



Pope awake and 'joking' after hernia operation
 AFP | Rome

Pope Francis was said to be awake and cheerful yesterday after undergoing a three-hour hernia operation which has revived concerns over the 86-year-old's increasingly fragile health.

The Argentine pontiff had been admitted earlier in the day to the Gemelli hospital in Rome, where he is expected to stay for several days.

"The Holy Father reacted well both to the surgery and the anaesthesia. He is already awake... he has already cracked a joke," the surgeon who operated on him, Sergio Alfieri, told reporters.

Archives for IS crimes in Iraq
 AFP | United Nations

The United Nations will soon launch central archives containing millions of digitised documents that it says provide proof of crimes committed by the Islamic State group in Iraq, an official said yesterday.

UNITAD, the UN body set up to investigate IS crimes in the country, began its field work five years ago in an effort to bring the jihadists to justice.

"For us, it is absolutely clear that only if we work side by side with Iraqi authorities, in particular with our counterparts in the Iraqi judiciary, UNITAD can be successful," said the UN's chief investigator Christian Ritscher.

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HM King affirms importance of 'education and training'

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, underscored the importance of education and training in various development sectors, including the military fields.

This came as HM the King sent a cable of congratulations to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Prime Minister, on the



HM the King



HRH Prince Salman

success of His Highness Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, in completing the Joint Command and Staff Course at the US Marine Corps University, in Virginia, USA.

His Majesty wished HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa continued success to join the ranks of loyal youth who are committed to working the homeland to enhance its standing and safeguard its achievements.

In the cable, HM King Hamad hailed the pivotal role played

by the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF), as well as commitment to developing human resources and ensuring their training to be highly prepared to assume their patriotic tasks in defending the homeland and protecting its achievements and its civilised march.

He commended the BDF personnel's readiness and high efficiency, which reflects their commitment to keeping abreast of recent developments in all sectors, especially the military fields.

US 'deeply invested' in Gulf partnerships

AFP | Riyadh

The US remains committed to its Gulf Arab partners, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Gulf diplomats in Saudi Arabia yesterday, at a time of rapidly shifting regional alliances.

Blinken spoke during a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) ministerial meeting in the capital Riyadh following talks with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and the kingdom's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

"The United States is in this region to say we remain deeply invested in partnering with all of you," Blinken said at the opening of the US-GCC ministerial meeting on strategic partnership.

"The GCC is the core of our vision for a Middle East that is more stable, more secure, more prosperous," he added.

The meetings came a day after Blinken flew into Jeddah, kick-starting a visit aimed at boosting ties with ally Saudi Arabia, which has begun forging closer relations with Washington's rivals.

Relations between the decades-old allies have been strained in recent times, mainly over human rights and oil, after US pleas for help in bringing down skyrocketing prices last



US Secretary Blinken, left, poses with GCC ministers yesterday. (AFP)

year were dismissed.

The three-day visit is Blinken's first since the kingdom restored diplomatic ties with Iran, which the West considers a pariah over its contested nuclear activities and involvement in regional conflicts.

On Tuesday, the day Blinken arrived, Iran reopened its embassy in Riyadh after a seven-year closure, with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alireza Bigdeli hailing a "new era" in ties.

On the same day, Prince Mohammed hosted Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, the head of a fellow oil power who has long sparred with Washington.

Last month, in a major shift, Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad attended an Arab League summit in Jeddah, his first since Syria's membership was suspended at the start of its 12-year civil war. Washington criticised the decision to invite Assad.

Meeting

Yesterday's meeting at the GCC headquarters in Riyadh was attended by Qatar's prime minister among other leading Gulf officials.

On the agenda were key regional issues, including conflicts in Yemen, Sudan, Syria and the Palestinian territories.

"Together, we are working to achieve a... resolution to the conflict in Yemen," and to "continue to counter Iran's destabilising

"
The GCC is the core of our vision for a Middle East that is more stable, more secure, more prosperous

ANTONY BLINKEN, US SECRETARY OF STATE

behaviour," including recent seizures of tankers in international waters, Blinken told the GCC ministers.

"We are determined to find a political solution in Syria that maintains its unity and sovereignty and meets the aspirations of its people," he added.

"We are also collaborating with countries in the region to widen and deepen the normalisation of relations with Israel."

Shortly before the meeting, Blinken held talks with Saudi Arabia's top diplomat.

The two "resolved to continue to work together to counter terrorism, to support efforts to bring about a lasting peace in Yemen, and to promote stability, security, de-escalation, and integration in the region," the US State Department said.

"The two sides pledged to continue their strong cooperation to end the fighting in Sudan," it added in a statement.

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HM the King

HM King lauded by BDF chief

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, yesterday received a cable of congratulations from the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, on the success of His Highness Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, in completing the Joint Command and Staff Course at the US Marine Corps University, in Virginia, USA.

In the cable, the BDF chief wished HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad success in his efforts and career to serve the homeland under the wise leadership of HM the King.

Bahrain housing strides highlighted at UN assembly

Nairobi

Housing and Urban Planning Minister, Amna bint Ahmed Al Rumihi, has participated in a special session on achieving universal access to adequate housing through inclusive and stronger multilateralism.

Officials and specialists from the UK, France, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines and Kenya also participated in the panel session, held on the sidelines of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Assembly (UNHA 2), held in Nairobi, Kenya on June 5-9.

The dialogue session focused on the importance of decent housing in achieving social and economic development.

The participants called for devising comprehensive long-term policies to ensure the provisions of affordable social housing for the citizens.

Addressing the session, Al Rumihi affirmed Bahrain's early awareness of the potential challenges associated with the increase in demand for housing services as a result of the high rates of population, which requires intensifying efforts to provide housing services to low-income citizens.

As a result, she said, the government had begun providing housing cities since the 1960s, starting with Isa Town, and then Hamad Town and Zayed City, in addition to the current five housing cities, namely Salman, Khalifa, East Hidd and East Sitra towns, as well as Al Raml District. The kingdom has been keen to implement housing projects.

HRH Prince Salman commends HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, yesterday congratulated the Commanding Officer of the RBNS Al Jaber, HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, on HH's successful

completion of the Joint Command and Staff Course from the US Marine Corps University, in Virginia, USA.

His Royal Highness highlighted the Bahrain Defence Force's continued development as a result of the support and directives issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.



HRH Prince Salman

HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman highlighted the importance of prioritising education and training as a means to develop multiple sectors, including the military.

He commended the BDF's commitment to offering its staff high quality training, ensuring they are well prepared to safeguard the Kingdom's interests. His Royal Highness applauded

ed the readiness and efficiency of Bahrain's armed forces and wished HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman continued success in his military career.

HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman concluded by noting the longstanding relationship between Bahrain and the US and their joint commitment to continuing to develop their military and defence.

Mass wedding



The 11th mass wedding has been held under the patronage of His Majesty the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, Royal Humanitarian Foundation (RHF) His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation hosted the ceremony which was held at the Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Auditorium at the University of Bahrain campus in Sakhir. A total of 1,200 brides and grooms tied the knot during the mass wedding, making it the largest event of its kind in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The ceremony was attended also by UAE Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain His Highness Shaikh Sultan bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, RCO Secretary General Dr. Mustafa Al Sayyed, Director General Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation Mohammed Al Khoury.

Logos Hope first day successful!

Hundreds flock to world's largest floating book fair at Khalifa bin Salman Port

● Visitors enjoy day picking up merry mix of titles

● Book lovers enjoy thrilling activities on massive ship

● Residents, citizens have until June 18 to check out expo

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

The first day of Logos Hope, the world's largest floating book fair, was a success as hundreds queued to go aboard and discover the thrilling activities and books on the massive ship.

The Daily Tribune traveled down to Khalifa bin Salman Port to check out the floating book expo, getting a real feel of the special docking.

Once reaching the port, visitors of the Logos Hope are made to take a shuttle down to the ship, which allows visitors to capture the spectacular essence of the port itself, and an exceptional view of the Logos Hope driving up to it!

Logos Hope last docked in the Kingdom almost 10 years ago,



Logos Hope

and back in 2013 from October 22 to November 4. And book lovers were most definitely in high spirits to take a glimpse of the inside whilst waiting at the ticket stands.

First docking the boat, visitors were met with a phenomenal international crew and staff of volunteers from around 60 countries, who live and work on the ship. They devote one or more years of their lives to serving on board.

Once inside, bookworms were met with an impressive array of various types of genres ranging from non-fiction, science, sports, medicine, and languages. There was certainly a book to everyone's liking.

When taking a look around the over 5,000 book titles on board, literacy, and educational books were not difficult to come by. And after speaking with some of the volunteers and international crew, they revealed that the ship promotes literacy and education, cross-cultural cooperation, and social awareness, and reflects God's compassion for the world in the ports they visit.

Moreover, visitors on board also had the opportunity to view a walkthrough graphic, showing the 'journey of life'.

Although the first day of docking in the Kingdom proved a success, residents, and citizens still have time to check out the

YOU KNOW WHAT

Logos Hope last docked in the Kingdom almost 10 years ago, and back in 2013 from October 22 to November 4.



Ticket stand



Visitors queuing at the shuttle

files, although children under the age of 12 enter for free. The hours of operation are 4 pm to 11 pm. However, the ship will be closed on Mondays.

World Environment Day celebration



The community engagement team of the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences at the University of Technology Bahrain celebrated World Environment Day by planting trees inside the campus. Acting Dean of College of Business, Dr Vinodh Natarajan, Community Engagement Chairman Dr. Nidhi S. Menon, other faculties, and students of the College of Business were present at the event.

Growing concerns over 'wage fraud' luring foreign workers



Migrant workers take risk to support families

Zahra Ayaz

TDT | Manama

Another instance of wage fraud has come to light in which employees were lured to Bahrain with false promises of a salary and a visa, only to return depressed.

Workers claim that the corporation hired them under a different company name and informed them that their visas will be changed after three months.

The corporation first offered these migrant workers BD120, but a system check reveals that their basic pay is actually only BD50.

Workers who wish to remain anonymous told The Daily Tribune that it was difficult to pay their bills at the moment. They also complained to the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) about the company, but the system revealed that their visa was illegal.

"LMRA instructed us to go to the police station and make a complaint as it is a criminal case because the sponsor's name is not listed. We don't have the relevant document or the salary."

The Daily Tribune learned that these individuals are currently looking for a new position in an effort to alter their visa status and resume earning because they have families to support.

Meanwhile, if we look at the reports, it's estimated that there are 24 million migrant workers in the Gulf countries, constituting 83.3 per cent of the total workforce of the Gulf countries.

Migrant workers constitute the majority of the workforce in Qatar (94.0%), the UAE (92.5%), Kuwait (84.2%), Bahrain (79.4%) and Oman (78.4%).

A report published on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development noted that from the last three years, it received 16,532 requests to settle disputes between employees and employers. It added that 50.3 per cent of these disputes were resolved amicably.

Critically ill expat sent back home



Mr. Ezhumalai is being well cared for in the hospital

Zahra Ayaz

TDT | Manama

After spending six months in a hospital in the Kingdom, a critically ill patient finally departs for India with the assistance of Annai Tamil Mandram.

Mr. Ezhumalai Kuzhandhaivel, who was hospitalised at the Salmaniya Hospital for stroke and paralysis, had to be returned to India for additional medical care in his village.

Mr. Ezhumalai, who required stretcher support, returned to India on June 6, 2023 with the necessary onboard medical assistance and a nursing attendant.

His medical circumstances had been monitored by Mr. Arun Ramalingam, Social Welfare Secretary, ATM, and his team, who had also made the necessary arrangements for

his swift return to India.

ATM assisted in organising a ticket for Mr. Ezhumalai that cost BD2,000 from supporters, his sponsor, and a significant amount of support from the Indian Embassy to pay for all of the travel costs and send money to his family in India for their well-being while he was recovering.

President Mr. Senthil GK & General Secretary Dr. Thamarai kannan, ATM, thanked His Excellency Mr. Piyush Srivastava, Ambassador of Indian Embassy, and all the embassy officials, Salmaniya Hospital and all the staff nurses, Immigration department, Gulf air officials, Honorable Senji K. S. Masthan Minister of Non Resident Tamil Welfare Government of Tamilnadu, members of ATM, Mr. Ezhumalai's sponsor and each and everyone who helped to make this possible.

US Marine course achievement

TDT | Manama

His Highness Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa has successfully completed the Joint Command and Staff Course at the US Marine Corps University, in Virginia, USA.

On this occasion, HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman expressed his gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, for his directives and continuous support, which were the key motivators for completing the course.

HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman also expressed his gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, for his support throughout the course, which was integral to His Highness's success.

His Highness emphasised his commitment to utilising the knowledge, insights and strategic disciplines delivered throughout the course to support the Kingdom's ongoing development in the military and civilian sectors, in service of the Kingdom and its people.

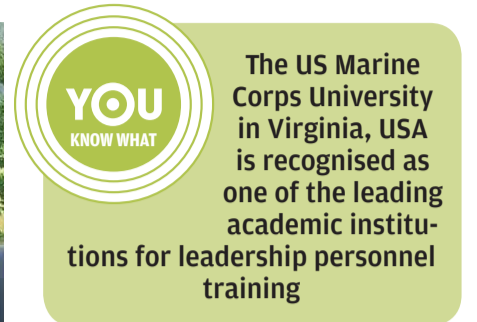
He also expressed his appreciation to the Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) Commander-in-Chief, HE Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, for his



HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman with a US Marine Corps University officer

ongoing support and for overseeing the facilitation of quality training opportunities for all members of the BDF, as part of the overall efforts aimed at enhancing leadership, administrative competence, and combat readiness of the force. In this regard, His Highness noted his pride in the BDF's national efforts and its dedicated servicemembers.

His Highness underlined the depth of relations between Bahrain and the US and the advancement of strategic cooperation across all sectors, particularly in military



and defence.

HH Major Shaikh Isa bin Salman expressed his thanks to the administrative personnel at the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College for their support throughout the course, and congratulated Major Shaikh Ali bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa and all other graduates on completing the Joint Command and Staff Course and wished them success in their future endeavours.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials including the Minister of Interior, HE General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the President of the Court of the Crown Prince, HE Shaikh Salman bin Ahmed bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the US, HE Shaikh Abdullah bin Rashid Al Khalifa, and a host of senior officers.

Source of inspiration

Shatha Husain Haji first Bahraini to earn Bachelor of Aviation Management degree in UK

● Ultimate goal is to leave legacy, contribute to growth, success of Bahrain's aviation sector

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

Shatha Husain Haji, 21, has become the first female Bahraini to earn a Bachelor of Aviation Management degree in the United Kingdom, specifically in Coventry.

She is the first Bahraini to be certified with Delf A1, A2, B1 and B2 (Diplome d'Etudes en Langue Francaise), an official qualification awarded by the French Ministry of Education to certify the competency of candidates from outside France in the French language.

According to Shatha, the achievement represents the progress and potential of Bahrainis in the field of aviation. It showcases Bahraini's talent, capabilities, and the opportunities that exist within the country.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Tribune, Shatha said: "I look forward to utilising my expertise to contribute to the development of the aviation industry in Bahrain."

"This accomplishment is a testament to the power of diversity and inclusion in the aviation field. It demonstrates that bar-



Shatha ... shaping the future of aviation in Bahrain and abroad

riers can be shattered, stereotypes can be challenged, and everyone, regardless of their background or gender, can excel in their chosen field.

"I hope that my achievement opens doors for others and fosters a more inclusive and diverse aviation industry."

Shatha added that choosing to pursue a career in aviation management was not just a decision based on passion, "it was a strategic choice aligned with my strengths and goals."

"The prospect of combining my love for aviation with my aptitude for strategic planning, leadership, and problem-solving made it an easy decision for me."

She emphasised that her achievement serves as a source of inspiration for fellow Bahrainis, encouraging them to pursue

their passions and reach for the highest heights in their chosen fields.

It signifies progress, determination, and the limitless potential of Bahrainis in the aviation field.

When asked about her ultimate goal, Shatha said: "Ultimately, my goal is to leave a lasting legacy in the aviation industry and contribute to the growth and success of Bahrain's aviation sector."

"I am determined to make a difference and be an influential figure in shaping the future of aviation both locally and globally."

She added: "I am committed to staying up-to-date with the latest advancements and trends in the aviation field globally and in Bahrain."



This accomplishment is a testament to the power of diversity and inclusion in the aviation field. It demonstrates that barriers can be shattered, stereotypes can be challenged, and everyone, regardless of their background or gender, can excel in their chosen field

SHATHA HUSAIN HAJI

Shatha lastly noted that continuous learning and professional development will be crucial for her to stay relevant and continue making a positive impact.

"I will actively seek opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills, whether through advanced certifications, attending conferences, or engaging in research and development," she said.

Evacuation exercise



The General Directorate of Civil Defence has held an evacuation exercise at the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) building. The drill was part of the evaluation of the emergency response plan. The safety team, under the supervision of the civil defence team, evacuated the building through the emergency exits and ensured that the NPRA affiliates were gathering at the assembly points.

Alba chairman calls for action on ESG challenges for sustainable future

TDT | Manama

Shaikh Daij bin Salman bin Dajj Al Khalifa, the Chairman of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba)'s Board of Directors, has stressed the need to address ESG challenges to create a better future.

Speaking at the 26th Arab-German Business Forum held in Berlin, Germany, Shaikh Daij further called upon the participants to take responsibility and find solutions to the most urgent ESG issues of our time.

"The world is changing and as we gather here in this Forum, we should take on the responsibility for finding answers to the most pressing ESG challenges of our time to foster a better future for generations to come," stated Shaikh Daij.

During the Forum's Gala Dinner on Tuesday, Shaikh Daij said, "With the world rapidly changing, it is our duty to tackle



The 26th Arab German Business Forum held in Berlin, Germany

the pressing ESG challenges we face today, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come." He further urged collective action "to meet our national targets to achieve the right balance between our economic gains and social returns."

Highlighting Alba's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and supporting Bahrain's "Net Zero Emissions by 2060" objectives, Shaikh Daij mentioned ongoing initiatives such as the Power Station 5 Block 4 Project and Solar Farm

Projects. These endeavours, he said, are expected to significantly decrease Alba's greenhouse gas intensity levels. Additionally, Alba is committed to planting 6,000 trees annually and aiding the restoration of mangrove forests in Bahrain.

Alba's delegation at the Forum included Ali Al Baqali, the Chief Executive Officer, who participated in a panel discussion on "Sustainability as a Success Factor & Global Challenge: How to maintain Sustainable Growth in Economies?" on June

7, 2023. Al Baqali joined other industry leaders and experts in sharing insights and ideas on the topic.

The Arab-German Business Forum, organised by the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ghorfa), serves as a prominent platform for promoting business cooperation between German and Arab companies. The forum brings together business leaders, experts, and decision-makers, facilitating valuable discussions and collaborations.

Fitch affirms GFH's 'B' rating; Outlook Stable

TDT | Manama

GFH Financial Group yesterday announced that Fitch Ratings has affirmed its Long- and Short-Term Issuer Default Ratings (IDR) at 'B'. The Outlook on the Long-Term IDR is Stable.

Fitch has also affirmed the senior unsecured long-term rating of the US\$500 million sukuk due 2025 issued through GFH Sukuk Company Limited ("GFH SCL") at 'B' with a Recovery Rating of 'RR4'.

According to the report, key ratings drivers included GFH's evolving business model, noting management has made progress in implementing a de-risking strategy in recent years, growing its treasury activities, increasing fee-generative business from investment management and reducing legacy illiquid real estate investments. GFH's overall profitability was affirmed as moderate, with capitalisation and liquidity noted to be in line with and above regulatory standards, respectively.

The Group's treasury activities (26% of revenue in 2022), were also highlighted by Fitch as a growing area and significant profit contributor, having commenced only a few years ago.

Fitch affirmed management's goal of significantly increasing the Group's fee-earn-



Damian White

ing assets (Currently: US\$7.8 billion; in 2021: US\$5.7 billion) over the medium term, primarily through inorganic growth targeted at the US and UK markets.

Fitch noted other IDR drivers including GFH's significant albeit reduced exposure to illiquid unlisted investments, primarily related to real estate investments and exposure to low-rated operating environments.

Fitch further notes that the IDR also takes into account GFH's niche franchise in Bahrain as an Islamic wholesale investment bank and majority owner of Khaleeji Commercial Bank. Damian White, Group Chief, Financial Institutions and Proprietary Investments of GFH, said, "We will continue to pursue expansion in key areas and markets with the aim of further strengthening our performance and building our portfolio of income-generating assets."

Middle East Hospital names Dr Alderazi Chief Executive Officer

TDT | Manama

Middle East Hospital, one of the leading private hospitals in Bahrain, has officially appointed Dr Amer Alderazi as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Dr Amer, a highly regarded Bariatric & General Surgeon, brings with him a wealth of experience, having previously served as the Head of the Department of Accident & Emergency at Salmaniya Hospital. Currently, he is also the President of the Bahrain Medical Society.

Varghese Kurian, the Chairman of VKL Holdings, Al Namil Group of Companies, and Middle East Healthcare Group, expressed his confidence in Dr Amer's capabilities, stating, "His impressive track record and leadership skills make him the ideal candidate to lead Middle East Hospital into the future. We are confident that his expertise and experience will enable us to continue providing world-class healthcare services to our patients and strengthen our commitment to serve the community in the Kingdom of Bahrain."



Varghese Kurian welcomes Dr Alderazi

Dr Amer Alderazi expressed his enthusiasm for the new role and emphasised his dedication to achieving the hospital's shared vision of providing exceptional medical services to

the community. As the newly appointed CEO, he is poised to work closely with the hospital's team to further elevate the quality of care and uphold the hospital's commitment to delivering

top-notch healthcare services. Middle East Hospital, renowned for its commitment to excellence, said it looks forward to a successful tenure under Dr Amer's leadership.

Nass highlights AI challenges at Arab-German Economic Forum

TDT | Manama

Sameer Nass, The President of the Union of Arab Chambers, Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, stressed the need for embracing the latest technologies and scientific progress for the betterment of people and nations.

Speaking during the 26th Arab-German Economic Forum held in Berlin, Nass also shed light on the significant challenges posed by AI (Artificial Intelligence) and technological transformation to world and Arab countries, which could potentially disrupt numerous job markets and labour sectors.

The Forum has the participation of Arab and German diplomats, decision-makers and business owners.

In his address, Nass further underlined the need for strengthened Arab economic cooperation, urging an increase in export volumes and investments.

He called for elevating Arab-German partnerships to new levels and emphasised the tremendous potential for collaboration and mutual growth between Arab and German entities.

In addition, Nass highlighted the notable growth in Bahrain's exports to Germany, which amounted to 86.28 million dinars in 2022, a 43% increase from the previous year, with aluminium being the most prominent export commodity.

Khalid Najibi, the First Vice-Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, stressed the significance of the 26th Arab-German Economic Forum as a platform for bringing to-



Sameer Nass



Al Owais



Najibi

gether experts from both German and Arab backgrounds. Najibi further highlighted the shifting dynamics of Arab-German economic relations in the post-pandemic era, showcasing a 23.3% surge in the volume of Arab-German trade exchange in 2022.

He called for the initiation of new initiatives to strengthen these vital economic relations.

Abdullah Sultan Al Owais, the Chairman of the Sharjah Chamber, shared insights on the United Arab Emirates' success in developing robust infrastructure and implementing legislative reforms.

The 26th Arab-German Economic Forum serves as a platform for fostering collaboration, exploring bilateral trade prospects, and establishing stronger ties between Arab and German economies.



Al Salam Bank's Shari'a Departments Forum

Al Salam Bank has recently organised the First Shari'a Departments Forum at the Bank's headquarters with the active participation of all the Islamic banks in the Kingdom, as well as members of the Shari'a Supervisory Board. The Forum highlighted the role played by Shari'a auditing and supervisory in Islamic banks, in addition to discussing the best Shari'a governance practices and the challenges faced by the sector. The event also showcased various forms of Shari'a governance, as well as a future outlook on the benefit of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Eihab Ahmed, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Corporate Affairs at Al Salam Bank, said: "As the largest Islamic bank in the Kingdom of Bahrain, we look forward to supporting specific initiatives that aim to develop the local Islamic banking sector."

Beyon Money launches Flexi Savings with SICO

TDT | Manama

Beyon Money, part of the Beyon Group, and SICO, a leading regional asset manager and Investment Bank, have partnered to launch Flexi Savings, a flexible Investment Product for Beyon Money customers, the first of its kind in Bahrain and MENA region.

Flexi Savings, available for both Beyon Money Classic and Platinum Card holders, en-



Mancone, Al Shirawi

ables customers to grow their earnings daily. Customers can seamlessly place their cash in a high-yield product with Beyon Money, starting from as low as BD20, with no upwards limit. Along with the unparalleled earnings, there are no time commitments, and customers have freedom of withdrawal at any time. Earnings are credited daily and paid at the end of each month.

Beyon Money CEO Roberto

Mancone commented, "It is the first of a series of products that will cater initially to clients with no investment experience and subsequently will offer additional products catered to more sophisticated investors, allowing everyone to become customers of Beyon Money because they will always find a product that suits them from a huge variety of financial management products in our pipeline."

SICO CEO, Najla Al Shirawi,

commented on the new collaboration with Beyon Money, stating, "This collaboration represents our unwavering commitment to promoting a savings culture within the community and fostering an environment of investment, regardless of its size."

To access the Flexi Savings product, existing Beyon Money customers should update their Beyon Money app and access the "Earn" tab.

Gulf Hotels Group buys Novotel Bahrain Al Dana resort

TDT | Manama

Gulf Hotels Group (GHG), Bahrain's leading hospitality management company, yesterday announced completing the acquisition of Novotel Bahrain Al Dana Resort.

The financial transaction was finalized between the Group's Chairman Farouk Almoayyed and Al Jazeera Tourism Company Chairman Hazem Alshaikh Mubarak.

In a statement, GHG said the property will immediately undergo complete refurbishment along with the introduction of new features and leisure services, given the Group's extended expertise in hospitality management.

Gulf Hotels Group is a public limited liability company quoted on the Bahrain Stock Exchange incorporated in 1967, under the name of Bahrain Hotels Company.



Officials following the deal signing

stc Bahrain secures top ranking in TRA's 2022 QoS reports



TDT | Manama

stc Bahrain, a leading telecommunications provider, announced achieving the highest ranking in 12 quality of service parameters, including the top three categories, according to the latest 2022 Bahrain Telecommunications Authority (TRA) Mobile QoS report conducted from 30 Oct 2022 to 18 January 2023.

With its nationwide 5G coverage network, stc Bahrain said it has successfully extended its services to both residential and business areas with speed and low latency, delivering an exceptional user experience.

Notably, stc's 5G network has been acknowledged as the fastest in the Kingdom, with record upload and download speeds and high computing capabilities. This enables high-resolution video streaming, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), multimedia content, and seamless online data communications.

In addition, stc Bahrain has been ranked first for Best Voice Quality of Service and Best Web Experience. This recognition, stc said, reflects the cutting-edge technology and innovation it brings to Bahrain, empowering the community to embrace a new digital way of life.

Nezar Banabeela, CEO of stc Bahrain, expressed his pride in the company's achievements, stating, "It is a testament to our high-network quality and wide 5G coverage bandwidth across Bahrain and our capabilities to fuel 5G experiences for customers and businesses. This is important to us as we continue to push new boundaries in technology, to provide state-of-the-art and next-generation connectivity services to our customers while contributing to making Bahrain more digitally enabled."

Beyon Connect joins hands with Adera Global and Cumulo9 for 'ONEVIEW' in Singapore

To launch digital postbox solutions, based on Beyon Connect's OneBox, in Singapore, ASEAN region

TDT | Manama

Beyon Connect, part of the Beyon Group, has announced a partnership with Singapore's Adera Global and Cumulo9, based in New Zealand, to establish a joint venture 'ONEVIEW' in Singapore.

The shareholder agreement, which was signed by the three parties in Singapore on May 17, brings a new innovative digital platform to Singapore and other parts of the ASEAN region, through the launch of digital postbox solutions, based on Beyon Connect's OneBox platform, the Company's flagship product.

ONEVIEW aims to deliver an end-to-end encrypted digital communication platform that enables secure communication between public authorities, businesses and citizens, creating a digital ecosystem where the individual user is always in control of their own data.

ONEVIEW will provide customers with a digital postbox and enable public authorities and businesses to interact with them digitally, removing the



The deal signing

need for physical interaction to complete important documentation. Users can securely receive and send messages, documents and related sensitive information, without worrying about data breaches, cyberattacks or identity theft.

The new platform is expected to be available in Singapore by Q4 2023, with plans to expand

to other regional countries in the near future.

Beyon Connect CEO Christian Rasmussen expressed his pleasure on the partnership signing, stating, "We are delighted to align with Adera Global and Cumulo9, who share our passion for creating highly secure digital postboxes and communication platforms."

Beyon Chief Digital Growth Officer, Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, added, "This marks a significant milestone for Beyon Connect and reinforces our commitment to driving digital transformation."

Adera Global Executive Director, Marvin Tan, said, "We believe that ONEVIEW has the potential to set a benchmark in



Shaikh Mohamed bin Khalifa Al Khalifa

the region and transform the way people manage their bills and documents."

Cumulo9 CEO Chris Hogg added, "As a company that is committed to providing cutting-edge solutions that help businesses thrive in a digital age, we are pleased to support ONEVIEW in its mission to digitize bill payment management in Southeast Asia."

Classifieds



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Time to reinvent the wheel

- California expected to regulate on tyres later this year
- Chemical in tyres found to be toxic to some salmon
- EV tyres could wear out up to 50% faster



Reuters | London

Tyre-makers are under pressure to almost literally reinvent the wheel as regulators turn their scrutiny to tyre pollution that is set to surge with the rise of electric vehicles (EVs) and threatens to undermine those cars' green credentials.

When tyres make contact with the road, tiny particles are abraded and emitted. The extra weight of EVs linked to their batteries means this little-discussed form of pollution – from an estimated 2 billion tyres produced globally every year – is becoming a bigger problem.

Major producers, including Goodyear (G.T.O), Bridgestone (5108.T), Michelin (MICP.PA) and Continental (CONG.DE), are also trying to fend off competition from cheaper Chinese rivals.

“It’s not quite a perfect storm,” said Gunnlaugur “G” Erlendsson, CEO of UK-

based startup Enso, which has developed more durable tyres specifically for EVs and rents out tyres that it takes back to recycle at the end of life. “But it’s close.”

Tyre-makers are racing to get ahead of emissions rules and find alternatives.

Emerging research is showing the toxicity of tyres, which on average contain about 200 components and chemicals, often

derived from crude oil.

While critics say tyres contain many toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, so far there is only really consensus around one – 6PPD, an antioxidant and antiozonant found in all tyres that reduces cracking.

This year, California is expected to be the first authority to demand tyre-makers demonstrate they are seeking an alternative to 6PPD – a degraded form of which is lethal to some fish and has been found in human urine in South China.

The European Union’s upcoming Euro 7 emission regulations will set standards for tyres for the first time.

Compounding those challenges, manufacturers will need to develop tyres that emit less for heavy EVs, which Michelin and Goodyear have reported can wear out tyres up to 50% faster.

“The unintended consequence of electric cars is we’ll have more tyre pollution unless we have better tyres,” said Enso’s Erlendsson, whose tyres, in testing emit 35% less than premium EV tyres from major manufacturers.

He says this is because their reliance on

higher-quality, more expensive materials makes them more durable.

Bridgestone and Goodyear declined to discuss the industry’s emissions challenges.

But Michelin, Continental and Pirelli (PIRC.MI) told Reuters they are pursuing alternatives to 6PPD, with Michelin and Continental adding collective industry action may be necessary to find solutions.

Asked about Euro 7 regulations, Michelin said it wants worldwide standards to squeeze the higher emitting tyres, which are usually cheaper, out of the market. Continental advocates a global abrasion standard with transparent labelling for consumers.

Developed during the Korean War, research shows that when 6PPD reacts with oxygen or ozone it forms 6PPD-quinone, which has been blamed for mass deaths of Coho salmon off the U.S. West Coast.

Californian regulators say 6PPD’s impact on human health is unclear, but are finalising documents that could require tyre manufacturers to analyse safer alternatives.

The tyre industry said finding a replacement for 6PPD is hard because any new chemical must prevent tyres degrading and cracking without affecting other attributes.

Swedish group to supply ‘green steel’ to Mercedes

Stockholm

Sweden’s H2 Green Steel company said yesterday it would supply German car maker Mercedes-Benz with 50,000 tonnes of steel made without using fossil fuels as of 2025. The two companies also signed an agreement for the potential supply of green steel produced in North America.

H2 Green Steel, whose first plant is under construction in northern Sweden, plans to use hydrogen made from renewable energy to produce steel instead of highly-polluting coal used in traditional steel-making. A preliminary accord with Mercedes-Benz “has now

been further developed into a binding agreement covering volumes of about 50,000 tonnes per year, which will be produced in H2 Green Steel’s green hydrogen-powered iron and steel plant in Boden in northern Sweden,” the two companies said in a joint statement.

With around 900 kilos (1,985 pounds) of steel needed per car according to industry data, the contract would enable Mercedes-Benz to produce around 55,000 cars with a lower CO2 footprint.

Mercedes-Benz sold around two million vehicles last year. No financial details of the deal were disclosed.

Samsung’s Exynos Auto V920 to Power Hyundai infotainment systems

Soul

Samsung Electronics yesterday announced that its latest automotive processor, the Exynos Auto V920, has been selected to power Hyundai Motor Company’s next-generation in-vehicle infotainment (IVI) systems, which are expected to roll out by 2025. This marks Samsung’s first collaboration on automotive semiconductors with Hyundai Motor, a global mobility leader.

The Exynos Auto V920 is Samsung’s third-generation automotive processor for advanced IVI systems. With considerable upgrades in CPU, graphics and neural processing performance, the V920

will deliver an optimal in-vehicle experience by enabling real-time display of critical driving information, as well as seamless playback of graphics-rich video content and games on multiple displays.



Afghan children play with a tyre along a street in Argo district of Badakhshan province

Basketball finals game dates announced

● **Best-of-five championship series in 2022/2023 Zain Bahrain Basketball League to resume following Manama's participation in FIBA West Asia Super League Final Eight**

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) has released the dates for the remaining games of the best-of-five championship series between Manama and Muharraq for this year's title in the Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Manama currently hold a 2-0 lead in the finals match-up, which is now headed for a short break to make way for Manama's participation in the FIBA West Asia Super League (WASL) Final Eight in Dubai, taking place from Friday to June



Manama's Ali Hussain looks to keep his dribble against the tough defence of Muharraq's Younes Kuwayed in game two of the finals (File photo)

17. Game three has been set June 22, and, if needed, game four will be on June 26 with the decisive fifth game on June 30. All three contests are set to be held at the Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town, each with

7pm tip-offs.

Manama hold the record for most league titles in the Bahrain league, having claimed the coveted championship 23 times in the past, including last season's crown. Muharraq have won the title thrice in the past, in the 2007/2008 season, as well as in 2011/2012 and 2018/2019.

In the WASL Final Eight, Manama are in Group A of the competition along with Al Riyadi and Beirut First Club from Lebanon and Chennai Heats from India. Group B features Kuwait SC of Kuwait, Shabab Al Ahli of the UAE, Shahrdary Gorgan from Iran and BC Astana from Kazakhstan.

Manama open their campaign against Riyadi on Saturday. They next play Chennai on Monday, before facing Beirut on Wednesday.

Following a single round-robin, the top two teams from each group move on to the knockout semi-finals on June 16, while the gold and bronze medal games are to be held the following evening.

Moeen Ali out of Test retirement to join England Ashes squad

London

All-rounder Moeen Ali came out of Test retirement yesterday to bolster the England squad for the first two Tests of the Ashes.

Moeen replaces first-choice spinner Jack Leach, who was ruled out of the series after suffering a stress fracture in his back.

Moeen, who turns 36 during next week's first Test at his home ground of Edgbaston, has agreed to return to red-ball cricket for the first time in almost two years.

England did have other options, including 18-year-old Rehan Ahmed, who became England's youngest men's Test cricketer when he made his debut in Karachi in December, and Surrey's Will Jacks, but none with the experience and credentials of Moeen.

"We reached out to Mo early

this week about returning to Test cricket," said Rob Key, managing director for England men's cricket.

"Having had a couple of days to reflect, Mo is excited to join the squad and play Test cricket again.

"His vast experience, along with his all-round ability, will benefit our Ashes campaign."

Moeen, a powerful batsman and off-spinner, has played 64 Tests for England, taking 195 wickets and scoring 2,914 runs.

But Australia have proved tough opponents for Moeen, with his career bowling average climbing from 36.66 to 64.65 in Ashes cricket.

The first match of the five-Test series gets under way on June 16 at Edgbaston.

Ben Stokes' England are seeking to wrest back the Ashes from Australia, who have not won a series in England since 2001.

Head hits fifty as Australia take charge against India in WTC final

● **India captain Rohit Sharma elected to bowl**

AFP | London

Travis Head scored an impressive half century as Australia reached 170-3 against India at tea on the opening day of the World Test Championship final at the Oval.

Australia struggled after losing the toss in bowler-friendly conditions but as the sun burst through the clouds in south London on Wednesday, the runs started to flow.

Middle-order batsman Head was 60 not out at the break and Steve Smith unbeaten on 33 -- the pair had added 94 runs after coming together at 76-3 soon after lunch.

India captain Rohit Sharma elected to bowl under overcast skies and on a green-tinged pitch that promised to assist a



Australia's Travis Head celebrates his century

four-man pace attack.

It was not long before a bowling unit missing injured fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah justified Rohit's decision, with Mohammed Siraj removing Usman Khawaja for a 10-ball duck with an excellent wobble-seam delivery.

Australia, to the raucous delight of a mostly pro-India

crowd, were then 2-1 in the fourth over.

But David Warner, who had managed just one century in his previous 32 Test innings, counter-attacked.

The 36-year-old struck first-change Umesh Yadav for three fours in successive balls, with a forcing shot through cover-point followed by an upper-

cut over the slips and a delicate late cut.

Even better was a cover-driven four off Shardul Thakur that sped across the outfield.

Medium-pace Thakur had his revenge when he dismissed the opener for 43, although credit for the wicket belonged to wicketkeeper Srikanth Bharat, who took a fine diving catch down the legside after Warner had gloved an attempted pull shot.

Marnus Labuschagne, the world's top-ranked Test batsman, fell for his lunch score of 26 when bowled between bat and pad by a Mohammed Shami inswinger.

Head, one of three left-handers in Australia's top five, put the pressure back on an attack without Ravichandran Ashwin after India decided against selecting the off-spinner, ranked number one in Test cricket.

Head, strong off his pads and severe on anything wide of off stump, was troubled by Ravindra Jadeja but then drove the left-arm spinner for four -- one of nine boundaries in a 60-ball fifty. The match, the second WTC final, comes after a two-year programme of games. New Zealand defeated India in the inaugural 2021 edition in Southampton.

The fixture also marks the start of a packed schedule of six Tests in eight weeks for Australia, including a five-match Ashes series against England.

Sri Lanka thrash Afghanistan to win ODI series 2-1



Sri Lanka's players pose with the trophy

Hambantota

Half-centuries by Sri Lanka openers Dimuth Karunaratne and Pathum Nissanka made short work of Afghanistan in a nine-wicket drubbing that clinched a 2-1 ODI series win for the hosts yesterday.

Sri Lanka eased to 120 with 34 overs to spare in Hambantota, after a fast-bowling attack led by man-of-the-match Dushmantha Chameera had demolished the hapless Afghan top order.

It was just the boost Sri Lanka needed before heading off for a qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe, with two remaining slots up for grabs for the World Cup.

Afghanistan are already through to the World Cup, to be held in India from October, but skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi was left to rue "a bad day for our batters".

"We lost too many wickets and it put us under pressure," he told reporters.

"I still feel it was a good call to bat first but we lost too many wickets earlier on and that took the momentum away

from us."

Nissanka did not waste time when the chase began, racing to his seventh ODI half-century in 32 balls with eight fours and two sixes.

He departed on 51 after being trapped leg before by Gulbadin Naib to end an 84-run stand for the opening wicket.

Fellow opener Karunaratne, featuring in his first ODI series in more than two years, made 56 not out to ensure that Sri Lanka reached the target without another wicket falling.

His 56 came off 45 balls with seven boundaries, making his eighth half-century in the format. Kusal Mendis was unbeaten on 11 as Sri Lanka reached the target in just 16 overs to end the game early.

Afghanistan won the toss and elected to bat, but fast-bowling spearhead Chameera established Sri Lanka's dominance early with two fiery spells that left the tourists unable to post a decent partnership.

Chameera, playing his first series after ankle surgery sidelined him for seven months, earned man-of-the-match honours with his 4-63.

BETTER YOU KNOW

The WTC remains the only major men's cricket trophy Australia have yet to win.

Di Maria quits Juventus after one season

Paris

Argentina winger Angel Di Maria has quit Juventus after one season, becoming a free agent amid claims he could be targeted by a club in Saudi Arabia.

The 35-year-old World Cup winner touched down in Turin after seven seasons for Paris Saint-Germain, going on to score eight goals in 40 games for Juve in a trophy-less season.

"I leave with the peace of mind of having given all to help

the club to continue winning titles, but it was not possible," Di Maria said on Instagram.

"I leave with the bitter taste of not having achieved that, but also with the happiness of taking with me many friends from a fantastic dressing room of which

I was part."

Saudi Arabia has drawn up a list of more than 10 players who have won either the Champions League or the World Cup that it wants to lure to its league, a source close to the negotiations has told AFP.

The list includes Di Maria as well as the likes of Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric, Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris and his France teammate N'Golo Kante. All are at the tail-end of their careers. Karim Benzema signed Tues-

day with Al-Ittihad, joining his former Real Madrid teammate Cristiano Ronaldo in the Gulf kingdom after the five-time world player of the year moved to Al Nassr from Manchester United following last year's World Cup

Bahrain extends sponsorship deal with Tom Marquand

● **Leading rider looking forward to Bahrain visit in 2023/24 season**

TDT | Manama

Internationally renowned Group 1 winning jockey Tom Marquand has strengthened his partnership with the Kingdom of Bahrain by renewing his sponsorship contract with the Bahrain Turf Club for a further year.

Now firmly established as one of the world's leading riders following big race successes in Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and Australia, 25-year-old Marquand is looking forward to another successful campaign wearing the Bahrain logo on his breeches.

Ed Veale, Director of Racing and International Relations at

the Bahrain Turf Club, said: "Tom's profile makes him a perfect fit for the Bahrain Turf Club, particularly on account of his growing international reputation. He is an excellent role model for the sport and someone that young people look up to and admire. "We are excited to watch Tom in action over the summer and look forward to welcoming him to Bahrain later this year."

Marquand said: "I am delighted and grateful to extend my sponsorship with Bahrain. Bahrain's growth domestically and internationally over the last few years has been clear for all to see and their ambitious nature matches mine. After finishing joint second in the Flat Jockeys Championship in 2022, my goal is to continue to improve and ride more winners around the world."

Marquand is due to visit Bahrain to race ride in the coming

season, which runs from October to March, prior to that he will be working in tandem with the Bahrain Turf Club on their social media platforms and is expected to be in action on a significant day in the Bahrain Turf Club's calendar, namely day one of the Boodles July Festival at Newmarket, a day on which all three Group races are sponsored by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Shaikh Salman bin Rashed Al Khalifa, Bahrain Turf Club High Committee Representative, International Racing, added: "Our sponsorship on the first day of the July Festival provides a great opportunity to showcase the Kingdom of Bahrain and it is an honour to be associated with the

three group races run that afternoon, the Bahrain Trophy, the July Stakes and the Princess of Wales's Stakes. We will be working with Tom to promote the day and Bahrain's support for British racing."

Tom Marquand carrying Bahrain branded breeches to victory in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes (Gr 1) on Bayside Boy, QIPCO British Champions Day, Ascot, in October of last year



Salwa clocks season's best in win

Bahrain's elite sprinter and 2019 world champion triumphs in women's 400m race in Spain meeting



Salwa Eid Naser competes in her women's 400m race

● **Salwa Eid Naser posts her season's best time of 49.78s in victory**

● **Bahraini sprinter gearing up for world championship, Asian Games**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's elite sprinter and 2019 world champion Salwa Eid Naser powered to a spectacular victory while clocking her season's best time

in the women's 400 metres at the Meeting Iberoamericano, held at Estadio Iberoamericano in Huelva, Spain.

The event was a bronze-level meet on this year's World Athletics Continental Tour.

Appearing on track for only the fifth time this outdoor season, Salwa raced to an impressive win in a time of 49.78 seconds. It was her best mark of 2023 and her first of this campaign under 50.00 seconds.

Salwa's time was also the fifth-fastest in the world this season, as the 25-year-old Bahraini inched closer to matching the world lead of 48.98s held by Marileidy Paulino.

She also came closer to matching her personal best of 48.14 seconds, which is also an Asian and Bahraini record, which Salwa set in 2019.

Salwa was competing in the first of three final races in the 400m at the Huelva meeting. She finished ahead of Miranda Charlene Coetzee of South Africa, who was the runner-up in 50.90s, while Anna Kielbasinska of Poland was third in 51.29s.

Sharlene Mawdsley of Ireland came fourth in 51.34s, Catia Azevedo of Portugal fifth in 51.42s, and Alica Mangione sixth in 51.75s. Rounding out the final



Salwa Eid Naser with her winner's trophy alongside men's 1,500m winner Isaac Nader of Portugal

classification were Camille Laus of Belgium in 51.76s and Madeleine Price of Canada in 52.60s.

Salwa was the lone Bahraini participating in the Spain event. She has already participated in meetings held this year in the US and Chile, running in 100m, 200m and 400m races.

Salwa is continuing to get ready for a packed season of competitions, which include the

World Athletics Championships in Budapest this August, and the Hangzhou Asian Games in China this September and October.

She is one of the Kingdom's leading international athletes. Aside from her women's 400m world title which she won in 2019, Salwa is also an Olympic Games silver-medallist and a former world junior champion, both in the same distance.



Salwa's winning mark of 49.78 seconds was the first time she ran under 50 seconds in this outdoor athletics season. Her mark was also the fifth-fastest time in the world in 2023

Reigning champion Swiatek reaches French Open semi-finals

AFP | Paris

Defending champion Iga Swiatek will play Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia in the French Open semi-finals after the top seed defeated Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-2 yesterday in a rematch of last year's final.

World number one Swiatek improved her record at Roland Garros to 26-2 after beating



Poland's Iga Swiatek

Gauff for the seventh time in as many meetings.

The 22-year-old from Poland is chasing a third French Open crown and attempting to become the first woman to successfully defend the title in Paris since Justine Henin in 2007.

After the pair exchanged breaks in the fourth and fifth games, Swiatek landed the key blow with another break as

Gauff served to stay in the first set.

The American teenager, who won only four games in the 2022 final, made this a much closer contest but was left to rue three missed break point opportunities early in the second set.

Swiatek's quality then shone through as she won the final four games to become the youngest woman since Martina Hingis to

reach three or more semi-finals at Roland Garros.

"It wasn't easy, the first set was really tight. Coco was really using the conditions, so I was happy to be able to work on it and win this match," said Swiatek, who has yet to drop a set at the tournament.

US Coco Gauff

