

Bahrain greets Chinese President

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, sent cables of congratulations to Chinese President Xi Jinping, on the Chinese New Year.

HRH Prince Salman sent a similar cable to the Premier of the State Council of China, HE Li Qiang.

Arts exhibition winners named

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More than 150 works by 67 artists in various mediums, including painting, installation, photography, and sculpture are on display as the 51st edition of the Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition was opened at the Bahrain National Museum.

On behalf of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa inaugurated the exhibition at the Bahrain National Museum.

The opening ceremony included the presentation of awards to the winning artists.

Sayed Hassan Al Sari and Ali Karimi jointly won the Al Dana Award, while Ebrahim Al Ghanim received the Rashid Al Khalifa Art Foundation Award. Zainab Al Sabba was awarded the Al Riwaq Art Space Award.

The exhibition will remain open to the public at the Bahrain National Museum until April 27, during official working hours, except on Tuesdays.

The Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition serves as a vital platform for showcasing the Kingdom's fine and visual arts, featuring broad participation from local and international artists, art enthusiasts, and critics.

220 fils (includes VAT)



United in grief



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, arrived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to extend their condolences following the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. HM the King and HRH Prince Salman asked them to convey their condolences to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques; and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. HM King Hamad and His Royal Highness recalled the late prince's contributions to his country and society, highlighting his efforts in advancing Saudi Arabia's development alongside his brothers. Upon arrival, HRH Prince Salman was received by the Deputy Governor of Riyadh Region, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The family of the deceased expressed their appreciation to His Majesty and HRH Prince Salman for their condolences and sympathy during their loss.



HM King receives Saudi Media Minister

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa received Salman bin Yousef Al Dosari, Minister of Media of Saudi Arabia, who visited Bahrain to chair the Saudi delegation at the fourth meeting of the Coordination Committee on Culture, Media, Tourism, and Social Development, established under the Saudi-Bahraini Coordination Council. HM the King welcomed the Saudi minister and wished success for the Coordination Committee meeting in strengthening cooperation between the two countries. His Majesty expressed

Future at stake

MPs call for debate as Bahrain's transit strategy and tourism facilities come under scrutiny

Mohammed Darwish
TD | Manama

MPs want answers on whether Bahrain is doing enough to attract travellers and cash in on its spot as a regional stopover.

A formal request has been handed to Council of Representatives Speaker Ahmed bin Salman Al Musallam, pushing for a debate on the government's handling of transit and tourism services.

The discussion will look at whether Bahrain International Airport is set up to handle more transit passengers and what steps the Ministry of Tourism is taking to draw in more visitors.

MPs also want to know if the visa process for short-stay travellers can be made easier, particularly through online systems. A key part of the debate will compare Bahrain's tourism perks with those of nearby countries to see where it stands in the race to pull in travellers.

The wider impact of expanding transit and tourism services on the economy is also on the agenda, especially how they might bring in more revenue.

MPs are expected to put forward ideas to make Bahrain a stronger player in regional tourism and transit, making better use of its spot on the map.

The debate will also take in



MP Hassan Ebrahim

the government's current and planned moves to bring in tourism dollars, build up the sector's backbone, and open doors for outside investment.

Gulf Air's role in all this won't be left out.

MPs want to see whether Bah-



MP Mamdouh Al Saleh

rain's flag carrier is pulling its weight in making travel smoother, from entry procedures to onward flights.

There's also talk of expanding transit routes by teaming up with airlines across the region and beyond, giving Bahrain a

better shot at competing in air travel and tourism.

The request for this debate was put forward by MPs Mamdouh Al Saleh, Hassan Ebrahim and eight others.

MPs have called for key officials to give their input including the Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, Bahrain Airport Services, Gulf Air representatives, the Interior Ministry's Immigration, Passports and Residency Affairs, the Minister of Tourism, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

MP Al Saleh is expected to take the lead in putting forward the MPs' case.

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Bahrain Bolsters Future Generations Reserve

HM King Hamad approves tiered oil revenue deductions to secure long-term financial stability

● **Law effective from next fiscal year**

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His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa yesterday ratified and issued Law (5) of 2025, amending Article (1)

of Law (28) of 2006 to increase deductions from oil export revenues for the Future Generations Reserve (FGR).

The move follows approval by the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives and will take effect from the start of the next fiscal year.

As per the law approved by the legislative councils, deductions



HM the King

will now be tiered, reaching \$5 per barrel when oil prices exceed \$120.

The change aims to bolster Bahrain's long-term financial stability by ensuring more resources are set aside for future generations.

Sovereign safeguard

Established in 2006, the

Future Generations Reserve serves as a financial buffer designed to protect national wealth and support Bahrain's economy.

The fund ensures that a portion of oil revenues is set aside exclusively for future needs, preventing over-reliance on immediate expenditures.

Its role has been particular-

ly evident during global financial challenges, where reserve funds have allowed Bahrain to sustain key government projects without abrupt budgetary shortfalls.

By strengthening its structure through increased deductions, the Kingdom aims to enhance economic resilience and safeguard its financial future.

Italian rhythms and joy

A night to remember as Bahrain dances to Tarantella beat at Cultural Hall

Ashen Tharaka
TDT | Manama

The Cultural Hall in Bahrain came alive last night with the vibrant rhythms and melodies of Southern Italy as it hosted Breeze of Tarantella: A Journey to the South of Italy.

The event showcased the rich dance and musical traditions of the Italian regions of Apulia,



Guests and attendees enjoy the captivating Italian performance on stage



“Cultural exchanges are significant in strengthening the enduring bilateral ties between Italy and Bahrain.”

- H.E. ANDREA CATALANO, ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN

with influences from Campania, Calabria, and Basilicata.

Music and dance

The performance featured renowned Italian artists Sara Fiorina Colonna, Mariangela Recchia, Giuseppe Delle Donne, and Tommaso Masarelli, who captivated the audience with their authentic renditions of traditional folk music and dance.



H.E. Andrea Catalano, Italian Ambassador to Bahrain

The event transported attendees through an immersive cultural experience, highlighting the deep-rooted artistic expressions of Southern Italy.

Italian Ambassador to Bah-

rain, H.E. Andrea Catalano, graced the occasion and delivered the opening remarks.

Bilateral ties

He emphasized the enduring bilateral ties between Italy and Bahrain, noting the significance of cultural exchanges in strengthening international relations.

The event was attended by members of the Italian community in Bahrain, as well as local enthusiasts of Italian heritage and arts.

The night's performances featured a variety of traditional instruments, which played a pivotal role in preserving the region's folk legacy.

HRH Princess Sabeeka chairs SCW meeting



Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of HM the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women (SCW), chaired the council's fourth meeting of its eighth term (2022-2025). HRH Princess Sabeeka expressed her appreciation to the unwavering support of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of the council's work and all national initiatives aimed at advancing Bahraini women. She highlighted that this support has empowered the SCW to achieve key milestones in fulfilling His Majesty's vision, ensuring Bahraini women's contributions to national development and progress.

Defence and security forum session



In the presence of His Highness Lieutenant General Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, National Security Advisor, Royal Guard Commander, and Secretary General of the Supreme Defence Council, His Highness Colonel Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Commander of the Royal Guard Special Force, participated in a discussion panel on the second day of the National Defence and Security Forum.

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Notorious drug lord's relapse ends in life sentence

H Naser
TDT | Manama

A notorious Bahraini drug trafficker, released from a decade-long prison sentence just months ago, is back behind bars — this time facing life imprisonment.

The 32-year-old, convicted in 2012 for drug peddling, seemingly learned nothing from his time incarcerated, returning to his life of crime with a vengeance.

His brazen relapse has resulted in a far harsher punishment than his previous 10-year sentence as well as BD10,000 fine.

The man had served his time for a previous conviction on drug trafficking charges.

His release, marking the end of his twenties spent behind bars, was short-lived.

He quickly resumed his illegal activities, demonstrating a shocking disregard for the law and a complete lack of remorse.

As per the court files, the defendant used WhatsApp to contact Asian suppliers

Let them sit

MP Hanan Fardan fights against 'servitude' of women forced to stand at work all day

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A single-MP legislation to stop bosses from forcing female staff to stand all day has just hit Parliament.

MP Hanan Fardan, who put forward this amendment to the Labour Law for the Private Sector, says the current rules amount to a kind of servitude that takes advantage of women's urgent search for paid work.

Her draft law would require businesses to provide seating, upending a workplace norm that, in her words, "exploits our sisters and daughters" who have little choice but to endure the strain for a wage.

"The 'you stay standing' rule pushed by some businesses is servitude against our sisters and daughters, squeezing them through their dire need for a job, and we have to put an end to it," the lawmaker said.

She tied the proposal to a bigger move to keep women in the

“The ‘you stay standing’ rule pushed by some businesses is servitude against our sisters and daughters, squeezing them through their dire need for a job, and we have to put an end to it.”

- MP HANAN FARDAN

workforce, saying that a simple seat can mean the difference between exhaustion and steady work.

"Breaking up long hours on your feet does not just ease the body — it steadies the mind and lifts output," she said.

The submission comes with a call for shops and businesses to display a copy of women's work regulations where they can be clearly seen, giving workers the means to know their rights.



It also demands strict steps to prevent mistreatment, including harassment and aggression in the workplace, pushing for a setting where women can work without the creeping fear of being undermined or harmed.

Fardan argued that fair work conditions for women make workplaces run better, keeping staff steady and bosses happy.

"Giving women the means to work well is not a burden — it is sound practice," she said.

Convicted killer gets extra jail time for brutal inmate attack

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A convicted killer already serving a life sentence at Jau Prison has been handed another jail term — this time for a vicious attack that left a fellow inmate with shattered teeth, a fractured jaw, and a permanent disability.

The First High Criminal Court sentenced him and four others to three years behind bars for the bashing, which targeted three prisoners and left one with lasting damage.

The attack took place on 30 June 2022 inside the Reform and Rehabilitation Centre at Jau Prison.

Injuries

Prosecutors said the five men set upon their fellow inmates, one of whom suffered broken facial bones, lost five teeth, and was left with a misaligned jaw that affected his ability to chew.

A head injury caused permanent impairment. The other two victims were injured but not to the same extent.

A senior corporal with the

Ministry of Interior, who was on duty at the time, told the court he was called to a fight and arrived to find a group of prisoners blocking the visitation room door, stopping anyone from getting in.

Unconscious

Officers forced their way in and found an inmate unconscious.

The corporal saw one of the defendants — already convicted over a killing at Jau Prison — beating the victim.

The other four, including three also found guilty in the same case, were attacking two others. The injured were taken to hospital.

Admission

During questioning, the five admitted to the assault.

A forensic report confirmed the primary victim's injuries were caused by blows to the head and face.

Security footage inside the prison captured the attack, backing up the testimony.

Criminal records revealed the defendants had previous convictions.

Accountant guilty of stealing from Gulf Aviation Academy

● Five years behind bars, and fined BD41,770.795

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The High Criminal Court has sentenced a 36-year-old accountant to five years imprisonment and a fine of BD41,770.795

for embezzling BD54,121 between January 2021 and April 2022 from Gulf Aviation Academy, a subsidiary of Gulf Air Group. He has also been ordered to repay the same amount to Gulf Aviation Academy following his conviction.

As per the case records, the Public Prosecution accused the accountant, who served as a senior accountant and acting head of accounts and finance at the academy, of embezzling the

amount.

Cash payments

The prosecution alleged that he exploited his position to misappropriate cash payments received from trainees, diverting the funds for his personal use instead of depositing them into the academy's accounts.

The accountant was further accused of manipulating the academy's electronic information system.

He allegedly altered transaction data and dates, falsified bank reconciliations, omitted accurate data, and systematically prepared monthly reconciliation reports to conceal his embezzlement.

He also reportedly entered false value-added tax (VAT) entries to cover discrepancies between the academy's bank records and its electronic system.

Testimonies from the academy's finance and accounts di-

rector revealed that since November 11, 2021, the department had consisted of two employees: the defendant and an accounts coordinator.

Irregularities

"The coordinator, who was primarily focused on preparing the 2022 financial plan, delegated most departmental tasks to the defendant. In the December 2021 reconciliation report, I noticed irregularities including

the coordinator's own signature, despite not having reviewed or prepared it. Upon the defendant's resignation in April 2022, discrepancies were discovered," she stated.

These included a BD 50,000 VAT payment made by the academy, despite the parent company being responsible for this tax.

Further inconsistencies revealed that funds received in certain months were recorded as received in other months.

'Unfair weight on business owners'

MPs back proposal to scrap fines for late CR renewals

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A push to scrap BD500 annual fines for late commercial registration (CR) renewals — penalties that can hit BD5,000 — has been backed by Parliament, aiming to relieve the financial strain on traders and citizens already grappling with tough economic conditions.

The proposal, directed at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, seeks to scrap fines imposed on businesses that fail to renew their CRs within three years of the due date.

Unfair weight

Proponents of the move, including Khalid Saleh Buanaq, Hesham Al Awadhi, Zainab AbdulAmeer, Ali Al Nuaimi, and Hassan Ebrahim, described the fines as an unfair weight on business owners.

"This adds unnecessary pressure during a time when many are struggling with rising costs and financial hurdles," the MPs stated in their submission. "Scrapping these fines will offer relief and help individuals



regain stability."

The fines, introduced under a 2024 regulation amending an earlier directive from 2016, were flagged as a deterrent to business growth and compliance.

Hefty penalties

According to the MPs, the hefty penalties discourage traders from keeping their CRs active, ultimately stifling economic activity.

"Penalties like this acts as barriers, preventing traders from thriving or meeting their obligations. Removing them will clear the way for greater competition and economic growth," their submission argued.

Tuesday's decision saw Par-

“This adds unnecessary pressure during a time when many are struggling with rising costs and financial hurdles. Scrapping these fines will offer relief and help individuals regain stability.”

- MPS' STATEMENT

liament calling on the government to act quickly, with MPs pointing to the urgency of the matter.

Financial setbacks

They warned that traders facing fines as high as BD5,000 could face lasting financial setbacks if no action is taken.

"This is about standing by our traders and ensuring we're not piling on unnecessary burdens," the MPs explained. "Easing these pressures could breathe life back into businesses and encourage activity across the board."

Social security coverage for unemployed

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The anxiety of aging without social security coverage may soon be a thing of the past for unemployed individuals in Bahrain.

This comes as a new proposal by MP Jalal Kadhem would mandate that the Unemployment Fund cover social security contributions for all registered job seekers, numbering more than 16,000 according to recent statistics from the Ministry of Labour.

The proposal, submitted yesterday to the Council of Representatives and The Daily Tribune received a copy of it, aims to address the plight of individuals who remain unemployed for extended periods, often facing difficulties securing suitable employment as they age.

The explanatory memorandum accompanying the proposal highlights the challenges faced by many citizens who spend years searching for work, potentially jeopardising their future financial security.

It argues that including them in the social insurance system will prevent years from being wasted without coverage, par-



MP Jalal Kadhem



The proposal aims to address the plight of individuals who remain unemployed for extended periods, often facing difficulties securing suitable employment as they age.

particularly as they approach retirement age without sufficient employment history.

This, the memorandum states, will contribute to their

psychological and emotional well-being, as well as that of their families, protecting them from hardship until suitable employment is found.

The proposed amendment to Article 1 of the Social Insurance Law (Decree No. 24 of 1967) would add a new clause to include job seekers.

A final clause stipulates that the Unemployment Fund (established under Decree Law No. 78 of 2006) would be responsible for paying all monthly social insurance contributions to the Social Insurance Organisation (SIO) for the ninth branch.

Benefits

The Social Insurance Law currently covers various aspects including old-age, disability, and death benefits; work-related injuries; temporary disability due to illness or maternity; unemployment insurance; self-employed individuals; employers; family allowances; and other social security branches.

The proposal, if passed, would represent a significant step towards bolstering social safety nets for unemployed individuals in the Kingdom.

Timely move

MPs push for cost-of-living boost and one-off meat subsidy for Ramadan

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A push to raise the cost-of-living allowance and hand out a one-off meat subsidy to ease Ramadan expenses has landed in Parliament, with MPs urging quick approval.

The move, led by MP Mohammed Janahi and backed by second deputy speaker Ahmed Qarata and three others, is aimed at helping families shoulder the extra costs of Ramadan and Eid. The MPs said the added sup-



MP Mohammed Janahi

port would help households cover their needs without dragging down their standard of

living, especially as prices keep creeping up.

They pointed out that some families are feeling the pinch and need extra help to stay on steady ground.

They also argued that this kind of backing shows the state's concern for Bahraini families, particularly during Ramadan, when costs pile up.

MPs called on Parliament to back the plan, saying it was in the public interest and would ease the strain on families already stretched by rising expenses.

MPs push to resolve 'Khatwa' programme pension issue

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The Council of Representatives unanimously approved an urgent proposal to resolve the pension issue affecting participants in the "Khatwa" programme.

The proposal, submitted by MPs Jalal Kadhem, Hassan Ibrahim, Eman Showaiter, Mamdooh Al Saleh, and Dr Mahdi Al Showaikh, aims to reinstate pension payments and rectify their legal status by deducting the amounts from their pensions instead of halting them entirely.

The explanatory memorandum accompanying the proposal highlighted the aim of supporting Bahraini families, particularly given the upcoming holy month



The proposal also emphasized the tough living conditions of the participants' families, including costs for children's clothes and school supplies.

of Ramadan and the financial burdens faced by those whose pensions were suspended.

The MPs emphasised that for some families, these pensions

are the sole source of income.

The proposal also drew attention to the significant emotional distress caused by the pension suspension, noting that many affected individuals have made insurance contributions exceeding the legally required years for retirement, and some even purchased virtual past service credits.

The proposal further highlighted the difficult living conditions faced by the programme participants' families, including expenses for children's clothing and school supplies.

Before the vote, several supporting MPs intervened, affirming the government's commitment to ensuring that neither men nor women participating in the Khatwa programme suffer loss of income and that swift action is needed to facilitate their affairs.

178 abandoned and for-sale vehicles removed after warnings ignored

H Naser
TDT | Manama

The Southern Municipality has launched a major cleanup operation, removing 178 abandoned and for-sale vehicles from neighbourhoods across the southern region after several warnings were met with ignorance.

This action, taken to ensure



Abandoned car removed from the street

road safety and maintain the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, may result in fines of up to BD300 for vehicle owners.

It was carried out in collaboration with the Southern Municipality Council.

Despite the high number of the removed vehicles, a councillor revealed that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Problem

"The recent removal of abandoned vehicles only scratches the surface of the problem," Southern Governorate Municipal Council member Mohammed Al Daraj told The Daily Tribune.

He revealed that this number represents just 10% of the total, adding that a plan is underway to remove 6-7 vehicles daily.

"We hope the authorities will stick to the schedule to finally resolve this issue," Al Daraj stated.

Fine

On the other hand, Al Daraj opposed the current BD110 fine imposed on those violating current laws governing abandoned vehicles.

"It's pricey and legislators must look into this," he pointed out.

The vehicles in question were left behind by their owners and were removed following a legal notification period as stipulated by the Public Cleanliness Law, issued under Decree No. 10 of 2019. Offenders may face fines of up to BD300 for non-compliance.



A car for sale parked in a public area

"The recent removal of abandoned vehicles only scratches the surface of the problem ... we hope the authorities will stick to the schedule to finally resolve this issue."

- MOHAMMED AL DARAJ, MEMBER OF SOUTHERN GOVERNORATE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



Article 7 of the Public Cleanliness Law explicitly prohibits vehicle owners from abandoning their vehicles or any form of scrap materials in streets, on sidewalks, or within public squares, beaches, and other communal areas. The law mandates authorities

to issue warnings to owners of such vehicles, requiring them to remove their property within a specified timeframe.

Markers indicating the commencement of the warning period are placed on the vehicles, signaling the enforcement process.

BAHRAIN CINEMA COMPANY B.S.C.



Board of Directors Nomination Announcement

Bahrain Cinema Company B.S.C would like to announce the opening of the election/re-election for candidacy of seven (7) Board of Directors memberships for a 3 years term (2025 -2028). The election process will be carried out during the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") dated 25th March, 2025. A formal invitation of the AGM together with the agenda items and relevant details will be announced 21 days prior to the date of the AGM.

Conditions for nomination:

- 1- The candidate must be fully qualified to act,
- 2- The candidate must not have been convicted in a crime involving negligent or fraudulent bankruptcy or a crime affecting his honor or involving a breach of trust or in a crime on account of his breach of the provisions of this law, unless the candidate was reinstated.
- 3- The candidate shall not be prohibited from being a member in the Board of Directors of a joint stock company in accordance with the provisions of this law or any other laws enforced in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- 4- With respect to the Board's chairman or the deputy chairman positions, the candidate must not hold any of the aforementioned positions simultaneously with the position of the CEO of the company or its equivalents.
- 5- Any other condition, which may be specified in the Company's Memorandum or Articles of Association.

Required Documents:

- 1- Copies of Identity card and passport
- 2- Curriculum vitae, including academic and professional qualifications
- 3- Any act that the candidate performs directly or indirectly, that amounts to competition with the company
- 4- Names of companies and entities in which the candidate works or is a member of their boards of directors
- 5- Any position the candidate occupies that requires more than a small part of his/her time
- 6- Any other information specified in the Implementing Regulation.
- 7- Fill the Nomination Declaration Form, which can be downloaded from the Company website: www.cineco.net

Every candidate wishing to nominate himself/herself or a representative is invited to furnish the Company with all required documents mentioned in this announcement either by submitting by hand or via renowned international courier service to be delivered to the Company's address Office No. 2701, Building No. 470, Road No. 1010, Block No. 410, Sanabis, P.O. Box 26573, Manama or via email to the Company Secretary at cinecosec@cinco.net. Such documents need to be provided to the Company no later than 13th February, 2025. The nominations for membership in the Board of Directors will remain open from 30th January, 2025 to 13th February, 2025.

The Candidates' names and relevant information will be disclosed on the Bahrain Bourse's and Company's website, simultaneously with the publication of the general meeting agenda.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on +973 17240546 or email at cinecosec@cinco.net

Businessman sent to jail for fake \$50 bills

H Naser
TDT | Manama

A Bahraini businessman will spend five years in prison for using counterfeit \$50 bills, a decision upheld by the High Appeals Court.

As per the court files, the businessman went on a shopping spree at the Bahrain International Airport, using forged currency.

He reportedly bought five perfumes for \$750 and cigarettes for \$200, all using counterfeit \$50 notes.

A duty-free staff discovered

the fraud when the businessman attempted to pay for his purchases.

Airport security was alerted, and further investigation revealed that the businessman had also used counterfeit \$50 bills at an airport pharmacy, making purchases totaling \$500.

In total, the businessman attempted to spend \$1,700 in counterfeit currency.

The duty-free store employee was the first one to notice the suspicious behavior of the businessman and immediately alerted airport security.

The businessman's identity was quickly established via his travel documents used during the transactions.

"The use of \$50 bills for such large purchases was unusual in my experience. Customers typically use credit cards or smaller denominations for transactions of this magnitude. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, I verified the authenticity of the bills using our store's counterfeit detection pen and ultraviolet light. I discovered that several of the bills were counterfeit," the store employee told prosecutors.

BisB announces new Credit and Debit Cards

TDT | Manama

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide exceptional client-centric banking experiences, Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB), the leading provider of innovative Islamic financial solutions for simplifying money matters in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has launched its newly designed line-up of credit, Corporate, prepaid and debit cards.

Reflecting the Bank's deep connection to Islamic culture and heritage, the revamped cards are thoughtfully crafted to ensure convenience that aligns with the contemporary lifestyle of its clientele. With a vibrant colour, these modern masterpieces are manufactured with

high-quality sustainable materials to ensure durability and seamless usability. The unique aesthetic incorporates geometric patterns inspired by Islamic art, with tactile elements catering to the special needs of visually impaired customers. Meanwhile, state-of-the-art global security technologies are integrated to ascertain a secure and effortless banking experience for daily use.

Mr. Faisal Al Abdulla, Acting Head of Branches and Sales at BisB stated: "We are delight-

ed to introduce our newly designed credit and debit cards, which embody our commitment to providing cutting-edge and accessible Islamic banking services that address the diverse needs of our valued customers. We are confident that the new cards will continue to reinforce the quality and ingenuity they expect from BisB."

BisB's extensive card portfolio includes offerings such as Vevo Youth, Classic Debit, Thuraya Signature, Visa Prepaid, Visa Platinum, Visa Signa-



Faisal Al Abdulla

ture, Visa Infinite, Visa Corporate, and MasterCard Titanium. The launch of its redesigned cards marks an important step in BisB's mission to continually redefine Islamic banking for the digital age by offering an impeccably connected banking experience.

Tamkeen backs employment and career development of 55 Bahraini employees at BisB



Afnan Saleh

TDT | Manama

The Labour Fund "Tamkeen" announced its support for the employment and wage increments of 55 Bahraini employees at Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) through various programs, including the National Employment Programme, the Leadership Employment Program, and the Wage Increment Program.

On this occasion, Mr. Khalid Al Bayat, Chief Growth Officer at the Labour Fund (Tamkeen), stated: "We are pleased to support Bahraini employees at BisB. This support enriches the financial sector, which is the largest contributor to Bahrain's GDP, accounting for 17.1% in Q2 of 2024. We remain committed to supporting various economic sectors, especially those offering re-



Khalid Al Bayat

warding jobs and promising career development opportunities for national talent. Our programs are designed to reward employees, motivate them to achieve greater career milestones, and help them build a promising professional future."

Afnan Saleh, Chief Human Resources Officer at Bahrain Islamic Bank, stated: "As business owners, we can leverage Tamkeen's programs to keep pace with these changes and empower Bahraini talent to secure rewarding roles and lead positive transformations in the labour market."

Bahrain Islamic Bank is one of Tamkeen's partner banks under the "Tamweel" program, which provides Sharia-compliant financing solutions to enterprises of various sizes and growth stages.

Batelco Expands IoT

Network upgrade enables smart tech

TDT | Manama

Batelco has strengthened its network to support Bahrain's growing demand for Internet of Things (IoT) applications, upgrading its infrastructure with Ericsson's latest cloud-native technology. The enhancement enables seamless integration of IoT and 5G Standalone services, paving the way for smarter industries, connected devices, and future-ready digital solutions.

The network expansion includes the deployment of Ericsson's energy-efficient radio access network (RAN) products, improving coverage and capacity while cutting energy consumption by up to 20 per-



Nicolas Blixell

cent. This upgrade enhances reliability for IoT applications, ensuring a robust and scalable network for businesses and consumers.

Advanced infrastructure

Batelco has also modernised its Ericsson Mediation platform, optimising its ability to handle increasing data traffic and high-speed connectivity. The upgrade



Rashed Mohamed

enhances operational efficiency, allowing Bahrain to keep pace with the rapid adoption of IoT-driven solutions across industries.

Batelco Chief Technology Officer Rashed Mohamed said the expansion reflects the company's commitment to delivering cutting-edge digital services. "Our ongoing collaboration with Ericsson strengthens our

network coverage and capacity across the Kingdom and empowers us to meet the growing connectivity demands in Bahrain seamlessly," he said.

Future-ready partnership

Ericsson's Vice President and Head of Gulf Council Countries, Nicolas Blixell, described the upgrade as a significant step in enhancing Bahrain's digital landscape. "By leveraging our cutting-edge technology, we are facilitating a strengthened digital infrastructure in Bahrain and an enhanced connectivity experience for Batelco's consumer and enterprise customers," he said.

By investing in IoT-ready infrastructure and next-generation connectivity, Batelco and Ericsson are driving Bahrain's transition to a more connected and technologically advanced future.

Accelerating Green Fleet: Alba Debuts Electric ALF3 Feeding Vehicle in Potlines



Opening of the pilot programme for an electric, battery-powered Aluminium Fluoride (ALF3) feeding vehicle

TDT | Manama

In a forward step towards its ambitious decarbonisation goals, Aluminium Bahrain (Alba), the world's largest aluminium smelter on a single site, is embarking on a pilot programme for an electric, battery-powered Aluminium Fluoride (ALF3) feeding vehicle. This innovative step, utilising a cutting-edge vehicle from Techmo Car S.p.A., is currently being evaluated in Reduction Lines 4, 5, and 6.

Alba will analyse the data and performance of this trial vehicle to inform its decision on a potential fleet-wide adoption of electric ALF3 feeding vehicles. This move underscores Alba's commitment to sustainable operations and aligns perfectly with its overarching Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy.

An official handover ceremony for the vehicle was held on 23 January 2025 at the Company's premises, attended by top Alba officials, including CEO Ali Al Baqali and COO Dr. Abdulla Habib, as well as the

Managing Director of Techmo Car S.p.A. Massimo Zannini.

Ali Al Baqali, the Chief Executive Officer of Alba, commented: "This initiative to explore electric ALF3 feeding vehicles within our reduction lines represents a proactive and decisive step towards minimising our environmental footprint."

Massimo Zannini, the Managing Director of Techmo Car S.p.A., added: "We are confident that this electric ALF3 feeding vehicle will not only enhance operational efficiency but also contribute significantly to Alba's decarbonisation journey."

This initiative builds upon Alba's existing sustainability efforts. Since 2023, the Company has successfully deployed solar-electric powered industrial Personnel Carriers (PCs) across its premises.

Furthermore, three strategically located solar charging stations equipped with advanced battery storage systems are operational at the car park areas of Alba's Power Stations.



ASRY CEO Joins Middle East Sustainability Forum Discussions

Dr Ahmed AlAbri, ASRY's Chief Executive Officer, stressed the urgency of shifting to environmentally sound practices, highlighting the role of large industrial firms in driving sustainability efforts forward. Speaking during a panel discussion at the third Middle East Sustainability Forum, hosted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, he outlined steps companies can take to meet green targets. The session, titled Unpacking the Megatrends: Tech-Driven Innovations Transforming the Sustainability Landscape, brought together senior leaders, including Dr Chawki Tawbi, Google's Head of Data and AI, Bruce Niven, Aramco Ventures' Head of Strategic Venturing, and Caius Camargo, Hydrocavit Brazil's Founding CEO, to discuss how technology and digital advancements are accelerating progress towards sustainable development goals.

autobuzz



50 supercars in India



McLaren Automotive marks milestone

TDT | Manama

McLaren Automotive has reached a significant milestone, with 50 McLaren supercars now on Indian roads just two years after establishing its first official dealership in the country.

To celebrate this achievement, McLaren hosted an exclusive Celebration Drive from Udaipur to Mount Abu and back, bringing together 15 McLaren owners for a journey through Rajasthan's stunning landscapes. The event was flagged off at the historic Manak Chowk by Prince Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, blending heritage, luxury, and



high-performance automotive excellence.

"We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone of over 50 McLa-

rens in India, a testament to the growing passion and enthusiasm for the brand in this region. This achievement underscores

the trust and excitement our customers have in McLaren's unmatched engineering and design. We are proud to have built a vibrant community of supercar enthusiasts across the country and look forward to continuing this journey. With 2025 poised to be another strong year for McLaren in India, we are excited about the opportunities to further elevate the supercar experience for our customers."

— Lalit Choudary, Dealer Principal, McLaren Mumbai
"India is a key market with immense potential for McLaren. The rapidly growing number

of young, affluent consumers, along with a strong enthusiasm for innovation and performance, creates an exciting landscape for our brand. Hosting the milestone drive was a proud moment, as it allowed us to celebrate this achievement with our passionate customers and showcase McLaren's unparalleled driving experience. We remain committed to offering world-class experiences and look forward to continuing our journey in India."

— Robert Holtshausen, Market Director – Middle East, India & Africa, McLaren Automotive

Aprilia Tuono 457 set for India launch



TDT | agencies

Aprilia is preparing to launch the Tuono 457 in India, with the bike already listed on the brand's official website. Ahead of its debut, the new model is undergoing final road tests across the country.

Design and features

The Tuono 457 is the naked counterpart of the fully-faired RS 457, featuring an aggressive design with a sharp LED headlamp, small fairings flanking the exposed frame, and a stepped seat. The bike comes equipped with a 5.0-inch TFT instrument console, a ride-by-wire system, traction control, and three riding modes for a dynamic riding experience.

Engine and performance

Powering the Tuono 457 is a 457cc parallel-twin engine producing 47 BHP and 43.5 Nm of torque. It is paired with a 6-speed gearbox featuring a slipper clutch.

Chassis and braking

The bike is built on a robust chassis and features USD forks at the front and an adjustable mono-shock at the rear for superior handling. Disc brakes on both ends, supported by ABS, ensure strong and controlled braking performance.

BMW unveils updated iX electric SUV

TDT | agencies

BMW has introduced the refreshed iX electric SUV, featuring a redesigned exterior and an upgraded powertrain that delivers more power and an extended range.

Design updates

The new BMW iX sports a revised front fascia, with an updated kidney grille and a redesigned front bumper that incorporates a larger air dam and vertical intakes. The LED headlights have also been restyled for a sharper look. At the rear, the SUV gets a new

bumper and newly designed alloy wheels, enhancing its modern aesthetic.

Interior enhancements

Inside, the updated iX retains the familiar cabin layout but now comes equipped with a new three-spoke steering wheel and a dual-screen display setup, offering a more contemporary and refined driving experience.

Powertrain and performance

The new BMW iX is available in three variants: iX 45, iX 60, and iX M70—all featuring a



dual-motor all-wheel-drive system.

iX 45: Powered by a 94.8 kWh battery, it produces 397 BHP and 700 Nm of torque, with a range of 602 km.

iX 60: Equipped with a 109.1 kWh battery, it delivers 529 BHP and 765 Nm, offering an extended range of 701 km.

iX M70: The range-topping variant features a 650 BHP and 1100 Nm power output from a 108.9 kWh battery, with a maximum range of 600 km.

Ship runs aground off Tuscany, spurring fuel leak fears

Rome, Italy

A cargo ship carrying stone rubble and tonnes of diesel fuel ran aground off Italy's Tuscan coast due to bad weather, the coastguard said yesterday.

The Cyprus-flagged vessel, measuring more than 100 metres (330 feet) long, was harboured at the port of Marina di Carrara near Massa "when the force of the waves caused the anchor to shift and the vessel to drift dangerously towards the coast", the coastguard said in a statement.

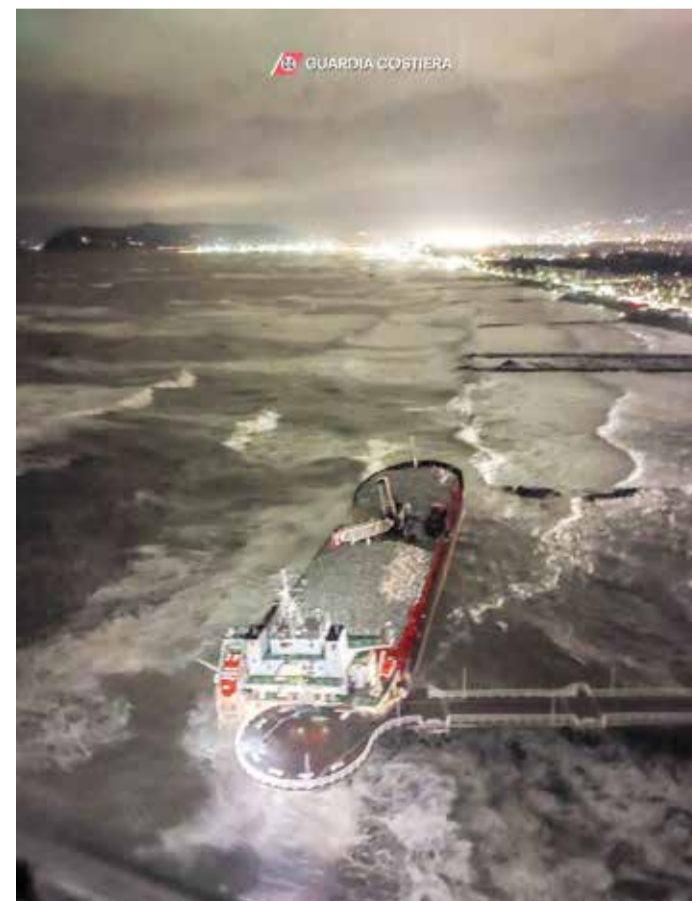
Pushed by strong winds and the current, the ship struck a pier to the south at Massa.

Rescuers intervened to pull the ship's 12-member crew, mostly Ukrainians, to safety, it said.

The mayor of Massa, Francesco Persiani, told local media he was concerned about the possibility of spilled fuel, though there had not yet been any indication of a leak.

He said the ship contained 102 tons of diesel, calling it "potentially a small ecological bomb".

"Obviously the weather conditions in the ocean don't allow us to understand exactly



The cargo ship *Guang Rong*, transporting crushed stones, that ran aground near the pier along the Tuscan coast of Marina di Massa due to bad weather conditions

in what condition the ship is in, spilling of diesel," he said in a video posted on Facebook.



Galloping to glory

Crown Prince's Cup Festival set for a thrilling showdown



TDT | Manama

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the Crown Prince's Cup Horse Racing Festival will take place today and tomorrow at the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club in Riffa.

The Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club has completed all organisational and administrative preparations for the festival. A dedicated programme has been arranged for fans, with tickets available through Bahrainturfclub.com, offering spectators an opportunity to experience the excitement firsthand.

Today's schedule (Starting at 5:30 PM)

The opening day features nine rounds, including races for Arabian horses, locally produced horses, and imported racehorses.

Race 1: Purebred Bahraini Arabian Horses "Al Wahoo"

• Distance: 1400m, Top contender: Tawisan 1844

Race 2: Fourth-Class and Beginner Locally Produced Horses

• Distance: 1400m, Notable entry: Mamlouha (third-place finisher in a previous race)

Race 3: Grand Seiko Cup - Bahrain Jewellery Centre (Imported Balance Race Horses)

• Distance: 1600m, Participants: 18 horses, Top contender: Mujtahid

Race 4: Irish Horse Marketing Company Cup (Locally Produced Balance Racehorses)

• Distance: 1000m, • Key competitors: Al-Hadba vs. Members Only (both winners in previous races)

Race 5: Bahrain Oaks - Sponsored by Al Muzhar Farm (Locally Produced First-Class Horses)

• Distance: 1800m, Expected competition: Jerusalem vs. Silk Road (both with top-three finishes this season)

Race 6: Bahrain Jockeys Academy Cup (Open Class Horses)

• Distance: 1600m, Top contenders: Champion's Glory vs. Storm Falcon

Race 7: Howden Cup (Imported Handicap Race Horses)

• Distance: 1800m, Key participants: Royal Vanguard, Titan's Shadow

Race 8: Lexus Cup (Imported Balance Race Horses)

• Distance: 2400m, Top contenders: Glen Savage, Laser Guided, Fleet Admiral

Race 9: Locally Produced Balance Race Horses

• Distance: 2200m, Key contender: Taj Mahal (consistently in top-three finishes this season)

High-stakes competition

The festival will feature 17 races over two days, with top-tier horses competing for prestigious titles, including the Crown Prince Cups for Arabian horses, local production, and imported horses. Other notable races include:

- Bahrain Oaks Cup
- Bahrain Derby
- Howden Cup
- Bahrain Jockeys Academy Cup
- Grand Seiko Cup - Bahrain Jewellery Centre
- Irish Horse Marketing Company Cup
- Lexus Cup
- Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club Cup
- Bahrain Horseracing Club Cup



Hamilton unharmed after crashing during Ferrari Barcelona test

Barcelona, Spain

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton crashed during the second day of his new team Ferrari's private Formula One testing in Barcelona on Wednesday but was left unharmed.

The 40-year-old Briton, in his second test with Ferrari following 12 successful years with Mercedes, lost control of the 2023 car and hit the barriers at the Circuit de Catalunya.

A source close to the team told AFP Hamilton was "absolutely OK" and was still exploring the car's limits.

Hamilton is sharing the car with team-mate Charles Leclerc as he gets ready for the 2025 season which begins in March with the Australian Grand Prix.

His two-year deal with Ferrari began last week when he powered through laps at the Fiorano test track near Ferrari's Maranello base.

Ferrari will unveil their new car on February 19 at Fiorano, a day after the F1 season launch event in London to mark the sport's 75th anniversary.



Khawaja, Smith tons power Australia to 330-2 in first Test

AFP | Galle, Sri Lanka

Steve Smith stood unbeaten on 104 after crossing 10,000 Test runs and helped Australia pummel Sri Lanka alongside fellow centurion Usman Khawaja on day one of the opening Test on Wednesday.

Australia reached 330-2 in 81.1 overs when rain stopped play for the day after the tourists elected to bat first in Galle at the start of the two-match series.

Left-handed opener Khawaja, on 147, and skipper Smith put on an unbeaten stand of 195 to thwart the opposition attack in two wicketless afternoon sessions.

"We have played a lot of cricket in the sub-continent but not been able to put pressure on the opposition. But today, we definitely did that," Khawaja said.

He added, "Showed how fast we were scoring until they tried to bowl a bit negative line after tea."

Milestone man Smith got three runs off spinner Nishan Peiris to reach his third ton in four matches as he took off his baggy green and raised his bat to acknowledge the crowd's cheers.



Australia's captain Steve Smith

Smith took the crease in the first session with 9,999 runs and calmly nudged his very first delivery to mid-on for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya.

He became the 15th batsman to 10,000 Test runs and only the fourth Australian to achieve the

feat after Allan Border, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting.

Smith survived an early reprieve in his knock when Jayasuriya grassed a sharp return catch in the same over, a chance Sri Lanka would come to rue.

He made the hosts pay dear-

ly, crafting a sublime 35th Test century to reaffirm his stature as one of Australia's rock in the middle-order.

Head fires

Khawaja reached his 16th Test hundred -- his maiden ton on Sri

Lankan soil -- after a 17-match drought since his Ashes century in June 2023.

The ton came with a flick off fast bowler Asitha Fernando to the fine leg boundary, a stroke brimming with elegance and relief.

The 38-year-old had a few heart-in-mouth moments when a couple of edges fell just short of fielders and a reprieve on 74 when he nicked Jayasuriya to the keeper, but Sri Lanka chose not to review the on-field decision.

Another opportunity slipped through Sri Lanka's fingers with Smith on 90 as Kusal Mendis, slow to react behind the stumps, spilled a bat-pad chance.

Earlier, Travis Head smashed 57 off 40 balls including 10 fours and one six to put Sri Lanka on the back foot right away.

"The wicket is not a usual Galle wicket. It's on the slow side," Sri Lanka's spin bowling coach Piyal Wijetunga told reporters.

"When the wicket is not helping the bowlers, you should try to show more discipline and I don't think we bowled well today."

Head, who replaced 19-year-

old Sam Konstas as an opener for the Test, put on 92 runs with fellow left-hander Khawaja.

The hosts finally found a breakthrough when Head misfired an ambitious charge against Jayasuriya only to find the long-on fielder.

Jeffrey Vandersay had Marnus Labuschagne caught at first slip for 20 with his left-arm spin.

With three specialist spinners in the Australian XI, the tourists hold all the aces, especially with the pitch expected to deteriorate as the game progresses.



Smith started the match on 9,999 runs and on his first ball pushed for a single off Prabath Jayasuriya in Galle to be the 15th player and fourth Australian to the milestone.