



Bahrain and Italy commit to strengthening ties



HM the King receives H.E. Italy Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni



HRH Prince Salman gives the Italian Prime Minister a warm welcome

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Bahrain and Italy have reaffirmed their deep and growing partnership, focusing on enhancing bilateral ties across various sectors.

The commitment to strengthen cooperation came during separate meetings between His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa

Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and Her Excellency Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy, who was on an official visit to the Kingdom.

At Al Gudaibiya Palace, HM the King welcomed Meloni and her delegation, describing her visit as a significant step in advancing Bahrain-Italy ties.

Discussions centered on opportunities to boost collaboration in economic, trade, investment, and sustainable development sectors to achieve mutual prosperity.

They also addressed regional and international developments, emphasising the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in resolving global challenges.

HM King Hamad praised It-

aly's efforts in promoting international peace and stability, while reiterating Bahrain's role as a bridge for dialogue and cooperation among cultures and religions to foster tolerance and coexistence.

Meloni expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality and commended Bahrain's contributions to strengthening historical ties and advancing global peace

initiatives. A luncheon was held in her honour following the discussions.

In a subsequent meeting, HRH Prince Salman welcomed the Italian Prime Minister and highlighted the enduring partnership between the two nations, underpinned by shared values and strategic cooperation.

HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister reaffirmed Bah-

rain's commitment to advancing collaboration across key sectors, particularly economic and investment domains, to fulfill shared aspirations.

The talks also explored regional and international priorities, with HRH Prince Salman stressing Bahrain's dedication to promoting peace and stability through dialogue and mutual understanding.

Bahrain Rail Plan

Cabinet approves timeline for Kingdom's rail network, GCC Rail integration

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Bahrain's Cabinet has approved a timeline for implementing the Kingdom's internal railway network and its integration into the GCC railway network.

The memorandum, submitted by the Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications during the weekly Cabinet meeting chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, marks a significant milestone in Bahrain's transport infrastructure development.

Planned integration with the Gulf Railway network is poised



HRH Prince Salman chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting

to enhance connectivity across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Linking Bahrain's domestic railway system to the larger regional network aims to improve travel efficiency, facilitate

cross-border trade, and foster economic growth.

The Gulf Railway project, spanning over 2,100 kilometres across six GCC states, is expected to be operational by 2030.

Substantial progress has

been reported, including the completion of segments in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as well as the 200-kilometre Ras Al Khair-Dammam rail line.

Preparations for the Bah-

rain-Saudi Arabia causeway link are also underway.

By joining the unified GCC rail network, Bahrain stands to benefit from increased passenger and freight movement.

The project is forecasted to

carry six million passengers annually by 2030, rising to eight million by 2045.

Freight volumes are projected to reach 271 million tonnes by 2045, boosting regional trade, reducing transport costs, and promoting economic integration.

Bahrain's internal railway network is expected to be a part of the Bahrain Metro project, which is set to transform the Kingdom's public transportation landscape.

The Bahrain Metro, a key component of Bahrain's broader economic development strategy, will connect major commercial districts, residential areas, and transportation hubs.

Art serves as 'bridge connecting different cultures and civilizations'

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His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa affirmed the

importance of art, emphasising its meaningful messages and role as a bridge connecting different cultures and civilizations.

On behalf of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman launched the 51st edition of the Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition yesterday at the Bahrain National Museum.



HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman at the ribbon-cutting ceremony

His Highness highlighted the significant advancements in Bahrain's art sector, attributing this progress to the unwavering support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman.

HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman highlighted Bahrain's wealth of creative artistic talents, whose work is prominently showcased in both local and international exhibitions.

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From passion to action

An inspiring journey of expatriates making waves in Bahrain's growing beach cleanup movement

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

A growing community of expatriates are leading by dedicating their time and effort to creating a cleaner and greener environment in the kingdom.

Among them is Lord Darren R. Schneider, who reached out to The Daily Tribune through the "Clean Bahrain" social media campaign, sharing his inspiring journey with Bahrain Beachcombers, a group that has been transforming Bahrain's shores since 2014.

Recently, the Ministry of Municipality and Agriculture recognized an expatriate couple for their heartfelt beach-cleaning efforts — a moment that went viral on social media and highlighted the impact of volunteerism in the kingdom.

Encouraged by this momentum, we invited expatriates to share their environmental activities with us. Here's the story of Bahrain Beachcombers.

A small yet determined initiative quietly began in Bahrain, driven by one man's desire to make a difference.



Lord Darren R. Schneider

Lord Schneider, an Australian who has called Bahrain home for over 25 years, founded Bahrain Beachcombers, the island's first beach community clean-up group.

What started with a handful of people has blossomed into a large, diverse community of passionate volunteers, including schools, corporates, military personnel, and local families — all united by a mission to protect Bahrain's shores.

The First Steps

The spark for Bahrain Beachcombers was ignited during Schneider's morning walks along Nurana Island.

"I noticed the sheer amount of



Beachcombers Team

rubbish washed up on the beach," Schneider recalls. "I started taking a garbage bag with me each day, but it felt like fighting a losing battle. That's when I realized I needed more hands to help."

This realization led to the first community clean-up in 2014.

Schneider reached out to friends, schools, and social groups, who eagerly joined the cause.

"My son's school, the British School of Bahrain, approached me to get involved, and teachers I knew also wanted to help," he explains. "The military joined through word of mouth. It was amazing to see how many people

wanted to help once they knew how to contribute."

A System That Works

Bahrain Beachcombers operates with a carefully designed system to ensure maximum efficiency during clean-ups.

The group meets monthly on a Friday or Saturday morning for two hours of focused cleaning.

Volunteers are guided on what to collect — mostly plastics — while avoiding organic materials, sharp objects, or anything that might tear garbage bags.

"The collected waste is always disposed of properly, and we emphasize consistency by revisiting



Volunteerism in action

sites for follow-ups," Schneider says.

Memorable Moments and Milestones

Over the years, Bahrain Beachcombers has had its share of unforgettable experiences.

One particularly heartwarming moment was when a local Bahraini family joined the effort.

"They came with their children and even brought drinks for everyone," Schneider shares. "Their regular presence became a highlight of our clean-ups."

Another notable success was saving a sea turtle entangled in a fishing line.

"That was a good day," he smiles. "But the most rewarding sight is always seeing the beach completely clean — it's a reminder of the impact we're making."

Since 2014, Schneider has seen a significant shift in how environmental conservation is perceived in Bahrain.

"When we started, there was no one regularly organizing community clean-ups," he reflects. "Now, more groups, clubs, and organizations have joined the environmental movement. Schools are actively including environmental awareness in their programs, and even the local government has been supportive."

RCSI Bahrain Names New Nursing Director

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The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) Medical University of Bahrain has announced the appointment of Professor Husain Nasaif as Director of the MSc in Nursing Programme.

With a distinguished career in nursing education and leadership, Professor Nasaif steps into a role pivotal to advancing postgraduate nursing studies in Bahrain.

Professor Nasaif, who has been with RCSI Bahrain since 2009, holds a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Educational Leadership from Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, USA, and an MSc in Advanced Practice Nursing.

He has also undergone advanced leadership training at Harvard Medical School and Toronto University.

His academic journey and clinical expertise have made him a cornerstone in developing nursing programmes at the university, including his pri-



Professor Husain Nasaif, Associate Professor in Nursing & Director of BSC Nursing Programme at RCSI Medical University of Bahrain

or roles as Director of the BSC (Hons) Nursing Programme and the Nursing Bridging Programme.

Driving Innovation

In his new position, Professor Nasaif will spearhead the enhancement of postgraduate nursing programmes, ensuring cutting-edge research and innovation are seamlessly integrated into the curriculum.

His work will focus on col-

laboration with the School of Nursing & Midwifery to align educational strategies with emerging healthcare challenges.

Beyond academics, Professor Nasaif remains actively involved in healthcare research, exploring areas such as advanced nursing practice, workforce well-being, men's health, and educational assessment in nursing.

Endorsing Excellence

Professor Sameer Ootom, President of RCSI Bahrain, commended Professor Nasaif's appointment, stating, "We are delighted to welcome Professor Nasaif into this pivotal leadership role within the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research. His vast experience and expertise in nursing education, clinical practice, quality improvement, and strategic direction will be instrumental in the advancement of nursing postgraduate teaching. We extend our best wishes for his continued success in this new capacity."

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Anti-human trafficking efforts

Nibras Talib, CEO of the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) and Chairman of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, received an Omani delegation led by Dr. Ahmed bin Talib Al Jabri, Deputy Chairman of Oman's National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking. The meeting reviewed Bahrain's efforts in combating human trafficking and enhancing the labour environment to support market stability. The CEO highlighted the MoU signed between Bahrain and Oman during His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's state visit to Oman. The agreement aims to strengthen cooperation in anti-trafficking efforts, enhance national capacities through knowledge exchange, and coordinate training programmes.



BD396,000 penalty for unpaid electrical fees

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A construction company has been ordered to settle BD396,000 in unpaid fees for electrical works delivered as part of a hotel project worth BD2 million.

The Fifth High Commercial Court ruled in favour of the contractor after evidence showed the defendant failed to fully pay for the services, lawyer Fatima Mohammed Al Keraan confirmed.

Al Keraan explained that her client, the plaintiff, signed a contract with the company to carry out electrical work for the hotel project, valued at BD 2,025,000.

The plaintiff completed the work, obtaining a completion certificate from the supervising engineer. While part of the payment was made, a substantial amount remained unpaid despite reminders.

Foreign investors inject \$33.6m into Bahrain stocks market in 2024



Image used for illustrative purposes only

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A recent report shows that foreign investors continue to pump money into Bahrain's stock market, reflecting growing interest in certain local firms' shares.

Figures from the Bahrain Bourse revealed a net foreign purchase of \$33.6 million in listed stocks during 2024, marking a clear trend of international funds entering the market.

Net purchase transactions

The fourth quarter alone saw net purchase transactions valued at \$1.1 million.

In a bid to breathe new life into trading activity, the Bahrain Bourse has announced the launch of a broad incentive programme, which will kick off on 2 February 2025.

This initiative is a cornerstone of the Financial Services Sector Development Strategy (2022-2026), designed to broaden participation in the market and increase liquidity through new approaches.

Kamco Invest reported that Saudi Arabia's Tadawul recorded the highest net foreign purchases in 2024, totalling \$6.3 billion.

Abu Dhabi's bourse followed with \$5.4 billion, while Dubai's market posted \$572.5 million.

A 'fair' farewell

MP proposes law to reform end-of-service benefits for foreign workers in private sector

H Naser
TDT | Manama

MP Mohammed Al Maarifi has proposed an amendment to the private sector labour law to redefine end-of-service benefits for foreign workers.

The proposal suggests determining gratuity through a written agreement between the foreign worker and employer, included within the employment contract.

This amendment targets Article 116 of the labour law.

Revision

The proposed revision stipulates: "Employees not covered by the Social Insurance Law will be entitled to a mutually agreed-upon end-of-service gratuity, clearly outlined in the employment contract. In the absence of an agreement, the worker will receive a gratuity equivalent to half a month's salary for each of the first three years of service and a full month's salary for each subsequent year. Partial years of service will be compensated proportionally."

In the accompanying memorandum, MP Al Maarifi ex-



Image used for illustrative purposes only

plained that the amendment aims to provide greater flexibility for both parties.

Consideration

"Negotiation allows consideration of job specifics and the contractual relationship. It also seeks to alleviate the financial burden on employers, particularly in sectors employing many foreign workers not covered by the Social Insurance Law – sectors currently facing significant financial strain under the existing law," the accompanying memorandum stated.

Al Maarifi further argued in

the memorandum that the proposal would encourage the establishment of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), startups, and small companies that may struggle with current gratuity costs.

This amendment, he believes, could stimulate investment.

Workers' rights

The MP stressed that the proposal does not diminish workers' rights to end-of-service benefits.

The employment contract may include alternative benefits, such as travel and housing



"The proposal would encourage the establishment of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), startups, and small companies that may struggle with current gratuity costs."

- MP MOHAMMED AL MAARIFI

allowances, in lieu of a standard gratuity calculation.

Furthermore, workers demonstrating exceptional skills and performance can negotiate enhanced end-of-service benefits when renewing contracts or seeking new employment.

Drugs hidden in book covers send smuggler to jail, BD3,000 fine imposed

● Asian man behind bars for five years

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Drugs hidden inside book covers led to an Asian man being jailed for five years and fined BD3,000 after a sting exposed his role in an organised smuggling ring.

The First High Criminal

Court issued the sentence after customs officers intercepted a suspicious parcel at Bahrain International Airport.

The package, arriving from an Asian country, was scanned and found to contain a crystalline substance concealed within book covers.

Upon inspection, the substance was identified as the drug "shabu" (methampheta-

mine), weighing 1.3 kilograms. Anti-Narcotics officers set up an operation to track down the intended recipient.

The man was arrested after picking up the parcel, and a search of his car uncovered a black bag containing another 492.94 grams of suspected shabu, along with a precision scale.

During questioning, the man admitted to collecting the parcel

on behalf of another individual. Investigators uncovered an organised network smuggling drugs into Bahrain, with the defendant tasked with receiving, storing, and distributing the narcotics under instructions from the ringleader.

Laboratory tests confirmed the drugs' nature, while forensic analysis of the defendant's phone revealed more evidence, including images and videos of narcotics and tools used in drug distribution.

Court ends \$27mln banking dispute over jurisdiction

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A \$27 million deposit dispute between two Arab banks has been put to rest, with Bahrain's highest court ruling that its courts lack the authority to handle the case.

The decision closes a long-running row that hinged on cross-border banking challenges and sovereign restrictions.

The case began in October 2019 when a Bahrain-based Arab bank accused another Arab bank, operating in a different country, of failing to honour an investment agreement.

The claimant alleged it had transferred \$25 million to the defendant bank as a deposit, due for maturity on 4 Novem-

The case originated in October 2019 when a Bahrain-based Arab bank filed a complaint against another Arab bank in a different country, alleging a breach of an investment agreement.

ber 2020.

Control

However, the defendant bank cited laws in its home country that barred dollar transfers abroad, claiming the issue was beyond its control.

The claimant sought \$1.3 million from the Bahrain-based operations of the defendant bank and its board members.

It argued that the defendant

was a subsidiary of the Bahrain-based entity, leaving the parent company accountable.

The claimant also reserved the right to pursue the remaining funds and interest in separate legal proceedings.

Bahrain's Chamber for Dispute Resolution ruled early on that the case fell outside its jurisdiction.

It dismissed the lawsuit, ordered the claimant to cover legal

fees, and rejected claims against all board members involved.

Ruling

The claimant appealed to the Court of Cassation, seeking to overturn the ruling.

Representing the defendant bank, lawyer Dr Abdullah Al Ali argued that Bahrain's courts can only hear cases involving non-Bahraini entities if the dispute concerns assets located in

Conference on restorative criminal justice successful

TDT | Manama

An international gathering on restorative criminal justice has drawn to a close in Bahrain, shining a light on the country's growing influence in modern justice practices.

Over two days, experts and officials from across the globe met at the Gulf Hotel to share experiences and explore approaches to reform.

The event, titled "Promoting Restorative Criminal Justice – An Insight into the Evolution of Criminal Justice Administration Patterns", was organised by the Public Prosecution in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, and the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies.

Representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also took part.

Leader

Bahrain's role as a leader in restorative justice was a central theme.

Discussions covered the implementation of the Restorative Justice for Children Law, the development of criminal mediation programmes, and the use of orders for minor offences to reduce the burden on traditional courts.

These efforts were held up as a practical model that could influence approaches in other countries.

Experts stressed the need for collaboration and the sharing of knowledge between countries to meet the growing challenges facing justice systems.

Legal frameworks

Delegates urged governments to revisit and update their legal frameworks, ensuring they include more opportunities for restorative measures and reflect the best global practices.

The conference ended with a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening restorative justice systems.

Bahrain, obligations carried out within the kingdom, or specific ties to the country.

He pointed out that the defendant bank, as a foreign joint-stock company, had no domicile or operations in Bahrain.

Jurisdiction

Dr Al Ali emphasised that Bahrain's rules on jurisdiction are well-established and consistently upheld by its courts, reinforcing the initial ruling.

The Court of Cassation ultimately dismissed the appeal, backing the lower court's stance.

With this ruling, Bahrain's judiciary has drawn a clear line on its jurisdiction in cross-border banking matters, wrapping up a case that has simmered for years.

Dirt and disorder

766 cleanliness violations recorded from Jan 2024 to Jan 2025 in Northern Governorate

H. Naser
TDT | Manama

A total of 766 cleanliness violations have been recorded between January 2024 and January 2025.

This was revealed by Eng. Lamya Al Fadhala, Director General of the Northern Governorate Municipality.

Pressing concerns

The update was shared during the Northern Governorate Municipal Council's regular meeting held yesterday, which focused on addressing pressing concerns regarding public cleanliness and the enforcement of related regulations that are crucial for maintaining a healthy environment.

Eng. Al Fadhala stated that, in addition to the cleanliness violations, over 900 building violations were noted during the same period, generating fines exceeding BD100,000.

Many of these violations were



Eng. Lamya Al Fadhala speaks during the Municipal Council's regular meeting

resolved amicably through settlements, highlighting the municipality's commitment to fostering cooperation between residents and local authorities.

Garbage collection

Al Fadhala also addressed persistent concerns regarding garbage collection, stressing the importance of adhering to des-

ignated collection times, specifically between 8pm and 10pm.

To further enhance waste management efforts, she introduced a new initiative aimed at utilising organic waste for fertiliser production, which not only addresses waste disposal but also promotes sustainability.

Additionally, Al Fadhala underscored the importance of

promoting recycling initiatives and raising public awareness about cleanliness standards within the community.

Temporary postponement

Meanwhile, council member Mohammed Saad Al Doseri reported on a temporary postponement of issuing some cleanliness violations following a recent meeting with the services committee.

“It is important to promote recycling initiatives and raise public awareness about cleanliness standards within the community.”

- ENG. LAMYA AL FADHALA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NORTHERN GOVERNORATE MUNICIPALITY

LMRA conducts 674 inspection campaigns, visits across Kingdom

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The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) announced the implementation of 674 inspection campaigns and visits, during the period of January 19-25, which resulted in the detention of 29 violating and irregular workers, while 192 violators were deported.

The inspection campaigns and visits also resulted in monitoring a number of violations related to the provisions of a number of regulating laws, especially the Labour Market Regulatory Authority and the Residency Laws in the Kingdom of Bahrain, noting that legal measures were taken regarding the observed violations.

The authority pointed out that 661 inspection visits were carried out on various shops in all governorates, in addition to 13 joint inspection campaigns, that included 8 campaigns in the Capital Governorate, 3 campaigns in the Muharraq Governorate, 1 campaign in the Northern Governorate, and 1 campaign in the Southern Governorate.

The government entity that participated in the campaigns is the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Nationality, Passports and Residence Af-



fairs (NPRA), the Governorate's Respective Police Directorate, and the Social Insurance Organization.

Joint coordination

The Authority affirmed the continuation of joint coordination with government agencies to intensify inspection campaigns in all governorates of the Kingdom, and to address any violations or practices that negatively affect the stability and competitiveness of the labour market or harm the economic and social security of the Kingdom.

The LMRA renewed its call on all members of society to support the efforts of government agencies in addressing illegal labour practices, by reporting violations via the electronic form on the authority's website www.lmra.gov.bh.

Housing Ministry starts distributing 1,842 residential units in Salman City



Northern Governorate Municipal Council and Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning members conduct site visit

H. Naser
TDT | Manama

The Ministry of Housing has officially begun the distribution of 1,842 residential units in Salman City.

Northern Governorate Municipal Council member Basem Ali Abuidrees made the announcement following a recent site visit conducted by members of the Northern Governorate Municipal Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.



Basem Ali Abuidrees

Visit

The visit aimed to monitor the progress of housing projects and assess the final preparations before handing over the apartments to the beneficiaries.

Abuidrees said that the residential units, located in Block 582 of Salman City, are equipped with essential amenities, including air conditioning, ovens, and kitchens.

Each apartment will cover an area of 175 square meters, and every building will feature a multipurpose hall capable of accommodating up to 200 guests for events and celebra-

Deep gratitude

“During the site visit, council members reviewed all aspects of the project, including the infrastructure, apartment fittings, and services available in Salman City,” he pointed out, expressing deep gratitude to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for its dedicated efforts in serving the nation and its citizens.

He stressed that the Salman City housing project is one of the most prominent developmental initiatives that meet citizens' expectations in terms of housing quality and basic services.

‘Necessary and timely solution’

Hamad Town parks transformed into public parking lots to ease traffic congestion

H. Naser
TDT | Manama

The Northern Governorate Municipal Council approved the conversion of two plots designated for public parks in Hamad Town into essential public parking lots.

This decision, made yesterday during the Council's regular meeting, addresses the growing population density and significant shortage of parking spaces in the area, aiming to alleviate ongoing traffic congestion and offer safer, more organised parking for residents and visitors.

One of the selected plots is located on Road 939 in Block 1210, covering approximately 1,033,855 square meters, while the second is situated on Road 1051 within the same block in Hamad Town.



Abdullah Al Qubaisi

The initiative has garnered strong support from council member Abdullah Al Qubaisi, who explained that the new parking facilities will serve both the community and those using the area's walking paths, enhancing accessibility for everyone.

“In response to the persistent parking challenges and high population density in this area of Hamad Town,” said Al

“The conversion of these parks into public parking lots represents a necessary and timely solution. This initiative will directly benefit residents, provide convenient parking for those utilising the nearby walking paths, and contribute to improved traffic management within the entire community.”

- ABDULLAH AL QUBAIS, NORTHERN GOVERNORATE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBER

Qubaisi, “the conversion of these parks into public parking lots represents a necessary and timely solution. This initiative will directly benefit residents, provide convenient parking for those utilising the nearby walking paths, and contribute to improved traffic management within the entire community.”

Proactive step

He further explained: “The

transformation of these parks into parking lots is expected to significantly ease the current parking challenges and improve overall traffic flow in the area, enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike,” adding: “With the increasing demands for space and resources, this initiative marks a proactive step toward better urban management and sustainable development in Hamad Town.”

Grace in Motion: Bahrain Celebrates Indian Dance Legacy

TDT | Manama

Bahrain witnessed a dazzling celebration of Indian classical dance on Friday at the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS), where five young talents marked their Bharatanatyam Arangetram (debut performance by students).

Ananya Vivek Jananiy, Haritha Aravindan, Nithyasri Ganesapandian, Sanathanya Inbasekaran, and Shivanshi Ghosh Dastidar, disciples of Hanshul Gani of Birundavani Music and Dance Academy, showcased years of dedication to this revered art form.

The evening was graced by Chief Guest Ghada Al Sayed, a



Chief Guest Ghada Al Sayed with students, guest of honours and other prominent figures

trailblazing interior designer and philanthropist, alongside Guest of Honours Saji Jacob, M. Palaniswamy, and Arun Kumar Sharma, principals of Bahrain's leading Indian schools.

Over 800 attendees, including

prominent figures, witnessed the event.

From Pushpanjali to Mangalam, the students performed a traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire with precision and grace, blending intricate footwork and

storytelling.

Supported by 40 academy students, the three-hour event was a mesmerising showcase of India's cultural heritage, blending devotion with artistic expression.

Hilton Bahrain presents **The Dome**

A majestic culinary experience this Ramadan

TDT | Manama

Hilton Bahrain has unveiled The Dome, an exquisite 800 square meters venue located right beside the hotel, designed to elevate Ramadan celebrations. For the first time since the hotel's opening, Iftar and Ghabga will be held in this stunning dome, adorned with captivating mashrabiya patterns that beautifully celebrate the spirit of the season. Construction has already begun.

Hilton Bahrain has made a name in the market for its delicious Iftar and Ghabga. This year, the culinary team promises to deliver an exceptional experience featuring a harmonious blend of local and global flavors. The Dome features two wings for outdoor seating, allowing guests to enjoy shisha and live cooking stations in a vibrant atmosphere. The venue accommodates up to 400 guests and includes private dining areas for a more intimate experience. Tamer Farouk, General Man-



ager of Hilton Bahrain, shared, "We are very excited and thrilled about this unique setting that brings the experience from the hotel to The Dome. Our team is committed to continually el-

evating the experiences we offer our guests, especially in this important season of Ramadan. You wouldn't want to miss this unforgettable celebration!"

To enhance the evening,

guests can look forward to live entertainment that captures the festive spirit of Ramadan, featuring traditional music and captivating performances. The Iftar and Ghabga menus will

showcase a diverse selection of traditional Arabic dishes, freshly prepared at live cooking stations, along with international favorites and delectable desserts that are sure to please every pal-

ate. This Ramadan, guests are invited to experience The Dome, where dining transcends the ordinary and becomes an unforgettable celebration.

BBK offers exclusive Tas'heel and Mazaya Finance to own dream home

With a gift of BD 1,000 and flexible 30-Year repayment plan

TDT | Manama

Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK), the leading retail and commercial bank in Bahrain, announced the commencement of registration for eligible customers to apply for the social housing programs Tas'heel and Mazaya, along with New Mazaya. These government-led initiatives, introduced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in partnership with the private sector, aim to provide social housing solutions for Bahraini citizens, and facilitate homeownership by enabling beneficiaries to apply for financing directly through the Bank, streamlining the process of acquiring residential units.

BBK outlined an array of exclusive benefits for customers applying for Tas'heel or Mazaya financing which include repayment plans of up to 30 years, competitive rates, and fast approvals. Tasheel financing scheme through BBK includes coverage of real estate registration fees for the financed amount, comprehensive life insurance, and inclusion of administrative fees in the financing package.

Moreover, The Bank offers an exclusive gift of BD 1,000 to all customers who obtain Tasheel financing, fixed monthly installment payments and a grace period of six months before the first installment is due. Customers may also qualify for a larger financing amount if they opt to increase the deduction rate.

The financing amount for Tasheel can reach up to BD 70,000, enabling customers to purchase their dream house or land, or to buy land and construct a property, with no cap



BBK is delighted to offer this solution, supported by a suite of competitive advantages, as part of our continued collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Eskan Bank. This partnership has significantly enhanced the ability of Bahraini families to benefit from the financing solutions we've developed, aligning with the comprehensive development goals and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030

AHMED TAQI, GENERAL MANAGER OF RETAIL BANKING AT BBK

on the property's price. Applicants must be between the ages of 21 and 50 and have a salary ranging from BD 350 to BD 1,200 to be eligible for the financing. Moreover, BBK of-

fers both Mazaya and Tasheel financing schemes, the option for its customers, to avail up to 115% of the value of the property as a loan.

Mr. Ahmed Taqi, General Manager of Retail Banking at BBK, emphasized the Bank's commitment to enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of housing services for citizens, facilitating their journey to own their dream homes or land with exclusive benefits. This is achieved through BBK's partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and in collaboration with leading real estate development companies, providing customers with diverse property options.

"We take pride in our exceptional housing financing solutions, which reflect our ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration with the real estate and housing sectors across the Kingdom," Mr. Taqi stated.

"BBK is delighted to offer this solution, supported by a suite of competitive advantages, as part of our continued collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and Eskan Bank. This partnership has significantly enhanced the ability of Bahraini families to benefit from the financing solutions we've developed, aligning with the comprehensive development goals and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030."

Mr. Taqi urged all eligible beneficiaries to take advantage of Tas'heel or Mazaya financing through BBK, whether for new or additional financing, and highlighted the bank's streamlined application process, designed to ensure a smooth and swift experience, supported by a dedicated advisory team providing professional assistance throughout the process.

BENEFIT first organisation in Bahrain to get ISO 37301:2021



The award ceremony

TDT | Manama

BENEFIT, the Kingdom's innovator and leading company in Fintech and electronic financial transactions service, has announced its certification for ISO 37301:2021 (Compliance Management System) by the British Standards Institution (BSI), marking a groundbreaking achievement as the first organization in the Kingdom of Bahrain to attain this prestigious certification.

This milestone reflects BENEFIT's unwavering dedication to adhering to the highest international standards in compliance, demonstrating the company's robust compliance management practices and fostering a culture of integrity and accountability.

Maryam Kamal, Senior Manager - Compliance & MLRO at BENEFIT, expressed her pride in this accomplishment: "We are incredibly proud to be the

first in Bahrain to receive this prestigious certification. It reflects our dedication to building a transparent, ethical, and compliant work environment that meets international standards. This accomplishment inspires us to continue striving for excellence."

The certification was awarded after a comprehensive evaluation by BSI, which assessed BENEFIT's policies, procedures, and systems to ensure compliance with the stringent requirements of ISO 37301:2021.

With this certification, BENEFIT sets a benchmark for organizations in the Kingdom and the region, showcasing how a strong compliance culture can support sustainable growth and operational excellence. BENEFIT's commitment to compliance not only enhances its reputation but also strengthens the Kingdom's position as a leader in adopting international standards.



An interesting fact about ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is that its name is not an acronym but comes from the Greek word "isos," meaning "equal." This choice ensures the organization's name is consistent across all languages, emphasizing its goal of standardization and equality in global practices.

BRAVE CF expands European horizons

Trailblazing MMA promotion unites continents through landmark events and strategic global growth

● Events planned for Switzerland, Slovenia, and Bulgaria in 2025

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation's strategic expansion into Europe in 2024 marks a defining chapter in its global growth plans. The organization hosted events in 35 countries, bridging continents through the universal appeal of combat sports. By solidifying its presence in Europe, BRAVE CF sets the stage for accelerated growth in 2025, with a cascading impact on its expansion into Asia and Africa.

Europe represents one of the most mature MMA markets, boasting a deep talent pool, robust fanbase, and established sports culture. BRAVE CF's presence in the region positions it to tap into these strengths while introducing its unique vision of global MMA.

By hosting events in countries like Germany, Slovenia, Serbia, the United Kingdom, Spain, and France, the organization can attract high-caliber European fighters and engage audiences eager for fresh and dynamic MMA experiences.

Cementing presence

Building on its successful



A view of the packed venue during the event in Serbia (file photo)

European expansion in 2024, BRAVE CF has announced several exciting events for 2025, further cementing its presence in the region.

On May 17, 2025, BRAVE CF 94 will mark the organization's debut in Switzerland, making it the 17th European country to host a BRAVE CF event. This milestone extends BRAVE CF's record as the most hosted MMA organization in Europe.

Following this, BRAVE CF will return to Slovenia for BRAVE CF 95 on June 7, 2025, capitalizing on the success of two re-

cord-breaking events held there in 2024.

Additionally, BRAVE CF 96 is scheduled for July 12, 2025, in Bulgaria, marking the organization's second event in the country. These events demonstrate BRAVE CF's commitment to expanding its European footprint and providing top-tier MMA action across the continent.

This strategic foothold in Europe amplifies BRAVE CF's global appeal. European fighters joining BRAVE CF bring diverse fighting styles and strong followings, enhancing the organ-

ization's roster and global fan engagement. Additionally, Europe serves as a gateway to new sponsorship and broadcast partnerships, bolstering the financial foundation needed to fuel its ambitious expansion plans.

Ripple effect

The ripple effect of European expansion extends to Asia and Africa, two regions central to BRAVE CF's identity. By leveraging its success in Europe, BRAVE CF can position itself as a truly interconnected MMA promotion, uniting talent and fans

across continents. For Asia, this means enhanced collaboration opportunities with existing partners and an increased ability to showcase Asian fighters on a global stage. By bridging the gap between Europe and Asia, BRAVE CF can bring its athletes into cross-regional matchups, generating unprecedented interest and viewership.

Global force

In Africa, the European strategy strengthens BRAVE CF's credibility as a global force, inspiring confidence among athletes and stakeholders. African fighters, already gaining traction through BRAVE CF's initiatives, can now access a wider platform, gaining exposure to European audiences and honing their skills against elite competition. This dynamic reinforces the organization's commitment to nurturing untapped talent in Africa while presenting it as a critical component of the global MMA narrative.

The synergy between these regions also fuels BRAVE CF's media production initiatives, with documentaries and short films highlighting fighters' journeys across continents. European expansion adds compelling stories of perseverance and triumph, enriching BRAVE CF's growing library of content. These narratives can resonate with diverse audiences, blending European, Asian, and African cultures



BRAVE CF has become the most hosted MMA organization in Europe, with events in 35 countries across the globe, bridging continents through combat sports

through the lens of MMA.

Push for global recognition

Moreover, BRAVE CF's presence in Europe strengthens its lobbying efforts for the global recognition of MMA, including its push for Olympic inclusion. Partnering with European sports institutions and policymakers can elevate MMA's status while spotlighting BRAVE CF's role as a leader in the sport's development. This strategy accelerates its growth in 2025 and cements its role as a unifying force in combat sports. By creating pathways that connect Europe, Asia, and Africa, BRAVE CF builds a legacy of innovation, inclusivity, and cultural exchange, redefining the future of MMA on a global scale.

Equestrian enthusiasts await HRH the Crown Prince's Cup

● Two-day horseracing cup starts January 30

TDT | Manama

Equestrian and horse racing enthusiasts eagerly await His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's Horseracing Cup, sponsored by Cebarco, which will take place over two days, Thursday and Friday, January 30-31, at the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club.

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's Horseracing Cup is one of the most prominent and significant races in the history of Bahraini horse racing, carrying a rich legacy since its first edition in 1982, which coincided with the official launch of races at the club's track. The race, held under the patronage and support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, has enhanced the event's stature and propelled its development.

Increased prize money

In recent years, the race has seen significant advancements, including increased prize money and a gradual rise in the number of races, reaching eight in the previous season.

From the 2024/2025 season, the event expanded into a two-day festival. Additionally, since two seasons ago, the race for imported horses has been open



Action from a previous event at REHC

to entries from owners outside Bahrain, alongside Bahraini horses.

These developments aim to enhance competition and make the races more exciting, with a variety of classifications and distances. This reflects the club's efforts to improve local and international racing standards, making it a key destination for horses from around the world.

The Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club (REHC) has prepared a special programme for fans to enjoy the festival's activities and competitions over the two days. Tickets are available for purchase on the website Bahrainturfclub.com, allowing all attendees to experience the exceptional atmosphere and enjoy the festival's events and races.

Rich legacy

His Royal Highness the

Crown Prince's Horseracing Cup golden record includes names of owners, stables, horses, and jockeys over 43 years. Shaikh Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khalifa was the first winner of the Cup in 1982 with the horse "Sari," ridden by jockey Hassan Haji.

Last season, in 2024, the horses "Abiyon 1777," "Immortal," and "Isle of Jura" won in the categories of Arabian horses, locally produced horses, and imported horses, respectively.

The imported horse category, introduced in 2015, has witnessed victories by four different stables. Notably, Al Nawafeeq Stable won the first two editions in 2015 and 2016 with the horse "Bartack". Other winners include Al Adiyat Racing, Victorious Stable; which claimed the cup three times with "Port Lions," "New Show," and "Isle of Jura"; and Al Mo-



The Crown Prince's Horseracing Cup has been held annually since 1982, with notable winners including horses like "Anchorman" and jockeys like Frankie Dettori

hamediya Stable, which secured its first win in 2022 with "Medal Winner." Godolphin Stable of the United Arab Emirates became the first international stable to win the cup in 2023 with "Warren Point."

Legendary Horses and Jockeys

Among the standout horses in the competition's history is "Anchorman," who won the cup three times (1996, 1997, and 1999), "Shadow Boxer," crowned twice (2002 and 2004), and "Blues Bass Billy," a two-time champion (2010 and 2012).

As for jockeys, Bahrainis Hassan Ezzat and Ahmed Akbar, French jockey Gérald, British jockey Gary Hind, and the renowned Italian jockey Frankie Dettori each claimed four titles, making them the most successful jockeys in the event's history.

India's Bumrah named Test cricketer of the year

AFF | London

India pacesman Jasprit Bumrah was yesterday named men's Test cricketer of the year for 2024 by the International Cricket Council.

The right-arm quick returned to the five-day format in late 2023 following a lengthy absence due to a back injury.

Bumrah, 31, was the leading wicket-taker in Test cricket in 2024, topping the charts with 71, well clear of second-placed Gus Atkinson of England (52 in 11 matches).

His average across the year was a breathtaking 14.92 and he ended 2024 with a strike rate for the year of just 30.1.

"Test cricket has always been a format I hold close to my heart, and to be recognised on this platform is truly special," said Bumrah.

"This award is not just a reflection of my individual efforts but also of the unwavering support of my teammates, coaches, and fans who continue to believe and inspire me every day."

Jasprit Bumrah

day. "Representing India is a privilege I deeply cherish, and knowing my efforts bring smiles to people around the world makes this journey even more special."

Bumrah beat England batsmen Harry Brook and Joe Root as well as Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis to the award, given by the game's governing body.

Smriti Mandhana made it a double success for India as she was voted women's one-day international cricketer of the year for the second time.

Afghanistan all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai clinched the men's ODI award.

