

Visit Confirmed

The state visit by King Charles III to the United States will go ahead as scheduled, Buckingham Palace confirmed, despite heightened security concerns following the shooting in Washington. | P8

Bahrain condemns Washington attack

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain strongly condemned an attempted armed intrusion at the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association held at a hotel in Washington, D.C., which US President Donald Trump attended.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Bahrain's firm denunciation of violence and terrorism in all its forms, reaffirming its rejection of any acts that threaten the safety and security of public events.

The Ministry also reiterated Bahrain's solidarity with the United States and its friendly people, praising the efficiency and professionalism of the US President's security personnel, who successfully foiled the attempt and arrested the attacker.

Bahrain further extended its wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured security officer, and conveyed hopes for continued health and safety for the US President.

BD197m Lifeline Supports

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Bahrain is spending nearly BD197 million annually on direct cash support programmes aimed at helping families manage rising living costs and maintain financial stability.

According to a memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Social Development to Parliament, the funding is spread across several key schemes.

The largest share BD128 million is allocated to cost-of-living support, followed by BD21.5 million for social security and BD18.3 million for disability allowances.

An additional BD29.4 million compensates citizens after the removal of meat subsidies, along with assistance for emergency situations such as housing fires.

The programmes target some of the Kingdom's most vulnerable groups, including widows, divorced and abandoned women, families of prisoners, orphans, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

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STRONG BAHRAIN UAE BOND STANDS AS MODEL OF SOLIDARITY

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UAE Reaffirms Strong Ties

Highlighting the importance of bilateral coordination and ongoing high-level engagement, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received His Excellency Fahad Mohammed Salem Kardous Alameri, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Kingdom of Bahrain, at Riffa Palace.

During the meeting, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister also acknowledged the UAE's continued supportive initiatives under the leadership of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, noting that these initiatives reflect his deep appreciation for Bahrain and consistently contribute to the Kingdom's development and progress.

His Royal Highness underscored the strong and historic ties between Bahrain and the UAE, which the close relationship between His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, continues to reinforce.

HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad emphasised that the values of generosity, loyalty, and shared Arab identity embodied by the UAE leadership reflect the strength of bilateral relations, describing the partnership as a model of unity, cooperation, and mutual support.

The UAE Ambassador expressed his appreciation for His Royal Highness's efforts to strengthen bilateral relations, and conveyed his best wishes for Bahrain's continued progress and prosperity.

Bahrain Boosts Health Collaboration

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, received Colonel Dr Manaf Al Qahtani, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control, at the Secretariat General of the Gulf Health Council in Riffa Palace.

During the meeting, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister congratulated Colonel Dr Al Qahtani on his new



His Royal Highness with H.E. the UAE Ambassador Fahad Mohammed Salem Kardous Alameri



HRH Prince Salman receives Colonel Dr Manaf Al Qahtani

appointment, wishing him every success in carrying out his duties.

His Royal Highness underscored the importance of the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control in strengthening GCC-wide collaboration in

public health and disease prevention.

He also highlighted its key role in advancing joint medical research, policy development, and regional health initiatives.

Colonel Dr Al Qahtani expressed appreciation for His Royal Highness's continuous support of Bahraini talent across various sectors, noting the importance of initiatives that foster quality opportunities aligned with the Kingdom's development aspirations.

Day Off

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To mark the upcoming Labour Day, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, issued a circular announcing the official holiday arrangements.

According to the circular, ministries and public institutions will be closed on Friday, 1 May 2026, in observance of Labour Day. As the public holiday falls on a Friday, the day off will be compensated with an additional holiday on Sunday, 3 May 2026.

2026-2027 School Enrollment Begins

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Education has announced the start of online registration for new students enrolling in Grade 1 for the 2026-2027 academic year. The registration applies to children born between January 1 and December 31, 2020.

The registration window will open today at 7:00 a.m. and will continue until Sunday, May 10, 2026.

Parents and guardians wishing to register their children are encouraged to submit applications through the National Portal of the Kingdom of Bahrain (bahrain.bh) or via the Ministry of Education's official website (moe.gov.bh). The ministry emphasized the importance of completing the process within the specified timeframe, noting that applicants can also track and monitor their submissions through the National Portal.

Bahrain Cuts NGO Permit Time by 70%

TDT | Manama

As part of ongoing government efforts to enhance service quality and restructure procedures, Bahrain's Ministry of Social Development upgraded its financial permit service for civil society organizations, introducing both fast-track and standard processing routes.

The development comes within broader government efforts to improve and redesign public services. So far, more than 1,300 government services have been documented and translated, with 800 services undergoing redesign and improvement across various sectors.

Comfort-Focused Hajj Plan Sets

TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

As the Hajj season approaches, preparations in Bahrain are taking on a new tone one that places comfort and dignity at the centre of the pilgrimage journey.

This year, the Supreme Committee for Hajj and Umrah has drawn a clear line: every pilgrim deserves not just a place to stay, but a space that feels organised, safe, and cared for.

Campaign operators now move with checklists in hand, knowing expectations are higher than ever. In Mina, tents are no longer simple shelters. They are being transformed into structured living spaces, divided with clean partitions, watched over by cameras, and fully lit from entrance to walkway.

Behind the scenes, teams are growing. Supervisors and service workers are assigned in precise ratios, ensuring that help is always within reach. Cleaners move constantly, maintenance crews stand ready, and security remains present around the clock.

The same careful planning extends to Arafat, where camps rise on level ground, enclosed



and organised. Tents glow with LED lighting, while cooling systems hum steadily against the desert heat. Water, ice, and essential services are all arranged with quiet efficiency.

There is also a noticeable shift in inclusivity. Ramps and adapted facilities are being built in, making sure pilgrims with disabilities can move with ease and independence.

Bahrain Expands Humanitarian Footprint in Gaza

The Royal Humanitarian Foundation highlighted Bahrain's ongoing humanitarian initiatives in Gaza during a meeting between Acting Secretary-General Eng. Ebrahim Dallal Al Dossary and Bahrain's Ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, H.E. Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal.

The discussions focused on Bahrain's relief and development projects in the Gaza Strip, including the Bahrain Hospital, Bahrain Schools, and recent emergency aid shipments delivered to support affected civilians.



RHF praised the UAE's humanitarian efforts under "Operation Gallant Knight 3."

Al Dossary reaffirmed the Foundation's commitment to continuing humanitarian and development efforts beyond Bahrain, stressing that such initiatives strengthen the Kingdom's global humanitarian presence.

He also expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led by Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, for its continued support in facilitating overseas aid operations and ensuring efficient delivery of assistance to those in need.

Manama Market Upgrade Plans Assessed

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A senior municipal delegation visited the Manama Central Market to review development needs and explore ways to improve facilities and operational efficiency.

The visit was attended by Capital Trustees Board Chairman Engineer Saleh Taher Tarada and Capital Municipality Director General Engineer Alia Youssef Yahya, along with council members and officials.

Engineer Tarada highlighted the importance of continuous upgrades to central markets, noting that ongoing works are part of a broader plan to modernise



committed to regular maintenance programmes aimed at enhancing service quality and operational readiness in coordination with relevant authorities. This year's development works include upgrading surrounding roads, improving internal streets and pavements, ensuring electrical safety, and carrying out preventive maintenance on air-conditioning systems.

"Our focus is on coordinated infrastructure upgrades."

ENGINEER ALIA YOUSSEF YAHYA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CAPITAL MUNICIPALITY

infrastructure and improve services for traders and consumers. Engineer Alia Youssef Yahya said the municipality remains

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Safe Homes Restored for Families

71 Homes Restored After Damage from Iranian Attacks

● **Sitra, Hidd Repairs Completed**

● **Repairs included structural restoration**

● **Priority is given to the most affected homes**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain continues to repair damaged houses following the Iranian aggression, underscoring its commitment to safeguarding citizens' welfare and ensuring the rapid restoration of affected homes across the Kingdom.

In line with the Royal directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the instructions of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the government has undertaken comprehensive efforts to address the damages sustained by citizens' properties.

As part of the first phase of the national response, the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of



Ministers review progress of housing repair works in Hidd, Sitra and other areas.

Housing and Urban Planning announced the completion of repair works for 71 homes affected in Hidd Housing City, Sitra, and other scattered locations across the Kingdom. This includes 30 housing units in Hidd Housing City, 19 homes in Sitra, and 22 homes in various areas, with all technical and engineering restoration works now fully completed.

These facts were revealed during a field visit by Minister of Works Ibrahim bin Hassan Al Hawaj and Minister of Housing and Urban Planning Amina bint Ahmed Al Romaihi to Sitra and



Hidd Housing City, where they reviewed the progress of ongoing repair works for the first batch of affected homes.

Al Hawaj affirmed that the repair programme is being implemented in phased stages, prioritising the most severely affected cases in line

with assessed damage levels. He added that all structural repairs, maintenance works, and infrastructure-related services have been carried out according to approved engineering standards, ensuring the homes are safe and ready for residents to return.

Phone Dispute Turns Serious

TDT | Manama
Rehab Mohammad

A domestic dispute over a missing mobile phone has escalated into a serious criminal case, with a man in his thirties accused of causing permanent injury to his domestic worker.

The High Criminal Court is examining allegations that the worker suffered a 7% permanent disability after sustaining a severe injury to her ear during an incident inside the defendant's home on March 4, 2026. A forensic report confirmed the lasting damage.

The defendant has denied the charges, claiming the worker assaulted him and took his phone, prompting his reaction. His lawyer, Abdullah Sayyar, requested time to review the case file and sought his client's release. The court, however, ordered the defendant to remain in custody and adjourned the case to May 4.

According to the worker's testimony, the situation escalated quickly after she was questioned about the missing phone. She said she was pushed to the ground and assaulted, later discovering a severe injury to her ear. She told the court she saw a knife and part of her ear on the floor afterward, though she could not confirm how the injury was inflicted.

Optional Fee Relief for Tourism Sector

● **Economic Flexibility Step**

● **Private Sector Support Move**

● **Industry Stability Effort**



TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority announced the introduction of an optional deferral of first-quarter fees for all tourism establishments across



the Kingdom.

The measure applies to hotels, hotel apartments, furnished apartments, and tourism-oriented restaurants.

The Authority stated that the initiative supports ongoing efforts to sustain business continuity and enhance flexibility within the tourism sector. It also

reflects strengthened cooperation with the private sector to boost Bahrain's competitiveness as a leading tourism destination.

Officials noted that the step is designed to ease operational pressures on tourism businesses while encouraging sustained growth and stability across the industry.

Smart Shared Transport Plan



TDT | Manama
Hasan Barakat

Traffic congestion in busy parts of the Capital could ease under a proposed smart shared transport system discussed by the Services and Public Utilities Committee.

The proposal, reviewed during a meeting chaired by Eng. Mohammed Tawfiq Al Abbas and attended by senior board members and Ministry of Transportation officials, centres on a digital platform allowing commuters to share daily journeys with others heading in the same direction.

Officials said the system is

designed to improve transport efficiency while reducing the number of vehicles on the road, particularly during peak hours.

The initiative is also expected to lower emissions, improve air quality, and reduce commuting costs, while encouraging the use of more sustainable and technology-driven transport solutions.

Representatives from the Ministry of Transportation, including legal advisor Dr Farid Al Rajo and senior officials from the land transport and licensing departments, took part in discussions on the proposal and its potential rollout.

Crack Down on Exploitation Ring



TDT | Manama

As part of ongoing security efforts to combat human trafficking and reinforce Bahrain's strong international standing in addressing such crimes, the Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of an Asian man and woman accused of exploiting women and forcing them into illegal activities.

The Anti-Human Trafficking and Public Morality Protection Unit, operating under the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Science, carried out the operation after receiving information regarding the case.

Authorities said that immediate investigations and intensive searches led to the suspects' identification and subsequent arrest.

The Ministry confirmed that all necessary legal procedures have been taken, and the case has been referred to the Public Prosecution for further action.

Lost Cheque Saves Restaurant from Eviction

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

A long-established restaurant in Bahrain avoided eviction after the High Civil Appeals Court overturned a lower court judgment that had ordered its removal over alleged unpaid rent.

The dispute centred on claims

that the tenant owed BD1,800 in rent for August to October 2025. The lower court had previously ruled in favour of the landlord, terminating the lease, ordering eviction from the premises, and requiring payment of the disputed amount, with immediate enforcement allowed upon a BD600 guarantee.

However, the appeals court

reached a different conclusion after reviewing evidence submitted by the tenant, including rent cheques and communication records between both parties.

The court found that rent payments had in fact been made by cheque and accepted by the landlord, and that the tenancy had continued with mutual consent beyond the original lease term.

As a result, it ruled that the lease had effectively been renewed under Bahrain's rental law.

Lawyer Essam Al Tayyeb, representing the restaurant owner, said his client was surprised by the eviction case despite the business operating at the same location since 1997. He argued that rent had been paid up to June 2026 and that no outstand-

ing debt existed.

Court documents showed that the landlord had not rejected, returned, or formally disputed the rent cheques. Messages presented in court also indicated that one cheque had been misplaced by the landlord, who later requested alternative payment through BenefitPay or a replacement cheque.

Smart Bridge in Just Eight Days

Hands-on innovation project showcases future talent

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Inside a school workshop, students combined metal, wires, and ideas to build a working model of a smart bridge designed for Bahrain's future in just eight days.

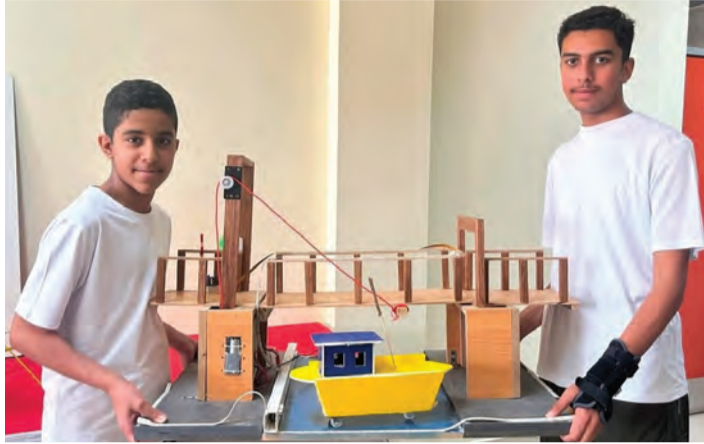
At Al Jaberia Industrial Secondary Boys School, a group of students turned a classroom challenge into a real engineering solution by creating a smart movable bridge that automatically lifts when ships pass, using sensors and a control system linked to motors.

Hassan Yousif, Elya Ramzy Makki, and Haidera Mohammed Al Najjar developed the project, combining skills from welding, electronics, and computing to produce a model that responds to maritime movement without disrupting traffic.

The concept stemmed from Bahrain's geography as an island nation and its reliance on maritime transport. Students



Teacher Jameel Mahrous



The students with their project

Bahrain has more than 30 islands. It is also a country that relies on maritime transport, so we decided to design a smart bridge

aimed to design a cost-effective alternative to traditional bridges, which are expensive and limited in navigation. The work was split between design, programming, and construction.

Students dedicated their break times inside the workshop to complete the model under the supervision of teacher Jameel Mahrous.

"We combined construction with modern technology. "The project can help monitor maritime movement, attract tourism,

and offer a practical solution, especially where building traditional bridges is difficult or costly," Makki said.

In parallel, the team also developed a smart water monitoring system that tracks tank levels using sensors, sends alerts to mobile devices, and reduces water waste offering a practical solution to resource management.

New office inaugurated at Pakistan Club Bahrain



Mohammad Afzal Bhatti, Chairman of Pakistan Club Bahrain, inaugurated the newly renovated Executive Office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking a key step in enhancing facilities and strengthening community services. Executive Board members and senior community leaders attended the event, where they also discussed upcoming initiatives and community development plans.



BIS brings Shakespeare to life during English Week



Bhavans Bahrain Indian School came alive with creativity during "English Week 2026," celebrating Shakespeare's legacy through performances, poetry, and interactive literary activities.

When Game Theory meets Geo Politics

TDT | Manama



During the recent escalations between the United States, Israel, and Iran, my perspective diverged from the dominant narrative. As a management student with exposure to negotiation frameworks, I observed the situation not merely as a geopolitical conflict but as a live demonstration of strategic theories unfolding in real time.

At the outset, what stood out was the classic Game of Chicken. Both sides appeared to accelerate toward confrontation, signalling strength and resolve.

Yet, at critical moments, there were subtle swerves—calibrated de-escalations designed to avoid catastrophic outcomes. Interestingly, these retreats were managed so that neither side appeared weak or willing to concede. It was not about avoiding conflict entirely, but about avoiding the perception of being the "chicken."

As the situation evolved, another framework became visible—the Prisoner's Dilemma. Instead of exercising restraint, particularly in communication, key players—most notably the United States and Iran—engaged in a war of words.

This mutual escalation, driven by distrust and the need to assert dominance, yielded little tangible gain. Instead, it risked reputational damage on both sides, illustrating how rational actors can arrive at suboptimal outcomes when cooperation is absent.

What we are witnessing now resembles a form of Nash equilibrium—where both sides, having pushed to the brink, settle into a position where neither can improve their outcome without worsening the other's. In such a scenario, one could argue that both sides have simultaneously "won" and "lost."

Yet, for the ordinary observer, the more pressing question remains: did anyone truly gain from this confrontation?

Modern wars are no longer about who fires first but who calculates better. The battlefield has shifted from land and sea to minds, markets and machines. The nature of conflict itself has evolved.

Modern "invasions" are no longer confined to territorial conquests. Today, influence can be exerted through technology, economic penetration, and strategic investments—often carried out silently, without overt aggression. Control is no longer always seized through force; it is frequently acquired through calculated, long-term positioning.

In this context, the timeless wisdom of Chanakya remains strikingly relevant. His principles emphasise that war must never be driven by emotion, but by careful calculation. A thorough assessment of strengths and weaknesses—what we today call a SWOT analysis—is essential before any confrontation.

Chanakya also cautioned against engaging in conflicts with uncertain outcomes, a principle that resonates strongly with the inherent risks of the Game of Chicken. His strategic framework of persuasion, incentives, punishment, and division highlights the importance of employing multiple approaches rather than relying solely on force.

Perhaps his most enduring insight lies in timing: knowing when to engage and when to withdraw. In the recent crisis, it could be argued that both sides, to an extent, recognised this balance and stepped back from the brink, avoiding further escalation.

Equally significant is the psychological dimension of conflict. Strength is not always displayed through overt action.

At times, appearing weak can be a strategic choice, just as projecting strength can compensate for underlying vulnerabilities. Such mind games continue to shape modern diplomacy and warfare.

Despite his deep understanding of strategy, Chanakya never glorified war. He recognised its cost—economic, social, and human. War, he warned, drains resources, disrupts peace, and brings suffering.

The escalations may settle, but the echoes of a new Cold War could linger. As the world moves toward a future of fewer borders and freer movement, one question remains: should borders continue to make life more difficult for future generations? It is a question modern-day Chanakyas must confront.

(P. Unnikrishnan is Chairman and Managing Director of The Daily Tribune)

Behind every attack and every statement issued lies a quieter battle—one of strategy, psychology, and calculated risk

P. UNNIKRISHNAN

New Law for Lawyers

First major overhaul in over 46 years

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

The Shura Council has unanimously approved a comprehensive new law regulating the legal profession, replacing a framework that has been in place for more than four decades.

The 68-article legislation, already passed by Parliament, introduces updated rules on lawyer registration, training, disciplinary procedures, legal fees, legal aid, and client rights.

It also sets new conditions for practice, including allowing non-Bahraini lawyers to appear in limited cases alongside licensed Bahraini lawyers, while tightening requirements for returning practitioners.

The law allows non-Bahraini lawyers to operate only in specific specialised courts and only alongside Bahraini lawyers ad-



This law represents a new start for the legal profession in Bahrain, in line with international developments

H.E. NAWAF AL MAAWDA, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ISLAMIC AFFAIRS AND WAQF



The process is a model of cooperation among government, parliament, and the legal community

JAMAL FAKHRO, FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SHURA COUNCIL



The reform balances national legal identity with the need for specialised international expertise

DALAL AL ZAYED, HEAD OF SHURA COUNCIL'S LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

mitted to higher courts, while excluding criminal, labour, tenancy, sharia, and personal status cases.

Several amendments were also approved during review, including removing mandatory insurance requirements,

reducing administrative fines, and limiting ministerial powers in disciplinary suspensions.

Historic Legal Reform

TDT | Manama

Salah Al Madfa, chairman of the Bahrain Bar Society, described the development as "a new era for the legal profession in Bahrain," noting that the previous framework had remained unchanged for more than four decades.

"The old law has been in place for over 46 years. This new legislation brings important gains for lawyers and strengthens the profession's role in the justice system," Al Madfa said.

He added that discussions re-



We hope the law will come into force soon, positively impacting the quality of legal services provided to litigants

SALAH AL MADFA, CHAIRMAN OF BAHRAIN BAR SOCIETY

vised or removed several disputed provisions, including a clause that would have allowed non-lawyers to establish law firms. Al Maawda also high-

lighted that the law expands professional opportunities, including specialisation in English-language advocacy.

It was included in the govern-

ment's programme under the directives of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

Shift of OAPEC into Broader Arab Energy Body

TDT | Manama

The Shura Council approved legislation transforming the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) into the Arab Energy Organisation, marking a major shift from an oil-centric mandate to a wider energy-focused role.

The move, endorsed under a draft law attached to Decree No. 6 of 2026, expands the organisation's scope to include renewable, nuclear and solar energy, while also updating its le-

gal and institutional framework. Oil and Environment Minister Mohammed bin Daina said the reform reflects global energy changes. The legislation also cancels the organisation's

judicial authority, replacing it with dispute resolution mechanisms based on settlement and arbitration.

Bahrain's annual contribution remains unchanged at

BD210,000. The Council report noted that the headquarters will remain in Kuwait, with the possibility of establishing additional offices in member states or abroad by ministerial decision.



Global shift towards diversified energy sources requires the organisation to expand its role and vision beyond oil

H.E. MOHAMMED BIN DAINA, MINISTER OF OIL AND ENVIRONMENT



Hala Ramzi, Shura Council member

Nancy Khadouri, rapporteur for the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee

TDT | Manama

A draft law paving the way for Bahrain to join the Locarno Agreement on the international classification of industrial designs was approved by the Shura Council.

The agreement, signed in 1968 and amended in 1979, provides a unified global system for classifying and registering industrial designs, helping standardise procedures across member states.

During the session, Shura Council member Hala Ramzi questioned assurances that accession would not place any

financial burden on the state budget.

Officials noted that the Locarno system works alongside international intellectual property frameworks, including the Paris Convention, which Bahrain joined in 1996.

Committee rapporteur Nancy Khadouri said the agreement would strengthen Bahrain's intellectual property environment and align it with international best practice.

The draft law, attached to Decree No. 77 of 2025, includes approval of Bahrain's accession and outlines implementation measures.

Social Support Bill Sparks Budget Concerns

TDT | Manama

The proposal aimed to bring all forms of government assistance under one umbrella law.

From cost-of-living allowances and food support to housing aid, fuel subsidies, education grants, and even electricity and water assistance, everything would be organised into a single national system designed to strengthen social protection.

Supporters of the bill saw it as a step toward clarity and fairness.

It would create a structured framework aligned with Bahrain's Constitution and National Action Charter, with 11 articles and multiple categories of support covering families, pensioners, and low-income citizens.

But as the debate approached,



This bill is an important step toward unifying fragmented support schemes into a clear legal framework that guarantees transparency and equal access for citizens

MAMDOUH AL SALEH, CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENT'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

concerns grew inside government circles.

Officials warned that while the intention was clear, the financial impact could be significant.

They argued that the bill would introduce long-term, recurring expenses that could widen the budget deficit and disrupt existing fiscal reform plans.

System

The Ministry of Social Development stressed that the current system was already carefully structured, with clear eligibility rules, income thresholds, and targeted assistance for those most in need.

It also highlighted recent improvements, including unified payment schedules and coordi-

nated support schemes.

The Ministry of Finance echoed these concerns, noting that the state budget already allocates substantial funds for social programmes and that any expansion would require careful long-term financial planning.

A key point of contention was utility support. Government experts referenced a past Constitutional Court ruling, arguing that electricity and water prices are managed as economic services and should not be fixed through legislation in the same way as taxes or fees.

Despite the warnings, parliamentary committees reviewed the proposal and recommended approval in an amended form, keeping the debate alive between expanding social protection and maintaining fiscal balance.



H.E. Yusuf Khalaf, Minister of Labour



Jameela Al Salman, Head of the Services Committee

Payroll Support Activated

BD100m Scheme to Cover Bahraini Salaries in April

TDT | Manama

Shura Council approved a draft law allowing the unemployment insurance fund to cover April 2026 salaries for an estimated 106,000 Bahraini workers, with costs projected between BD80 million and BD100 million.

The legislation, linked to Decree No. 24 of 2026, introduces a one-time provision to the existing unemployment insurance framework, enabling salary payments for insured workers up to their registered

wage level. Officials highlighted that the unemployment insurance fund currently holds around BD600 million. It has previously been used for major national programmes, including retirement support schemes, Covid-19 relief, and employment initiatives, with total spending of about BD741 million over the past seven years.

The Ministry of Labour said the fund remains financially stable and is closely monitored through regular actuarial assessments.

Bahrain Set to Join Global Industrial Design Classification System



Hala Ramzi, Shura Council member



Nancy Khadouri, rapporteur for the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee

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Minister Questioning Bill Cleared

TDT | Manama

A proposal to make it easier for MPs to question ministers has been approved by the Shura Council, reducing the required support from a two-thirds majority to a simple majority.

The bill was fast-tracked for a final vote and will now be referred through Parliament to the Prime Minister before being submitted to His Majesty the King.

The Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee backed the change, saying the current threshold could block legitimate attempts to hold ministers accountable.

Committee rapporteur Sa-beeka Al Fadhala said: "Lower-

ing the threshold removes procedural obstacles and enables Parliament to use questioning more effectively as a tool of oversight."

Tough Law on Dangerous Animals

Strict new controls on the ownership and handling of dangerous animals have been approved by the Shura Council, including life imprisonment in cases where such animals are used in fatal attacks.

The draft law, attached to Decree No. 15 of 2025, prohibits keeping, breeding, selling or transporting dangerous animals without a licence and sets out wide-ranging penalties for violations.

US Fed set to hold rates steady again on cost hikes from war

Fed officials are set to keep rates steady at a range between 3.50% and 3.75%

● **Oil and gasoline prices remain elevated even if they have peaked**

● **Fed officials will likely focus more on containing inflation than the jobs**

● **Trump has made no secret of his wish for lower interest rates**

AFP | Washington, United States

The US central bank is widely expected to keep interest rates unchanged at its policy meeting next week, as energy prices stay high and supply chains snarled due to war in the Middle East.



The Federal Reserve's two-day meeting, starting Tuesday, could be chairman Jerome Powell's last at the helm of the independent institution.

But it takes place against a tricky backdrop. Powell's likely successor -- Trump's nominee Kevin Warsh -- has faced a bumpy road to confirmation, while policymakers battle competing pressures as steeper fuel prices drive inflation and job market worries linger.

Fed officials are set to keep rates steady at a range between 3.50% and 3.75%, extending their pause since the start of the year.

"We still have a very high level of uncertainty on what's happening in the Middle East," KPMG senior economist Kenneth Kim told AFP.

Oil and gasoline prices remain elevated even if they have peaked, meaning "there's certainly an energy shock that's still impacting both consumers and businesses," he said.

The Fed has a dual mandate of maintaining price stability and low unemployment. It tends to keep interest rates high to curb inflation or lower them to spur growth, meaning that current conditions pull officials in different directions.

Navy Federal Credit Union Chief Economist Heather Long expects Powell to be "non-committal" on the path of rates, as the full impact from the war on Iran remains unknown.

The oil price hikes came after US-Israeli strikes targeting Iran from February 28 sparked Tehran's retaliation in virtually closing the Strait of Hormuz -- a key waterway for energy transit.

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell

Containing inflation

Fed officials will likely focus more on containing inflation than the jobs market this meeting, with the war entering its ninth week.

The strait is also a key passage for fertilizers, and disruptions threaten to hit food production.

Already, US consumer inflation reached its highest level in nearly two years in March at 3.3 percent as energy costs rocketed.

Fed Governor Christopher Waller, who earlier backed lower rates to support employment, indicated this month that a prolonged conflict could make it hard for the central bank to cut rates this year.

If there were high inflation and a weak labor market, one would have to balance risks on both sides.

This "may mean maintaining the policy rate at the current target range if the risks to inflation outweigh those to the labor market," he told an Alabama event.

KPMG's Kim said solid hiring recently "gives the Fed some cushion" to temporarily focus more on prices.

Analysts will monitor if the Fed signals in its post-meeting statement that rate hikes are a

possibility.

'Critical juncture'

The Fed is also taking its next steps under intense political scrutiny.

President Donald Trump has made no secret of his wish for lower interest rates, and regularly slammed Powell for not cutting them aggressively.

Beyond rhetoric, Trump has sought to oust Fed Governor Lisa Cook over claims of mortgage fraud. The Supreme Court is set to rule on whether he can fire her.

Meanwhile, the last major obstacle for Trump's pick to replace Powell as Fed chair was removed Sunday when Senator Thom Tillis said he would back Warsh.

Tillis's decision, which he posted on social media, came after the Department of Justice said Friday it would drop the investigation into Powell over renovation costs overruns at the Federal Reserve headquarters -- a condition Tillis had set for supporting Warsh.

Asked by journalists Saturday about the DOJ's move, Trump said he still wants to look into the cost of the renovations, which he has claimed is too high.

"I want to find out. I have an obligation to find out," he said.

Warsh has repeatedly pledged to remain independent if confirmed.

"We're at a critical juncture for the Fed," EY-Parthenon chief economist Gregory Daco told AFP.

"It may be that under Warsh, we're going to see less Fed transparency, less Fed communication than we had in the past," he said, referring to Warsh's confirmation hearing testimony.



Powell's chairman term expires May 15. All eyes are on his future plans at his scheduled press briefing Wednesday.

EU, US sign critical minerals plan to counter China reliance

AFP | Washington, United States

The European Union and United States signed an agreement Friday to coordinate on the supply of critical minerals needed for key industries including defense, as China's dominance becomes a growing concern.

The pact marks a rare embrace by President Donald Trump's administration of the role of the EU, which it often berates as it instead champions right-wing populists within Europe.

Flexing its muscle at times of tension, Beijing has restricted exports of critical minerals needed for products including semiconductors, electric vehicle batteries and weapons systems.

"The overconcentration of these resources, the fact that they're dominated by one or two places, is an unacceptable risk," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said as he signed a memorandum of understanding with EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic.

Sefcovic told a separate press briefing that the agreement "formalizes our partnership across the entire value chain, from exploration and extraction to processing, refining, recycling and recovery."

ing, refining, recycling and recovery."

Cost of dependency

On concerns that China could retaliate against a potential critical minerals deal involving multiple parties, Sefcovic said: "For us, it's really a matter of economic security. It's a matter of overcoming dependencies."

From recent experience, "we know how dependencies could be expensive, and we have a huge price tag for being dependent on the sources of our fossil fuels," he added.

Rubio noted that the United States and the EU combined are "the largest customers and users" of critical minerals.

An action plan said that the EU and United States would explore setting minimum prices on critical minerals -- effectively preventing China or other outside powers from flooding the market with inexpensive exports.

They will also look at coordinating any subsidies and stockpiles of critical minerals, and could coordinate joint standards to ease trade across the Western world, and together invest in research.

What is Signal and is it secure?

● **Top German officials on Saturday blamed Moscow-backed groups for phishing attacks**

● **Signal also goes further than WhatsApp on data privacy**

AFP | Washington, United States

Signal, an end-to-end encrypted messaging app long considered one of the most secure in the world, has recently faced attacks from hackers accused of links to Russia.

Top German officials on Saturday blamed Moscow-backed groups for phishing attacks targeting senior politicians on the messaging app, raising questions about how secure Signal really is.

Similar phishing cases have been reported by Dutch and American users, with Google in February sounding the alarm over cyberattacks from Russia-aligned groups.

But what makes Signal different from other messaging apps, and how could one of the world's most secure messaging apps be so widely targeted?

How does it work?

Signal's end-to-end encryption means that any sent message travels in a scrambled form and can only be deciphered by the end user.

Nobody in between -- not the



company providing the service, not the internet provider, nor hackers intercepting the message -- can read the content because they don't have the keys to unlock it.

Signal is not the only messaging service to do this, but unlike WhatsApp and Apple's iMessage, the app is controlled by an independent non-profit -- not a big tech behemoth motivated by revenue. That has won it more trust with those concerned about privacy.

Signal also goes further than WhatsApp on data privacy, making metadata such as when the message was delivered and its recipient invisible even to the company itself.

And WhatsApp shares information with its parent company Meta and third parties, including phone numbers, mobile device information, and IP addresses.

For these reasons, Signal has long been a go-to messaging service for users particularly concerned about communications secrecy, such as people working in security professions, journalists, and their sources.

Who owns Signal?

Founded in 2012, Signal is owned by the Mountain View, California-based Signal Foundation.

Its history is linked to WhatsApp: the site was founded by cryptographer and entrepreneur Moxie Marlinspike, with an initial \$50 million from WhatsApp co-founder Brian Acton.

Both Signal and WhatsApp, which was bought by Mark

Zuckerberg in 2014, are based on the same protocol built by Marlinspike.

"We're not tied to any major tech companies, and we can never be acquired by one either," Signal's website reads. Development is mainly supported by grants and donations.

Very outspoken compared to other Silicon Valley bosses, Signal's president is Meredith Whittaker, who spent years working for Google and is a fierce critic of business models built on the extraction of personal data.

Was Signal hacked?

Signal's encryption itself has not been broken.

Cyberattackers accused of Russian links did not target the encryption system directly.

Instead, recent attacks relied on phishing -- tricking users into handing over access to their accounts.

The attacks work by sending messages purporting to come from Signal support, like fake security alerts or invites to join group chats.

Once users click on these links or enter sensitive account information, attackers can then gain access to messages and chat groups.

This means hackers gain access to data shared on Signal and can also impersonate the person whose account was compromised.

Signal did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the recent attacks.



Signal collects very minimal user data-- by design, the Signal Foundation says it stores only a user's phone number and the date they joined, not message content or contact lists.



India strengthens energy security through diversified oil sourcing

Agencies

India has moved swiftly to strengthen its energy security by expanding crude oil purchases from a wider range of global suppliers, including Russia, Africa, Iran and Venezuela, according to analysts and industry data.

As the world's third-largest oil consumer, India has demonstrated supply agility by

broadening its sourcing mix and ensuring steady fuel availability despite disruptions in traditional trade routes. Analysts say the country's ability to tap multiple suppliers reflects the growing sophistication of its en-

ergy strategy.

Import data shows that Indian refiners significantly increased purchases of Russian crude in March, with imports averaging nearly 1.98 million barrels per day, helping stabilise supplies during a period of global uncertainty. Industry experts note that policy flexibility and timely international coordination enabled refiners to secure additional volumes ef-

ficiently.

India has also strengthened energy ties with African producers. Imports from Angola rose sharply in March, while Nigeria supplied additional cargoes in April, reinforcing Africa's role as a reliable partner in India's diversification efforts.

At the same time, shipments from Iran and Venezuela resumed in April, adding further depth to India's supply portfolio.

Analysts describe these flows as a strategic boost for refiners, offering greater optionality and reinforcing supply resilience.

Despite shifts in sourcing, domestic fuel availability has remained stable. State-run oil companies have continued to supply petrol and diesel without price increases, supported by government measures including excise duty adjustments.

The oil ministry said coordinated action by the government and public sector oil firms has helped shield consumers from global price volatility.

Officials emphasised that India has successfully kept retail fuel prices steady over recent years through proactive planning and policy support.

Energy analysts say India's multi-pronged sourcing strategy, combined with timely fiscal measures, has preserved access to crude supplies while protecting domestic markets—underscoring the country's growing role as a confident and adaptive global energy consumer.



Indian-flagged oil tanker Kashimasan remains docked near an offloading terminal at Butcher Island, off the coast in Mumbai

AI firms flex lobbying muscle on both side of Atlantic

● Lobbying outlays by the tech industry have surged 55% since 2021 to reach 151 million euros (\$177 million) last year, according to study by the Corporate Europe Observatory and LobbyControl, a nonprofit.

AFP | Paris, France

AI developers are ramping up efforts to win over the hearts and minds of officials in Europe and the United States, hoping to sway governments as they weigh high-stake regulatory frameworks for the ever more powerful technology.

Flush with cash, the firms are also wooing the general public, insisting that artificial intelligence will be a force for good -- and not a destroyer of jobs or an existential threat for humanity.

ChatGPT maker OpenAI unveiled this month a 13-page "Industrial Policy for the Intelligence Age" that calls for new taxation and expanded safety nets to ensure society withstands the arrival of superintelligent systems.

It has even bought TBPN, a technology-focused talk show, to help shape the narrative.

But the policy document

came just days after a public backlash forced the company to halt plans for a sexually explicit chatbot.

OpenAI has also faced legal challenges from families of teenagers who say ChatGPT caused harm and even suicide among young people, prompting the company to introduce an age-verification system.

"This is a turning point" for the industry, and companies "are spending a fortune to try to get favourable measures passed in their patch", said Alexandra Iteanu, a Paris-based lawyer specialising in digital law.

Politicians in pocket?

The AI industry has transformed Washington lobbying at extraordinary speed, with more than 3,500 federal lobbyists -- one-fourth of the total -- working on AI issues last year, a 170 percent increase over three years, according to Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group.

The established giants like Meta, Google and Microsoft still dominate spending, but AI start-ups like OpenAI and Anthropic have rapidly built out their Washington presence, hiring elite firms and expanding in-house policy shops.

Anthropic for example has focussed its message on promoting AI safety and tighter regulation.

But OpenAI is also actively pushing

the industry's top legislative priority of preventing US states from passing their own laws governing AI, an effort that has twice failed in Congress but remains very much alive, backed by a sympathetic White House.

The influence campaign has moved into electoral politics, with a pro-AI campaign called Leading the Future assembling a \$100 million war chest to back AI friendly candidates in the 2026 midterms.

President Donald Trump, a fierce opponent of AI regulation, counts OpenAI's cofounder Sam Altman and its president Greg Brockman among his biggest donors.

European regulators are also feeling the heat, with the French start-up Mistral recently presenting in Brussels a 22-point plan to accelerate AI development on the Continent.

Lobbying outlays by the tech industry have surged 55% since 2021 to reach 151 million euros (\$177 million) last year, according to study by the Corporate Europe Observatory and LobbyControl, a nonprofit.

'Concentration of wealth'

For Margarida Silva of the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO, a Dutch nonprofit), AI firms are working from playbook of the oil and smoking industries, but with one major difference.

"They're just the wealthiest companies in the world, so they have a lot of money that they can use to put

towards lobbying," Silva said.

"When you have such intense corporate lobbying that is based on having such a concentration of wealth, and that is standing in the way of public interest regulations... we are really talking about a democratic threat," she added.

Many executives also cultivate friendships with elected officials to have "privileged channels" with public administrations, said Charles Thibout, a politic science professor at the Sciences Po Strasbourg university in eastern France.

He noted the phalanx of tech moguls at Trump's inauguration last year, and the close ties between Mistral's cofounder Arthur Mensch and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Political leaders are often keen to be seen with AI's top names, Thibout added, if only to help get some of their huge development spending for their states or regions.

But "lawmakers are not fooled", said Iteanu, as enthusiasm for AI has not dispelled public wariness about its potential consequences.

Despite the colossal spending in the United States, for example, opinion polls regularly show that Americans remain highly sceptical about the technology's benefits, and more worried that it spells doom for millions of jobs.

Sri Lanka seeks buyers for white-elephant airport



AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's government issued a call yesterday for investments in a currently loss-making airport, after a 30-year lease agreement with an Indo-Russian joint venture had failed to take off.

Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport, built with Chinese loans near a wildlife sanctuary on the island's southern coast, has no regular flights.

The small airport has failed to generate enough revenue to cover even electricity bills since opening in 2013, and has been a running sore on state coffers.

Calling for expressions of interest from investors, the government said the facility offers "untapped potential for growth opportunities... for exotic tourism development and strategic investment".

Two years ago, the Sri Lankan government announced it had awarded a 30-year lease to a joint venture between India's Shaurya Aeronautics and Russia's Airports of Regions Management Company, but the plan never materialised.

The airport is named after former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who borrowed heavily from China for infrastructure projects that quickly became commercial failures.

Debts to China are partly blamed for an unprecedented

financial crisis that prompted Sri Lanka to default on its \$46 billion foreign debt in 2022.

Since receiving an International Monetary Fund bailout early the following year, Sri Lanka has sought to privatise a host of unprofitable state-owned enterprises, with no success.

The Mattala airport is located on a migratory bird route, with several aircraft forced to ground after striking airborne fowl.

At one point, Sri Lanka's military deployed hundreds of troops to remove deer, wild buffalo and elephants from the runway so operations could continue.

The airport is regarded as an alternate destination in case of bad weather at the country's main international gateway in the capital Colombo, a half-hour flight away.

Several cargo carriers and some charter aircraft operate via Mattala, but the revenue is insufficient for the facility's upkeep, according to official reports.

In 2017, unable to repay a large Chinese loan, Sri Lanka allowed China Merchants Port Holdings to take over the Hambantota port, near Mattala.

The deal, which granted the Chinese company a 99-year lease, fuelled fears over Beijing's use of "debt traps" to exert influence.





Trump was the target of an assassination attempt during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania in 2024. A gunman fired several shots, killing an audience member and lightly wounding the president in the ear.

A few months later, another man was arrested after a Secret Service agent saw the barrel of a rifle poking from the bushes on the perimeter of the West Palm Beach golf course where Trump was playing a round.

The Washington Hilton where Saturday's gala was taking place was the site where Republican President Ronald Reagan was shot by a would-be assassin in 1981.

The "Nerd Prom" -- as attendees dub it -- brings together journalists and the who's who of Washington to raise funds for scholarships and awards.

Trump says shooting suspect wrote anti-Christian manifesto

Trump says shooting proves need for his White House ballroom
Washington, United States

President Donald Trump on Sunday used a shooting at a gala he attended in Washington to push his plans to construct a huge ballroom next to the White House that has faced legal challenges.

"What happened last night is exactly the reason that our great Military, Secret Service, Law Enforcement and, for different reasons, every President for the last 150 years, have been DEMANDING that a large, safe, and secure Ballroom be built ON THE GROUNDS OF THE WHITE HOUSE," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The \$400-million ballroom has become a passion project for Trump during his second term and he has addressed it often in public appearances, press conferences and meetings.

Trump and his officials 'likely' targets of gunman: acting attorney general

- Donald Trump was a "likely" target of last night's shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, according to the acting US attorney general
- Todd Blanche says "preliminary" findings suggest the suspected gunman was targeting members of the Trump administration
- US media identify the suspect as Cole Tomas Allen, 31, from Torrance, California - Blanche says the suspect is not cooperating with the authorities
- Police earlier said the suspect's motive remains unknown, and law enforcement has been searching an address in Torrance believed to be linked to the suspected gunman



Journalist Karen Travers, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, US First Lady Melania Trump, US President Donald Trump and CBS News senior White House correspondent Weijia Jiang attend the White House Correspondents' dinner at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC

Trump evacuated as shooter opens fire at Washington gala; The man was detained at the scene

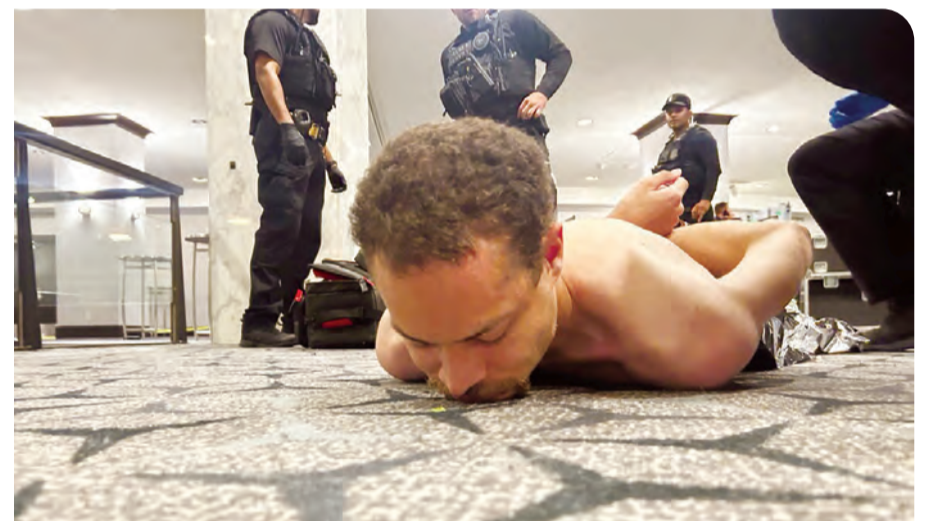
US Secret Service agents bundled Donald Trump from the stage as shots rang out Saturday at a media gala, in what the president later described as an attack by a "would-be assassin."

Armed guards opened fire at the gunman who charged through a security checkpoint just outside the ballroom of the hotel where Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, senior government officials and hundreds of other black-tie guests had gathered.

People dived under tables in chaotic scenes as Secret Service teams swarmed into the glitzy White House Correspondents' Association dinner held annually at the Washington Hilton in the US capital.

King Charles says 'greatly relieved' Trump unharmed after Washington shooting

'Get down!'



This image released by US President Donald Trump via his Truth Social account (@realDonaldTrump) shows a person he claims to be the alleged suspect in the shooting incident at the White House Correspondents' Dinner on the ground after being apprehended

Trump's motorcade zoomed out of the Hilton a few minutes after 8:40 pm and headed for the White House.

"I fought like hell to stay"

Trump, still in black tie, appeared at the podium in the White House briefing room with Melania Trump, Vice President JD Vance, FBI chief Kash Patel and other top officials. "I fought like hell to stay" at the dinner but Secret Service agents said he had to leave, said Trump, who narrowly escaped an assassination attempt at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania in 2024. Trump added however that the gala would be rescheduled. "We're going to do it again," said Trump. "We're not gonna let anyone take over our society."

● Tactical teams with guns drawn took position on the stage where Trump had been sitting during dinner before he was evacuated.

● Police surrounded the hotel, and helicopters hovered overhead.

● "They seem to think he was a lone wolf, and I feel that too," the president said at a news conference at the White House shortly after the incident.

● The security breach occurred after the welcoming speech and during dinner, before Trump was due to speak.

● Cabinet members were evacuated first, as confusion and concern spread through the partying guests.



1565

First Spanish settlement in the Philippines is founded in Cebu City

1865

Steamboat "SS Sultana" explodes in the Mississippi River, killing up to 1,800 of the 2,427 passengers in the greatest maritime disaster in United States history; most are paroled Union POWs on their way home.



The Australian Labor Party under Prime Minister Chris Watson becomes the first Labor government in the world

1904 1945

Italian partisans capture Benito Mussolini in Dongo, near Lake Como

The annual event -- a private, not government, function -- was at the Washington Hilton, a few blocks north of the White House, where it has been held for decades.



Vance being pulled out of chair during shoot-out chaos

How the shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner unfolded

✧ Around 8:35 p.m. ET (0035 GMT on Sunday), guests at the Washington Hilton dinner took cover when shots were heard, video footage showed. Soon after, Secret Service agents rushed towards Trump, escorting the president and his cabinet from the ballroom.

✧ A sole gunman had rushed a Secret Service checkpoint in a lobby, Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser and interim Police Chief Jeffery Carroll later told reporters.

✧ The suspect charged the Secret Service checkpoint in the hotel's lobby area and was armed with a shotgun, a handgun and multiple knives, Carroll said. As the suspect ran through that checkpoint, Secret Service members intercepted him.

✧ A Secret Service agent was injured and transported to a local hospital, the mayor said, adding the suspect was also transferred to a local hospital where he was evaluated.

✧ "We do know that law enforcement exchanged gunfire with the individual. ... The suspect in this case, he was not struck by gunfire," Carroll said. "Law enforcement ... they actually tackled him into the ground and handcuffed him."

✧ Around 9:17 p.m. ET (0117 GMT), Trump made his first comments after the shooting, saying law enforcement "acted quickly and bravely." Trump posted on Truth Social that "the shooter has been apprehended." Trump said he recommended that the event continue.

✧ About 20 minutes later, Trump posted again saying law enforcement asked him and others to leave the premises of the venue and that he was complying with that request. The event will be rescheduled "within 30 days," Trump said

✧ Around 10:30 p.m. ET (0230 GMT), Trump addressed the media in a press conference at the White House, accompanied by the director of the FBI and the acting US attorney general. Trump and other law enforcement officials said preliminary information suggested the suspect was a lone shooter.

✧ Around 11:13 p.m. ET (0313 GMT), Jeanine Pirro, the US Attorney for the District of Columbia, told reporters the suspect was being charged with using a firearm during a crime of violence and assault on a federal officer with a dangerous weapon.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Relieved to learn that President Trump, the First Lady and Vice President are safe and unharmed following the recent security incident at a Washington DC hotel. I extend my best wishes for their continued safety and well-being. Violence has no place in a democracy and must be unequivocally condemned.

@narendramodi

02



I just spoke to @POTUS Donald Trump to express my solidarity with him and @FLOTUS after the attempted attack. Thanks to the security services no one was seriously harmed and the injured police officer is recovering. We underlined that political violence has no place in our democracies.

@vonderleyen

03



The armed attack targeting the President of the United States last night is unacceptable. Violence has no place in a democracy. I extend my full support to Donald Trump.

@EmmanuelMacron

04



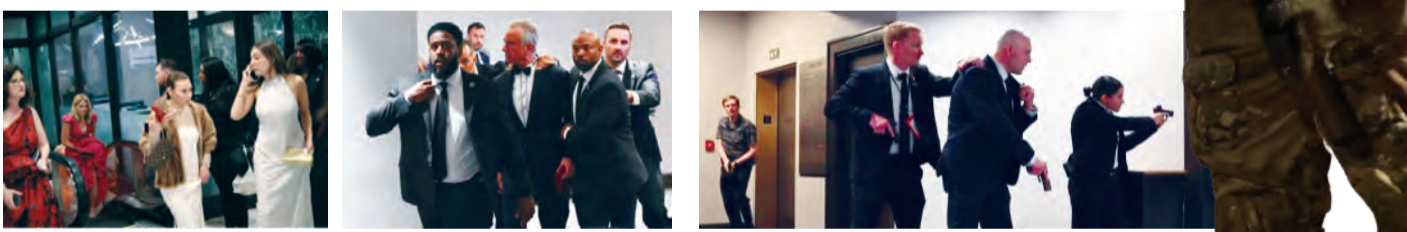
Political hatred has no place in our democracies. We will not allow fanaticism to poison the spaces of free debate and information

@GiorgiaMeloni

shots fired



A screen grab taken from a video filmed by an AFP reporter shows armed agents moving to the stage after loud bangs were heard during the White House Correspondents' dinner at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC



"It was either a tray or a bullet. I thought I was hoping it was a tray, but it wasn't."

"I guess he lives in California"

Trump said one officer was shot at close range but appeared to not be critically injured. He added that the venue was "not a particularly secure" facility, as questions swirled about the president's safety. Trump said at the hastily arranged news conference that he first thought the noise was a tray being dropped before he realized it was gunfire. He said he planned to re-schedule the media gala within a month.

City officials said the suspect, who will be arraigned in court on Monday on firearm and assault charges, appeared to have been a guest at the hotel. He was armed with a shotgun, handgun and knives. "Law enforcement exchanged gunfire with the individual," Washington police chief Jeffery Carroll told reporters. "A US Secret Service uniformed division officer was struck in his vest. He was transported to a local hospital for treatment. He appears to be in

good spirits." Trump told reporters that the authorities have gone to the suspect's apartment and "I guess he lives in California." An AFP photographer saw FBI tactical agents entering a two-story, brown house in Torrance, California associated with the suspect. Multiple US news outlets identified the suspect as 31-year-old Cole Tomas Allen from the southwestern Los Angeles suburb. A LinkedIn profile with

the name "Cole Allen" showed a picture of a man which appeared to match a photo of the suspect shared by Trump. The social media profile said Allen was a mechanical engineer, computer scientist, game developer and teacher. Last year, Allen uploaded a picture wearing a graduation gown and cap, saying he was "done" with his computer science master's degree from California State University Dominguez Hills.

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

'I've studied assassinations'

Trump muses on reasons for latest shooting

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump struck a philosophical tone Saturday after a shooter rushed a media gala in Washington, the latest in a series of incidents to target the Republican leader.

"I ask respectfully, why do you think this keeps happening to you?" a reporter asked Trump after the chaotic incident at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

Trump had a ready answer, and it was about the 79-year-old's own position in the pantheon of US presidents.

"Well, you know, I've studied assassinations," Trump said. "And I must tell you the most impactful people, the people that do the most -- you take a look at Abraham Lincoln... the people that make the biggest impact, they're the ones that they go after."

"I hate to say I'm honored by that, but I've done a lot," Trump added. "We've changed this country, and there are a lot of people that are not happy about that. So I think that's the answer."

Trump, who survived an assassination attempt at an elec-



US President Donald Trump speaks flanked by US Vice President JD Vance, FBI Director Kash Patel, US Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a press briefing in the Brady Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, DC, shortly after a shooting incident at the White House Correspondents' Dinner

Trump says shooting won't 'deter' him from Iran war

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Saturday a shooting at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner would not deter him from the Iran war, although he believed the incident was unlikely linked to the conflict.

"It's not going to deter me

from winning the war in Iran. I don't know if that had anything to do with it, I really don't think so, based on what we know," Trump told reporters in a briefing at the White House after the shocking security incident.

Trump had earlier said, however, that "you never know" if it could be linked to the Iran war, and said investigators were

working on the motive of the shooter whom he described as a "lone wolf."

The US leader earlier Saturday canceled his envoys' trip to Pakistan for peace talks with Iran, after being unimpressed with Tehran's negotiating position following nearly two months of war.

tion rally in 2024, added that "I lead a pretty normal life, considering, you know, it's a dangerous life."

"A lot of other people, you know, you read stories where they become basket cases. To be honest, I'm not a basket case."

Trump meanwhile took a measured tone towards the press

-- despite previously calling it the "enemy of the people" -- saying there was "a tremendous amount of love and coming together" after the incident.

He said he had been ready to give the "most inappropriate speech ever made" but would now be "very boring" when the dinner was rescheduled.

The shooting on Saturday, which Trump blamed on a "would-be assassin," also caused him to riff on one of his favorite topics -- the huge \$400 million ballroom he is building at the White House.

Trump said the venue for the correspondents' dinner, the

Well, you know, I've studied assassinations

And I must tell you the most impactful people, the people that do the most -- you take a look at Abraham Lincoln... the people that make the biggest impact, they're the ones that they go after

I hate to say I'm honored by that, but I've done a lot. We've changed this country, and there are a lot of people that are not happy about that. So I think that's the answer

'Wine-Gate' erupts after viral clips from correspondents' dinner evacuation

TDI | agencies

A controversy dubbed "Wine-Gate" has erupted online after viral videos appeared to show attendees at the White House Correspondents' Dinner taking bottles of wine while evacuating the venue.

Clips circulating on social media show individuals, some appearing to be members of the press, placing unopened bottles into bags and jackets as guests were ushered out. The footage spread rapidly, with the term "Wine-Gate" trending within hours.

The videos have not been fully verified, and it remains unclear how many of those seen in the clips were accredited journalists or guests. No offi-

cial statement has confirmed misconduct.

The incident has drawn sharp criticism from some commentators, who described the behaviour as inappropriate given the circumstances. Others online reacted with humour, with posts joking about attendees "stocking up" as they left.

The White House Correspondents' Dinner, an annual event attended by journalists, public officials and celebrities, has not yet issued a formal response to the viral claims.

The debate continues online, with questions raised over professionalism, optics and conduct during high-pressure situations.

Washington Hilton, was "not particularly secure" and showed the need for the construction of the new ballroom.



Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on 14 April 1865 at Ford's Theatre while watching a play; he was shot by John Wilkes Booth, a well-known actor and Confederate sympathiser, and died the following morning.

Gaza civil defence says three killed in Israeli attacks

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes in the Palestinian territory on Sunday killed at least three people, including a woman.

Despite an October ceasefire, Gaza remains gripped by daily violence as Israeli strikes continue and both the Israeli military and Hamas accuse each other of breaking the truce.

"Three martyrs and several others were injured following attacks by occupation forces in Gaza City and Khan Yunis," said the agency, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas.

Two men were killed when an Israeli drone fired a missile that "struck a group of civilians" near the Kuwait roundabout in the Zeitun neighbourhood of Gaza City, the territory's largest urban centre, the agency reported.

Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital confirmed it had received the bodies.

In a separate incident, a



People inspect a destroyed civilian vehicle after it was targeted by an Israeli airstrike that allegedly killed three people on Salah al-Din Street, south of Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip

woman was killed after being shot by Israeli forces in Khan Yunis. Her body transferred to Nasser hospital, according to the agency.

The Israeli military said it was not aware of any incident involving the death of a wom-

an in Khan Yunis, adding it was looking into reports concerning the deaths of the two men.

The October truce has largely halted the Gaza war that began after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

Russia, North Korea agree 'long-term' military cooperation

● North Korean soldiers are said to have been instructed to kill themselves rather than be captured in battle.

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

Russia and North Korea have agreed to "long-term" military cooperation, Russia's defence ministry said Sunday, as Moscow's military chief visited officials in Pyongyang.

Pyongyang has sent thousands of troops -- as well as missiles and munitions -- to support Russia's war in Ukraine.

In return, analysts say North Korea is receiving financial aid, military technology, food and energy from Russia, helping Pyongyang circumvent heavy international sanctions over its banned nuclear programmes.

The two countries signed a

military treaty in 2024, obligating both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the event of an attack on the other.

"We agreed with the DPRK Defence Ministry to place our military cooperation on a stable, long-term footing," Moscow's Defence Minister Andrey Belousov said, using the initials of North Korea's official name. "We are ready to sign a plan this year for Russian-Korean military cooperation for the period of 2027-2031," he added.

Russian officials are in Pyongyang for the opening ceremony of a memorial complex honouring those killed while supporting Moscow's war effort against Ukraine.

Belousov met North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un and Defence Minister No Kwang Chol on Sunday, while Russia's parliamentary speaker Vyacheslav Volodin also met Kim

and thanked him for the role of North Korean troops in "the liberation of Kursk".

Pyongyang has deployed troops to Russia's western Kursk region to fend off a months-long counter-offensive by Kyiv's troops.

Belousov presented military awards to North Korean servicemen who took part in the Kursk operation, the Russian defence ministry said.

"Korean soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers and officers, liberating Russian soil from the Ukrainian Nazis," Volodin said.

Seoul estimates about 2,000 North Koreans have been killed in Moscow's war with Ukraine.

North Korean soldiers are said to have been instructed to kill themselves rather than be captured in battle.

Only two North Korean troops have been captured alive and are currently in custody of Ukrainian authorities.

Iran minister returns to Pakistan despite US talks cancellation

● **Trump told Fox News he had scrapped the trip, saying there was no point “sitting around talking about nothing”**

● **“They gave us a paper that should have been better and -- interestingly -- immediately when I cancelled it, within 10 minutes, we got a new paper that was much better,” he told reporters**

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan



Police officers stand guard near the Serena Hotel, the venue for expected US-Iran talks, in Islamabad's Red Zone

Iran's foreign minister returned to Islamabad for more consultations yesterday, as international mediators tried to keep peace talks on track despite US President Donald Trump calling off his envoys' planned trip.

According to the Iranian news agency ISNA, Abbas Araghchi was to sit down with Pakistani officials to convey “Iran's positions and views on the framework of any understanding to completely end the war” in the Middle East.

The minister had already been

in Islamabad only the day before, after which he travelled to Oman, while other Iranian envoys went to Tehran “to consult and obtain the necessary instructions on issues related to ending the war”, according to the agency.

Before Saturday's Iran-Pakistan meetings in Islamabad, the White House had announced that Trump's peace envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner were planning to leave for Pakistan to engage in further negotiations.

But Trump later told Fox News he had scrapped the trip, saying there was no point “sitting around talking about nothing”. He dismissed Tehran's negotiating position, but added that it had revised its proposal within minutes of his decision.

“They gave us a paper that should have been better and -- interestingly -- immediately when I cancelled it, within 10 minutes, we got a new paper that was much better,” he told reporters, without elaborating.

‘Very fruitful’

Asked separately whether halting the trip meant a return to open hostilities, Trump said: “No, it doesn't mean that. We haven't thought about it yet.”

On Saturday, Araghchi met Pakistan's military chief Asim Munir, a key mediator, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, before flying on to Muscat.

He is expected to go to Moscow after the talks in Islamabad.

Araghchi described his initial Pakistan trip as “very fruitful” but signalled scepticism over Washington's intentions. “Have yet to see if the US is truly serious about diplomacy,” he said.

Hormuz blockade deepens

Pressure to end the war has intensified as the Strait of Hormuz -- a vital oil and gas route -- remains closed.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had no intention of lifting their blockade, which has roiled energy markets.

The United States has imposed a blockade of Iranian ports in retaliation.

Israel strikes Lebanon

On the war's Lebanese front, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered strikes on Hezbollah and accused the Iran-backed group of violating a ceasefire that was extended this week.

“It must be understood that Hezbollah's violations are, in practice, dismantling the ceasefire,” Netanyahu said, during Sunday's weekly cabinet meeting.

Lebanese official media said Israel's military began striking the country's south after issuing an evacuation warning for seven locations, despite the

Israeli soldier killed

The Israeli army said one of its troops was killed “during combat” in south Lebanon, where a ceasefire has been in place since mid-April.

Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah have accused each other of breaching the truce.

Iran FM to meet Putin

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin during a visit to Moscow on Monday, the ISNA news agency reported.

ceasefire with the Iran-backed group.

“Israeli warplanes launched a strike” in Kfar Tibnit -- one of the locations included in the warning -- the state-run National News Agency said, adding that there were reports of casualties.

Under the terms of the ceasefire, Israel reserves the right to act against “planned, imminent or ongoing attacks”.

Chernobyl, 40 years since disaster

AFP | Chernobyl, Ukraine

Ukraine yesterday marked the 40th anniversary of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant -- the worst civilian nuclear disaster in history.

It comes four years into the Russian invasion that has put the plant once again under threat and raised risks of another radioactive catastrophe.

Here are five things to know about the disaster and the plant today:

Explosion

At 01:23 on April 26, 1986, a human error during a safety test triggered a blast in reactor number four at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in northern Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union.

The explosion tore the inside of the building apart, sending a plume of radioactive smoke into the atmosphere, with nuclear fuel burning for more than 10 days.

Thousands of tonnes of sand, clay and lead

ingots were dropped by helicopter to contain the radioactive leak.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) determined the main cause of the disaster was “severe deficiencies in the design of the reactor and the shutdown system” combined with “violation” of operation procedures.

Radioactive cloud

In the following days, the radioactive plume heavily contaminated Ukraine, Belarus and Russia before spreading across Europe.

The first public alert came only two days later, on April 28, when Sweden detected a spike in radiation levels on its territory.

The IAEA was officially notified of the accident on April 30, but Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev did not publicly acknowledge it until May 14.

Thousands are estimated to have died as a result of exposure to the radiation, though assess-

ments of the precise human toll vary.

A 2005 UN report put the number of confirmed and projected deaths at 4,000 in the three worst-affected countries. Greenpeace in 2006 estimated that the disaster had caused close to 100,000 deaths.

According to the United Nations, some 600,000 people involved in the clean-up operation -- known as “liquidators” -- were exposed to high levels of radiation.

The disaster raised public fears of nuclear energy, fuelling a surge in anti-nuclear movements across Europe.

Russian occupation

Russian forces occupied the power plant on the first day of Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

They captured the plant without fighting after sending tens of thousands of troops and hundreds of tanks into Ukraine from Belarus,

Moscow's close ally.

Russian soldiers dug trenches and set up camps in areas such as the so-called Red Forest, named after the colour its trees turned from radiation explosion.

Their seizure of the defunct plant raised intense fears a military incident could trigger a catastrophic nuclear disaster at the site.

Russia's army withdrew around a month into the war, as part of a pullback after failing to encircle and capture the capital Kyiv amid fierce Ukrainian resistance.

New threats

The remains of the plant are covered by an inner steel-and-concrete structure known as the sarcophagus, hastily built after the 1986 disaster.

A newer hi-tech outer shell, the New Safe Confinement, was installed in 2016-2017, designed to eventually replace the sarcophagus, which was not intended to be a permanent

tion.

The massive metal outer structure was punctured by a Russian drone in February 2025, losing its ability to contain radiation.

In a report published in April, Greenpeace said the outer shell “cannot be repaired at the moment, it cannot function as it was designed, there's a possibility of radioactive releases.”

Repairs are expected to take around three to four years. Another Russian strike could see the radiation shelter collapse, the plant's director told AFP in December 2025.

Exclusion zone

The area around the plant was evacuated and became an exclusion zone, with abandoned towns, fields and forests.

In total, more than 2,200 square kilometres in northern Ukraine and 2,600 square kilometres in southern Belarus are effectively uninhabitable.

People will not be able to safely live there for the next 24,000 years, the IAEA says.

The city of

Pripyat, three kilometres from the plant with a population of 48,000 residents in 1986, was completely evacuated.

It remains abandoned, with its empty, decaying buildings -- including a rusting amusement park and ferris wheel -- resembling a post-apocalyptic ghost town.

Before Russia's 2022 invasion, guided visits to the site were possible, but for nearly three years the area has been closed to tourists.

Without human presence, the area has effectively become a vast nature reserve, where the rare and endangered Przewalski horse was reintroduced in 1998.

24k

People will not be able to safely live there for the next 24,000 years, the IAEA says.



India UAE Strategic Alignment

NSA Doval meets UAE President to advance cooperation across key sectors



India and the United Arab Emirates reaffirmed their growing strategic partnership following a high-level meeting this week between India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

NSA Doval's official visit to the UAE highlighted the continued momentum in bilateral relations between New Delhi and Abu Dhabi, which have expanded significantly in recent years across political, economic, and security domains.

Strategic Cooperation

Both sides examined ways to further deepen collaboration

in defence, security, technology, energy, and trade. The engagement reflected the growing scale and depth of ties that have positioned the India-UAE relationship as one of the most significant partnerships in the region.

The leaders also discussed regional and global developments, exchanging views on the evolving geopolitical landscape and the importance of maintaining stability, peace, and prosperity in the wider region.

Priorities on Security and Growth

Counter-terrorism cooperation, economic connectivity, and long-term development initia-

tives were among the key areas of mutual interest highlighted during the talks. Both countries reiterated their commitment to strengthening coordination on shared security challenges and expanding economic opportunities.

The India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, established in 2017, has steadily broadened beyond traditional cooperation into emerging sectors such as fintech, renewable energy, food security, and advanced technologies. Regular high-level engagements continue to reinforce the forward-looking nature of the relationship.

The latest meeting under-

India and the UAE reaffirmed their strong strategic partnership during high-level talks, highlighting growing cooperation in security, trade, and emerging sectors.

scores the sustained diplomatic engagement between New Delhi and Abu Dhabi, reflecting a shared commitment to long-term strategic alignment. In an increasingly complex global environment, both nations continue to emphasize consistent dialogue at the highest levels as a cornerstone of their partnership.

UAE Boosts Rainfall Efforts with 80 Missions



The UAE has conducted around 80 cloud seeding missions since the beginning of 2026 as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance rainfall and strengthen national water reserves, according to the National Centre of Meteorology (NCM).

Officials said the operations are carefully targeted and only carried out when suitable convective clouds are present. Dr Mohammed Al Abri, Director of Meteorology at the NCM, explained that not all cloud types are viable for seeding.

"We target only convective clouds suitable for cloud seeding, while stratiform clouds are not included," he said, noting that this natural limitation often leads to variations in rainfall intensity across different areas.

He added that cloud movement and formation cannot be controlled, meaning some

regions may receive heavier rainfall while others remain largely dry. This variability, he stressed, is part of normal weather behaviour and not a limitation of the seeding process itself.

The cloud seeding programme forms part of the UAE's broader strategy to increase rainfall, replenish groundwater, and improve long-term water security, especially in arid conditions where natural rainfall is limited.

Meteorologists also expect light rainfall in the coming days due to a shallow low-pressure system in the upper atmosphere, with western and eastern parts of the country most likely to be affected.

Dr Ahmed Habib, a meteorology expert at the centre, confirmed that cloud seeding operations will continue throughout 2026 and beyond, depending on suitable weather conditions.

UAE launches AED 1bn industrial resilience fund

Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, ruler of Dubai has announced the creation of a special national fund aimed at strengthening the United Arab Emirates' industrial sector and boosting long-term economic resilience.

The initiative establishes a 1 billion dirham Industrial Resilience Fund designed to support the localisation of vital industries across the UAE. It will focus on reducing dependency on imports, strengthening domestic supply chains, and accelerating the adoption of advanced tech-



nologies, including artificial intelligence.

The move is part of broader efforts to enhance the country's industrial competitiveness and future-readiness, ensuring key sectors are better equipped to respond to global economic shifts



and disruptions.

Officials say the fund will also encourage innovation and investment in high-priority manufacturing areas, aligning with the UAE's long-term vision of a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

Jordan, Kuwait Discuss Regional De-escalation Efforts

Jordan's King Abdullah II reaffirmed that the security and stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states form the cornerstone of both regional and global security.

The remarks came during his meeting with Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, where the two sides discussed the strong fraternal relations between Jordan and Kuwait and explored ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation.

The discussions also highlighted the importance of



strengthening joint Arab action and maintaining coordinated efforts to sustain de-escalation across the region, amid ongoing regional challenges.

Both sides underscored the need for continued diplomatic engagement to support stability, security, and collective Arab interests.

Qatar condemns Washington shooting incident

The State of Qatar has strongly condemned a shooting incident that took place during a dinner reception hosted by the White House Correspondents' Association at a hotel in Washington, D.C., which was attended by US President Donald Trump.

According to the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the incident resulted in the injury of a security personnel during the event.

Qatar reiterated its firm position rejecting all forms of violence and criminal acts, regardless of their motives or circumstances.

The Ministry also expressed Qatar's full solidarity with the United States and extended wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured individual.

Oman, Iran Discuss Regional Issues

His Majesty the Sultan, received Iran's Foreign Minister, Dr. Abbas Araghchi, at Al Barakah Majestic Palace. Discussions focused on the latest regional developments and ongoing mediation efforts aimed at ending conflicts.

During the meeting, consultations were held on current tensions in the region and initiatives designed to promote de-escalation and political solutions. His Majesty was briefed on Iran's perspective regarding recent developments, while the Iranian Foreign Minister listened to the Sultan's views on advancing diplomatic efforts that could help achieve sustainable political settlements and reduce the impact of regional crises on affected populations.



His Majesty emphasized the importance of prioritizing dialogue and diplomacy as the foundation for addressing regional challenges, underlining that such an approach strengthens prospects for lasting peace and stability.

For his part, the Iranian For-

eign Minister expressed his country's appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman's positions under His Majesty's leadership in supporting dialogue and fostering regional security and stability, particularly amid ongoing regional challenges.

Three Rescued After Boat Capsizes Off Oman

Authorities confirmed that three Omani nationals were safely rescued after their vessel capsized in open waters off the coast of Barka in South Al Batinah Governorate.

According to the Royal Oman Police, the Coast Guard Unit coordinated with a local fishing boat crew to conduct a swift rescue operation, ensuring all three individuals on board were brought to safety without injury.

Following the rescue, the Coast Guard recovered the overturned vessel and towed it to the marine dock at the fishing port in the Wilayat of Barka.

Authorities praised the rapid



coordination between emergency responders and local fishermen, noting it played a key role in the operation's successful outcome.

Barka is a coastal wilayat in northern Oman, located along the Sea of Oman and bordered by the Hajar Mountains in the Al Batinah region.

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Fans hit by eye-watering World Cup prices

TDT | Manama

With the men's World Cup in North America just 45 days away, anticipation is building fast. Alongside the excitement, a more uncomfortable question is taking hold among supporters: can ordinary fans still afford football's biggest stage?

The 2026 tournament, co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, was originally promoted as one of the most accessible World Cups ever. That promise is now under serious strain as ticket prices climb far beyond what many expected.

The shift became clear after FIFA released ticket allocations through its Participating Member Association system, which was meant to prioritise loyal national team fans. Instead, many supporters were hit with sticker shock. Reports suggest that following a team from the group stages through to the final could cost over \$20,000 per person in some cases, while single tickets for the final are already listed for up to approximately \$10,990.

Fan groups have reacted strongly. Football Supporters Europe called the prices "astounding" and "extortionate," warning that long-time supporters risk being pushed out of the tournament they helped build.



The Football Supporters' Association in England said the system now appears tilted toward wealthy tourists and corporate buyers rather than travelling fans. Pressure has grown further on FIFA's official resale platform. Final tickets at MetLife Stadium

have reached extreme levels. Some listings show four Category 1 seats at around \$2.3 million each, which is over \$9 million in total. Even more striking, similar prices appear in upper-tier Category 3 sections, suggesting the problem is not limited to premium seats.

FIFA says the pricing reflects record global demand and insists the system is transparent and secure. It also points to lower-cost tickets, with some group-stage seats starting around \$60, arguing that tiered pricing is designed to keep the tournament accessible across different budgets.

But fans on the ground describe a different reality. Cheap tickets are limited, sell out quickly, and are often replaced by long queues and inflated resale prices, especially for knockout matches in major US cities.

Comparisons are already being drawn with the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, which many travelling fans found more affordable, despite its own controversies. That contrast has deepened concerns about where football is heading.

As FIFA highlights record demand and strong early sales, a broader question is taking shape in parallel about who the World Cup is ultimately for. For many supporters, the answer feels less certain than ever.

Atletico's Barrios to miss Arsenal tie with thigh injury

AFP | Madrid

Atletico Madrid midfielder Pablo Barrios is set to miss the Champions League semi-final tie against Arsenal after his club said yesterday he sustained a thigh injury.

"Barrios has suffered a muscular injury in his left thigh, which occurred during the match against Athletic Bilbao this Saturday," said Atletico in a statement, without specifying how long he is expected to miss.

Spanish media reported the injury will keep the 22-year-old out for a month, a blow for Diego Simeone's side ahead of Wednesday's first leg clash



Pablo Barrios

against Arsenal at the Metropolitan stadium.

After defeat in last weekend's Copa del Rey final the Champions League represents Atletico's last hope of silverware this season.

Bahrain's Al-Jabouri wins bronze in Rabat

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Paralympic athletics star Zahra Jawad Al-Jabouri has secured a notable achievement by winning the bronze medal in the F34 shot put event at the Paralympic Athletics Grand Prix "Rabat 2026".

Al-Jabouri recorded a throw of 4.80 metres, underlining her strong technical form and growing competitiveness on the international stage.

The result reflects her continued progress and rising performance levels in recent competitions.

In addition to claiming bronze, she also achieved the qualification standard for the Asian Games, marking



an important milestone that strengthens her chances of representing Bahrain in upcoming continental championships.

Alex Marquez wins Spanish MotoGP to end Bezzecchi streak

AFP | Jerez de la Frontera

Alex Marquez claimed a comfortable victory in the Spanish MotoGP yesterday, ending overall leader Marco Bezzecchi's winning streak of five consecutive triumphs.

Pole-sitter and last season's champion Marc Marquez crashed out and his younger brother was able to repeat his 2025 maiden victory in Jerez, finishing 1.903sec ahead of Bezzecchi in second.

Aprilia rider Bezzecchi nonetheless stretched his overall lead at the top of the standings to 11 points on Jorge Martin, who came in fourth.



Team Gresini Racing MotoGP's Alex Marquez leads the race

"I can confirm it -- magic exists. We were nowhere before arriving here, nowhere near a podium, not even maybe a shot at the top five," Alex Marquez told DAZN, after a difficult start to the season.

Fabio Di Giannantonio finished third to complete the podium and rise to third in the overall standings, in what proved a relatively serene race in the sun after the chaotic and dramatic rain-lashed sprint on Saturday.

Last season's champion Marc Marquez won that after some quick thinking to change his bike, and started on pole yesterday, but came to grief on the 11th turn of the second lap, short-

ly after being overtaken by his brother Alex.

Pedro Acosta, who started the day third overall but dropped to fourth after coming in 10th, took some damage after contact with Raul Fernandez.

Bezzecchi stayed on Ducati-Gresini rider Alex Marquez's tail for a while but the Spaniard was too quick for him and eventually the Italian settled for holding onto second ahead of compatriot Di Giannantonio.

"Since Friday I went out and felt really good. It's not that we changed a huge amount, yes, a few small things, but not that much," added Alex Marquez.

Al Khaldiya lead as season enters final stretch

TDT | Manama

The 19th round of the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League begins tonight with two matches scheduled at 7pm, as the competition enters its final matchdays.

Al Khaldiya will face Al Hidd at Khalifa Sports City Stadium, while Al Ahli meet Sitra at Bahrain National Stadium.

The round continues on Tuesday with Al Shabab facing Bahrain Club and Al Malikiya taking on Al Najma, before concluding on Wednesday with Al Ahli against Riffa and Muharraq meeting Budaiya.

In the standout clash between Al Khaldiya and Al Hidd, league leaders Al Khaldiya will aim for a 16th win of the season to extend their lead at the top and pull further clear of nearest challengers Muharraq. Al Hidd, on 24 points, will be targeting a strong finish to the season as they look to improve their position in the table, currently sitting 6th.

In the other fixture tonight, Al Ahli faces Sitra in an important match for both sides. Al Ahli will be looking to reach 28 points and temporarily move into 4th place, while Sitra, sitting 10th with 18 points, need a result to distance themselves from the relegation playoff zone.

Ahead of the round, the standings are as follows: Al Khaldiya lead with 45 points, followed by Muharraq on 43, Riffa on 37, Al Malikiya on 27, Aali Club on 25, Hidd on 24, Al Ahli on 23, Budaiya on 21, Al Najma on 19, Sitra on 18, Al Shabab on 11, and Bahrain Club on 7.



Al Khaldiya's players in high spirits during Saturday's training session

Dar Kulaib Crowned Volleyball Champions



Dar Kulaib crowned champions alongside Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Volleyball Federation

TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib officially lifted the 2025-26 Isa Bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League title yesterday with a comfortable 3-0 win (25-14, 25-13, 25-20) over Al Dair, completing a perfect unbeaten season across 26 matches. The title had already been secured last Thursday following a straight-sets win over Ma'ameer, which mathematically confirmed the championship with one match still to play.

The triumph marks Dar Kulaib's fifth league title (2016, 2018, 2023, 2024, 2026), mov-

ing them level with Al Ahli on the all-time list, while Muharraq remain the clear leaders with 16.

Under head coach Ivan Joksimovic, the club has secured two league titles as well as the 2022-23 Crown Prince's Cup. The Montenegrin will leave his role at the end of the campaign to take charge of the Bahrain national team.

Dar Kulaib will next turn their attention to the HRH the Crown Prince's Cup, where they will enter the knockout stage directly in the quarter-finals as league champions.

Pogacar cracks teen Seixas to win 4th Liege-Bastogne-Liege



UAE Team Emirates-XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar (R) and Decathlon CMA-CGM Team's French rider Paul Seixas cycle

AFP | Liege

World champion Tadej Pogacar won a third straight Liege-Bastogne-Liege yesterday after a thrilling battle with teenage French sensation Paul Seixas.

Pogacar romped to his 13th Monument victory and fourth in total at La Doyenne after finally cracking Seixas with 14km to ride of the 260km slog through the Ardennes, halfway up the last of 11 punchy climbs along the route.

Seixas came home 45 seconds later with Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel winning the sprint for third place from a large group 1min 42sec back.

"It means a lot to win again one of the biggest races of the year," Pogacar told Belgian television at the finish line.

In what was only his fifth race this year, Pogacar claimed a fourth victory -- and three of those in Monuments -- while

his only blip was a second place behind Wout van Aert at Paris-Roubaix two weeks ago.

"I don't have a lot of opportunities to win because I don't race a lot," added Pogacar.

"So it's a lot of pressure for me to deliver on days like today."

"I'm really, really happy that we succeeded. I couldn't be more proud of the team."

But in 19-year-old Seixas, he now has a rival seemingly capable of pushing him to the limit.

"On the Redoute (climb) I was really going deep," said Pogacar.

"But on the top, he came next to me and I was like, okay, really impressed."

At that point, he expected Seixas to stay with him to the finish.

"Maybe back in my head, I was already preparing to do a duel sprint because he was so strong."

Rabada's 3-25 helps Gujarat thrash Chennai in IPL

AFP | Chennai

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada led a disciplined attack with figures of 3-25 to help Gujarat Titans hammer Chennai Super Kings by eight wickets in the IPL yesterday.

Pace bowler Rabada struck twice in his second over to set the tone for his team's domination as they restricted Chennai to 158-7 at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

Sai Sudharsan hit 87 off 46 balls to steer Gujarat home with 20 balls to spare as they bounced back after two defeats to move to fifth spot in the 10-team table.



Gujarat Titans' Kagiso Rabada (2L) celebrates with teammates

The top four teams at the end of the league stage will advance to the playoffs. Sudharsan and Shubman Gill,

who made 33, laid the foundation of the chase with a 58-run opening stand.

Afghanistan spinner Noor Ahmad struck in the seventh over to have Gill stumped thanks to Sanju Samson's quick glovework as he removed the bails with the batters' foot centimetres off the ground.

Sudharsan stood firm and put on a partnership of 97 with Jos Buttler, who made an unbeaten 39.

Dewald Brevis took a stunning catch in the deep to dismiss Sudharsan off Akeal Hosen with Gujarat needing four for victory and Buttler then hit the winning six.

Fernandez sends Chelsea into FA Cup final to lift gloom after Rosenior sacking

AFP | London

Enzo Fernandez fired Chelsea into the FA Cup final against Manchester City as the Argentine sealed a 1-0 win against Leeds in the Blues' first match after Liam Rosenior's sacking.

Fernandez's first-half header in yesterday's semi-final at Wembley was an ironic twist after another farcical chapter in Chelsea's turbulent recent history.

The 25-year-old midfielder emerged as a divisive figure towards the end of Rosenior's brief reign after he was dropped for two games for hinting in an interview that he was considering leaving at the end of the season.

Rosenior's handling of the



Chelsea's Argentinian midfielder #08 Enzo Fernandez (L) vies with Leeds United's Welsh midfielder #04 Ethan Ampadu (R)

incident undermined his already-fragile relationship with his squad as Chelsea's form spiralled out of control. He was sacked on Wednesday after a woeful run of five suc-

cessive defeats without scoring -- the club's worst streak since 1912 -- climaxed with Tuesday's 3-0 hammering at Brighton.

Rosenior, who lasted only 106 days after arriving from Strasbourg, had sealed his fate by criticising the players' desire and spirit against Brighton.

That outburst was the final straw for Chelsea's owners, exposing a rift between Rosenior and his stars that included leaked team selections and several players, including Fernandez, publicly expressing frustration with his predecessor Enzo Maresca's departure.

Chelsea's woeful run has ruined their bid to qualify for next season's Champions League, leaving them 10 points behind fifth-placed Aston Villa with just four games left.

Early halt to Bahrain's Beach Games momentum

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's men's beach handball national team suffered their first defeat at the Asian Beach Games yesterday, losing 2-0 to Iran in a closely fought Group A match, with both periods ending 18-16.

Despite the setback, Bahrain remain firmly in contention for a semi-final place and still control their qualification hopes ahead of today's final preliminary match against Hong Kong at 6am (Bahrain time).

Bahrain Handball Federation president Ali Eshaqi praised the team's performance after the match while calling for greater consistency. "We lost to a very strong side, but the performance was good. What matters now is maintaining this level. We cannot start well and drop off later. Whatever is written will happen," he said.

The opening period was evenly balanced, with both sides exchanging goals in a high-tempo contest. Bahrain struck first through Mahdi Ali, with much of their attacking play built around spin shots. Iran responded quickly through Ali Shirani Dastjerdi and Mohammadmahdi Heidarianpour, who punished Bahrain in transition.

Bahrain stayed competitive through Ali, Komail Mahfoodh, Adam Alnasheet, and Bilal Askani, and briefly led 14-12 after a strong attacking spell. However, Iran finished the period strongly to edge ahead 18-16.

The second period followed



Mehdi Ali fires at goal under pressure from Iran's Alipour

a similar pattern, with Bahrain again matching Iran for long stretches. Askani and Mahfoodh led the scoring effort, supported by Ali Alhayki and Alnasheet, as Bahrain stayed level at 14-14 midway through the half.

Iran, however, once again proved stronger in the closing stages. Ali Heidari and Heidarianpour combined to swing

momentum their way before sealing the period 18-16, despite a late penalty conversion from Mahfoodh. Heidarianpour finished as the standout performer with 14 goals, while Ali Heidari added 12 for Iran.

Bahrain's scoring was well distributed, with Askani, Mahfoodh, and Mahdi Ali each contributing eight goals, while

Alhayki and Alnasheet added four apiece.

The result leaves Group A finely poised. Iran remain unbeaten at the top, while Bahrain sit level on points with China. Both teams are now competing for the second semi-final qualification spot behind Iran heading into the final round of fixtures.

Bahrain training underway for GCC Games



Head coach Georgios Vovoras

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's basketball team has started training for the 4th GCC Games in Qatar next month, beginning a busy international year in 2026.

Head coach Georgios Vovoras led the first session with a 15-player group, as the team begins its build-up to the regional competition.

Bahrain Basketball Association president Shaikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa and vice-president Nader Al Awadhi attended the session and spoke to players about expectations heading into the tournament.

The current roster includes several of Bahrain's experienced internationals such as Ahmed Salman, Ahmed Al-derazi, Mohammed Buallay, Ali Jaber, Ahmed Bindayneh, Mahmood Abbas Isa, Mohammed Juma'a and Ali Hussain.

Younger players in the squad are Emran Ashkanani, Nader Ali, Hassan Ghareeb, Mohammed Ghazi, Mohammed Sami, Nader Shaker and Hassan Fadah.

Not included in the current list are national team regulars Mustafa Hussain, Muzamil Ameer, Wayne Chism, Maitham Jameel, Hesham Sarhan and Mohammed Ameer. It remains unclear whether any of them will join the squad at a later stage.

The GCC Games will take place in Doha from May 11 to 22, featuring 19 sports on the programme, with the Kingdom represented in multiple events including volleyball and handball.

The basketball tournament is the national team's first assignment of the year; they will also compete in the FIBA Asia Cup pre-qualifiers and the Asian Games in Japan later in the year.

Bahrain delivers solid 5km effort in Sanya

TDT | Manama

Bahrain opened its open water swimming campaign at the Asian Beach Games with a strong showing in the men's 5km race, held yesterday at Sanya Bay Haiyue Square.

The event featured some of Asia's top endurance swimmers, who tackled a demanding three-lap course where pacing, positioning, and tactical awareness proved just as important as speed in challenging open-water conditions.

China's Ziyang Zhang claimed the gold medal in 53:46.0, while Vietnam secured both remaining podium spots through Huy Hoang Nguyen (silver) and Tran Tuan Anh Mai (bronze) after a closely fought finish.

For Bahrain, Robert Bonsall delivered the standout performance of the day.

The Australian-born swimmer, who turned 23 on the eve of the race and won the 5km Western Australian State Championship in 2024, remained in contention throughout much of the competition.

He stayed with the leading pack for significant stretches and ultimately finished fourth



Robert Bonsall in action at Sanya Bay Haiyue Square



William Bolzano makes his way to the start of the swim

in 54:19.2, narrowly missing out on a medal.

Bonsall's race included an early setback after receiving a yellow flag during the first lap, a standard warning in open water swimming typically issued for minor infractions such as positioning or incidental contact. Although it carried no time penalty, it placed him under close observation for the remainder of the race. He responded well, regaining composure and maintaining a consistent pace through to the finish.

The Kingdom's second entrant, William Balzano, finished 21st in 1:02:03. Based in Bahrain, the Italian swimmer trains under national coach Farj Saleh and is part of the country's competitive swimming setup, including Riffa Aquatic and the Bahrain Elite Swim Team.

Balzano, 16, is experienced internationally, having previously finished runner-up at Oceanman Dubai and set multiple Bahraini records.

Despite difficult race conditions that saw several athletes struggle to complete the course within the time limit, he finished the event under physically demanding circumstances.