

Aggression Strongly Condemned



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the Kingdom of Bahrain's strong condemnation of the heinous Iranian attack on the State of Kuwait using missiles and drones. The attack, claimed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, was a flagrant violation of the sovereignty, security and stability of the State of Kuwait, as well as the principles of good neighborliness and international laws.

The Ministry affirmed the Kingdom's full solidarity with Kuwait and its support for all measures and actions taken to preserve its sovereignty, security and stability. It also praised the readiness of the Kuwaiti armed forces, which confronted this blatant aggression with utmost efficiency.

Leaders Extend Condolences



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa sent a cable of condolences to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, following the passing of Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry.

His Majesty expressed sincere sympathy and extended condolences to the Amir and the bereaved family during their time of grief.

In a separate message, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, also conveyed his condolences to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani over the passing of the former Qatari minister.

Bahrain Hails Hajj Success

Smart Technology and Expansion Projects Win Royal Praise



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa extended their warmest congratulations to the Saudi leadership on the outstanding success of this

year's Hajj season 1447 AH. In a cable to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, His Majesty commended the Saudi leadership and government for their extensive efforts in organising the season, serving pilgrims, and ensuring the smooth and safe performance

of all rituals. His Majesty also highlighted the ongoing expansion projects at the Holy Mosque and the deployment of advanced smart technologies across holy sites. These initiatives greatly eased the pilgrims' experience and drew widespread appreci-

ation worldwide. HRH Crown Prince Prince Salman sent similar cables to both King Salman and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman, reinforcing the warm and enduring bonds between the two kingdoms.

Hajj Efforts Recognised

Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives, sent a cable of congratulations to Sheikh Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al Al-Sheikh, Speaker of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the success and distinguished organisation of this year's Hajj season.

Al Musallam commended the extensive efforts undertaken by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Hajj rituals on the third day, performing the symbolic stoning at Jamrat, animal sacrifice, and hair cutting, alongside Tawaf Al-Ifadah and Sai.

Bahrain Warns Against Fake Faces Online

When AI Crosses the Line

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's General Directorate for Anti-Corruption, Economic and Electronic Security has issued a warning against using AI-generated personal images and videos on social media platforms.

The authority stressed that positive and meaningful digital publishing should rely on authentic photographs and real video footage, without any alterations or distortions that change the content's truth, context, or nature.

It urged all users to exercise caution and responsibility



when sharing or distributing content online, highlighting the importance of using modern technologies consciously and

ethically to preserve credibility and protect digital media integrity.

The directorate further con-



firmed that it will take legal action against anyone violating these guidelines.

Justice reform gains momentum

Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Director-General of the General Directorate for the Execution of Judgments and Alternative Sentences, announced that 207 convicted individuals recently had their custodial sentences replaced with alternative penalties. The decision was made in coordination with the Public Prosecution and approved by the judge responsible for sentence execution after a detailed review



Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa

of each case ensured all legal conditions were met.

With this latest batch, the total number of beneficiaries under Bahrain's alternative sentencing law has risen to 11,215 since its implementation.

Shaikh Khalid said the programme's expansion reflects His Majesty the King's directives to broaden the application of alternative penalties. He also reaffirmed that the government, led by the HRH Crown Prince

and Prime Minister, continues to support and oversee the initiative.

He described the programme as one of Bahrain's leading national justice initiatives, aligned with the Kingdom's commitment to human rights and the development of a balanced, reform-oriented criminal justice system.

The official also praised the role of Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah

Al Khalifa, noting that ongoing follow-up has strengthened implementation standards, ensuring transparency, discipline, and respect for human dignity.

He concluded that Bahrain's evolving justice reforms reflect the country's long-term vision to integrate modern penal policies with rehabilitation efforts, supporting social stability and enabling former offenders to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to society.



Bahrain Stands Firm on Water Security

Electricity Minister carries a message of resilience and commitment to Dushanbe summit

TDI | Manama

Electricity and Water Affairs Minister Yasser bin Ibrahim Humaidan represented the Kingdom at the 4th High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” (2018–2028), held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from May 25 to 28.

Speaking at the conference, Minister Humaidan reaffirmed Bahrain’s unwavering commitment—under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the directives of HRH Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa—to supporting global efforts on water security and sustainable water management. He described water security not as a technical issue, but as a national priority and a cornerstone of Bahrain’s sustainable development agenda.

Attacks on Water Infrastructure

In a pointed moment, Minis-



ter Humaidan raised the direct impact of Iranian attacks on critical infrastructure across Bahrain, the GCC countries, and Jordan — including significant material damage to one of Bahrain’s main desalination plants. He stressed the urgent need to strengthen the protection of

water infrastructure globally, ensuring its readiness to withstand ongoing risks and threats, and safeguarding the continuity of essential services for citizens.

A Four-Pillar Strategy

Looking ahead, the Minister outlined Bahrain’s integrated



approach to building long-term water resilience through four key pillars: diversifying water and energy sources, expanding treated wastewater reuse projects, replenishing groundwater reserves, and building strategic water stockpiles—giving the Kingdom the flexibility to adapt to future climate and security challenges.

Why This Conference Matters

The Dushanbe conference brings together world leaders and policymakers to accelerate progress on the UN’s global water action decade. Bahrain’s participation signals that water security, especially in conflict-exposed regions, must sit at the heart of the international agenda.

Panel Proposed for Housing Application Cancellations

Waiting-list places could be protected for Bahrainis whose housing applications are cancelled, under a proposal recommended by Parliament’s Public Utilities and Environment Committee to create a specialist review panel.

The committee urged approval of the amended proposal, which asks the government to rework the rules for cancelling housing requests and add one more check before an application is struck off.

The change would apply to Article 69 of Ministerial Resolution No. 909 of 2015 on the housing system. It would create a committee to examine grievances against cancellation decisions and decide what happens next.

Where the panel finds that an applicant’s case should continue, the housing request would keep its original filing date. Where the applicant no longer meets the conditions, they would have to file a new request after fixing their status.

The explanatory note says the aim is to protect low-income Bahrainis’ right to decent housing. It cites Article 9(f) of the Constitution, which says the state works to provide housing for low-income citizens.

It also refers to Article 4, which says justice is the basis of rule and names equality, security, reassurance, social solidarity and equal opportunity among the foundations of society guaranteed by the state.

Those behind the proposal



Mohammed Moosa, Chairman of Parliament’s Public Utilities and Environment Committee

say housing requests now carry more weight as owning a home has become harder for many families. They argue that cancellations should be brought under closer control and kept to the least possible range.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning said Resolution No. 909 of 2015 already lays down the conditions for accepting housing service requests.

Under Article 5, applicants must meet the required conditions from the date they file their request until they receive a nomination certificate.

The ministry said this is linked to the availability of housing schemes, their readiness and the money allocated to them. If an applicant loses any required condition during the waiting period, the housing request can be cancelled.

It said Article 69 already deals with the cancellation process. The ministry can cancel a housing service request if an applicant loses any condition for receiving the service, except Bahraini nationality.

Those whose requests are cancelled can ask to be placed again in the register of eligible applications within two years of the cancellation date.



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Bahraini Pilgrims Complete Hajj Rites

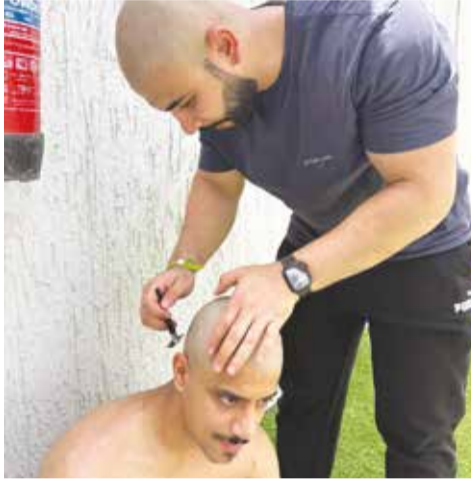
Pilgrims Return Fulfilled, Lawmakers Offer Praise

Bahraini pilgrims performed the stoning of Jamarat Al Aqaba on Wednesday morning, marking the first day of Eid Al Adha after an overnight stay in Muzdalifa. The sacred atmosphere was defined by devotion, calm and a deep sense of spiritual fulfilment.

Pilgrims moved through the day's sequence without pause — stoning the Jamarat, slaughtering their Hadi, shaving their heads, exiting Ihram, and completing Tawaf Al Ifada. The entire process flowed smoothly, supported by a comprehensive and well-organised network of services that eased crowd movement and made each ritual accessible.

"All Pilgrims Are Safe"

Hajj campaign operators reassured families back in Bahrain that all pilgrims were well. Movement toward the Jamarat and surrounding areas was described as gradual, safe and orderly, with pilgrims directed in managed waves across multiple levels. Roads in Mina showed remarkable ease of movement



throughout the day.

Several Bahraini Hajj campaigns documented pilgrims completing their Eid day rites in an atmosphere of spirituality, peace and joy — with visible happiness among those who had fulfilled one of Hajj's greatest obligations on the Day of Sacrifice.

Pilgrims will spend tonight in Mina as they continue stoning the Jamarat across the remaining days of Tashreeq, completing the final stages of their pilgrimage.

Hajj Success Draws Praise From MPs

MPs Praise Saudi Arabia's Flawless Management of Hajj 1447

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Three Bahraini Members of Parliament praised Saudi Arabia's handling of the 1447H Hajj season, crediting meticulous planning, advanced technology, healthcare readiness and security coordination for enabling millions of pilgrims to perform their rites safely and calmly.



Maryam Al Sayegh, MP



Waleed Al Dosari, MP



Abdulla Al Dhaen, MP

MPs Maryam Al Sayegh, Abdulla Al Dhaen and Waleed Al Dosari congratulated Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the season's success. Ms Al Sayegh described Saudi Arabia as a global model in managing mass gatherings, highlighting the expansion of holy sites, infrastructure renewal and smart crowd management as achievements every Muslim could take pride in.

Mr Al Dhaen praised the kingdom's "high efficiency and professionalism" in running the world's largest annual human gathering, singling out the Ministries of Hajj, Interior and

Health for their contributions. He also commended Bahrain's own Hajj mission for its early coordination with Saudi authorities. "Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are one body," he said, calling their cooperation a model for Arab and Gulf collaboration.

Mr Al Dosari said the season reflected sound planning, smart services and steady development — consistent with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 ambitions to continuously raise Hajj standards.

The three MPs also thanked Justice and Islamic Affairs Minister Nawaf Al Maawda and Bahrain's Hajj mission committees, and prayed for pilgrims to return safely with an accepted Hajj.

Shura Council Praises Saudi Arabia's Successful Hajj Organization

The Shura Council praised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the successful organization of this year's Hajj season, highlighting the high level of coordination, safety, and services provided to pilgrims.

The Council commended the efforts of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for their continued commitment to improving Hajj services and ensuring pilgrims' comfort and safety.

It noted that the smooth management of crowds, advanced healthcare and security measures, and the use of modern technologies reflected Saudi Arabia's extensive experience in organ-



izing one of the world's largest religious gatherings.

The Council also praised the Bahrain Hajj Mission for its efforts in caring for Bahraini pilgrims and coordinating closely with Saudi authorities to facilitate the performance of Hajj rituals in a safe and organized environment.

In addition, the Council com-

mended Bahraini authorities for dedicating the necessary resources to support pilgrims throughout the Hajj season.

The Shura Council further praised pilgrims for adhering to regulations and organizational guidelines, describing the success of this year's Hajj season as a source of pride for the Islamic world.

Ban Lifted on Shaari, Safi and Andaq Fishing Starting June 1

Seasonal fishing ban ends after two months of marine conservation efforts

The Supreme Council for Environment in Bahrain has announced the end of the seasonal ban on fishing for Shaari, Safi and Andaq fish in the Kingdom's territorial waters, effective Monday, June 1, 2026.

The ban, which began in early April, was introduced as part of Bahrain's national efforts to protect marine resources and promote environmental sustainability.

The council said the General Directorate of Marine Resources remains



committed to preserving ma-

rine biodiversity and regulating fishing activities in line with

international environmental standards.

The authority noted that the measures are designed to maintain a balance between benefiting economically from marine resources and ensuring their long-term sustainability.

The fishing restriction was implemented under Decision No. (2) of 2024 concerning the prohibition of catching Shaari, Safi and Andaq fish. The council said the regulation aims to protect fish stocks, restore ecological balance and support the rehabilitation of Bahrain's marine ecosystem.

Officials added that such initiatives contribute directly to safeguarding marine resources for future generations.

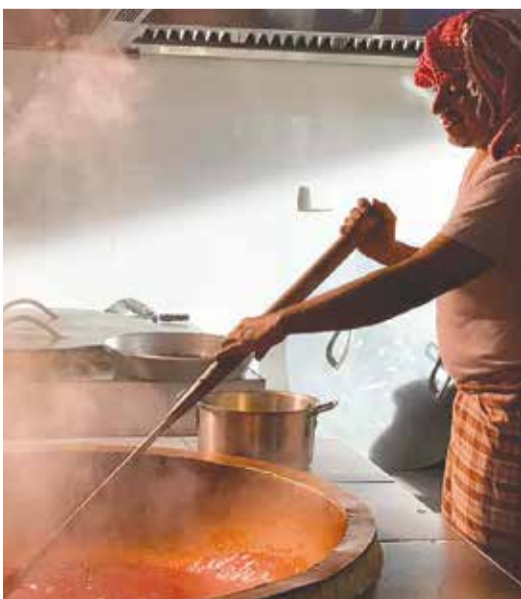
Turkish Snacks Join Bahraini Eid Trays

TDT | Manama
Mohammed Darwish

Lower-priced Turkish and Chinese snacks are being added to Bahraini Eid trays this year, with shopkeepers saying families are buying them for their price, range and ease of serving.

The Eid 'qadoo'a', long part of Bahraini family tables during the holiday, still leans on halwa, nuts, fruit and mathai (or mettai). But sellers say ready-packed savoury snacks have become a common addition for households receiving guests.

Abdulla Isa, owner of Qalay Al Youm, said nuts were still



selling well, while demand had risen for Turkish and Chinese crisps and crackers.

He said a 250-gram pack sells for about 500 fils and can contain around 15 kinds, making it an easy purchase for families looking to widen the spread without paying much.

Still, Bahraini halwa has held its place on the Eid table.

Mr Isa said halwa remained one of the main items in the qadoo'a, along with Bahraini mathai, which he said has a

special standing with Gulf families.

Saleh Al Halwachi, owner of Al Halwachi Sweets, said his shop sells a range of Bahraini sweets, including halwa, mathai and khanfarroosh, all made in-house.

He said the shop is known for khanfarroosh filled with halwa and pistachios, as well as halwa cut into cubes for easier serving.

Mr Al Halwachi said Bahraini halwa is made mainly from sugar and starch, cooked in a special pot over a low flame for up to an hour until it reaches its familiar thick texture.

Online orders, he added, are led by khanfarroosh with halwa, a popular Bahraini sweet bought often during feasts and family gatherings.

Eid Greetings Exchange



The Capital Governor, His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Humood Al Khalifa, received well-wishers on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha at the Governorate Council in Gudaibiya. Dignitaries, members of the legislative authority, community leaders, and residents gathered there to exchange greetings and congratulations.

The attendees extended their heartfelt Eid greetings to Bahrain's wise leadership, praying that the occasion brings continued prosperity, blessings, and stability to the Kingdom and its people. They also expressed hopes for lasting security, development, and well-being across the nation.

Residents Urged to Report Mosquito Breeding Hotspots

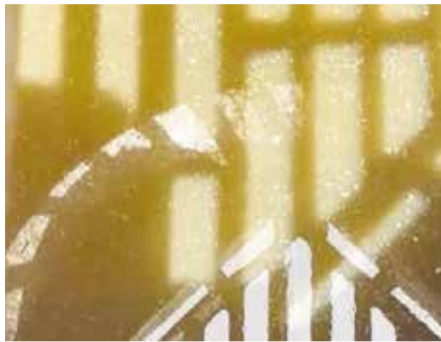
Portable Mosquito Traps Proposed as Bahrain Boosts Prevention Efforts

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

Amid ongoing government efforts to curb mosquito growth across Bahrain, public reporting is emerging as a key tool in tackling breeding hotspots, as residents continue to flag problem areas where stagnant water has created favourable conditions, particularly near construction and drainage sites.

Authorities have urged residents to play an active role by ensuring proper waste disposal and reporting standing water or sanitation issues via 80008188. The Health Ministry also warned that mosquito activity typically increases during periods of rainfall, moderate temperatures and high humidity, urging the public to remove stagnant water from containers, tyres and drains.

As previously reported by The



Stagnant drainage water is raising mosquito breeding concerns among residents in Riffa Al Haziat, Road 3191, Block 939. Picture taken by a resident.

Daily Tribune, Engineer Mohammed Aman from the Supreme Council for the Environment said during a recent "Hayaakom" session organised by the Northern Municipal Council that "citizens are the eyes of environmental protection," calling for stronger sanitation practices and cooperation to address root causes.



A resident shares a photo showing mosquito bites on his baby amid concerns over mosquito breeding in the area.

Residents across several areas continue to raise concerns over localised mosquito to breeding conditions.

Speaking to TDT recently, resident Aswin Tamang said that near his home in Riffa Al Haziat, stagnant water had collected near a construction-linked drainage area following recent works, creating persistent mosquito problems despite preventive measures taken inside homes.

"We are doing everything for the mosquitoes, but I don't know where they come from and enter our rooms," he said, adding that the issue is particularly worrying for families with small children.

ACTION

Bahrain has stepped up nationwide mosquito control measures. In April, the Cabinet, chaired by HRH Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, ordered urgent action to



Engineer Mohammed Aman (Supreme Council for the Environment).

strengthen monitoring, containment and response efforts aimed at preventing mosquito-borne diseases, including dengue.

Following this, the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture and the Ministry of Health expanded joint operations across all governorates, including inspections, pest control and water removal drives, alongside efforts to clear waste and stagnant water breeding sites.

More recently, a proposal to install portable electric mosquito traps in public spaces was referred to the Cabinet as part of ongoing discussions to strengthen mosquito control measures.

The Northern Municipal Council had previously proposed involving specialised private companies to support mosquito control efforts and improve response times during outbreaks.

Health experts note that mosquito bites, while common in Bahrain, can cause itching, swelling, pain and sometimes infection, stressing that prevention begins at home through removing stagnant water, maintaining drainage, covering containers and using repellents.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's Public Cleanliness Law prohibits activities that allow water to flow into streets or public areas, reinforcing the need to prevent stagnant water build-up.

Finding humanity in every frame

Turning everyday life into timeless portraits

Neethu V
TDT | Manama

For decades, Bahraini photographer Isa Ibrahim has quietly built a career around one simple instinct: observing people. Not celebrities. Not staged moments. But ordinary lives unfolding in streets, villages, markets, and distant cities — turning everyday life into timeless portraits.

That instinct led to one of his most recognized photographs, captured during a visit to Dhaka, Bangladesh — a powerful human moment showing a woman bathing her disabled husband in the city's slums.

In an exclusive interview with the Daily Tribune, Isa recalled noticing the man in the frame from a distance.

The image, which recently won first prize at the Egypt Best Press Photo 2025 in the category of Best Daily Life Photo Outside Egypt, was captured spontaneously and was never planned.

"Something about his presence immediately drew my attention," he said. "Before taking the image, I approached him and learned more about his story and daily life."

For Isa, the interaction mattered just as much as the image itself.

"As a documentary photographer, I try to understand the person before photographing them," he explained. "The image becomes more truthful that way."

That philosophy has defined much of his work over the years — photography rooted not in spectacle, but in empathy.

Long before international recognition and more than 720 global photography awards, Isa



Recent award winning photo from the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh



was a teenager walking through the narrow lanes of Sitra with a camera in hand. In the early 1990s, he began documenting everyday life around him: neighbours gathering outdoors, village celebrations, and fleeting moments many would otherwise overlook.

"My family strongly supported my passion, and many people in the village trusted me to photograph their gatherings and special occasions, often giving me film rolls to capture those memories," he told TDT.

Those early experiences shaped both his visual style and his connection to community storytelling.

Over time, his curiosity evolved into a distinguished career in photojournalism and documentary photography. Isa worked with several Arab and international publications and later became the first Arab photographer to receive the

prestigious Master FIAP (MFI-AP) distinction from the International Federation of Photographic Art.

Yet despite the titles and recognition, Isa says the photographs closest to his heart are not necessarily the award-winning ones.

"My most meaningful photographs are the images I captured during my journalism work that helped solve problems for families and individuals," he said. "Those photographs had a real impact on people's lives, and for me, that is the true value and purpose of photography."

To Isa, photography is not about chasing perfect moments, but about preserving human ones.

Where History Meets Creativity in Bahrain

Children and young visitors engaged in creative heritage-focused programmes



TDT | Manama

Children and young visitors engaged in creative heritage-focused programmes

The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities has concluded its International Museum Day celebrations, held this year under the theme "Museums Unite a Divided World."

The programme highlighted the role of museums as cultural institutions that strengthen national identity, preserve human civilisation and history, and promote knowledge, art and heritage. Through a series of cultural activities, the authority reinforced its vision of making museums permanent destinations for education, creativity and cultural appreciation.

The celebrations featured guided tours and interactive workshops at the Bahrain National Museum, Bahrain Fort Site Museum and the Post

Museum. Kanoo Museum also participated as part of a cultural partnership between the public and private sectors.

As part of efforts to promote cultural tourism, the authority organised a tour of the 52nd Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition, currently being held at the Bahrain National Museum until the end of May.

The exhibition attracted large numbers of art enthusiasts and specialists from various artistic fields, reflecting growing engagement with creativity and the arts across generations. The annual exhibition serves as a platform showcasing works by established artists and emerging talents in painting, photography, video art and other

disciplines. Meanwhile, the Post Museum hosted a special tour exploring the history of postal services in Bahrain and key milestones in the sector's development.

To strengthen the connection between younger generations and museums, the Bahrain National Museum organised educational tours and interactive art workshops for children, aimed at deepening their understanding of cultural identity and heritage.



French AI firm Mistral announces deals with BMW, Airbus



Mistral's co-founder and CEO Arthur Mensch speaks during of Mistral's "AI Now Summit"

AFP | Paris

French AI firm Mistral announced yesterday partnerships with BMW and the aerospace group Airbus as it aims to boost growth by fostering links with defence and industry giants.

The Paris-based company, looking to punch above its weight in a sector dominated by US and Chinese firms, said it would be involved with car-crash tests and plane design.

"The most important use cases for AI are located in research and development and the creation of physical objects," chief executive Arthur Mensch told hundreds of guests at the company's first AI conference in Paris.

Mistral is already closely

tied with ASML, the Dutch firm producing chipmaking equipment indispensable for the high-end semiconductors, which invested in the French company last year.

"It's an interesting new market where Europe is strong... Europe has significant high-end manufacturing companies," Mensch had told reporters ahead of yesterday's event.

The company this month bought an Austrian start-up, Emmi AI, that specialises in digital simulations for industry, after earlier snapping up the French cloud computing start-up Koyeb.

AFP has a deal with Mistral allowing the company's chatbot to draw on the news agency's articles to formulate responses.

Oil climbs, stocks drop on fresh US-Iran strikes

● Global stock markets suffer widespread losses

● Crude oil prices bounce significantly higher

AFP | London

Oil prices bounced higher and global stock markets fell yesterday after the United States and Iran exchanged new strikes despite their purported ceasefire, rekindling uncertainty about an end to the Middle East war.

The crude price jumps of around 2.5 percent partly erased Wednesday's sharp declines on hopes of an imminent deal to stop a conflict that has all but halted shipping through the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

The latest strikes were the most serious since an April ceasefire, and came despite a series of headlines suggesting talks on a deal were progressing.

"A fresh exchange of strikes between the two countries is



A person in front of a large screen displaying vessel movements in the Strait of Hormuz on a ship-tracking website

testing the fragile ceasefire and forcing a reassessment of the chances of a near-term agreement which can reopen the Strait of Hormuz and dial down the pressure the crisis is putting on the global economy," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

Stock markets were down across the board with the Dow, the Nasdaq and the S&P 500 all in the red upon opening after the US Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure rose in

April by its highest year-on-year rate since 2023.

The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index jumped 3.8 percent from a year ago, the Commerce Department said, in line with expectations and up from 3.5 percent in March as the economic fallout of President Donald Trump's Iran war continued to hit Americans.

The US also revised down its first-quarter GDP growth to 1.6 percent from 2.0 percent, as in-



vestment and consumer spending slowed.

The combination of persistent inflation and slowing growth lowers the chances of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve, despite President Donald Trump's repeated calls for lower rates to support the world's biggest economy.

"Even after stripping out energy prices, core PCE is sitting at a multi-year high. In response, the Fed has already taken on a more hawkish posturing in response to higher inflation," said Bret Kenwell, US investment analyst at eToro.

Meta launches paid subscriptions for Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp

AFP | San Francisco

Meta on Wednesday launched paid subscription plans for its flagship apps, marking a major push by the tech giant to diversify beyond its longtime reliance on advertising revenue.

Meta head of product Naomi Gleit announced the move in a video posted to Instagram, saying she was rolling out Facebook Plus, Instagram Plus and WhatsApp Plus globally, with more plans in the works for businesses, creators and artificial intelligence products.

The move comes as Meta faces investor scrutiny over its massive AI spending. The com-



pany has projected capital expenditure -- mainly for AI data centers -- of between \$125 billion and \$145 billion for the year.

Meta's stock rose nearly three percent on the news.

According to reports, Instagram Plus and Facebook Plus will be priced at \$3.99 per month, while WhatsApp Plus will cost \$2.99 per month.

Instagram Plus and Facebook

Plus will unlock extra features including better analytics, story rewatch statistics, wider audience reach and profile customization options.

WhatsApp Plus focuses on personalization, including premium stickers, custom ringtones and app themes.

Gleit said the company intends to eventually consolidate its various offerings under a single brand called Meta One.

Meta in 2023 launched ad-free, paid versions of Facebook and Instagram in Europe to comply with EU data privacy legislation, giving users a choice between a free, ad-supported experience and a paid, ad-free one.

Mideast war reshaping national energy strategies: IEA



A bird rests on a street light near the Chevron EL Segundo refinery, one of the largest petroleum processing facilities in California

AFP | Paris

The Middle East war is pushing countries to open new supply routes and turn to domestic resources to tide over the world's biggest energy crisis, the International Energy Agency said yesterday.

"We are in the midst of the largest energy security crisis the world has ever faced -- and I believe this will reshape investment strategies globally, with parallels to the major changes the energy world witnessed after the oil shocks of the 1970s," said IEA executive director Fatih Birol.

"We are already seeing intensified efforts by both producer and consumer countries to diversify trade routes and energy sources -- such as advancing new pipelines and other supply infrastructure, on the one hand, and turning more to domestically available resources, on the other," he added in the World Energy Investment report by the energy agency of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD).

The IEA estimates that global energy investment will reach \$3.4 trillion in 2026, slightly higher than the previous year, with around \$2.2 trillion devoted to power grids, storage, low-emission fuels, nuclear, renewables, energy efficiency and electrification.

Alongside this, around \$1.2 trillion is expected to be invested in oil, natural gas and coal. It nevertheless expects oil investment to decline for the third straight year in 2026, falling below \$500 billion despite rising crude prices.

This is due to uncertainty over how long higher prices will last, project lead times, supply constraints and the tightening offshore rigs market, which are limiting short-term investment outside the Middle East.

By contrast, investment in natural gas is "projected to rise to \$330 billion, the highest level in a decade, supported by a wave of new LNG export projects, particularly in the United States and Qatar," IEA said.

Australia sues consumer goods giant 3M over 'forever chemicals'

AFP | Sydney

Australia's government said yesterday it had launched an AU\$2 billion (\$1.43 billion) legal action against US consumer goods giant 3M over the contamination of military bases that used firefighting foam containing so-called "forever chemicals".

Assistant Minister for Defence Peter Khalil told reporters the Australian government was seeking damages to recover the cost of managing environmental contamination at 28 bases from per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

It was the most significant legal action taken by an Australian government, he said.

The defence force had al-



ready removed 200,000 tonnes of PFAS from soil because of the risk to communities, he said.

"We are prepared to take on one of the biggest multinational corporations in the world,"

said Attorney-General Michelle Rowland. In a statement, the Australian government said action was being lodged in the Federal Court, where it alleges 3M knew about the environ-

mental risks of the firefighting foam and did not disclose them.

"3M gave assurances about disposal and environmental safety that were inconsistent with what the company knew at the time," the statement read.

In a statement emailed to AFP, 3M vowed to "defend ourselves against these claims through the legal process".

"3M has never manufactured PFAS in Australia and ceased sales of the products at issue in Australia around two decades ago," a spokesperson said.

The US multinational maker of Post-it and Scotch tape also reached a \$10 billion settlement in the United States in 2023 over contamination of water supplies.

Yemen's ex-president Hadi dies in Saudi Arabia

AFP | Washington

Yemen's former President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi has died at 80 years old, the Yemeni presidency said yesterday.

Three days of mourning, with lowered flags and condolence books, was declared to commemorate Hadi, who oversaw a tumultuous period when the Houthis seized large swathes of Yemen, triggering a devastating civil war.

The presidency's statement praised his "wise leadership," saying he "led the Yemeni state through one of the most complex phases the country has ever experienced, amid war, coup, and unprecedented humanitarian and economic crises."

Trump voices support for Armenia PM ahead of tense vote

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump voiced support on Wednesday for Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in the upcoming elections, which polls show as an exceedingly tight race.

The June 7 parliamentary vote is seen as a litmus test for Pashinyan's moves to loosen Armenian dependence on Moscow while forging closer ties with the West.

The South Caucasus nation is also still reeling from Azerbaijan's 2023 military takeover of the Karabakh region and the mass exodus of its 100,000 ethnic Armenians.

Australia charges woman with terrorism over IS links

AFP | Sydney

Australian police charged yesterday a woman linked to the Islamic State group with membership of a terrorist organisation and entering a known conflict zone.

Hundreds of women from Western nations were lured to the Middle East as IS gained prominence in the early 2010s, in many cases following husbands who had signed up as jihadist fighters.

A joint counter-terror police team said they will allege that the woman, 34, travelled to Syria between 2013 and 2014 with a man to join Islamic State.

The man is now believed to be imprisoned in the Middle East, they added.



Rescue workers and local residents inspect the damage to a building following an Israeli air strike in the Choueifat area, south of Beirut

Israeli strike hits south of Beirut as Lebanon says raids kill 14

Lebanon and Israel prepare for Pentagon talks as violence threatens renewed escalation

Israel launched strike near Beirut

Ceasefire violations accusations continue

AFP | Beirut

Israel's military said it launched an airstrike in the Beirut area yesterday as a Lebanese source said an apartment was hit, the second such raid since an April ceasefire announcement.

The escalation comes as Lebanon and Israel prepare for talks between military delegations at the Pentagon on Friday, and for US-brokered talks early next week -- the fourth round since the latest Israel-Hezbollah war erupted on March 2.

After heavy strikes that Lebanese authorities said killed at least 14 people including three children, Israel's military said it "precisely struck in Beirut",

without identifying the target.

A Lebanese military source, requesting anonymity, told AFP that "an Israeli strike targeted an apartment in the Choueifat area".

AFPTV footage showed smoke rising from the area on the edge of Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold.

An AFP correspondent said the first two floors of a residential building were damaged, and saw residents packing cars and leaving.

It was the second Israeli strike on south Beirut since a ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah that was supposed to have taken effect on April 17 but has never been observed.

Both sides accuse each other of violating it and justify their attacks by the other's alleged truce breaches.

Hezbollah yesterday claimed several attacks with rockets and drones on Israeli troops in south Lebanon.

Spokesperson for the United Nations Interim Force in Leb-

YOU
KNOW WHAT

An Israeli airstrike hit a building inside Tyre's archaeological district, prompting local residents to accuse Israel of deliberately targeting the ancient coastal city's rich history and civilisation

anon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers Kandice Ardiel told AFP that last month's agreement "had a positive effect in lessening the violence, but (we) have seen an escalation in recent weeks, and an intense escalation in recent days".

The force said in a statement that "Wednesday saw around 670

projectiles fired -- the highest level since 17 April".

'Cultural landmarks'

On Wednesday, Israel's military declared all areas south of Lebanon's Zahrani River -- around 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the border and including the cities of Tyre and Nabatieh -- to be "combat zones" and told residents to evacuate.

This week, Israel vowed to ramp up operations in Lebanon and said it was expanding ground operations there.

Yesterday afternoon Israel's military issued another evacuation warning for swathes of Tyre and surrounding areas.

Israeli airstrikes hit Tyre and Sidon, both southern cities, early yesterday.

AFP footage showed a fireball followed by smoke as a strike hit a building in Tyre's archaeological district.

Resident Ghazouane Halawani told AFP he believed Israel wanted to attack the ancient city's "history and its civilisation".

"We're staying here. This is our country, our land, our life," he added.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi said on X that he had begun "intensive diplomatic contacts" after Israeli attacks on Tyre struck "its historic old neighbourhoods, churches, mosques, and cultural landmarks that have stood resilient for thousands of years".

Israeli soldier killed

Lebanon's health ministry said a strike in Tyre killed two Syrians including a child, and another in Sidon killed five people, including two women.

An AFP correspondent said the Sidon raid destroyed the first two floors of a residential building.

The ministry said another strike hit a vehicle in south Lebanon's Adloun, killing six people "including two children, their mother and their father".

Lebanon's military said another strike killed a soldier "while he was driving" in the Nabatieh region.

Ukraine to buy up to 20 Gripen jet fighters, Sweden to donate 16

AFP | Stockholm

Ukraine plans to buy up to 20 latest model Gripen fighter jets and Sweden will donate 16 older models, the two countries announced yesterday as Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Sweden.

Ukraine plans to allocate 2.5 billion euros (\$2.9 billion) from an EU loan for the new aircraft,

the Swedish government said in a statement. Regarding the latest model Gripen E jets, "the aim is to quickly conclude a final agreement with deliveries as of 2030", Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said at a joint press conference with Zelenskyy at an air base in Uppsala, 70 kilometers (45 miles) north of Stockholm.

The 16 donated aircraft will

150

Gripen fighter jets are the long-term target Ukraine hopes to acquire from Sweden

be delivered in early 2027, Kristersson said.

"This is a historic decision for Sweden, but it also strengthens Ukraine's air defense significantly," he added.

The two countries signed a letter of intent in October on Kyiv's purchase of 100 to 150 Gripen E aircraft.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine, bat-

tling Russia's invasion since 2022, hoped to buy all 150 planes.

"We hope we will be able to secure financing for all of them," he said.

Sweden in 2024 suspended plans to send Gripen jets to Ukraine after partner countries requested that priority be given to providing US F-16 fighters.

1453

Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, falls to the Ottoman Turks under Mehmed the Conqueror, ending the Byzantine Empire after 1,100 years



1592

The Korean navy, led by Admiral Yi Sun-sin, repels a Japanese fleet in the Battle of Sacheon, the first use of a Korean Turtle Ship

1660

On his 30th birthday, Charles II returns to London from exile in the Netherlands to claim the English throne after the Puritan Commonwealth comes to an end

1953

Edmund Hillary (NZ) and Tenzing Norgay (Nepal) are the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest as part of a British expedition

US, Iran accuse each other of violating truce after attacks

Fighting around the Strait of Hormuz reignited fears of broader regional escalation

● Five drones intercepted by US forces

● Kuwait condemns Iranian attacks

● Stuttering peace negotiations face deep uncertainty

AFP | Tehran

The United States and Iran accused each other of violating an ongoing ceasefire yesterday following an exchange of fire, three months after the regional conflict began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran.

The latest incident was the most serious since the ceasefire took effect in April, complicating ongoing negotiations aimed at ending the conflict and prompting concern from regional states, including Kuwait, which described the developments as a “dangerous escalation”.

Iranian forces fired at four ships attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz without authorisation, according to state



Vessels are seen anchored in the Strait of Hormuz, off the port city of Khasab on Oman's northern Musandam Peninsula

broadcaster IRIB. Iran has imposed restrictions on the waterway since the conflict began on February 28.

US forces said they intercepted five attack drones in and around the strait and prevented the launch of a sixth from a ground control site near the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

According to IRIB, citing Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the strike

near Bandar Abbas prompted Iran to target what it described as “the American airbase that served as the source of the attack”.

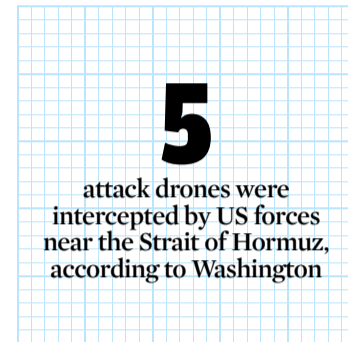
The Guards did not specify the location of the base, though Kuwait, which hosts US troops, said its air defences responded to incoming missiles and drones.

Kuwait's foreign ministry later condemned what it described as

Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti territory, calling them “a dangerous escalation”.

US Central Command described the incident as an “egregious ceasefire violation”.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Iran would “take all necessary measures to defend its national sovereignty”, while also accusing the United States of violating the



5 attack drones were intercepted by US forces near the Strait of Hormuz, according to Washington

truce.

A US official said the American actions had been “measured” and “intended to preserve the ceasefire”.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned of a “firm response” in the event of further attacks.

The exchange highlighted continued uncertainty surrounding negotiations aimed at formally ending the conflict, although neither side has indicated a willingness to resume full-scale war.

Before yesterday's strikes, Amir, a 27-year-old software developer in Tehran, said concerns about renewed fighting remained despite the ceasefire and reports of diplomatic progress.

“I feel like nothing is certain yet,” he said. “The daily question is: Will there be missile strikes tonight?”

Israel PM says orders army to take control of 70 percent of Gaza Strip



A Palestinian boy sits at the site of an overnight Israeli military strike on structures and tents housing displaced families, killing ten Palestinians, in Gaza City

AFP | Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he had ordered the country's military to take control of 70 percent of the Gaza Strip, in defiance of the terms of a fragile ceasefire that took effect in October.

“We are currently squeezing Hamas. We now control 60 percent of the territory in the Strip,” he said at a conference in an occupied West Bank settlement, according to a video aired by Israel's Channel 12 network.

He said the military had controlled 50 percent of Gaza under

the terms of the ceasefire, adding: “My directive is to move to... 70 percent.”

“We're squeezing them from all (sides). We'll deal with what's left afterwards.”

The first phase of the truce saw the last hostages seized in Hamas's October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel, which triggered the war in Gaza, released in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel.

The transition to the second phase, which was supposed to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of the Israeli army, has been stalled for months.

Fire in Kenya girls' school dorm kills 16

AFP | Nairobi

A fire in a girls' dormitory in Kenya yesterday killed 16 children and hospitalised 79 in the latest deadly blaze to hit a school in the east African country.

The fire broke out shortly before 1:00 am local time at Utumishi Girls Academy in Nakuru County, around 120 kilometres (75 miles) north of the capital Nairobi, officials said.

There have been many devastating school fires in Kenya, where boarding schools are common as a colonial legacy of missionaries and the British.

It was unclear how old the victims of yesterday's blaze were.

“We have 16 fatalities. It's an unfortunate incident,” education minister Julius Migos Ogamba told reporters at the scene.

Frantic parents were being held outside the school buildings by authorities as investigators raced to identify the victims.

“Our hearts and prayers are with the families who have



Parents and guardians walk outside the Utumishi Girls Academy following the deadly fire in Gilgil, north of the capital Nairobi

lost their beloved daughters,” President William Ruto said on X, describing it as an “unimaginable tragedy”.

The school is linked to the National Police Service and most pupils are the children of officers, said interior minister Kipchumba Murkomen.

“We know that this is a very anxious moment,” he told reporters.

Asked about the cause of the fire, Murkomen called for patience while investigations were ongoing and urged people to avoid speculation.

Children have been accused of deliberately starting school

fires in the past. One report found there were 63 arson cases at schools in 2018 alone.

Pupils were accused after a 2001 dormitory fire in the southern county of Machakos killed 67.

A fire in 2024 killed 21 boys after flames engulfed a dormitory at the Hillside Enderasha Academy in Nyeri county.

A 2017 report by Kenya's National Crime Research Centre blamed exam stress and long school terms and said students in different schools were communicating via smuggled phones, leading to copycat acts.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



#Hantavirus update: the number of cases reported to @WHO so far remains 13, including three deaths. No new deaths have been reported since 2 May. We remain in close contact with all governments where passengers and crew are being quarantined or receiving care in isolation. The situation remains stable at this time.

@DrTedros

02



The Strait of Hormuz remains caught in a dangerous grey zone between war and peace. There is now a tenuous diplomatic push to extend the ceasefire and reopen the strait. Any first phase agreement between the U.S. and Iran must be followed by deeper talks about the nuclear stockpile, and other critical issues for regional security. The EU can contribute with technical expertise. The EU is also helping to protect the freedom of navigation in the region, including through our operation Aspides. We have already reinforced the mission with more ships.

@kajakallas

03



Congratulations @AndrisKulbergs on your election as Prime Minister of Latvia. I look forward to working with you on crucial issues for Latvia and Europe: defence, competitiveness, Ukraine, and the EU's long-term budget. We will address all of them together in the June #EUOCO.

@eucopresident

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

Gulf Stands With Kuwait

Regional leaders condemn the strikes and reaffirm commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty

Kuwait Fires Back Diplomatically

Kuwait on Thursday condemned what it called "criminal Iranian attacks" after missiles and drones struck its territory in what its Foreign Ministry described as a dangerous escalation and a flagrant violation of its sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. Kuwait reserved its full right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter, calling on Iran to immediately and unconditionally halt the attacks and bear full responsibility for them.

Kuwait's military confirmed its air defence systems had intercepted the hostile missiles and drones, assuring citizens that explosion sounds heard were the result of successful

interceptions — not ground impacts — while urging the public to follow official safety instructions.

One Voice

The response from Gulf neighbours was swift and unanimous. Saudi Arabia condemned the attacks "in the strongest terms," reaffirming its solidarity with Kuwait and rejecting all violations of state sovereignty. Qatar called the strikes a flagrant breach of international law, while the UAE labelled them "Iranian terrorist attacks" and a direct threat to Kuwait's security. Bahrain's Foreign Minister personally called his Kuwaiti counterpart to condemn the attacks and affirm Kuwait's right to protect itself.

"Tracherous Aggression"



The Gulf Cooperation Council went further, with Secretary-General Jassem Alabdulawi denouncing the strikes as "treacherous aggression" and a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and principles of good neighbourliness — with all GCC states standing firmly behind Kuwait.

Diplomacy Under Fire

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry noted the attacks came precisely when regional and international efforts were underway to reduce tensions — making the strikes not only an act of aggression, but a deliberate blow to diplomacy and regional stability.

Saudi Arabia Provides \$150 Million Emergency



Saudi Arabia has provided an urgent grant of oil derivatives worth \$150 million to Yemen to help sustain the operation of power plants that rely on diesel and mazout across the country.

This move is part of ongoing Saudi support for Yemen and aims to strengthen electricity generation and improve essential public services.

The assistance was ordered by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman.

Saudi officials said the initiative reflects the Kingdom's continued commitment to supporting the Yemeni people and addressing urgent humanitarian and infrastructure needs.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman has been tasked with overseeing follow-up on the grant's implementation.

Development Programme

The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen (SDRPY) will supervise the execution of the grant, ensuring the delivery and distribution of fuel supplies to support electricity generation.

Officials said the funding will help stabilise power production, improve basic services, and reduce the pressure on Yemen's strained energy infrastructure.

Focus on improving living conditions

Saudi Ambassador to Yemen and General Supervisor of SDRPY Mohammed Al-Jaber said the initiative reflects the Kingdom's consistent support for Yemen, particularly as seasonal temperatures rise and demand for electricity increases.

He added that the assistance is intended to ease humanitarian hardship and strengthen essential services for the Yemeni population.

US and France Align on Africa and Middle East Cooperation

A senior U.S. official held talks with a French foreign ministry representative to review shared priorities and strengthen cooperation on key geopolitical issues in the Middle East and Africa.

Massad Boulos met with Romaric Roignan, Director for North Africa and the Middle East at France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, to discuss areas of mutual interest between Washington and Paris.

Both sides emphasized continued coordination on regional stability, particularly in conflict-affected countries.

On Western Sahara, the two officials underlined the importance of pursuing a peaceful, durable, and mutually acceptable political

solution, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2797.

The discussions also addressed the ongoing crisis in Sudan, where both countries highlighted the need for continued international cooperation following the Berlin Conference on Sudan. They referenced a joint statement of principles endorsed by the United States, France, and more than 20 other countries and organizations. The U.S. side stressed that resolving the Sudan conflict remains a priority for the administration of the President of the United States, given the scale of the humanitarian emergency, widely described as the world's most severe.

Libya was another key topic, with both parties discussing the



importance of an inclusive, Libyan-led political process aimed at unifying state institutions, in coordination with the United Nations' roadmap for political reconciliation.

The meeting reflects ongoing U.S.-French efforts to align their diplomatic approaches across North Africa and the wider Near East amid multiple regional crises.

Air Medical Units Provide Rapid Hajj Response



The air medical evacuation department under the General Directorate for Health Services of the Ministry of Defense (Saudi Arabia) has deployed four fully equipped aircraft to support emergency

medical operations during this year's Hajj season.

The aircraft are dedicated to providing advanced in-flight emergency medical care to pilgrims, ensuring rapid response in critical situations across the

holy sites.

Officials said the aerial evacuation system is part of a broader healthcare strategy aimed at strengthening emergency preparedness during Hajj, when

millions of pilgrims gather in and around the holy sites.

The deployment highlights ongoing efforts to enhance medical readiness and ensure the safety and well-being of pilgrims throughout the Hajj season.

Call for Peace and Unity Mark OIC Chief's Eid Al-Adha Message

The Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Hissein Brahim Taha, extended his congratulations and blessings to Muslims around the world on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha 1447H.

In a message issued for the Islamic holiday, the OIC chief conveyed his sincere wishes to the Muslim Ummah, praying that Allah accepts the good deeds of pilgrims performing Hajj and Mus-

lims celebrating Eid worldwide.

Taha described Eid Al-Adha as a blessed occasion that reflects the values of sacrifice, compassion and selflessness, while expressing hope for peace and harmony across the Muslim world.

The Secretary-General also extended congratulations to the leaders of OIC member states, wishing them good health and continued prosperity for their nations and peoples.

He paid special tribute to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, praising Saudi Arabia's efforts in serving Islam and caring for pilgrims during the Hajj season.

Taha highlighted the Kingdom's leading role in supporting causes related to the Islamic Ummah and

ensuring the welfare and safety of pilgrims visiting the holy sites.

Concluding his message, the OIC Secretary-General prayed for greater security and stability across the Muslim world, expressing hope that Eid Al-Adha would help strengthen solidarity and joint Islamic cooperation.

He also voiced hope for an end to hardships facing Muslim nations and for a future marked by peace, prosperity and progress.

India, Saudi FM attend Cyprus talks on Middle East



India's External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud participated in the Foreign Affairs Council held in its informal "Gymnich" format in Cyprus.

The high-level discussions brought ministers together to examine the evolving geopolitical situation in the Middle East and explore ways to improve coordination in responding to regional crises.

A key focus of the meeting was maritime security, particularly safeguarding freedom of navigation through

the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy corridor widely regarded as being in a fragile balance between escalation and stability.

Ministers reportedly stressed the importance of maintaining open sea routes and avoiding further deterioration of security conditions in the region, given the wider implications for global trade and energy supplies.

The talks reflect ongoing international efforts to align diplomatic approaches amid heightened tensions across the Middle East and surrounding maritime routes.



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Yamal's Spain dreaming of Euro-World Cup double repeat

Luis de la Fuente's dynamic Spain blend flair, pace and technical control

● Spain attempts to revive golden era

● Lamine Yamal faces ongoing hamstring recovery

● Luis de la Fuente encourages tactical flexibility

● Multiple key players battle late-season fitness issues

AFP | Madrid

Boosted by teenage phenomenon Lamine Yamal, Luis de la Fuente's Spain are attempting to follow in the footsteps of the country's golden generation, who conquered Europe in 2008 and then the world two years later.

The 18-year-old Barcelona winger is recovering from a hamstring injury which could delay his appearance at the tournament, but he has the star quality to elevate Spain to an era-defining triumph by repeating the feat of Xavi Hernandez, Andres Iniesta and Co. in South Africa.

That team, guided to Euro glory by Luis Aragones for their first major trophy in 44 years, and then to the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012 successes by Vicente del Bosque, was built on control and passing opponents into submission.

De la Fuente's Spain are a different, more dynamic side.

With Yamal and Athletic Bilbao star Nico Williams on the flanks, Spain cut teams open in transition, with pace and skill as well as the technical qualities La Roja are renowned for.

The coach, after replacing Luis Enrique following Spain's Qatar World Cup elimination by Morocco in the last 16, said he was not afraid to have a Plan B or be more direct when needed.

44

years was Spain's wait for a major trophy before their golden generation won Euro 2008, followed by the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012

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Bulgaria's forward #09 Aleksandar Kolev and Bulgaria's defender #07 Fabian Nuernberger fight for the ball against Spain's forward #19 Lamine Yamal (C) (file photo)

“In my book we play the best football. (When I'm on form) it's like being a superhero -- everything falls into place. I'm faster, stronger, full of adrenaline. I feel like nothing can stop me. I'd love to reach that level at the World Cup.

LAMINE YAMAL

Just as 2008 proved to Spain that they truly were capable of going all the way and securing silverware, De la Fuente's Euro 2024 success in Germany could prove a similar stepping stone.

“We've recovered the spirit of 2010... the one that brought us all out into the streets,” said the Spain coach then.

The 2010 World Cup win is Spain's sole triumph in the competition, and they struggled badly in the subsequent three editions of the tournament.

Del Bosque's team were eliminated in the group stage in 2014 -- older, slower, and with classic tiki-taka past its peak.

“To say that the cycle has come to an end is crazy,” said defender Sergio Ramos at the time -- but it had.

In 2018 Spain sacked coach Julien Lopetegui on the eve of

the tournament after he agreed to join Real Madrid, thus destabilising themselves.

Four years later, Luis Enrique's Spain lacked the cutting edge they needed, which Yamal now brings in spades.

“In my book we play the best football,” Yamal told FIFA.

“(When I'm on form) it's like being a superhero -- everything falls into place. I'm faster, stronger, full of adrenaline.

“I feel like nothing can stop me. I'd love to reach that level at the World Cup.”

Accepting the compliment

Spain arrive at the World Cup as favourites alongside France, ahead of England, Brazil and Argentina, according to bookmakers.

“I think everyone likes it when people speak well of you, especially given it's not us who are putting out that message...



De la Fuente says Spain can now adapt beyond traditional possession football, with Yamal and Williams giving them a more direct edge

we'll accept the compliment,” said De la Fuente in March.

“We'll have to... put in an almost perfect performance to have a chance of winning,” he continued.

“We have to be aware that there are other teams just as strong as we are.”

Even though Spain head into the tournament with top billing, there are some worries.

It could take youngster Yamal time to get up to speed if he is not able to play in the opening Group H games against Cape Verde and Saudi Arabia.

Reports in Spanish media suggest that he is likely to return for the third match, against two-time winners Uruguay, although De la Fuente said that everybody should be available by the second group game.

Williams's own fitness is a significant issue.

He has struggled with a groin issue for much of the season, but rapid Osasuna winger Victor Munoz is there for back-up.

Arsenal midfielder Martin Zubimendi appeared to finish the season exhausted, while Manchester City's Rodri is not quite back at the dominant level he showed before his serious knee injury in 2024.

Some might argue that Spain still lack a top quality centre forward -- think Fernando Torres, David Villa, Raul -- but the classy Mikel Oyarzabal would beg to differ after his Euro 2024 final goal against England won Spain the trophy.

Neymar a doubt for Brazil's World Cup opener due to injury

AFP | Brasilia

Brazil forward Neymar is a doubt for the start of the World Cup after injuring his calf, requiring two to three weeks of treatment, the national team's doctor Rodrigo Lasmar said yesterday.

The 34-year-old Santos star will miss Brazil's two pre-World Cup friendlies against Panama and Egypt, but may also be out of their tournament opener against Morocco on June 13.

An MRI scan “identified a grade two muscle injury... our expectation is that he will be



Neymar

available in two to three weeks,” Lasmar said at Brazil's pre-tournament training centre just outside Rio de Janeiro.

Neymar joined his international teammates at the training centre on Wednesday but sat out the first session.

He has missed Santos's last few matches due to what his club coach Cuca had called “a slight injury”.

His inclusion in Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti's 26-man squad for the World Cup was something of a surprise as Neymar had not been picked for the

national team in almost three years.

A mixture of injuries and poor form had left him outside the national team set-up, with Ancelotti citing concerns over his fitness after leaving him out of Brazil's squad for March friendlies against France and Croatia.

However, Neymar is Brazil's all-time leading goalscorer with 79 goals in 128 appearances for the Selecao. This will be his fourth World Cup.

His last appearance for Brazil was in 2023 during a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay.

Bulgaria's Delyan Georgiev squares off against India's Owais Yaqoob at BRAVE CF 107

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation™ (BRAVE CF), the world's fastest-growing and most global mixed martial arts organization, continues to raise anticipation for its return to Bulgaria with a lightweight showdown officially confirmed for BRAVE CF 107, scheduled for Saturday, August 1, at the Burgas Arena.

The bout will see hometown favorite Delyan Georgiev collide with Indian standout Owais Yaqoob in a three-round featured attraction on the supporting card, adding further intrigue to a highly anticipated international showcase.

Delyan Georgiev, Former IMMAF World Champion, stated: "I've been waiting for this moment for a long time. Finally making my BRAVE CF debut in front of my home fans and a worldwide audience is truly special. I am ready to show every-



one what I can do and prove that Bulgaria has another elite talent ready for the international scene."

Owais Yaqoob, No. 5-Ranked Lightweight Contender, stated: "I'm excited to compete again in BRAVE CF and continue building my momentum. Delyan

Georgiev is a young and talented fighter from Bulgaria, so I know this will be a tough test in front of his supporters. These are the kind of fights that push you to the next level, and I'm ready for it."

Georgiev joins BRAVE CF carrying an exceptional amateur

pedigree. The Bulgarian prospect established himself as one of the brightest names in European mixed martial arts after becoming a two-time IMMAF World Champion, winning the gold medal in 2017 and 2018.

Since transitioning to the professional ranks in 2021, Georgiev

has compiled an unbeaten 3-0 record, showcasing versatility with victories by both knockout and submission. Now, the promising lightweight prepares to unveil his skill set on one of the sport's premier platforms in what could become a defining chapter of his young career.

Standing across from him will be a competitor who has rapidly emerged as one of BRAVE CF's most dangerous new athletes.

Yaqoob owns an impressive 5-1 professional record with three stoppage victories and has made an immediate impact during his current run under the promotion's banner. The Indian bruiser forced Ian Paul Lora to tap on strikes in the opening round at BRAVE CF 98 in September 2025 before delivering another emphatic first-round finish against Mehmet Can Tasdoven through relentless ground-and-pound at BRAVE CF 103 three months later.

Those dominant performances earned Yaqoob the prestigious 2025 BRAVE CF Breakout Fighter of the Year award and cemented his reputation as one of the most exciting talents in the weight class today.

The clash becomes even more intriguing considering the elite camps behind both competitors. Georgiev sharpens his craft alongside BRAVE CF alumnus Ilia "El Matador" Topuria, while Yaqoob trains under the guidance of MMA legend Khabib "The Eagle" Nurmagomedov.

With national pride, rising momentum, and international recognition all at stake, Georgiev vs. Yaqoob promises to deliver a compelling battle when BRAVE CF 107 lights up Burgas Arena on Saturday, August 1.

Several additional matchups will be announced in the coming weeks as BRAVE CF continues to build anticipation for its return to Bulgaria.

Egypt eye World Cup breakthrough in Salah's likely last World Cup

● Mohamed Salah targets elusive victory

● Egypt holds seven continental championships

● AFCON heartbreak still motivates Salah

AFP | Cairo

Mohamed Salah has unfinished business in what could be his final World Cup as Egypt's superstar seeks to deliver a first win at the tournament for the Pharaohs.

Powerhouses of African football with a record seven continental titles, Egypt have struggled to make a dent on the global stage in three previous attempts.

Salah should have arrived at the 2018 World Cup in the form of his life.

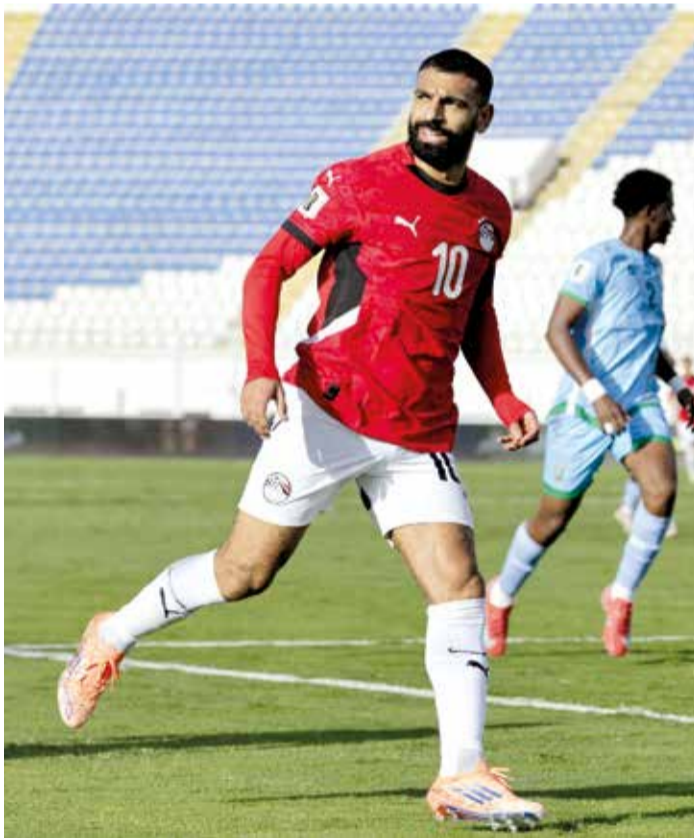
Fresh from scoring 44 goals in his debut season at Liverpool -- which propelled him from promising talent into a worldwide phenomenon -- Salah suffered a serious shoulder injury in the Champions League final after an infamous challenge by Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos.

A patched-up Salah did make it to Russia and scored twice in his two appearances, but failed to prevent a group stage exit after defeats to the hosts, Uruguay and Saudi Arabia.

Now the 33-year-old comes into a World Cup at the other end of his Liverpool career.

Salah broke down in tears several times as his nine-year spell at Anfield ended on Sunday after amassing 257 goals, two Premier League titles and Champions League glory.

"We put this club back where



Egypt's forward #10 Mohamed Salah reacts during a match (file photo)

it belongs," he said in his parting message on Merseyside.

His Premier League exploits meant that his influence stretched far beyond the field of play.

Salah was named in Time magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in 2019, described as an "iconic figure for Egyptians, Scousers and Muslims the world over".

He has used that profile to call for greater gender equality in the Arab world and to appeal for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza following Israeli air strikes in October 2023.

'Best in the world'

Now, his home nation expects Salah to deliver a moment on the international stage which is lacking from his glittering

career.

Twice he has been on the losing side in Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) finals, in 2017 and 2021.

"For me, Salah is the best player in the world," Egypt forward Mahmoud Hassan, better known as Trezeguet, told AFP.

"His presence is extremely important for us. Not only as a star, but also as a leader who gives us confidence and strength."

Together, Salah and former Aston Villa forward Trezeguet scored 14 of Egypt's 20 goals in qualifying.

Yet, Salah was a diminished force in the Premier League this season, which accelerated his exit from Liverpool.

A year ago, he was handed a new two-year contract on the back of one of the great all-time



individual seasons to deliver the Premier League title.

Tensions between Liverpool's "Egyptian King" and manager Arne Slot simmered for months after Salah was dropped for three consecutive matches in December.

Injuries to others meant he regained his place after returning from AFCON, but Salah's return of 12 goals in 41 appearances was by a distance the lowest of his Liverpool career.

However, his and Egypt's form at international level is a cause for optimism heading into a manageable draw against Belgium, New Zealand, and Iran in Group G.

Salah scored in his first four appearances at AFCON before more heartbreak against his former club team-mate Sadio Mane's Senegal, this time in the semi-finals.

He then missed the March international window where Hossam Hassan's side thrashed Saudi Arabia 4-0 and held Spain to a 0-0 draw.

"I believe he will achieve something with the Pharaohs at the 2026 World Cup," former Egypt captain Ahmed Fathi said.

"I played with him since the early days of his international career -- we were together at the London 2012 Olympics and the 2018 World Cup. He always made the difference, and I hope he will do it again in the United States."

Mateta fires Palace to Conference League glory in Glasner farewell



Crystal Palace's French striker #14 Jean-Philippe Mateta reacts holding the trophy

AFP | London

Jean-Philippe Mateta scored as Crystal Palace beat Rayo Vallecano 1-0 in the UEFA Conference League final in Leipzig on Wednesday to secure the club's first European trophy in their history.

After a cagey opening half with few clear chances, Mateta turned in a rebound for the game's only goal on 51 minutes, sending departing coach Oliver Glasner off in style.

Glasner departs with a third trophy in two years as Palace manager, the most successful period in the club's history, after dashing Rayo's hopes of landing their first major silverware.

"The difference he (Glasner) has made in two and a half years is incredible," Palace midfielder Adam Wharton told TNT Sports.

"Three trophies, the first in the history of the club, first European competition and winning it.

"He's got to be one of the best managers Palace have had and he's made a huge difference to how the club looks at competitions now -- we're

looking to win it."

The victory also completed Glasner's objective of returning Palace to the Europa League, the competition they qualified to play in this season before falling foul of multi-club ownership rules and being demoted to the Conference League.

The Austrian, already a Europa League champion with Eintracht Frankfurt in 2022, once again showed his excellence in knockout competitions.

Palace overcame the sales of star players Eberechi Eze and Marc Guehi this season, and the fallout from the latter's January move to Manchester City, to cap their first full venture into European competition with a title.

France striker Mateta, the hero on the night, was a failed medical away from leaving Palace for AC Milan this winter.

"I feel fantastic," said Mateta. "First time in Europe, we did it! Now I just want to celebrate, I just want to party.

"I'm tired, man. I gave everything. The team gave everything and that's why we won today."

Barbar, Al Ahli advance to league final

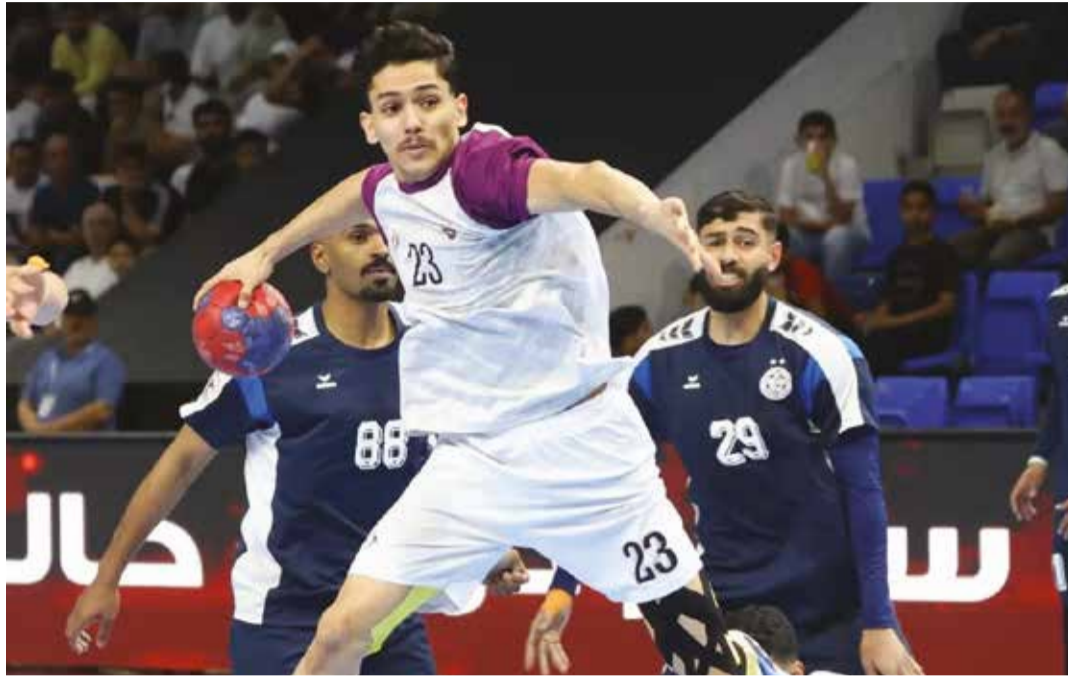
TDT | Manama

Al Ahli and Barbar booked their places in the final of the 2025-26 Khalid bin Hamad Bahrain Handball League yesterday after dramatic semi-final victories at Khalifa Sports City in Isa Town.

Ahli overcame Al Shabab 35-33 on penalties after a 31-31 draw in regulation time, while Barbar edged defending champions Al Najma 25-24 in a last-gasp finish. Both finalists completed 2-0 sweeps in their best-of-three series.

Ahli and Shabab opened the night with a tense battle. Ahli led 3-2 by the sixth minute and extended their advantage to 6-4, but Shabab responded strongly to move ahead 11-8 before taking a 14-9 lead into halftime after intercepting an Ali Eid pass and scoring on the fast break.

Shabab continued to fight in the second half despite losing



Action from Barbar's dramatic victory over Al Najma

Abdulla Al Salatneh to injury through the half, they over- 22-21 and later scored twice in quick succession to move two

goals ahead with under three minutes remaining.

Ahli responded through Ali Eid, who converted a crucial free throw to level the game before goalkeeper Hussain Mahfooz produced a last-second save from Jassim Khamis to force shootouts.

In the shootout, Ali Merza opened for Ahli before Jassim Khamis missed Shabab's first attempt wide of the post. Qassim Qambar converted Ahli's second throw, while Mahfooz later denied Al Salatneh with another key save. Mohammed Hameed added Ahli's fourth successful throw before Yousif Ahmed calmly converted the winning attempt to seal a 35-33 triumph and send Ahli through to the final. Mahfooz was named MVP for his impressive goalkeeping.

Later in the evening, Barbar overcame defending champions Najma in another closely con-

tested clash.

Salman Al Showaikh levelled the score at 4-4 early in the first half after cutting in from the right wing, while Barbar goalkeeper Isa Khalaf made a crucial save moments later to preserve a narrow 6-5 lead. Najma held a 16-15 halftime lead before the second half became a back-and-forth battle.

Barbar moved ahead 22-21, but Najma regained the lead at 24-23 entering the closing stages. Barbar equalised in the 29th minute before Khalaf made another close-range save in the final seconds to preserve parity.

Moments later, Hassan Al Fardan scored the winner after battling inside the goal area to receive the ball and finish in the dying seconds. The goal sparked celebrations as Barbar continue their pursuit of a seventh league title. Khalaf was named MVP after his extraordinary display in goal.

Ailing Sinner **crashes out** of French Open

Sinner's exit leaves the French Open men's draw dramatically more unpredictable

● Sinner lose after two-set lead

● Heat issues disrupt top seed

● Cerundolo stage stunning comeback

● Osaka safely reaches third round

AFP | Paris

Jannik Sinner succumbed to an apparent bout of heatstroke and a remarkable Juan Manuel Cerundolo comeback to crash out of the French Open yesterday, blowing the men's tournament wide open.

The world number one was cruising when leading by two sets and 5-1 in the third set before suddenly struggling with his movement as he lost 18 points in a row.

Sinner took a medical timeout, complained of feeling "dizzy" and left a sweltering Court Philippe Chatrier for treatment, but after returning still slipped to a 3-6, 2-6, 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 loss to world number 56 Cerundolo.

"I was little bit lucky, I feel sorry for him," said Cerundolo.

"I don't know what happened, he was cramping, maybe the pressure. I feel sorry for him and hope he recovers."

Sinner suffered his earliest exit from a Grand Slam since the 2023 French Open, as Cerundolo completed one of tennis' biggest shocks in recent years and set up a last-32 tie against either Spanish youngster Martin Landaluce or Czech Vit Koprivna on Saturday.

The unseasonably hot weather has caused problems for players all week in Paris.

Czech Jakub Mensik collapsed on court with cramps after his win on Wednesday,



Italy's Jannik Sinner acknowledges the crowd as he reacts to his men's singles match defeat to Argentina's Juan Manuel Cerundolo

30

consecutive matches had been won by Jannik Sinner before his shock French Open defeat

while Novak Djokovic called for matches to be moved to later in the day.

The 24-year-old Sinner was the latest to wilt under the blazing sun, seeing his 30-match winning streak, after taking titles in Rome, Madrid and Monte Carlo, Miami and Indian Wells, come to a shuddering halt.

The Italian will now have to wait until next year, when injured rival Carlos Alcaraz will likely be back in action, for his next chance to complete the career Grand Slam.

The top seed was in total control and romping towards the most routine of victories before

he suddenly started to struggle physically, losing three consecutive games to love. He asked the chair umpire what his options were when 0-40 down in the next game, before being evaluated by a physio, saying he felt dizzy and needed to vomit.

Sinner gingerly returned to the court after treatment to applause from the crowd but continued to melt in the 32C heat and departed the stage again after Cerundolo took the set.

After a nine-minute delay, the cramping Sinner hobbled back out but quickly saw the fourth set slide away as Cerundolo levelled the tie.

The unheralded Argentinian appeared inspired by the opportunity to knock out the world's best player and raced to victory against his deflated opponent, who was left bent over double after every lengthy rally.

The underdog was left to celebrate a sensational win after clipping away a forehand winner to reach the third round of a Slam for the first time.

"I tried to play my best, I'm

going to keep trying to play my best. The clay is my best surface and I hope to be ready for the next match," added Cerundolo.

Sinner's compatriot Flavio Cobolli, the 10th seed, reached the third round for a second successive year with a 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 win over China's Wu Yubing.

He will next face American Learner Tien after the 18th seed fought back to defeat world number 151 Facundo Diaz Acosta of Argentina 7-5, 4-6, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.

Osaka safely through

Osaka edged closer to a possible last-16 meeting with Sabalenka after reaching the third round for the first time in seven years by beating Croatia's Donna Vekic 7-6 (7/1), 6-4.

The four-time Grand Slam champion will face a tough test from American teenager Iva Jovic on Saturday when both players will be hoping to reach the fourth round at Roland Garros for the first time.

"Today was really tough," said the Japanese star. "But I was glad to be able to finish in two because every game felt really, really close."

Osaka's run to the US Open semi-finals last year is the only time she has made the second week of a major since her last Grand Slam triumph at the 2021 Australian Open.



Sinner reportedly asked the chair umpire about his options mid-match after feeling dizzy and saying he needed to vomit in the Paris heat

Road to AFC U20 Asian Cup begins



Bahrain's U-20 national football team line up before a match

TDT | Manama

Bahrain have been drawn in Group D of the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2027 Qualifiers, alongside Jordan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, following the official draw held at the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Kingdom of Bahrain will host the group's qualification matches from August 25 to September 6, with all fixtures set to be played in a centralised league format.

The competition will determine which teams progress to the continental finals in China, scheduled from March 24 to April 10, 2027.

This edition of the qualifiers introduces a new competition system approved by the AFC earlier this year as part of broader reforms to age-group tournaments. The revised format is designed to raise competitive standards across Asia and ensure more balanced, technically demanding encounters between national teams.

Under the new structure, the qualification campaign will be played over two stages and will feature a promotion and relegation mechanism. A total

of 32 national teams are split into eight groups of four.

The eight group winners, along with the seven best second-placed teams, will advance to the 43rd AFC U20 Asian Cup finals, while the bottom-placed team in each group will drop into the AFC's developmental stage for the next edition of the qualifiers.

The group stage features a wide spread of contenders across Asia. Group A includes South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, and Lebanon. Group B brings together Uzbekistan, Syria, India, and Bangladesh. Group C consists of Iran, Vietnam, North Korea, and Palestine.

Group D comprises Bahrain, Jordan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Group E features Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Hong Kong China. Group F includes Iraq, Thailand, the UAE, and Turkmenistan. Group G contains Japan, Yemen, Cambodia, and Kuwait, while Group H is made up of Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Laos.

With the advantage of playing on home soil, Bahrain will be aiming to make full use of familiar conditions as they push for a place in the prestigious continental tournament.