

Thrills galore @ National Race Day

National Race Day produced plenty of thrills in the third round of its 2024/2025 season, held last weekend at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir. | **P 12**

WORLD 6 New Syria PM says all religious groups' rights 'guaranteed'

THE DAILY tribune

Renault to redefine vehicle design **8 AUTOBUZZ**

BUSINESS 5 BisB announces digital account opening for GCC customers

Saudi Arabia wins bid to host Fifa World Cup 2034



Riyadh

The International Federation of Association Football (Fifa) announced yesterday that Saudi Arabia has won the bid to host the Fifa World Cup 2034.

The announcement was made during Fifa's extraordinary general assembly meeting, held virtually.

Saudi Arabia will become the first country in history to solely host the largest edition of the World Cup, featuring 48 national teams competing across five cities.

This follows Fifa's earlier approval of the expanded tournament format.

The Kingdom formally submitted its bid for the tournament in July under the slogan "Growing. Together" outlining ambitious plans to host matches across 15 stadiums in five cities: Riyadh, Jeddah, Al Khobar, Abha, and NEOM, with an additional 10 hosting sites across the country.

561 payments made to families affected by floods

TDI | Manama

Flood-hit families have started receiving compensation, with 561 payments made and 1,670 claims still being processed, the Ministry of Works confirmed.

The Minister of Works, His Excellency Ebrahim Al Hawaj, assured Parliament that "every dinar allocated has been spent according to the ministry's plans" to tackle the fallout from heavy rainstorms.

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HM King hails Bahrain-Pakistan defence cooperation

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, commended the advanced level of defence and military cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and Pakistan.

HM the King highlighted the historical bilateral relations and developed cooperation across various sectors as he received Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of Naval Staff of the Pakistan Navy, at Al Sakhir Palace.

His Majesty noted the importance of such visits in strengthening coordination to serve mu-



HM the King receives Admiral Naveed Ashraf

tual goals and aspirations.

He commended Pakistan's honourable positions and cooperation in enhancing security

and stability in the region, and the contributions of the Pakistani community to Bahrain's development.



The meeting also addressed regional and international developments and topics of mutual interest.

Admiral Ashraf expressed his

appreciation for HM the King's role and efforts in fostering and strengthening Bahraini-Pakistani relations, particularly in the defence and military sectors.

Protecting children from parental feuds

New parliamentary proposal allows mothers to manage kids' paperwork without fathers' approval

Mohammed Darwish
TDI | Manama

Expatriate and Bahraini mothers caught in family rows could be given the green light to manage their children's official paperwork without needing the father's say-so, under a new proposal being considered by Parliament.

The suggested rule change would also enable grandparents to step in if both parents are out of the picture, ensuring youngsters don't lose access to essential services because of domestic conflict.

MP Jalal Kadhem, who brought this forward, said the plan aims to stop fathers from wielding red tape as a form of revenge during legal or personal feuds.

Payback

"Some fathers deliberately refuse to handle basic formalities due to bitter family quarrels, turning simple procedures into a form of payback," Kadhem said.

"The aim is to give children a steady footing, especially when family feuds drag on for months or even years. This is about fairness and keeping children's interests at the heart of things."

- MP JALAL KADHEM



MP Jalal Kadhem

would carry out these tasks without waiting on the courts.

Grandparents

Should both parents be unwilling or unable, grandparents would then take over.

"We must put children first. A long wait in court should never mean a child goes without

healthcare, schooling, or proper documents," Kadhem insisted.

He made it plain that the new approach would apply to both Bahraini and expat wives, acknowledging that those from abroad often face an uphill struggle, with few relatives nearby and an unfamiliar legal set-up.



The plan aims to stop fathers from wielding red tape as a form of revenge during legal or personal feuds.

"The aim is to give children a steady footing, especially when family feuds drag on for months or even years," Kadhem added. "This is about fairness and keeping children's interests at the heart of things."

Kadhem expects strong backing from the Council, calling this step necessary to close legal gaps and protect youngsters from the fallout of family strife.

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Justice with dignity

Interior Minister attends graduation ceremony of Open Prisons Programme beneficiaries

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

His Excellency Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa attended a ceremony celebrating the graduation of the second, third, and fourth batches of beneficiaries from the Open Prisons Programme.

The event, organised by the General Directorate of Verdict Enforcement and Alternative Sentencing, also marked the launch of the Directorate's electronic system and honoured outstanding beneficiaries, partners, and supporters.

The ceremony was attended by several high-ranking officials, including the Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments; the Minister of Housing; the Minister of Information; the Deputy Interior Minister; the Chief of Public Security; and ambassadors from brotherly and friendly nations.

Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah emphasised that His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's vision has laid the foundation for Bahrain's alternative sentencing project since the law's endorsement in 2018.

Royal directives

He noted that the directives of HM the King to expand the application of the law ensure the project's sustainability, supporting humanitarian and societal goals.

"The alternative sentencing project reflects the values and principles of HM the King's reform era and represents a significant turning point in human rights," HE the Interior Minister said.

He also praised the government, led by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for its support of initiatives that enhance citizens' lives.

The Director-General of Verdict Enforcement and Alterna-



H.E. Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa with attendees (Pictures by Ashen Tharaka)

“The alternative sentencing project reflects the values and principles of HM the King's reform era and represents a significant turning point in human rights.”

- ZAINAH JASSIM ALI, NORTHERN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL VICE CHAIRPERSON



Supporters and partners



The Interior Minister inspects pilot projects

and their families. Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, expressed gratitude to HM the King for his care and for honouring the Directorate's affiliates.

He noted that the national alternative sentencing system has achieved a 97.5% success rate, benefiting over 7,600 individuals

and their families. Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid outlined the programme's milestones, including its alignment with international human rights standards.

He highlighted that Bahrain's Open Prisons Programme is the first entity outside the US to re-

ceive international accreditation for community housing from the American Correctional Association.

Additionally, the programme won the His Royal Highness Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Award for Arab Security and the Arab Government Ex-



Shaikh Khalid bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Director-General of Verdict Enforcement and Alternative Sentencing, speaks at the event

cellence Award.

The event also showcased innovative initiatives, including the "Shed Hailak" behavioural points system inspired by US models. Beneficiaries can earn points to access privileges such as extended leave periods. Another initiative, the "Empowered Programme," focuses on supporting female beneficiaries.

In line with government directives, the first phase of an electronic system for alternative sentencing was launched, offering beneficiaries easier access to information and services.

Educational opportunities are also being expanded through partnerships with Gulf University and Applied Science University, which provide scholarships for beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries honoured

During the event, beneficiaries shared their gratitude to HM the King, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, HE the Interior Minister, and the Directorate-General.

A short film highlighting the achievements of the alter-

native sentencing project and Open Prisons Programme was screened.

HE the Interior Minister honoured supporters, partners, beneficiaries, and winning project creators.

A wind turbine project to generate renewable energy from road traffic. A device to recycle plastic waste into reusable raw materials, a mobile truck equipped to recycle agricultural waste into compressed wood and fibreglass solutions as an alternative to wood in construction.

These projects were developed by beneficiaries in a dedicated workshop within the Open Prisons Programme complex.

Coinciding with International Human Rights Day, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirmed its commitment to protecting human rights by advancing laws and systems that align with global standards.

The Open Prisons Programme and alternative sentencing system exemplify Bahrain's dedication to civilised and humanitarian projects, setting a pioneering model for other nations.



Dr. S. Jaishankar visits Shri Krishna Temple

Hon External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar visited the historic Shri Krishna Temple, engaging with the THMC board and highlighting the cultural bonds between India and Bahrain. The diplomatic interaction underscored the strong bilateral ties and community connections.

Bahraini women hailed for labour-related achievements

TDT | Manama

His Excellency Youssef bin Abdul-Hussein Khalaf, Minister of Legal Affairs and Acting Minister of Labour, has emphasised that Bahraini women have achieved numerous labour-related gains under the prosperous reign of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

This progress has been supported by the continuous efforts and follow-up of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

This support has contributed to creating more opportunities for women and enacting national legislations that facilitate their integration into various produc-



H.E. Youssef bin Abdul-Hussein Khalaf with attendees

tive sectors of the labor market in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Opening ceremony

This statement was made by the Minister during his participation in the opening ceremony of the Tenth Conference for Working Women, organised by the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions.

Stronger Arab cooperation crucial for tourism growth

Cairo, Egypt

Her Excellency Fatima bint Jaffar Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, participated in the meetings of the Arab Tourism Organisation (ATO) held at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo.

Al Sairafi highlighted the significance of enhancing cooperation among Arab states to advance the tourism sector, noting that tourism represents one of the vital sectors supporting economic development in Arab countries, which necessitates intensified joint efforts to achieve sustainable development.

She also underscored the role of tourism in bridging cultural connections and fostering mutual understanding among



H.E. Fatima bint Jaffar Al Sairafi at the event

peoples, emphasising the importance of collective action to develop effective partnerships and strategies that enhance tourist experiences and improve the quality of tourism services, benefiting all Arab nations.

The Secretary General participated in the 35th session of the

Executive Bureau of the Arab Ministerial Council for Tourism, alongside Their Excellencies the ministers responsible for tourism from Arab League member states, as well as representatives from various Arab and international organisations concerned with tourism.

Discussions centred on shared strategies aimed at achieving sustainable development goals in the tourism sector, with a focus on optimising the utilisation of available resources more effectively.

Participants also stressed the necessity of enhancing coordination among member states to ensure tangible results in developing tourism activities, thus elevating the tourism profile of Arab nations.

70 days of support

MPs propose extending paid maternity leave for private sector workers

H Naser TDT | Manama

Three MPs, Hanan Fardan, Jaleela Al Sayed and Basma Mubarak, have submitted a draft law proposing to increase paid maternity leave for women in the private sector from the current 60 days to 70 days.

The proposed amendment targets clause (a) of Article 32 of the Labour Law in the private sector (Law No. 36 of 2012).

Currently, the law grants female employees 60 days of paid maternity leave, encompassing the period before and after childbirth, requiring a medical certificate from a government health center or employer-approved clinic.

Employees may also take an additional 15 days of unpaid



MP Basma Mubarak

leave.

The explanatory memorandum accompanying the draft law cites neighbouring countries as examples, highlighting that Saudi Arabia grants 10 weeks of paid maternity leave, a similar provision existing in Egypt.

The proposal also references Article 5, Clause (b) of the

The proposal by the MPs seeks to strengthen support for working mothers in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Bahraini Constitution, which guarantees the state's role in balancing women's family responsibilities with their work, ensuring equality with men in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres, without violating Islamic law.

The MPs' proposal aims to enhance support for working mothers in Bahrain, aligning the country's maternity leave provisions with regional standards and emphasising the constitutional commitment to gender equality.

Complaints to Ombudsman down 50% in two years

TDT | Manama

Ghada Hameed Habib, Secretary General of the Ombudsman and Chair of the Commission for the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees, revealed that the number of complaints submitted to the Ombudsman's office has decreased by 50% over the past two years.

This reduction is attributed to new contemporary legisla-

tion, royal pardons for prisoners, and reforms that included open prison programs and alternative sentencing.

This announcement came during a discussion session held on Tuesday organised by the Special Investigations Unit in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, titled "Human Rights in the Criminal Justice System of the Kingdom of Bahrain:

Manifestations and Acquired Experiences."

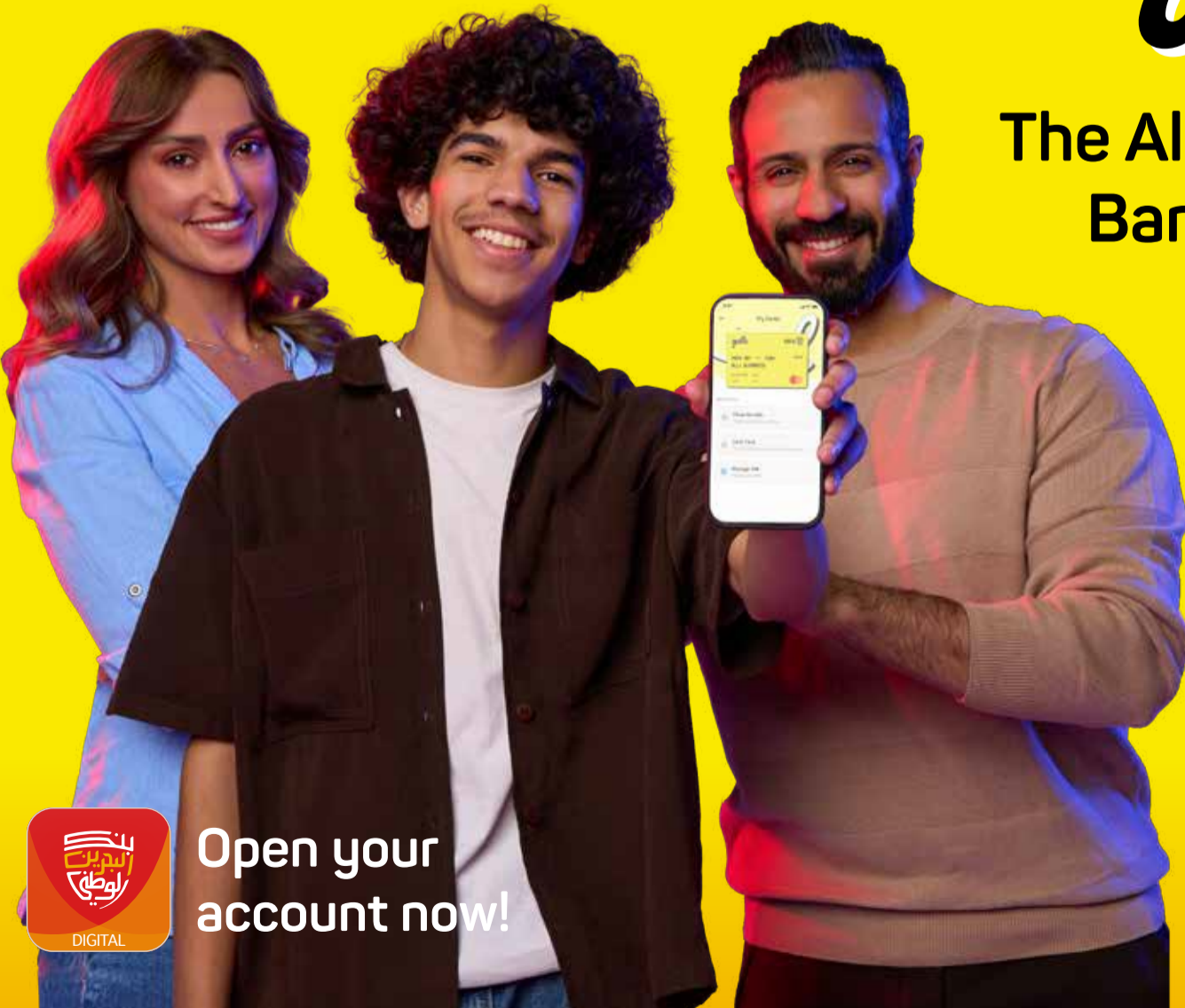
Habib emphasised that public trust in independent government institutions has been firmly established, marking the first challenge faced by these institutions since their inception.

She noted that people's confidence in the performance, credibility, seriousness, and neutrality of these institutions has grown significantly.



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Celebrating creativity

ICRF holds successful 16th Faber Castell Spectra painting competition



Winners of the painting competition with ICRF officials, guests, and other attendees

● **Winners announced on the same day**

TDT | Manama

The Indian Community Relief Fund (ICRF) conducted this year's painting competition titled "Faber Castell Spectra 2024" on 6 December 2023.

The Bahrain-Indian painting competition, aimed at encouraging and honoring artistic skills among the youth, is the largest art competition for students in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The 16th "Faber Castell Spectra" painting competition was held at the Indian School - Isa Town premises.

ICRF Chairman Adv. V K Thomas inaugurated the finale competition by lighting the lamp

in the presence of ICRF members and volunteers in the morning and the announcement of the art competition winners were held in the evening.

"Faber Castell Spectra 2024" had an overwhelming response this year which saw nearly 2,500 children from nearly 25 schools across Bahrain participating in the competition.

In addition, there was a competition for adults' group (18 years and above) as well.

The results were declared and the winners were honoured at a ceremony held at the Jashanmal Auditorium of Indian School Bahrain Isa Town campus.

Trophies and certificates

The top five winners in each category were awarded trophies and certificates and top 50 from each group received Medals and every participant will be pre-

sented with a certificate of participation.

Also all the participants were provided with drawing material by Faber Castell.

The Chief Guest of the Award Ceremony was His Excellency Mr Ahmed Jaafar Mohammed Al Hayki - Assistant Undersecretary for Labour Affairs and the Guest of Honors included His Excellency Talal Mannai - Member Shura Council, Mr Hussain Al Hussaini - Senior occupational Engineer, Ministry of Labour, Ms. Lovy Joseph - Director of Asian School, Mr. Gopinath Menon, Principal - New Indian School, Mr. James John - President KCA and Mr. Boban Idikkula, Managing Director -DT.

For the competition students were divided into four age groups - five to eight years, eight to eleven years, eleven to

thirteen years and fourteen to eighteen years.

Winners

Top 5 winners from each group were awarded trophies and certificates by His Excellency.

The winner in Group 1 is Jubal John Joji from New Millennium School, Second place Hasmitha S - New Millennium School, Third place Ria Raghavendra Kotian - The New Indian School, Fourth place Iffah Irfan Nakhwa - The Indian School Bahrain, Fifth place Dhruv Tiny Chandh - The Indian School Bahrain.

The winner in Group 2 is Ameya Suneesh from The Asian School, Second place Srihari Santhosh - The Indian School Bahrain, Third place Joel John Joji - New Millennium School, Fourth place Lakshya Ramakr-

ishnan - The Indian School Bahrain, Fifth place Andrea Shervin Vinish - The New Indian School.

The winner in Group 3 is Hannah Sarah Solomon from The New Indian School, Second place Devan Praveen - The Asian School, Third place Keerthana Harish K V - The Indian School Bahrain, Fourth place Neha Jagadeesh - The Indian School Bahrain, Fifth place Sanvi Krishna - The Asian School.

The winner in Group 4 is Theertha Sabu from the Asian School, Second place Ananya K Shareebkumar - The Indian School Bahrain, Third place Mathumitha Natarajan - The Indian School Bahrain, Fourth place Jasper John Elago - Britus International School, Fifth place Anghana Sreejith - The Indian School Bahrain.

IPO provisional results and allotment basis

TDT | Manama

SICO BSC (c), a leading regional asset manager, broker, and investment bank, with direct presence in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, announced yesterday the successful closing of the BD9 million initial public offering (IPO) of AlAbraaj Restaurants Group, which was significantly oversubscribed by 2.6 times.

These results reflect the provisional reconciliation of the data related to the application forms received.

The transaction comprised an offering of 38,181,818 shares at BD0.236 per share representing 35% of the company's total issued post-IPO share capital. The IPO generated total demand of over 99 million shares or over BD23 million between both the professional and retail tranches.

The IPO is structured with 70% of the shares on offer allocated to professional investors (i.e., those applying for 1.5 million shares or more), while 30% of the shares have been allocated to retail investors (i.e., those applying for less than 1.5 million shares).

Applications for professional investors represented over 300% of the shares earmarked for this category, and applications for retail investors represented over 130% of the shares in the retail category.

Winners of Sastra Pratibha Contest 2024 Announced

TDT | Manama

The Sastra Pratibha Contest 2024, organized by the Science International Forum (SIF) - Bahrain, concluded successfully on November 30, 2024.

This prestigious competition saw enthusiastic participation from students across seven schools in Bahrain, inspiring a passion for science and innovation among young minds.

The results, officially declared by Vijnana Bharati, were announced on December 7, 2024, by Dr. Ravi Warrior, Chairman of the SIF Bahrain Advisory Board.

The results announcement took place at the Manama office of SIF Bahrain in the presence of school representatives and the SIF Executive Committee.

SIF Bahrain congratulated all

the winners, they will be presented with trophies and certificates during the Science Fiesta on December 20, 2024.

Dr. Tessy Thomas, celebrated scientist and "Missile Woman of

India," as the Chief Guest.

The Sastra Pratibha Contest remains a flagship initiative to ignite young minds, providing a platform for students to explore the wonders of science

and fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation within the community.

The Science International Forum (SIF) - Bahrain is dedicated to nurturing scientific curiosity

and innovation through diverse initiatives, contests, and programs aimed at empowering the next generation of scientists and innovators.

Grade 6

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Gunjan Pal	Bahrain Indian School
2	Pratham Sumeet Khopkar	New Millennium School
3	Sreenand Prasad	New Horizon School
4	Anamaa Mohan Raj	New Indian School

Grade 7

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Shaurya Saxena	Bahrain Indian School
2	Amay Singh Dewan	Bahrain Indian School
3	Helga Mary Jeas	Asian School
4	Joanne Tivy Mathew	Indian School

Grade 8

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Swastika Kiran Patil	New Horizon School
2	Mohit Bhardwaj	Al Noor International School
3	Sivashree Perumal	Al Noor International School

Grade 9

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Shayaan Ahmed	Asian School
2	Nirupama Menon	New Millennium School
3	Daksh Choudhary	Bahrain Indian School

Grade 10

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Krishna Kishor Patel	New Millennium School
2	Tanish Mukherjee	Asian School
3	Rakshit Rajesh Mendon	Asian School

Grade 11

Sr. No.	Name of Student	School
1	Akshatha Saravanan	Indian School
2	Pulkit Singla	New Indian School
3	Darwina Manoj Amarnath	Bahrain Indian School

Verdict set for Bahraini 'money launderer'

H Naser

TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has adjourned until December 30th to deliver its verdict on a 30-year-old Bahraini man accused of money laundering.

The man, already sentenced to three years imprisonment and a BD5,000 fine for fraud, faces further charges related to a black magic scam.

The original fraud case involved the man posing as a faith healer who conned a Bahraini couple out of their wife's jewelry, two cars, a piece of land, and over BD100,000 in cash.

Hearing

The 30-year-old man refused to attend the hearing, while lawyer representing the victims, Zahra Ali, was present in the hearing, pressing for the seizure of assets to compensate her clients.

She highlighted that the original crime stemmed from the practice of black magic, fraud, and deception, and that the money in the defendant's account represented the proceeds from the sale of the fraudulently obtained land.

She also reiterated her invocation of Article 3 of the Anti-Money Laundering Law to protect the rights of those who acted in good faith.

Stage set for ISB Annual Cultural Fair 2024 in Isa Town

● **December 19 and 20**

TDT | Manama

The Indian School's Annual Cultural Fair 2024 is set to take place on December 19 and 20 at the school premises in Isa Town.

The fair is made possible with the support of Star Vision, the event management company.

The ticket launch for the much-anticipated event will occur today during the award ceremony of the youth festival,

which will be held at the school auditorium.

Opportunity

The main objective of the fair is to provide students with an opportunity to showcase their cultural talents through performances and to experience the performances of professional artists from India.

The first day of the fair will feature musical programme from South India led by actor and singer Vineeth Sreenivasan, while the second day will focus on North Indian cultural performances led by musician and



singer Twinkle Dipan Kar.

The fair will also feature licensed food stalls, offering a variety of culinary delights that will cater to the tastes of all visitors and various games for all age groups.

With an entry fee of BD2, the Annual Fair will include a wide array of cultural performances designed for families to enjoy together.

The fair will also offer exhibitions from various sectors, including art displays, food festivals, and more.

"The funds generated from the fair will be utilized for providing

support for economically underprivileged students, welfare activities for the staff, and to enhance the resources of the school. We request you to kindly extend your support and cooperation to raise the funds for the noble cause," said ISB Hon.Chairman Adv. Binu Mannil Varughese.

The school is excited to bring together students, families, and the wider community to make this event a resounding success.

The last Annual Fair was held in 2022, and the school is looking forward to welcoming visitors once again in 2024 to support this noble cause.

BisB announces digital account opening for GCC customers

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) has announced the launch of a new feature within the BisB Mobile App that allows customers Holding the Nationality of any of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to open accounts remotely.

With this Digital onboarding experience, clients across the



Fatema AlAlawi

GCC can conveniently open a range of accounts at BisB, including Tejoori Al Islami, Saving Accounts, Current Accounts (without a cheque book), and Investment Deposits. In addition, users can apply for both debit and prepaid cards directly from within the App, without the need for physical branch visits.

Ms. Fatema AlAlawi, Acting Chief Executive Officer at BisB

said, "We look forward to expanding our reach and setting new standards for Islamic digital banking with innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of users beyond Bahrain."

BisB encourages potential customers to explore the benefits of the new offering and open accounts at one of the Kingdom's leading Islamic banks from the comfort of their homes.

AlAbraaj Restaurants Group announces provisional results, allotment basis of IPO

TDT | Manama

SICO, a leading regional asset manager, broker, and investment bank, announced yesterday the successful closing of the BHD 9 million initial public offering of AlAbraaj Restaurants Group, which was oversubscribed by 2.6 times. These results reflect the provisional reconciliation of the data related to the application forms received.

The transaction comprised an offering of 38,181,818 shares at BD 0.236 per share representing 35% of the company's total issued post-IPO share capital. The IPO generated total demand of over 99 million shares or over BD 23 million between both the professional and retail tranches.

The IPO is structured with 70% of the shares on offer allocated to professional investors (i.e., those applying for 1.5 million shares or more), while



Najla Al Shirawi, Group Hamad Rashed Hilal Isa Wissam Haddad

30% of the shares have been allocated to retail investors (i.e., those applying for less than 1.5 million shares). Applications for professional investors represented over 300% of the shares earmarked for this category, and applications for retail investors represented over 130% of the shares in the retail category. As a number of professional investors exceeded the maximum allocation possible of 10% of the offer size, their bid will be reduced to such limit and the

excess will be allocated to the retail category, allowing for a full allocation of retail investors. Professional investors will be allotted shares as determined by the lead manager.

Najla Al Shirawi, Group CEO of SICO, stated, "The strong response to AlAbraaj Restaurants Group's IPO is a testament to the appeal of Al Abraaj's unique value proposition."

Wissam Haddad, Group Head of Investment Banking at SICO, added, "Going public provides

businesses with advantages including another currency to execute acquisitions through share swaps, wider access to capital, solid transparency and governance, and liquidity for shareholders."

Hamad Rashed Hilal Isa, Chairman of AlAbraaj Restaurants Group, said, "This achievement opens an exciting new chapter, enabling us to accelerate our regional expansion, enhance our brand portfolio, and create innovative dining experiences for a broader audience." Allotment notices will be emailed to investors and will also be available for collection from Bahrain Clear starting from 12 December and any refunds will be distributed on 15 December. On 19 December, the company's shares will be listed and will trade on the Bahrain Bourse under the ticker symbol ABRAAJ.

Wage increment: Tamkeen supports 25 Bahraini employees at Gulf Hotels Group



TDT | Manama

The Labour Fund "Tamkeen" announced its support for the wage increment of 25 Bahraini employees at Gulf Hotels Group. In addition, five employees have been enrolled in the Leadership Employment Programme.

This programme comes in alignment with Tamkeen's 2024 strategic priorities focused on economic impact and the private sector under three pillars: increasing economic participation through new employment opportunities for new entrants, expanding career development opportunities available to Bahraini workforces, and further developing the private sector by supporting enterprises and boosting productivity and adoption of technology.

On this occasion, Khalid Al Bayat, Chief Growth Officer

at Tamkeen, said: "We are committed to strengthening our partnerships with private sector enterprises that believe in investing in their national workforce and providing them with career development opportunities, thereby achieving the shared developmental objectives."

As stated by the Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Hotels Group, Mr. Ahmed Janahi: "Thanks to the Wage Increment Program, we were able to support 25 Bahraini employees across various departments. Additionally, the Leadership Employment Program has helped identify and develop leadership figures capable of taking on greater responsibilities and achieving the company's strategic goals."

Gulf Hotels Group is a leading institution in hotel management in Bahrain, established in 1967 under the name "Bahrain Hotels Company."

BisB launches new personal finance campaign

TDT | Manama

Coinciding with National Day celebrations, Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) has launched its new personal financing promotional campaign from 8th till 12th of December.

This exclusive offer is targeted towards Bahraini citizens



Faisal Hamed Al Abdulla

only, working in the entities and institutions listed in the approved list of Bahrain Islamic Bank.

They will benefit from competitive profit rates on personal financing solutions to meet their needs and requirements, including travel, education, home renovation, and other personal

goals.

Mr. Faisal Hamed Al Abdulla, Acting Head of Branches and Sales at BisB said, "At BisB, we remain committed to delivering personalised Islamic banking products that cater to the needs and requirements of our key customer segments."

Tamkeen launches open innovation programme

For large enterprises to adopt innovative solutions with SMEs and Startups

TDT | Manama

As part of its commitment to champion innovation in the local market and to encourage startups, small, and medium-sized enterprises to innovate, research, and develop, The Labour Fund "Tamkeen" announced the signing of a partnership agreement with "Brinc" to launch the Open Innovation Program. This programme will enable large enterprises to address the challenges they face by leveraging innovative solutions provided by startups and SMEs.

The Programme is in its first edition and will focus on leading Bahraini enterprises in the manufacturing, financial services, and telecommunications sectors. The programme will assess the main challenges facing these enterprises and iden-



Maha Mofeez

tify the most pressing challenge to address, then match them with startups or SMEs to develop solutions that address these challenges.

"This programme comple-



Yasin Aboudaoud

ments Tamkeen's ongoing efforts to enhance the business ecosystem in the Kingdom of Bahrain as part of our strategic priorities for this year," said The Labour Fund (Tamkeen) Chief Executive Ms. Maha Mofeez.

On this occasion, Yasin Aboudaoud, Chief Development Officer & MP at Brinc.io stated: "Being selected as Tamkeen's partner in the Open Innovation

Programme is a testament to our commitment to being catalysts for innovation in Bahrain and the region.

This collaboration will provide a valuable opportunity for startups and SMEs that have at least one year of experience in developing technological solutions and new, more efficient, and sustainable services. This, in turn, will enhance the performance of large enterprises while providing these enterprises with the opportunity to expand their customer base and secure business agreements with major enterprises. Tamkeen will support the development of initial solutions during this phase.

Startups and SMEs can express their interest in participating in this challenge by registering via <https://openinnovation.bh/>

NBB announces year-end Thara'a grand prize draw offering USD 2,000,000 and luxury villa

TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) is set to conclude the year with its highly anticipated Thara'a Grand Prize Draw which will offer an extraordinary opportunity for 3 customers to win life-changing rewards.

The December draw will see two lucky winners secure a cash prize of USD 1,000,000 each, totalling USD 2,000,000, while one winner will claim a luxury villa.

Launched earlier this year, the Thara'a Prize Account has offered unparalleled rewards to promote a culture of saving among NBB's clientele. The Bank invites customers to be a part of the final grand



draw of 2024 by conveniently opening their Thara'a Prize Accounts via the NBB Digital Banking App or visiting any of its branches and depositing before 31st December 2024 for a chance to win the grand prizes.

US imposes trade curbs on China, Russia firms over human rights

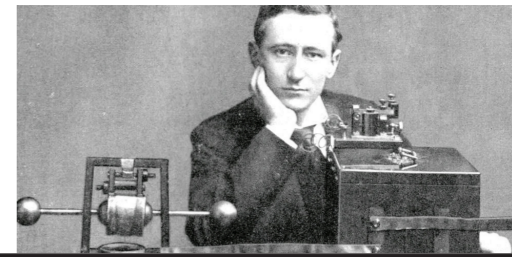
Washington, United States

The United States unveiled trade restrictions Tuesday on eight companies, including two Chinese firms and several from Russia, alleging human rights violations.

The China-based companies identified include Zhejiang Uniview Technologies, which US officials accuse of enabling human rights vio-

lations such as surveillance of Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups.

The other firm named by the US Commerce Department was Beijing Zhongdun Security Technology Group, which is said to develop and sell products allowing public security authorities to carry out rights violations.



News in brief

◆ **The United States** offered \$10 million reward on Tuesday for information leading to the arrest of a Chinese man and co-conspirators wanted for hacking computer firewalls. Guan Tianfeng, 30, is believed to be living in China's Sichuan province, according to the State Department. An indictment charging Guan with conspiracy to commit computer fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud was unsealed on Tuesday. The Treasury Department said it had imposed sanctions on the company Guan worked for, Sichuan Silence Information Technology Co Ltd.



US offers \$10 mn reward for wanted Chinese hacker

◆ **The UN General Assembly** will vote Wednesday on a draft resolution that seeks an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, a symbolic gesture after the US previously vetoed a similar action in the UN Security Council. In addition to calling for "an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire," the draft resolution seeks "the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages," an accommodation of the United States and other staunch allies of Israel. The resolution, which is non-binding, also demands "immediate access" to widespread humanitarian aid for the citizens of Gaza, who have been subjected to more than a year of war with Israel, especially in the besieged north of the territory.

◆ **Tech giant Apple** yesterday rolled out major updates to its artificial intelligence offerings that integrate OpenAI's ChatGPT into its native applications, including Siri, on the iPhone. In a notable shift for the privacy-focused company, Apple has partnered with OpenAI to integrate ChatGPT into its Writing Tools and Siri virtual assistant, allowing users of the latest iPhone or iPad to access the AI chatbot without leaving Apple's ecosystem. The move, first announced in June, marks Apple's most significant push into generative artificial intelligence, as the company aims to compete with rivals Google and Samsung, who have already integrated similar AI features into their Android-operated devices. Since OpenAI launched ChatGPT in 2022, Apple has been seeking to persuade doubters on its AI strategy, after Microsoft and Google rolled out products in rapid-fire succession. The ChatGPT features fall under the iPhone maker's "Apple Intelligence" system, which also includes an AI-powered image editing tool called Image Playground and an emoji generator dubbed Genmoji.

Apple adds ChatGPT integration in latest software update



SPOTLIGHT

Malaria mortality returns to pre-Covid levels: WHO



AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

Since then the total number of deaths from malaria, which is caused by a mosquito-borne parasite, has gradually shrunk, as has the mortality rate.

The estimated 2023 mortality rate in Africa of 52.4 deaths per 100,000 population at risk meanwhile still remains more than double the target level set by a global strategy for combatting malaria through 2030, WHO said, insisting "progress must be accelerated". WHO pointed to the wider rollout of malaria vaccines as a promising development, expected to save tens of thousands of young lives each year. The two jobs currently in effect, RTS,S and R21/Matrix-M, hold the promise of significantly easing the burden on Africa, which accounts for up to 95 percent of all malaria deaths. Malaria vaccines were first introduced in April 2019, first in Malawi, with Kenya and Ghana following suit.

New Syria PM says all religious groups' rights 'guaranteed'

◆ **HTS is rooted in Syria's branch of Al-Qaeda and is proscribed as a terrorist organisation by many Western governments**

AFP | Damascus, Syria

Syria's new prime minister said the Islamist-led alliance that ousted president Bashar al-Assad will "guarantee" the rights of all religious groups and called on the millions who fled the war to return home.

Assad fled Syria after a lightning offensive spearheaded by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group and its allies, which brought to a spectacular end five decades of brutal rule by his clan. Syrians across the country and around the world erupted in celebration, after enduring a stifling five decades that saw anyone suspected of dissent thrown into jail or killed.

With Assad's overthrow plunging Syria into the unknown, its new rulers have sought to assure members of the country's religious minorities that they will not repress them. HTS is rooted in Syria's branch of Al-Qaeda and is proscribed as a terrorist organisation by many Western governments, though it has sought to moderate its rhetoric. "Precisely because we are Islamic, we will guarantee the rights of all people and all sects in Syria," said Mohammad al-Bashir, whom the rebels appointed as the transitional head of government.

Tomb of Assad's father set on fire in Syria hometown



This combination of pictures created on December 11, 2024 shows one (L) of rebel fighters standing the same day next to the burning gravestone of Syria's late president Hafez al-Assad at his mausoleum in the family's ancestral village of Qardaha in the western Latakia province, after it was stormed by opposition factions

Syria

The tomb of ousted Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's father Hafez was torched in his hometown of Qardaha, AFP footage taken Wednesday showed.

Asked whether Syria's new constitution would be Islamic, he told Italian daily Corriere della Sera that "we will clarify all these details during the constituent process". Bashir, whose appointment was announced Tuesday, is tasked with heading the multi-ethnic, multi-sectarian country until March 1. After decades of iron-fisted rule by the Assads -- adherents of the minority Alawite offshoot of Shi'ite Islam -- Syrians now face the enormous challenge of charting a new course as they emerge from nearly 14 years of war. Roaming the opulent Damascus home of Assad, Abu Omar felt a sense of giddy defiance being in the residence of the man he said had long oppressed him. "I am so happy to be here in the middle of his house," said the 44-year-old. "I came for revenge. They oppressed us in incredible ways," he added.

with rebel fighters in fatigues and young men watching it burn.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor told AFP the rebels had set fire to the mausoleum, located in the Latakia heartland of Assad's Alawite community. The vast elevated structure atop a hill has an intricate architectural design with several arches, its exterior embellished with ornamentation etched in stone. It also houses the tombs of other Assad family members, including Bashar's brother Bassel, who was being groomed to inherit power before he was killed in a road accident in 1994.

Qatar said yesterday that it would soon reopen its embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus after president Bashar al-Assad's ouster in an Islamist-led rebel offensive.

The Gulf country "will soon reopen its embassy in the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic after completing the necessary arrangements", foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said in a statement. The move aimed to "strengthen the close historical fraternal ties between the two countries", said the statement. It also sought to "enhance coordination with relevant authorities to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid currently provided by Qatar to the Syrian people" via an air bridge, it added. Doha closed its diplomatic mission in Damascus and recalled its ambassador in July 2011 after an uprising against the Assad government turned into a civil war.



Syrians living in Turkey arrive with their belongings at the Oncupinar border crossing before entering Syria, in Kilis

Los Angeles, United States

A man who threw himself captured on a video that went viral was jailed for up to 65 years on Tuesday. Deobra Redden, 31, hurled himself over the bench at Judge Mary Kay Holthus when she was about to sentence him for an earlier crime. Footage of the January attack shows punches flying in all directions as Redden continues to flail even as a marshal, court staff and lawyers try to restrain him. The assault left the judge badly shaken and a marshal needed hospital treatment. At a hearing in Las Vegas on Tuesday, Judge Susan Johnson sentenced Redden to serve between 26 and 65 years. Earlier, Redden told the judge he was not evil. "I know that I'm not a bad person," he said. "I believe that you all know I'm not an evil person."

Redden's lawyer, Carl Arnold, said his client has battled with severe mental illness for most of his life, and had not been on his medication at the time of the outrage. "He is deeply remorseful," Arnold said Tuesday. "The first time that he saw the entire video... his reaction was very visceral. It was almost like he wanted to throw up." "He called himself a monster. 'That's me? I did that? I did not mean to hurt that woman like that'."

Netanyahu aide on trial in new case troubling Israeli PM

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

As the corruption trial of Benjamin Netanyahu resumed this week, Israel was gripped by another scandal involving the prime minister and the alleged leaking of classified documents.

Eli Feldstein, a former adviser to Netanyahu, is accused in the case of leaking a classified document related to hostage negotiations in Gaza to shift critical media coverage of the Israeli leader. The case, critics say, highlights deep-seated corruption inside his office, including attempts to sway public opinion amid a divisive war. It also casts a spotlight on disciplinary issues faced by the Israeli military during the wars in Gaza and Lebanon. Feldstein, who was released

to house arrest on Tuesday, allegedly received the classified information from a reservist noncommissioned officer who has not yet been named.

In a combative press conference on Monday, Netanyahu said the charges against Feldstein were a part of a broader attack against him and his supporters. "I do not intend to get involved in ongoing investigations, but I want to talk about this here as well," Netanyahu said in response to a question from a journalist about the affair.

He said he was shocked by the investigation and the methods used by law enforcement officials to extract information, adding the overarching goal was to get his former aides to give up sensitive information about him.

US man who attacked judge in viral video jailed



Los Angeles, United States

The defense budget is bloated. Defense contractors engage in fraud and waste. That's why we should cut military spending by 10%. I hope Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) will support that effort. @SenSanders

On Tuesday judge Johnson said Redden's assault had been "an attack on the judiciary."

Gaps in birth registration leave 150 million children 'invisible': UNICEF

United Nations, United States

Despite recent progress in birth registration, some 150 million children worldwide remain "invisible," deprived of legal identity and exposed to the risk of statelessness and rights violations. The UN children's agency in a new report estimated that 77 percent of children under age five have had their births registered in the last five years,

up two percentage points from 2019. But even with such "notable strides," 150 million young children are in legal limbo by having not been registered, with 50 million more who have been registered but possess no official birth certificate. Birth certificates are critical for asserting a person's identity and age. Such proof is often essential for establishing nationality and protection from child labor, forced marriage or underage recruitment.

Father, step-mum guilty of murdering British-Pakistani girl

AFP | London, United Kingdom

The father and stepmother of a 10-year-old British-Pakistani girl were found guilty yesterday of her murder in a gruesome case of child abuse that has shocked the UK.

Urfaan Sharif, 42, and Beinash Batool, 30, were convicted of Sara Sharif's murder after she was found dead at her home last year, having suffered extensive injuries including broken bones, burns and bite marks.

Her uncle Faisal Malik, 29, was also found guilty of causing or allowing her death after a week of jury deliberations at London's Old Bailey criminal court. The sentencing for the "extremely stressful and traumatic" case will take place next Tuesday, the judge said. Sara was found dead in her bed in Woking, southwest of London, on August 10, 2023. The three convicted family members had fled to Pakistan the day before. They were arrested after returning to the UK a month later. When cross-examined at the highly-charged trial last month, Sharif, a taxi driver, admitted to killing his daughter, but maintained he had not meant to harm her. He had initially denied all charges and blamed Batool for Sara's death. Sharif also admitted causing multiple fractures in the weeks



L-R) Urfaan Sharif, Beinash Batool and Faisal Malik, respectively father, stepmother and uncle of British-Pakistani girl Sara Sharif in custody.



British-Pakistani girl Sara Sharif at school.

before Sara's death, using a cricket bat on her as she was bound with packaging tape, throttling her with his bare hands and breaking the hyoid bone in her neck. Batool, who did not give ev-

idence, had refused to provide dental imprints for the bite marks found on Sara. The prosecutor said Batool and Malik had a "strong case" against them, by "the fact they lived with Sara as she was gradually being

beaten to death." A post-mortem found the child had suffered at least 25 broken bones.

On arriving in Islamabad after fleeing last year, Sharif phoned British police and told them he had beaten his daughter "too much". A written confession was also found beside Sara's body. However, during the trial, all three family members entered not guilty pleas.

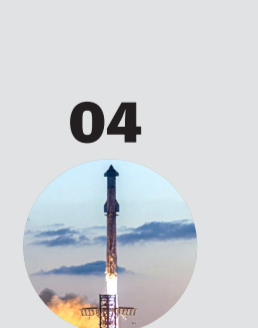
Sharif had gained custody of Sara after separating from his first wife and despite allegations of being abusive towards his ex-wife, the jury was told during the trial. "None of us can imagine how appalling and brutal Sara's treatment was in the last few weeks of her short life," Libby Clark from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said after the conviction. "We have today secured justice for Sara, a bubbly young girl, who was killed by the adults who should have protected her," Clark added.



Honoured to release a compendium of Mahakavi Subramania Bharati's works. His vision for a prosperous India and the empowerment of every individual continues to inspire generations.



The defense budget is bloated. Defense contractors engage in fraud and waste. That's why we should cut military spending by 10%. I hope Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) will support that effort.



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

Auto

Renault to redefine vehicle design

TDT | agencies

Renault plans to launch its next generation of vehicles in 2028, moving away from traditional SUV designs in favour of completely new body styles, according to media reports. The French carmaker has already provided a glimpse of this new direction with its Embleme Concept, which reflects its upcoming design language, as confirmed by Renault's design chief, Gilles Vidal.

These new models will be built on a fresh platform that promises "radical advances in efficiency and sustainability."

Discussing the Embleme Concept, Vidal explained, "The Embleme better represents what's next for the brand globally in terms of design—introducing potentially new silhouettes for the future. It features generous shapes, not overly minimalistic, but simpler than recent designs like the Scenic."

Vidal addressed the challenges of reimagining vehicle concepts, asking,

"How do you reinvent the next step in terms of concepts and silhouettes? What purpose should they serve? What story should they tell?"

He acknowledged the ongoing demand for SUVs despite growing criticism, noting that they often meet practical needs. "SUVs have largely replaced MPVs, and some people still choose them for their versatility," Vidal said.

"But

this raises questions about how we can create something less controversial in terms of heritage, more efficient, and deserving of a new form."

While recognising the continued need for larger vehicles, Vidal questioned their evolution. "What character do you give to these products?" he asked. "And beyond that, what's next? It feels like we've seen it all—whether it's the Espace, the Scenic, or oversized SUVs.

Yet, with almost 140 years of automobile history, surely there are new, meaningful concepts and silhouettes to address the pressing questions of today's society."



Croatian sculpture honours emigrant legacy with Mercedes-Benz monument



A life-sized Mercedes-Benz, model V115, carved in local limestone, in the Croatian south-western town of Imotski



A 1980 Mercedes-Benz is driven in the streets near to a newly unveiled life-sized Mercedes-Benz, model V115, carved in local limestone



Fran Marko Vlahinic (R), sculpture student from Zagreb, and Ivan Topic, who has launched the idea

TDT | agencies

Rising from a pile of limestone boulders on the outskirts of a small Croatian town, a life-sized sculpture of a vintage Mercedes-Benz resembles a mini Mount Rushmore. This unique tribute pays homage to thousands of emigrants who returned to Imotski from Ger-

many, proudly driving what was considered the ultimate status symbol.

Like many economically disadvantaged regions across Southeast Europe and Türkiye, Imotski saw thousands of its residents leave in the 1960s and 1970s to work in Germany as "gastarbeiters" or guest workers. For those who re-

turned home behind the wheel of a Mercedes-Benz, the car became a powerful symbol of success.

"It was a mark of achievement—anyone who owned one could choose his girlfriends and sit in the front row at church," said Ivan Topic, the initiator of the monument. Topic spent 18 years working in construction in Frankfurt before moving back to Imotski in 1997. Topic conceived

the idea for the monument, likening the timeless durability of the classic 1960s W115 saloon, affectionately called "Minika" locally, to the resilience of the region's people.

"That car was way ahead of its time and remains modern even today," he told Agence France-Presse (AFP) as workers applied the finishing touches to the sculpture, crafted from the area's signature white karst stone.



Mercedes-Benz W126 S-Class, which set new standards for luxury and safety in the automotive industry, was one of the first cars to feature an integrated driver airbag and an anti-lock braking system (ABS) as optional equipment, both groundbreaking innovations at the time.

Uber launches Robotaxi Services in Abu Dhabi



TDT | agencies

Uber has introduced its Robotaxi services in Abu Dhabi, marking its first international initiative to integrate autonomous vehicles from multiple operators onto its platform. The launch is part of Uber's collaboration with WeRide, a Chinese autonomous driving startup.

Abu Dhabi customers can now book WeRide autonomous vehicles via the TXAI

app. Initially, these vehicles will include safety drivers, but fully driverless operations are planned for 2025. Fares for these rides will match UberX and Uber Comfort pricing and must be paid upfront.

WeRide, which holds driverless operation permits in the UAE, Singapore, China, and the USA, partnered with Uber last year. Despite this collaboration, Uber has no current plans to expand its partnership with WeRide beyond the UAE.



President and CEO of Honda Cars India Takuya Tsumura poses during the launch event of the third-generation Honda Amaze 2024 car in New Delhi

Honda plans first EV with solid-state batteries by 2030



TDT | agencies

Honda is gearing up to introduce its first electric vehicle featuring solid-state batteries by the end of the decade, according to reports. These next-generation batteries are touted to be 50% smaller, 35% lighter, and 25% cheaper to produce than current lithium-ion cells, while also being safer and capable of faster charging.

One of the standout features of Honda's solid-state batter-

ies is their potential driving range of up to 620 miles (1,000 km) on a single charge—nearly double that of many mass-market EVs today. By 2040, Honda aims to extend this range to 776 miles (1,250 km) while further reducing the size, weight, and cost of the batteries.

Honda has already established a pilot production facility to refine the process of manufacturing solid-state batteries on a mass scale. Test production is set to commence soon.

Classifieds

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CONTINUED

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Extreme thrills for speed lovers @ BIC



TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East', hosts back-to-back experiences from morning to night on Saturday for race fans to enjoy supreme thrills that are available nowhere else in the kingdom.

Set to take place from 8am to 3pm is BIC's widely popular Track Experiences, where speed lovers can get into three ultra-quick cars – either as a driver or a passenger – for an adventure like no other. Then, from 4pm to 11pm, BIC opens its doors for Open Track Night, offering the chance to power along a Formula 1 host circuit in one's very own car or motorbike.

Those interested in taking part in either experience can book their slot online at bah-

raingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

In Track Experiences, race enthusiasts will have the opportunity to get into the hot seat of a Renault Clio Cup sports car or in SR1 or SR3 Radical cars.

An awesome introduction into the high-octane world of motorsport awaits in the Clio Cup Driver Experience. Participants will buckle up in a Renault Clio Cup – boasting a 1.6-litre, Turbocharged engine – and take it out onto the track behind a professional instructor in a lead-follow manner.

The Radical SR1 Driving Experience is ideal for amateurs and racers alike in a car boasting a 185bhp engine. The Radical SR3 Passenger Experience will take fans from zero to 100kph in about 3.4 seconds, making for an amazing series of laps around BIC.



The cost to get behind the wheel for the Clio Cup Driver Experience is BD121. For the Radical SR1 Driver Experience, the cost is BD132, while the Radical SR3 Passenger Experience is BD38.500.

The action at BIC on Saturday then shifts into a different gear with Open Track Night being held in twilight conditions and under lights.

This experience offers motorsport lovers a memorable drive in the seat of their very own private vehicles, and this Saturday's Open Track Night will be held along BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix circuit – the same layout used in the Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix.

Open Track is one of the most sought-after public activities at BIC, and driver etiquette is of ultimate importance. There is no close or aggressive overtak-

ing permitted. Overtaking is by invitation between corners and driving is monitored, with poor or dangerous driving being dealt with swiftly.

Those interested in taking part can book their slot in advance to get a reduced rate. The cost for the full night is BD99, while the half night is BD71.500. A single session is also available for BD33.

If booking on the night itself, the cost for the full night is BD115.500, BD82.500 for half the night, and BD44 for a single session.

Instructor sessions are also available, while additional drivers and passengers can participate, all for an additional fee.

For more information on Track Experiences, Open Track Night, or other events and activities at BIC, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline.

BRAVE International Combat Week: BRAVE Combat Federation and Batelco join hands

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation and Batelco have announced an exciting association for the 2024 BRAVE International Combat Week.

BRAVE Combat Federation, the most global MMA organization in the world, and Bahrain's leading integrated communications provider, Batelco, have further strengthened their relationship as Batelco has been announced as the official Telecommunication Partner for the 2024 BRAVE International Combat Week.

A part of the Beyon Group, Batelco was established in 1981 and has been providing telecommunication services in the Kingdom of Bahrain for over four decades. Earlier this year, Batelco and BRAVE Combat Federation signed a strategic partnership aimed at enhancing the experience of martial arts fans and making premium combat sports content more accessible.

Building on this historic collaboration, Batelco and BRAVE Combat Federation will now join hands for the upcoming edition of BRAVE International Combat Week. Set to become the biggest combat sports festival in the world, the event will feature BRAVE CF 91 on December 13, the IMMAF Youth Asian Championships on December 14 and 15, and BRAVE CF 92 on December 15.

BRAVE International Combat Week will showcase the best MMA talent from around the world in the Kingdom of Bahrain and is set to be the biggest indoor sports event in the country's history.

FIFA to confirm Saudi Arabia as 2034 World Cup hosts

Lausanne, Switzerland

FIFA is set to confirm on Wednesday that Saudi Arabia will host the 2034 World Cup while a joint bid by Morocco, Spain and Portugal which also features matches in South America will be awarded the 2030 tournament.

The awarding of hosting rights for both tournaments will go to a vote during a FIFA Congress to be held virtually, but there is no doubt about the outcomes with neither bid having a rival.

As for 2034, FIFA invoked its principle of rotating its flagship tournament between continents, only welcoming bids from Asia or Oceania -- the 2026 World Cup, the first involving 48 teams, will take place across North America.

From Karate to MMA

Seth Rosario set for career-defining India vs Pakistan showdown at BRAVE CF 92

TDT | Manama

India's Seth Rosario and Pakistan's Abbas Khan will lock horns at BRAVE CF 92 in Bahrain on December 15, in one of five India vs. Pakistan matchups on the fight card.

The fight marks Seth's BRAVE CF debut, and for the Indian MMA veteran, it is set to be a career-defining moment.

Born in the United States, Seth relocated to India at the age of 11. His journey into combat sports began when his brother took him to a Karate class for fun and Seth quickly fell in love with the sport.

One thing led to another and



in 2014, Seth transitioned into MMA, starting in the regional amateur circuit. A year later, he made a statement with his professional debut by knocking out a regional champion. Fast

forward to 2024, Seth holds a professional record of six wins and five losses, with three victories by submission—an impressive achievement for someone from a Karate background.

Inspired by MMA legends like Georges St-Pierre and Karate-based fighters such as Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson, Seth has evolved his fighting style over the years. Now, he successfully blends the skills he gained from his Karate background with BJJ skills, a combination that has ensured he has never been submitted in his MMA career.

Known for being a calm and composed fighter within the Indian MMA community, Seth is someone that also values the psychological aspects of preparation, such as managing adrenaline and staying composed under pressure.

Thrills galore @ National Race Day



TD | Manama

National Race Day produced plenty of thrills in the third round of its 2024/2025 season, held last weekend at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

The Kingdom's three premier local racing championships were in action along the 2.55-kilometre Inner Track at 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East'.

Taking wins in the 2024/2025 Bahrain Touring Car Challenge (BTCC) were Moaaz Elzahrawi and Isa Ebrahim, while Saud Al Toura and Ali Bousheri were both triumphant in the Bahrain Motorcycle Championship (BMC).

Also claiming victories in Time Attack were Ahmed Algaidy, Abdulla Khojah, Abdullah Shukri, Rakan Al Saheel, Ali Almansoori, Mazen Dabbous, Sultan Turki Al Saud, Yazeed Sameer Al Saheel, Hazim Mohammed Al Dabbagh, and Hisham Badiea Al Badiea.

Round three

Round three of National Race Day was organised and run by BIC, in cooperation with the Bahrain Motor Federation, the Circuit Racing Commission, the Bahrain Motorcycle Commission, the Bahrain Autocross and Drift Commission, and the Motorsport Marshals Club.

In the BTCC, Elzahrawi was the leader from the start. After topping the timesheet in practice

and then snatching pole in qualifying, Elzahrawi won the first 15-lap race in his Honda Civic with a time of 23 minutes 15.276 seconds. Ebrahim finished as the runner-up with a 3.440 seconds gap, while Ali Baqer was third 6.473s back while also taking the win amongst BTCC junior participants. Both Ebrahim and Baqer were also behind the wheel of a Civic.

In race two, following a 30-second penalty on Elzahrawi for overtaking under the formation lap, Ebrahim took the win in 21:24.246 after 15 laps. Finishing second was the Radio Bahrain entrant in a Honda Integra 10.743s adrift, while Baqer took his second overall podium for the event, as well as his second junior class win, 11.390s from

Ebrahim. In the BMC, Al Toura was quickest overall in practice but Saif Al Buainain took pole after pipping Al Toura by 0.033s in qualifying.

In the single 14-lap race, however, Al Toura triumphed amongst a 14-runner field with a time of 19:16.674 in his BMW S 1000 RR, competing in the 1,000cc class. Nawaf Al Shuabi was second overall 0.865s back in his Honda CPR 100 RR, while Bousheri came third in his Honda CBR 600 RR 1.089s adrift while also clinching the 600cc win.

In Time Attack, the meeting featured two heats for each of the competition categories.

Algaidy won both times in the SU class in his AMG GTR car with a best time of 1:13.266 in heat one

and 1:12.691 in heat two. Khojah followed suit in the MA category, winning in his Audi RS3 with a quickest mark of 1:18.389 in heat one and 1:17.581 in heat two.

In the SA class, Shukri triumphed in heat one in his Ford Shelby GT350 with a mark of 1:18.649, while Rakan Al Saheel won in heat two in his Porsche 718 Spyder with a time of 1:18.306.

In the MB category, Almansoori took first place in heat one driving his Mazda MX5 in 1:23.165, while Dabbous won in heat two with a mark of 1:23.238 in his Subaru Brz.

Al Saud was then triumphant in both heats in his Toyota GR86. He won the first time out in 1:22.758 and then completed his double in 1:22.325.

In the ULA class, Yazeed Sameer Al Saheel won in heat one driving his Porsche GT3RS to a fastest time of 1:10.678. Al Dabbagh was then the victor in the second heat in his Porsche 992 GT3RS with a time of 1:10.488.

Al Badiea completed the round's list of winners by taking both heats in the ULB category. He won heat one in his Lotus Exige in 1:18.412, and then took heat two in 1:18.264.

Podium

Following all the action, the winners were presented their prizes in the podium ceremonies. Seven rounds of National Race Day are scheduled to take place this 2024/2025 season, to be held all the way through to May.

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