

**Maloney, Browning set testing pace**

Rodin Motorsport, Hitech Pulse-Eight drivers top timesheets on second day of Formula 2, Formula 3 pre-season testing in Bahrain | P12

WORLD 6 'Tears, hugs' as two Gaza hostages rescued

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**HM King Hamad to receive Amir of Kuwait today**



HM the King

TDT | Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa will receive His Highness Shaikh Mishal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, upon his arrival to Bahrain today, the Royal Court announced yesterday.

HM King Hamad and HH Shaikh Mishal Al Sabah are scheduled to hold talks that will discuss the historical Bahrain-Kuwait relations and the latest regional and international developments.

The Royal Court welcomed the visit of HH Shaikh Mishal and his accompanying delegation.

**Visa Fee Surge**

**No more 'free visa'; visit to work visa change to cost BD 250**

TDT | Manama

The Interior Ministry has decided to stop changing visit visas to work or dependent visas without a sponsor.

It was also agreed to increase the fees for changing visit visas to work or dependency visas from BD60 to BD250 only if it will be for the same sponsor.

**Ex-Guantanamo prisoners freed**

AFF | Kabul

Two former prisoners held at the US detention centre in Guantanamo Bay until 2017 were welcomed home to Afghanistan yesterday, more than 20 years after they were arrested.

220 fils (includes VAT)



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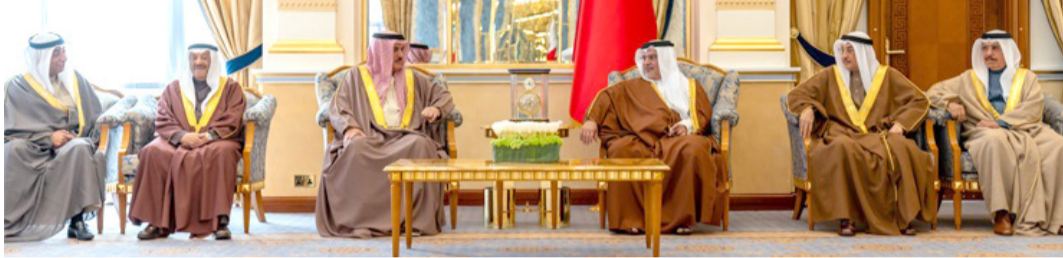
**Private sector hailed as 'significant driver of growth'**

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, highlighted the development of the private sector and emphasised its importance as a significant driver of growth.

He commended the private sector's key role to contribute to supporting development efforts and to spur the creation of quality opportunities for Bahraini citizens.

HRH Prince Salman was speaking as he met yesterday with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, His Excellency Ahmed bin Salman Al-Musallam, and the Chairman of the Shura Council, H.E. Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh, and the Shura and Representative Council deputies and their heads of



HRH Prince Salman meets with Speaker Al-Musallam and Chairman Al Saleh

committees at Gudaibiya Palace.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister lauded the efforts of Team Bahrain, comprising of the Executive and Legislative Authorities, the private sector and civil societies, and their commitment to the Kingdom of Bahrain's development, in line with the vision and aspirations of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

His Royal Highness noted the importance of furthering the Kingdom's accomplishments and development across various sectors, which reflects the essence of Team Bahrain and its successes.

He noted that the Kingdom's interests are at the forefront of the various efforts to achieve a better present and a prosperous future for the Kingdom and its

citizens.

**Determination**

His Royal Highness expressed the Kingdom's determination to achieve its wide-ranging development goals aimed at benefiting citizens through numerous initiatives and plans.

He emphasised that this will be achieved through the determination of Team Bahrain

from their various workplaces as it continues to turn challenges into successes through a passion for achievement.

Speaker Al-Musallam and Chairman Al Saleh expressed their gratitude to HRH Prince Salman for his commitment to supporting Executive and Legislative collaboration and integration and affirming his commitment to achieving the Kingdom's development to benefit Bahraini citizens.

The Deputy Prime Minister, HE Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, the Minister of Interior, HE General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, several ministers, and the Chairman of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce, HE Sameer Abdulla Nass, also attended the meeting.

**Road to home and retirement**

HRH Prince Salman orders easy access and benefits for Khatwa Program applicants



TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, directed the relevant authorities to accept applications from those who meet the Khatwa Program for Home Projects' legal requirements for eligibility for a retirement pension.

This came following the Cabinet's approval of a memorandum by the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs regarding the report submitted by the team responsible for researching aspects of the Khatwa Program for Home Projects.

The Cabinet, chaired yesterday by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, also approved the recommendation from the Ministerial Committee for Legal and Legislative Affairs that the National Audit Office conduct a review of aspects of the programme's registration and



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting at Gudaibiya Palace

retirement procedures

The Cabinet extended its deepest condolences to His Majesty the King, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Bahrain's citizens, and the family of the fallen serviceman, Major Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi, who was killed in a terrorist attack, along with several servicemen of the UAE, while performing training missions in Somalia.

The Cabinet also extended its condolences to the fallen servicemen of the UAE and wished a speedy recovery for those who have been injured.

**Congratulations**

It congratulated His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Bahraini citizens on the 23rd anniversary of the adoption of the National Action Charter. The Cabinet commended

the Kingdom's achievements following the adoption of the National Action Charter, which has contributed to progress and development across all sectors.

The Cabinet highlighted the importance of the Shield of Bahrain Project Cobra Z aircrafts, which were inaugurated by His Majesty the King, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, as well as the Kingdom of Bahrain's naval ship the RBNS Khalid bin Ali, which was inaugurated by HRH Prince Salman.

Both the Project Cobra Z aircraft and the RBNS Khalid bin Ali are valuable additions to the BDF's combat readiness. The Cabinet further emphasised the critical role these assets play in supporting the ongoing development and modernisation efforts of the Bahrain Defence Force, enhancing its capabilities in performing its national duties.

**Outcomes**

The Cabinet commended the outcomes of the third meeting of the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council, co-chaired by HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



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# Time Travel in Bahrain

Expats invited to unearth Kingdom's rich heritage through archaeological adventures

**Ashen Tharaka**

In a unique initiative blending sport and culture, the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA) is inviting expats and citizens alike to explore the Kingdom's fascinating archaeological sites. This exciting program aims to raise awareness of Bahrain's rich heritage and offer residents a novel way to spend their leisure time.

The inaugural event, a 5km "Walkathon," saw over 200 participants, including expats from diverse backgrounds like Germany, Japan, the Philippines, the UK, India, and Saudi Arabia. Even ambassadors residing in Bahrain joined the walk, exploring the ancient Dilmun burial mounds between Riffa and Aali. "We welcome expats to delve deeper into our archaeological sites and delve into Bahrain's heritage," stated Salman Almahari, Director of Archaeology and Museums at BACA.

"They are welcome to participate in future events like the Walkathon and 'Little Archaeologist,' both incredibly engaging programs," he further stated to the Daily Tribune.

## Archaeological sites into leisure parks on track

This initiative also includes



Exploring the archaeological sites



Participants in the 5km Walkathon (Pictures by Ashen Tharaka)

plans to transform archaeological sites into vibrant leisure parks. The latest excavation site in Hamad Town, featuring a 4km irrigation channel discovered by British archaeologists, is slated to become a recreational park after the second phase of excavation is complete. "We began digging again during the winter, but haven't unearthed any significant artifacts yet," explained Almahari. The recent research by a British



"We welcome expats to delve deeper into our archaeological sites and delve into Bahrain's heritage."

- SALMAN ALMAHARI, DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUMS AT BACA

scholar revealed a distinctive triangle-shaped channel designed to expedite water delivery to the Karzakan village. Interestingly, researchers found two types of channels: "open" and "closed," indicating efforts to protect the water from dust and maintain its temperature.

Adding to the excitement, BACA anticipates a surge in visitors to the prestigious International Archaeological Summit 2024, including members from the GCC region. This event promises to be a highlight for history enthusiasts and archaeology professionals alike.

So, whether you're an expat new to Bahrain or a long-time resident, grab your walking shoes and prepare to embark on a fascinating journey through time. Uncover the mysteries of ancient civilizations and immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Bahrain's heritage!

# Beyon Money BIC Fan Village returns to Block 338, Adliya



Admission is free every day, accompanied by live music performances

## Two-week spectacle to start tomorrow

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), together with Beyon Money, is set to raise the levels of excitement and anticipation ahead of the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024, with the return of the Beyon Money BIC Fan Village to Block 338 in Adliya.

The two-week festival, celebrating Formula 1 and a big part of the thrilling lead-up to the Kingdom's grand prix weekend, is set to feature incredible daily attractions for all the family, including daily live performances from a huge mix of bands and DJs, Grand Prix activations such as racing simulators and show cars, The Beyon Money stand, a village market, roaming family entertainment, street artists, and so much more.

The Beyon Money BIC Fan Village will open at 6pm tomorrow. From then, it will be welcoming fans daily until 27 February. The village will be open from 6pm to 12am on weekdays and from 1pm to

12am on weekends.

All are welcome to enjoy everything on offer and entrance is completely free of charge.

The festival is being organised for the third time by BIC after a hugely popular debut in 2022. It is set to bring all the excitement of the F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024 closer to the fans with a daily celebration in the heart of the Kingdom's capital.

This exciting experience for fans is once again being supported by title partner Beyon Money, part of Beyon Group, which is a financial services super app, enabling customers to connect to their bank accounts, access financial insights to observe transactions and spending habits, use their prepaid card all over the world, and send money abroad instantly.

Bapco Energies, the integrated energy company leading the energy transition in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is also a support partner for the event.

At the Beyon Money BIC Fan Village, there will also be a BIC stand where official BIC and F1 merchandise can be purchased, as well as grand prix tickets.

# Focus on Tamkeen's key role and postgraduate training



Officials of RCSI Bahrain, Private Hospitals, and Tamkeen at the meeting  
TDT | Manama

RCSI Medical University of Bahrain hosted on campus its annual Joint Board of Private Hospitals meeting.

Present were executive members of seven main private hospitals in Bahrain; executive members of Tamkeen; the Chairman of the society of private hospitals; the President of Bahrain Medical Society; and executive members of the University to discuss cooperation in clinical training, education and research.

In attendance of the meeting were Her Excellency Professor Jameela Al-Salman, Shura

Council Member and Professor Mary Rose Sweeney, Executive Vice Dean for Education, Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery, RCSI in Dublin.

During the meeting Professor Sameer Otoom, President of RCSI Medical University of Bahrain, commented: "RCSI Medical University of Bahrain is committed to fostering its relations with the private hospitals and Tamkeen, with the ultimate goal of providing international standards' training to medical staff. Collaborating with Tamkeen is a significant step towards enhancing healthcare services and the delivery of primary and community care for the people

of Bahrain and beyond."

Discussions focused on opportunities for a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for General Practitioners and for professional nursing qualifications proposed by the University, as well as student participation in observerships, electives and research at the private hospitals. Cooperation between the private hospitals and RCSI Medical University of Bahrain regarding postgraduate training and the upcoming Doctor of Medicine (MD) Programme was also discussed, which will be announced pending the approval from the Higher Education Council.

**MATRIX**  
**CHARITY EVENT**  
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May the peace, blessings, and mercy of God be upon you

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On the occasion of our first anniversary approaching, as a part of the Bahraini community and a proud local brand, we are indebted to give back and support the community.

Further to that, we are glad to invite you for a day full of fun for all our little heroes and champions who bravely face the challenges of life.

It will be an honor to have you at Matrix celebrating with us and the special children's, on February Tuesday 13th, 2024, between 10 am until 8 pm.

As we promise that you will have an amazing experience and an unforgettable day with us.

## تحية طيبة من فريق ماتريكس!

بمناسبة الذكرى السنوية الأولى لنا، وبما أننا جزء من المجتمع البحريني وعلامة تجارية محلية نفتخر بها، فإننا ملزمون بتقديم الشكر والدعم لجميع أفراد المجتمع.

ولذلك يسعدنا دعوتكم ل قضاء يوم مليء بالمرح لجميع أبطالنا الصغار المميزين من (البناتى والمصايين بالتوحد والصم والبكم وغيرهم) من الذين يواجهون تحديات الحياة بشجاعة واقدام بشكل دائم ومستمر.

وسيكون من دواعي الشرف أن تحتفلوا معنا ومع الأطفال المتميزين في ماتريكس، وذلك في يوم الثلاثاء فبراير 13، 2024، بين الساعة العاشرة صباحاً حتى الساعة الثامنة مساءً. حيث نعدكم بأفضل تجربة مدمجة ويوم لا ينسى معنا.

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# Visa Fee Surge

No more 'free visa'. Charges for conversion from visit visa to work visa goes up over four times. But will the sharp increase in visa fees affect the availability of workers? The Daily Tribune talks to specialists in immigration economics and immigration experts to find out.

## ● Visit-to-work visa change to cost BD 250

Mahir Haneef  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain government on Monday announced that it would not allow conversion of visit visas to work or dependent visas without a sponsor. While visit visas can be changed to work or dependent visas if the sponsor is the same, the fee for it has been increased by over four times. The fee, which was originally BD60, now stands at BD250 per visa.

The announcement came from Shaikh Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Interior Ministry Undersecretary at Nationality, Passports, and Residence Affairs (NPRA). The official said the decision was taken by Interior Minister H.E. General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa.

As per the decision of the Interior Minister, "it was decided to stop changing visit visas to work or dependent visas without a sponsor. It was also agreed to increase the fees for changing visit visas to work or dependency visas from BD60 to BD250 only if it will be for the same sponsor," the announcement said.

Further, it said the decision is as per the government directives to intensify rules of changing visit visas to support the local workforce by making them the first employment choice. The procedures would be carried out in cooperation with the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) to promote the National Labour Market Plan and stop the exploitation of visit visas.

Calls had been made by various people in the Kingdom recently for tightening the rules regarding conversion of visit visas to work visas, citing its effect on employment prospects of Bahraini citizens.

Several proposals had been made by the MPs in the Parliament to either completely stop the conversion or increase the fees for conversion of visit visas to work visas as well as for issuing work visas for foreigners.

But what happens when fees is raised for issuing visas and has it been tried out in any country before? The Daily Tribune got in touch with experts in immigration economics and immigration policies and they had plenty to say.

### An economist's viewpoint

Increasing the visa fees to lessen the inflow of migrants had been adopted by many countries around the world and the results were mixed, according to the experts.

Stan Veuger, a senior fellow in economic policy studies at the Washington-based think tank American Enterprise Institute, said, "The main way to think about this in economic terms, from the perspective of Bahrainis, is as a large increase in taxes on imported labour services."

Further, Stan said such an in-



"The main way to think about this in economic terms, from the perspective of Bahrainis, is as a large increase in taxes on imported labour services."

- STAN VEUGER, A SENIOR FELLOW IN ECONOMIC POLICY STUDIES AT THE WASHINGTON-BASED THINK TANK AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE



"If the cost of employing expat workers increases in Bahrain, it may be challenging for smaller to mid-size companies to cater to higher government fees, resulting in fewer job opportunities for expat workers."

- SHAYAN SULTAN, A PARTNER AT DUBAI-BASED IMMIGRATION SERVICES FIRM FRAGOMEN



"It will be interesting to see if other countries in the region follow suit and increase fees for expat workers, which could shift the dynamics of the job market in the Gulf region."

- CHETAL PATEL, HEAD OF IMMIGRATION, AT LONDON-BASED LEGAL FIRM BATES WELLS



"The fee increase might incentivize Bahraini employers to hire more local workers, boosting employment opportunities for Bahraini citizens."

- AJAY SHARMA, FOUNDER DIRECTOR OF THE OLDEST AND LARGEST IMMIGRATION CONSULTANCY FIRM IN INDIA



"The costs related with hiring expats will certainly trickle down to the employee themselves, some may have to pay this price upfront before embarking on their new job."

- SHAI ZAMANIAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION CONSULTANCY THE AMERICAN LEGAL CENTER OF DUBAI

crease on tax has a number of consequences. "Incidence: It is a tax increase, i.e. it makes those who pay the tax (or who reduce their reliance on expatriate labour) strictly worse enough. Perhaps corresponding tax reductions or an improvement in government services will make up for that, but that remains to be seen," he said.

Regarding efficiency, Stan stated, "This kind of tax distorts the choice between relying on expatriate labour versus capital, one's own labour, and other native labour." When it comes to human capital and productivity, these distorted incentives can have consequences down the road, as Bahrainis will focus more on their efforts on activities in which they do not currently have a comparative advantage, the expert said.

The higher visa fees will result in a redistribution, with jobs going from the expatriate workers to those who compete with them in the local market, he said. "From the perspective of the expatriate workers themselves, on the other hand, it is a pure negative on all fronts," Stan added.

### How it would affect companies

Shayan Sultan, a partner at Dubai-based immigration services firm Fragomen, points out that it could affect smaller to mid-size companies. "If the cost of employing expat workers increases in Bahrain, it may be challenging for smaller to mid-size companies to cater to higher government fees, resulting in fewer job opportunities for expat workers. The attractiveness of Bahrain for expat skilled workers will remain as factors like social and economic infrastructure, affordable housing, ease of obtaining work permits, etc, will ensure Bahrain stays an attractive destination for expat workers," he said.

But an increase in fees would not lead a shortage of skilled

workers, according to the Fragomen expert. "No significant shortage of skilled workers can be foreseen at this point due to the higher cost of employing expat workers. Bahrain's healthcare sector does not heavily rely on expat healthcare skilled professionals except for support staff, i.e., technicians, nurses, etc. Any significant changes to government fees will increase healthcare facilities overall operational costs, impacting the recruitment of expat workers while promoting the employment of Bahrainis in the healthcare industry."

The expert also pointed out that there are examples of such fee increases across the world. "There are examples where governments of many countries have increased the fees levied for expats. Some examples include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Kingdom and Kuwait. The aftereffects usually require companies to conduct more detailed analysis and budget planning to help them make the most beneficial decisions when planning to employ expat workers or develop new recruitment strategies," he stated.

### Immigration concerns

Chetal Patel, Head of Immigration, at London-based legal firm Bates Wells, cited the example of the UK, which is one of the most expensive immigration systems in the world due to associated costs linked to visas, in particular the Immigration Skills Charge (ISC) and Immigration Health Surcharge (HIS). Many organizations are re-visiting ways in which they can financially support migrants with their visas as it costs over GBP 20,000 (9,526 BD) for a worker and his family for the visas, she pointed out.

"Whilst the UK remains focused on attracting the brightest and the best, there's a concern that skilled workers will simply go elsewhere due to the exorbi-

tant immigration costs," Chetal stated.

### Are there any positives?

India tops the list of countries with the highest number of emigrants per year. Ajay Sharma, who is based in New Delhi and is the founder director of the oldest and largest immigration consultancy firm in India, does not think higher visa fees would affect the attractiveness of Bahrain among expat employees.

"I don't think so because the burden is on mid or large-sized Bahraini employers. They will pass it on to end-users and utilities. Additionally, with the proposed fee increase, Bahrain could generate more revenue to invest in infrastructure and social welfare programs for its citizens. Also, the fee increase might incentivize Bahraini employers to hire more local workers, boosting employment opportunities for Bahraini citizens. However, it is vital to consider the potential impact on small businesses and start-ups, as the increased fees may pose a financial challenge for them when hiring expat workers," Ajay said.

He also does not believe that it will lead to a shortage of skilled workers in Bahrain, especially in critical sectors such as health-

care. "I doubt that will happen. It will be interesting to see if other countries in the region follow suit and increase fees for expat workers, which could shift the dynamics of the job market in the Gulf region. My experience with the policy actions of bloc countries — in this case, the Middle East — worldwide is that other countries may soon follow with similar action. Also, as I stated above, it depends on the size of the company hiring international workers, the percentage of international workers in their overall workforce, and their ability to pass on the additional costs to end customers of their products or services," Ajay

explained.

Levying higher visa fees from expatriates is also not unprecedented, states Ajay, whose firm processes thousands of visa applications from immigrants to countries across the world. "It happens all the time. The US government recently increased the premium application processing fee. The Canadian government has increased the application processing fee for different categories. The demand and supply situation is such that employers can only do with essential overseas workers that it has no impact beyond creating short-term news," he said.

### Possible adverse effects

However, Shai Zamanian, Managing Director of immigration consultancy The American Legal Center of Dubai, does not agree and says higher visa fees will have an adverse effect.

"The messaging behind the tariffs is exclusion. Expatriates questioning to take the leap and move to Bahrain, normally base their decision on a key principle: Will I be welcomed? By virtue of taxing every foreigner seeking to make their dreams a possibility in Bahrain, the messaging is unambiguous. The costs related with hiring expats will certainly trickle down to the employee themselves, some may have to pay this price upfront before embarking on their new job. If the success of the globalized world we live in today is the interconnectedness of global skills, this new policy will certainly negatively affect competitive skilled expat workers," Shai said.

Whether the higher fees would lead to a shortage of skilled workers need to be seen as it evolves, Shai added. "With a tax, there will certainly be less expats hired as company's face a fiscal crunch. In the short-term there will be a shortage of skilled workers as it takes time for the marketplace to adjust to change and then decide whether

to hire expats or to continue to hold. The long-term impacts could be that the quality of candidates and the number of actual hires would decrease, however it would need to be reflected on after some time. Conversely, there could be a positive affect if HR directors understand the costs of bringing on expats so they work more rigorously to only bring in the most skilled. We have to take the wait and see approach," he said.

But Shai agrees that the practice of levying higher fees from expatriates for visas has been tried out in many countries.

"Absolutely. Australia and Canada have imposed heavy restrictions on foreigners purchasing real estate within some of the hottest real estate markets in the world such as Sydney and Vancouver. There are instances where placing your own citizens first makes a lot of sense. However, there needs to be a discussion around the intention of the new policy in Bahrain. Is this new regulation in place to promote the hiring of the local population? If so, perhaps other incentives should be considered in actual hiring of locals. Just because its taxing to hire foreigners, does not mean that instead local populations will be hired. Here, we should lean on institutions that have discussed and analyzed the issue and perhaps release a mandate outlining the intentions. Otherwise, there could be backlash and optically, it could be perceived as undue punishment towards those that we require to continue building a vibrant Bahrain and GCC," Shai, who owns the US-licensed legal firm based in Dubai told.

In short, the jury is still out there on whether higher visa fees would lead to more jobs for Bahrainis, and the real effects of the change will be known only with time. What do you think will be the effects of the change? Tell us at editor@newsfobahrain.com

# Explore Dumistan Beach: Bahrain's well-kept secret

Hidden away in remote location, far from Kingdom's bustling residential areas

Zahra Ayaz  
TDT | Manama

Nestled within the village of Dumistan lies a hidden treasure waiting to be discovered by many.

Dumistan Beach, renowned for its picturesque landscapes and tranquil ambiance, remains a well-kept secret tucked away in a remote location, far from bustling residential areas.

One of the unique features that sets Dumistan Beach apart is a small bridge that stretches out into the sea, inviting adventurers to delve into its depths.

This intriguing structure not only adds to the allure of the beach but also offers an exceptional viewpoint to admire the breathtaking beauty of the ocean.

The beach is adorned with trees providing ample shade, setting the stage for families to relax and savor the serene surroundings. Additionally, there is a designated play area for children to engage in playful activities.

However, reaching Dumistan Beach comes with its fair share of challenges. The road leading



Dumistan Beach offers picturesque landscapes and serene ambiance perfect for relaxation and recreation

to the beach is rough and riddled with potholes, necessitating cautious driving. Yet, adventure enthusiasts will find the journey exhilarating, as it adds an ele-

ment of excitement to their visit.

## Hidden paradise

To make the most of this hidden paradise, it is recommended

to arrive in the morning or before 4pm. The absence of street lights in the area makes navigation challenging after dark, increasing the likelihood of get-

ting lost.

Beyond the enchanting beach, visitors also have the opportunity to explore nearby horse farms, which offer thrilling horseback

rides along the shore.

According to sources, Dumistan Beach was once a favoured destination for boating enthusiasts, the availability of numerous public and private beaches in the vicinity has led to a decline in boating activities.

With the moderate weather at hand, now is the perfect time to uncover the secrets of Dumistan Beach. Pack your bags, embark on a journey of exploration, and immerse yourself in the untouched coastal retreat that promises an unforgettable experience.

## Parliamentary bloc to promote Bahrainisation

TDT | Manama

MP Hamad Al Doy has announced his efforts to establish a parliamentary bloc dedicated to resolving the issue of Bahrainisation in private sector companies and the banking sector.

He revealed that nine MPs have already joined the new formation, with the doors open for others to join this initiative. The bloc aims to tackle the obstacles, figures, and reasons hindering the replacement of non-Bahrainis in private sector companies and the banking sector.

The newly formed parliamentary bloc plans to initiate a

series of meetings and actions to identify the primary challenges that impede Bahrainisation in various sectors.

Among its objectives is exploring ways to incentivise companies to prioritise Bahrainisation by offering competitive salaries for administrative and supervisory positions across different industries.

Additionally, the bloc will advocate for the dismantling of foreign labour blocs within certain employment departments of companies operating in Bahrain. This will pave the way for the localisation of human resources functions and recruitment departments within these companies.

## Tamkeen supports wage increments for more than 200 Silah Gulf employees

### Labour Fund's support aligned with 2024 strategic priorities

TDT | Manama

In line with its commitment to empowering national talent and fostering their professional growth across a range of sectors, the Labour Fund Tamkeen announced its support for wage

enhancements for more than 200 Bahraini employees at Silah Gulf. Specialising in call center management, Silah Gulf's business lines cover customer experience, business outsourcing, training, consulting, and technology-related services, with eligible employees - whose salaries do not exceed BD1,500 - receiving wage increments ranging from 5% to 20% for 24 months.

“Tamkeen continues to forge strategic alliances across a range of sectors to support the development of Bahraini talent,” said Her Excellency Tamkeen Chief Executive Maha Abdulhameed Mofeez on the occasion.

“By enhancing employees' wages, performance, and productivity, we help enterprises accelerate their growth and boost their contributions to the national economy.

“In addition to wage increases for more than 200 Bahraini employees, we are offering wage support to facilitate the employment of Bahrainis in executive and other managerial positions at Silah Gulf through the Leadership Employment Program, aligning with Tamkeen's objective of positioning Bahrainis as employees of choice in the jobs market.”

**Pride**

Information & e-Government Authority (iGA) Chief Executive

and Silah Gulf Chairman, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ali Al Qaed said, “Silah Gulf takes pride in its productive partnership with Tamkeen, which is aimed at realising the shared vision to enhance national talent by providing them with avenues for career growth.

“Without doubt, the wage increment and leadership employment programs will motivate Bahraini employees and invest in their career advancement.

“This partnership resonates with our commitment to nurturing national competencies in communications services, outsourcing, technology, and encouraging Bahrainis to pursue leadership roles, thus enhancing the private sector's contribution to national economic growth.”

**Proud**

Echoing this sentiment, Silah Gulf Chief Executive Officer,

H.E. Mr. Firas Jaafar Ahmed said, “We are proud of the high levels of Bahrainisation within the Silah Gulf team, a testament to our confidence in the abilities of Bahraini talent to drive growth within our company.

“We value Tamkeen's continuous support in honing our workforce's skills through wage subsidy and wage enhancement initiatives.”

Tamkeen's support for Silah Gulf is aligned with its 2024 strategic priorities, which are 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 workforce, and further developing the private sector by supporting enterprises, boosting productivity and the adoption of technology.

Mr. Basheer Ambalayi, the local representative of Sathyam Online, expressed his enthusiasm for the seminar, highlighting its importance in fostering collaboration and innovation within the media community.

For media inquiries and registration details, please get in touch with Basheer Ambalayi on 33982363.

**Proud**

Echoing this sentiment, Silah Gulf Chief Executive Officer,

working opportunities. The seminar is poised to welcome a distinguished lineup of media luminaries who will share their expertise and insights on the evolving media and communications landscape. With an anticipated audience representing various facets of the industry, the seminar offers a platform for thought-provok-

ing dialogue and knowledge exchange.

Adding to the occasion's significance, Mr. Vincent Nellikunnel, a prominent figure from the Kerala Media Academy, will grace the event as the esteemed Chief Guest. His wealth of experience and profound insights will enrich the discourse and inspire attendees.

**Proud**

Echoing this sentiment, Silah Gulf Chief Executive Officer,

## Joint Media Seminar by Sathyam Online, KIMS Medical Ummal

TDT | Manama

Sathyam Online, in collaboration with KIMS Medical Umm al Hassam, is conducting a media seminar scheduled for 23 February Friday, the 23rd.

Set to be a convergence of esteemed media personalities, the event promises insightful discussions and invaluable net-

working opportunities. The seminar is poised to welcome a distinguished lineup of media luminaries who will share their expertise and insights on the evolving media and communications landscape. With an anticipated audience representing various facets of the industry, the seminar offers a platform for thought-provok-

ing dialogue and knowledge exchange.

Adding to the occasion's significance, Mr. Vincent Nellikunnel, a prominent figure from the Kerala Media Academy, will grace the event as the esteemed Chief Guest. His wealth of experience and profound insights will enrich the discourse and inspire attendees.

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Arbitration Case Number: 7/07109/2023/02  
Claimant: City View Development Real Estate Co. S.P.C -  
Commercial Register: 68045-1

Defendant: Mufaddal Fakhruddin Jiwaali  
Personal Number: 750607432

Based on the judgment issued on 11/07/2023 in the arbitration case number 7/07109/2023/02, which orders the appointment of the arbitrator Saad Jaber Saad Al-Dosari to resolve the dispute between the parties involved, and charges the defendant with the costs and twenty Dinars for attorney fees.

Therefore, we notify the Defendant of the initiation of the aforementioned arbitration case and to present his defense to the arbitration claim list by Thursday, 22 February 2024, or to personally attend the arbitrator's office located in the Diplomatic Area, Building 240 - First Floor - Road 1704, Complex 317.

Arbitrator / Saad Jaber Al-Dosari  
17311611 - Saad@aldoserilaw.com

# Unlock your Financial Future

Kuwait Finance House Bahrain Launches New Libshara 2024 Campaign

● **The campaign includes two Mega Cash Prizes, a \$500,000 prize in June and a \$1,000,000 prize in December**

TDT | Manama

Kuwait Finance House - Bahrain officially announces the new edition of the Libshara Investment Savings Account for 2024. The campaign includes two Mega Cash Prizes, a \$500,000 prize in



Hamed Mashal

June and a \$1,000,000 prize in December. In addition, Monthly Grand Prizes of \$50,000 will be presented to 10 winners. There will also be a total of \$600,000 in Monthly Cash Prizes of \$1,000 each for 600 winners.

Hamed Mashal, Executive Manager - Head of Retail Banking at KFH-Bahrain commented, "The 2024 Libshara Campaign marks a bold new chapter, offering unprecedented rewards that are considered the largest yet. Current and future customers will be rewarded beyond comparison with this year's abundance of prizes. We encourage

everyone to open a Libshara Investment Savings Account and start their journey towards both saving and winning."

Account holders are reminded that they can multiply their chances of winning in the prize draws by saving more through their Libshara Savings Account. For every 50 BD saved, customers earn one entry to the draw. As part of the Libshara campaign, customers can participate in the loyalty programme, which offers increased chances of winning the Mega prize. Holding the amount in their accounts for 90 days earns them one entry, while

holding it for 180 days earns them two entries, and holding it for 360 days earns them three entries.

The Libshara Investment Savings Account is open to Bahraini and GCC nationals and residents aged 18 and over. New and existing clients can create a Libshara account and deposit money online using the KFH Jazeel Banking App without visiting a branch. To participate, customers must have a minimum savings balance of BD 50 or its equivalent in US Dollars in their Libshara accounts for at least 30 days.

# Powering homes & solar dreams

NBB launches Kingdom's first mortgage offering with Integrated Solar Financing

TDT | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) recently launched an innovative mortgage offering in line with its commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices, to give customers the option to combine solar financing as part of their mortgage package.

The financing programme is the first of its kind in the Kingdom, empowering property buyers to enjoy a sustainable lifestyle, while simultaneously benefitting from competitive interest rates and flexible repayment terms.

Commenting on the occasion, Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani, Chief Executive - Retail Banking at NBB said, "We consistently strive to provide our customers with innovative & affordable home financing solutions and enable savings on monthly electricity bills. Our integrated



ed mortgage and solar finance package reflects our dedication to sustainability while ensuring accessible financial services for our valued customers. The combined mortgage and solar finance package also offers prospective buyers a swift



Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani

approval process, a maximum tenor period of 30 years, and a grace period of up to 6 months. Additionally, by generating their own solar power, property owners can enjoy significant savings on monthly electricity bills.

Details of all NBB products and services can be obtained by visiting any NBB branch, logging on to [www.nbbonline.com](http://www.nbbonline.com), or contacting the Bank's Customer Service Centre at +973 1721 4433.

**IMF, World Bank warn Gaza war, Red Sea attacks imperil global economy**

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The IMF and World Bank warned yesterday that the Gaza war and the related attacks on shipping through the Red Sea pose threats to the global economy. The Israel-Hamas war raging since October has already hit the Middle East and North Africa region's economy, said the International Monetary Fund's managing director Kristalina Georgieva. Its knock-on effects could impact the world the longer the fighting drags on, Georgieva told the World Governments Summit in Dubai. "I fear most a longevity of the conflict because, if it goes on and on, the risk of spillover goes up," she said.

"Right now we see a risk of spillover in the Suez Canal," she said, as Houthis attacked Red Sea shipping leading to the crucial maritime passage.

# Al Salam Bank Finances First Beneficiary on 'Baity' App

As the first bank in the Kingdom... and as part of its participation in the Housing Finance Exhibition

TDT | Manama

Al Salam Bank has recently completed its procedures for the financing of the first beneficiary of services provided by the Bank through the 'Baity' application, which was recently launched at the Housing Finance Exhibition.

This marks Al Salam Bank as the first financial institution to complete its real estate financing procedures through the platform, reflecting the simplicity and speed of its administrative procedures. The Bank also awarded the homeowner with a cash prize worth BD 500 at the exhibition held in City Centre Bahrain.

Commenting on the occasion, Mohammed Buhijji, Head of Retail Banking at Al Salam Bank, said: "We are proud to be the first bank to provide financing through the 'Baity' platform, in line with our participation in the third edition of the Housing Finance Exhibition. Al Salam Bank



Al Salam presents first villa Through Baity App

remains a key supporter of the national aspiration to offer suitable housing services to citizens through facilitated, simplified,

and quick financing solutions. We would like to invite everyone

to utilize the 'Baity' platform to apply for convenient residential and financial solutions, as well as exclusive offers from Al Salam Bank."

He added: "Financing beneficiaries from Al Salam Bank will also benefit from competitive profit rates, a grace period of up to 6 months, exemption from property valuation fees, administrative fees, and advance payment. Clients will also receive flexible procedures, immediate approval and convenient monthly installments, alongside obtaining points through the Loyalty Rewards program which offers clients a number of benefits and chances to win. Terms and conditions apply on all offers, in addition to special offers on personal financing."

During the exhibition, Al Salam Bank initiated 6 partnerships with notable local organizations such as Bareeq Al Retaj, Naseej Real Estate, Delmon Gate Company, Union Real Estate,

Taiba Real Estate, and AlSalam Gas Electronics. Through these partnerships, the Bank will provide exclusive offers and prices to its client base.

The third edition of the Housing Finance Exhibition, organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning taking place in City Centre Bahrain from 8 to 17 February 2024, recently launched the 'Baity' app which brings together landlords, housing applicants, residential unit seekers, and participating banks under one platform. The application also aims to support them in finding solutions and options that best suit their needs. Throughout its participation in the exhibition, Al Salam Bank will be delivering exclusive financing offers to its clients through 'Baity', and offering prizes worth BD 500 to the first three clients that reserve their properties through the new platform. The offer is currently valid until the end of June.



# celebs

## Beyonce, Swift command conversation as Usher helms halftime

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Usher delivered a Las Vegas-appropriate set heavy on glitz, choreography and nostalgia as he headlined Sunday's Super Bowl halftime show, but it was new music from Beyonce and the Taylor Swift cam that grabbed the most attention.

Swift was the night's most-watched fan as she cheered on her boyfriend Travis Kelce, the tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, from a luxury box with a coterie of famous friends.

Swift's relationship with the charismatic Chiefs star has been a boon to television ratings, her every move offering headline fodder.

At one point she delighted the internet by chugging a beer -- she clocked in at 6.6 seconds -- as the jumbotron documented the party trick.

Beyonce was also in attendance with her hip hop mogul husband Jay-Z -- and announced a new album during a commercial she did with Verizon, in which she repeatedly tries to "break the internet."

The ad closes with the line: "Drop the music."

Moments later on Instagram, Beyonce announced with another clip that her eighth studio



US singer-songwriter Taylor Swift (3rd L), US rapper Ice Spice (L), Ashley Avignone (2nd L) and US actress Blake Lively (2nd R) attend Super Bowl LVIII

album is due March 29. The post didn't give a title but simply said "Act II"; her blockbuster album "Renaissance" had been branded "Act I."

Shortly thereafter the Beyhive had two brand new songs to listen to: the twangy "Texas Hold 'Em" and "16 Carriages" implied Beyonce's new volume of work might be country-heavy, in a nod to her Texas roots.

The announcement came one week after Swift used the Grammy awards to promote her forthcoming studio album "The Tortured Poets Department,"

out April 19. America's megastars Beyonce and Swift both had major summer tours last year, boosting local economies at every turn.

**'Yeah!'**

But while it was Bey and Tay who overshadowed the night, it was Usher who helmed the stage.

The slow jam king held his own as he captured the magic of his late-1990s, early-aughts fame with a 13-minute, career-spanning medley including hits like "Love In This Club" and "OMG."



**Beyonce was also in attendance with her hip hop mogul husband Jay-Z -- and announced a new album during a commercial she did with Verizon, in which she repeatedly tries to "break the internet"**



US singer-songwriter Usher (L) and US singer-songwriter Alicia Keys perform during Apple Music halftime show of Super Bowl LVIII

It wasn't his first time at the Super Bowl -- Usher appeared as a guest of the Black Eyed Peas in 2011 -- but it was the first that he headlined.

His show paid homage to Michael Jackson, who with his 1993 set transformed the halftime gig into one of music's most-watched -- and most-coveted. At one point Usher donned a single glove, a clear nod to the groundbreaking pop artist.

From gyrating among dancers clad in feathers, velvet and gemstones to roller-skating as

a marching band took the field, the 45-year-old Usher gave an electric performance that was also an ode to Black culture and music.

The roller skating bit was a recreation of the viral highlight in his Las Vegas concert residency, and saw will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas join him onstage.

"Hey mama, we made it, and now this is for you," he told the camera before launching into the sultry smash "Love In This Club."

Alicia Keys appeared midway through at a futuristic red piano,

playing a few bars of her own hit "If I Ain't Got You" before removing a cape to reveal her sparkling red catsuit.

Keys and Usher then performed their duet "My Boo" to the delight of fans and social media.

It wouldn't be an Usher show if he didn't eventually lose his shirt, which he dropped for "U Got It Bad."

That song featured a surprise guest in the form of H.E.R., the enigmatic artist whose sizzling guitar solo was among the show's highlights.

## Christopher Nolan wins top directors award for 'Oppenheimer'

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

"Oppenheimer" was named the best film of the year by Hollywood's directors on Saturday, boosting expectations that Christopher Nolan's long wait for success at the Oscars could soon be over.

The British director -- who is renowned for making commercially successful, complex blockbusters, but has not always received love from awards voters -- won the top prize at the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Awards in Los Angeles.



Christopher Nolan with the award

"The idea that my peers would think I deserve this means everything to me," said Nolan, of his film about the invention of the atomic bomb.

Nolan had been nominated four times previously for the top accolade from the DGA, but had failed to win for "Memento," "The Dark Knight," "Inception" or "Dunkirk."

He will now be hoping he can break a similar losing streak next month at the Oscars, where he has lost all five of his previous nods.

Nolan lavished praise on his filmmaking team for bringing his hugely ambitious visions -- including a jaw-dropping replica of the first atomic bomb test -- to life over the course of his career.

"People say 'Christopher Nolan destroyed a real plane' and 'Christopher Nolan blew up a building,' or whatever," he said.

"Sorry, chaps! It's all down to you and your teams. And you were never more on your game than making 'Oppenheimer.'"

## Austin Butler 'had to choose' between Top Gun: Maverick or Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Austin Butler "had to choose" between 'Top Gun: Maverick' and 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood'.

The 32-year-old actor confirmed he had been in the running for the Tom Cruise-starring aviation sequel but was unable to test for the part because

it clashed with the Quentin Tarantino movie.

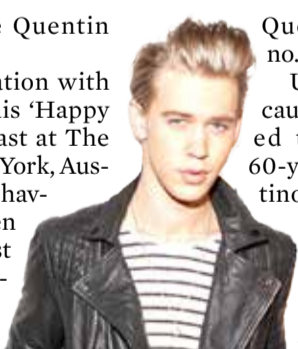
During a conversation with Josh Horowitz for his 'Happy Sad Confused' podcast at The 92nd Street Y in New York, Austin said: "I ended up having to choose between going to the screen test for Top Gun: Maverick or saying yes to

Quentin Tarantino."

Ultimately, because he had wanted to work with 60-year-old Tarantino "for so long", he opted to go for the 'Pulp Fiction' director's movie.

He added: "I'd already met with him, so I did that."

Austin - who played Charles Watson, a member of Charles Manson's cult, in the movie - previously admitted it had "always" been a "dream" of his to work with the 'Kill Bill' filmmaker, and he had a particularly memorable moment one day on set.



Austin Butler

## Naomi Watts wanted quick and 'efficient' wedding

Celebretainment | Los Angeles

Naomi Watts married Billy Crudup at a courthouse in New York because they were both "keen" to tie the knot and it seemed the most "efficient" way.

The pair, both 55, exchanged vows in a low-key ceremony in the Big Apple last June and the 'King Kong' star has now revealed they opted for a simple service over a lavish wedding because it was a quick and easy way to make their union official.

During an appearance on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon' with Naomi Watts

my Fallon', she explained: "It just happened that way. We knew we wanted to do it, it was something we were very keen on doing and quickly. It's an efficient way to do it."

She added of her big day: "It was really lovely. It was a classic New York day. You ran into all kinds of people, some were dressed to the nines, some were walking quickly in and out. It was very special and very memorable."

After the wedding, Naomi confirmed she'd married 'The Morning Show' star by sharing a picture of the newly-weds posing outside the courthouse in Manhattan. Alongside the wedding snap posted on Instagram, she simply wrote: "Hitched."



Naomi Watts

### SUDOKU

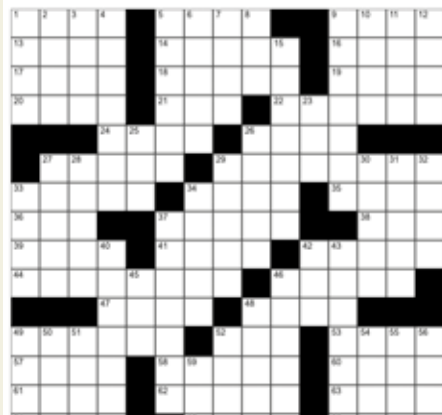
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Yesterday's solution

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**How to play**  
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### CROSSWORD



**Across**

1- Partly open; 5- Graceful horse; 9- Morales of "NYPD Blue"; 13- Boy or man; 14- Part of TNT; 16- Agrees tacitly; 17- Graven image; 18- Model; 19- Greek goddess of the earth; 20- Bristle; 21- Peg used on the first in golf; 22- Edema; 24- Run smoothly; 26- North Sea feeder; 27- Rica; 29- Furniture wood; 33- Native American tent; 34- Nimbus; 35- Therefore; 36- Rodent, betrayer; 37- Montana city; 38- Projection at the corner of a door architrave; 39- In your dreams!; 41- Zeno's home; 42- Bottled spirit; 44- Unusual; 46- Chocolate source; 47- Droops; 48- Commotion; 49- Dried grape; 52- Alley; 53- Portfolio; 57- Fellow; 58- Boredom; 60- Taverns; 61- Rifle adjunct; 62- Trace; 63- Speaker's spot; 64- Show to a table; 65- 1922 Physics Nobelist; 66- Novel ending;

**Down**

1- Author Kingsley; 2- Green stone; 3- Very much; 4- Backslide; 5- "Peer Gynt Suite" dancer; 6- One in a cab, say; 7- To (perfectly); 8- Maidenform product; 9- Swallow greedily; 10- Work up lather; 11- Citrus coolers; 12- old chap; 15- Comfortably familiar; 23- Stutz contemporary; 25- Shoshone language member; 26- Seaport in the Crimea; 27- Break off; 28- Sight-related; 29- Alma; 30- Concert venue; 31- Marsh of mystery; 32- Long ago; 33- Two-wheeled carriage, golf bunker; 34- Hawaiian dances; 37- Square doughnut; 40- Idealist; 42- Wander; 43- Destruction of the natural environment; 45- Chou En-; 46- Transcriber; 48- Not easily broken; 49- Some TVs; 50- Words of woe; 51- Camera; 52- account (never); 54- Med school subj.; 55- Bad mood; 56- "quam videri" (North Carolina's motto); 59- Penpoint;

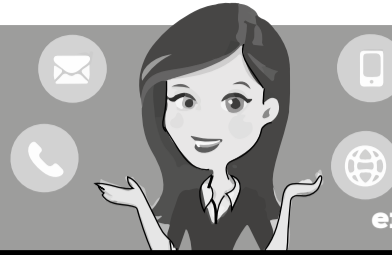
Yesterday's solution

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## HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa reconstitutes REHC High Committee

TDT | Manama

His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Chairman of the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club (REHC) High Committee, yesterday issued Edict (1) of 2024.

According to the edict, the REHC High Committee will be reconstituted under the chairmanship of HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and the membership of His Highness Shaikh Faisal bin Rashid Al Khalifa as Deputy Chairman; Shaikh Nayef bin

Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Member; Shaikh Misha'al bin Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Member; Youssef Osama Buhiji, Member; Kamal Murad Ali Murad, Member; Adnan Abdul Wahab Ishaq, Member; Ali Habib Qasim, Member; Khaled Hussein Taqi, Member; Taher Tawfiq Al Alawi, Member; Ahmed Youssef Abdul Ghani, Member; Zaid Yousif Khunji, Member  
 The term of their membership shall be three years. The edict shall take immediate effect and will be published in the Official Gazette.

## India's Rahul out of third England Test

AFP | New Delhi

India's KL Rahul has been ruled out of the third Test against England but expected to be match-fit for the final two games, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

The Test begins Thursday in Rajkot with the five-match series level at 1-1 after India bounced back from their opening loss.

Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja missed the second Test due to injuries but were named in the squad for the rest of the three matches subject to fitness.

Rahul has reached "90 percent of match fitness and is progressing well", the Board of Control for Cricket in India said.

"He will continue his recovery process at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to be completely match-fit for the fourth and fifth Test."

Uncapped batsman Devdutt Padikkal has been added to the squad as Rahul's replacement.

Star batsman Virat Kohli



KL Rahul

will miss the entire series after he opted out of the first two matches due to "personal reasons".

Updated Squad for the third Test: Rohit Sharma (capt), Jasprit Bumrah (vice-capt), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar, Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (wk), KS Bharat (wk), R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja (subject to fitness), Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep, Devdutt Padikkal

## Alia National School hosts Al Aatah charity tournament

TDT | Manama

Alia National School hosted Al Aatah third Annual Charity Tournament in support of the micro schools project that is under the umbrella of Bahrain Trust Foundation.

The tournament was organised by Alia National School and its students that are part of the School's career and entrepreneurship program (ANSCE program), which aims to give students essential life skills to high school students with an aim of greater self-independency.

Private schools and football academies participated in the tournament, which consisted with player aged 10 - 12 years old.

Shaikh Rashid Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, Board member of Alia National School, stated that the challenge the community is facing is that some educational curriculums fail to prepare students with the necessary skills for the job market, such as pro-



A winning team receives their trophy

fessional communication and essential legal skills.

Shaikh Rashid called on schools, government and private institutions based in the Kingdom of Bahrain to join this initiative to support the youth of Bahrain and prepare them for a better future.

Alia National School emphasized the importance of the collaboration between schools in Bahrain to protect the best interests of the youth in Bahrain, taking to account that high school students are young adults of Bahrain and not only are students at their schools.

Al Aatah Legacy annual charity tournaments was established in 2021 by Al Aatah Legacy for Public Relations, where Alia National School took its role in managing these tournaments in support of charitable and humanitarian causes and parties in the non-profit sector



The Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) held a welcome reception at Bahrain International Airport for the Al Ahli Club women's athletics team, who returned from Sharjah where they won 16 medals, including 10 gold, at the seventh Arab Club Games for Women. Among the officials receiving the athletes were BOC technical director Lounes Madene and BOC equal opportunities and gender equality committee member Shaikha Al Shaiba. The team's gold-medallists included Bontu Rebitu (5,000m, 10,000m), Aminat Jamal (100m hurdles, 400m hurdles), Zainab Musa (400m), Marta Yota (800m, 1,500m), Noora Jassim (shot put), and the relay teams of Zainab, Edidiong Odiong, Laila Kamal and Hajar Al Khaldi (4x100m) and Marta, Zainab, Aminat, and Awatef Ahmed (4x400m). Left, the athletes with officials upon their return to the Kingdom

# Riffa held by Al Nahda in AFC Cup

Bahrainis take lead through Ali Haram but concede late equaliser in first-leg against Omani side in West Zonal semis

● Ali Haram puts Riffa ahead in 62nd minute, but Inters Gui levels for Al Nahda in 77th

● Bahrainis head for second-leg next Monday at Sultan Qaboos Sport Complex in Muscat

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Riffa Club were held to a 1-1 stalemate last night by Oman's Al Nahda in the first-leg of their West Zonal semi-final in the 2023/2024 AFC Cup.

Ali Haram put the Bahrainis ahead two minutes after the hour-mark at Khalifa Sports City Stadium in Isa Town, but Inters Gui brought Nahda back on level terms a quarter-hour later to send the head-to-head to the decisive second-leg tied,



Riffa striker Jaco looks to make a play during their match last night against Al Nahda

with the Omanis having scored a crucial away goal.

The West Zonal last four is being played in a two-leg format. The return game is scheduled to take place on Monday next week at Sultan Qaboos Sport Complex in Muscat.

The winners of this West Zonal semis pairing will take on the victors of the other match-up between Al Ahed of Lebanon and Al Kahrabaa Club of Iraq. The first-leg of their encounter is set for tonight, also in Muscat, and then they play again



on Tuesday next week at Basra International Stadium in Iraq.

The West Zonal final will then take place on April 16 and 23.

The AFC Cup is the annual club competition of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC)

for the continent's top teams not in the AFC Champions League. Riffa are the lone Bahraini outfit in this year's tournament.

In their draw last night, Riffa had a few chances to go ahead in the first half but could not apply the finishing touches.

## Header

But after the re-start, Haram was able to find the net in the 62nd minute with a header from close range between two Nahda defenders, off a long cross from the right supplied by Ali Hassan Saeed.

Just six minutes later, Aymen Harzi had a shot on target from the outside edge of the penalty box, but it was punched away by a diving Nahda goalkeeper Ibrahim Al Mukhaini.

Gui made Riffa pay after scoring in the 77th minute. His initial attempt bounced off the crossbar, and he reacted quickly to send the ball home with a header off the rebound.

Star midfielder Komail Al As-

wad had a chance in the 84th minute to put Riffa back in front, but his left-footed effort in the area flew inches wide of the right post.

Riffa booked their place in the AFC Cup's knockout stages after finishing as winners of Group C in the preliminary round. Nahda, on the other hand, were the top-ranked squad from Group A.

The West Zonal champions will advance to the AFC Cup final, scheduled for May 5. There, they will take on the winners of the Inter-Zone final, to be played over two legs on April 17 and 24.

Riffa made it to the West Zonal final last year, but lost to eventual champions Al Seeb Club of Oman. The Bahrainis hope to advance to the title match this time round. They are looking to become only the second club from the Kingdom to win the tournament title. Muharraq won the AFC Cup twice in the past, in 2008 and in 2021, and also finished as runners-up in 2006.

## Leipzig 'not outsiders' against Real Madrid, says coach Rose

AFP | Leipzig

RB Leipzig coach Marco Rose shut down suggestions his side would be outsiders when they host Real Madrid in the Champions League on Tuesday, saying his side were "not afraid".

"The topic of us being outsiders wasn't worth considering for me at all, because football games need to actually be played," Rose told reporters yesterday ahead of the first leg of the last-16 tie.

"Incredible things have happened in football."

Leipzig are struggling for form ahead of the visit of La Liga leaders Madrid, having won just one of five games since Christmas to slide to fifth in the Bundesliga.

Despite this, Rose said his side had "no fear" against the 14-time European champions.

"We are not afraid at all, we're looking forward to it."

"It's what we want. It's what we worked hard for last season and what we fought for in the group stage."



RB Leipzig coach Marco Rose

Real Madrid look set to travel to Germany without star midfielder Jude Bellingham, who injured his ankle after scoring two goals in Saturday's 4-0 defeat of second-placed Girona in the Spanish capital.

Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi said Real still had "incredible quality, even if Jude is injured".

"I could name their entire midfield."

Rose, who coached Bellingham at Borussia Dortmund during the 2021-22 season, did not rule out the England international making a surprise appearance despite the injury.

## Andreev leads six qualifiers into main draw

● Qualifying's top seed Adrian Andreev through to singles round of 32 with Cem Ilkel, Gastao Elias, Laurent Lokoli, Viktor Durasovic, Peter Buldorini

TDT | Manama

Qualifying top seed Adrian Andreev of Bulgaria led six players last night into the singles main draw of the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger 2024—an ATP Challenger Tour event being played at Public Security Officers Club in Gudaibiya.

Andreev punched his ticket to the tournament proper along with qualification's second seed Cem Ilkel of Turkey, fifth seed Gastao Elias of Portugal, seventh seed Laurent Lokoli of France, 12th seed Viktor Durasovic of Norway, and alternate Peter Buldorini of Italy.

Andreev secured his place after defeating Mikalai Haliak of Belarus 6-1, 6-2. He has now



Bulgaria's Yanaki Milev in action during his first round qualifying match against Salvatore Caruso, who won in three sets

been paired up with Otto Virtanen of Finland in the main draw's round of 32.

Ilkel advanced after winning against qualifying's ninth seed Marat Sharipov of Russia, who retired after Ilkel took the first set 6-1, while Elias beat eighth seed Yanki Erel of Turkey 1-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5 to go through.

Lokoli won against David Pichler of Austria after Pichler retired following Lokoli's 7-5

first-set triumph. Buldorini upset qualification's fourth seed and countryman Salvatore Caruso 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (2) in their head-to-head, and then Durasovic made it to the main draw with a 7-6 (2), 6-3 triumph against sixth seed Ergi Kirkin of Turkey.

The top seed of the singles main draw is Christopher O'Connell of Australia, while the field also includes Bahraini

wild card Yusuf Qaed, who will be taking on second-seeded Italian Fabio Fognini in their opening stage meeting.

Meanwhile, players participating in the tournament continued their preparations for matches continuing today.

Spaniard Daniel Rincon confirmed his readiness for his opening round affair, commenting: "I try to adapt to each tournament and its circumstances, and the opponent determines my strategy in the match. However, I try to keep my plan almost the same to avoid distraction."

Jordanian Abdullah Shelbayh expressed his delight in participating in the competition for the second time after finishing as the runner-up last year.

Slovakian Jozef Kovalik said he is completely focused on his first match and that he wishes all players success in the tournament. He added that there is an enjoyable atmosphere in the Kingdom, which he described as beautiful and comfortable, while highlighting the warm reception and organisation of the tournament.

## Argentina knock Brazil's men's football team out of Paris Olympics

AFP | Brasilia

Brazil were denied the chance of winning a third straight men's Olympic football title after a 1-0 defeat to Argentina on Sunday knocked them out of qualifying for the Paris Games.

Champions in Rio 2016 and the Covid-delayed 2020 Tokyo Games, Brazil only needed a draw against their arch continental rivals on the final day of the South American pre-Olympic tournament in Venezuela.

But Argentina it is who now go to France, seeking a third title after 2004 and 2008, courtesy of Luciano Gondou's second-half goal in Caracas.

Paraguay claimed the other ticket to Paris 2024 from South



Argentine players celebrate after defeating Brazil

America with a 2-0 victory over Venezuela.

Midfielder Diego Gomez with a penalty in the 48th minute and

forward Marcelo Perez in the 75th minute scored the goals for Carlos Jara Saguier's Paraguay, who topped the standings in the

qualifying tournament ahead of Argentina.

The qualifying tournament was restricted to under-23 players, unlike at the Olympics, where teams are allowed to call on the services of three overage reinforcements.

And Argentina will now be on the phone to try to persuade one very special 36-year-old player, Lionel Messi who starred in the 2008 run to Olympic gold, to join them in Paris.

"Everyone knows my relationship with Leo... and the doors are open for him to join us," said coach Javier Mascherano, a long-time former team-mate of Messi's with Argentina.

"It's up to him."

## Celtics hold off Heat in bruising NBA clash

AFP | Los Angeles

The Boston Celtics, fueled by a near triple-double from Jayson Tatum, held off the short-handed but determined Miami Heat 110-106 in an NBA clash that turned testy in a tense fourth quarter on Sunday.

League leaders Boston, who blew out the Heat last month, found the going tougher this time as the Heat cut a 15-point third-quarter deficit to two with less than two minutes remaining.

Boston star Jaylen Brown and Miami's Duncan Robinson exchanged heated words after tangling early in the final period, with Brown assessed a flagrant foul.



Boston's Jayson Tatum drives against Caleb Martin

But the Celtics -- stunned by the Heat in the Eastern Conference finals last season -- kept their heads down and polished off Miami.

Tatum scored 26 points with 10 rebounds and nine assists.

Kristaps Porzingis added 25 points, Brown scored 20 points and Jrue Holiday chipped in 15 for the Celtics, who made 16-of-39 three-point attempts.

# Grandstands sold out for F1 Bahrain Grand Prix!

● **BIC announces that Main, Beyon and Turn 1 grandstand tickets have completely sold out for 20th anniversary F1 race**

● **Very limited availability on University and Victory grandstands; some availability with remaining hospitality options**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East", announced yesterday that it has completely sold out its Main, Beyon and Turn 1 grandstands for

the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024.

With the racing and entertainment extravaganza just over two weeks away, interest from fans is at an all-time high, and BIC is getting all geared up for another sensational turnout this 29 February to 2 March in Sakhir, for Bahrain's first ever Saturday night race.

This year's event will be the first of a record 24 rounds in the 2024 FIA F1 World Championship. It will be an extra-special occasion, celebrating "20 Years of a Modern Classic" as the Kingdom of Bahrain showcases its landmark 20th anniversary in motor racing's top flight.

BIC'S announcement today of the Main, Beyon and Turn 1 grandstand sell-outs follow the recent news of the F1 Paddock Club and the circuit's Corpo-



Action from last year's Bahrain Grand Prix at BIC

rate Lounges also completely selling out. There is now only very limited availability on tickets to the University and Victory grandstands, with BIC's two

other hospitality options, The Dome by F1 Experiences and The Champions Club, also having some availability.

Those who are eager to attend

the F1 weekend but have yet to purchase their tickets or hospitality packages can do so today online at bahraingp.com, by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or at the BIC stand at City Centre Bahrain.

Also taking place in support of F1 throughout the race weekend will be the first rounds of 2024 in the FIA Formula 2 Championship and the FIA Formula 3 Championship, as well as the fifth and penultimate round of the 2023/2024 Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East.

Off the track, BIC has lined plenty of attractions in its biggest-ever grand prix entertainment programme for the whole family to enjoy. These will be headlined by live performances by world-renowned artists, including a post-race concert by superstar DJ and producer Diplo.

The attractions also include roaming performers; carnival rides; kids' shows featuring some of their favourite Nickelodeon characters such as SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, Paw Patrol and Shimmer and Shine; an extreme circus; an F1 Fanzone with many activities offering a genuine F1 experience, and so much more.

All these will be available on all three days in the circuit's vending area.

Prior to race week, BIC is also set to host three days of F1 Aramco Pre-Season Testing 2024 from February 21 to 23, with public access available on 22 and 23 February. Access for pre-season testing is free for all those who purchased their grand prix tickets prior to 1 February, whilst tickets are also available at just BD5 per day on BIC's website.

# Maloney, Browning set testing pace

Rodin Motorsport, Hitech Pulse-Eight drivers top timesheets on second day of Formula 2, Formula 3 pre-season testing in Bahrain

● **Zane Maloney posts best lap time in F2 tests while completing 63 laps for the day**

● **Luke Browning goes fastest with top afternoon lap in F3 and 64 laps completed**

TDI | Manama

Barbadian Zane Maloney and Briton Luke Browning were quickest yesterday on the second day of Formula 2 and Formula 3 pre-season testing in Bahrain.

After a rain-hit first day on Sunday at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir, the two Formula 1 feeder series enjoyed sunshine and more pleasant on-track conditions yesterday, getting extensive running in their 2024 challengers as they continued their final preparations for the start of their respective seasons.

Maloney powered his Rodin Motorsport contender to the top of the overall times in the two F2 sessions, while Browning was best on the day for Hitech Pulse-



Kush Maini in his Invicta Racing car on the way to topping F2's morning times

Eight amongst the F3 runners.

Action continues today at BIC with the third and final day of tests. F2 will be in action from 11.45am to 2.15pm and again from 5.15pm to 7.45pm. F3 will be on track from 9am to 11.30am and then again from 2.30pm to 5pm.

Maloney went fastest yesterday under lights at BIC during the evening tests, clocking a leading lap time of one minute 41.501 seconds. He completed a total of 63 laps of work for the day, and was 0.125 seconds quicker overall than American Jak Crawford of DAMS Lucas Oil.

Brazilian Enzo Fittipaldi of Van Amersfoort racing finished third on the classification 0.234s behind, while Frenchman Isack Hadjar put Campos Racing in fourth 0.420s back. India's Kush Maini, who was quickest during F2's morning runs yesterday, was ahead of Brazilian teammate Gabriel Bortoleto in their Invicta Racing cars. Maini was 0.481s behind Maloney on the times while Bortoleto was 0.648s slower.

The pair of Briton Zak O'Sullivan and Frenchman Victor Martins testing for defending F2 champions ART Grand Prix came

**YOU**  
KNOW WHAT

Today is the third and final day of pre-season testing for Formula 2 and Formula 3 in the Kingdom. F2 will be in action from 11.45am to 2.15pm and again from 5.15pm to 7.45pm, and then F3 will be on track from 9am to 11.30am and then again from 2.30pm to 5pm



Luke Browning drives his Hitech Pulse-Eight F3 contender down the pit lane

pleting 64 laps in total behind the wheel.

Irish rookie Alexander Dunne of MP Motorsport followed close behind 0.066s off Browning's pace, while Austrian Charlie Wurz, also in his debut F3 season, steered his Jenzer Motorsport contender to third on the timesheet 0.144s from the top.

Spaniard Mari Boya of Campos Racing was fourth 0.145s behind the leader, while German rookie Tim Tramnitz in another MP car was fifth 0.157s adrift.

Completing the top 10 amongst the F3 runners were Italian Nikita Bedrin (+0.303s)

of PHM AIX Racing, his countryman Gabriele Mini (+0.485s) of reigning F3 champions Prema Racing, German Oliver Goethe (+0.513s) of Campos Racing, Italian Leonardo Fornaroli (+0.745s) of Trident, and Bulgarian Nikola Tzolov (+0.760s) of ART Grand Prix.

F2 and F3 are set to kick off their 2024 seasons later this month with their first rounds supporting the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2024, taking place February 29 to March 2 at BIC. The F2 season is set to feature 14 rounds while F3 will have 10 rounds.

# Muharraq through to FIBA WASL Gulf play-offs

● **Bahrainis lose at the buzzer to Qatar's Al Rayyan, finish second in Group A**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain's Muharraq Club booked their ticket last night to the play-off round in the Gulf sub-zone of the 2023/2024 FIBA West Asia Super League (WASL). Muharraq secured their seat

following a stunning 78-79 loss at the buzzer to Al Rayyan of Qatar in their final Group A game of the preliminary round, played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

After Ra'Shad James buried a three-pointer to give Muharraq a slim 78-76 lead with 14 seconds to play, Rayyan's Mohamed Abdelkawy banked in his own triple at the buzzer to give the visitors the win.

The defeat put Muharraq in second place on their division table and they will now need to play a best-of-three elimination

play-off against a to-be-determined opponent for a berth in the Gulf sub-zone semi-finals.

There are two Gulf groups in the FIBA WASL preliminaries, and the top teams advance directly to the semis, while the second and third seeds will face off for the other two spots.

Muharraq will play either Shabab Al Ahli Dubai of the UAE or Kazma of Kuwait in their play-off.

Bahrain's other team in this year's FIBA WASL, reigning title holders Manama, have already



Muharraq's Mohammed Hussain goes for a lay-up against Al Rayyan last night

secured their final four place as winners of Group B. They play a final fixture today against Shabab Al Ahli at 7pm, while Kazma face winless Al Shamal of Qatar.

In last night's game, Muharraq trailed 53-55 heading into the final period and stayed close in the closing stages. Tyler Wilkerson then levelled the score at 75-all with a dunk and 46 seconds to go, and after a Mouhammad Faye free-throw for Rayyan, the stage was set

## Standings

|                        | P | W | L | +/- | Pts |
|------------------------|---|---|---|-----|-----|
| Kuwait SC (Kuwait)     | 6 | 4 | 2 | 56  | 10  |
| Muharraq (Bahrain)     | 6 | 3 | 3 | -14 | 9   |
| Al Rayyan (Qatar)      | 6 | 3 | 3 | -27 | 9   |
| Al Ahli (Saudi Arabia) | 6 | 2 | 4 | -15 | 8   |

for the game-ending triples of James and Abdelkawy.

Wilkerson had 24 points to pace Muharraq in the loss while James added 14. Andrew Jackson White III led Rayyan with 21, while Faye had 17 and Abdelkawy 16.