

Ahli bolster roster for Asian clubs volleyball

Bahraini representatives sign top professional players for continental competition | P12

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NBB Q1 net profit rises 15%



US, Saudi, UAE and India discuss railway project

TDT | Manama

The US is currently in talks with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and India to construct a project that would link Middle Eastern nations through a network of railway lines.

Reports claimed that the railways would also be connected to India via shipping lanes from ports in the region.

Sources say that the White House National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, is expected to arrive in Saudi Arabia on Saturday, and will meet with Saudi, Emirati, and Indian counterparts next week to further discuss the proposed project and other regional issues.

Eight unlicensed manpower agencies, 26 illegal workers face legal action

TDT | Manama

Eight unlicensed manpower agencies were referred for legal action after failing to acquire the necessary licenses, and 26 irregular workers were arrested for violating their work permits.

This came as the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) conducted a joint inspection campaign in the Capital Governorate, in coordination with the General Directorate of Crime Detection and Forensic Evidence and the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs (NPRA) of the Ministry of Interior.

The campaign resulted in the detection of violations related to Labour Market and Residency Laws and Regulations. Acquire the licenses from the LMRA to avoid legal accountability.

HRH Prince Salman receives Singapore Chief Justice



The Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, yesterday received the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Singapore, the Honourable Sundaresh Menon, at Gudaibiya Palace. The Vice President of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation, HE Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, HE Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, HE Hamad bin Faisal Al Malki, also attended the meeting. (Full report on Page 2)

'Flexible' working hours for workers

Cabinet approves new policy to be adopted across ministries and government agencies

● Giving employees three-hour window to begin workday in move to increase productivity

TDT | Manama

The Cabinet has approved a memorandum submitted by the Civil Service Council to adopt flexible working hours across ministries and government agencies.

The new policy will provide employees with a three-hour window to begin their workday to increase productivity.

The Cabinet directed the Civil Service Bureau to take the necessary measures to implement the policy.

The decision came as the Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, chaired yesterday the weekly Cabinet meeting at Gudaibiya Palace.

Coronation

The Cabinet highlighted the importance of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's at-



tendance at the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, which was also attended by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, which reflects the depth of relations between the two countries.

The Cabinet congratulated HM King Charles III on his coronation and thanked the UK for its hospitality.

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day and Bahraini Press Day, the Cabinet commended HM the King's address on the importance of addressing hate speech.

The Cabinet highlighted the contributions of Bahrainis in the press and media and emphasised their pivotal role in supporting the Kingdom's comprehensive development.



HRH the Deputy King chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting

To mark International Nursing Day, the Cabinet thanked Bahraini nursing professionals for providing immaculate health services to Bahraini citizens and residents.

Support

The Cabinet affirmed the Kingdom of Bahrain's support

ending the ongoing conflict. The mediation will be led by Saudi Arabia and the US, with support from the Quartet, the Arab League, and the tripartite mechanism represented by the United Nations Mission, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Decision

The Cabinet welcomed the decision of the council of the League of Arab States in its extraordinary session to resume the participation of delegations of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in the meetings of the council and all its affiliated organisations.

The Cabinet noted that this decision supports a commitment to preserving Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, consistent with common Arab interests and aspirations.

Rare attack

'Jordan' air strike in Syria kills major drug trafficker

TDT | Beirut

An air strike killed a major drug smuggler and his family in southern Syria yesterday,

a war monitor said, attributing the strike to Jordan which has neither confirmed nor denied.

Drug dealer "Marai al-Ramthan, his wife and six chil-

dren were killed in a Jordanian air force strike" in the eastern countryside of the Sweida province, near the Syrian-Jordanian border, the Britain-based Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights said.

"Ramthan is considered to be the most prominent drug trafficker in the region, and

the number one smuggler of drugs, including captagon, into Jordan," said the Observatory, which relies on a wide network of sources inside Syria.



Bahrain-Singapore judicial cooperation

HRH Prince Salman highlights importance of sharing of expertise to develop system between the two countries

● Kingdom keen to reinforce its international commercial arbitration role

TDT | Manama

The Deputy King, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, acknowledged the importance of cooperation and sharing of expertise between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Singapore in settling commercial disputes, which help develop the Kingdom's judicial system, in line with international best practices.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he received yesterday the Chief Justice of the



HRH the Deputy King receives the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Singapore

Supreme Court of the Republic of Singapore, the Honourable Sundaresh Menon, at Gudaibiya Palace.

His Royal Highness wished

Honourable Menon a pleasant stay in the Kingdom.

The Supreme Court Chief Justice thanked His Royal Highness for his warm welcome and noted

that stronger cooperation between the two countries helped achieve common aspirations.

He wished the Kingdom further progress and prosperity.

Commercial arbitration

HRH the Deputy King highlighted the importance of advancing the Kingdom's judicial system to reinforce the Kingdom of Bahrain's role in commercial arbitration, in line with the vision of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

His Royal Highness emphasised the pivotal role of international arbitration institutions in supervising the proper conduct of arbitration proceedings.

The Vice President of the Supreme Judicial Council and President of the Court of Cassation, HE Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, the Minister of Finance and National Economy, HE Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, and the Minister of Cabinet Affairs, HE Hamad bin Faisal Al Malki, also attended the meeting.

Kingdom to host NATO Initiative Policy Advisory Group Meeting

TDT | Manama

The Kingdom of Bahrain will host the 5th Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Policy Advisory Group Meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), tomorrow.

Around 120 high-level officials, ambassadors and representatives of the member states of the ICI from the Kingdom of Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, and NATO members, in addition to observer representatives from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman and the GCC General Secretariat, will attend the meeting.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Political Affairs, Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, affirmed Bahrain's welcome to the delegations of brotherly and friendly countries participating in this meeting.

It is organised by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with NATO, with the participation of the Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Javier Colomina.

US Navy hosts Omani Naval Commander and top officials in Bahrain



Leaders from the US fleet hold a meeting with senior Omani officials

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) welcomed Oman's top naval commander to the US Navy base in the Kingdom of Bahrain on May 7, coinciding with the start of an Oman-led maritime exercise in the Gulf of Oman.

The visit to the US Navy base in Bahrain entailed senior Omani officials meeting with leaders from the US fleet, Combined Maritime Forces, and the International Maritime Security Construct.

Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT, US 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces, hosted Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman Rear Ad-

miral Saif bin Nasser bin Mohsin Al Rahbi and other senior Omani officials for discussions on strengthening regional maritime security.

Forces from France, Japan, and the UK will all participate in the week-long exercise, and training will focus on mine counter-measures, explosive ordinance disposal, maritime interdiction, and other combined naval operations.

Cooper said that Oman is an important regional maritime partner, and "it was a pleasure hosting discussions on our shared vision for advancing cooperation among forces at sea."

"We look forward to strengthening our collaboration in the days ahead," the commander said.

Bangladesh celebrates 52nd National Day



Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed bin Abdulla speaks at the event

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

The 52nd Bangladesh National Day celebration was held at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel under the auspices of Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed bin



Cake-cutting ceremony

Abdulla Al Khalifa, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dignitaries attended the event, which was hosted by Bangladesh Ambassador H.E. Dr. Mohammed Nazrul Islam.

"Over the past two years, Bang-



ladesh has made significant progress in the economic and social sectors, achieving a three-billion-dollar economy in less than three years," Dr. Islam said.

He thanked Bahrain for its extraordinary support.

Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed

bin Abdulla commended the development of Bangladesh's food security, business, and pharmaceutical sectors, saying: "Development in those industries enhances the strong economic activities in Bahrain and Bangladesh."

1,600 Turkish in Bahrain cast votes for Turkey election

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

Under the direction of Turkish Ambassador to Bahrain H.E. Esin Cakil, Turkish citizens in Bahrain cast their votes for the last three days for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.



Turkish citizens line up to cast their votes at the Turkish Embassy in Um Al Hassam

Bahrain is home to about 1,600 Turks, and this is the sixth election in which Turkish nationals living overseas have been permitted to cast votes.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been in the post since 2014, called for early elections to be held on 14 May 2023. Voters from 87 electoral

districts will elect 600 Members of Parliament to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for a five-year term, forming the country's 28th Parliament.

Ambassador Cakil said: "Turks residing in Bahrain are interested in casting their votes, and the process has gone smoothly over the last three days."



A cultural performance entertains the crowd

ATM's Labour Day celebration successful

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama

The Indian Club, in association with Annai Tamil Mandram (ATM), celebrated the Labour Day on Friday at its premises in Manama.

The event was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Yusuf Lori, Director of Information and Follow-up Capital Governorate, Mr. Cheriyan, President of Indian Club, and other distinguished guests.

Around 2,000 people attended the event, which featured cul-

tural performances organised by ATM.

Famous writer, speaker and Star Vijay TV personality Mr. C Gobinath delivered a motivational speech, which was thought-provoking for all the migrant workers and families.

Technology enhancing Bahrain quality of life

● **Solid digital infrastructure key to boost modernisation of public sector**

● **E-learning system has brought an exciting revolution in Bahrain education sector**

Zahra Ayaz
TDT | Manama



“The internet and artificial intelligence will help you to accomplish your tasks when it comes to research, deep learning and educational activities.”

- DR. NIDHI S. MENON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, BAHRAIN

Technology is inevitable in people's lives nowadays, and especially in today's world, it plays a critical role in the continued functioning of society.

Bahrain has a solid digital infrastructure and also recognises that the digital government transformation is key to the emergence of a knowledge-based economy and the modernisation of the public sector.

The effects of technology appear in every sphere of human life, such as entertainment, communication, living, educa-

tion, working, and so on.

It helps people to do new things, or to better perform everyday tasks. People use advanced technology to perform shopping, food delivery, transportation and health care. This saves a lot of time in this fast-paced world.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Dr. Nidhi S. Menon, Assistant Professor at University of Technology, Bahrain, said: “E-learning system has brought an exciting revolution especially in the education sector in Bahrain. As a result, students get interactive learning and

resource-based knowledge through the internet.

“As well as enhancing the class experience, technological tools such as virtual class rooms, augmented reality, videos, Robots help to foster collaboration and promote intellectual curiosity among students.

“The internet and artificial intelligence will help you to accomplish your tasks when it comes to research, deep learning and educational activities.”

Dr. Menon further explained: “Our classrooms can be enhanced by using apps and techs

in order to explain what is important, to expose them to technological advances and provide them with a platform to experiment, and experience those advancements to encourage them to pursue these careers.”

“It is imperative that universities collaborate with industry experts to increase research and development (R&D) and to better understand emerging technologies and what their economic impact is.

“These initiatives will give students an opportunity to learn more about the fast-paced world of business and keep their minds updated on the latest development,” she said.

According to reports, digital transformation is a pillar of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, an ambitious national development plan focused on the principles of sustainability, competitiveness and fairness.

Moreover, the Government's Digital Government Strategy 2022 highlights the commitment of transforming its services through emerging technologies, helping to create a better life for citizens and residents.

Bahrain and Hungary enhance ties through medical exhibition

Julia Cassano
TDT | Manama

As Bahrain makes tremendous strides to develop its medical sector and boost tourism in the country, distinguished companies from Hungary have participated in a significant exhibition in the Kingdom.

The exhibition, under the patronage of Lieutenant-General Dr. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, featured nearly 25 Hungarian medical start-ups and specialist companies.

The aim of the event is to encourage competition among healthcare providers in the Kingdom to deliver the highest quality care as well as for Bahrain and Hungarian companies and medical professionals to mesh strategies and engage with distributors.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune, Tamas Hovany, Chairman of Bahrain-Hungary Relations, Friendships & Business Society, said that as the Kingdom puts forth efforts to become the center of excellence regarding the medical field in the GCC, Hungary can most certainly become a strong player in this.

“The expo's idea is to show

Bahraini companies how Hungarian companies can effectively contribute with new technologies, innovation, and medical equipment. This will lead to an increase of investments to the Kingdom,” Tamas said.

He noted that by organising expos or conferences as such, this establishes stronger relations between both countries and encourages innovation and new ideas.

“We can build new hospitals, bring manpower, doctors, nurses, and medicines to help contribute to this exciting time, if necessary,” he said.

Most importantly, he noted that the most crucial aspect of all is to work together.

“As countries collaborate and work together, we are able to brainstorm and bring different ideas to the table, which could lead to great opportunities for both countries. There may be certain fields where one country lacks, however, the other can add value. It is all about brainstorming and working together to transform countries,” Tamas voiced.

When speaking about the future of relations between Bahrain and Hungary, Tamas, highlighted his hope for the future.

Court rejects doctor case against work transfer

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court upheld an administrative decision to move a doctor serving at Salmania Medical Complex to another section.

The doctor filed a case against this decision, terming it arbitrary and illegal. But the High Appeals Court responded to this claim by stating that the administrative authority has

the right to move employees as required by the interest of work.

The plaintiff stated in his complaint that he was serving at the hospital as a medical doctor for 10 years, but received an email requesting him to move to the emergency section at the end of last year. He initially appealed



this decision in the Civil Bureau, which rejected his complaint for the same reasons.

The Court of First Instance had also declined his complaint after the Ministry of Health's lawyers presented the reasons behind this decision which were found to be for the work interest.

Man acquitted of embezzlement

● **Court cancels two-year jail term**

TDT | Manama

The High Appeals Court cancelled the punishment of two years in prison each that was issued against an employee involved in embezzling medicine and medical equipment from the pharmacy in which he was serving in.

The defendant was sentenced to two years and obliged to pay BD34,000 to his workplace after being found guilty of embezzling medicine and equipment. However, the High Appeals Court overturned the Court of First Instance's decision, citing that the accounting expert's report was not convincing.

The plaintiff is said to have submitted the report of its accounting expert as part of the evidence against the defendant in addition to a complaint



raised by one of the employees who accused the defendant of embezzling equipment and medicine.

Moreover, a confirmation from the defendant that he had received the medicine and the equipment was also submitted to the court. However, the defendant's lawyer challenged the accounting expert's report adding that this couldn't be counted as evidence as he was not hired by the Public Prosecution or the Court to handle this task,

let alone that he was already an employee at the plaintiff company.

“Moreover, the accounting expert was already paid by the company before embarking on the task, and he didn't even listen to the defendant's statements. The report was one-sided and lacked credibility,” the lawyer said.

Based on the above, the Court overturned the initial decision to hold the defendant guilty and acquitted him.

بنك السلام
Al Salam Bank



Important Notice

Our Valued Clients,

Al Salam Bank gives notice to its intention to cease providing any of its financial services licensed by the Central Bank of Bahrain at its branch in Seef Mall, as of 10 June 2023.

Please note that clients of this branch can carry out their banking activities via digital channels or by visiting any of Al Salam Bank branches.

For more details, please contact us through WhatsApp on 17005500.

Condensed Consolidated Interim Financial Information

31 March 2023

National Bank of Bahrain Goup

T: (+973) 17 228800

www.nbbonline.com



Condensed Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	31 March 2023 (reviewed)	31 December 2022 (audited)
Assets		
Cash and balances at central banks	185.7	177.7
Treasury bills	224.0	343.5
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	338.5	275.1
Loans and advances	2,467.2	2,494.9
Investment securities	1,341.0	1,241.4
Investment in associates	26.9	26.5
Interest receivable and other assets	116.7	103.3
Property and equipment	70.4	70.1
Goodwill and other intangible assets	52.6	52.8
Total assets	4,823.0	4,785.3
Liabilities		
Due to banks and other financial institutions	508.3	472.3
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	257.9	244.4
Customer deposits	3,371.3	3,330.2
Interest payable and other liabilities	145.9	162.5
Total liabilities	4,283.4	4,209.4
Equity		
Share capital	226.6	206.0
Shares unallocated under share incentive scheme	(1.2)	(1.1)
Share premium	12.3	12.3
Statutory reserve	113.3	103.0
General reserve	32.4	32.4
Other reserves and retained earnings	145.7	213.3
Equity attributable to the shareholders of the Bank	529.1	565.9
Non-controlling interest	10.5	10.0
Total equity	539.6	575.9
Total liabilities and equity	4,823.0	4,785.3

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Profit or Loss for the three months ended 31 March 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Three months ended	
	31 March 2023 (reviewed)	31 March 2022 (reviewed)
Interest income	61.6	40.4
Interest expense	(28.3)	(8.0)
Net interest income	33.3	32.4
Other income	16.7	10.1
Total operating income	50.0	42.5
Staff expenses	12.1	10.9
Depreciation, amortisation and equipment expenses	4.5	3.6
Other operating expenses	5.7	5.9
Total operating expenses	22.3	20.4
Operating profit before results of associates, impairment, and other provisions	27.7	22.1
Share of profits from associates, net	0.4	0.6
Loans, placements and securities impairment, net	(5.3)	(0.9)
Other impairment and provisions, net	0.2	(1.3)
Profit for the period	23.0	20.5
Attributable to:		
Shareholders of the Bank	22.4	19.4
Non-controlling interest	0.6	1.1
Profit for the period	23.0	20.5
Basic and diluted earnings per share	10 fils	9 fils

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income for the three months ended 31 March 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Three months ended	
	31 March 2023 (reviewed)	31 March 2022 (reviewed)
Profit for the period	23.0	20.5
Other comprehensive income:		
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Fair value through other comprehensive income (debt instruments)		
- Net change in fair value	(0.4)	13.4
- Net amount transferred to profit or loss	(5.1)	(1.1)
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Fair value through other comprehensive income (equity instruments)	(1.5)	9.2
Total other comprehensive (loss) / income for the period	(7.0)	21.5
Total comprehensive income for the period	16.0	42.0
Attributable to:		
Shareholders of the Bank	15.4	40.9
Non-controlling interest	0.6	1.1
Total comprehensive income for the period	16.0	42.0

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity for the three months ended 31 March 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

2023 (reviewed)	Share capital	Unallocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings				Non-controlling interest	Total equity
						Fair value reserve	Donation charity reserve	Retained earnings	Total owners' equity		
Balance at 31 December 2022	206.0	(1.1)	12.3	103.0	32.4	28.2	13.0	172.1	565.9	10.0	575.9
2022 appropriations:											
Cash dividend at 25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(51.5)	(51.5)	-	(51.5)
Bonus shares issued at 10%	20.6	(0.1)	-	-	-	-	-	(20.5)	-	-	-
Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.4	(3.4)	-	-	-
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	-	-	10.3	-	-	-	(10.3)	-	-	-
Balance after 2022 appropriations	226.6	(1.2)	12.3	113.3	32.4	28.2	16.4	86.4	514.4	10.0	524.4
Comprehensive income for the period:											
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22.4	22.4	0.6	23.0
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	(7.0)	-	-	(7.0)	-	(7.0)
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	(7.0)	-	22.4	15.4	0.6	16.0
Utilisation of donation and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.4)	-	(0.4)	-	(0.4)
Other movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.1)	(0.4)
Balance at 31 March 2023	226.6	(1.2)	12.3	113.3	32.4	21.2	16.0	108.5	529.1	10.5	539.6

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity for the three months ended 31 March 2022

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

2022 (reviewed)	Share capital	Unallocated shares	Share premium	Statutory reserve	General reserve	Other reserves and retained earnings				Non-controlling interest	Total equity
						Fair value reserve	Donation charity reserve	Retained earnings	Total owners' equity		
Balance at 31 December 2021	187.3	(1.2)	11.4	93.6	32.4	18.2	13.8	172.3	527.8	7.5	535.3
2021 appropriations:											
Cash dividend at 20%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(37.5)	(37.5)	-	(37.5)
Bonus shares issued at 10%	18.7	(0.1)	-	-	-	-	-	(18.6)	-	-	-
Transfer to donations and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7	(2.7)	-	-	-
Transfer to statutory reserve	-	-	-	9.4	-	-	-	(9.4)	-	-	-
Balance after 2021 appropriations	206.0	(1.3)	11.4	103.0	32.4	18.2	16.5	104.1	490.3	7.5	497.8
Employee shares allocated during the period	-	0.2	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	1.1	-	1.1
Comprehensive income for the period:											
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19.4	19.4	1.1	20.5
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-	21.5	-	-	21.5	-	21.5
Total comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-	-	21.5	-	19.4	40.9	1.1	42.0
Utilisation of donation and charity reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.7)	-	(0.7)	-	(0.7)
Other movements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.1)	(0.4)
Balance at 31 March 2022	206.0	(1.1)	12.3	103.0	32.4	39.7	15.8	123.2	531.3	8.5	539.8

Condensed Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows for the three months ended 31 March 2023

(Bahraini Dinar Millions)

	Three months ended	
	31 March 2023 (reviewed)	31 March 2022 (reviewed)
Cash flow from operating activities		
Profit for the period	23.0	20.5
Adjustments to reconcile profit for the period to net cash from operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortisation	2.3	1.9
Amortisation of right-of-use leased property	0.5	0.4
Loans, placements and securities impairment, net	5.3	0.9
Other impairment and provisions, net	(0.2)	1.3
Share of profits from associates, net	(0.4)	(0.6)
Profit for the period after adjustments	30.5	24.4
Change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Balances with central banks (mandatory cash reserve)	(1.3)	1.0
Treasury bills	(63.8)	25.6
Placements with banks and other financial institutions	1.6	(6.5)
Loans and advances	22.4	65.2
Investment securities	(92.2)	(6.5)
Interest receivable and other assets	(27.9)	10.6
Due to banks and other financial institutions	36.0	25.9
Borrowings under repurchase agreements	13.5	25.1
Customer deposits	41.1	49.5
Interest payable and other liabilities	(17.3)	10.8
Net cash (used in) / from operating activities	(57.4)	225.1
Cash flow from investing activities		
Dividend received from associates	-	0.1
Purchase of property and equipment, net	(2.3)	(3.6)
Net cash used in investing activities	(2.3)	(3.5)
Cash flow from financing activities		
Dividends paid	(51.6)	(37.5)
Donations and charities paid	(0.8)	(1.1)
Payment of lease liabilities	(0.4)	(0.4)
Net cash used in financing activities	(52.8)	(39.0)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents during the period	(112.5)	182.6
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	512.9	320.5
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	400.4	503.1

The comparatives for the condensed consolidated statement of financial position have been extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. The comparatives for the condensed consolidated statements of profit or loss, comprehensive income, changes in equity and cash flows have been extracted from the reviewed condensed consolidated interim financial information for the three months ended 31 March 2022.

Reviewed by KPMG - 8th May 2023

Farouk Yousuf Khalil Almoayyed
Chairman

Dr. Esam Abdulla Fakhro
Deputy Chairman

Usman Ahmed
Group Chief Executive Officer

Alba explores business ties with Chinese companies



Alba Chairman Shaikh Daij bin Salman bin Daij Al Khalifa, the Ambassador of China Ni Ruchi, the Ambassador of China and other top officials following talks at Alba's premises

TDT | Manama

Shaikh Daij bin Salman bin Daij Al Khalifa, the Chairman of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), expressed the company's eagerness to establish fresh commercial ties with prominent Chinese corporations.

This announcement was made during a discussion with

Ni Ruchi, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Bahrain, on the Alba premises.

Shaikh Daij further stated that Alba is keen on advancing its proposed Line 7 Expansion Project, which will consolidate its position as the world's largest smelter outside China.

He added: "We are pleased

to welcome Ni Ruchi and shed the light on Alba's role in the global aluminium industry and contribution to Bahrain's economy."

The meeting was attended by Alba's Chief Executive Officer, Ali Al Baqali, along with officials from the Chinese Embassy in Bahrain, including Li Baoan, Economic and Trade Counsel-

or, and Wang Zhen, Second Secretary.

The discussion covered a range of topics of mutual interest, including business and partnership prospects between Alba and significant companies in China, which is a prominent exporter/importer of aluminium products and raw materials worldwide.

ila Bank to give 50 winners BHD 50,000 cashback on foreign Credit Card spends

TDT | Manama

ila Bank, a digital mobile-only bank in the region powered by Bank ABC, announces the launch of the 'International Spend and Win' campaign, which will run until 31 December 2023. The campaign gives 50 lucky ila Credit Card holders the chance to win back up to BD1,000 on their travel and e-commerce spends in foreign currencies.

ila Credit Card users need to spend a minimum of BD300 in foreign currencies, internationally and/or on e-commerce purchases to be eligible to win up to BD1,000 back. Every BD50 spent in any foreign currency counts as one chance to participate in the draw.

Abdulla Abuidrees, Head of Marketing & Acquisition at ila Bank says, "ila Bank's International Spend and Win campaign is designed to reward customers with an unforgettable travel and online shopping experience by winning back their foreign Credit Card spends."

There will be monthly draws that will take place at ila Bank's offices, in the presence of an



Abdulla Abuidrees

MOIC representative, ila Bank executives and internal auditors. Fifty lucky winners will be randomly selected, using an automated software, two monthly winners for the months of April, May, September, October, November and ten winners every month for the peak holiday months of June, July, August, and December. The full cashback prize amount (up to BD1,000 each) will be credited into the winner's Credit Card, provided it is active during the raffle draw. ila Bank and Bank ABC employees are not eligible for entry.

NBB Q1 net profit rises 15%

TDT | Manama

National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) reported a 15% increase in profits in the first quarter of 2023, helped primarily by higher income from loans and securities. The bank attributed the boost in profits to the higher performance of its capital market and treasury teams as well.

Q1 results

First quarter net profit attributable to shareholders increased 15% to BHD 22.4 million (USD 59.4m) from BHD 19.4m (USD 51.5m) in the year-ago quarter.

Earnings per share increased to 10 fils (USD 3 cents) from 9 fils (USD 2 cent) in the same quarter of 2022. Total comprehensive income attributable to NBB's shareholders decreased by 62% to BHD 15.4m (USD 40.8m) from BHD 40.9m (USD 108.5m) in



Usman Ahmed



Farouk Yousuf Khalil Almoayyed

2022, due to the negative market-to-market movements of the equity and Bahrain sovereign bond portfolios. The prior year results included significant fair value gains in both the equity and bond portfolios as we exited the pandemic, which were not applicable to 2023.

Total equity attributable to

owners decreased by 7% as at 31 March 2023 to BHD 529.1m (USD 1,403.4m) compared to BHD 565.9m (USD 1,501.1m) reported at 31 December 2022. The decrease followed the payment of BHD 51.5m of cash dividends during the first quarter of 2023.

NBB's Chairman of the Board, Farouk Yousuf Khalil Al-

moayyed, stated: "We delivered our highest quarterly consolidated net profit of BHD 23.0m demonstrating a 12% growth compared to the same period in 2022.

The Bank will continue to deliver on its non-financial ambitions underscored by our commitment to implementing ESG practices across all verticals and our brand promise of being 'Closer to You'. We look forward to continuing to exhibit a level of high-performance in the coming quarters."

NBB's Group Chief Executive Officer, Usman Ahmed, said: "Average loan balances during the first quarter were maintained at higher levels than the year-end, contributing to the growth in revenues. This uplift in revenues was achieved while keeping expenses controlled and has positively impacted the Group's cost-to-income ratio."



Entrepreneurs Investment Summit

During the opening of the Entrepreneurs Investment Summit 2023 at the sidelines of the 12th Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) in Abu Dhabi, Chairman of the Union of Arab Chambers and Chairman of the Bahrain Chamber, Sameer Nass, emphasized the significance of strengthening economic cooperation and promoting collaboration among entrepreneurs from the Arab and African region. Mr. Nass highlighted the pivotal role of entrepreneurship in fostering sustainable development and economic growth. He also urged for concerted efforts to overcome obstacles hindering the progress of young entrepreneurs and encouraging innovation.

US needs \$30bn to seal 14,000 unplugged offshore oil and gas wells: study

AFP | Paris

The cost to secure thousands of inactive oil and gas wells in the US Gulf of Mexico could top \$30 billion, according to research published yesterday weighing potential environmental damage against the estimated price tag.

Researchers in the United States found there are some 14,000 unplugged oil and gas wells that are either officially idle or have been inactive for at least five years in the waters off the southeastern coast of the United States.

With new US government funding available for plugging old fossil fuel wells, the authors



There are more than 25,000 oil and gas fields of all sizes in the world. However, 94% of known oil is concentrated in fewer than 1500 giant and major fields.

focused on offshore sites which are relatively more costly and complicated to secure than those on land.

They said both taxpayers and fossil fuel giants would likely be liable for the costs of plugging and abandoning the wells -- a process that includes encasing the opening in concrete to stop oil and the potent greenhouse gas methane from leaking out.

"The wells aren't supposed to just be leaking into the environment if they're not actively producing... but sometimes they do," said Mark Agerton, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature Energy.

Shallow waters

The research found that while 90% of the inactive wells in the US Gulf of Mexico region were in

shallower waters closer to shore, they accounted for only a quarter of the \$30 billion in plugging costs -- and presented a greater environmental risk.

"The policy implication is that you'd likely focus on those shallow ones," said co-author Gregory Upton of Louisiana State University in a press briefing.

Researchers identified some 13,000 idle wells in shallow waters close to shore, either in the state waters of Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama, or in federal jurisdiction.

Oil leaks from these shallow wells would be more likely to pose a threat to coastal habitats than those from deeper wells, the authors said.

The study said much of what is known about the environmental impacts of oil and gas spills at different depths comes from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion in the Gulf of Mexico, one of the worst environmental disasters in US history.

The BP-leased rig exploded off the coast of Louisiana, killing 11 people and spewing out an oil slick the size of the state of Virginia.

While inactive wells are more likely to produce "small, chronic and potentially unobserved" leaks, the study said the underlying processes affecting ecological impacts "have many similarities".

Who pays?

Under US laws, the costs for plugging wells in state waters are more likely to fall on the taxpayer, while in federal waters it is often the current or even previous owner that is liable.

In the case of the Gulf of Mexico wells, the study found that of the total \$30 billion in estimated costs for plugging inactive wells, under \$2 billion were in state waters.

The vast majority of costs were in federal waters, where nearly 90% of the wells had at one point been owned by "super-major" companies like Chevron, Shell, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, BP, Total and Eni.

News in brief

◆ **European Commission**

head Ursula von der Leyen will visit Kyiv today for talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, an EU spokesman said. "The visit will focus on all the dimensions of our relations with Ukraine," spokesman Eric Mamer told reporters on Monday, reaffirming "the EU's unwavering support towards the country". The trip will mark the fifth time von der Leyen has visited the Ukrainian capital since Russia's all out invasion of the country in February last year. Such visits, to a city that comes under frequent Russian missile strikes, are conducted amid tight security and Mamer would reveal no precise details of the programme. "You will, of course have noticed as well this visit will take place on Europe Day," Mamer said, referring to the annual celebration of European unity timed to mark the end of World War II on the continent. "In this context, we warmly welcome the announcement by President Zelensky that May 9 will from now on also be celebrated as Europe Day in Ukraine."



EU chief Ursula to visit Kyiv today

◆ **Two people died** after a MiG-21 military aircraft

Two dead after MiG jet crashes in India: police



crashed onto a house in India on Monday, police said. "Pilot has been rescued safely. The MiG crashed on a house. Two people have died. Three people have been injured," police officer Sudhir Chaudhary told AFP after the crash in the western state of Rajasthan. The Indian Air Force (IAF) confirmed the accident and that the pilot ejected. "A MiG-21 aircraft of the IAF crashed near Suratgarh during a routine training sortie today morning," the IAF tweeted. "The pilot ejected safely, sustaining minor injuries. An inquiry has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the accident." Russian-made MiG-21 jets first entered Indian service in the 1960s and for decades served as the backbone of the country's air force.

At least 7 killed in car ramming outside Texas migrant center



◆ **At least seven** people were killed Sunday in south Texas and several others injured when a car plowed through a group waiting at a bus stop outside a migrant aid center, police said. Law enforcement said they were treating the incident as an accident for now, though a witness told AFP the driver had yelled insults at the group before accelerating. The gray sport utility vehicle "went through a red light and ran over several people" at around 8:30 am (1330 GMT) in Brownsville, a border city at the southernmost tip of the state, local police spokesman Martin Sandoval said. He said seven people died and "nearly 10" other people were injured.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Mysterious Chinese spacecraft returns after spending 276 days in space



Representative picture Agencies

An experimental Chinese spacecraft landed on Earth yesterday after spending 276 days in space completing a landmark mission to test the country's reusable space technologies.

Chinese state media reported that the mission marked a key milestone in the country's push into reusable spacecraft technology research, and "provides technological support for the peaceful use of space," CGTN reported.

The uncrewed spacecraft returned to the Jiuquan launch center in northwest China on Monday as scheduled, according to state media. Commentators on Chinese social media have speculated that Beijing has been developing a spacecraft like the U.S. Air Force's X-37B, an autonomous spaceplane that can remain in orbit for years. No details were

given on what the spacecraft was, what technologies were tested, how high it flew, and where its orbits had taken it since its launch in early August 2022. Images of the craft have also yet to be released to the public. The test marks an "important" breakthrough in China's research into reusable spacecraft technology that will provide a more convenient and inexpensive way to mount future space missions, state media reported.

In 2021, what may have been a similar spacecraft flew to the edge of space and returned to Earth on the same day in a mission that was also kept largely under wraps. It landed on Earth "horizontally," according to China's main space contractor at the time.

The uncrewed and reusable X-37B returned to Earth in November last year in its sixth and latest mission, after more than 900 days in orbit.

Second blast near Sikh shrine in India

AFP | Amritsar

A second blast in 36 hours rocked the area around the Sikh holy site of the Golden Temple in India's Amritsar city yesterday, police said.

Authorities said that one person was injured.

The previous blast late Saturday night, which police said they were still investigating, also left at least one person wounded in the city, in the Sikh-majority northern state of Punjab.

Punjab's director general of police said a terrorism angle had not been ruled out, and preliminary investigations suggested a crude device had been used.

"Blast occurred when a thread was pulled accidentally by a passerby," said Gaurav Yadav. "The container fell down and it went off."

The Golden Temple -- a gleaming edifice in a large artificial pond -- is revered by Sikhs the world over.



Punjab Police Director General (DG) Gaurav Yadav (C) inspects the site of another blast at Heritage Street in Amritsar

But it has been the scene of violence in the past, most notably when Indian special forces stormed it in 1984 to remove Sikh militants.

Devotees told AFP that officials arrived soon after the early morning blast on Monday -- when hundreds of people would have been at the shrine -- to collect forensic samples. "Such happenings are cre-

ating panic," said worshipper Jasbir Singh Patti, who visits the temple daily.

"It is time for the police administration to act swiftly to present the truth before the public."

Several windows cracked in the blast in the same area on Saturday -- a day when around 200,000 people typically visit the site.

Iran charges two over hijab violation

Tehran

Iran has charged two actresses for violating the country's dress code for women, the latest in a series of similar indictments against celebrities in the Islamic republic, local media reported yesterday.

Separate legal cases against Baran Kosari, 37, and Shaghayegh Dehghan, 44 -- both known for roles in Iranian cinema -- were filed after they appeared in public without headscarves in recent days, according to media reports.

If prosecuted, the actresses could face fines or prison terms.

Kosari's case was "sent to the judiciary" after she attended the funeral of actor Hesam Mahmoudi without a headscarf on Friday, Tasnim news agency said.

"Her photos were immediately published on the internet and some media," the news agency added. Dehghan was similarly charged for "not wearing a hijab in a cafe", Mehr news agency reported Monday.

Biden aide discusses Yemen peace push with Saudi crown prince

AFP | Taipei

US national security advisor Jake Sullivan discussed efforts to end Yemen's eight-year war during a meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the White House said in a statement.

Sullivan and Prince Mohammed, "reviewed significant progress in talks to further consolidate the now 15-month long truce in Yemen and welcomed ongoing UN-led efforts to bring the war to a close", the White House statement said.

Taiwan in talks for \$500 mn weapons package from US: defence minister

Taipei, Taiwan

Taiwan is expecting a fast-tracked \$500 million weapons package from Washington this year to make up for delays in arms procurements, the island's defence minister said yesterday. The United States in September approved the Taiwan Policy Act -- which would see new legislation provide billions in military aid to Taipei.

"The use of the \$500 million package is aimed at prioritising supplying us with spot goods (available for immediate delivery) over any delay or late delivery in our arms procurement," Chiu told lawmakers when questioned in parliament about the "military aid" package. he United States has for decades sold weapons to Taiwan.

No breakthrough yet Saudi-hosted Sudan

● **Army and RSF representatives are participating**

● **UN's top humanitarian official arrived in Jeddah on Sunday**

AFP | Riyadh

Ceasefire talks in Saudi Arabia between Sudan's warring generals have yielded "no major progress" so far, a Saudi official said yesterday, dampening hopes for a quick end to the fighting.

Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy turned rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who heads the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), sent representatives to the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah on Saturday for meetings that Washington and Riyadh have described as "pre-negotiation talks".

Goals include reaching "an effective short-term halt" to the



Saudi Royal Navy officer checks the luggage of evacuees in Port Sudan

fighting, facilitating aid delivery, restoring basic services and setting "a timetable for expanded negotiations to reach a permanent cessation of hostilities", the Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement Monday.

The two sides have "begun to discuss the security measures they should take in order to facilitate the delivery of urgent humanitarian aid and the restoration of

essential services", the statement said.

But a Saudi diplomat said yesterday that "no major progress is achieved so far".

"A permanent ceasefire isn't on the table. Every side believes it is capable of winning the battle," the diplomat added.

The UN's top humanitarian official, Martin Griffiths, arrived in Jeddah on Sunday intending

NASA launches two small satellites to track

AFP | Washington

NASA launched two small satellites designed to track tropical cyclones hour by hour from a base in New Zealand yesterday, in a project that could improve weather predictions on devastating storms.

The new storm trackers, sent into orbit on a rocket built by US company Rocket Lab, can fly over hurricanes (or typhoons in the Pacific) every hour, compared to every six hours with current satellites.

Researchers will be able to see storms evolve on an hourly basis, said NASA scientist Will McCarty at a press conference for the first launch of the TROPICS mission.

"We still need the large satellites," he added. "What we get from this is the ability to add more information to the flagship satellites that we already have."

A second Rocket Lab-built vessel is due to launch in about two weeks carrying two more satellites to complete a small constellation of four storm-tracking satellites.

The information gathered on rainfall, temperature and humidity could help scientists determine where a hurricane will make landfall and how intense it will be, helping people living in coastal areas be better prepared for possible evacuations.

"Many operational organizations like the National Hurricane Center and the Joint Typhoon Warning Center and many others are ready to receive tropical imagery to help inform their forecasters," said Ben Kim, a program executive at NASA.

1865

President Andrew Johnson issues a proclamation declaring armed resistance in the South is virtually at an end; this is the commonly accepted end date of the American Civil War

1901

The First Australian Parliament opens in Melbourne, though the first working session will not be until 21 May



1945

World War II: The Soviet Union marks Victory Day

1960

US becomes the first country to legalize the birth control pill

more actresses ons: media

“Earlier legal cases had been filed against actresses Katayoun Riahi, Pantea Bahram, Afshaneh Baygan and Fatemeh Motamed-Aria for removing their headscarves,” the agency added.

Some of the indicted actresses have won awards for their work in Iranian cinema, including at the country’s leading industry event, the Fajr International Film Festival.



The requirement for women to wear the headscarf in public was imposed shortly after the Islamic revolution of 1979. Last month, authorities said they had closed 150 commercial establishments whose employees were not complying with the dress code.

t in talks

to meet representatives of both camps, though his role in the process is unclear.

A spokesperson for Griffiths said on Sunday that he had arrived in Jeddah “to engage in humanitarian issues related to Sudan”.

A separate UN official said on Monday that Griffiths had “asked to join the negotiations” but that his request had not been approved so far.

The talks “will continue in the following days”, the Saudi foreign ministry said, without specifying a clear timeline.

Humanitarian crisis

Multiple truce deals have been declared, without effect, since fighting erupted on April 15 in the poverty-stricken country with a history of instability.

Fierce combat has killed hundreds of people, wounded thousands and sparked multiple warnings of a “catastrophic” humanitarian crisis.

More than 100,000 people have already fled the country.

hurricanes



The constellation was originally intended to have six satellites, not four, but the first two were lost when a US Astra rocket malfunctioned shortly after lift-off last year.

At least 22 dead after boat capsizes in India

● It was not clear why the double-decker boat tipped over

● 11 people from one family, including three children, had died in the accident

● A case has been registered against the boat’s owner

AFP | Malappuram

At least 22 people died when a tourist boat capsized in India, officials said yesterday, with many of those on board thought to be children.

It was not clear why the double-decker boat carrying at least 30 people tipped over in the southern state of Kerala’s Malappuram district late Sunday.

Dozens of people searched for survivors in and around the stricken vessel all night, which was partially submerged, and the search continued into Monday.

Some used ropes to stabilise the boat while others were in the water, desperately looking inside the vessel’s windows for any survivors.

“We have recovered 22 bodies, including 15 females and seven males. There are around six people in the hospital. Rescue operations are on,” a police officer told AFP.

Local publication Onmanorama reported that 11 people from one family, including three children, had died in the accident.

Rajisa, who was on the boat with her husband and daughter, told the publication most of the passengers on board were children and that there was smoke coming from the boat during the journey.

“We survived only because we were wearing life jackets,” Rajisa, who bruised her neck after hitting the boat, was quoted as saying.

She said three life jackets were brought to her and her family, and four jackets were given to children on the boat’s top deck.

“The boat swerved sometime after it set sail. Everyone was thrown off to one side as the boat wobbled,” she told On-



Onlookers gather near the site of a boat accident in Tanur, in Malappuram district



people carry out rescue operation at the site of a boat accident in Tanur, in Malappuram district of India’s Kerala state.

manorama.

“I fell before my child and sank into the water. The boat overturned on top of the people who had fallen into the water. There were mostly children on the boat,” she said.

Broadcaster NDTV said rescue teams, including personnel from National Disaster Response Force and the Indian Coast Guard, were using underwater cameras to look for those still missing.

VD Satheesan, a politician from the opposition Congress party in the state, said the ac-

cident was “man-made” and called for a probe.

“Nobody even knows if the boat had a licence or not,” he said Monday, speaking to reporters.

A case has been registered against the boat’s owner for alleged culpable homicide, media reports said.

Kerala’s sports and fisheries minister V. Abdurahiman, who was helping to coordinate rescue efforts, said most of the victims were children on school holidays.

Police said that there were

around 30 people on board.

But NDTV reported that 40 people had tickets, although there were many others on the vessel who did not.

Abdurahiman said four people were taken to hospital in critical condition, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

“Pained by the loss of lives due to the boat mishap in Malappuram, Kerala. Condolences to the bereaved families,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter, adding that families would get compensation.

Farmers break down barricades to join protesting Indian wrestlers

New Delhi

Dozens of Indian farmers broke down police barricades in New Delhi on Monday to join wrestlers protesting against the sport’s local federation chief over allegations of sexual harassment and intimidation.

Several of the wrestlers are from the nearby state of Haryana, a rice-producing area where many people make their living from farming.

The farmers were led by one of the groups behind demonstrations against agriculture reform bills that lasted for more than a year, and with hundreds of them at the site by Monday afternoon, its involvement increases the likelihood that the



Farmers gather at the site of an ongoing protest by Indian wrestlers in New Delhi

wrestlers’ protest will go into the long term. Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella group of protesting farmers, released a statement at the weekend condemning Delhi police for denying the athletes “basic civil rights” and backing the calls for Singh’s arrest, adding it would

mount nationwide protests this week.

Delhi police last month registered two complaints against Singh, who has denied the allegations.

In a video posted on Facebook on Saturday, Singh urged the farmers to wait until investigations were completed, broadcaster NDTV reported.

“If these children are committing a mistake, let them do so, my request to the elderly with folded hands is that you should not commit the mistake,” NDTV quoted him as saying.

The protesting wrestlers, including Olympic bronze medalist wrestlers Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia, have been backed by some of India’s most famous athletes.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Humanity’s failure to make progress towards ending hunger & achieving food security is unconscionable. We have the data & know-how to build a #ZeroHunger world. What we need is collective action & a commitment to change.

@antoniogetterres

02



We’re investing in mental health training so first responders can safely and effectively respond to those in crisis and connect them to care. And we’re making sure that public safety officers have the support and resources to deal with the stresses of their work.

@POTUS

03



In Shivamogga, I had a memorable interaction with members of the Hakki Pikki tribe who safely came home from Sudan.

@narendramodi

04



Let us never forget our veterans and all those who fought for freedom in Europe against the forces of tyranny. Their example serves as a powerful reminder of our responsibility to ensure that freedom prevails on our continent today #VEDay78

@RishiSunak

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

autobuzz

'Beautiful Corolla'

Afghanistan's enduring love affair with Toyota



Toyota Corolla cars in a traffic jam beneath the kot-e Sangi bridge in Kabul.

AFP | Kabul

Little is certain in Afghanistan -- armies invade and retreat, governments rise and fall -- but when the key of a Toyota Corolla turns in the ignition, the engine can be relied upon to roar to life.

A humble Japanese runabout with a reliable albeit unglamorous reputation, the Toyota Corolla is said to be the world's most popular car, with over 50 million trundling off production lines since 1966.

Sturdy, uncomplicated and affordable, it is finely tuned for a nation where roads dissolve into punishing terrain, repairs rely on frayed supply chains, and a "make do" mentality has emerged from decades of hardship.

"These cars have always been there for people," says mechanic Mohammad Aman. "If you travel with these cars, they can take you anywhere."

"The Corolla is quick, their metal is bold, they work well," the 50-year-old told AFP. Other cars "are flimsy like paper" by comparison, he insists.

In Afghanistan, Corollas are virtually ubiquitous.

Fleets of the suburban mainstay sell on forecourts overlooked by rusted Soviet troop carriers. Corolla taxis with pummelled bodywork jounce past humvees immobilised since US forces withdrew in 2021.

Even hauling up a mountain in a 4X4 you may be overtaken by a careening Corolla driver.

And Afghans everywhere emblazon their vehicles with English-language tributes romanticising the brand: "Happiness is a Toyota feeling", "Toyota sets the standard" and "Beautiful Corolla" have become the unofficial slogans of Kabul's grinding traffic jams.

'Special craze'

Corollas flooded Afghanistan

after the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the USSR -- before which Moscow's state-owned Lada brand dominated the market.

They have had a background role in national history ever since.

Over the Taliban's 20-year insurgency, the Corolla became the vehicle of choice for car bombers.

Expendably cheap and camouflaged in plain sight, they were packed with explosives and rammed into targets with devastating effects.

In 2022, after American forces had pulled out, Taliban authorities boasted about a new Afghan-designed sports car: a supposed symbol of progress.

But under its sleek, aerodynamic exterior were the mechanical innards of a modest Corolla. Everywhere, sprawling families cram into the car, with passengers far outnumbering seats.

"In other countries everything

is used in the way it's intended," said auto dealer Azizullah Nazari. "But in Afghanistan people don't care much about such standards."

The 39-year-old has sold imported Corollas to suit any budget -- \$1,500 to \$14,000 -- and many seem to have taken a circuitous route to the country.

He points to a pristine white model apparently originating from Canada. Its interior is lined with Korean newspaper and it has a Ghanaian number plate.

Another has a bumper sticker from a US university; one more has the incongruous coat of arms of a district in central Germany.

But all their roads have led to Afghanistan, where "people have a special craze for Toyota", Nazari insists.

'Top and fantastic car'

Such is Afghans' faith in the car that the capital's largest repair market is not served by paved roads.

BETTER YOU KNOW

When Washington launched air strikes after the 9/11 attacks, Taliban founder Mullah Omar fled his Kandahar hideaway in a white Corolla. It was buried in 2001 but triumphantly excavated last year "still in good condition", a Taliban government spokesman said, adding it should be publicly displayed as a "great historical monument".

stone, a peeling "fantastic Corolla" decal stuck to the window.

Next door, others fiddle with tendrils of wiring in the footwell of a Corolla adorned with cursive verse: "HighSpeed Toyota. Top and fantastic car in the world. Compatible with all condition."

A dull green model nearby is improbably branded "Dramatic Classic Car".

Out in Kabul's afternoon traffic, 27-year-old cab driver Naqeebullah pilots a sun-bleached Corolla three years his senior as he scouts for fares.

He estimates 80 percent of vehicles on the road match his.

"All cars have failed to show results apart from the Toyota Corolla," he puts it simply.

Swaying from his rearview mirror is a prayer card. "Glorified be the one who has made this means of transport subservient to us," it reads.

Ford to open orders on F-150 Trucks amid production snags

Reuters

Ford Motor Co said that it will open orders for its popular F-150 Lightning truck next week as part of their plan to scale to annual production of 150,000 units.

Ford is facing another production snag on the F-150 pickup trucks due to missing door handles, a source told Reuters on Wednesday.

The company faced a production snag in February after a battery fire. Production re-



A model of the all-new Ford F-150 Lightning electric pickup

sumed in March.

While a supplier part shortage is affecting some of our North American plants, we expect to make up all of the production that is impacted," the automaker said in an emailed statement on Wednesday.

BYD to make EVs in Vietnam

Reuters | Hanoi

Chinese automaker BYD Co. (002594.SZ) plans to expand into electric vehicles manufacturing and assembly in Vietnam, according to a Vietnamese government statement citing the company's chair.

In a government statement released after the meeting between BYD's founder and chair Wang Chuanfu and Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha on May 5, Wang said he expected Vietnam to create favourable conditions for BYD



BYD electric vehicles (EV) are displayed at a car dealership in Shanghai

to complete investment procedures.

The statement did not mention how much new investment BYD would top up for the expansion.

Bentley production chief to lead Volkswagen's software overhaul

Reuters

Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE) has appointed Bentley production chief Peter Bosch to lead its software subsidiary Cariad, dismissing all but one of the unit's current executive board members as the automaker tries to get the troubled division on track.

Bosch will take over from June 1, the German group said on Monday, with two further software experts to join Cariad's board alongside him and

human resources head Rainer Zugehoer, the only board member to remain in his post.

Bosch, a former Oliver Wyman consultant who spent nearly seven years at the Volkswagen brand before moving to Bentley in 2017, will also take over financial management at Cariad, Volkswagen said, confirming an earlier Handelsblatt report.

"He is a strategist, an enabler and a team player," Volkswagen CEO Oliver Blume said of Bosch in a statement.

Classifieds



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Everton stun Brighton as Fulham hit Leicester for 5

AFP | London

Everton moved out of the Premier League relegation zone with a stunning 5-1 win at Brighton on Monday, while Leicester's hopes of survival are hanging by a thread after a 5-3 defeat at Fulham.

Brighton are in the hunt to qualify for Europe for the first time in the club's history, but a heavy schedule looked to have taken its toll on Roberto De Zerbi's men as they were torn apart by an Everton side that had not won away since October.

The Toffees had the dream start as Abdoulaye Doucoure opened the scoring after just 34 seconds.

Doucoure's brilliant volley from Dwight McNeil's cross doubled Everton's lead before Brighton goalkeeper Jason Steele deflected McNeil's cross into his own net.

De Zerbi responded by making four half-time substitutions and Brighton peppered the



Fulham's Jamaican striker Bobby Decordova-Reid runs with the ball during the English Premier League football match

Everton goal but were caught out on the counter-attack when McNeil showed great poise to round Steele to make it 4-0.

Alexis Mac Allister finally pulled a goal back after Kaoru Mitoma's initial effort came off the post.

But McNeil fittingly had the final say as he rounded off a

brilliant performance in stoppage time by smashing into the top corner.

A first win in eight games lifts Sean Dyche's men two points clear of the drop zone.

Brighton remain in seventh, two points behind Tottenham with two games in hand, but their outside shot at a top-four

finish now appears gone.

Leicester's mental struggles - Leicester boss Dean Smith admitted his players might be struggling with the pressures of a relegation battle after a disastrous defensive display at Craven Cottage.

The Foxes, who won the Premier League in stunning fashion in 2016 and lifted the FA Cup two years ago, are staring relegation in the face.

Leicester remain outside the relegation zone on goal difference for now but could end the day in the bottom three should Nottingham Forest avoid defeat at home to Southampton.

Smith's men also face a tough run-in with Champions League-chasing Liverpool and Newcastle to come before ending the season at home to West Ham.

Only Leeds and Bournemouth have conceded more goals than Leicester in the Premier League and defensive deficiencies were again their undoing at Craven Cottage.

Sunderland into Championship play-offs after Millwall collapse

London

Sunderland secured their place in English football's Championship play-offs with a 3-0 win away to Preston yesterday but only after Millwall suffered an extraordinary loss at home to Blackburn Rovers.

The final day of the regular second-tier season kicked off with Millwall knowing a win would guarantee their place in the play-offs that decide the last available spot on offer in next term's lucrative Premier League.

Burnley, the champions, and second-placed Sheffield United were already assured of automatic promotion.

But the identity of the clubs finishing fifth and sixth -- the teams that would join third-placed Luton and fourth-placed Middlesbrough in the play-offs -- had still to be decided.

All seemed set fair for south London club Millwall when they led 3-1 at the interval following two goals from Duncan Watmore and one from Oliver Burke.

But with Joe Rankin-Costello having reduced the deficit,



Sunderland's English goalkeeper Anthony Patterson (C) watches the ball from a shot that went over the bar by Fulham's Brazilian midfielder Andreas Pereira (2L) during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Fulham and Sunderland at Craven Cottage in Fulham, west London

Ben Brereton Diaz's second-half double inspired a Rovers revival as they won 4-3 at the New Den.

"As soon as their (Blackburn's) second (goal) went in, you could see the nerves appear in the team," said Millwall manager Gary Rowett.

Sunderland's win at Preston meant the northeast side took sixth place, with Blackburn leapfrogging Millwall only to be denied a play-off position of their own on goal difference.

"I felt as though we could come here and control the game," said Sunderland manager Tony Mowbray.

He added: "We didn't have harsh words at half-time, but we discussed that we needed to control the game better. We became more confident and, off the back of the first goal, we controlled things. It was a solid performance."

Coventry, meanwhile, claimed a final day point to finish fifth

and secure a play-off berth following a 1-1 draw at Middlesbrough -- who they will now meet in a two-legged semi-final.

Gustavo Hamer put the Sky Blues ahead before Cameron Archer equalised in first-half stoppage time.

West Brom, the other team that started the day with a chance to finish in the top six suffered a 3-2 defeat at Swansea, for whom Joel Piroe scored a stoppage-time winner.

Luton drew 0-0 at home to Hull and will now face Sunderland in the play-off semi-finals.

Burnley won 3-0 at home to Cardiff, with Josh Brownhill, Ashley Barnes and Scott Twine all scoring at Turf Moor as Vincent Kompany's team finished with 101 points, while Sheffield United won 2-1 at Birmingham.

Of the three relegated sides, Blackpool won 1-0 at Norwich thanks to Morgan Rogers's early goal and basement club Wigan drew 0-0 at home to Rotherham. Meanwhile, Reading lost 2-0 at Huddersfield, who had already secured their Championship status with a game to spare.

Apologetic Messi returns to training with PSG



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi, his wife Antonela Rocuzzo and their children visiting a horse stable in Riyadh

AFP | Paris

Monday.

Lionel Messi returned to training with Paris Saint-Germain yesterday six days after Argentina's World Cup-winning captain was suspended for going on an unauthorized trip to Saudi Arabia.

"Leo Messi returns to training Monday morning," tweeted the club along with a photo of the 35-year-old in action.

His return makes it likely he will feature in PSG's home match with relegation-threatened Ajaccio next Saturday.

PSG hold the whip hand in defending their Ligue 1 title, a six point lead over Lens with four matches remaining.

He was suspended by the Qatar-owned club after failing to turn up for training last

Instead, the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner travelled to Saudi Arabia without PSG's permission to fulfil commitments as part of a contract with the country's tourist office.

Messi subsequently apologised in a video posted on Instagram to his 458 million followers.

"I had organised this trip to Saudi Arabia having cancelled it previously. This time I couldn't cancel it. I am sorry for what I did and I wait to see what the club decides to do."

The affair has made it increasingly unlikely that Messi will remain at PSG beyond this season, when his two-year contract with the club expires.

India name Kishan for World Test final against Australia

New Delhi

Batsman Ishan Kishan was yesterday named in India's squad for the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia in place of the injured K.L. Rahul.

Rahul captains Lucknow Super Giants in the lucrative Indian Premier League but has been sidelined from the rest of the tournament with a right upper thigh injury.

The batsman, 31, will undergo surgery followed by rehab at the National Cricket Academy, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement.

"He is ruled out of the upcoming ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia," it said.

A decision on Jaydev Unadkat, who hurt his

left shoulder while training in the IPL, for the WTC final will be taken later, the statement added.

Kishan, 24, is uncapped in Test cricket, but has played 14 ODIs and 27 T20Is so far, and was also in the Test squad for the home series against Australia earlier this year.

He is the second wicketkeeper in India's WTC squad behind K.S. Bharat, who made his Test debut against Australia in February in the absence of Rishabh Pant.

Pant is recuperating after a car accident in December. The WTC final will be played at the Oval from June 7-11.

It will be India's second WTC final after they lost the decider in the inaugural edition to New Zealand in 2021.

Ishan Kishan

Alonso admits watching Miami action on TV mid-race

Miami Gardens

You might think that Formula One drivers powering around a track at average speeds of around 220 kph (136 mph) would have their eyes fixed solely on the road ahead and their rivals.

Not always it seems.

Veteran Aston Martin driver Fernando Alonso admitted he was following the action on the giant TV screens at the Miami

Grand Prix while driving to a third-place finish on Sunday.

Alonso gave the game away with his radio communication to his team where he commented on a move with around 10 laps to go from his Canadian teammate Lance Stroll, who overtook Alex Albon in the Williams.

"Which position is Lance? Great

move into turn one," Alonso was caught saying on the team radio.

His comment caused puzzlement and amusement on the race broadcast commentary and when asked by reporters about the observation, he admitted he had seen the action on the course's big screens.

"I think this circuit, we have big TV screens out of some of the low speed corners. So it was very easy to follow the race on TV," he told the post-race press conference.

"I saw one overtake.. it was a little bit unexpected lonely race for us, we were thinking (we would have) a more difficult race."



Formula One World Champion Fernando Alonso is affected by Poland syndrome; he is missing the right pectoral muscle. Poland Syndrome was named for the investigator (Poland A) who initially described the condition in 1841. According to reports in the medical literature, Poland Syndrome appears to be three times as common in males as females

Manama begin title quest

Bahrain champions to battle Kuwait SC tonight in game one of Gulf sub-zone finals in FIBA West Asia Super League

● **Best-of-three finals opener in Kuwait City tips off 8pm, Bahrain time**

● **Manama looking to hand opponents first loss of entire competition**

TDT | Manama

Reigning Bahrain champions Manama Club begin their quest tonight to add a new title to their already impressive trophy cabinet when they face off with Kuwait SC in the best-of-three finals of the Gulf sub-zone Manama players during their practice scrimmage last night in preparation for tonight's finals opener

in the 2022/2023 FIBA West Asia Super League (WASL).

Tonight's game is scheduled to tip off at 8pm, Bahrain time, at Shaikh Saad Abdullah Sport Hall Complex in Kuwait City.

Manama punched their tickets to the championship decider after completing a two-game sweep of Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia in their semi-final match-up. Kuwait, on the other hand, defeated Shabab Al Ahli of Dubai in the last four.

Heading into tonight's encounter, Manama's star point guard Lamont Jones from the US says that any player on their team can step up on any given night and help lift them to a victory.

"We have a team of great players," Jones was quoted as saying. "Most of the guys are on the national team. They know how to play. They represent their country, they represent Manama. And I think at any given point anybody can go off, like Mohammed [Ameer], [Ahmed] Haji, [Musta-

"We have a team of great players. Most of the guys are on the national team. They know how to play. They represent their country, they represent Manama"

LAMONT JONES

fa Hussain] Mosti.

"We can have somebody off the bench perform, we can have a starter perform, we can have somebody that may not have played a lot tonight coming in to fill the void when we need him. I think that's a good quality to have."

Manama have a tough task ahead of them in the finals, as Kuwait are the lone undefeated team in the competition, hav-

ing swept the six-game group phase, which included two wins against Manama, before taking their semi-final.

Manama conducted their final practice last night in Bahrain prior to their departure for the Kuwaiti capital.

Game two in the finals series is scheduled for May 15 at the Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town. Game three, if needed, will take place May 22 back in Kuwait City.

With their finals berth, Manama are also assured of a place in the WASL Final 8, where they will be joined by champions of South Asia and Central Asia. The WASL Final 8 will qualify for FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2023, on the road to FIBA Intercontinental Cup 2023, FIBA's highest club competition.

The WASL is a new basketball competition sanctioned by FIBA, the sport's global governing body. Manama are one of 16 teams that have taken part in this inaugural edition.



Verstappen wins Miami Grand Prix

Miami Gardens

World champion Max Verstappen powered from ninth on the grid to beat teammate Sergio Perez and extend Red Bull's all-conquering start to the season with victory at the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday.

The win -- Red Bull's fifth from five races this season -- extends Verstappen's lead at the top of the standings to 14 points and follows his triumph in the inaugural Miami race last year.

The 1-2 for Red Bull is their fourth in five races so far this year as the team utterly dominate the sport leaving their rivals to battle for the third podium position.

Aston Martin's Spanish veteran Fernando Alonso took third for his fourth podium in five races this season as he continues to enjoy his late career revival.



(L-R) Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez, who placed second, Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen, who placed first, and Aston Martin's Spanish driver Fernando Alonso, who placed third, celebrate on the podium after the 2023 Miami Formula One Grand Prix at the Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida

Verstappen had to work hard for his third victory of the campaign after his disappointing performance in Saturday's qualifying left him in the middle of the grid.

But the speed of the Red Bull car, combined with smart decisions on tyres, meant that the

Dutchman was able to quickly get himself in contention and then produce a late surge to beat his team-mate Perez, who remains second in the standings.

Perez, starting on pole, made the perfect start, racing clear of his rivals but Verstappen, on hard tyres, quickly moved

through the field and took just 15 laps to reach second place behind his team-mate.

Perez pitted on lap 20 allowing Verstappen to take the lead but the Dutchman had to give that up when he went into the pits on lap 46, changing to the medium compound tyres and coming out 1.2 seconds behind.

It took just two laps for Verstappen, who won the inaugural Miami Grand Prix a year ago, to take advantage of his fresher tyres with better grip as, after a brief joust, he overtook the Mexican, on 25-lap-old tyres, to take the lead.

Verstappen's 38th win for Red Bull equals the team record set by Sebastian Vettel and is the first time a driver has won from exactly ninth on the grid since Niki Lauda at the French Grand Prix in 1984.

Russell, Rinku star as Kolkata win IPL thriller

Kolkata

Andre Russell's blazing 42 and a finishing act by Rinku Singh kept Kolkata Knight Riders in the hunt for the IPL play-offs with a tense final-ball win over Punjab Kings yesterday.

Kolkata looked in trouble at 124-4 while chasing 180 for victory when Russell and Rinku, who hit an unbeaten 21 off 10 balls, put on a destructive partnership of 54 to win by five wickets at their home Eden Gardens.

Russell smashed three sixes off England left-arm quick Sam Curran in the 19th over but got run out on the penultimate delivery with Kolkata needing two off the final ball.

The left-handed Rinku, who smashed five sixes on the final five balls in a match-winning knock for Kolkata last month to become an IPL sensation, hit the winning boundary off Arshdeep Singh.

"I didn't think about the last

ball. Even when I hit those five sixes, I hadn't thought much," said an elated Rinku.

"I was playing on the merit of the ball. I had the belief in me that I could finish the game."

Man of the match Russell said, "When I have Rinku at the other end I am not worried. I have confidence in him. I get goosebumps when I see what he is doing now. I have company at the backend."



Kolkata jumped from eight to five in the 10-team table led by holders Gujarat Titans as teams jostle for the final four spots to make the play-offs.

Messi scoops individual, team Laureus double

Paris

Argentina and Paris Saint Germain veteran star Lionel Messi yesterday scooped a unique double, landing individual and team Laureus awards for his exploits and those of his World Cup winning nation.

Messi, 35, finally landed a first World Cup winners medal in Qatar last December after a thrilling penalty shootout final win over France -- enough to earn him an individual accolade while the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner also accepted the team award at a prestigious Paris ceremony.

The accolade saw Messi, who earned a fine and suspension from PSG for making an unauthorised promotional visit to Saudi Arabia, see off competition notably from clubmate Ky-



Messi poses with his Laureus World Sportsman of the Year award

lian Mbappé, whose World Cup final hat-trick was not enough to earn him glory in Qatar.

Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who last August earned a fifth world 100m crown at Eugene, Oregon, picked up the female athlete award while US Open tennis champion Car-

los Alcaraz earned the World Breakthrough of the Year award.

Going back to football, Denmark and Manchester United star Christian Eriksen earned a Comeback Award for returning to the top of the European game after collapsing with cardiac arrest during the Euros two years ago. Swiss para-athlete sensation Catherine Debrunner meanwhile picked up the Disability Award after triumphing in her opening two marathons

The Sport for Good Award was presented to TeamUp -- a programme for children displaced by war -- by Barcelona and Poland star Robert Lewandowski.

Meanwhile, Chinese-American Olympic ski freestyle champion Eileen Gu won the World Action Sportsperson accolade. The awards have been made annually since 2000 by a jury comprising 71 members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, representing the past 50 years of athletic excellence.

The Argentine, who attended the ceremony with wife Antonela Rocuzzo, previously had won the award jointly with British Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton in 2020.



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Gabriel Jose da Silva Candido in action (file)

Ahli bolster roster for Asian clubs volleyball

Bahraini representatives sign top professional players for continental competition

● Ahli boost line-up with Gabriel Jose da Silva Candido from Brazil, Yosvany Hernandez from Cuba and Davide Saitta from Italy

● Team's top Bahraini stars include Naser Anan, Mohammed Anan, Abbas Al Khabbaz, Ali Alsairafi, Sayed Mohammed Alabbar, Mahmood Abdulhussain



Yosvany Hernandez



Davide Saitta

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Ahli Club have bolstered their line-up for the upcoming 2023 Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship, which is set to be hosted by the Kingdom from Sunday next week.

The Bahraini hosts have signed three top professional players for the 16-team competition, including Gabriel Jose da Silva Candido from Brazil, Yosvany Hernandez from Cuba and Davide Saitta from Italy.

All three players have years of experience competing with clubs in leagues around the world, and will be welcome additions to Ahli's formidable line-up of top Bahraini stars who include Naser Anan, Mohammed Anan, Abbas Al Khabbaz, Ali Alsairafi, Sayed Mohammed Alabbar and Mahmood Abdul-

hussain, among others.

The Asian clubs championship is set to be held under the patronage of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports first deputy chairman, General Sports Authority (GSA) president and Bahrain Olympic Committee chief His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa. It is being organised by the BVA in cooperation with the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC).

AVC president Rita Subowo is set to be a guest of Bahrain during the tournament, the BVA

announced yesterday. It will be the first visit for the continental volleyball chief in the Kingdom since she took office in 2020.

Ahli have stepped up their preparations for the competition under Tunisian head coach Nezar Al Shakili, a former Bahrain national team tactician.

They begin their tournament campaign against Jakarta Bhayangkara Presisi from Indonesia on opening night. They then take on Korean Air Jumbos Pro-Volleyball Club from South

Korea in their second assignment the following evening, before completing their Pool A preliminary round campaign Tuesday against Canberra Heat from Australia.

Eight matches will be held per day between two arenas at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

Following the group stage, a rest day will be held on Wednesday next week, after which action will begin in the play-offs and placement pools.

The top two teams from each preliminary round pool move on to the round of eight play-offs, where they will again be divided into two further pools to determine the semi-finalists. The head-to-head games from the opening stage will carry over.

The bottom two teams from each preliminary round pool will move on to the consolation bracket for the tournament's final classification.

Pool B in the preliminary round features Shahdab Yazd from Iran, South Gas Sports Club from Iraq, Taichung Bank from Chinese-Taipei and Kam Air from Afghanistan. Pool C comprises Suntory Sunbirds from Japan, Diamond Food Fine Chef-Air Force from Thailand, Bayankhongor Crownd Geo VC from Mongolia and Khaypil Sports Club from Yemen. Pool D features Atyrau VC from Kazakhstan, Police Sports Team from Qatar, Aspiring Volleyball Team from Hong Kong and Kuwait Sporting Club from Kuwait.



Asian volleyball chief Rita Subowo from Indonesia is set to be a guest of Bahrain during the tournament, marking her first visit to the Kingdom since taking office in 2020

Muharraq, Riffa end season with big wins

● Muharraq outclass Hidd 3-1 while Riffa, last year's title winners, rout lowly Budaiya 7-0

● Muharraq end their season with 40 points

● Riffa finish their season with 39 points

TDT | Manama

Muharraq and Riffa both claimed big wins last night as they wrapped up their respective campaigns in the 2022/2023 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier Football League.

Muharraq outclassed Hidd 3-1 while Riffa, last year's title winners, routed lowly Budaiya 7-0.

The results kicked off the concluding week of action and they ensured that both teams finish in the top five on the standings. They are also, however, already out of title contention.

In Muharraq's triumph, Sufyan Mahrouq opened their ac-



Hidd's Abdulwahab Ali battles to keep possession with Muharraq's Abdulwahab Al Malood

count in the 22nd minute with a short stab from inside the six-yard box following a scramble for the ball. Abdulwahab Al Malood then doubled their advantage on the half-hour mark with a fine left-footed effort from inside the area.

Muharraq made it 3-0 in the opening minute of first-half stoppage time with an Abdullah Al Khalasi effort that was de-

flected into the net off of Hidd's Sayed Mohammed Adnan. Thiago Augusto got a goal back for Hidd on a quick counter-attack in the 80th minute.

Muharraq end their season with 40 points following their 10th win, while Hidd finish on 27.

For Riffa, Amin Al Shanaina scored a brace. He opened their scoring in the seventh minute

and then added a second in the 29th, both from close range. Ali Hassan made it 3-0 in the 41st minute after rounding the opposing goalkeeper and sending the ball home into an empty net.

Komail Al Aswad then scored in the 55th minute for a commanding 4-0 advantage for Riffa, before Adnan Fawaz added their fifth in the 75th.

Saud Hussain Ramadan and

Standings

	P	W	D	L	+/-	Pts
Al Khaldiya	21	12	5	4	22	41
Muharraq	22	10	10	2	22	40
Manama	21	11	7	3	19	40
Riffa	22	11	6	5	18	39
Sitra	21	10	7	4	10	37
Al Ahli	21	7	9	5	1	30
Hidd	22	7	6	9	-9	27
Al Shabab	21	7	5	9	-4	26
East Riffa	21	4	9	8	-6	21
Al Hala	21	5	6	10	-10	21
Bahrain Club	21	4	6	11	-10	18
Budaiya*	22	1	2	19	-53	-1

(*Budaiya deducted six points due to a decision by the Bahrain Football Association)

substitute Mauro Bravo Fernandez completed the demolition of their rivals.

Riffa finished their season with 39 points after claiming their 11th win, while Budaiya will be going down to the second division for next season.

The final week of league action continues tonight with one match on the cards between Al Shabab and Sitra.

Meanwhile, the final title-deciding clashes are still to be de-

termined by the Bahrain Football Association. Only current leaders Al Khaldiya and Manama are still in contention, with only a point separating the two.

Khaldiya take on Bahrain Club while Manama face off with Al Ahli in two yet-to-be-scheduled contests.

The other remaining game is between East Riffa and Al Hala, both of whom, along with Bahrain Club, are trying to stave off relegation.