pm to 11pm and 11pm to 7am. In those cases, the weekly total is 40 hours.

“Public sector staff in Bahrain already work fewer hours than those in the private sector. The gap now stands at 12 hours a week, or about 33 per cent, when measured against the normal public sector week.”

— CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU

Rules

The bureau said civil service rules also allow special working times for some government bodies, groups of staff and posts where the nature of the work calls for it, so long as weekly hours do not fall below 36 and staff get at least one weekly rest day.

Any work above 40 hours

must be paid under overtime rules.

It added that it keeps pay, benefits, working days and working hours under review, and compares Bahrain's civil service with practice elsewhere.

Comparisons

Those comparisons, it said, showed that Bahrain's public sector week is close to the average in a number of countries, where the weekly mean stands at 37.4 hours.

It also said the Kingdom's hours are close to those used across the Gulf.

The bureau said public sector staff in Bahrain already work fewer hours than those in the private sector.

Gap

The gap now stands at 12 hours a week, or about 33 per cent, when measured against the normal public sector week, it said.

Shura set to debate bill on rejection of marriage grant increase

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Three draft laws to raise marriage grants for widows and other female pension beneficiaries are due to be rejected by the Shura Council on Sunday.

The Services Committee stat-

ed that the additional cost would put extra pressure on pension funds.

The council will debate reports calling for rejection in principle of proposed changes to Article 90 of the Social Insurance Law under Decree-Law No. 24 of 1976, Article 87 of Law

No. 13 of 1975 on pensions and retirement rewards for government employees, and Article 41 of the Military Retirement Law under Decree-Law No. 11 of 1976.

The bills were put forward to raise the grant after about 15 years without change, with the reports saying the current

amount no longer keeps pace with living costs.

But the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) told the committee that the funds already face a wide gap between income and spending, even after pension reforms in recent years.

Grant

It said any rise in the grant, though limited on its own, would still weigh on the funds in light of an actuarial shortfall and future liabilities without a lasting source of funding.

Figures placed before the

committee showed the change would raise costs by 34 per cent in the public sector and 61 per cent in the private sector.

The average yearly cost of the marriage grant stands at about BD300,000 in the public sector, with a roughly similar sum in the private sector.

Silent heroes on the road

Bahrain's delivery drivers keep moving in storms and uncertainty

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

Delivery drivers in Bahrain continue to operate around the clock despite heavy rain and a backdrop of regional tensions, ensuring essential services remain uninterrupted.

Last few days have been additionally heavy, with persistent rainfall and thunderstorms.

Food, groceries and essential items are still reaching homes, often delivered by riders who push through long hours, siren alerts and changing weather conditions to meet demand.

For many drivers, the job has never been easy, but recent days



Delivery drivers at work

have added new strain, working through thunder, strong winds and disrupted traffic, often late into the night and early morning

Yet, the work continues, quietly and without attention. "On days like this, everything

takes longer on the road," says a delivery rider in Manama. "You have to be more careful, but people are still waiting for their orders, so you just keep going. Delivering by car is a bit more manageable in these conditions, while bikes can be more challenging and riskier in heavy rain."



"You have to be more careful, but people are still waiting for their orders, so you just keep going."

— DELIVERY RIDER IN MANAMA takes longer on the road," says a delivery rider in Manama.

"You have to be more careful, but people are still waiting for their orders, so you just keep going. Delivering by car is a bit more manageable in these conditions, while bikes can be more challenging and riskier in heavy rain."

Security plans reviewed



The Interior Ministry Undersecretary, His Excellency Shaikh Nasser bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, chaired the online preparatory meeting for the 43rd session of the Arab Interior Ministers Council via videoconference. During the meeting, several important security topics were reviewed, which are scheduled for discussion on the agenda of the meeting of Their Highnesses and Excellencies, the Arab Interior Ministers, within the framework of strengthening joint Arab security cooperation. The meeting emphasised the importance of continuing coordination and unifying efforts among member states in order to contribute to developing joint security policies, addressing current challenges, and enhancing security and stability in the region.

Residential fire



Civil Defence teams extinguished a fire in a residential building in Hamad City and evacuated several residents, with no injuries reported. Initial reports indicate the blaze was caused by thermal pressure in an electrical appliance, while authorities have begun necessary measures.

House fire in Barbar claims lives of two siblings days after Eid

Ghadeer Alkumaish
TDT | Manama

A family from Barbar awoke to a nightmare instead of Eid joy when a devastating fire engulfed their home, claiming the lives of two children.

Their 16-year-old daughter, Duaa, passed away one day after Eid, and tragedy struck again

yesterday when her 10-year-old brother, Sayed Hussain Sayed Ibrahim, succumbed to his injuries three days after his sister.

He was the only son among his sisters.

Rescue

During the blaze, their father tried desperately to open the bedroom door to rescue them.

Although it was unlocked, the intense heat and smoke made it impossible to open, forcing him to break a window to save his children's lives.

He sustained injuries to his hand and foot but is now recovering.

A small spark quickly grew into a raging inferno, destroying not only the home but also the



Sayed Hussain, first-place Quran recitation winner at Barbar Primary Boys School

children's dreams and cherished memories.

While the family slept, Eid celebrations turned into unimaginable grief, leaving permanent damage on a home that had once been a safe haven.

Sayed Hussain had recently won first place in the Quran recitation competition at Barbar Primary Boys School during

the 2023/2024 academic year, a bright achievement that now stands as a poignant memory of a young life full of promise.

Mourning

The siblings' deaths have left the Barbar community in deep mourning, with the father and family grappling with unimaginable loss.

Al Dar Capital Company B.S.C

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at 31 December 2025			
	31-Dec-25	31-Dec-24	US \$
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	1,769,081	959,824	1,769,081
Prepayments and other assets	119,516	128,372	119,516
Short-term investments	2,302,000	2,302,000	2,302,000
Investment securities	30,704,346	28,936,513	30,704,346
Investment in real estate held-for-use	44,519,296	44,547,824	44,519,296
Right-of-use assets	159,365	237,233	159,365
Property and equipment	13,567,821	13,499,706	13,567,821
Total assets	89,279,245	93,829,502	89,279,245
LIABILITIES AND LIABILITIES			
LIABILITIES			
Net gas liability	165,885	238,989	165,885
Accruals and other payables	94,016	148,649	94,016
Total liabilities	259,901	387,638	259,901
EQUITY			
Share capital	100,000,000	100,000,000	100,000,000
Statutory reserve	3,035,339	3,035,339	3,035,339
Property fair value reserve	(1,340,879)	(8,817)	(1,340,879)
Investment fair value reserve	1,718,754	40,045	1,718,754
Unrealised foreign currency translation losses on net investment in foreign operations	(783,144)	(783,576)	(783,144)
Foreign currency translation reserve	(315,975)	(364,977)	(315,975)
Accumulated losses	(15,673,447)	(14,528,472)	(15,673,447)
Total equity	88,999,344	93,441,864	88,999,344

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN OWNERS' EQUITY for the year ended 31 December 2025										
	Share capital	Statutory reserve	Property fair value reserve	Investment fair value reserve	Unrealised foreign currency translation reserve	Foreign currency translation reserve	Accumulated losses	Total	Non-controlling interests	Total
At 31 December 2023	200,000,000	3,035,339	(782,202)	928,910	(754,918)	(316,553)	(112,526,883)	89,583,693	2,520,080	92,103,773
Net loss for the year	-	-	(782,202)	928,910	(754,918)	(316,553)	(1,499,589)	(1,499,589)	-	(1,499,589)
Reduction in share capital	(100,000,000)	-	-	-	-	-	100,000,000	-	-	-
Unrealised fair value gain on investment in real estate held-for-use	-	-	773,385	-	-	-	-	773,385	50,262	823,647
Unrealised fair value loss on investment securities	-	-	-	(888,865)	-	-	-	(888,865)	-	(888,865)
Unrealised foreign currency translation loss on net investment in foreign operations	-	-	-	-	(28,658)	-	-	(28,658)	-	(28,658)
Foreign currency translation loss on investment securities	-	-	-	-	(48,444)	-	-	(48,444)	-	(48,444)
At 31 December 2024	100,000,000	3,035,339	(8,817)	40,045	(783,576)	(364,977)	(14,026,472)	87,891,522	2,570,342	90,461,864
Net loss for the year	-	-	(1,332,062)	1,678,709	-	-	(1,332,062)	(1,332,062)	(111,526)	(1,443,588)
Unrealised fair value gain on investment securities	-	-	-	1,678,709	-	-	-	1,678,709	-	1,678,709
Unrealised foreign currency translation gain on net investment in foreign operations	-	-	-	-	20,432	-	-	20,432	-	20,432
Foreign currency translation gain on investment securities	-	-	-	-	49,022	-	-	49,022	-	49,022
At 31 December 2025	100,000,000	3,035,339	(1,340,879)	1,718,754	(763,144)	(315,975)	(15,673,447)	86,660,648	2,458,816	89,119,464

Consolidated Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31 December 2025

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME for the year ended 31 December 2025			
	Year ended 31 Dec. 25	Year ended 31 Dec. 24	US \$
Other income	633,608	742,120	633,608
Total Income	633,608	742,120	633,608
Expenses	-	-	-
Staff costs	(1,632,176)	(1,618,826)	(1,632,176)
Other operating expenses	(877,852)	(872,252)	(877,852)
Total expenses	(2,512,078)	(2,493,328)	(2,512,078)
Net loss for the year	(1,878,470)	(1,751,208)	(1,878,470)
Other comprehensive (loss)/income			
Items that were reclassified to income	-	-	-
Unrealised fair value gain/(loss) on investment securities	1,678,709	(888,865)	1,678,709
Unrealised fair value loss/(gain) on investment in real estate held-for-use	(1,443,588)	(823,647)	(1,443,588)
Unrealised foreign currency translation gain/(loss) on net investment in foreign operations	38,432	(28,658)	38,432
Foreign currency translation gain/(loss) on investment securities	49,022	(48,444)	49,022
Other comprehensive (loss)/income	(737,485)	(1,749,014)	(737,485)
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(2,615,955)	(3,500,222)	(2,615,955)
Basic and diluted losses per share (in US Cents)	(2.62)	(3.50)	(2.62)

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS for the year ended 31 December 2025			
	Year ended 31 Dec. 25	Year ended 31 Dec. 24	US \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Adjustments for:	-	-	-
Net loss for the year	(1,878,470)	(1,751,208)	(1,878,470)
Depreciation	1,893	1,229	1,893
Amortisation on right-of-use asset	1,893	1,229	1,893
Net investment in foreign exchange	1,443,588	(823,647)	1,443,588
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	-	-	-
Prepayments and other assets	8,817	8,200	8,817
Accruals and other liabilities	(24,022)	(10,200)	(24,022)
Net cash used in operating activities	(48,109)	(1,159,617)	(48,109)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Withdrawal of short-term investments	3,200,000	1,800,000	3,200,000
Purchase of property and equipment	(10,000)	-	(10,000)
Net cash liability account	(23,100)	(23,100)	(23,100)
Net cash provided by investing activities	3,166,880	1,776,880	3,166,880
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	3,118,771	617,263	3,118,771
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	929,824	1,346,811	929,824
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	1,769,081	1,964,074	1,769,081



The above position and results are extracted from the consolidated financial statements for the Year ended 31 December 2025 which was Audited by BDO. The auditors have expressed an unqualified opinion on these consolidated financial statements. Al Dar Capital Company B.S.C. (C) is licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain as an Investment Company category 1 website: www.aldarcapital.com. The information was approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf on 15th February 2026, by:

Mubarak A.Rahman Al Quoud

Hussam Ammar Mohammed

Mohammed Abdulrahman Ahmed Almutawa

Chairman

Director

Director & Chief Executive Officer



NBB to Transition Back to 100% Operational Capacity from 29th March

Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) has announced the transition back to 100% operating capacity across its Headquarters and branches in the Kingdom from Sunday, 29th March, with the exception of its Bahrain International Airport branch which will remain closed until further notice.

This step reflects NBB's continued efforts to enhance service accessibility and support the Kingdom's economic resilience during this period. The Bank will operate with standard working hours, in line with the necessary measures to maintain a safe and secure environment for both employees and customers.

NBB remains focused on de-

livering a seamless banking experience through its physical network, while continuing to offer convenient access to services via its digital platforms and Self Service Machines.

The Bank will continue to monitor developments in coordination with relevant authorities, reinforcing its commitment to operational stability and the communities it serves.

BASREC Holds Virtual Annual General Meeting

Manama

Bahrain Ship Repairing and Engineering Company B.S.C. (BASREC) held its Annual General Meeting for the financial year 2025 on Thursday, 26 March 2026, at 10:00 a.m., remotely via electronic means, as part of the company's commitment to best governance practices and enhanced communication with its shareholders.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Fawzi Ahmed Kanoo, Chairman of the Board, and attended by shareholders, members of the Board of Directors, Executive Management, representatives of regulatory authorities, and external auditors. During the meeting, the company's financial and operational performance for the year was reviewed, and its strategic outlook and future directions were discussed.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman expressed his sincere appreciation for the continued support BASREC receives from its shareholders and regulatory authorities, noting that such support remains a key pillar in enabling the company to navigate challenges and achieve positive results despite the complex and evolving conditions facing the sector.

The meeting considered and approved the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025, in addition to ratifying the external auditors' report and the corporate governance report, reflecting



the company's ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability, and sound corporate governance. Shareholders also approved the Board's recommendation to distribute a 50% cash dividend, underscoring BASREC's

dedication to delivering sustainable value to its shareholders.

Commenting on the company's performance, Mr. Fawzi Ahmed Kanoo stated:

"Achieving a net profit of BD 2,539,622

in a rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive operating environment reflects the strength of the company's operational foundations, the resilience of its business model, and its ability to adapt to both regional and global developments. The continued trust of our clients, the growth of our strategic partnerships, and the steadfast support of our valued shareholders and regulatory authorities have all played a pivotal role in strengthening this positive performance.

The strategic investments undertaken by the company during the past period have also been instrumental in supporting this growth, most notably the acquisition and operation of the new floating dock, BASREC 2, which has enabled the company to accommodate larger vessels and broaden its service offerings. This has directly contributed to increased operational activity and enhanced BASREC's competitiveness in the market.

We remain committed to ongoing development and modernization through investment in infrastructure, the advancement of national talent, and the adoption of the latest operational practices, all of which support sustainable growth and create long-term value for all stakeholders."

He added:

"2025 marked an important turning point for BASREC, as the company focused on enhancing operational efficiency, expanding its ship repair and

engineering services, and investing in the development of its technical and human capabilities. We are moving ahead with our strategic plans to further strengthen BASREC's position as a leading provider of maritime services in the region."

Mr. Kanoo further emphasized that BASREC looks to the future with confidence, with a clear focus on seizing opportunities and achieving sustainable growth despite potential market challenges, through innovation, improved operational efficiency, and the expansion of strategic partnerships.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Fawzi Ahmed Kanoo expressed his deepest gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for their continued support of the private sector and their efforts to strengthen the Kingdom of Bahrain's economic environment.

He also extended his appreciation to the ministries and government entities for their active role in supporting the company's progress, and commended the valuable contributions of suppliers and contractors, whose partnership played an important role in the successful delivery of projects and in supporting the company's growth throughout 2025.

Oil jumps, stocks drop on uncertainty over US-Iran talks

AFP | London

Oil prices jumped and equities slid Thursday as hopes for a peace deal between the US and Iran wavered after Tehran rejected Washington's bid to wind down the nearly four-week war.

Markets had been buoyed this week by US President Donald Trump's announcement that strikes targeting Iran's energy infrastructure would be postponed, adding that the two sides were in peace talks.

But uncertainty over the talks and the virtual closure of the Strait of Hormuz -- through which around 20 percent of oil and liquefied natural gas normally passes -- have cast a shadow over market sentiment.

"The market rollercoaster continues," said Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Scope Markets.

Crude prices rallied more than nearly four percent on Thursday, with Brent crude above \$101 per



A oil tanker is docked unloading crude oil at the port in Qingdao, in China's eastern Shandong province

barrel and WTI around \$94.

The dollar rose against its main rivals.

Wall Street opened lower, with Europe's main markets down in afternoon trading, while there were losses across Asia.

"When the oil price surges, the market playbook stays the

same; stocks and bonds sell off," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB.

The yield on government bonds rose across the board.

Conflicting messages from the US and Iran are "raising questions about whether there is really an off-ramp to the conflict in

the days ahead," said Deutsche Bank's Jim Reid.

Washington was said to have presented a 15-point plan to end the war, while Tehran's state-run TV reported officials had put forward their own five conditions for hostilities to end.

Trump on Wednesday threat-

ened to "unleash hell" if Iran did not strike a deal, but Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country does not intend to negotiate with the administration in Washington.

"This is quite the shift in rhetoric from the President, and highlights how complex it will be" to reach a peace deal, said XTB's Brooks.

She added that "the prospect of troops on the ground suggest a prolonged war and not one final blow at Iran."

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed Thursday that indirect negotiations between the US and Iran were being held, using Islamabad as an intermediary.

"The tone taken by Iran may simply be posturing, but... there is a high likelihood they continue this conflict until energy prices reach uncomfortable levels," Mahony said.

The OECD on Thursday cut its eurozone growth outlook and forecast higher inflation for

2026 as energy prices have skyrocketed.

The conflict has also weighed on German consumer sentiment heading into April, a survey showed Thursday, adding to the woes facing Europe's top economy.

France, which holds the G7 Presidency, will on Monday host a meeting bringing together the group's finance ministers, energy ministers and central bank governors.

"Pressure on energy prices, shipping flows and broader financial conditions remains one of the few meaningful sources of leverage (Iran) retains," said Saxo Markets' Charu Chanana.

"There is therefore little incentive to relinquish that leverage prematurely, particularly if market stress strengthens its negotiating position," she added. The World Trade Organization chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala warned the global trading system is experiencing the "worst disruptions in the past 80 years".

Germany FM says 'encouraging' if US speaking directly to Iran

AFP | Cernay-la-Ville

Germany's foreign minister yesterday said it was encouraging if the United States was talking directly to Iran to end the war in the Middle East, but Washington should make its intentions clear.

"I hear that there are signs that the US is speaking directly to Iran. I think that this is encouraging and this is welcome," Johann Wadephul told reporters before heading into the meeting of G7 foreign ministers outside Paris.

With US Secretary of State Marco Rubio set to join the discussions from Friday, he added: "For the German government it is of great importance to know precisely what our American partners are intending."



Palestinian residents inspect the remnants of an missile that landed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank village of Beitin, northeast of the city of Ramallah

Pakistan says 'US-Iran indirect talks taking place'

Pakistan confirms it is relaying messages between Washington and Tehran to end war

AFP | Washington

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar confirmed yesterday that indirect negotiations between the United States and Iran were being held to end their war, using Islamabad as an intermediary.

Dar, who is also deputy prime minister, described speculation about "peace talks" as "unnecessary", adding: "In reality, US-Iran indirect talks are taking place through messages being relayed by Pakistan."

"In this context, the United States has shared 15 points, being deliberated upon by Iran. Brotherly countries of Turkiye and Egypt, among others, are also extending their support to this initiative," he wrote on X, using Turkey's official name.

Dar's comments are the first on-the-record confirmation from Islamabad that Pakistan is playing a facilitating role.

Two senior officials said on Wednesday that the US plan had been "conveyed to Iran via Pakistan", but spoke anonymously



Israeli rescuers and security personnel survey the site struck by a projectile in the Arab-Israeli city of Kfar Qassem

as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Islamabad has been touted as a go-between given its longstanding ties with both neighbouring Iran and the United States, as well as its network of regional contacts.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Dar have both been in regular contact with senior Iranian government officials, as well as their Gulf allies, notably Saudi Arabia.

The powerful head of the Pakistani army, Field Marshal Asim Munir, has equally been involved in the diplomatic efforts, and spoke to US President Donald Trump last Sunday, officials said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has denied any "negotiations" with the administration in Washington but conceded that messages were being exchanged through "friendly countries".

"At present, our policy is the continuation of resistance," he said on state television late on Wednesday. "We do not intend to negotiate -- so far, no negotiations have taken place."

Israel defence minister says Iran Guards navy commander killed in strike

AFP | Tel Aviv

Defence Minister Israel Katz announced yesterday that an Israeli airstrike had killed Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' navy.

"Last night, in a precise

and lethal operation, the IDF eliminated the commander of the Revolutionary Guards' navy, Tangsiri, along with senior officers of the naval command," Katz said in a video statement.

"The man who was directly responsible for the terrorist op-

eration of mining and blocking the Strait of Hormuz to shipping was blown up and eliminated."

Since the start of the joint US-Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28, Israel has announced the killing of several top Iranian officials.

Two dead, three wounded as missile intercepted in Abu Dhabi: government media office

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Two people were killed and three were wounded by falling debris after air defences

intercepted a ballistic missile on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, the government media office said yesterday.

"The incident resulted in the

deaths of two unidentified individuals, three injuries, and damage to a number of cars," the Abu Dhabi Media Office said in a post on X.

1513

Spaniard Juan Ponce de León and his expedition first sight Florida

1794

Naval Act of 1794 is signed by President George Washington, authorizing the building of six frigates and establishing a permanent US Navy

1958

Nikita Khrushchev becomes Soviet Premier as well as First Secretary of the Communist Party



1977

583 die in aviation's worst ever disaster when two Boeing 747s collide at Tenerife airport in Spain



Iraqi soldiers inspect the site of a destroyed healthcare center in the Habbaniyah military base, which was targeted by in an airstrike in Habbaniyah, west of Baghdad

Gulf council says members want to be involved in any Iran war talks

AFP | Riyadh

Gulf countries said yesterday that they wanted to be involved in any talks between the United States and Iran, insisting that while they had a right to self-defence they preferred diplomacy.

"We emphasize the necessity of involving the GCC countries in any talks or agreements to resolve this crisis, in a way that contributes to strengthening their security and stability," Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Jassem AlBudaiwi said in a televised speech. AlBudaiwi also said Iran had been asking vessels to pay sums of money to cross the Strait of Hormuz.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



The @Europarl_EN has just voted to establish the EU's first-ever directive harmonising criminal laws to fight corruption, strengthening resilience and effectiveness. Corruption has no place in our Europe. We will keep fighting against it.

@EP_President

02



@WHO CoViNet has grown from 35 labs in 28 countries in 2023 to 58 labs in 35 countries in 2026 (& is growing) supporting early & accurate detection, surveillance & monitoring, risk assessment & capacity strengthening for coronaviruses

@mvankerkhove

03



The Secretary-General @antonio_guterres has made clear: The conflict has broken past the limits even leaders thought unimaginable. There is only one way forward — an immediate end to the war, full respect for international law and a return to diplomacy.

@AminaJMohammed

04



Putin is rubbing his hands at the war in the Middle East because he thinks higher oil prices will let him line his pockets. I will always defend British interests at home and abroad, which is why we are taking action against Russia's shadow fleet today.

@Keir_Starmer

Trump insists Iran operations 'extremely' ahead of schedule

US President Donald Trump warned Iran to "get serious soon" in talks to end the Middle East war, as he once again criticized NATO allies for not joining in the conflict

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that the Iran war was "extremely" ahead of schedule, as he pushed Tehran to make a deal at his first cabinet meeting since the conflict began nearly a month ago.

As Tehran publicly rebuffed negotiations, Trump again cited the original timeframe of four to six weeks that he gave early on in the joint US-Israeli military offensive.

"They're lousy fighters, but they're great negotiators, and they are begging to work out a deal," Trump said at the White House alongside top officials including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth.

"We estimated it would take approximately four to six weeks to achieve our mission. Twenty-six days in we're extremely, really, a lot ahead of schedule," added Trump.

"The Iranian regime is now admitting to itself that they have been decisively defeated."

Trump has been saying for days that Iran wants to make a deal, amid growing signs he is seeking a quick end to the conflict. Iran, however, says there are no direct negotiations.

The US leader also launched a fresh attack on NATO allies after they rejected his appeals to send naval assets to secure the Strait of Hormuz, the oil chokepoint Iran has effectively closed in response to the US-Israeli attacks.

"I'll say it publicly. We're very disappointed with NATO, because NATO has done absolutely nothing," Trump said.



Israeli security forces cordon off the area following a projectile strike on south Tel Aviv

Trump said that taking control of Iran's oil was an "option," comparing it to the deal Washington made with Venezuela after toppling Nicolas Maduro. "It's an option," Trump told reporters at a cabinet meeting when asked if he was looking to take control of Iran's oil, saying that the United States had done "very well" with Venezuela's reserves.

Iran allowed 10 oil tankers to pass through the strategic Strait of Hormuz as a "present" to show it was serious about negotiations to end the war, Trump said. Referring to cryptic comments earlier this week about a "gift" from Tehran, Trump said Iran allowed eight "big boats of oil" to transit the waterway earlier this week, followed by two others later on.

He particularly lambasted Britain, saying it had offered to send aircraft carriers too late and describing the UK ships as "toys" compared to their US equivalents.

'Inflection point'

During the meeting, roving US

envoy Steve Witkoff confirmed for the first time from the US side that Washington had sent a 15-point "action list" to Iran via mediator Pakistan.

Businessman Witkoff, who led failed negotiations with Iran in the weeks before the US-Israeli strikes began, said there were

indications Tehran was ready to make a deal.

"We will see where things lead, and if we can convince Iran that this is the inflection point with no good alternatives for them, other than more death and destruction," Witkoff said.

"We have strong signs that this



The Iranian negotiators are very different and 'strange.' They are 'begging' us to make a deal, which they should be doing since they have been militarily obliterated, with zero chance of a comeback, and yet they publicly state that they are only 'looking at our proposal.' WRONG!!!

DONALD TRUMP

is a possibility."

In his usual style for his lengthy cabinet meetings, Trump let officials around the table have their say.

Vice President JD Vance, previously a staunch anti-interventionist who was widely reported to be against the Iran operation, said Trump was ensuring that Iran "didn't get a nuclear weapon."

Noting that Easter is approaching, Catholic convert Vance said US forces were "fighting at a time... that celebrates the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem."

Top US diplomat Rubio appeared to quote rappers Public Enemy as he praised Pentagon chief Hegseth, saying that "every day, the Department of War lets the drummer get wicked over every portion of Iran."

Hegseth launched an attack on the media for failing to support Trump's war, before hailing for "doing the work of the free world."

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

Lebanon says Israeli strikes kill five as Hezbollah claims new attacks

Hezbollah launches new wave of attacks targeting Israeli military sites amid heavy bombardment

● **Hezbollah targets Tel Aviv defense complex**

● **Over a million people now displaced**

AFP | Beirut

Israeli strikes on Lebanon killed at least five people on Thursday, Lebanese state media said, as Hezbollah claimed they had staged a new wave of attacks on Israel.

The Israeli military announced, meanwhile, the killing of a soldier in fighting in south Lebanon, raising to three the total number of troops killed since Hezbollah drew Lebanon into war with Israel.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on March 2 to avenge the killing of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of Iran, the movement's backer.

Israel has since launched a sustained campaign of bombardment focused mostly, but not solely, on areas where Hezbollah has long held sway, while also sending ground troops across the border in a push to establish a buffer zone by reoccupying swathes of south Lebanon.

According to Lebanon's National News Agency, a strike on a building in the Nabatieh area of south Lebanon killed two



First aid responders are seen at the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese village of Kfar Roummane

people.

Images showed a badly damaged building and smoke rising from the rubble, while rescue workers and firefighters worked at the scene.

Another strike in the border area of Bint Jbeil killed another three people, the agency said.

On Wednesday, Lebanon's

health ministry said Israeli strikes had killed 1,094 people since the start of the war, 121 of them children, and wounded more than 3,000 others.

A million displaced

With swathes of Lebanon under evacuation warnings, more than a million people have fled

their homes.

On Thursday, the Israeli military said it had killed 700 Hezbollah since the start of the war, though the movement has not announced its casualties.

With Israel pressing its bid to crush Hezbollah, the group claimed a new round of attacks against it.



Israel pushes to create a buffer zone by reoccupying southern Lebanon, while Hezbollah rejects negotiations under fire as "surrender" amid Iran's ambassador expulsion row

The group said it had targeted a defence ministry complex in Tel Aviv, as well as other military objectives in northern Israel.

Hezbollah also said it had fired rockets in Lebanon's Khiam, scene of fierce fighting between Israeli troops and the armed group.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that his country's forces were expanding a "buffer zone" in southern Lebanon, adding that dismantling Hezbollah "remains central" to Israel's objectives in Lebanon.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty announced on a visit to Beirut on Thursday the delivery of 1,000 tonnes of humani-

1,094

Lebanese have been killed since war's start, including 121 children, per health ministry figures

tarian aid, while calling for the immediate cessation of what he called Israel's "aggression".

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also called for an end to the war.

"Hezbollah must stop launching attacks into Israel. And Israel must stop its military operations and strikes in Lebanon, which are hitting civilians the hardest," he said. "The Gaza model must not be replicated in Lebanon."

On Wednesday, Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem said any negotiations with Israel under fire would amount to "surrender", as he called on Lebanon's authorities to rethink their decision to "criminalise" his group's military activities.

Hezbollah and its Shia Muslim ally Amal condemned the government's decision to declare Iran's ambassador persona non grata, while movements aligned with the groups called for a sit-in to support the envoy Thursday afternoon.

Russian oil arrives as Philippines battles 'energy emergency'



A fisherman paddles before the Sierra Leone-flagged Sara Sky, which is carrying crude oil from Russia, anchored at Limay port, Bataan province

AFP | Manila

A ship carrying more than 700,000 barrels of Russian crude oil has arrived in the Philippines, a source with knowledge of the matter said yesterday, days after the country declared a national energy emergency over the Middle East war.

The Sierra Leone-flagged Sara Sky, bearing high-quality crude from Russia's ESPO pipeline arrived on Monday, with documents showing the consignee as Petron Corp, operator of the Philippines' sole oil

refinery, said the source, who asked to remain anonymous as they were not authorised to speak to press.

The Philippines is heavily dependent on imported fuel, the cost of which has hit historic highs since the US-Israeli war with Iran forced the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The Sara Sky was seen at anchor in Limay port just outside Manila, where the Petron refinery is located. It is believed to be the first shipment of Russian oil to the Philippines in five years.

North Korea, Belarus sign 'friendship' treaty during Lukashenko visit

AFP | Seoul

North Korea and Belarus's strongmen leaders signed a "friendship and cooperation" treaty on Thursday after Kim Jong Un gave a lavish welcome to President Alexander Lukashenko on his maiden visit.

Besides supporting Russia's war against Ukraine -- around 2,000 North Korean soldiers are thought to have been killed -- both nations are subject to Western sanctions and are accused of gross human rights violations.

Belarusian state media showed Kim and Lukashenko hugging at a lavish welcome programme on Wednesday involving an artillery salute and goose-stepping soldiers before a large flag-waving crowd at Kim Il Sung Square.

Kim "gladly" met and "warmly" welcomed Lukashenko at the start of the two-day visit, the Korean Central News Agency reported, which followed a meeting last year in Beijing.

Lukashenko said the "friendly relations between our countries, which date back to the days of the Soviet Union, have never been interrupted", according to Belarusian state media BelTA.

"Today, as a result of comprehensive and steady development, we are entering a funda-



Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un greet each other during a welcoming ceremony

mentally new phase," he added. Lukashenko visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun -- where Kim's embalmed father and grandfather lie in state -- to pay his respects, flanked by top North Korean officials, the report said.

Lukashenko, who has ruled

Belarus since 1994 and has swung firmly behind Moscow since the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, laid a bouquet on behalf of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The world's "powerful" are "openly ignoring and violating the norms of international law",

Lukashenko said, according to BelTA, in apparent reference to the United States and Israel.

Independent countries must therefore cooperate more closely to "protect their sovereignty and improve the well-being of our citizens", he added.

In another event, Lukashenko laid a wreath at the Liberation Tower and observed a moment of silence with Kim "in memory of the fallen fighters of the Soviet Army who dedicated their precious lives to the sacred war for Korea's liberation", KCNA said, referring to the end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945 at the close of World War II.

Multipolar

Belarus and North Korea are part of a push driven by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Putin to create what they call a "multipolar world" to break Western hegemony.

They have provided Moscow assistance in its Ukraine war, with Minsk serving as a launchpad for the invasion and Moscow stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have estimated that the North has sent thousands of soldiers to Russia, primarily to the Kursk region, along with artillery shells, missiles and rocket systems.

Classifieds



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Verstappen's Japan GP win streak under **threat** as Mercedes dominate

Four-time champion says Suzuka is a favourite but car problems persist

● Verstappen struggling under new rules

● Red Bull start season poorly

● Mercedes dominate opening races

AFP | Suzuka

Max Verstappen says that the Japanese Grand Prix is one of his favourite races, but his chances of a fifth straight victory at the weekend look vanishingly slim as his Red Bull struggles with Formula One's sweeping new regulations.

Mercedes drivers George Russell and Kimi Antonelli will carry their early dominance into Suzuka with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton their nearest challengers.

Red Bull and Verstappen are scrambling to recover from a disastrous start to the Formula One season, as are McLaren whose drivers -- world champion Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri -- both failed to start in China with separate technical problems.

Verstappen, the four-time world champion, finished sixth in the opening grand prix in



Verstappen's frustrations with the 2026 regulations led him to brand the cars "anti-racing" and liken them to Mario Kart's video game mechanics, while seeking escape in a German endurance race—where he was disqualified after winning



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen drives out of the pits

Australia after crashing in qualifying.

He then limped home ninth and out of the points in the Shanghai sprint before retiring from the main race.

Verstappen has raged against the 2026 regulations and new car designs, branding them "anti-racing" and likening them to the Mario Kart video game with their electrical boost and overtake modes.

The Dutchman sought a change of scenery by competing at a four-hour race in Germany

last weekend, but even that did not lift his gloom as he was disqualified after winning.

Verstappen has been unbeaten in Japan for the past four years and he clinched his second world title there in 2022.

His problems in China, where he was ordered to retire on lap 46 of the grand prix because of a cooling issue, suggest his Suzuka dominance could end on Sunday.

"Getting on top of our problems is not easy," Verstappen said in Shanghai.

"It would help if we would just have a normal start -- I've been every time dropping to last."

Antonelli breakthrough

Verstappen's struggles are in stark contrast to the flying start enjoyed by Mercedes, who secured one-two finishes at both

grands prix so far.

Championship leader Russell triumphed in Australia and 19-year-old Antonelli picked up the first win of his fledgling career in China.

Russell took the chequered flag in the Shanghai sprint and Mercedes will target a Suzuka triumph for the first time since Valtteri Bottas won in 2019.

Antonelli, who became the

youngest pole-sitter in Formula One history in Shanghai and the second-youngest race winner after Verstappen, was given a hero's welcome when he returned to his native Bologna in Italy.

The win had "removed a bit of weight from my shoulders", said Antonelli.

"It's the kind of result which gives you strength and more awareness of what you can do."

McLaren have endured a nightmare start to the campaign under the new regulations which require battery management and energy harvesting with a 50-50 split between conventional and electrical power.

Defending champion Norris, who complained his car "sucks", is 36 points behind Russell while Piastri is yet to take part in a grand prix this season after he crashed on his way to the grid in Melbourne.

"We just have to take it on the chin, learn what the problem was and make sure it never happens again," Norris said in Shanghai.

"All of us want to go racing and score points."

The teams will have time to regroup after Suzuka, as there will be a five-week gap until the Miami GP as the Bahrain and Saudi Arabia races were cancelled because of the war in the Middle East.

Bahrain youth basketball squad heads to Germany

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's national under-18 basketball team is preparing to compete in the 31st Albert Schweitzer Tournament in Mannheim and Viernheim, Germany, from April 4 to 11. The tournament is one of the most prestigious youth competitions worldwide, attracting elite teams from across the globe.

The Bahrain Basketball Federation (BBF) confirmed that the squad will face a strong international field, including teams from Germany, Serbia, Slovenia, Türkiye, Latvia, Italy, Brazil, Sweden, China, New Zealand, and Japan. The competition offers an important opportunity for Bahraini players to test themselves against advanced basketball programs and refine their skills ahead of major regional tournaments.

In the lead-up to the tournament, Engineer Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, President of the BBF, visited the team's training sessions to meet players, coaches, and staff. Nader Al Awadhi, Vice President of the federation, and Mohamed Abdul Samad, Board Member and Treasurer, were also present.



Bahrain U18 team trains ahead of the Albert Schweitzer Tournament

ent. Shaikh Mohammed encouraged the squad to perform at their best and represent Bahrain with pride. "I am confident in

your ability to showcase the progress of Bahraini basketball and achieve positive results in this important international competition," he said.

The team is following an intensive training program, focusing on technical development, physical conditioning, and team cohesion. The delegation will travel to Germany four days before the tournament begins, allowing players to acclimate to the local conditions and maximize their readiness.

Participation in the Albert Schweitzer Tournament also forms part of Bahrain's preparation for the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) qualifiers for the FIBA U18 Asia Cup 2026 in Doha. Competing against top international sides, including Germany, Serbia, Slovenia, and Japan, will help raise the team's performance levels and provide exposure to different playing styles.

The BBF considers these international competitions critical in developing a new generation of Bahraini basketball talent, equipping players with the experience and confidence needed to represent the kingdom with distinction on both continental and global stages.

India to end home season with five Australia Tests



India's players celebrate during a match (file photo)

AFP | New Delhi

India will host Australia in a high-profile five-Test series starting January next year to end the 2026/27 home season, the country's cricket board announced yesterday.

"The season will culminate with the prestigious and much-anticipated Border-Gavaskar Trophy, featuring a five-match Test series against Australia, beginning on January 21, 2027, in Nagpur," the Board of Control for Cricket in India said.

"The contest will then move to Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi and Ahmedabad," the board

said.

India suffered a 2-0 Test whitewash against South Africa at home last year and are placed sixth in the World Test Championship table led by Australia.

India's home season will begin with a white-ball series including three one-day matches and five T20 internationals against the West Indies starting September 27.

The cricketing powerhouse will host Sri Lanka in December 2026 for a white-ball series including three ODI and three T20I matches.

Zimbabwe will be in India for three 50-over matches in January.

Sabalenka and Rybakina to clash again in Miami semi-final

Frenchman Fils saves four match points in epic three-set thriller

● Sabalenka defeats Hailey Baptiste in straight sets

● Rybakina defeats Pegula in three sets

● Lehecka ends qualifier Landaluce's run

AFP | Miami

World number one Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina on Wednesday booked a blockbuster semi-final at the Miami Open in a rerun of their Melbourne Grand Slam decider.

Defending champion Sabalenka held off big-hitting 45th-ranked American Hailey Baptiste 6-4, 6-4.

World number two Rybakina beat fifth-seeded American Jessica Pegula -- runner-up to Sabalenka last year -- 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

They will return Thursday at Hard Rock Stadium -- home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins -- to fight for a place in the final.



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus returns a shot against Hailey Baptiste of the United States

Rybakina beat Sabalenka in a nail-biting Australian Open final in January -- the world number one's only defeat in 2026 -- but the Belarusian avenged it with victory in the Indian Wells final this month.

"We've been playing a lot of matches, recently actually, and

all of them have been a battle, all of them been a show," Sabalenka told the Tennis Channel. "I'm super-excited facing her."

Sabalenka is now two wins away from completing the "Sunshine Double" of Indian Wells and Miami.

Baptiste, playing her first

WTA 1000 quarter-final, failed to convert three break points in Sabalenka's first two service games.

Sabalenka finally broke Baptiste when the American double-faulted on set point.

Sabalenka gained an early break in the second, but Baptiste

broke back and held confidently to level at 4-4.

But as she served at 4-5 to stay in the match, the American opened with three straight double faults. Sabalenka pounced, converting her second match point with a blistering return.

"She really pushed me," Sabalenka said.

"The rhythm, the heaviness of her shots is incredible. I'm super happy that I was able to hold the pressure and to get the win."

She'll now face a familiar foe in Rybakina, who shrugged off a slow start to post her fifth straight win over Pegula -- a streak that includes a semi-final victory at the Australian Open and a quarter-final win at Indian Wells.

Pegula, who won last month's WTA title in Dubai, broke twice to jump to a 4-0 lead and took the opening set in 35 minutes.

But Moscow-born Kazakh Rybakina was finding her rhythm and broke for a 4-2 edge on the way to forcing a third set, gaining control of the decider with an opening break.

"She started playing well, and I was a bit rushing and frustrated, but I'm happy that I managed to

”

We've been playing a lot of matches, recently actually, and all of them have been a battle, all of them been a show. I'm super-excited facing her

ARYNA SABALENKA

bounce back and turn it around in the second set," said Rybakina, who is seeded third despite rising to No. 2 in the world for the first time this week.

Fils tops Paul

In the men's draw, 28th-seeded Arthur Fils of France saved four match points on the way to a 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6) victory over 22nd-seeded American Tommy Paul.

Fils trailed 6-2 in the third-set tiebreaker, saving four straight match points before prevailing in two hours and 49 minutes.

"It was a dog fight and I never back down from a fight," Fils said. "Even if I lose, it's OK, I just fought the best that I could."

Muharraq Dominate Rivals Al Ahli in Semifinal Opener

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Reigning champions Muharraq cruised to a 90-73 win over Al Ahli in the Zain Bahrain Basketball League semifinal opener at Khalifa Sports City Arena, taking control of the best-of-five series. Under the guidance of German coach Peter Schomers, the Red Wolves are chasing a fifth straight league title and a season treble after already claiming the Khalifa bin Salman Cup and Super Cup.

Muharraq made their dominance clear from the opening tip. Captain Bader Abdulla scored 10 of the team's first 19 points, sparking a 24-9 lead. Wayne Chism dominated the boards, while Mohamed Ameer's inside presence disrupted the Eagles. Al Ahli, led by coach Ahmed Jan, struggled to find rhythm despite Anthony Fairley's energy and Ali Shukralla's rebounding.

Al Ahli fought back in the second quarter. Fairley attacked the basket, and Maitham Jameel hit timely mid-range shots to trim the deficit to 13 by halftime. Schomers' game plan, however, kept Muharraq composed. Mahmood Abbas Isa orchestrated the offense, Nick West drained jumpers, and Ameer continued to control the paint, preventing the Eagles from gaining momentum.

The third quarter was decisive. Muharraq went on a 12-2



Captain Bader Abdulla Malabes in action

run, fueled by West's back-to-back jumpers and Abdulla's three-pointer. Jan's Eagles tried to rally through Sarhan and Jameel, but turnovers and forced shots allowed the four-time champions to maintain a comfortable lead.

In the final quarter, Muharraq focused on closing out the win. Abdulla finished with a team-high 19 points, while Abbas Isa and West added 15 each. Ameer recorded a double-double with 13 points and 10 rebounds, and Chism contributed 11 points and seven boards. For Al Ahli, Fairley led

with 17 points and 10 rebounds; Jameel and Sarhan scored 14 each, while Shukralla grabbed 10 boards. Abbas Isa led the assists with seven, and Fairley added two blocks.

Muharraq's balanced scoring, rebounding dominance, and disciplined defense ensured a 17-point victory and a 1-0 series lead. Game 2 on Sunday will see Jan's Eagles fighting to stay alive.

Earlier last night, Al Najma kept their own championship hopes alive with a win over Manama, setting up another compelling semifinal series.

Al Najma stun Manama with last-gasp winner

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Al Najma pulled off a 78-76 victory over Manama last night, sealing a stunning win with a last-second tip-in in their Golden Square semi-final opener of the 2025-26 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

In a closely contested clash at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town, the game went down to the wire, with Najma overturning a late deficit to snatch victory in thrilling fashion.

Manama, coached by Bahraini Salman Ramadhan, appeared in control entering the final minutes, holding a lead that stretched to as many as 10 points earlier in the fourth quarter. Behind Ali Jaber and Alex Young, who both finished with 18 points, and Mohammed Buallay, who added 16 points along with 10 rebounds and five assists, Manama looked poised to draw first blood in the best-of-five series.

However, Najma, guided by Tunisian coach Racem Marzougui, refused to back down. Led by a superb 25-point outing from Mohamed Hussain, they chipped away at the deficit with timely shooting and defensive stops. Donovan Smith and Hassan Fahad also played crucial roles, contributing 14 and 13 points respectively, with Fahad pulling down 10 rebounds and adding three blocks inside.



Al Najma's Mohammed Hussain drives to the basket

The final minute proved decisive. Hussain drained a clutch three-pointer to tie the game at 76-76 with under 30 seconds remaining. Manama had a chance to respond but missed on consecutive possessions. Najma capitalised in the closing seconds: Smith grabbed a crucial offensive rebound and converted a tip-in lay-up with just four seconds left, giving his side a two-point lead.

Manama had one final opportunity, but Hasan Nowrooz's three-point attempt at the buzzer missed its mark, sealing Najma's remarkable comeback.

Earlier, the two teams trad-

ed blows throughout the first three quarters. The opening period ended level, and Manama carried a narrow 66-60 advantage into the fourth after edging ahead slightly by halftime. Despite Manama's balanced scoring and strong showing, Najma's resilience and execution in crunch time ultimately proved decisive.

The result gives Najma a 1-0 lead in the series. Game two is set for Sunday, where Ramadhan's Manama will look to respond and keep their title ambitions alive, while Marzougui's Najma aim to build on their momentum.

Mercedes teen ace Antonelli wants more of the same after maiden win

Antonelli's China triumph boosts belief as Mercedes duo chase first Suzuka win since 2019

● Mercedes dominate opening races

● Confidence boosted after China win

AFP | Suzuka

Kimi Antonelli said yesterday that his maiden Formula One win had given him more "awareness" of his potential as he and Mercedes look to ram home their early season advantage in Japan.

The 19-year-old Italian came home first at the Chinese Grand Prix to become the second-youngest race winner in history behind Max Verstappen, after finishing second at the season-opener in Australia.

Mercedes have claimed one-two finishes at both grands prix so far in 2026, with Antonelli's team-mate George Russell winning in Australia.

Antonelli said his approach would not change at this week's Japanese Grand Prix but admitted his win had boosted his



Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli celebrates his victory after the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix

confidence.

"I think the only difference is that the win gave me a bit more awareness of the potential, on

what is possible to achieve," he said.

"But in terms of approach, I want to keep the same because

it's been working well so far."

Antonelli, who also became the youngest pole-sitter in F1 history in Shanghai, was given



By winning in Shanghai, Kimi Antonelli ended a long drought for his home country, becoming the first Italian driver to stand on the top step of a Formula One podium in 20 years



I think the only difference is that the win gave me a bit more awareness of the potential, on what is possible to achieve

KIMI ANTONELLI

of races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia because of war in the Middle East.

"It's never good to have a break, especially when you have such momentum," said Antonelli.

"You need to look at the positive side of it, which is you get a bit of time to reflect and to try and analyse where are the areas where you have to work on."

Russell leads the early championship standings by four points from Antonelli, with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc 13 further back in third.

Russell is chasing his first world title and he said Mercedes were reaping the benefits after some lean years.

a hero's welcome when he returned to his native Bologna.

He is the first Italian to win an F1 grand prix since Giancarlo Fisichella 20 years ago.

He and Russell have the chance to build on their scorching early form in Suzuka, where Mercedes have not won since Valtteri Bottas in 2019.

The race is followed by a one-month gap in the schedule caused by the cancellation

Norris talks up McLaren chances after double China disaster



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris

AFP | Suzuka

Formula One world champion Lando Norris said yesterday he was confident he could still get into title contention after a disastrous start to the season, starting this week in Japan.

The McLaren driver is 36 points behind championship leader George Russell of Mercedes after two grands prix and arrives in Suzuka after an embarrassing non-start in China.

Norris and McLaren have struggled to get to grips with sweeping new regulations, but he said the car had "a lot of potential" as he targets a positive result in Japan.

"What we are thinking of is getting on the podium first of

all and then returning to winning races," said the Briton.

"The points then take care of themselves and we'll see what we can claw back, and we're confident in that.

"I have a good belief in the team and I think we can have the best car this year," he added.

Norris finished fifth in the season-opener in Australia and fourth in the sprint in China, but did not even make the grid for the grand prix in Shanghai.

Team-mate Oscar Piastri also did not start as both cars suffered separate technical issues.

Norris said McLaren now understood what the problems were but admitted that the double failure "hurt us as a team".

'Get out': Verstappen bans reporter from Japan press conference

AFP | London

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen was involved in a flashpoint ahead of the Japanese Grand Prix yes-

terday when he refused to start his press conference until an English journalist had left the room.

The Red Bull driver sat down to speak to reporters

at the team's hospitality suite in Suzuka, but then said, "I'm not speaking before he's leaving", and gestured at a journalist from The Guardian newspaper.

The journalist asked Verstappen if his demand was because of a question he had asked the driver last season, to which Verstappen replied "yes" and told him to "get out".

Bahrain Victorious ready for key test at E3 Saxo Classic

TDI | Manama

The cobbled Classics season heats up today as Bahrain Victorious lines up for the E3 Saxo Classic in Harelbeke. Seen as the final major test before the Tour of Flanders, the 208 km race will reveal which riders are ready to contend on cycling's biggest stage.

This year's edition features 16 short climbs and nine cobbled sectors, with nearly 3,000 metres of elevation gain. The route winds through the heart of Flanders, including Oudenaarde and Geraardsbergen, where narrow roads and steep gradients are expected to split the peloton early.

A key addition to the course is the E3-Col, a 1.2 km climb tackled twice, including once inside the final 35 kilometres. The decisive phase begins shortly after, with a reverse approach to the Oude Kwaremont, followed by familiar climbs such as Taaiberg, Kortekker, and



Bahrain Victorious riders in previous cobbled action

Eikenberg. The race is expected to be decided in the final 40 km, where the Paterberg-Oude Kwaremont combination and the last ascent of Tiegemberg with 20 km remaining could separate the contenders.

Bahrain Victorious Banking on Depth

Bahrain Victorious arrives with a balanced lineup led by

Matej Mohoric and Alec Segaert. Sports Director Nikolas Maes highlighted the importance of positioning before the crucial sections, explaining that the team's support riders will guide the leaders and control the race.

"E3 is one of the hardest races of the Classics. We want to position our leaders well before the decisive sections and be in the

mix for the finale," Maes said. Attila Valter could play a key role by seeking opportunities in a breakaway, adding tactical flexibility to the squad.

Leaders in Form

Mohoric heads into the race in strong condition and is targeting another top result in Harelbeke.

"I've been feeling good in the last Classics. I've had a top five here before, so I'd like to aim for something similar," the Slovenian said.

Segaert, fresh off victory at GP Denain, also brings momentum. "With a win already and strong performances from the team, I'm confident we can have a good campaign," the Belgian explained.

Today's E3 Saxo Classic will be a proving ground for Bahrain Victorious, giving the team the chance to measure their strength and stake their claim as serious contenders ahead of the Tour of Flanders.