

'Very special' Parag powers Rajasthan to IPL win over Delhi

Riyan Parag's blistering knock leads Rajasthan to a thrilling 12-run win | P12

Drunk child killer set to face trial at High Criminal Court

TDI | Manama

The Chief of Family and Children Prosecution, Noor Shehab, has announced the completion of the investigation by the Public Prosecution into the incident of deliberate killing perpetrated by a drunk individual.

As a result of the thorough investigation, the Public Prosecution has made the decision to proceed with the case and has ordered the suspects to be sent to the High Criminal Court.

The incident traces back to a report received by the Public Prosecution from the Nabih Saleh Police Station, which operates under the Capital Governorate Police Directorate.

The report was filed by a lady of Asian origin, who sadly recounted the murder of her six-month-old son. The perpetrator, identified as a friend of her friend, during a visit to her residence, where she was taking care of the child, the intoxicated assailant, allegedly, started beating the child resulting in the loss of the innocent life.

Upon being notified of the incident, the Public Prosecution swiftly initiated an investigation.

\$3.7b invested in industrial zones

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The total registered investments in Bahrain's seven industrial zones have reached \$3.7 billion.

This was revealed by the Commerce and Industry Minister, His Excellency Abdullah Fakhro, as he addressed an inquiry submitted by Shura Council member Khalid Al Maskati.

The Minister said the zones currently house 851 industrial plots, 91% of which are leased. Only 9% of the total area remains available.

The zones cover a total of 14.5 million square metres spread across three governorates, namely the Southern Governorate, the Capital Governorate and the Northern Governorate.

HM King invites Arab leaders to Bahrain summit

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa extended invitations to Their Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses, the leaders of Arab countries, to participate in the thirty-third session of the Arab Summit, which will be held in Bahrain mid-May.

The ambassadors of the Kingdom of Bahrain accredited to Arab countries delivered the

invitations and conveyed the greetings of HM the King to the leaders of the Arab countries.

The Arab Summit hosted by Bahrain holds great significance as it is expected to drive forward joint Arab initiatives, strengthen coordination on regional and global issues, and support the efforts of Arab nations in their pursuit of progress and prosperity.

Since the announcement of



HM the King

The Arab Summit is expected to drive forward joint Arab initiatives, strengthen coordination on regional and global issues, and support the efforts of Arab nations for progress and prosperity.

hosting the Arab Summit in Bahrain at Jeddah Summit 2023, the Kingdom has diligently prepared for the upcoming summit. It has focused its efforts on ensuring the summit's success in achieving its goals of unifying ranks and enhancing the capabilities of Arab countries to effectively address challenges.

Securing progress with modern tech

HRH Prince Salman prioritises innovation for safer communities, criminal justice reform

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Security is an essential pillar of development, which requires a safe environment to achieve its set goals.

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, highlighted the importance of continuing to develop the Ministry of Interior's services and adopting the latest practices and modern technology aimed at enhancing community security and the development of the criminal justice system.

HRH Prince Salman made the statements as he hosted yesterday an iftar banquet for senior officers and officials of the Ministry of Interior, at the Public Security Officers' Club.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister highlighted the significant contributions of



HRH Prince Salman with H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa and senior government officials

the Ministry of Interior and its role as an integral part of Team Bahrain, working towards advancing the Kingdom's comprehensive development goals, led by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

His Royal Highness affirmed the ministry's pivotal role and the efforts of its personnel in

safeguarding public security, preserving rights, and enforcing the law.

He commended the Kingdom's advanced security efforts, as well as the achievements of the Ministry of Interior and its agencies.

In this regard, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister extended his gratitude to the Minister of Interior, His Excellency



General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, and the ministry's personnel.

Royal support

On behalf of the Ministry of Interior personnel, General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah expressed his gratitude to HRH the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister for his

support for Interior Ministry personnel.

The Minister wished His Royal Highness success in furthering the Kingdom's development, under the leadership of HM King Hamad.

He affirmed that the ministry is continuing its advancement within its modernisation strategy by increasing the competence of its personnel.

Qur'an champions honoured



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday met with several Bahrainis who won Holy Qur'an competitions abroad, at Riffa Palace. HRH Prince Salman highlighted the Kingdom's commitment and achievements in serving and preserving the Holy Qur'an, consolidating the Islamic faith, and disseminating the religion's moderation-based teachings and values amongst the community, thanks to the support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister highlighted that those who recite, memorise, and intone the Holy Qur'an are the pride of the Kingdom and key members of Team Bahrain. He congratulated the winners of the competitions and wished them success in their future endeavours.

Bahrain-Thailand ties



His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday received the outgoing Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Kingdom of Bahrain, His Excellency Piyapak Sricharoen, at Riffa Palace. HRH Prince Salman affirmed the longstanding Bahrain-Thailand relations, which has contributed to advanced levels of bilateral cooperation. He highlighted the importance of furthering multisector collaboration between the two countries to achieve mutual aspirations.



NBB Group Holds The Annual Shareholders Ordinary General Meeting



The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) Group successfully convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the 28th of March 2024 at the Gulf Hotel Convention Centre. The meeting was attended by the NBB Board of Directors, the NBB Group’s executive management team, shareholders, and representatives from the Central Bank of Bahrain (CBB), the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), the Bahrain Bourse, and external auditors from KPMG.

The AGM served as a platform to acknowledge NBB’s exceptional performance and strategic direction. NBB’s board of directors Chairman, Mr. Farouk Yousuf Khalil Almoayyed announced his departure from his role, along with three other Esteemed Board members; Mr. Fawzi Ahmed Ali Kanoo, Dr. Esam Abdulla Yousif Fakhro and Mr. Amin Ahmed Alarrayedh.

Mr. Farouk Yousuf Khalil Almoayyed, departing Chairman of the Board, expressed his pride in NBB’s achievements, stating, “This has been a thoroughly rewarding journey. Together, we steered NBB through a significant digital transformation, ensuring the Bank is well-equipped to navigate the future. Today, the Bank stands financially robust, employs a team of exceptional talent, and enjoys a strong reputation and are confident that we have laid a solid foundation for the newly appointed board to propel our successes even further. We extend our sincerest gratitude to all NBB stakeholders, especially the Bank’s employees, whose unwavering dedication has been instrumental in our journey. Their passion for NBB is truly inspiring, and we have no doubt it will continue to be a driving force in the Bank’s future.”

The outgoing Vice Chairman, Dr. Esam Abdulla Yousif Fakhro shared his perspective by stating, “It has been an honour to serve NBB. We focused on building a sustainable and innovative leader in the banking sector. NBB’s success belongs to all its stakeholders, and I commend the talented NBB team whose steadfast commitment has empowered the Bank’s tremendous growth over the years.”

Echoing Mr. Almoayyed’s sentiment, departing Vice Chairman Mr. Fawzi Ahmed Ali Kanoo said, “NBB’s journey has been one of continuous evolution. We prioritised fostering a culture of excellence and embracing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles. I am confident that NBB will continue to amplify its positive impact and shape the future of Bahrain’s banking sector.”

Concluding his term, departing Board member Mr. Amin Ahmed Alarrayedh remarked, “I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to NBB’s growth. Our ongoing focus on customer-centricity has been a cornerstone of our success. I have no doubt that NBB’s dedicated team will continue to deliver exceptional value to our customers.”

The AGM also applauded NBB’s strategic initiatives that align with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030, focusing on areas such as financial inclusion, fostering entrepreneurship, and supporting the development of key sectors. The Bank’s dedication to innovation and digital transformation was also reaffirmed, positioning NBB to be a key driver of Bahrain’s economic diversification and digital future.

NBB Welcomes Its New Board at the Annual General Meeting

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) announced the appointment of new members to its Board of Directors at its recent Shareholders Annual General Meeting (AGM).

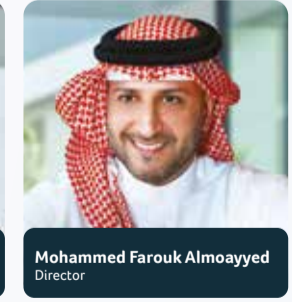
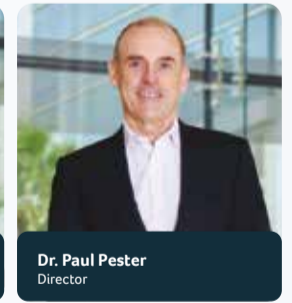
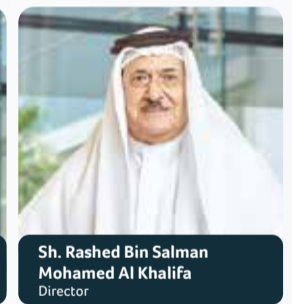
The distinguished new members will provide strategic direction and leadership to NBB as the Bank continues its growth trajectory and strengthens its position as a regional leader.

Marking a historic moment, NBB elected its first Chairwoman, Ms. Hala Ali Husain Yateem. Ms. Yateem has served 6 years on NBB’s Board and was also the Audit Committee’s Chairwoman. She brings a wealth of financial and technological experience and expertise to the helm.

Joining the new Chairwoman are prominent figures with proven track records in finance, technology, and business leadership. The new esteemed Board Members are Ahmed Fawzi Kanoo, Alaa Abdulkhaleq Saeed, Isa Hasan Maseeh and Mohammed Farouk Almoayyed.

Leveraging the foundation laid by the outgoing Chairman and Board members, the new leadership team will focus on further accelerating NBB’s progress and solidifying its domestic and regional presence.

NBB remains steadfast in its mission to deliver exceptional value to stakeholders and play a vital role in the Kingdom’s economic development, as envisioned in Bahrain’s Economic Vision 2030.



Scan here to view the biographies of the New Board Members

Sweet culinary legacy

Bahrain's oldest halwa shop in Manama Souq preserves traditions

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Located in the heart of Manama Souq, Bahrain's oldest halwa shop stands as a testament to the rich culinary heritage of the Kingdom.

Renowned for its traditional red halwa, this iconic shop has become a destination of choice for both locals and visitors, drawing patrons from across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

The halwa maker, Mahdi, affectionately known as Saeed by his customers, has dedicated himself to preserving Bahrain's culinary legacy.

One unique feature of his shop



Mahdi making red halwa



Old picture of halwa making in Manama souq

is the wall adorned with photographs of patrons, a heartfelt gesture of appreciation and love

towards his regular customers and friends.

"The pictures serve as a gift of

Mahdi shared in an interview with The Daily Tribune.

"By placing these photographs on our wall, we create a sense of connection and nostalgia, allowing future generations to witness their family's history when they visit our shop."

The shop sells traditional red halwa, known as "semen" in Arabic, made with ghee. It is priced between 2.5 to 6 Bahraini dinars. They also offer halwa made with oil, called "dehen" in Arabic, and packets of Mattai, a popular Arab snack.

To uncover the origins of this beloved treat, The Daily Tribune spoke with local guide Yunus, who shed light on the historical journey of halwa in Bahrain.

gratitude to our loyal customers, and it's a way for me to show my affection and appreciation,"

Drug bust nets over BD51,000 narcotics, multiple arrests

TDT | Manama

The General Directorate of Criminal Investigation has arrested several suspects - including a woman - on drug trafficking charges after seizing over 3kg of assorted narcotics worth approximately BD51,000.

In a statement, the anti-narcotics chief said intelligence reports led to coordinated raids that identified the culprits and recovered the illegal substances from their possession.

Additional evidence in the form of foreign currencies from suspected drug sales proceeds were also confiscated, he affirmed. Authorities have since catalogued and stored the contraband haul as criminal cases against the detainees are referred to public prosecutors.

As part of ongoing community partnerships, the directorate renewed appeals for tipsters to anonymously report any suspicious activities.

University of Technology Bahrain Supports Academic Research

TDT | Manama

University of Technology, Bahrain.

A collaborative research titled "Effect of leadership styles on turnover intention among staff nurses in private hospitals: The moderating effect of perceived organisational support" was published in the Springer Q1 Journal by the faculty of Uni-

versity of Technology, Bahrain. Dr Haitham Alqahtani, VP of Academic Affairs UTB, Dr Jayendra Shankar, Assistant Professor UTB, Dr Nidhi S Menon, Assistant Professor UTB, Dr Shabana Faizal, Assistant Professor UTB, and Dr Surabhila Patali completed the assignment.



From left, Dr Haitham Alqahtani, Dr Jayendra Shankar, Dr Nidhi S Menon and Dr Shabana Faizal



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E-Mail: licintl@licinternational.com
Website: www.licinternational.com

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	31 December 2023	(Restated) 31 December 2022	(Restated) 01 January 2022
	BD	BD	BD
Assets			
Intangible assets	29,404	4	4
Furniture and equipment	4,372	2,286	2,667
Right-of-use assets	11,989	18,844	26,210
Investments	370,466,320	415,481,564	622,612,694
Policy loans	4,323,504	4,436,206	4,740,263
Reinsurance contract receivable	159,450,472	167,980,991	11,922
Accrued interest income	8,941,283	10,363,249	9,525,703
Other assets	129,364	178,669	1,053,429
Statutory deposits	648,503	703,194	704,095
Term deposits with banks	71,364,219	90,869,605	116,143,699
Cash and cash equivalents	21,269,854	29,406,318	41,613,201
Total assets	636,639,284	719,440,930	796,433,887
Equity and liabilities			
Equity			
Share capital	65,439,300	65,439,300	65,439,300
Statutory reserve	7,771,644	7,771,644	7,771,644
Contingency reserve	232,192	232,192	228,580
Investments fair value reserve	(463,071)	(1,167,367)	(237,084)
Insurance finance reserve	78,988,878	96,153,767	-
Reinsurance reserve	12,887	-	-
Accumulated losses	(99,749,314)	(85,046,122)	(14,415,000)
Total equity	52,232,516	83,383,414	58,787,440
Liabilities			
Employees' end-of-service indemnity	41,822	29,969	36,094
Lease liabilities	13,527	20,740	28,127
Amounts due to related parties	119,477	86,234	188,476
Insurance contract liabilities	580,521,433	633,089,110	733,834,277
Zakat and tax provisions	287,356	300,010	300,010
Reinsurance contracts liabilities	77,626	80,154	110,980
Other liabilities	3,345,527	2,451,299	3,148,483
Total liabilities	584,406,768	636,057,516	737,646,447
Total equity and liabilities	636,639,284	719,440,930	796,433,887

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	31 December 2023	(Restated) 31 December 2022
	BD	BD
Insurance revenue	105,617,230	46,984,569
Insurance service expenses	(127,158,073)	(101,269,519)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contract held (a)	(21,540,843)	(54,284,950)
Allocation of reinsurance premium paid	(156,943)	(288,939)
Amounts recoverable from reinsurers	-	574,595
Net expenses from reinsurance contracts held(b)	(156,943)	285,656
Insurance service result (a+b)	(21,697,786)	(53,999,294)
Net finance expenses from insurance contracts issued	(22,093,843)	(20,464,913)
Net financial result (c)	(22,093,843)	(20,464,913)
Net financial results from insurance operations(a+b+c)	(43,791,629)	(74,464,207)
Unrealised gain/(loss) on investments at FVTPL	3,460,412	(17,437,450)
Realised income from investments	28,917,959	31,214,217
Impairment reversal/(loss) on investment securities, net	176,427	(7,419,402)
Income from investments (d)	32,554,798	6,357,365
Net insurance financial result and income from investments (a+b+c+d)	(11,236,831)	(68,106,842)
General and administrative expenses	(1,413,257)	(1,732,404)
Reinsurance fee	(1,317,172)	(791,196)
Other income	696,884	566,385
Transfer to Actuarial reserve to LIC India	(930,320)	(667,076)
Other expenses	(453,854)	111,208
Loss before zakat and income tax	(14,654,550)	(70,619,925)
Zakat and income tax expense	(35,755)	(7,585)
Loss for the year	(14,690,305)	(70,627,510)
Other comprehensive (loss)/income to be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Net change in fair value of investment at FVOCI during the year	704,296	(930,283)
Net finance (expenses)/income from insurance contracts issued	(17,164,889)	96,153,767
Other comprehensive (loss)/income for the year	(16,460,593)	95,223,484
Total comprehensive(loss)/income for the year	(31,150,898)	24,595,974

A Company incorporated in the Kingdom of Bahrain (C.R. No. - 21606) and licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain as a Life Insurance Company with paid-up capital of BD65,439,300.

The financial information has been audited by M/s Grant Thornton Abdulaal. A copy of the report and financial information will be available at the registered office of the Company. The financial information was approved by Board of Directors and signed on their behalf by:

Mr. Siddhartha Mohanty
Chairman

Mr. Debashis Prasad Pattanaik
CEO & Executive Director

From Bahrain to Copenhagen

Export Bahrain hosts Bahrain's Creative Business Cup 2024 in collaboration with BDB and The Collective Hub

TDT | Manama

Export Bahrain announces hosting Bahrain's Creative Business Cup 2024 in collaboration with Bahrain Development Bank and The Collective Hub to support and empower Bahrain's entrepreneurial ecosystem and showcase its creative potential on a global stage.

The competition will take place on April 17, 2024 at the Collective Hub, with a focus on promoting startups in sectors such as Creative Industries, Sustainable Development, and Social Impact.

The Creative Business Cup is an esteemed annual global competition that attracts participants from over 80 countries worldwide. It serves as a platform for

creative and innovative startups to connect, compete, and gain exposure. With a history spanning 12 years, the competition has become a cornerstone in promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable development.

The competition will include a panel of experts to assess and select 10 founders from Bahrain, who will proceed to compete in front of a jury on April 17th, 2024. The selected startups will then pitch and present their innovative ideas and business models. The winner of Bahrain's Creative Business Cup 2024 will earn the opportunity to represent the Kingdom at the CBC Global Finals in Copenhagen in June 2024.

"We are excited to host the National Creative Business



Mr. Nawaf AlKoheji

Cup in Bahrain," said Mrs. Safa Akhaliq, CEO of Export Bahrain.

"This event presents a unique opportunity for Bahraini entrepreneurs to showcase their creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial



Mrs. Dalal Al Qais

spirit and present it on a global scale. We believe that supporting local entrepreneurship is essential for driving economic growth and prosperity in Bahrain."

"We are proud to partner with



Mrs. Safa Akhaliq

Export Bahrain to further support Bahrain's vibrant startup ecosystem," said Mrs. Dalal Al Qais, CEO of Bahrain Development Bank. "Through initiatives like the National Creative

Business Cup, we aim to nurture Bahrain's creative talent, promote innovation, and empower startups to reach internationalization."

Mr. Nawaf AlKoheji, CEO of Tenmou and The Collective Hub, emphasized the importance of supporting startup initiatives in Bahrain, stating, "Bahrain's Creative Business Cup 2024 is a testament of our commitment to foster entrepreneurship as we contribute to the growth and diversification of Bahrain's economy, making it an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and investors alike."

For more information and to register for the competition, please visit Export Bahrain Social Media accounts or visit our website export.bh.



Stylish Mazda at unbeatable prices during the holy month

Special Ramadan offers on new Mazda vehicles

TDT | Manama

International Motor Trading Agency, the sole authorized distributor for Mazda passenger vehicles in Bahrain, announces the launch of exceptional Ramadan offers on new 2024 models, exemplifying its commitment to delivering unparalleled customer service and value.

Suzan Salman Kanoo, President of IMTA, expressed her enthusiasm about the promotion, stating, "This year, we are thrilled to unveil our exclusive Ramadan deals. Our offers not only boast competitiveness but also deliver superior value, ensuring our beloved customers can drive home a brand new, stylish Mazda at unbeatable prices during this auspicious month."

IMTA Vice President, K.N. SINGH added: "Mazda vehicles excel in combining style, performance, safety and comfort seamlessly. This year, our Ramadan offers are created to offer unparalleled savings, value and stress-free after-sales services to our valuable customers. We welcome customers to our showrooms across Bahrain to capitalise on our special deals. Frankly speaking, we're thrilled with the response so far. Many customers have already secured their cars as we launched our Ramadan offers earlier than usual this year, starting in mid-February."

The Mazda brand has experienced remarkable growth in the GCC region, with Bahrain emerging as a pivotal market. This is evidenced by Mazda Bahrain (IMTA) receiving the prestigious highest volume growth award for 2023 by Mazda Corporation, Japan. Renowned for its ability to cater to the diverse needs of modern families and driving



Prospective buyers are welcome to visit their nearest Mazda showroom for more information

enthusiasts alike, Mazda stands out for its insightful solutions and driving pleasure.

Competitive pricing on the new 2024 Mazda models and special auto finance rate of interest makes it easier to drive home your dream Mazda.

Complimentary 5-year or 100,000kms service package ensures peace of mind for years to come, while free extended warranty for 7 years enhances protection and confidence in the investment.

IMTA experts simplify the ownership process with complimentary insurance and registration services. Drive comfortably during harsh climate and boost the aesthetics of your vehicle with Mazda's complimentary window tinting and rust-proofing treatments.

Due to limited stock and high demand, interested individuals are encouraged to secure their Mazda early to avoid disappointment. This limited-time offer is valid until the end of Ramadan. During this period, customers have the opportunity to book their favorite Mazda and secure the offer for later deliveries. Terms and conditions apply.

Prospective buyers are welcome to visit their nearest Mazda showroom for more information.

Call Arad on 17 875 799, Sitra on 17 706 010, and Whats app Tubli on 17 875 777.

Additionally, customers can explore the latest Mazda models and features by visiting the website <http://mazda.kekanoo.com>



BNP PARIBAS

BNP PARIBAS - CONVENTIONAL RETAIL BANK - BAHRAIN BRANCH

(Licensed as a Conventional Retail Bank by the Central Bank of Bahrain)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Statement of financial position
(Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)

	At 31 December 2023	2022
ASSETS		
Cash and balances with banks and the Central Bank	6,468	14,647
Placements with banks	44,300	59,500
Due from other offices of the Bank	56,156	15,990
Financial assets at amortised cost	13,565	17,835
Loans and advances to banks	4,733	5,710
Loans and advances to customers	2,577	3,718
Other assets	875	1,098
Furniture and equipment	22	3
Total assets	128,696	118,501
LIABILITIES		
Due to other offices of the Bank	4,186	251
Due to customers	51,482	50,876
Other liabilities	20,486	19,574
Total liabilities	76,154	70,701
Net residual attributable to Head Office	52,542	47,800

Statement of comprehensive income
(Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)

	Year ended 31 December 2023	2022
Interest income	8,288	3,111
Interest expense	(1,151)	(162)
Net interest income	7,137	2,949
Fees and commissions - income	569	949
(Loss) / gain on derivatives and foreign exchange transactions	(31)	41
Total operating income	7,675	3,939
Operating expenses		
Staff costs	(661)	(691)
Depreciation	(7)	(6)
Premises and equipment costs	(28)	(49)
Other operating expenses	(1,279)	(1,324)
Provision for expected credit losses on loans and advances to banks and placements with banks	(44)	(31)
Reversal in provision for expected credit losses on financial assets at amortised cost	18	60
(Provision for) / reversal in expected credit losses on loans and advances to customers	(468)	2,362
Provision for expected credit losses on guarantees	(460)	(195)
Total operating expenses	(2,929)	126
Increase in net residual attributable to Head Office from operations	4,746	4,065

Statement of comprehensive income (continued)
(Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)

	Year ended 31 December 2023	2022
Increase in net residual attributable to Head Office from operations	4,746	4,065
Other comprehensive loss for the year:		
Items that are or may be reclassified in subsequent periods to profit or loss:		
Loss on cash flow hedges	(7)	-
Remeasurement gain/(loss) on employees' retirement benefits	3	(6)
Other comprehensive loss for the year	(4)	(6)
Total comprehensive income for the year	4,742	4,059

Statement of cash flows
(Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)

	Year ended 31 December 2023	2022
Cash flows from operating activities		
Increase in net residual attributable to Head Office from operations	4,746	4,065
Adjustments for:		
Provision for employees' retirement benefits	15	11
Provision for expected credit losses on loans and advances to banks and placements to banks	44	31
Reversal in provision for expected credit losses on financial assets at amortised cost	(18)	(60)
Provision for / (reversal in) expected credit losses on loans and advances to customers	468	(2,362)
Provision for expected credit losses on guarantees	460	195
Depreciation	7	6
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Balances with the Central Bank	95	(232)
Loans and advances to banks	933	(2,594)
Loans and advances to customers	673	5,996
Other assets	223	(781)
Due to other offices of the Bank	3,935	(5,469)
Due to customers	606	5,563
Other liabilities	440	150
Net cash generated from operating activities	12,627	4,519
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of furniture and equipment	(26)	-
Purchase of financial assets at amortised cost	(14,162)	(50,345)
Maturities of financial assets at amortised cost	18,443	82,173
Net cash generated from investing activities	4,255	31,828
Net Increase in cash and cash equivalents	16,882	36,347
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	89,347	53,000
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	106,229	89,347

Rami Falah
General Manager

Abid Hussain
Chief Financial Officer - MEA

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company AGM approves 25pc cash dividend

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Kuwait Insurance Company (BKIC) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the financial year 2023 on Thursday at the Company's Head office in Seef District with a quorum of 86.20 per cent, and in the presence of representatives of the relevant regulatory authorities.

The General Assembly approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute a cash dividend of 25pc equivalent



Murad Ali Murad, Chairman



Dr. Abdulla Sultan, CEO

to 25 fils per share amounting to BD 3,726,095 (excluding the treasury shares). The General Assembly also approved the

rest of the agenda items of this meeting.

Murad Ali Murad, Chairman, stated in his report that having

collaborated more extensively within the consideration for the current environment and the expected trends ahead, the Board alongside the Management have implemented sound insurance, investment, and operational strategies with the main objective of strengthening both the market and the financial position.

The financial results for 2023, based on the new IFRS17 standards, indicate a decline of 12% compared to last year's reinstated results due to changes in

accounting assumptions which resulted in a one-time exceptional increase in 2022 reinstated results.

The company achieved earnings of 34 fils per share compared to restated 38 fils in 2022. Total comprehensive income attributable to the shareholders for the year stood at BD 5.59 million compared to BD 4.49M in 2022, showing an increase of 24pc. The total shareholders' equity as at end of December 2023 is BD 44.23M compared to BD 42.48M (restated) as at

end of last year, representing an increase of 4pc. Investment income driven by the company's strategy to restructure the investment portfolio to earn optimum returns increased by 50pc.

Dr. Abdulla Sultan, CEO, said that despite the challenges faced by the company in 2023, BKIC continued affirming its lead position in the local market and maintained its strong presence in Kuwait by achieving the historical records on growth, profitability and returns to shareholders.

BBK holds general meetings, board elects new chairman

TDI | Manama

Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) convened its Ordinary General Meeting on Wednesday at Al Dana Hall in Gulf Hotel, during which all recommendations put forth by the Bank's Board of Directors were duly endorsed.

During the meeting, the Bank's shareholders unanimously approved all items on the agenda of the Ordinary General Meeting.

This included the endorsement of the minutes from the previous Ordinary General Meeting held on March 28, 2023, as well as the approval of the Board of Directors' report on the Bank's activities for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023.

Subsequently, BBK convened an Extraordinary General Meeting where the shareholders ratified the minutes of the previous meeting held on March 28, 2023.

Empowering the Board

The shareholders empowered the Board of Directors, or its designee, to undertake all necessary procedures with the relevant authorities in the Kingdom of Bahrain to secure the official approvals essential for amending the Articles of Association.

After the conclusion of the Ordinary and Extraordinary General Meeting, BBK's Board of Directors assembled and elect-

ed Tariq Jaleel AlSaffar as the Chairman of the Bank's Board of Directors.

Before assuming the role of Chairman, AlSaffar held memberships in BBK's Risk Committee, the Audit and Compliance Committee, the Nomination, Remuneration, and Governance Committee, as well as the Bank's Independent Board Committee.

BBK announced that Mohammed Abdulrahman Hussain, a Board Member, has tendered

his resignation from his position due to personal reasons.

BBK also announced the appointment of replacements for departing members to its Board of Directors, Munther Abdulaziz Al-Kooheji and Dr. Ghania Mohsen Al-Derazi.

Tariq AlSaffar, Chairman of BBK, expressed his profound pride in gaining the trust and confidence of the Bank's Board of Directors and the shareholders' representatives.



Tariq Jaleel AlSaffar, Chairman of Board of Directors



Shareholders vote for the newly appointed board members



Farouk Almoayyed - Chairman of the Board, NBB



Usman Ahmed, Group CEO and Dr. Esam Fakhro, Deputy Chairman

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM) yesterday at the Gulf Convention Center. Above, (From left to right) Zaid Khalid Abdulrahman - Director, Amin Al - Director, Hala Ali Husain Yateem - Chairwoman, Usman Ahmed - Group Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Esam Fakhro - Deputy Chairman, Farouk Almoayyed - Chairman of the Board (Pic credit - Ashen Tharaka)

HBL حبيب بنك البحرين HABIIB BANK LIMITED		Retail Branch - Kingdom of Bahrain	
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 31 December 2023		STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the year ended 31 December 2023	
	(Bahraini Dinar '000')		(Bahraini Dinar '000')
	2023	2023	2022
Assets		Interest income	6,629
Cash and balances with the Central Bank of Bahrain	22,420	Interest expense	(3,873)
Placements and balances with banks	14,070	Net interest income	2,756
Investments	18,264	Other operating income	432
Loans and advances	46,339	Net operating income	3,188
Equipment	62	Staff expenses	(911)
Other assets	1,125	Depreciation	(111)
Total assets	102,280	Other operating expenses	(624)
Liabilities and head office funds		Total operating expenses	(1,646)
Liabilities		Profit before impairment provision	1,542
Deposit from other offices of the Bank	453	Charge for impairment provision - net	(1,425)
Deposits from customers	89,102	Profit (Loss) for the year	117
Short-term borrowings	-	Other comprehensive income	
Other liabilities	3,716	Items that are or may be reclassified in subsequent periods to profit or loss:	
Total liabilities	93,271	Net change in fair value of debt investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	5,182
Head office funds		Total comprehensive income for the year	5,299
Capital contribution	2,754		(8,679)
Reserve	1,500	STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN HEAD OFFICE FUNDS For the year ended 31 December 2023	
Unremitted profit	6,282		(Bahraini Dinar '000')
Fair value reserve	(1,527)	2023	
Total head office funds	9,009	As at 1 January 2023	2,000
Total liabilities and head office funds	102,280	Additional Capital Contribution	754
		Comprehensive income	
		Profit for the year	-
		Other comprehensive income	
		Items that are or may be reclassified in subsequent periods to profit or loss:	
		Net change in fair value of debt investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	5,182
		Total comprehensive income for the year	5,182
			5,299
		At 31 December 2023	2,754
			1,500
			6,282
			(1,527)
			9,009
			(Bahraini Dinar '000')
		2022	
		As at 1 January 2022	2,000
		Comprehensive income (Loss) for the year	-
		Other comprehensive income	
		Items that are or may be reclassified in subsequent periods to profit or loss:	
		Net change in fair value of debt investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	(7,525)
		Total comprehensive income for the year	(7,525)
			(8,679)
		At 31 December 2022	2,000
			1,500
			6,165
			(6,709)
			2,956

Note: The above figures have been extracted from the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 which were approved for issue by the management on 28 March 2024 and which were audited by KPMG Fakhro, who expressed an unqualified opinion.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the year ended 31 December 2023		(Bahraini Dinar '000')	
	2023	2022	
Cash flow from operating activities			
Profit / (loss) for the year	117	(1,154)	
Adjustment for:			
Depreciation	111	117	
Charge for impairment provision	1,425	2,550	
Profit before changes in operating assets and liabilities	1,653	1,513	
Working capital adjustments:			
Mandatory reserve with the CBB	135	(1,206)	
Loans and advances	1,950	(1,254)	
Other assets	(92)	(87)	
Deposits from customers	1,662	3,166	
Deposit from other offices of the Bank	7	337	
Other liabilities	1,932	108	
Placements with original maturity of more than 90 days	-	(1,508)	
Net cash generated from operating activity	7,247	1,069	
Cash flow from investing activities			
Purchase of investments	-	(1,709)	
Proceeds from sale / maturity of investments	4,230	8,139	
Purchase of equipment	(34)	(78)	
Net cash generated from investing activities	4,196	6,352	
Cash flow from financing activities			
Payment of lease liability	(73)	(101)	
Short-term borrowings	(754)	(16,588)	
Capital Contribution	754	-	
Net cash used in financing activities	(73)	(16,689)	
Increase/(Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents during the year	11,370	(9,268)	
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	14,925	24,193	
Cash and cash equivalent at the end of the year	26,295	14,925	

News in brief

Thailand sounds alarm after anthrax outbreak in Laos



◆ Thailand ordered a close watch on livestock yesterday after an outbreak of anthrax in neighbouring Laos, where more than 50 suspected human cases have been reported. Anthrax, which spreads through bacteria in soil, commonly infects grazing livestock and wild animals but can infect humans and be deadly in some cases. Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has ordered officials to closely monitor the disease and to "protect the public". Humans can become infected by breathing in the spores, eating contaminated food or touching bacteria with broken skin, for instance when handling diseased animals.

◆ The Bidens' dogs grabbed headlines with their bad behavior, but "First Feline" Willow is getting a book all to herself. First Lady Jill Biden has written a children's story about the short-haired tabby's journey from a farm in Pennsylvania to the White House in 2022. With a June publication date, "Willow the White House Cat" will come out four months before President Joe Biden faces a bitter political catfight for reelection with Donald Trump.

Jill Biden writes children's book about 'First Feline' Willow



Colombia expels Argentine diplomats over Milei 'terrorist' remarks



◆ Colombia said Wednesday it had ordered the expulsion of Argentine diplomats, after President Javier Milei called his Colombian counterpart Gustavo Petro a "terrorist" and "murderer.". Colombia's foreign ministry cited Milei's "denigrating" remarks, which were made in an interview with CNN which has not yet been aired in full. "The Argentine president's comments have deteriorated the trust of our nation, in addition to offending the dignity of President Petro, who was democratically elected," the ministry said in a statement.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

New Zealand's Maori King calls for whales to be given personhood



Rescuers retrieve the carcass of a stranded fin whale in Christchurch (file photo)
AFP | Wellington

The King of New Zealand's Indigenous Maori people made an impassioned call yesterday for whales to be granted the same legal rights as people in a bid to protect the hallowed yet vulnerable species. Kiingi Tuheitia Potatau te Wherowhero VII said that majestic marine mammals should be given inherent human rights, such as having a healthy environment, to allow the restoration of their populations. "The sound of our ancestor's song has grown weaker, and her habitat is under threat, which is why we must act now," King Tuheitia said in a rare public statement. New Zealand has previously passed laws granting legal status to natural features such as rivers and mountains that are important to the Maori people. The Mount Taranaki volcano and Whanganui River, both in New Zealand's North Island, are seen by the Maori as both ancestors and of spiritual importance. They were both granted personhood in 2017.

The status has since been invoked to slow or overturn development projects and to force consultation with local groups. King Tuheitia said granting whales the same status would act as "a cloak of protection for our taonga (treasure), our ancestor -- the whales." The statement was jointly issued with the high chief of the neighbouring Cook Islands, Travel Tou Ariki. The leaders are advocating for Indigenous knowledge to be combined with science for a "more holistic approach" to whale conservation. Establishing protected marine areas would be a "crucial" step, they added. The leaders want Polynesian nations who share "a love for the vast Pacific Ocean" to help. "We can no longer turn a blind eye," high chief Travel Tou Ariki said. "Whales play a vital role in the health of our entire ocean ecosystem. Their decline disrupts the delicate balance that sustains all life in Te Moana (the sea)." "We must act with urgency to protect these magnificent creatures before it's too late."

French bill seeks to ban hair discrimination affecting black women



French former government spokesperson Sibeth Ndiaye, hairstyle was disparaged online, speaks in parliament (file photo)
AFP | Paris

Four people, including a teenage girl, were killed and at least five injured after a man went on a stabbing spree at multiple addresses in the US state of Illinois, police have said. The stabbings took place on Wednesday afternoon, Rockford city police said in a statement, adding that a 22-year-old suspect was taken into custody. The statement did not say anything about a possible motive. Rockford is located about 90 miles northwest of Chicago. Those killed included a 15-year-old girl, a 63-year-old woman and two men aged 49 and 22, according to the police. The police statement said that five people had been wounded, but US media later cited the police saying seven wounded.

Battles, bombardment
Israel reschedules talks

Tensions rise as airstrikes persist despite calls for

Israeli PM faces mounting criticism over civilian casualties and dire conditions

AFP | Gaza

Battles and bombardment pounded the Gaza Strip yesterday, after Washington said Israel agreed to reschedule cancelled talks with tensions worsening between the allies. United States criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has mounted over Gaza's civilian death toll, dire food shortages, and Israeli plans to push its ground offensive against Hamas into the far-southern city of Rafah, which is packed with displaced civilians. World leaders have warned against a Rafah offensive which they fear would worsen an already catastrophic humanitarian situation for the Palestinian territory's 2.4 million residents. The United Nations reported late Wednesday that famine "is ever closer to becoming a reality



A man walks with a bicycle loaded with blankets and cushions past destroyed buildings along a street in Gaza City

in northern Gaza," and said the territory's health system is collapsing "due to ongoing hostilities and access constraints." Bombardment and fighting have continued despite a binding United Nations Security Council resolution passed on Monday demanding an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza and the release of hostages held by Hamas. Netanyahu scrapped an Israeli visit to Washington to discuss the Rafah plan, in protest of the UN ceasefire resolution from which

the United States abstained, allowing it to pass. Netanyahu's government has since backtracked and agreed "to reschedule the meeting dedicated to Rafah", according to White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre. She added that they were working to find a "convenient date". US officials say they plan to present Israel with an alternative for Rafah, focused on striking Hamas targets while limiting the civilian toll.

Exercise Tiger Triumph: Indian, US forces train together for joint sub-conventional Operations in HADR

ANI | Visakhapatnam

As part of the Exercise Tiger Triumph, Indian Army, US Marines and US Army National Guard train together for joint sub-conventional operations in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief scenario. In a post on X, Indian Army stated, "Exercise #TigerTriumph 2024 Witness the synergy as #IndianArmy, #USMarines and #USArmy National Guard train together for joint sub-conventional operations in Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief #HADR scenarios. Collaboration at its finest, ensuring swift and effective response in times of crisis." Exercise 'Tiger Triumph 2024', a bilateral, triservice exercise, is being held India and the US. The harbour phase of the exercise is ongoing in Vishakhapatnam. The opening ceremony of the exercise took place onboard INS Jalashwa on March 19. Robust strategic partnership "The exercise represents the robust strategic partnership between both countries and aims to share best practices and Standard Operating Procedures in undertaking multinational HADR operations," the Ministry of Defence said in an official release. "The Harbour Phase of the exercise is being conducted at Visakhapatnam from March 18-25 and will include pre-sail discussions, Subject Matter Expert Exchange on professional



Indian Army, US Marines, US Army train together during Exercise Tiger Triumph

subjects and deliberations on planning and execution procedures of various tasks. Sports engagements are also scheduled as a part of the drills to enhance the camaraderie between the defence forces of India and the US. "Sports engagements are also scheduled to further enhance camaraderie between the participating armed forces personnel of both nations. The Sea phase, from 26 to 31 Mar 24, would include units of both countries setting up a joint Command and Control Centre and a Joint Relief and Medical Camp," the official release read. Significantly, the participating units from the Indian Navy include a Landing Platform Dock, Landing Ship Tanks (Large) including their integral

Landing Crafts and helicopters, guided missile Frigate and Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft. The Indian Army is being represented by one infantry battalion group, including mechanised forces, whereas the Indian Air Force has deployed its medium-lift aircraft, transport helicopters and a Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT). Additionally, the Special Ops Forces from all three services are participating in the exercise. Meanwhile, the US Task Force comprises a US Navy Landing Platform Dock, including its integral Landing Craft Air Cushions and helicopters, a destroyer, maritime reconnaissance and medium lift aircraft, and, as well as Marines.

Four killed in US stabbing spree



Police officers on scene after the stabbing
AFP | Chicago

Four people, including a teenage girl, were killed and at least five injured after a man went on a stabbing spree at multiple addresses in the US state of Illinois, police have said. The stabbings took place on Wednesday afternoon, Rockford city police said in a statement, adding that a 22-year-old suspect was taken into custody. The statement did not say anything about a possible motive. Rockford is located about 90 miles northwest of Chicago. Those killed included a 15-year-old girl, a 63-year-old woman and two men aged 49 and 22, according to the police. The police statement said that five people had been wounded, but US media later cited the police saying seven wounded.

845

Paris is sacked by Viking raiders, probably under Ragnar Lodbrok, who collects a huge ransom in exchange for leaving

1549

The city of Salvador da Bahia, the first capital of Brazil, is founded



1901

Edmund Barton is elected Prime Minister in Australia's first parliamentary election

1947

Chinese farmers discover the Terracotta Army near Xi'an, 8,000 clay warrior statues buried to guard the tomb of China's 1st emperor, Qin Shi Huang

ent in Gaza as talks with US

ceasefire and humanitarian



Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles have also massed around the Nasser Hospital, the health ministry said, adding that shots were fired but no raid had yet been launched

The war began when Hamas launched an unprecedented October 7 attack that resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 32,490 people, most of them women and children, according to the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

The health ministry, in a preliminary toll issued early yesterday, said 66 people were killed overnight.

Fighting continued around three of the Strip's hospitals, raising fears for patients, medical staff and displaced people inside them.

The Al-Amal hospital in Khan Yunis, near Rafah, "has ceased to function completely", the Palestine Red Crescent said earlier this week, following the evacuation of civilians from the medical centre.

Israel's military accuses Hamas fighters of hiding in medical facilities and using civilians as shields.

Early yesterday, the army said Hamas had been firing on troops "from within and outside the emergency ward at Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City."

Troops began raiding Al-Shifa early last week, and on Wednesday night carried out an air strike on the emergency ward "while avoiding harm to civilians, patients, and medical teams," the army said.

The UN has reported "intensive exchanges of fire between the Israeli military and armed Palestinians". It cited the health ministry as saying the army has confined medical staff and patients to one building, not allowing them to leave.

Marcos says Philippines will not be 'cowed into silence' by China

AFP | Manila

President Ferdinand Marcos said yesterday the Philippines will not be "cowed into silence" by Beijing after confrontations in the South China Sea that injured Filipino troops and damaged vessels.

Marcos's remarks came as China blamed the Philippines for raising tensions in the hotly contested waterway, which Beijing claims almost entirely.

Beijing and Manila have a long history of maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea and there have been repeated confrontations between their vessels near disputed reefs in recent months.

Manila summoned a Chinese envoy over the latest incident near Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which occurred last Saturday during a Philippine mission to resupply troops garrisoned on the BRP Sierra Madre, a grounded navy ship.

The Philippines said the China Coast Guard blocked its supply vessel and damaged it with water cannon, injuring three soldiers.

The China Coast Guard has defended its actions, describing them as "lawful regulation, interception and expulsion" of a foreign vessel that "tried to forcefully intrude" into Chinese waters.

Beijing has urged Manila



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos inspecting a high mobility artillery rocket system (file photo)



We seek no conflict with any nation, more so nations that purport and claim to be our friends but we will not be cowed into silence, submission, or subservience

FERDINAND MARCOS

to "pull back from the brink" and stop "provoking trouble at sea", but Marcos hit back yesterday.

"We seek no conflict with any nation, more so nations that purport and claim to be our friends but we will not be cowed into silence, submission, or subservience," Marcos said in a statement.

He said the Philippines would respond with a "countermeasure package that is proportionate, deliberate, and reasonable in the face of the open, unabating, and illegal, coercive, aggressive, and dangerous attacks by agents of the China Coast Guard and the Chinese Maritime Militia".

"Filipinos do not yield," Marcos said.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims from other countries, including the Philippines, as well as an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Among the claimants, China has been the most assertive, deploying ships to patrol the waters and building artificial islands which it has militarised.

Bhutanese government confers highest civilian award on Narendra Modi

AFP | New Delhi

The Bhutanese government on Friday conferred Order of the Druk Gyalpo, the highest civilian honour of the Himalayan nation, on visiting Indian PM Narendra Modi.

He posted on X: "Honoured to be conferred with 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' Award by Bhutan. I dedicate it to 140 crore Indians."

He is the first foreign head of government to receive the honour.

Earlier, Modi thanked people of Bhutan and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay for the 'warm welcome' he received at the airport after reaching the country.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) and Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck during a meeting

Modi will be visiting Bhutan from March 22 to March 23.

"The visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and

After his arrival in Bhutan, the Indian PM posted on X: "Thank you for the warm welcome to Bhutan, PM @tsheringtobgay. May India-Bhutan friendship keep scaling new heights."

During the visit, the Prime Minister will receive audience with King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan.

The Prime Minister will also hold talks with the Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay.

Prime Minister will inaugurate the Gyaltshuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital in Thimphu, a state-of-the-art hospital, built with the assistance of the Government of India in Thimphu.

Japan drugmaker reports two more deaths in supplement scare



People enter to the Kobayashi Pharmaceutical's annual general meeting of shareholders in Osaka

AFP | Tokyo

A Japanese drugmaker whose dietary supplements are at the centre of a growing health scare reported yesterday two more deaths potentially related to its tablets.

Last week, Kobayashi Pharmaceutical recalled three supplement brands -- "Beni Koji Choleste Help" and two others -- after customer complaints of kidney problems.

The over-the-counter products contain an ingredient called red yeast rice, or "beni koji", which is supposed to help lower cholesterol. Yesterday's announcement brings the total number of deaths under investigation by the company and health ministry to four, with more than 100 other people hospitalised.

"We were told yesterday by a bereaved family that a person who had been using Choleste Help had passed away due to kidney disease," the drugmaker said in a statement.

It added it had been told separately that another person who had used Choleste Help in recent years had died.

"We are in the process of confirming the facts and causal relationships in both of these cases," the statement said.

Macron and Lula's 'bromance' sets social media fans alight

AFP | Rio De Janeiro

Wedding photos or a diplomatic visit? The apparent "bromance" between French President Emmanuel Macron and his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has set social media fans alight.

During his three-day visit to Brazil, 46-year-old Macron was pictured smiling and warmly embracing Lula, 78, during a trip to the Amazonian rainforest.

Many of the images have since circulated wildly among social media users in Brazil alongside montages and witty comments.

One picture showing the leaders raising their arms underneath a large tree has been



Brazil President Lula and French President Emmanuel Macron hold hands as they share a bilateral meeting while sailing at Guajara Bay off Belem, Brazil

edited to show them holding red balloons in the shape of a heart.

Another portrays the pair hand in hand, smiling as they look at the horizon while floating in a boat along the Amazon River.

"They are going to marry in the Amazon and have their honeymoon in Paris," joked one user on X, while others said pictures from the trip could make up a

wedding album.

Macron's warm relations with Lula mark a departure from the frosty ties between the French leader and Brazil's former right-wing president Jair Bolsonaro, who led the country from 2019 to 2022.

His trip, which was to end yesterday in Brasilia when he meets Lula at the presidential palace, saw the two leaders announce a billion-dollar green investment plan for the Amazon.

France, the seventh-largest economy in the world, and Brazil, the ninth-largest, are considered key players in a geopolitical scene marked by rivalry between China and the United States.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



I can't shake the heartbreak I witnessed while meeting with Palestine & Sudanese refugees during my Ramadan solidarity visit to Egypt & Jordan. But I will not give up. We must keep doing all we can to allow our common humanity to prevail in Gaza & other places around the world.

@antoniogetterres

02



At the first-ever Global AI Summit last year, I laid out our vision for a future where AI advances the public interest. To help build that future, I am announcing our first government-wide policy to promote the safe, secure, and responsible use of AI.

@VP

03



Going forward, all X accounts with over 2500 verified subscriber followers will get Premium features for free and accounts with over 5000 will get Premium+ for free

@elonmusk

04



I began my visit to New Delhi upon @DrJaisankar's invitation. The Ukrainian-Indian cooperation is important and we will be reinvigorating ties. Building on the dialogue between @ZelenskyyUa and @NarendraModi, we will pay specific attention to the Peace Formula.

@DmytroKuleba

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

Ramadan

NBB hosts media Ghabga



The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) hosted its annual media Ghabga at the Four Seasons Hotel on March 27th. The event brought together representatives from the media and NBB executives, fostering stronger relationships and communication channels. This gathering reinforces NBB's commitment to transparency and collaboration with the media, ensuring accurate and timely information reaches the public. Left, Hisham Abu Alfateh, Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NBB attends the event (By Ashen Tharaka)

Hilton Bahrain hosts Gergaoun



Hilton Bahrain recently hosted its second consecutive Gergaoun celebration in collaboration with the Down Syndrome Society, aiming to raise awareness about Down Syndrome and promote inclusivity and love for all individuals. During the event, the children from the Down Syndrome Society were treated to a night of festivities, including vibrant costumes, traditional music, and delicious sweets. The guests from Hilton Bahrain also joined in the celebrations with the children. Dressed in colorful Gergaoun costumes, the children danced to traditional music, and a skilled henna artist showcased her talent through calligraphy, enhancing the joyful ambiance. Tamer Farouk, the General Manager of Hilton Bahrain, expressed his delight in collaborating with the Down Syndrome Society for such an important event. He emphasized Hilton's belief in inclusion and promoting diversity in all forms. In addition to the celebrations, the event featured artwork and merchandise created by the talented children of the Bahrain Society for Children with Behavioral and Communication Difficulties

Beyon hosts Ghabga for team members



Beyon's team members enjoyed a wonderful Ramadan Ghabga night at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay. The annual event, hosted by Beyon to show its appreciation for its team members, was held in the hotel's iconic Ramadan tent, with its elevated décor and lively atmosphere setting the scene for an occasion to remember. The Ghabga hosted more than 600 of Beyon's team members, giving them the opportunity to socialize in a fun relaxed setting away from the office. The attendees enjoyed traditional Arabic music and five-star Middle Eastern cuisine, as well as a raffle with great prizes, which added to the excitement of the event

Derasat hosts Ghabga



Rashid AlHamer (L) with Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa (C)

Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa

The Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat) recently held its annual Ramadan Ghabga, titled "Sustaining Leadership and Partnership," at the Raffles Al Areen Palace. The event brought together prominent figures including officials, ambassadors, thinkers, media representatives, and Derasat's partners. Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Derasat, addressed the gathering. He emphasized the theme's focus on continuity and leadership, highlighting Derasat's unwavering commitment to producing high-quality research and fostering intellectual discourse within the Bahraini team. He announced the upcoming seventh "Derasat" Forum, which will be held in May alongside the Bahrain Arab Summit. This forum aims to establish the "Complex of Arab Research Centers for Sustainability and Development." The Ghabga also featured a ceremony honouring individuals who have significantly contributed to advancing sustainable development. Dr. Shaikh Abdullah presented them with awards in recognition of their efforts and impactful roles in this crucial area.

Collins, Alexandrova fight into Miami semis

Collins dominates Garcia, Alexandrova battles past Pegula in thrilling encounter

● **Danielle Collins** secures 6-3, 6-2 victory over Caroline Garcia

AFP | Miami

Danielle Collins and Ekaterina Alexandrova will meet in the semi-finals of the WTA Miami Open after victories in the last eight.

Collins powered into the last four with an emphatic 6-3, 6-2 win over France's Caroline Garcia before Alexandrova emerged triumphant from a near two-hour three set battle with American fifth seed Jessica Pegula.

Thursday will see the opening semi-final with three-time Miami winner Victoria Azarenka up against fourth-seeded Elena Rybakina, the highest ranked player left in the tournament.

Garcia went into the match against Collins on the back of an upset win over third-seeded American Coco Gauff but was unable to get a foothold against the Floridian.

Garcia still appeared to be troubled by an injury to her right



Danielle Collins of the US reacts during her win against Caroline Garcia of France

shoulder and received some treatment early in the second set.

Collins broke to go 5-3 up in the first set and then held serve for the set, then in the second set broke in the third game and never looked back as she wrapped up the win in one hour and 19 minutes.

Collins reached the semi-finals of Miami six years ago as a qualifier and at 53rd is the lowest ranked semi-finalist in the tournament.

The 30-year-old American is now 4-0 against Garcia and has yet to lose a set to the Frenchwoman but said the numbers didn't tell the true story.

"I think against someone like Caro, it forces me to be more concentrated. I know I don't want to give her an inch or she can get in there," Collins said.

Garcia said she had felt the pace of back-to-back tournaments.

"It's been a long two weeks for the body for me, between the



It's been a long two weeks for the body for me, between the back at the beginning and then the she shoulder which came back

CAROLINE GARCIA

back at the beginning and then the she shoulder which came back," she told reporters, adding that the shoulder issue was a recurrence of a previous injury.

"I think it's nothing too serious but (shoulder) is always quite problematic for a tennis player," she said, before adding that Collins had played "an amazing match".

Collins intends to retire at the end of the year but while she agreed she had a relaxed look to her play, she rejected the idea that it was a result of her impending departure from the sport.

"I think I feel pretty relaxed, but that could be due to a number of things. I've got a new hobby. I'm playing some more



Ekaterina Alexandrova's win marks her third victory against a top-five player this year

golf, running more, Pilates, all of these different things," she said.

"My dog is here. I'm feeling relaxed because I get to be with him at night. I don't know," she said with a smile.

Home favourite

Alexandrova beat home favourite Pegula 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, showing plenty of grit in a third set where both players showed signs of fatigue.

Pegula broke to go 4-3 up in the first and broke again to clinch the set but the Russian fought back, breaking in the first game of the second set.

Again 14th seed Alexandrova

broke early in the third but she let Pegula back into the set when she double-faulted on break point to leave the set balanced at 3-3.

The pair produced a fantastic rally in the subsequent game which Pegula was able to hold, but at 4-4, Alexandrova struck the decisive blow with Pegula going long on a back-hand return on the second break point.

The Russian held to grab the win and fell to her knees in joy at the result.

Alexandrova, who upset world number one Iga Swiatek in the previous round, said it was tough to break down Pegula's gritty defense.

"I couldn't understand how it was possible to return that ball it was always back. She was everywhere so I needed to do something," she said. "I tried to wait and use any opportunities that I got."

The win was Alexandrova's third against a top five player this year and she said her success was the result of developing patience.

"You have to wait and wait and something is going to come - and then you have to use it," she said.

Al Ahli through to Crown Prince's Cup volleyball semis

● **Al Ahli** book berth following straight-sets win against Bani Jamra

TDT | Manama

Al Ahli barged into the semi-finals of this year's His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's Cup volleyball tournament.

Ahli secured their berth following a 3-0 (25-18, 25-23, 25-17) sweep of Bani Jamra in their quarter-final match.

Ahli claimed their victory just days after narrowly missing out on the coveted title in the 2023/2024 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League. They have now shifted their

focus on this ongoing single-elimination tournament and winning the HRH the Crown Prince's Cup title.

Ahli have joined Al Najma and Muharraq in the final four. Najma advanced with a four-set win against Al Nasser, while Muharraq were straight-sets winners against Nabih Saleh.

One game remains in the quarter-finals. It is between recently crowned back-to-back Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League champions and reigning HRH the Crown Prince's Cup holders Dar Kulaib, who take on Al Shabab in their round-of-eight assignment.

Dar Kulaib won last year's competition after defeating Ahli in four sets in a rocking final.



Al Ahli's Ali Ebrahim attacks the net against Bani Jamra during their quarter-final contest

Sinner and Medvedev book Miami Open semi-final clash



Jannik Sinner of Italy serves against Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic
AFP | Miami

World number three Jannik Sinner will face defending champion Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals of the Miami Open - a rematch of the Australian Open final won by Sinner and last year's Miami title match.

Sinner moved into the last four in emphatic style on Wednesday, beating Czech Tomas Machac 6-4, 6-2 before Medvedev overcame a stern test against Chilean Nicolas Jarry before emerging with a 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) win.

Italy's Sinner, who rallied from two sets down to beat Medvedev and claim his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open, will play in his fourth semi of the season after dealing with lively Machac in 91 minutes.

Sinner broke the opening game serve from the Czech but Machac responded immediately to make it 1-1.

The crowd were on their feet to appreciate some brilliant defensive play from Sinner who eventually took charge of the set, breaking to go 4-3 up and then closing out.

I played good, especially in the important moments of the match, which makes it... the scoreboard, you see the score, but it's sometimes lying. Today was a little bit like that

JANNIK SINNER

The second set was more straightforward with Sinner breaking in the third game and never looking back.

Despite the comfortable margin of the win, Sinner said Machac deserved praise for his energetic and aggressive performance.

"He has an incredible talent. He is super fast, also physically he is in great shape," said the world number three.

"I didn't know exactly what to expect today. The first games I was looking a little bit at what kind of tactics could work or not," he added.

James triple-double leads Lakers, Warriors win despite Green ejection

AFP | Los Angeles

LeBron James returned from a one-game absence to post a 23-point triple-double on Wednesday and lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 136-124 NBA victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

James sat out the Lakers' come-from-behind double-overtime victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday with a sore left ankle.

Anthony Davis, who played nearly 52 minutes on Tuesday, was sidelined with a hyperextended left knee, but Rui Hachimura provided a big lift, drilling seven of eight three-point attempts on the way to 32 points with 10 rebounds to help the Lakers win their fifth straight, as they vie to work their way out of the play-in tournament and straight into the playoffs.

Against a Grizzlies team play-



2

ing out a season blighted by injuries, the Lakers led by eight at halftime and never trailed after the break.

James added 14 rebounds and 12 assists for his fourth tri-

ple-double of the season. The 39-year-old superstar, who said he'd have to be "strategic" in dealing with the ankle injury that has nagged him much of the season, said he

didn't change his game because of Davis's absence.

"Read and react to the game, see how the defense is playing and seeing the rhythm of my guys," he said of his approach.

"It's good to be back out there with them and be able to do a lot of things tonight to help us win."

The Golden State Warriors, fueled by 23 points from Andrew Wiggins and two late baskets by Stephen Curry, beat the Magic 101-93 in Orlando, despite the ejection of Draymond Green just 3min 36sec into the contest.

Curry was left shaking his head when Green was tossed, receiving two quick technical fouls for heatedly arguing a foul call.

It was the fourth ejection of the season for Green, who missed 16 games after he was suspended in December for swinging an arm into the head of Suns center Jusuf Nurkic.

'Very special' Parag powers Rajasthan to IPL win over Delhi

Riyan Parag's blistering knock leads Rajasthan to a thrilling 12-run win

● Rajasthan Royals post 185-5 with Parag's explosive 84* off 45 balls

● Ravichandran Ashwin's crucial partnership with Parag helps stabilize Rajasthan's innings

● Delhi's chase falls short despite Warner's 49; Stubbs' late blitz

AFP | New Delhi

Riyan Parag's unbeaten 45-ball 84 propelled Rajasthan Royals to 185-5 and sealed a 12-run win over the Delhi Capitals in IPL on Thursday.

Rishabh Pant-led Delhi won the toss and chose to field first and maintained a stranglehold over the game until the second half of the Royals' innings.

Rajasthan lost both their explosive openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (five) and Jos Buttler (11) early and even batting mainstay, captain Sanju Samson, failed to



Riyan Parag of Rajasthan Royals plays a shot

convert his start and fell for 15. in the eighth over, Rajasthan With the team reeling at 36-3 promoted India's spin-bowling

Scorecard

Rajasthan Royals 185 for 5 (Parag 84, Ashwin 29, Axar 1-21, Khaleel 1-24) beat Delhi Capitals 173 for 5 (Warner 49, Stubbs 44*, Chahal 2-19, Burger 2-29) by 12 runs

all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin, who built a crucial 54-run partnership with Parag.

Ashwin scored 29 off 19 balls and took the team to 90 before he was dismissed in the 14th over by India teammate Axar Patel.

Parag, who has been criticised in previous IPL seasons for his rash shot selection, kept the scoreboard ticking until after the 17th over.

The 22-year-old put together another key partnership with Indian wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel (20).

Parag, who reached his 50 off 34 balls, cracked 25 runs with three fours and two sixes off the final over bowled by South African paceman Anrich Nortje.

He was ably supported by West Indian Shimron Hetmyer, who hit an unbeaten seven-ball 14 that propelled the team to an impressive 185-5.

Samson praised player of the

“Wherever I go, people ask me about him. There is something very special he can give to Indian cricket.”

SANJU SAMSON

match Parag.

“Wherever I go, people ask me about him. There is something very special he can give to Indian cricket,” he said.

Patel was the standout bowler for Delhi and finished with 1-21 in his four over spell.

Delhi started their chase well with Australian openers Mitchell Marsh and veteran David Warner.

Marsh was removed after a 12-ball 23 in the fourth over by South African quick Nandre Burger, who also removed Ricky Bhui (0) in the same over.

But that didn't stop Warner, who took the team to 59-2 at the end of the powerplay.

He was removed in the 12th over after a well compiled 34-ball 49, falling to young India fast bowler Avesh Khan.

Delhi subsequently fell behind the run rate before a late innings



Parag, who has been criticised in previous IPL seasons for his rash shot selection, kept the scoreboard ticking until after the 17th over

counterattack by South African Tristan Stubbs who finished with an unbeaten 23-ball 44.

Avesh bowled a tight last over to seal a 12-run victory.

Leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal finished his three overs with 2-19 while Burger had 2-29.

Losing captain Pant said that he was “definitely disappointed”.

Pant, who hopes to make a comeback to the Indian team after his long injury layoff ahead of the T20 World Cup this summer, made 28 off 26 balls.

“The best thing to do from here is to learn from it,” he added.

'Probably impossible' Alonso will be Bayern's next coach, says Hoeness

AFP | Barcelona

Honorary Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness admitted yesterday bringing in-demand manager Xabi Alonso to the club was “probably impossible.”

The Bayer Leverkusen coach, who spent three years in Munich as a player, is Bayern's number one target to replace Thomas Tuchel who will leave his post in the summer.

Alonso's Leverkusen are 10 points clear atop the Bundesliga table with eight matches left and on course for a first-ever league title.

Still unbeaten this season, Leverkusen are also in the semi-finals of the German Cup and the last eight of the Europa League, having won 34 and drawn four of 38 games this season.

Speaking with Bavarian television, Hoeness confirmed Bay-



Bayer Leverkusen's head coach Xabi Alonso reacts after a match (file photo)

ern wanted Alonso but predicted he would stay at Leverkusen beyond the season.

“We'll have to see if we can do it this year. It will be difficult, if not probably impossible,” he said.

The Bayern powerbroker, who grew the club into a global

behemoth as an administrator and later president, said the German champions “value Xabi Alonso extremely.”

“(Alonso) is more inclined to stay at Bayer Leverkusen in view of their current successes, because he would not want to leave them behind.

“(Alonso) is more inclined to stay at Bayer Leverkusen in view of their current successes, because he would not want to leave them behind. Let's say if he had two or three more years of success, it would probably be easier to bring him out of there

BAYERN MUNICH PRESIDENT ULI HOENESS

“Let's say if he had two or three more years of success, it would probably be easier to bring him out of there.”

Alonso has been linked to Bayern as well as Real Madrid and Liverpool, where he also spent time as a player.

Pochettino taken aback by Chilwell's starts for England after injury



England defender Ben Chilwell (L) in action against Brazil midfielder Raphinha (R) (file photo)

AFP | London

Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino said yesterday he was surprised Ben Chilwell started two games for England during the international break after the defender only recently returned from a knee injury. Chilwell last started for Chelsea on March 2 against Brentford and has played just a few minutes for the London club since then, as a late substitute in the FA Cup against Leicester.

Nevertheless, the 27-year-old featured for the whole of England's 2-2 draw with Belgium at Wembley on Tuesday, three days after spending 67 minutes on the field in a defeat by Brazil.

Chelsea currently have nine

players ruled out of Saturday's Premier League match with Burnley at Stamford Bridge, with several others to be assessed following international duty, including Chilwell -- who suffered a blow to his knee against Belgium.

“He didn't play after Brentford, then he played only a few minutes against Leicester,” said Pochettino. “(Then) he started two games (for England).”

“It's a surprise for us. It's bad luck because he got a dead leg in the last moment against Belgium. Now we need to assess if he can be available.”

Enzo Fernandez, who played twice for Argentina in the United States during the break, will also have his fitness monitored ahead of this weekend's match.

Crawley says England won't turn backs on 'Bazball' despite India loss

AFP | London

Zak Crawley has insisted England have no intention of retreating into a “negative” approach after their recent 4-1 Test series loss in India but accepted they must “pick the right moments” to absorb pressure.

England lost their first series under the red-ball leadership



Zak Crawley duo of captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum in convincing fashion earlier this

month after winning the first Test in Hyderabad.

That reverse sparked a widespread debate over the merits of England's aggressive ‘Bazball’ style following several batting collapses, with even former New Zealand captain ‘Baz’ McCullum saying the team would have to “refine” their style.

“We always talk about ab-

sorbing pressure and putting pressure back on,” 26-year-old opening batsman Crawley said yesterday.

“The last couple of years we've done the putting pressure back on pretty well and we've spoken about maybe picking those moments to absorb at the right times as well. We can certainly refine that.”