



Kingdom to facilitate safe evacuation of Bahrainis in Ukraine

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is closely following up on the situation of Bahraini citizens present in Ukraine amid the current security conditions there.

The ministry said that with regard to its statement issued on February 12 urging Bahrainis to leave Ukraine, it stresses Bahrain's keenness to facilitate the necessary procedures for the safe evacuation of its citizens through the available ports as soon as possible.

The ministry called upon the citizens wishing to leave Ukraine or seeking any assistance to call its Follow-up Office on 0097317227555.

Bahrain, US keen to boost economic cooperation

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Bahrain and the US are keen to explore opportunities for furthering economic and trade cooperation.

This was both emphasised by Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as the second Strategic Dialogue between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the USA began virtually yesterday.

Dr Al Zayani delivered a speech in which he said the two sides are building on the strong founda-



Dr Al Zayani and Blinken at the online discussion

tions of their bilateral Free Trade Agreement, noting that laying the foundation for the United States Trade Zone in Bahrain's Salman Industrial City is one example for such cooperation.

Dr Al Zayani said the two countries celebrated 50 years of formal diplomatic relations last year and with over a century of deep-rooted bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors, He said that the partnership between Bahrain and the US is one of unique strategic attributes and advantages, adding that it is a partnership based on mutual

respect, shared priorities.

Blinken, who chaired the US side, expressed his pride in the historical relations between the Bahrain and the US.

21st anniversary

He noted that both countries will also celebrate this year the 21st anniversary of the designation of Bahrain as a major non-Nato ally of the US.

He also underlined that the US appreciates its partnership with Bahrain in the field of maintaining security and stability in the region.

Putin defiant!

Russia gives no hints of ceasefire as peace talks at Belarus border make only slender progress

Arab League 'great concern'

Cairo

The Arab League yesterday said it is following with "great concern" developments in Ukraine and "their serious military and humanitarian consequences."

The organisation, which held an emergency meeting yesterday at Egypt's request, said it supports "all efforts aimed at resolving the crisis through dialogue and diplomacy in a manner that preserves the security and safety of peoples in this important region of the world."

● More negotiations in pipeline but Moscow's invasion of Ukraine will continue

● Major cities come under intense artillery fire overnight from Russian troops

Agencies

Fighting raged around key cities in Ukraine yesterday as its first critical rounds of talks with Russia since last week's invasion concluded with no immediate breakthrough.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's top adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said the talks, held near the Belarus border, were focused on a possible ceasefire and that a second round could take place "in the near future."

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin refused to give an inch in his demands from the West yesterday and instead responded to Ukrainian resistance and Western sanctions with a vi-



Residents of Severodonetsk, Donetsk region, look out from the basement where they hid during heavy shelling by Russian forces

cious bombardment of civilians in the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

Putin himself gave no hints of any impending peace deal. After a long call with French President Emmanuel Macron, Russian media reported Putin had not only repeated his long-standing security demands over Ukraine — that the country should disarm and stay neutral outside NATO — but also insisted upon the formal recognition of Crimea as Russian, an ultimatum he had not previously stated

so bluntly to Western allies.

Even as Moscow said officials negotiating had "heard" each other, Ukraine said Kharkiv, its second-largest city, was coming under attack from heavy Russian shelling.

The talks — the first direct negotiations between the two countries since Russia launched its invasion five days earlier — went for hours, and while they brought some hope for an end to the war, Ukraine's president and residents in Kyiv made it



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clear they expected little out of the discussion.

Russia would not clarify its aims for the talks, but sources reported that Ukraine's key demands were an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of all Russian troops.

Russian officials said the meeting had ended by early evening and that the respective delegations were heading back to their capitals to discuss the negotiations.

Ukraine's armed forces continued to hold off Russian troops, defending and retaining control of key cities, and slowing Russia's advance on Kyiv.

The Russian assault killed 11 people and wounded dozens, local authorities said.

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Signature F1 entertainment

World-class roaming acts to enliven Gulf Air Bahrain GP

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A wide variety of roaming performers from all across the globe will once again provide vibrant, festival-like atmosphere that can be enjoyed off the track at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhr during the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix from 18 to 20 March.

"The Home of Motorsport in

the Middle East" spares no effort each year in putting together a fantastic programme of fun family entertainment for all to look forward to throughout the three-day race weekend.

These colourful characters — who will be seen around BIC's F1 Village vending area — include dancers and musicians, clowns and magicians, and many more kinds of charming acts that will surely put smiles on everyone's

faces.

The roster of much-beloved artists includes Abraham Thill, Aras Stilt Band, the Joker group, Colour Dancers, Dr Bubbles, Funky Style Band and Jam Batu-cada.

All this and so much more await all those attending this year's F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix.

The event is set to be an historic, once-in-a-generation

occasion for motorsport, as it ushers in "A New Era" in F1 following the biggest shake-up in F1 rules and regulations.

There will also be loads of racing, as F1 will be joined by the FIA Formula 2 Championship, the FIA Formula 3 Championship and the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East.

To add to the roaming performers off the track, BIC's spectacular entertainment pro-

gramme will be highlighted by the back-to-back concerts on the Friday night of the race weekend, 18 March, when globally renowned DJs Don Diablo and Afrojack will take to the stage for separate live performances

Tickets for the Grand Prix are available online at bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline at +973-17450000.

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Bahrain resident stuck in war zone! P3

BAHRAIN COVID-19

ACTIVE CASES	25648
DEATHS	1454
DISCHARGED	487781
NEW CASES	2577

220 fils (includes VAT)

