

Antonelli wins in Japan to become youngest F1 championship leader
 19-year-old dominates early season as rivals trail in Japan showdown | P15

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Martinez holds second overall as Volta a Catalunya concludes 14 SPORTS

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Temporary ban on fishing and boating for safety

Rehab Mohammad
 TD | Manama

The Ministry of Interior has announced a temporary ban on maritime activities for fishermen and recreational boat users.

The decision comes in light of ongoing blatant Iranian attacks on the Kingdom of Bahrain using missiles and drones.

It aims to safeguard the lives of citizens, residents, and all sea-goers, given the serious risks posed by these attacks.

The maritime restriction will be enforced daily from 6pm to 4am, starting yesterday and until further notice.

Directives

This decision follows previous directives regulating maritime movement, as detailed in the attached map.

The Ministry urged all sea-goers to follow the maritime curfew, stay away from the coasts, and comply with safety regulations.

These measures are part of ongoing efforts to protect lives and ensure readiness amid the current security situation

Terrorist attacks

TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks targeting the residences of Nechirvan Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Masoud Barzani.

It described the incidents as unacceptable assaults and serious threats to Iraq's security and stability, as well as blatant violations of international law.

The Ministry affirmed Bahrain's firm support for Iraq's security, stability, unity, and territorial integrity, and expressed full solidarity with the Kurdistan Regional Government and its people in the face of attacks.

Bahrain condemns Iranian attacks, backs Kuwait

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, strongly condemned the hostile Iranian attacks that have targeted Kuwait, resulting in the injury of 10 members of its armed forces.

The attacks also targeted Kuwait International Airport, as well as a number of civilian, economic, and other vital facilities



HRH Prince Salman



HH Sheikh Sabah Khaled

and infrastructures.

The remarks came as HRH Prince Salman yesterday held a telephone call with His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait.

During the call, His Royal Highness affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's unwavering solidarity with Kuwait, underscoring its support for all measures undertaken to safeguard its

sovereignty, security, stability, and territorial integrity.

He conveyed his wishes for the swift recovery of the injured, and also expressed his hopes for Kuwait and its citizens to enjoy continued security, stability, and prosperity. During the call, the strength of the longstanding relations between Bahrain and Kuwait, regional and international developments, as well as issues of mutual interest, were also discussed.

Maritime security

Bahrain pushes for UN resolution urging Iran to guarantee safe passage through Hormuz



H.E. Dr. Al Zayani chairs the Council's online meeting

Global oil and trade flows at risk amid vital waterway tensions

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain is working with concerned countries to prepare a draft resolution for the United Nations Security Council, aimed at securing freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and urging Iran to respect international law and Security Council resolutions.

This was confirmed by His Excellency Dr. Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, while chairing the 165th Arab League Ministerial Council meeting, held via

video conference.

H.E. Dr. Al Zayani emphasised that "Iran has not complied with Resolution 2817, which called for an immediate cessation of its attacks, but has instead escalated its aggression against our countries with ballistic missiles and drones, specifically targeting civilian infrastructure including airports, seaports, hotels, energy and industrial facilities, food security services, service centers, residential areas, and diplomatic missions."

Will

He added that "the Kingdom of Bahrain, on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan, submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council, which was adopted on March 11, 2026, reflecting the collective will of the interna-

tional community to preserve state sovereignty and maintain international peace and security."

H.E. Dr. Al Zayani also highlighted the human rights dimension, noting that the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva adopted a resolution on the implications of Iran's attacks, supported by 106 countries.

"This underscores the severity of Iran's actions and the need for international accountability," he said.

Violation

The Minister pointed out that Iran's repeated closures and threats in the Strait of Hormuz constitute "a clear violation of international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, threatening global energy supplies, international



Iran's repeated closures and threats in the Strait of Hormuz threatens global energy supplies, international navigation, and trade

H.E. DR. ABDUL LATIF BIN RASHID AL ZAYANI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

navigation, and trade."

He stressed that Bahrain and its partners are preparing a new Security Council draft resolution to reinforce freedom of navigation in this vital waterway.

The Arab League Ministerial Council, under Bahrain's chairmanship, issued a joint declaration condemning Iran's attacks as deliberate, brutal, and targeting civilian populations.

Right

The Council reaffirmed the right of targeted countries to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, expressed full solidarity with the affected nations, and praised the read-

iness of armed forces and air defense systems in countering the attacks.

H.E. Dr. Al Zayani said that "the current stage requires all Arab countries to strengthen Arab solidarity, unify ranks, and coordinate positions in international forums, foremost among them the United Nations, to defend our just causes and protect regional security and stability."

The session highlighted the Kingdom's active role as an Arab member of the Security Council, emphasising its commitment to defend Arab interests, safeguard regional stability, and address threats to civilian infrastructure and international navigation.

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Democracy in action

Bahrain Chamber's 31st Board of Directors voting conducted in disciplined, transparent and secure environment

Business community exercises electoral rights freely and responsibly

TDT | Manama

The election committee for the 31st Board of Directors of the Bahrain Chamber chaired by Mr. Abbas Radhi, announced the official results of the chamber's elections, with the following candidates winning seats:

- Nabeel Khalid Kanoo – 58,590 votes
- Mohammed Adel Fakhro – 56,958 votes
- Hassan Bader Kaiksow – 54,916 votes
- Yousif Salahuddin Ibrahim – 53,008 votes
- Khalid Abdulrahman Juma – 50,856 votes
- Ahmed Sabah Al Salloom – 49,658 votes
- Abeer Tariq Al Moayed – 49,440 votes
- Nawaf Khalid Al Zayani – 48,342 votes
- Khalid Ali Abdulrahman – 46,646 votes
- Mohammed Nader Diwani – 46,186 votes
- Jameel Al Ghanah – 45,080 votes
- Waheeb Ahmed Al Khaja – 44,078 votes
- Mohamed Abduljabbar Al Kooheji – 42,910 votes
- Rashad Ibrahim Zainal – 40,218 votes
- Abdulwahab Yousif Al Hawaj – 39,314 votes
- Sawsan Abulhassan Ibrahim – 35,554 votes
- Sonia Mohamed Janahi – 34,288 votes
- Bhagwan das Chellaram Tikamdas Thacker – 32,538 votes

Reserve members:

- Shaker Mirza Al Helli – 29,204 votes
- Nayef Tawfiq Al Alawi – 22,844 votes

Counting

The counting results showed that 2,608 ballot papers were retrieved from the ballot boxes, of which 9 were invalidated for non-compliance with the regulations, bringing the total number of valid votes to 307,176.



Voter turnout reached 26.61% of the 37,983 eligible members, while overall membership participation stood at 6.9%.

The total number of participants in the electoral process was 1,027.

The results also indicated that 2,613 members were in attendance, with 2,599 valid ballots cast, compared to 9 invalid ballots. The elections were held on Saturday, 28 March 2026, at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre, in a well-organized setting marked by professionalism and transparency, with clear procedures and strict oversight to ensure integrity, neutrality, and full legal compliance.

Participation

The process saw strong participation from Chamber members, supported by efficient organization that ensured smooth voting.

The committee and supporting teams worked continuously until late at night to finalize and announce the results, demonstrating a high level of professionalism and commitment to delivering them on time.

Abbas Radhi, Chairman of the Elections Committee, stated that the voting process took place in a disciplined, transparent, and secure environment, enabling the business community to exercise its electoral rights freely and responsibly.

He added that holding the 31st cycle of elections amid re-



H.E. Abdulla bin Adel Fakhro with BCCI officials, members, and other attendees

gional challenges reinforces the Kingdom of Bahrain's standing and highlights the strength and efficiency of its national institutions.

Commitment

It also reflects the Kingdom's firm commitment to its constitutional framework and sends a clear message about the stability of its institutional system.

He expressed his appreciation to all entities and institutions

that contributed to the success of the elections, including the Chamber's executive team and university student volunteers, who played an effective and impartial role throughout all stages of the process—from the opening of ballot boxes to vote counting and the announcement of results.

He affirmed that the committee fully adhered to the Chamber's law and its executive regulations, implementing strict



organizational and supervisory measures to ensure the integrity and credibility of the process.

Process

In conclusion, Mr. Radhi, on behalf of the committee, thanked all participants in the elections, especially the representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and civil society organizations, including the Bahrain Transparency Society and the Bah-

rain Lawyers Society, as well as the supporting teams who facilitated the voting process with professionalism and dedication.

He also expressed his appreciation to all candidates, voters, and members for their role in the elections, wishing the elected members success in their upcoming responsibilities and better luck to those who were not successful in this cycle in future elections.

Schools adopt simplified evaluation system

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

A simplified student evaluation approach will be implemented in Bahrain's schools, Education Minister, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak Juma confirmed, aimed at reducing pressure and adapting to current conditions.

Under the revised system, students will complete two key assessments instead of multiple tests.

The first, scheduled to begin next week, will focus on essential lessons and core skills cov-



H.E. Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak Juma

ered over the past four weeks.

Options

The Ministry said students

will have flexible options to complete assessments, including online submissions or attending school where necessary.

In certain cases, delays may be granted, while alternative arrangements will be made for students unable to access either option. Curriculum content has also been reduced, particularly in core subjects, to prioritise understanding over completion.

Adjustments

Officials said the adjustments reflect varying learning conditions among students and aim to ensure continuity in education.

The second assessment will follow a similar approach, with the format subject to prevailing conditions.

Higher participation

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Supreme Council for Women and UN Women announced that participation in the third edition of the Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Global Award for Women's Empowerment has reached exceptional levels, reflecting the award's growing international recognition.

A total of 1,774 applications were received from countries around the world by the closing date on March 20, 2026 marking a significant increase of 571 submissions compared to the

combined total of all previous editions. According to statistics based on a report by UN Women, the current edition has surpassed participation figures from earlier editions, which recorded 612 and 591 submissions.

In terms of award categories, civil society organizations ranked first with 792 submissions, followed by individuals with 621 entries, the private sector with 257, and the public sector with 104.

The individual, civil society, and public sector categories have already exceeded their totals from the previous edition.

Budget burden

Shura Council blocks proposal to raise marriage grants over funding concerns

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Shura Council yesterday rejected three draft laws that would have raised marriage grants for widows and other women covered by the government pension scheme, the military retirement system, and the Social Insurance Organisation scheme.

The decision came after it was revealed that implementing the increase would raise costs by 34 percent in the public sector and 61 percent in the private sector.

The Social Insurance Organisation said the grant already costs about BD300,000 a year in the public sector, with a near-equal sum in the private sector, even though only 50 to 80 people receive it each year.

Members then voted against the bills in principle and sent them back to Parliament.

Pensions

Talal Al Mannai, rapporteur for the committee, argued against the first bill, which dealt with pensions for government staff.

Hala Ramzi then presented the committee's view on the other two, covering the military retirement law and the social insurance law, and said the same objections applied to all three.

Ramzi told the chamber the



Talal Al Mannai



Hala Ramzi



Dalal Al Zayed

bills had to be judged against the course taken in recent pension reform, which was meant to help the funds meet both current and future payments.

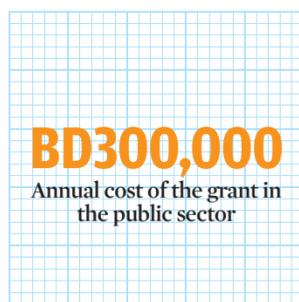
She said the proposed rise in marriage grants was not supported by the same financial and actuarial case that shaped those earlier changes.

Measures

Dalal Al Zayed, head of the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, also spoke against the measures.

"The current stage does not call for raising benefits," she said, adding that legal entitlements had to stay in step with the state's means to pay.

She also said government bodies had opposed the bills and that the Supreme Council



for Women shared that view.

Al Zayed said the law already covers those entitled to such grants and deals with cases where payments are paused for a time before resuming when the reason for the pause ends.

Law

She added that Bahrain's law covers some groups more wide-

ly than laws in other countries.

SIO told the Services Committee the funds were already under pressure, with a wide gap between income and spending.

It said the proposed rise would place a new burden on the system without any clear source of money to meet it.

The committee also said the bills were not supported by the financial and actuarial study needed before any new pension spending is put into law.

Benefits

In its view, any rise in benefits should come only after a clear reading of cost, effect and the funds' ability to bear it.

The three bills had come from proposals first submitted by Parliament.

Water strategy



His Excellency Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, chaired the regular meeting of the Water Resources Council. The Council reviewed the progress made in implementing the National Water Strategy (2021-2030), which reflected the effectiveness of the efforts exerted in this vital sector. The overall completion rate for the strategy's indicators, projects, and initiatives reached 81%. The strategy includes 40 initiatives, 22 of which have been completed, while 18 initiatives remain under implementation according to the scheduled timelines. The relevant ministries provided detailed presentations on the initiatives they are contributing to within this strategy and the progress achieved in implementing their respective areas, ensuring the integration of government work to enhance water security.

Twisted fingers, lasting damage



Court of Appeal to rule in violent altercation case

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

In a case marked by tension and sudden violence, the First High Criminal Court of Appeal has set April 27 as the date to deliver its verdict in the appeal of an Asian defendant.

He was previously sentenced by the First High Criminal Court to one year in prison after being found guilty of causing a permanent disability estimated at 4% to the victim.

The court also ordered his deportation upon completion of the sentence.

Injuries

Prosecutors stated that the 37-year-old defendant assaulted the victim on September 10, 2025, inflicting injuries documented in the forensic medical report.

While the assault was not intended to cause permanent harm, it ultimately resulted in a lasting disability assessed at 4%.

According to the victim, a 56-year-old worker employed as a building guard, the incident unfolded while he was on duty.

The defendant approached, seeking entry to the property in order to operate a gas cylinder at his workplace.

Entry

Acting on his employer's instructions, the guard refused entry.

The situation quickly escalated when the defendant attempted to force his way in, grabbing the victim and twisting the fingers of his left hand.

A second witness intervened, pulling the defendant away.

The second witness testified that he was at work when he heard shouting from outside.

Victim

Upon rushing to the scene, he saw the defendant gripping the victim by both hands. He immediately stepped in to separate them.

Moments later, the victim approached him, reporting that his finger had been broken.

MPs call for curbs on unregulated brokerage

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Property and car brokerage are among the trades targeted in an urgent proposal from five MPs seeking new rules for Bahrain's small-scale trading sector, saying unregulated practices are eating into citizens' income and driving some out of the market.

The proposal, submitted by Khalid Buanaq, Mohammed Al Maarefi, Ahmed Al Salloom, Zainab AbdulAmeer and Hisham Al Awadhi, calls on the government to review its approach to small commercial activity and bring in rules for areas including property and vehicle brokerage, along with some service trades.

Buanaq said the aim was to improve government policy for the small projects market and introduce controls for such activities "in a way that strengthens citizens' ability to compete



and curbs unregulated practices in the market".

Conditions

In their explanatory note, the MPs said small Bahraini traders were finding it harder to compete as more people moved into these lines of work without enough rules to keep conditions even or stop unlawful market

conduct.

They said that had weakened citizens' chances of staying in such trades and cut the return from work that many rely on as their main source of income.

The note says the effect has been felt most in smaller fields that do not need large sums to start, leaving part of the market out of balance and putting the

The case for urgency lies in the growing challenges in the small projects market, which directly affect the stability of the income sources of citizens working in these activities

MP KHALID BUANAQ

future of small projects at risk.

The MPs said that ran against Bahrain's push to support enterprise and widen citizens' role in the economy.

They said urgent action was needed because the strain in the small projects market was already hitting the stability of household income for citizens working in those fields.

Parliamentary group to seek IPU Motion on Iran attacks

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain will take its case against Iranian attacks to the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly in Istanbul next month.

Council of Representatives Speaker Ahmed Al Musallam said the Kingdom's delegation will seek a parliamentary resolution condemning strikes on Bahrain, Gulf states and Jordan.

Al Musallam said the Bahraini delegation, due to attend the 152nd assembly from April 15 to 19, would brief parliaments from around the world on what he called unjustified Iranian attacks on Bahrain, the Gulf Co-operation Council states and Jordan.

He said Bahrain's delegation was already working on a draft resolution condemning those attacks, linking the move to a United Nations Human Rights

Council resolution adopted by consensus against Iranian attacks on the territory of the GCC states and Jordan.

According to Al Musallam, that resolution followed an initiative put forward by Bahrain on behalf of the GCC and Jordan, and drew on Security Council Resolution 2817.

He said the attacks were a grave breach of international law and the United Nations Charter, and called for a united

stand among parliaments to face such acts and help bring them to an end in a way that keeps the region safe and stable.

Al Musallam said Bahrain had long stood for peace, coexistence, respect for the sovereignty of states and dialogue with all sides, adding that it had not sought enmity with anyone.

He also praised the role of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in protecting Bahrain, its people and its gains.

Two more scholarships for scientific research

● 'RAYAT' Program

Rehab Mohammad
TDT | Manama

The Al-Mabarrah Al-Khalifa Foundation announced the approval of two additional scholarships dedicated to scientific research under the "RAYAT" program, part of the grants established in the name of His Highness the late Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

This step reflects a strategic partnership with Ahlia University and demonstrates the Foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting higher education and fostering a culture of research and



The approval of these two scholarships is a natural extension of the Foundation's mission to invest in Bahraini talents and reinforce the pillars of academic and research excellence

HER HIGHNESS SHAIKHA ZAIN BINT KHALID AL KHALIFA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE AL-MABARRAH AL-KHALIFIA FOUNDATION

innovation in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The new scholarships aim to strengthen the scientific research ecosystem and enable national talents to carry out high-impact research projects aligned with local sustainable development priorities.

Collaboration

The initiative highlights the collaborative role of Ahlia University in supporting research environments and ensuring the success of educational and community initiatives.

It also represents the Foundation's strategy to expand the RAYAT program to include support for knowledge production alongside its academic study funding.

Lights on

No power cuts for supported homes despite BD84m in unpaid bills

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Despite BD84 million in overdue electricity bills, no supported Bahraini home on the first-account tariff has had its power cut since December 2022, the Ministry of Electricity and Water Affairs said.

The figures came in a reply to a parliamentary question from MP Hassan Ebrahim on the cost of producing electricity, how tariffs and state support are calculated, the scale of unpaid bills and the steps taken before supply is disconnected.

Using the latest audited figures from 2024, the ministry said Bahrain spends about BD550.8 million a year on producing, transmitting and distributing electricity.

Difference

The government covers about BD175 million of that, or 32 per cent, to meet the difference between the real cost of supply and the sums billed to home and business users.

Most of that support goes to Bahraini households under the first supported account category.

The ministry said supplying that group costs about BD182.9 million a year, while bill revenue stands at about BD41.3 million, leaving state support at roughly BD142 million.

For commercial and industrial users, support stands at about BD30.7 million.

The cost of supplying that group reaches about BD284 million, against revenue of around BD253 million.

Cost

The ministry said the yearly cost breaks down into BD416.8 million for production, BD79m for transmission and BD55 million for distribution.



Bahrain spends about BD550.8 million a year on producing, transmitting and distributing electricity

MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER AFFAIRS

It added that the cost of each unit of electricity, measured in kilowatt-hours, is calculated on the yearly average of those three parts.

Arrears across all account types stand at about BD84 million, the ministry said. Supported Bahraini household accounts under the first-account category make up the largest share at BD34.6 million.

They are followed by commercial and industrial accounts at BD26.2m, unsupported Bah-

raini residential accounts at BD21.5 million and non-Bahraini residential accounts at BD1.6 million.

Account

From the start of the current legislative term in December 2022 until November 2026, the ministry said no supported Bahraini residential account under the first-account scheme had been cut off.

Over the same period, supply was cut in 15,554 cases.

They included 6,640 unsupported Bahraini residential accounts, 5,276 commercial and industrial accounts and 3,638 non-Bahraini residential accounts.

Amounts

The ministry said amounts owed are collected through a stepped process before any disconnection takes place.

That includes sending up to six notices over 53 days from the date the bill is issued, giving subscribers time to pay or settle what they owe.

It added that subscribers can also use payment options such as instalment plans and a fixed-payment service, which spreads electricity costs across the year to ease seasonal rises in bills.

Rain emergency teams deployed for road safety

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

Municipal teams were deployed across Bahrain to manage rainwater accumulation and maintain road safety during recent weather conditions, as part of a coordinated emergency response plan.

Engineer Saleh Tarada, Chairman of the Capital Trustees Board, confirmed that the Capital Municipality activated its rain emergency team, comprising 45 personnel, to respond to reports and address water build-up.

The operation covers 25 blocks across the Capital, with teams working around the clock to minimise disruption.

Framework

Speaking during a phone intervention on Bahrain Television's News Centre, Tarada



Eng. Saleh Tarada

said the response forms part of a wider framework developed by the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture in coordination with municipal councils.

The plan is reviewed and updated annually ahead of the rainy season.

Teams were deployed in areas including Sitra, Tubli, Manama and Juffair, where water tends to accumulate.

Water tankers and pumps were used in locations with limited drainage infrastructure to ensure roads remained accessible.

Municipal measures enhance services

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

A series of municipal measures aimed at improving everyday services are being implemented across Bahrain, as authorities respond to observations by the National Audit Office with a focus on practical outcomes.

In its response, the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture said BD13,000 is

provided to eligible families under the Cities and Villages Development Programme, in coordination with municipal councils.

Applications are processed through an electronic system, supported by clear guidelines to ensure fairness and transparency.

Inspection campaigns have also resulted in the removal of around 480 abandoned vehicles, improving safety and the

appearance of residential areas.

In addition, 12 municipal sites have been allocated across the Kingdom to support mobile food businesses, with applications now available digitally.

Coordination with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has been strengthened to monitor licences issued through the "Sijilat" system, in line with the growing number of food trucks, to ensure better regulation of the sector.

24-hour care across Muharraq

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

For residents seeking care late at night or between daily commitments, a network of primary healthcare centres in Muharraq ensures services remain accessible at all times.

In response to MP Abdulwahid Qarata, the Ministry of Health confirmed that primary healthcare centres continue to

deploy all available resources to ensure uninterrupted services for citizens and residents, in line with high quality standards.

Six health centres operate across Muharraq, providing full-day coverage.

Three centres operate from 7:00am to 7:00pm, while Sheikh Salman Health Centre operates until 2:00pm.

Two centres, Halat Bu Maher

and Al Hidd, provide round-the-clock services, ensuring urgent care remains accessible.

Muharraq Health Centre operates on a two shift system, delivering general care, dental services, maternal and child health, early detection programmes, and specialised clinics for chronic conditions.

Pharmacy, laboratory, and radiology services support this integrated care.

BDF air defences destroy six drones

TDT | Manama

The National Communication Centre has confirmed that Bahrain Defence Force air

defence systems intercepted and destroyed 6 drones in the past 24 hours, according to the latest updates from the BDF General Command.

The total number of missiles and drones intercepted and destroyed since the beginning of Iran's hostile aggression against the Kingdom now stands at 174.



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BAHRAIN FAMILY LEISURE COMPANY B.S.C.

Reminder of Annual General Meeting & Extraordinary General Meeting

Please take notice that the Annual General Meeting & Extraordinary General Meeting of the Bahrain Family Leisure Company B.S.C will be held on Monday, 30th March 2026 at 01:00 pm at Gulf Convention Center in Al Dana - 4 to discuss the announced agenda.

Thank you

Abdul Latif Khalid Al Aujan
Chairman of the Board

Ebrahim Al Rayes -
Chairman

Essam Al Ansari



Dr Osama AlBaharna



Dr Abdulla Sultan



Fatima Al-Saffar



Jehad Yousif Ameen



Zeyad Zainal

Ahmed Ebrahim Al
Saad

Ahmed Bucheeri

Abdulaziz Al Ahmed -
Vice Chairman

Takaful International Company

AGM announces 15% cash dividends

Manama

Takaful International Company held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) yesterday, at 10:30 am at the company's headquarters in Seef Area with a quorum of 92.46%, and in the presence of representatives of the relevant regulatory authorities.

The General Assembly approved the company's financial results for the year ended December 31, 2025, which were announced earlier this year: (Net profit (before tax) of BD 1.819 compared to BD 1.650m in the previous year, an increase



of the strength, transparency, and sustainability of our takaful model."

Mr. AlRayes, added, "The Board remains focused on strengthening long-term competitiveness by advancing key strategic priorities, including accelerating digital transformation, expanding bancatakaful partnerships, enhancing underwriting through advanced analytics, and further embedding ESG principles into our operations and investment strategy. These initiatives, supported by robust governance, strong capital management, and a continued commitment to Sharia-compliant practices, position the Company to deliver sustainable growth while reinforcing stakeholder trust."

of 10%, and shareholders' net profit (before tax) of BD 1.618m compared to BD 1.334m in the previous year, and a corresponding earnings per share of 16.71 Fils compared to 15.70 Fils in the previous year).

BD 1.275m (15 Fils per share)

The shareholders have also approved the distribution of cash dividends of 15% of the paid-up capital, an equivalent of BD 1.275m (15 Fils per share), to the shareholders whose names are on the share register on the record date. As for the elections of the Board of Directors, the shareholders elected (by acclamation) the following ten members for Board Directorship for the upcoming term (2026 – 2029): Mr. Ebrahim Mohamed Al Rayes, Dr. Abdulla Salah Sultan, Mr. Ahmed Abdulrahman Bucheeri, Dr. Osama Taqi Al Baharna, Ms. Fatima Taqi Al Saffar, Mr. Zeyad Abdulmonem Zainal, Mr. Essam Mohamed Al Ansari, Mr. Jehad Yusuf Amin, Mr. Abdulaziz Abdulla Al Ahmed, and Mr. Ahmed Ebrahim Al Saad.

Strategy

On this occasion, Mr. Ebrahim Al Rayes, Chairman of Takaful International, commented, "Despite a complex global environment, Takaful International delivered a strong financial performance in 2025, reflecting the resilience of its business model and the disciplined execution of its strategy. The Company achieved a profit before tax of BD 1.819 million and recorded a 14% growth in recognised takaful contributions, supported by prudent underwriting, effective expense management, and a continued focus on operational efficiency. A landmark achievement during the year was the successful distribution of surplus to policyholders, making the Company the first takaful operator in the Kingdom of Bahrain to do so—an important validation

Medical and SME portfolios

For his part, Mr. Essam Al-Ansari, Chief Executive Officer, stated that the company delivered disciplined growth and maintained strong financial resilience, supported by healthy expansion in Gross Written Contributions and continued strength across key segments, particularly medical and SME portfolios. Despite ongoing medical inflation and rising provider costs across the industry, the Company's proactive pricing strategies, enhanced claims management, and network optimization initiatives enabled effective control of loss ratios, while stable investment performance contributed positively to overall profitability and reinforced Takaful International's strong capital position.

Mr. Al-Ansari further commented that the company continued to strengthen its operational foundations through advancing digital capabilities, enhancing customer experience, expanding its multi-distribution network, and embedding ESG principles more deeply across its strategy and operations.

The CEO concluded, "Looking ahead, we remain focused on sustaining profitable growth while enhancing operational agility and customer-centric innovation. Our strategic priorities include advancing digital transformation, expanding distribution partnerships, optimizing cost efficiency, and deepening ESG integration across the business. With a strong balance sheet, disciplined underwriting approach, and a clear strategic roadmap, we are well positioned to navigate evolving market dynamics and continue delivering sustainable value to our shareholders, policyholders, and the wider community."



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 2025

Statement of financial position (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)		Statement of comprehensive income (continued) (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)	
	At 31 December 2025 2024	Year ended 31 December 2025 2024	
ASSETS			
Cash and balances with banks and the Central Bank	3,769 2,755	<i>Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</i>	
Placements with banks	85,986 72,991	Remeasurement loss on employees' retirement benefits	(65) (7)
Due from the Head Office and other branches	8,539 28,856	Total other comprehensive income for the year	(65) -
Financial assets at amortised cost	- 9,892	Total comprehensive income for the year	5,328 5,970
Loans and advances to banks	8,694 1,802	Statement of cash flows (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)	
Loans and advances to customers	10,912 407	Year ended 31 December 2025 2024	
Other assets	964 871	CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
Furniture and equipment	15 25	Profit for the year	5,393 5,970
TOTAL ASSETS	118,879 117,599	ADJUSTMENTS FOR:	
LIABILITIES			
Due to the Head Office and other branches	3,774 1,072	Interest income	(6,601) (8,368)
Due to customers	49,086 55,483	Interest expense	664 1,002
Due to Banks and the Central Bank	11 -	Provision for employees' retirement benefits	24 19
Other liabilities	2,168 2,532	Reversal of expected credit losses - net	(461) (114)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	55,039 59,087	Depreciation	10 10
HEAD OFFICE ACCOUNT			
Head Office assigned capital	2,700 2,700		(971) (1,481)
Retained earnings	59,801 54,408	CHANGES IN OPERATING ASSETS AND LIABILITIES:	
Other reserves	1,339 1,404	Balances with the Central Bank	(120) (205)
TOTAL HEAD OFFICE ACCOUNT	63,840 58,512	Due from the Head Office and other branches	5,808 (5,808)
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND HEAD OFFICE ACCOUNT	118,879 117,599	Loans and advances to banks	(6,881) 3,145
Statement of comprehensive income (Expressed in thousands of Bahraini Dinars)			
		Year ended 31 December 2025 2024	
Interest income	6,601 8,368	Loans and advances to customers	(10,085) 2,222
Interest expense	(664) (1,002)	Other assets	(111) (94)
Net interest income	5,937 7,366	Due to the Head Office and other branches	2,702 (3,114)
Net fees and commission income	1,276 416	Due to customers	(6,397) 4,001
Gain on derivatives and foreign exchange transactions - net	67 99	Due to Banks and the Central Bank	11 -
Total operating income	7,280 7,881	Other liabilities	(365) (17,996)
Operating expenses		Net cash used in operations	(16,409) (19,330)
Staff costs	(505) (540)	Payment of employees' end of service benefits	(76) (116)
Other operating expenses	(1,843) (1,485)	Interest received	6,404 8,466
Reversal of expected credit losses - net	461 114	Interest paid	(671) (1,014)
Total operating expenses	(1,887) (1,911)	Net cash used in operating activities	(10,752) (11,994)
Profit for the year	5,393 5,970	CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	
Other comprehensive income for the year:		Purchase of furniture and equipment	- (13)
<i>Items that maybe reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</i>		Purchase of financial assets at amortised cost	(9,863) (20,319)
Gain on cash flow hedges	- 7	Maturities of financial assets at amortised cost	20,000 24,000
		Net cash generated from investing activities	10,137 3,668
		Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(615) (8,326)
		Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	97,903 106,229
		Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	97,288 97,903
		Anup Pradhan	Abid Hussain
		General Manager	Chief Financial Officer

The above have been extracted from the audited financial statements. The auditors, Ernst & Young - Middle East, Kingdom of Bahrain, have expressed an unqualified opinion on 29/03/2026.

Al Baraka Islamic Bank holds 2026 Annual General Meeting virtually

New Board for the 2026-2029 Term Elected



Dr. Adel Salem

● Approved the allocation of BD76,091 as zakat payable on behalf of shareholders

Manama

Al Baraka Islamic Bank announced the results of its 43rd Annual General Meeting for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, which was held yesterday virtually through the Bahrain Clear eAGM platform, in light of the current regional developments and as part of the Bank's commitment to ensuring the safety and convenience of all shareholders.

During the meeting, shareholders discussed the Board of Directors' Report on the Bank's activities for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, and listened to the Sharia Supervisory Board Report and the



external auditors' report. The consolidated financial statements for the year 2025 were also approved, reflecting the Bank's overall performance during the past period.

In this context, shareholders reviewed transactions conducted with related parties, as disclosed in Note (26) of the consolidated financial statements, in line with Article (189) of the Commercial Companies Law. They also approved the allocation of BD76,091 as zakat payable on behalf of shareholders, authorising the executive management to disburse it in accordance with Sharia requirements.

Shareholders further approved the discharge of the

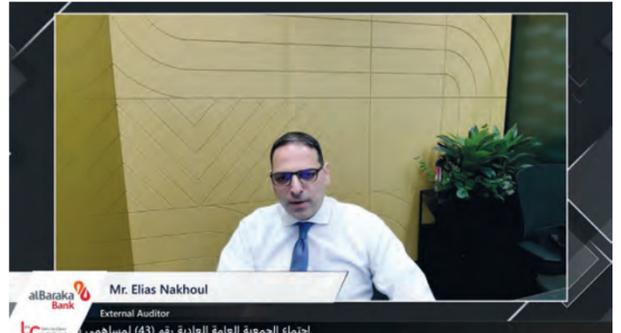
Board of Directors from liability for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, in addition to appointing the Bank's external auditors for the financial year 2026 and authorising the Board of Directors to determine their fees, subject to obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals.

The meeting also reviewed the Corporate Governance Report, in accordance with the Central Bank of Bahrain's guidelines, which included the results of performance evaluations of the Board members, its committees and the Board Secretary, as well as the evaluation of the Sharia Supervisory Board, attendance records of Board meetings, and governance and disclosure practices

in line with the requirements of the Commercial Companies Law and the Central Bank of Bahrain.

In a move reflecting shareholders' confidence and the Bank's future direction, the meeting approved the election and reappointment of the Board of Directors for a new three-year term (2026-2029), subject to the approval of the Central Bank of Bahrain. Other urgent matters were also discussed in accordance with Article (207) of the Commercial Companies Law.

Commenting on the occasion, Dr Adel Salem, Chief Executive Officer of Al Baraka Islamic Bank, said: "The holding of this year's Annual General Meeting



reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening transparency and governance, while maintaining effective engagement with our shareholders under all circumstances. The meeting provided an opportunity to review our performance over the past year and discuss key achievements and challenges, supporting our journey towards sustainable growth and reinforcing the Bank's position within the Islamic banking sector."

He added: "At Al Baraka Islamic Bank, we continue to enhance our operations and improve efficiency, with a fo-

cus on delivering innovative banking solutions that meet our customers' evolving needs. We are also leveraging digital transformation to enhance customer experience and ensure business continuity, creating added value for all stakeholders."

The successful holding of the Annual General Meeting in a virtual format further underscores the Bank's commitment to adopting digital solutions and enhancing flexibility in shareholder engagement under various circumstances, in line with best practices and ensuring business continuity and operational efficiency.

Two more India-bound tankers pass Strait of Hormuz: shipping ministry



A cargo ship carrying vehicles sails through the Arabian Gulf toward the Strait of Hormuz in the United Arab Emirates,

AFP | New Delhi, India

Two more Indian-flagged tankers carrying LPG passed through the Strait of Hormuz, India's shipping ministry said yesterday.

Iran, following US-Israel military strikes, has all but halted maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global crude oil and liquefied petroleum gas.

Two LPG carriers, BW TYR and BW ELM, carrying combined LPG cargo of about 94,000 tonnes were sailing towards India's coast, the ministry said in a statement.

BW TYR was proceeding towards Mumbai while BW ELM was heading to New Manga-

lore, the statement said.

Four other Indian LPG tankers had earlier transited the strait, but 18 Indian-flagged vessels with 485 Indian seafarers remain in the Gulf region.

India is the world's fourth-largest buyer of LNG and second-largest buyer of LPG, which is used for cooking and predominantly sourced from the Middle East.

New Delhi has ordered tighter controls over natural and cooking gas following import disruptions.

India maintains strong relations with Tehran but has steadily expanded cooperation with Israel in defence, agriculture, technology and cybersecurity.

Gulf Insurance Group (Gulf) B.S.C (c)



Summary Financial Information

Separate statement of financial position

	At 31-Dec-25 BD 000s (Audited)	At 31-Dec-24 BD 000s (Audited)
Assets		
Statutory deposits	14,163	11,228
Property and equipment	9,595	9,952
Investment properties	1,774	1,863
Intangible assets	5,320	6,335
Right-of-use assets	925	962
Investment in subsidiaries	36,468	36,457
Investments carried at fair value	232,442	204,272
Insurance contract assets	615	1,823
Reinsurance contract assets	82,132	100,237
Other receivables	598	659
Deposits with banks	27,449	25,592
Cash and cash equivalents	32,410	31,380
Total assets	443,891	430,760
Equity and liabilities		
Equity		
Share capital	15,000	15,000
Statutory reserve	7,500	7,500
Fair value reserve	1,399	(2,732)
Contingency reserve	10,242	9,623
Other reserve	481	445
Capital reserve	9,792	9,792
General reserve	7,500	7,500
Proposed dividend	11,310	10,368
Retained earnings	112,869	104,026
Insurance / reinsurance finance reserve	(196)	617
Total equity	175,897	162,139
Liabilities		
Employees' end of service benefits	3,146	2,856
Deferred tax liabilities	882	-
Insurance contract liabilities	246,295	249,611
Reinsurance contract liabilities	9,531	9,550
Lease liabilities	958	958
Accruals and other liabilities	2,950	3,084
Income tax payable	4,232	2,562
Total liabilities	267,994	268,621
Total equity and liabilities	443,891	430,760

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with IFRS Accounting Standards and interpretations issued by the IFRS Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) applicable to companies reporting under IFRS Accounting Standards and the relevant provisions of the Bahrain Commercial Companies Law and the Insurance Regulations contained in Volume 3 of the CSB rulebook.

Financial information as above has been extracted from the separate financial statements audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers M.E Limited for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Separate statement of comprehensive income

	Year ended 31-Dec-25 BD 000s (Audited)	Year ended 31-Dec-24 BD 000s (Audited)
Insurance revenue	238,628	218,454
Insurance service expenses	(184,101)	(254,653)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	54,527	(36,199)
Net (expense) / income from reinsurance contracts held	(32,707)	49,081
Insurance service result	21,820	12,882
Finance expense from insurance contracts issued	(10,383)	(538)
Finance income / (expense) from reinsurance contracts held	5,236	(820)
Net insurance and financial result	16,673	11,524
Interest income	11,636	11,156
Dividend income	4,356	4,575
Rental income	222	157
Investment property expenses	(123)	(122)
Net fair value gains on financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss	4,875	705
Net fair value (losses) / gains on derecognition of financial assets measured at fair value through comprehensive income	(63)	11
Reversal / (charge) of expected credit loss on financial assets	38	(156)
Net investment income	20,941	16,326
Net insurance and investment result	37,614	27,850
Other operating expenses	(9,762)	(8,892)
Profit for the year before taxation	27,852	18,958
Income tax expense	(4,080)	(1,961)
Profit for the year	23,772	16,997
Total other comprehensive income for the year	3,354	1,290
Total comprehensive income for the year	27,126	18,287

Jamal AlHazeem
Chairman

Paul Adamson
Director

For more information contact:
Gulf Insurance Group (Gulf) B.S.C (c) - Head quarters, Bahrain Bay
P.O. Box 11442
Unit 51, Building 298
Road 4609, Block 346, Sea front
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Anti-war protests in Israel

Hundreds gathered in Tel Aviv and some other Israeli cities on Saturday to protest the Middle East war, in unauthorised demonstrations that security forces sought to disperse. Numbers attending weekly protests against the war appear to be rising, though they are far from the tens of thousands who filled the streets last year to protest the conflict against Hamas in Gaza.

Iran threatens US universities in Mideast

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday threatened to target US universities in the Middle East, while saying US-Israeli strikes had destroyed two Iranian universities. The Guards demanded a US condemnation of the bombing of universities by noon (0830 GMT) Monday.

Qatari news channel Al Araby condemns attack on Tehran office
Doha, Qatar

Doha-headquartered news network Al Araby TV on Sunday criticised a strike on the building hosting its Tehran office, as Israel and the United States pressed an aerial campaign against Iran. The channel said in a statement to AFP that it "condemns this attack on a civilian commercial building and affirms that endangering journalists or considering them targets runs counter to international law". It added that, according to the Iranian Red Crescent 10 people, had been injured in the Sunday morning strike.

Iran says to target USS Abraham Lincoln carrier if it moves within range
Tehran, Iran

Iran's navy chief Shahrām Irāni said Sunday that the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier would be targeted by the Islamic republic if it comes within range. "As soon as the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group comes within firing range, we will avenge the blood of the martyrs of the Dena warship by launching various types of sea-to-sea missiles," Irāni was quoted as saying by state TV, referring to an Iranian frigate sunk by the US on March 4.



Faithful attend the Palm Sunday service at the Maronite Church of Saint George in the southern Lebanese border Christian village of Qlayaa



Pentagon plans ground attacks

● The Washington Post reported the Pentagon was preparing plans for weeks of ground operations

AFP | Tehran, Iran

The speaker of Iran's parliament accused the United States yesterday of plotting a ground attack despite publicly pushing for a negotiated deal, after a US warship with around 3,500 military personnel arrived in the Middle East. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf's comments come after more



The USS Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship carrying around 3,500 Marines and sailors, arrived in the Middle East.

than a month of aerial bombardments by Iran by US and Israeli forces, and as key regional players met to hold talks in Pakistan. "The enemy publicly sends messages of negotiation and dialogue while secretly planning a

ground attack," Ghalibaf said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency. "Our men are waiting for the arrival of the American soldiers on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional allies once and for all," he added. The USS Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship carrying around 3,500 Marines and sailors, arrived in the Middle East on Friday. The Washington Post reported the Pentagon was preparing plans for weeks of ground operations -- potentially including raids on sites near the Strait of Hormuz -- though US President Donald Trump has yet to approve any deployment.

IDF strikes 'critical' Iranian ballistic missile manufacturing sites in Tehran



A plume of smoke rises from the site of a strike in Tehran
The Jerusalem Post

The Israel Air Force struck Iranian weapon manufacturing sites in Tehran overnight between Saturday and Sunday, the IDF said on Sunday. Targets of the strike included a central site used by Iran's Defense Ministry to manufac-

ture "critical" components for ballistic missiles, one of only two such sites in Iran, said the IDF. Additional targets included various weapon production and storage facilities, as well as a drone engine production facility and an air defense development facility.



A man retrieves computer servers and equipment from an office building that housed the offices of the Doha-headquartered news network Al Araby TV following a missile strike earlier in the day in Tehran

240 BC

First recorded perihelion passage of Halley's Comet

1856

The Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, France and the Kingdom of Sardinia sign the Treaty of Paris ending the Crimean War



1867 1870

The United States buys Alaska from Russia for \$7,200,000 (109 million in 2018 dollars), roughly 2 cents an acre

The 15th Amendment to the US Constitution is adopted, guaranteeing the right to vote regardless of race



This UGC image posted on social media and verified by AFP appears to show a destroyed US Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, primarily used for air traffic control, in the aftermath of a projectile strike at Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan hosts Saudi, Turkey, Egypt for talks

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

Foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey met yesterday for talks on the war in the Middle East, with Islamabad acting as an intermediary between the United States and Iran.

Held at the invitation of the Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, "the Foreign Ministers during the consultations will review the evolving regional situation and discuss issues of mutual interest," Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on X.

Egypt's Badr Abdelatty and Hakan Fidan from Turkey arrived in Islamabad on Saturday night while Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan touched down on Sunday afternoon.

Dar held separate bilateral talks with his visiting counter-



Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar (2L) in a meeting with his counterparts Saudi Arabia's Faisal bin Farhan (L), Turkey's Hakan Fidan (2R) and Egypt's Badr Abdelatty at the Foreign Ministry office in Islamabad.

parts.

Sharif on Saturday said he had a detailed telephone conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian lasting over one hour, detailing his country's "ongoing diplomatic outreach." Pezeshkian thanked Islamabad "for its mediation efforts to stop the aggression."

Late on Saturday, Dar, who is also the country's deputy prime minister, said Iran had allowed 20 more Pakistani-flagged vessels -- or two ships daily -- to pass through the Strait of Hormuz. "Dialogue, diplomacy, and such confidence-building measures are the only way forward," Dar said on X, tagging US Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Kuwait says 10 service members injured in attack on military camp

Kuwait City, Kuwait

Kuwait's defence ministry on Sunday said 10 service members were injured in an attack on a military camp, as Iran continues targeting positions in the region in response to US-Israeli strikes.

"Over the past 24 hours, the armed forces detected 14 ballistic missiles and 12 hostile drones in Kuwaiti airspace," said defence ministry spokesman Colonel Saud Abdulaziz al-Atwan in a statement.

"This resulted in an attack



on one of the armed forces' camps, injuring 10 members of the armed forces, who are receiving the necessary medical treatment, in addition to material damage to the site," the statement added.

Arab League names Egypt's former top diplomat Nabil Fahmy new chief

Agencies

Arab foreign ministers agreed unanimously yesterday to nominate Egyptian diplomat Nabil Fahmy as secretary-general of the Arab League, succeeding Ahmed Aboul Gheit, whose second term in charge ends in June 2026, Egyptian state media outlets reported.

The decision came during a video conference.

Under the Arab League charter, the secretary-general is appointed by at least a two-thirds majority. While the charter



Egyptian former Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy

does not stipulate a specific nationality for the post, it has

traditionally been held by an Egyptian, except for Tunisian Chedli Klibi, who held the position from 1979 to 1990, reflecting Cairo's role as host of the organization's headquarters.

Fahmy, Egypt's foreign minister from June 2013 to July 2014, also previously served as Egypt's ambassador to the US from 1999 to 2008 and to Japan between 1997 and 1999.

He is the son of Ismail Fahmy, Egypt's foreign minister under President Anwar Sadat from 1973 to 1977 when he resigned in opposition to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.



TOP
3
TWEETS

01



I welcome the decision by @WHO Member States to continue negotiations on the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing system annex to the Pandemic Agreement from 27 April-1 May. This annex lies at the heart of the WHO Pandemic Agreement and I thank WHO Member States for their commitment to work to bring it to life. I urge all delegations to believe in the power of trust - in one another, in our institutions, and in our shared ability to transcend differences for the common public good, for solidarity and for equity.

@DrTedros

02



India is proud of our fishermen! Highlighted efforts from Odisha, Lakshadweep and Karnataka which showcase how this sector is contributing to a self-reliant India.

@narendramodi

03



This week alone, Russia used more than 3,000 strike drones against our cities and communities - a significant portion of them "shaheds" - as well as over 1,450 guided aerial bombs and 40 missiles of various types. The Russians are not dialing back their war effort against our state and our people, and at the same time, they are openly investing in prolonging another war that is driving global destabilization.

@ZelenskyyUa

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

Israel preventing mass by Jerusalem's Latin Patriarch an 'offence to the faithful': Italy

● Italy's foreign minister said he had summoned Israel's ambassador over the incident

● Since the war began on February 28, Israeli authorities have banned large gatherings

AFP | Rome, Italy

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Israeli police actions preventing Jerusalem's Latin Patriarch from celebrating Palm Sunday mass was "an offence to the faithful" in a statement.

Italy's foreign minister, Antonio Tajani, separately said on X he had summoned Israel's ambassador over the incident.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem earlier said its head, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa — an archbishop with Catholic



Christians attend the service at Monastery of Saint Saviour to celebrate the feast of Palm Sunday, one of the most important holidays of the Christian world, known as the memory of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem in East Jerusalem

jurisdiction across Israel and the Palestinian territories — was prevented by Israeli police from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to conduct the mass.

"This morning, the Israeli Police prevented the Latin Patri-

arch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Head of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, together with the Custos of the Holy Land, the Most Reverend Fr. Francesco Ielpo, OFM, the official Guardian of the Church of the Holy

Israel PM's office says 'no malicious intent'

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The Israeli prime minister's office said that police blocked the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate Palm Sunday mass out of "concern for his safety".

"Today, out of special concern for his safety, Jerusalem police prevented the Latin Patriarch Cardinal (Pierbattista) Pizzaballa from holding mass this morning at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on X.

"Again, there was no malicious intent whatsoever, only concern for his safety and that of his party."

However, Netanyahu's office said that a plan was being put in place to ensure that Christian worshippers would be able to perform their rites during Holy Week.

"Given the holiness of the week leading up to Easter for the world's Christians, Israel's security arms are putting together a plan to enable church leaders to worship at the holy site in the coming days," it said.

Sepulchre, from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, as they made their way to celebrate the Palm Sunday Mass," a statement from the Patriarchate said.

It said the two were stopped while proceeding privately without any characteristics of a procession or ceremonial act, and

had to turn back.

"As a result, and for the first time in centuries, the Heads of the Church were prevented from celebrating the Palm Sunday Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," the statement said.

"This incident is a grave precedent and disregards the sensibilities of billions of people

around the world, who during this week, look to Jerusalem."

Since the Middle East war began on February 28, Israeli authorities have banned large gatherings, including at synagogues, churches and mosques.

Public gatherings are limited to around 50 people.

The Latin Patriarchate had already announced it had cancelled the traditional Palm Sunday procession that normally runs from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem and draws thousands of worshippers each year.

"Preventing the entry of the Cardinal and the Custos, who bear the highest ecclesiastical responsibility for the Catholic Church and the Holy Places, constitutes a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure," it said.

"This hasty and fundamentally flawed decision, tainted by improper considerations, represents an extreme departure from basic principles of reasonableness, freedom of worship, and respect for the status quo."

UK police question suspect after car hits pedestrians in English city

Counterterrorism officers were supporting the probe

● The 36-year-old in custody is originally from India but is a Derby resident

● The suspect in the Derby incident was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder

● The interior ministry declined to comment on his immigration and citizenship status

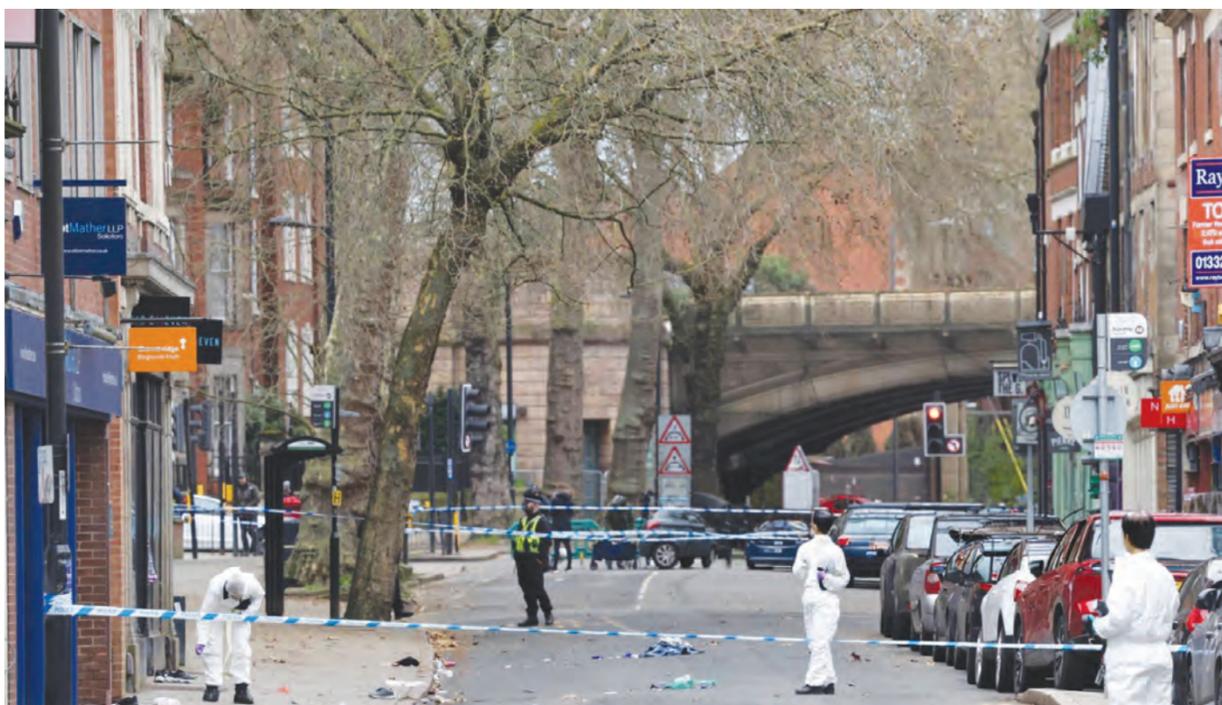
AFP | London, United Kingdom

British police were yesterday questioning a 36-year-old man arrested for attempted murder after a car ploughed into people on a street in a central English city, injuring seven of them.

Police in Derby, about 65km north of Birmingham, said counterterrorism officers were supporting the probe but they had not yet determined a motive for the incident there late on Saturday.

In an update on Sunday, Chief Superintendent Emma Aldred told reporters investigators believe the "horrific incident" was "isolated" and that there was "no wider risk to the public".

"Officers were on scene just



Police forensic officers work amongst a variety of personal items seen covering the road, inside a cordon set up on Friar Gate in central Derby, central England

seconds after a car collided with pedestrians who were simply enjoying a night out in Derby," she said.

"While none of those injured in the incident have suffered life-threatening physical injuries, the impact on them, I am sure, is just beginning to be felt."

Aldred noted the involvement of counterterror officers was "common practice for an inci-

dent of this nature" as police probe the circumstances and a possible motive.

"I would like to clarify that this does not mean the incident is currently being treated as terrorism," she added.

The 36-year-old in custody is originally from India but is a Derby resident who has lived in the United Kingdom "for a number of years", according to

Aldred.

UK police forces have started to release such details in some high-profile cases, after a 2024 Southport mass stabbing targeting children was initially falsely blamed on a purported immigrant.

Misinformation online was viewed as helping to fuel anti-immigration riots that subsequently swept the

country.

Seven Injured

The suspect in the Derby incident was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, causing serious injury through dangerous driving, inflicting grievous bodily harm with intent, and dangerous driving.

Police have opted not to provide any further details about

him.

The interior ministry declined to comment on his immigration and citizenship status.

"The police are leading the investigation and ministers are being kept updated as it progresses," a spokeswoman for the ministry said.

Officers detained the suspect on the other side of central Derby seven minutes after the incident unfolded, thanks to eyewitnesses reporting the vehicle's movements in its aftermath, police said.

The black Suzuki Swift car had struck the pedestrians at about 9.30pm in the area around Friar Gate, which is a popular nightlife spot.

The seven injured, some seriously according to police, were treated at the scene and then taken to Royal Derby Hospital and Queen's Medical Centre in the nearby city of Nottingham.

"The seven suffered a range of serious but not life-threatening injuries and we can confirm that, contrary to online speculation, no one died in the incident," an earlier Derbyshire Police statement noted.

Interior minister Shabana Mahmood was being kept updated on the incident, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson told the BBC.

Classifieds

VACANCIES
AVAILABLE

INTERIOR INGENUITY W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKERS(LAUNDRY), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33299543 or GHULAMHUSSAIN2916@GAMIL.COM

DAY TO DAY DISCOUNT CENTER has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(SALES), suitably qualified applicants can contact 66634444 or JISHNA@DAYTODAYBH.COM

AL MATLA ELECTRONICS CO. W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33980698 or SHAHTAJADIL.SA@GMAIL.COM

PRO CRAFT CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING BAHRAINI PARTNERSHIP COMPANY has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33429783 or SUFYANMUHAMMED922@GMAIL.COM

FRESH AIR CLEANING SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 38325542 or IMRANILYAS994@GMAIL.COM

Qutoof For Hydroponic has a vacancy for the occupation of AGRICULTURE WORKER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33116118 or MAAM74@HOTMAIL.COM

EYE LINE CONTRACTING has a vacancy for the occupation of WORKER(CONSTRUCTION), suitably qualified applicants can contact 34585803 or WABDULLA979@GMAIL.COM

AL RAFI GLOBAL SERVICES W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE ASSISTANT, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33930832 or RAFIGROUPBAH@GMAIL.COM

BAHRAIN TAJ RESTAURANT W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of CLEANER (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33993272 or NEWBLUEMOONTRADING@GMAIL.COM

HEALTH WELLNESS BY NISHA W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of MASSEUR, suitably qualified applicants can contact 66656707 or INFO@HEALTHWELLNESS-BYNISHA.COM

ORANGE TOWER CARGO HANDLING W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of OFFICE WORKER HELPER, suitably qualified applicants can contact 33875634 or ORANGETOWRBAHRAIN@GMAIL.COM

CHAYA MAKKANI W.L.L has a vacancy for the occupation of SALESMAN, suitably qualified applicants can contact 39445823 or NASSERBREEZEE@GMAIL.COM

ALMADINA GOLD SMITH has a vacancy for the occupation of JEWELRY GOLD-SMITH (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 36299953 or abdulaziz-ahmed@live.com

FRIENDS MOTORCYCLES REPAIRING has a vacancy for the occupation of REPAIRMAN (GENERAL), suitably qualified applicants can contact 33309516 or NOOF92000@HOTMAIL.COM

Forty new migratory species win international protection: UN body

AFP | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) on Sunday approved the listing of 40 new species for international protection, including the snowy owl featured in the Harry Potter saga.

The decision came at the conclusion of the COP15 summit on migratory species in Campo Verde, Brazil, which brought together representatives from 132 countries and the European Union.



The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also called CMS or the Bonn Convention) protects migratory animals that cross national borders. One fascinating example is the Arctic tern, which travels about 70,000 km every year—the longest migration of any animal—flying from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back.



A group of garca branca pequenas, snowy egret (Egretta thula) is pictured at the Pantanal, a key region along birds' migratory routes in the Americas, in the municipality of Miranda in Mato Grosso do Sul state, Brazil

It is one of the world's most important global meetings for wildlife conservation.

Also on the new list for protection along with the snowy owl (Bubo scandiacus) are the Hudsonian godwit (Limosa haemastica) -- a long-beaked shorebird threatened with extinction -- and the great hammerhead shark (Sphyrna mokarran).

The new list featured land mammals like the striped hyena (Hyaena hyaena) and other aquatic wildlife such as the giant otter (Pteronura brasiliensis).

The countries that are party

to the CMS are legally obliged to protect species listed as at risk of extinction, conserve and restore their habitats, prevent obstacles to migration and cooperate with other range states.

Campo Verde is in Brazil's biodiversity-rich Pantanal wetlands, in the southern Amazon.

According to a report released ahead of the summit, nearly half (49 percent) of all species catalogued by the CMS are showing signs of declining numbers, and nearly one in four are threatened with extinction on a worldwide scale.

Another major UN assessment, published on Tuesday as the summit opened, warned that migratory freshwater fish populations crucial to river health and sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people are in freefall and risk collapse.

Habitat destruction, overfishing and water pollution from the Amazon to the Danube threaten the very survival of hundreds of species whose epic voyages along the world's great rivers go largely unnoticed.

Last November, Brazil hosted the COP30 climate summit in the Amazonian city of Belem.

Russian tanker nears Cuba, defying US oil blockade

AFP | Havana, Cuba

A Russian oil tanker subject to United States (US) sanctions is scheduled to arrive in Cuba on Monday, challenging a de facto American fuel blockade of the energy-starved island, shipping data shows.

The Anatoly Kolodkin, which is carrying 730,000 barrels of crude, was north of Haiti on Sunday as it headed towards the port of Matanzas in western Cuba, according to maritime analytics firm Kpler.

Cuba lost its main regional ally and oil supplier in January when US forces captured Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolas Maduro.

US President Donald Trump subsequently threatened to impose tariffs on any country sending oil to Cuba and has mused about "taking" the com-



People wearing gas masks take part in a basic military training in Havana

munist-ruled island.

The Cuban Government says

it has not received any oil since January, deepening an energy

crisis in the country of 9.6 million people.

Rheinmetall addresses row over CEO's Ukraine 'housewives' comment

AFP | Berlin, Germany

German defence giant Rheinmetall on Sunday sought to smooth over a row caused by comments from its boss comparing Ukrainian factories producing drones to "housewives" making weapons in their kitchens.

In an interview with the US magazine The Atlantic published on Friday, CEO Armin Papperger was asked about Ukraine's development of

drone technology, widely seen to have played a key role in the country's response to Russia's invasion.

"This is how to play with Legos," Papperger said of the drones and went on to compare major drone Ukrainian manufacturers to "housewives".

"They have 3-D printers in the kitchen, and they produce parts for drones," he said, adding: "This is not innovation."

That earned a sharp response

from Alexander Kamyshin, an advisor to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who took to the X platform to point out the successes that Ukraine's drones have had against Russian tanks.

Kamyshin said that in his visits to arms factories he had seen "Ukrainian women working equally with men often enough".

"They are great housewives, yet they have to work hard in the military factories," he said,

telling Rheinmetall: "They deserve respect."

Rheinmetall's business has boomed since Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine spurred a re-armament drive in Europe.

The Duesseldorf-based group has benefitted in particular from greater defence spending in Germany, where Chancellor Friedrich Merz has vowed to turn the Bundeswehr into Europe's largest conventional army.

Iran's ambassador won't leave Lebanon despite expulsion

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

Iran's ambassador will not leave Lebanon despite being declared persona non grata and ordered to leave the country by Sunday, an Iranian diplomatic source told AFP. "The ambassador will not leave Lebanon, in accordance with the wishes of the speaker of parliament Nabih Berri and of Hezbollah," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

University in Iran's Isfahan says was hit by US-Israeli strike

AFP | Tehran, Iran

A university in Iran's central city of Isfahan said it was hit by US-Israeli airstrikes on Sunday for the second time since the war between the foes erupted a month ago.

"Around 2:00 PM (1030 GMT) today, Isfahan University of Technology was targeted for the second time (during the war) by a brutal airstrike of Zionist-American aggressors," the university said in a statement carried by Fars news agency.

"According to initial reports, the attack on one of the university's research institutes also caused damage to several other buildings and resulted in minor injuries to four university staff members," it added.

Lebanon says Israeli strikes killed more than 1,200 since March 2

Beirut, Lebanon

Lebanon's health ministry said on Sunday that Israeli strikes had killed 1,238 people in the country since the start of the latest war with Hezbollah on March 2.

The toll included 124 children, while more than 3,500 people had been wounded, the ministry said in a statement. On Saturday and Sunday alone, 49 people were killed, it said, including 10 rescue workers and three journalists.

Netanyahu orders expansion of security buffer zone in southern Lebanon

Reuters

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday he had instructed the military to further expand the existing security buffer zone in southern Lebanon, vowing to fundamentally change the security situation there.

"I have just instructed to further expand the existing security buffer zone. We are determined to fundamentally change the situation in the north," Netanyahu said in a video statement from the Northern Command.

'Excited' Buttler rejuvenated for IPL after horror T20 World Cup

Jos Buttler believes a complete break from cricket has prepared him for the upcoming IPL season

● Buttler struggled in T20 World Cup

● Scored just 87 runs in eight matches

● Eyes revival with Gujarat Titans

AFP | New Delhi

England's Jos Buttler insists he still has the hunger for runs, saying a complete break from cricket in the Alps has rejuvenated him for the Indian Premier League after a horror T20 World Cup.

The wicketkeeper cut a downcast figure opening the England batting in the global showpiece, scoring just 87 runs in eight matches up to the semi-final defeat to eventual champions India this month.

"It's great to have a nice break," Buttler, whose Gujarat Titans team will begin their campaign against Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh on Tuesday, told AFP.

"I actually went to the Alps so I couldn't have been further away from cricket which was really nice.

"Had some time away and I'm really excited now, looking forward to another IPL season," added the former England white-ball captain.

Opener Buttler, who has scored 4,037 T20 runs for England since his 2011 debut, was a



England's Jos Buttler (R) and Ben Duckett speak during the drinks break (file photo)

shadow of his usually destructive self in the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

Buttler's top score was a less-than-fluent 26 against Nepal in England's opening match.

He hit a scratchy 21 against the West Indies in the next group game then had a run of five single-digit scores before scoring 25 in the semi-final defeat.

Buttler's slump in form has left a question mark over his future in Harry Brook's England side, but the 35-year-old said he

4,037

T20 runs have been scored by Jos Buttler for the England national team since making his international debut back in 2011

retained his motivation for the game.

'Still hungry'

"I'm still hungry to score runs," said Buttler.

"I think I'm at a stage in my career now and having just had those few weeks to reflect, I just want to look forward and play what's in front of me and not make any plans really.

"Whether you're playing well in terms of runs or not scoring runs... you have to have the same energy and motivation to go to practise and to the next match.

“It's great to have a nice break. I actually went to the Alps so I couldn't have been further away from cricket which was really nice. Had some time away and I'm really excited now, looking forward to another IPL season

JOS BUTTLER

"As long as I've got that energy to turn up to the next one, I'll keep going," he said.

Buttler has made just one half-century in his last four International Cricket Council white-ball tournaments.

But is looking to regain his form in the IPL, where he has been one of the most successful overseas batsmen.

In 2022, Buttler equalled Virat Kohli's record of four centuries in a season.

"The onus is on you to get going quickly in your innings and play aggressively," he said.

"But I think the biggest thing for me and maybe a lesson to learn is just to stay in my own lane and just focus on my own cricket and my own game and play my own way."

Buttler plays in other T20 franchise tournaments, including England's The Hundred and Australia's Big Bash League.

He agreed with recent comments from Australia captain Pat

BETTER YOU KNOW
Buttler once equalled Virat Kohli's IPL record of four centuries in a single season

Cummins that players chasing lucrative franchise league pay days was creating tension with national selectors.

England Test opener Ben Duckett was due to play for Delhi capitals before pulling out of this year's IPL to manage his workload and focus on international cricket.

"For players, it's becoming a thing to weigh up what is the most important thing for you and your cricket at that time," said Buttler, who believes English players put their country first.

"I can only speak on England's behalf and you can feel it that the guys want to play for England -- and play for England as long as they can."

There is a danger that Test cricket could be marginalised, but Buttler said the five-day game would always be the ultimate format for him.

"It's different for different countries," he said. "I am still of the generation that (feels) Test cricket is the pinnacle."

F1 drivers call for safety changes after Bearman smash



The damage to the Haas VF-26 of Oliver Bearman of Great Britain and Haas F1 Team following his crash

AFP | Suzuka

Formula One drivers called for changes to protect their safety after Haas's Ollie Bearman slammed into a barrier at high speed at yesterday's Japanese Grand Prix.

The 20-year-old avoided serious injury after spinning off the track midway through the race, although he was limping heavily as he was helped off the course by stewards.

Sweeping new energy-saving regulations in Formula One this year mean cars can be travelling at drastically dif-

ferent speeds on the track at the same time.

Bearman was moving at high speed as he approached the slower Franco Colapinto and had to take evasive action to avoid hitting him.

Williams driver Carlos Sainz called on racing authorities to make sure there was no repeat of the incident.

"As drivers, we have been extremely vocal that the problem is not only qualifying, it's also racing, and we were warning this type of accident was always going to happen," said the Spaniard.

Tudor leaves after just seven games as Spurs battle for survival

AFP | London

Tottenham parted company with coach Igor Tudor by mutual consent yesterday after just seven games in charge as they battle to stay in the Premier League.

Tudor lost five of those matches to leave Spurs out of the Champions League and hovering just one point above the relegation zone in the Premier League.

The 47-year-old did not appear in front of the media after last weekend's damaging 3-0 defeat to fellow strugglers Nottingham Forest after learning of his father's death just after the game ended.

"We can confirm that it has been mutually agreed for head coach Igor Tudor to leave the club with immediate effect," Tottenham said in a statement.

"We also acknowledge the bereavement that Igor has recently suffered and send our support to him and his family at this difficult time.

"An update on a new head coach will be provided in due course."



Igor Tudor looks on during a match (file photo)

Tottenham are not in action again for another two weeks when they travel to Sunderland.

The former Juventus boss was appointed in February following the dismissal of Thomas Frank.

But the Croatian has been powerless to stop Tottenham's slide towards the relegation trap door for the first time since 1977.

The London club, ravaged by

impressive track record and the club started the season with just one defeat in their first seven league games.

But they lost their way and club bosses axed Frank following a run of just two wins in 17 league games.

With the fates of Burnley and Wolves almost certainly sealed, Spurs are battling for survival along with West Ham, currently in the relegation zone, Forest and Leeds.

Relegation to the second-tier Championship would be a seismic event in English football.

Spurs, who play in a gleaming new stadium that holds more than 60,000 fans, are one of the so-called "Big Six" in the Premier League and were ninth in Deloitte's latest Money League study for the richest clubs in world football.

Just a few years ago they were Champions League regulars under former manager Mauricio Pochettino, reaching the final in 2019, but their decline has been precipitous.

Spurs have seven matches remaining to save themselves following the international break.

Sabalenka **sinks** Gauff to win second straight Miami Open title

The world number one became the fifth woman in history to complete the prestigious “Sunshine Double”

● Sabalenka beats Gauff 6-2, 4-6, 6-3

● Completes Indian Wells-Miami double

● Completes Indian Wells-Miami double

AFP | Miami

Aryna Sabalenka won her second straight Miami Open title yesterday beating Coco Gauff 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 to complete a “Sunshine Double” Indian Wells-Miami sweep.

The world number one from Belarus, fresh off her first triumph in the California desert, became the fifth woman -- and the first since Iga Swiatek in 2022 -- to win both of the elite early season hardcourt WTA 1000 titles.

“It means a lot,” Sabalenka said after joining Poland’s Swiatek, German great Steffi Graf, Belgian Kim Clijsters and fellow Belarusian Victoria Azarenka on the list of women to win both titles in the same year.

“My goal always been to put my name in the history, and I just did it.”

Sabalenka underscored her WTA dominance in a season in which her only defeat to date was her Australian Open finals loss to Elena Rybakina -- who she went on to beat in the Indian Wells title match and in the semi-finals here.

She handed Gauff her first career defeat in a hardcourt final.



Aryna Sabalenka celebrates with the Butch Buchholz trophy after defeating Coco Gauff of the United States

The American had won her first nine, including a triumph over Sabalenka in the 2023 US Open championship match.

Gauff had also beaten the Belarusian for the title on the red clay of Roland Garros last year. So Sabalenka said she wasn’t surprised to see Gauff dig in, even after the Belarusian pocketed the first set with a ruthless display of power and precision.

She broke Gauff to open the match and, after Gauff saved three break points in a gritty fifth game, broke the American again in the seventh before serv-

9 consecutive hardcourt final victories was the incredible streak held by Coco Gauff before it was finally snapped by Aryna Sabalenka in yesterday’s championship match

ing it out in 37 minutes without facing a break point herself.

In a tense second set, Gauff’s first break point chance -- from

a blistering backhand passing winner in the second game -- sparked a jubilant reaction from the crowd at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL’s Miami Dolphins that is just about an hour away from Gauff’s Delray Beach home.

But Gauff couldn’t convert, slamming a forehand into the net on the next point as Sabalenka held.

It needed another gutsy hold from Gauff to keep it on serve in the fifth game.

Up 40-0, she wasted three game points with a pair of errors

“I knew that she’s going to try her very best to fight in this match. I was just trying to keep a positive mindset going into the third set. I’m super happy how well I handled my emotions how well I stayed focused from the very beginning to the very end

ARYNA SABALENKA

off the ground and a double fault then had to save a break point before taking the game.

But Gauff was finding more depth on her returns and broke Sabalenka for the first time to take the second set.

“I knew that she’s going to try her very best to fight in this match,” Sabalenka said.

“I was just trying to keep a positive mindset going into the third set. I’m super happy how well I handled my emotions how well I stayed focused from the very beginning to the very end.”

What a month

And the third set, again, was virtually all Sabalenka.

She broke to open the final frame and broke again when Gauff sailed a backhand long on Sabalenka’s first match point.

“What a month,” said Sabalenka, who along with two prestigious titles acquired a new puppy and got engaged to boyfriend

BETTER YOU KNOW

Sabalenka said “what a month” after winning both Sunshine Double titles, getting engaged to boyfriend Georgios Frangulis, and acquiring a new puppy—a perfect stretch of off-court and on-court success

Georgios Frangulis.

Gauff was also feeling grateful after a rocky March that saw her withdraw from her third-round match at Indian Wells with a nerve issue that caused “scary” pain in her left arm.

She had said after a dominant semi-final win over Karolina Muchova that she was making progress with the inconsistencies in her serve and forehand, although seven double faults hurt her cause against Sabalenka.

And after considering skipping the event, the 22-year-old was thrilled to reach the final for the first time.

“I feel like I’m nowhere near my peak of my tennis, so I think it gives me comfort a little bit playing these tournaments and having great results,” she said.

Bahrain Victorious misses ‘In Flanders Fields’ podium



Action from the race

TDI | Manama

Bahrain Victorious returned to the Belgian cobbled classics yesterday with high hopes for the newly renamed “In Flanders Fields”, formerly “Gent-Wevelgem”, but the team’s leaders missed the podium in a 241 km race from Middelkerke to Wevelgem.

Team leader Alec Segaert was active in the closing stag-

es, bridging to the late break by Mathieu van der Poel and Wout van Aert and launching a solo attack inside the final kilometre. Despite his bold move, the chasing peloton, led by sprint-focused teams, reeled him back, setting up the first bunch sprint finish at this race since 2019.

Co-leader Matej Mohoric stayed attentive across the cobbled climbs and gravel sectors, supporting Bahrain Victorious’

efforts, while debutants Borgo, Skerl, Stockwell, and Pau Miquel gained valuable experience in one of the season’s key one-day races.

The sprint saw Belgian Jasper Philipsen (Alpecin-Premier Tech) take victory, with Dane Tobias Lund Andresen (Decathlon CMA CGM) second and Christophe Laporte (Visma-Lease a Bike) third, capping a dramatic finale for the sprinting teams.

Bahrain’s 3×3 teams take on Singapore ahead of Asia Cup



Bahrain’s 3×3 teams and coaches on court yesterday

Hussain Almaskati
TDI | Manama

Bahrain’s men’s and women’s national 3×3 basketball teams will play a friendly against hosts Singapore today as a final tune-up before the FIBA 3×3 Asia Cup, scheduled from April 1-5.

The men’s team, coached

by Murtadha Mohammed, includes Nasser Al Mousawi, Isa Jassim, Mohammed Ghazwan, Al Wathiq Ali, and Salman Al Kaabi. They are in Group D of the Asia Cup qualifiers, facing Kazakhstan, Hong Kong, and India.

The women’s team, also under coach Murtadha Mohammed with team administrator

Ahmed Elias, features Bayan Salman, Shereen Abdulrahman, Noor Najaf, and Nouf Abdullah. Competing in Group C, they will face Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia in the opening stage.

Both teams aim to advance through the qualifiers with an eye on the pathway to the 2026 FIBA 3×3 World Cup in Warsaw.

Martinez holds second overall as Volta a Catalunya concludes

Bahrain Victorious rider secures second place overall and best young rider classification in Barcelona

● Vingegaard wins overall title with controlled front group

● Three Bahrain teammates finish top 11 overall

TDT | Manama

Team Bahrain Victorious' Lenny Martinez capped off an impressive week in Spain, securing second place overall at the 105th Volta Ciclista a Catalunya and claiming the best young rider jersey after yesterday's final stage.

Martinez entered the 95.1 km Montjuïc circuit in Barcelona as the second-placed rider in the general classification, proudly wearing the white jersey after a stellar performance on the summit of Queralt during Stage 6. Stage 7 promised a close battle:



Final podium: 1st Vingegaard (C), 2nd Lenny Martinez (L), 3rd Florian Lipowitz

seven laps of Montjuïc, each including the punishing Alt del Castell de Montjuïc.

From the start, the pace was relentless. Attacks flew from all directions, but Martinez

stayed glued to the front, handling every surge and climb with calm precision. Despite repeated accelerations and punishing ascents, the Frenchman held firm in second place overall.



Lenny Martinez of Bahrain Victorious wins young rider jersey by nearly four minutes

In a thrilling reduced-bunch sprint, Australian rider Brady Gilmore (NSN), racing for the team owned by former Barcelona

footballer Andres Iniesta, edged out Dorian Godon (Ineos Grenadiers) and Remco Evenepoel (Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe) to claim the stage win. Meanwhile, overall leader Dan-

ish rider Jonas Vingegaard (Visma-Lease a Bike) controlled the front group, securing his first Volta a Catalunya title with the poise of a champion.

Martinez crossed the line more than a minute behind Vingegaard, cementing his second-place finish. Bahrain Victorious teammates also delivered strong results: Afonso Eulalio cracked the top 10, Santiago Buitrago finished 11th, and Jakob Omrzel, Rainer Kepingler, Matevz Govekar, and Nikias Arndt completed the stage.

With the race concluded, Martinez comfortably retained the best young rider jersey ahead of Cian Uijtdebroeks (Movistar Team). As the final laps of Barcelona unfolded, the 2026 Volta a Catalunya drew to an exciting close — a week of relentless racing that highlighted Martinez's talent and consistency on the international stage.

Manama Holds On Amid Najma Rally

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Manama survived a furious late rally from Al Najma to secure an 80-76 victory in game two of the 2025-26 Zain Bahrain Basketball League Golden Square semi-finals last night, leveling the best-of-five series at 1-1. After a narrow win in game one, Najma had a chance to take a 2-0 lead, but Manama's composure in the closing minutes proved decisive at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

Al Najma's Ali Aqeel reflected on the game, saying, "Congratulations to Manama, but the series is still up for grabs. They started very well, and we didn't start as we had hoped."

The game opened with Manama asserting control. Hasan Nowrooz's sharp three-pointer and Ali Jaber's inside scoring quickly built a double-digit advantage, but Najma refused to fold. Donovan Smith's aggressive drives and Mohamed Kuwayed's reliable jumpers kept the challengers close and prevented Manama from pulling away.

Najma chipped away at a 14-point deficit, turning Manama's early lead into a one-possession game by halftime. The first half ended 41-39 in favor of Manama, setting up a closely contested second half. In the third quarter, Manama responded with Alex Young's scoring bursts and Mohammed Buallay's dominance on the boards, maintaining a narrow edge despite Najma's persistent counterattacks.



Manama's Mohammed Buallay

The fourth quarter delivered the drama. With under eight minutes remaining, Manama led 65-63. Smith tipped in a basket and added a free throw to briefly put Najma ahead. But under the guidance of coach Salman Ramadhan, the record 25-time champions steadied themselves. Jaber and Nowrooz hit key baskets, while Young's crucial free throws absorbed Najma's late surge.

Kuwayed kept Najma within two points with timely drives and free-throw conversions. However, a missed three-pointer by Mohamed Hussain and perfect free throws from Ahmed Salman allowed Manama to hold on. Kuwayed's final

layup narrowed the gap to 76-80, but Najma couldn't respond before the buzzer.

Stats highlighted the intensity of the contest. For Najma, Smith led with 24 points and 8 rebounds, Kuwayed added 14, and Hassan Fahad contributed a double-double of 13 points and 10 boards. Manama's Jaber and Young scored 18 points each, Buallay posted 16 points and 10 rebounds, and Salman chipped in 11.

With the series tied 1-1, Najma will look to take the lead and continue their pursuit of a first-ever league title. Game three tips off Wednesday at 6 PM, with both teams set for another edge-of-the-seat affair.

Muharraq extend series lead over rivals Al Ahli

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Defending champions Muharraq continued their strong showing in the 2025-26 Zain Bahrain Basketball League Golden Square semi-finals with a comfortable 96-69 victory over Al Ahli in game two last night. The win gives Muharraq a 2-0 lead in the best-of-five series.

The contest, held at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town, saw the Red Wolves maintain control from the opening tip, steadily building a lead they would never relinquish.

They outscored the Eagles in every quarter, opening the first period with a 24-17 advantage before gradually pulling away behind efficient shooting and disciplined defense. By halftime, Muharraq led 42-33, setting the tone for a decisive second half.

In the third quarter, the defending champions turned up the intensity. Younis Kuwayed, Ali Hussain Rashed, and Nick West spearheaded Muharraq's scoring surge, helping the team extend their lead to 71-44. Al Ahli struggled to keep pace despite strong efforts from Anthony Fairley and Hesham Sarhan, who combined for 33 points by the end of the third period.

The fourth quarter saw Peter Schomers' side continue their dominance, with Abdulla Rabea and Mohamed Nasser hitting key three-pointers to push the lead beyond 25 points. Muharraq's depth was evident, as contributions came from multiple players including Bader Abdulla, Rashed, and West,



Al Ahli captain Maitham Jameel guards Muharraq's Ali Hussain Rashed

ensuring the team's scoring remained balanced and their defensive pressure relentless.

Muharraq's balanced attack was led by Ali Hussain Rashed, who delivered 16 points and controlled the tempo throughout. Nick West added 25 points, while Mohamed Nasser contributed 11 points and Michael Warren 12. Captain Bader Abdulla chipped in with 9 points, helping Muharraq execute smoothly on both ends of the floor.

For coach Ahmed Jan's side, Anthony Fairley finished with 21 points, showing resilience despite his team's deficit. Hesham Sarhan added 12 points, Maitham Jameel 8, Hussain Salman 6, and Ali Shukralla

6, but their efforts were not enough to counter Muharraq's offensive depth and defensive intensity.

With a commanding 2-0 series lead, Muharraq will look to close out the semi-final when the teams return to Khalifa Sports City Arena for game three on Wednesday. Al Ahli will need a near-perfect performance to stay alive in the series, while Muharraq will aim to capitalize on their momentum and secure a spot in the Golden Square final.

The Red Wolves are aiming to add to their four national league crowns, though they still trail behind the record 25 titles held by Manama, with Al Ahli next on 20.

Antonelli wins in Japan to become youngest F1 championship leader

19-year-old dominates early season as rivals trail in Japan showdown

● Antonelli leads standings by nine points after three races

● Victory secured by 13.722-second margin

● Piastri second in first grand prix start

● Verstappen finishes eighth after four straight Suzuka wins

● F1 break until Miami on May 3

AFP | Suzuka

Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli won the Japanese Grand Prix yesterday for his second straight victory, as the 19-year-old Italian became the youngest driver in Formula One history to lead the world championship standings.

Antonelli took advantage of a mid-race safety car to leapfrog into the lead after a dreadful start from pole position and led home McLaren's Oscar Piastri by 13.722sec with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc a further 1.548sec back in third.

He whooped with delight as he crossed the line at Suzuka, telling his team "the pace was unbelievable today".

He moved up to 72 points and leads the championship by nine points after three races, building



Winner Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli (R) and second-placed McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri celebrate on the podium

on the first grand prix win of his career two weeks ago in China.

"Of course it's still too early to think about the championship but we're on a good way," said Antonelli.

"I don't know what would have happened, what the outcome would have been without the safety car, but it definitely made my life a lot easier."

His Mercedes teammate George Russell finished fourth to drop to second in the championship standings on 63 points. Leclerc is third on 49.

72
points is the total now held by Kimi Antonelli, making him the youngest driver in the history of Formula One to ever lead the world championship standings

Russell battled Piastri for the lead over the first half of the race but pitted just before the safety

car which dropped him out of contention for the win.

Piastri secured second in his first grand prix start of the season, after crashing on his way to the grid in the opener in Australia and missing the race in China because of a technical problem.

Piastri led for the first half of the race before the safety car gave Antonelli his chance.

"It would have been really interesting to see what would have happened without that," said Piastri.

“Of course it’s still too early to think about the championship but we’re on a good way. I don’t know what would have happened, what the outcome would have been without the safety car, but it definitely made my life a lot easier

KIMI ANTONELLI

‘A pretty good place’

“A shame that we never got to see what would have happened, but I think for us to be disappointed at this point about finishing second is a pretty good place to be.”

McLaren's world champion Lando Norris was fifth ahead of Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton and Alpine's Pierre Gasly.

Red Bull's four-time world champion Max Verstappen, the winner in Japan for the past four years, was eighth after starting from 11th on the grid.

Antonelli had become the youngest pole-sitter in F1 history in China and again was at the head of the grid.

But he suffered a shocking start and was down in sixth by the first corner.

Piastri took the early lead ahead of Leclerc, with Norris, Russell and Hamilton all sweeping past Antonelli.

The young Italian had made

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Antonelli suffered a dreadful start from pole, dropping to sixth, but a perfectly timed safety car after Bearman's crash allowed him to pit for fresh tyres and emerge in the lead

up some of the last ground when a crash by Haas driver Ollie Bearman brought out the safety car during the pit stop window.

Piastri had already pitted but Antonelli was able to dive in for fresh tyres moments after the safety car was deployed and emerged in front of the Australian, a stroke of luck that effectively won him the race.

Bearman got out of his car unaided but was limping badly as race marshals helped him off the track.

Haas later said he had "a right knee contusion" and initial X-rays showed no fractures after hitting the barrier at high speed.

Formula One now takes an extended break until the Miami Grand Prix on May 3.

The Bahrain and Saudi Arabia races scheduled for April have been cancelled because of the war in the Middle East.

Rohit, Rickelton blaze as Mumbai sink KKR in IPL



Mumbai Indians' Rohit Sharma plays a shot

TDT | Agencies

Mumbai Indians opened their IPL 2026 campaign with a six-wicket demolition of Kolkata Knight Riders, chasing down 221 with five balls to spare at the Wankhede Stadium yesterday.

Captain Rohit Sharma smashed 78 off 38 balls and South African left-hander Ryan Rickelton pummeled 81 off 43 in a whirlwind 148-run opening stand that broke the

back of the chase.

Earlier, Ajinkya Rahane's polished 67 and Angkrish Raghuvanshi's 51 powered KKR to 220-4, with Rinku Singh adding an unbeaten 33 as Shardul Thakur's 3-39 provided Mumbai's main control with the ball.

But Mumbai's top order, aided by brisk cameos from Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya, ensured the five-time champions cruised to their first points of the season.

Despondent Verstappen questions F1 future

AFP | Suzuka

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen suggested he could quit Formula One at the end of the season after enduring another frustrating race yesterday in Japan.

The Red Bull driver finished eighth in Suzuka, ending his four-year reign as Japanese Grand Prix champion in ruthless fashion.

He told the BBC that he was "not enjoying the whole formula behind" this season's championship, which has brought in sweeping new regulations.

"You just think about, is it worth it?" he said.

"Or do I enjoy being more at home with my family? Seeing my friends more when you're not enjoying your sport?"

Verstappen has repeatedly railed against the new regulations, that see a 50-50 split between conventional and electrical power.

He labelled his car "undriveable" after qualifying in a lowly 11th for the Japan race.

When asked if he could walk away from the sport, he replied



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen takes off his balaclava

that he was "thinking about everything inside this paddock".

"It's really anti-driving. Then at one point, yeah, it's just not what I want to do," he said.

"And of course you can look at it and make a lot of money.

Great.

"But at the end of the day it's not about money any more because this has always been my passion."

Verstappen sought a change of scenery by competing in a

four-hour race in Germany before the Japanese Grand Prix.

He will not compete again in F1 until the Miami Grand Prix on May 3, after the Bahrain and Saudi Arabia races scheduled for April were cancelled because of the war in the Middle East.

When asked how he would fill his time during the break, Verstappen answered: "I'll do some more racing, some stuff that makes me smile.

"And at the same time speak to the team as well, to try and find more pace and some more stable balance because this is not sustainable for us as a team," he added.

Verstappen is in ninth place in the championship standings, 60 points behind leader Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes after three races.

He finished sixth in the season opener in Australia and retired from the grand prix in China because of a cooling issue.

"I want to be here to have fun and have a great time and enjoy myself. At the moment that's not really the case," he said.

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