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Qatar condemns targeting of Saudi tanker, regional states

Qatar yesterday strongly condemned Iran's targeting of the Saudi tanker SIDR in the Strait of Hormuz and its renewed attacks on Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the attack on the tanker, which resulted in crew fatalities, constituted a blatant violation of international law and freedom of maritime navigation, as well as a flagrant breach of UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's categorical rejection of using the Strait of Hormuz as a means of exerting pressure and called for its unconditional reopening. It stressed that freedom of navigation through the vital waterway was a non-negotiable principle, warning that its continued closure threatened the vital interests of regional countries and the global economy. It also denounced the attacks on Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait as flagrant violations of their sovereignty and territorial integrity and breaches of international law, the UN Charter and the principles of good neighbourliness.

The ministry warned that the continued attacks represented a dangerous escalation that could complicate de-escalation efforts and undermine diplomatic and political initiatives aimed at restoring regional security and stability. It held Iran fully and legally responsible for the attacks. Qatar reaffirmed its full solidarity with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait and its support for all legitimate measures they take to safeguard their sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and property. The ministry called for an immediate and complete halt to all military action threatening regional security and stability. **(QNA)**

Qatar slams renewed Iran attacks on four countries

■ Cabinet approves draft laws on cloud computing

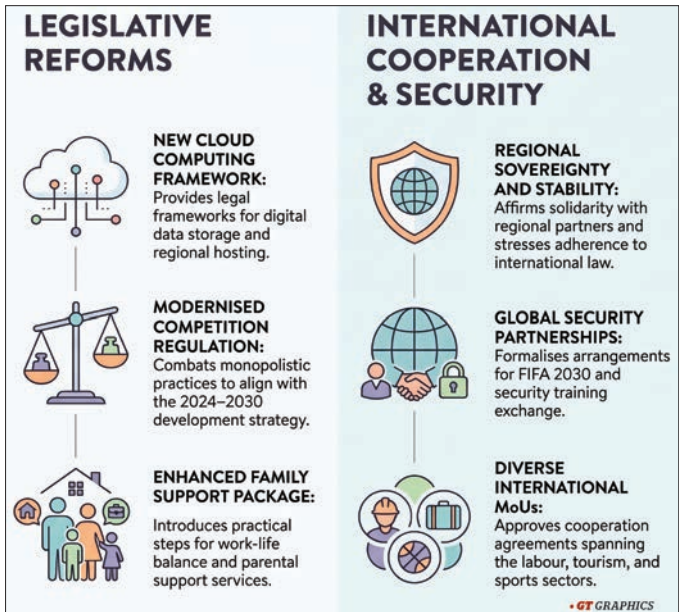
By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar has condemned in the strongest terms the renewed attacks launched by Iran against Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait, describing them as a flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries and a blatant breach of international law, the UN Charter and the principles of good neighbourliness.

The condemnation, renewed at the outset of the weekly Cabinet meeting yesterday, was accompanied by a demand for the immediate and complete cessation of all military actions and for restraint from any step that could widen the scope of escalation.

The meeting was chaired by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani at the Amiri Diwan. HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi briefed reporters on its outcomes afterwards.

The Cabinet approved a draft law on cloud computing and referred it to the Shura Council. Prepared by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in co-ordination with the Communications Regulatory Authority and



other competent entities, it establishes a comprehensive legislative framework governing the storage and disclosure of digital data, strengthens its protection and security, and sets controls for lawful access in a manner balancing law enforcement requirements against the safeguarding of individual privacy.

The draft is also intended to strengthen frameworks for international co-operation in the field, support digital transformation, and consolidate Qatar's position as an attractive destination for investment in data centres and cloud services, and as a trusted regional home for data hosting. It sets out the obligations of

data and telecommunications service providers, ensuring open and neutral access, fair pricing, non-discrimination, interoperability and customers' freedom to choose their providers, alongside rules on transparency and mutual legal assistance.

A second draft law, on the regulation of competition, was likewise approved and referred to the Shura Council. Prepared by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, it would replace Law No 19 of 2006 on the protection of competition and the prevention of monopolistic practices, bringing the regulatory framework for economic activity into line with comparative best practice. **To Page 7**

PM reviews latest situation in Turkiye, Lebanon, Egypt calls

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani held phone calls with the Lebanese prime minister and the foreign ministers of Turkiye and Egypt, with discussions centring on bilateral ties and co-ordinated diplomatic efforts to de-escalate regional tensions.

He spoke with the Prime Minister of Lebanon Dr Nawaf Salam on strengthening bilateral co-operation and on joint co-ordination to ease regional tensions and bolster security and stability, reaffirming Qatar's backing for diplomatic efforts to secure freedom of maritime navigation and a comprehensive, lasting peace in the region.

In a call with Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan, the two reviewed avenues for deepening bilateral relations alongside the latest regional developments, with HE the Prime Minister reiterating that same support for a settlement guaranteeing maritime freedom and paving the way to lasting peace.

He also spoke with Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Expatriates' Affairs Dr Badr Abdelatty, where the conversation likewise took in bilateral relations and regional co-ordination, with the prime minister underlining Qatar's continued commitment to the same diplomatic track toward maritime security and a durable regional peace. **(QNA)**



Latest campaign against Iran 'won't last long': Trump

US President Donald Trump said yesterday the renewed US campaign against Iran would not continue for "too long", after the biggest exchange of fire between Tehran and Washington since July. Speaking in the Oval Office, Trump said Iran had been trying to build a rocket capable of dropping mines and that US strikes had destroyed it, along with radar and missile systems Tehran was working to restore.

"We took out all of the new equipment that they tried to build along the Strait of Hormuz - some defensive, some offensive... It was a very heavy attack last night, and we're prepared to do another one any time we want," Trump told reporters. The latest round saw US forces hit air defences, radar, maritime assets, mine-laying capabilities and communications sites on Iran's southern coast, including targets near the Strait of Hormuz, according to the US military. **To Page 7**

Over 70 global partners tie up for Web Summit Qatar 2027



By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

More than 70 global partners have signed on for the fourth edition of Web Summit Qatar, organisers confirmed yesterday, as the event cements its place as the region's fastest-growing technology gathering.

The Permanent Web Summit Organising Committee reviewed prepara-

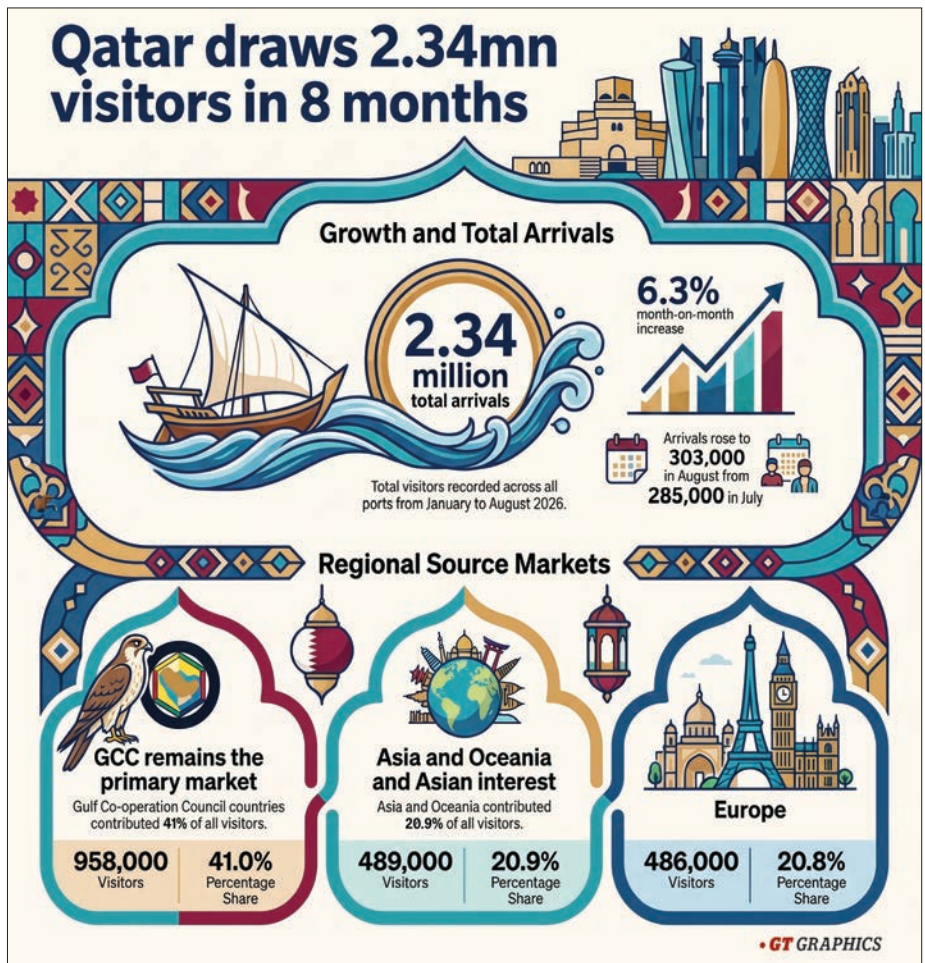
tions for the 2027 edition at a regular meeting in Doha, chaired by HE Director of the Government Communications Office (GCO) and committee chairman Sheikh Jassim bin Mansour bin Jabor al-Thani. The fourth edition will run from January 31 to February 3, 2027, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Alongside the confirmed partners, trade delegations from The Netherlands, Germany,

France, Pakistan, Bahrain, Italy, Turkiye and Palestine are also lined up to attend, underlining the summit's expanding international pull.

"For the fourth edition of Web Summit Qatar, we are focused on turning growing global interest into real opportunities for Qatar's private sector and startup ecosystem by connecting startups with investors and global markets and attracting international partners and expertise," the GCO director said.

"More than 70 global partners have already joined the upcoming edition, reflecting the summit's growing international profile and its role in advancing innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic diversification in Qatar," he added. **To Page 7**



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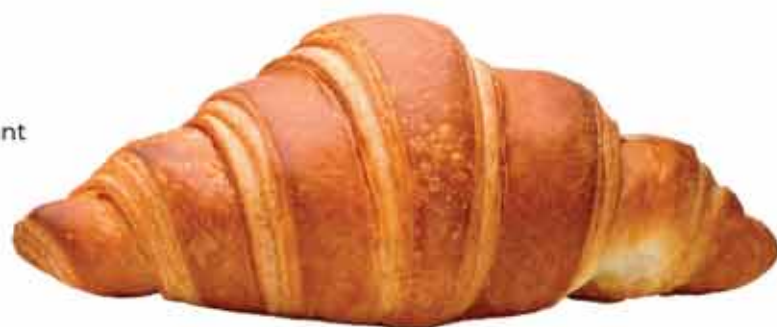
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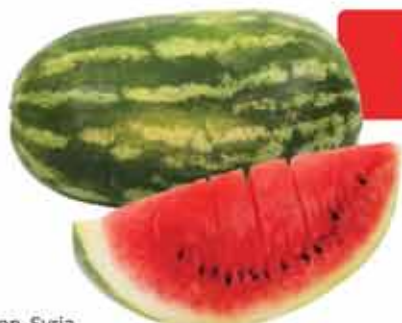
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Minister meets UAE ambassador



HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met yesterday with the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the State of Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance co-operation between the two countries in areas of mutual interest. (QNA)

Amir congratulates Vietnam president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam To Lam, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Le Minh Hung, on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. (QNA)

Al-Muraikhi bids farewell to Turkish envoy

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with the ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to the State of Qatar Dr Mehmet Mustafa Goksu, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE al-Muraikhi extended thanks to the ambassador for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties. (QNA)



MoI highlights separate system for deaf, early warning alert

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The Central Operations Department at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) provides all emergency services, and people can contact these services through 999 for any major issues, as well as through a separate emergency number, 992, for the deaf and an early warning alert, highlighted an official from the department at a webinar yesterday.

"People can always contact through 999 in case of any accidents or other major incidents. People with hearing disabilities can contact us through 992. Through this number, we have a mechanism for receiving calls through video systems, short messages, email and dealing with them to provide necessary help," said Captain Ahmed Muhammed al-Mutawa, Operations and Emergency Services 999 Office, Central Operations Department at MoI.

Capt al-Mutawa noted that his department receives reports and complaints of various accidents around the clock, immediately refers them to the competent authorities, and transfers the calls to the operations section for necessary action.

Regarding calls to number 992, the officer said that the service is an effort to provide inclusivity for all sections of society and falls under the security services managed by the Operations Department at the National Command Centre and is considered a national project.

"For this, the necessary expertise has been allocated, assistive information technology is deployed, and trained personnel have been provided to reach a better level of rendered services for this category of disabled people. They are part of our society, and some of these members may be exposed to an emergency or accident, as a result of which they ask for help, and we cannot neglect them. Asking for help or assistance does not differentiate between a disabled



Capt al-Mutawa

person and others," he explained.

The official said that the department has a strong interest in communicating with a hearing-disabled person who may be in an accident or emergency and whose disability may prevent him from conveying his message clearly. "Hence, this service is activated through the number 992. They must specify their name and membership number at the Qatari Social Cultural Centre for the Deaf. They must also provide the type of service required," he continued.

Capt al-Mutawa noted that his department also provides another service: an early warning system.

"It is an automated system that has been connected between the Central Operations Department of the Ministry of Interior and the banks, shops, establishments and important vital facilities in the country. It receives the alert notification on the system at the moment of the occurrence of any incident or attempts such as fires or thefts, among others," he underlined.

The official noted that the alert specifies the location and area of the received alerts for immediate response.

Capt al-Mutawa also advised callers to 999 to be ready to answer some questions from the department and avoid panicking when contacting the emergency centre.

"The officers at the call centre might ask you some questions which are meant to assist the person. So it is important that the caller provides the right answers. People also must have the necessary information about the location and address," he highlighted.

Al-Muraikhi receives copies of credentials of Czech, Russian, EU and Thailand ambassadors



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received yesterday the copies of the credentials of the ambassadors of the Czech Republic to the State of Qatar Marta Huskova, the Russian Federation to the State of Qatar Artem Kozhin, the European Union (EU) to the State of Qatar Antonino Maggiore and the Kingdom of Thailand to the State of Qatar Pensom Lertsitichai. HE al-Muraikhi wished the ambassadors success in their duties, emphasising utmost support to enhance bilateral relations and foster closer co-operation in various fields. (QNA)



HMC's employee wellbeing department designated as WHO Collaborating Center

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has formally designated Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Employee Wellbeing and Wellness Section within the Human Resources Department as the world's first WHO Collaborating Center for employee wellbeing and Workplace Health.

The designation is effective for four years and represents a significant institutional achievement for HMC. As a WHO Collaborating Center, HMC's Employee Wellbeing and Wellness Section will work closely with WHO to advance evidence-based approaches to supporting the health and wellbeing of healthcare workers and creating healthier workplaces.

Mona Shaheen al-Homaidi, Chief Human Resources Officer at HMC, said: "This designation is a proud achievement for HMC and

The designation is effective for four years and represents a significant institutional achievement for HMC

the State of Qatar. It reflects the strength of our evidence-based wellbeing program, the capability of our people and the commitment of HMC's leadership to protecting the health and wellbeing of our workforce.

"We are honoured to take on this responsibility and look forward to working closely with WHO to share our experience and expertise, support the development of healthier workplaces and contribute to stronger support for healthcare workers in Qatar and internationally."

The scope of the WHO Collaborating Center will focus on three key areas:

To support WHO's efforts in

developing and promoting policies, strategies and protocols for mental health and workplace wellbeing in healthcare settings.

To support WHO in building capacity for implementing workplace health and wellbeing interventions for healthcare workers through knowledge exchange and training.

To support WHO's country-level activities on workplace health and wellbeing for health workers.

The designation follows several years of focused development by HMC's Employee Wellbeing and Wellness Section, including close technical engagement with WHO and the implementation of

a comprehensive wellbeing model aligned with the WHO Healthy Workplace framework.

This prestigious recognition sees HMC's Employee Wellbeing and Wellness Section join HMC's other WHO Collaborating Centers: Hamad Trauma Center, a WHO Collaborating Center on Trauma, and the Department of Geriatrics and Long-Term Care, the WHO Collaborating Center for Healthy Ageing and Dementia.

The achievement also builds on international recognition already received by HMC's employee wellbeing programme from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, the Global Centre for Healthy Workplaces and the International Hospital Federation. These recognitions reflect the quality, consistency and measurable impact of HMC's approach to employee wellbeing and workplace health. (QNA)

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QMC chief meets Iran ambassador



HE the Chairman of the Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani held talks with the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the State of Qatar Ali Salehabadi. The talks took place in Doha yesterday and focused on media relations and co-operation between Qatar and Iran. **(QNA)**

Minister meets Iraq PM's advisory commission chairman

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met yesterday with the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Advisory Commission of the Republic of Iraq Dr Yousif Khalaf Yousif, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral co-operation relations and explored the latest developments in the region, as well as topics of mutual interest. HE al-Khulaifi affirmed Qatar's firm position in supporting the fraternal Republic of Iraq in everything that preserves its security, stability, and sovereignty in a way that meets the aspirations of its people for development and prosperity. **(QNA)**



Katara S'hail 2026 to launch Nabati poetry competition

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Katara International Hunting and Falconry Exhibition, S'hail 2026, will launch a four-verse Nabati poetry competition as part of its 10th edition, scheduled from September 8-12. The event will feature heritage, educational and training activities highlighting Qatar's hunting and falconry traditions.

According to Katara Cultural Village, the "Best Four Verses on Falcons" contest invites poetry enthusiasts to express their connection to falcons and hunting in a four-verse poem, highlighting the longstanding relationship be-

tween Nabati poetry and falconry in Gulf culture.

Entries must be written in Nabati verse, focus exclusively on falcons and contain four lines. The contest is open to participants in Qatar and abroad, allowing poets and enthusiasts worldwide to take part in S'hail 2026.

Participants should post their verses as replies to the competition announcement on X. The submission deadline is Monday, September 7, 2026.

The contest offers three prizes: QR4,000 for first place, QR3,000 for second and QR2,000 for third. The awards are intended to encourage distinctive portrayals of the falcon in Nabati poetry.

S'hail 2026 will also offer a

course titled "Fundamentals of Falconry and Transport" for children aged seven to 12. Combining theory with practical instruction, it will introduce participants to handling and transporting falcons while promoting falcon welfare and heritage preservation.

The course will be held on September 6 and 7 from 4pm-6pm at Building 15. It is among programmes designed to involve children in the exhibition and pass falconry knowledge to a new generation.

Organisers said the programme is designed to extend beyond displays of hunting and falconry equipment by combining heritage, poetry, training and community participation.

The edition will include programmes, seminars and events addressing environmental issues, with a focus on engaging children and young people through modern technology and digital tools.

The Social and Sports Activities Support Fund (Daam) and Katara Cultural Village signed an agreement to fund the 10th edition of Suhail 2026. The funding will support the exhibition's organisation, sustainability and continued development as a leading cultural and heritage event in the region.

The agreement reflects the role of Daam and Qatar Stock Exchange-listed companies in backing cultural, heritage and sustainable development initiatives aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Sidra, Aman Hospital sign MoU to advance healthcare

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, and Aman Hospital have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to advance healthcare collaboration for patients and families in Qatar.

The MoU marks the beginning of a wider collaboration between Sidra Medicine and Aman Hospital to identify opportunities that support the evolving healthcare needs of patients and families in Qatar. The MoU includes agreements to bring together the expertise and capabilities of both organisations to enable coordinated care pathways; strengthen professional development and facilitate the exchange of clinical and operational knowledge.

Prof Ibrahim Janahi, chief medical officer at Sidra Medicine, said: "This collaboration reflects our commitment to working closely with healthcare providers across Qatar to strengthen coordinated and patient-centred care. By bringing together our respective expertise and capabilities, we can support stronger care pathways, create meaningful opportunities for professional development and knowledge exchange, and enhance access to specialised services for patients and families. We look forward to building on this collaboration with Aman Hospital in support of Qatar's healthcare system."

Caroline Kieilty, chief nursing officer at Aman Hospital, said: "We believe that meaningful col-

laboration between healthcare institutions is essential to delivering seamless, high-quality care for patients and families. By combining our expertise, strengthening referral pathways and creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and professional development, we can further enhance the continuity and quality of care. We are confident that this collaboration will strengthen patient outcomes, advance mutual professional practice and contribute to a more connected, accessible and patient-centred healthcare system."

A key focus of the MoU will be the development of stronger referral pathways between the two institutions. The collaboration will support the timely transfer of patients and continuity of care, while helping connect patients and families with complementary specialised services available at Sidra Medicine and Aman Hospital.

The collaboration will also create opportunities for healthcare professionals to participate in clinical education, continuing professional development, simulation-based training, observerships, and other knowledge-sharing initiatives. In addition, the two institutions will collaborate in laboratory and pathology services, and other specialised clinical and operational areas.

Aman Hospital was also the first private hospital to sign a separate Cord Blood Banking agreement with Sidra Medicine.



Sidra Medicine and Aman Hospital officials at the signing ceremony.

Qatar Charity delivers urgent relief to flood-affected families in Nepal

With the support of donors, Qatar Charity (QC) has delivered urgent humanitarian assistance to families affected by the recent flash floods along the Trishuli River corridor in Nepal.

The aid included 30 metric tonnes of essential food supplies, along with hygiene and emergency shelter assistance, benefiting thousands of people in the affected areas.

This intervention is part of the urgent relief response announced by Qatar Charity last week following the massive floods that swept through Nepal. Immediately after the disaster, the organisation activated its crisis cell under the Humanitarian Operations Department at its headquarters in Doha. Meanwhile, its Crisis and Information Centre continues to monitor developments and coordinate humanitarian efforts to support those affected, while maintaining ongoing communication with its field office in Nepal to support its swift humanitarian response.

The distributed food aid consisted of food packages containing essential food items, ready-to-eat products, biscuits, dried fruits, beaten rice, and oral rehydra-



tion salt sachets. The assistance benefited 1,240 families, representing approximately 5,419 beneficiaries.

Qatar Charity also provided hygiene assistance to 130 families, benefiting around 568 people. The support included hygiene items, bathing soap, sanitary pads, laundry soap, nail cutters, towels, buckets, mugs, slippers, and water purification tablets.

As part of its emergency shelter response, Qatar Charity provided shelter and non-food items (NFIs) to 130 additional families, benefiting approximately 568 people. The assist-

ance included tarpaulin sheets for temporary shelter, ropes, blankets, sleeping mattresses, and solar-powered lamps.

All relief supplies were handed over to representatives of the District Office Administration (DOA) in Nuwakot District for distribution to beneficiaries, in accordance with the Government of Nepal's "One Door Policy," ensuring effective coordination and the timely delivery of aid to affected families.

During co-ordination meetings with local authorities and field visits to affected areas, Qatar Charity's team in Nepal observed extensive damage to infrastructure, including roads and buildings, as well as several collapsed bridges. This damage has limited access to some affected communities and posed challenges to relief delivery efforts.

Field assessments found that the most urgent needs included emergency food assistance, temporary shelter materials such as tarpaulin sheets, hygiene and dignity kits, safe drinking water, household water treatment supplies, and essential household items for displaced and vulnerable families.

Qatar to host conference on AI, digital future in construction

Doha is to host an international conference examining how artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology are reshaping the engineering and construction sectors.

The Qatar Society of Engineers will hold the Qatar Building Information Modeling (BIM) Conference on October 4. The event, sponsored by the Ministry of Municipality, brings together engineers, architects, consultants, government officials, academics and private-sector representatives.

The event will focus on Building Information Modeling, a digital approach that allows information about a construction project to be integrated and managed throughout its life cycle.

Organisers said BIM can improve the efficiency of project planning, construction and asset management while strengthening coordination between the different parties involved.

The conference will also examine regulations and standards governing the use of BIM in civil and industrial projects, including its integration with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which are used to collect, analyse and display geographically linked data.

Artificial intelligence will be another key focus, with sessions looking at how emerging technologies can help predict project risks, monitor costs and support engineering decisions. **(QNA)**

NEW YORKER to unveil Autumn 2026 campaign at Ezdan Mall



NEW YORKER is set to welcome the autumn season with a special in-store event at Ezdan Mall in Al Wakra today, bringing together fashion, music and entertainment.

The event will showcase NEW YORKER's Autumn 2026 campaign, "Own the Season", while offering visitors an opportunity to explore the brand's latest seasonal collections in an interactive setting.

The day-long programme will feature a live DJ set and performances by a dance group, which will take to the stage four times during the event. Visitors can also participate in a prize wheel, take photographs at a dedicated photo wall and enjoy complimentary finger food.

A makeup artist will be available at the store to offer customers styling and makeup assistance as they discover the new-season looks.

Customers will also be able to benefit from special discounts during the event. Purchases of QR120 or more will receive a QR25 discount, while purchases of QR240 or more will qualify for a QR50 discount. Customers spending QR360 or more will receive a QR75 discount.

The Autumn 2026 collection reflects the colours and textures of the new season, with deep blue, brown, beige and other autumnal shades featuring prominently across the range.

Relaxed silhouettes and versatile styles are designed to make it easier to combine different pieces, while denim, leather, layering and cosy essentials form key elements of the autumn wardrobe.

From casual and relaxed looks to edgier and more classic styles, the collection aims to offer a range of options for customers looking to express their individual style during the cooler months.



شركة قطر للإضافات البترولية المحدودة
QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

NO.	TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	COLLECTION FEE Qrs.	TENDER BOND Qrs.	BID CLOSING DATE
1.	QTC/075/26	Upgrade of existing Virtualization System at QAFAC Operational Technology	300/-	70,000/-	28th September 2026
2.	QTC/076/26	Distributed Control System (DCS) Alarm Rationalization Study	300/-	40,000/-	28th September 2026

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender documents as follows:

- **Collection Date :** From **Thursday, 3rd September 2026** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- **Collection Time :** 08:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m
- **Location :** The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13th Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- **Tender Fees :** As shown above, **(Non- refundable)** can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- **Validity :** Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Bid Bond :** Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 days from closing date.
- **Authorization :** Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
 1. Official authorization on Company Letter Head.
 2. Proper Identification.
 3. Copy of valid Company's Commercial Registration.
 4. Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)



DICID participates in ‘Family Challenges’ conference in Cairo

QNA
Cairo

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID) is participating in the two-day conference entitled, ‘Family Challenges Amidst Major Transformations: A Fatwa-Based Approach to Protecting the Family, Envisioning its Future, and Preserving Identity’ in Cairo, organised by the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide.

The centre is represented at the conference by HE Chairman of the Board at DICID Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Naimi

DICID’s participation reflects the constant and active presence of the State of Qatar in international forums and conferences, especially those concerned with discussing the issues of the Islamic world in the current era, the most important of which are the challenges facing the Muslim family, in light of what the world is witnessing in terms of the impact of globalisation and the information and technological revolution.

The participation also comes within the framework of DICID’s keenness to contribute to all issues concerning the Islamic world, and to co-operate with official institutions in all Islamic countries.

In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr al-Naimi pointed to the major and successive challenges facing the family in today’s world and its changes, which affect and represent a serious threat to its structure, system and cohesion, whether in terms of values or the family identity itself.

He stated that all these challenges call upon international civil institutions and organisations to participate intellectually and from a standpoint of responsibility, with cultural, academic and religious institutions, especially bodies and institutions of Islamic fatwas in the world, to attentively search for ways to preserve the cohesion of the family value system, especially the Muslim family, based on adherence to Sharia and the values of the true Islamic religion.

Dr al-Naimi considered the conference an extension and integration of joint Arab and Islamic work to instil the principles of preserving the family and enabling it to perform its role as defined by religion and the Shariah. He pointed out that the 15th Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue addressed the same issue, which focused on the Family Structure in Light of Changing World as its main topic, with the theme being “Integration of families, faith, values, and education.”



The conference aims to monitor and analyse contemporary family challenges in the context of artificial intelligence and digital transformation

He pointed out that most societies in the modern world have become pluralistic, with diverse cultures and religions, which necessitates taking advantage of interfaith dialogue to promote family values in order to protect the family system, which is in reality an innate system known to human society since the time of Adam (PBUH).

The conference aims to monitor and analyse contemporary family challenges in the context of artificial intelligence and digital transformation, and to build an integrated fatwa approach to protect the family, anticipate its future, and preserve its identity by reading the major transformations that the world is witnessing, and strengthening the system of belonging, coexistence, and solidarity. This contributes to building a balanced individual capable of positive interaction with his surroundings, while at the same time preserving the foundations and stability of the family.

Qatar attends meeting of undersecretaries of GCC justice ministries

The State of Qatar participated in the 28th meeting of the undersecretaries of the Ministries of Justice in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, held virtually yesterday. The State of Qatar’s delegation was led by HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, Saeed bin Abdullah al-Suwaidi.

The meeting addressed several topics related to strengthening joint judicial, legal, and legislative cooperation among the GCC Ministries of Justice. The meeting was also briefed on a report on the meetings of the Committee of Officials of the

Departments of International Co-operation and International Relations at the Ministries of Justice in the GCC countries for 2026, as well as the General Secretariat’s memorandum regarding the meeting of the Committee of Directors and Heads of Legal and Judicial Training Centers and Institutes in the GCC countries for the same year.

Appropriate decisions were taken in their regard, contributing to supporting the progress of joint Gulf action, enhancing integration, and promoting the exchange of expertise between the Ministries of Justice of the GCC countries. **(QNA)**

Al-Hammadi meets Philippine official



HE Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with the Undersecretary for Administration at the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Maria Theresa B. Dizon-De Vega, who is visiting Qatar. The meeting discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and strengthen it, as well as a number of issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

30 contestants reach Sheikh Jassim Qur’an contest finals

The final stage of the first Rofaqaa International Orphans Branch of the Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani Holy Qur’an Competition is underway in Doha, in co-operation with Qatar Charity, at Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque. The competition runs through today.

The first edition features 30 contestants from eight countries, who qualified from more than 300 participants representing 20 countries.

They are competing in three categories: memorising the entire Holy Qur’an, the last 20 Juz’ and the last 10 Juz’.

In statements to QNA, Deputy Chairman of the Sheikh Jassim Qur’an Competition Committee and Director of the Mosques Department at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Sheikh Abdulrahman bin



Abdulaziz al-Thani said the Rofaqaa branch represents a new experience for the competition and targets orphans supported by Qatar Charity.

He said the finalists reached this stage after several rounds of screening and testing, followed by training courses organised by the ministry in co-operation with Qatar Charity to improve their performance and prepare them for the finals in Doha.

He added that the edition represents a promising start for future co-operation between the Ministry and Qatar Charity, noting that the results will help assess the experience and determine whether the competition should be held annually.

Sheikh Abdulrahman stressed that the orphan branch reflects the ministry’s commitment to expanding Qur’anic competitions to different groups and strengthening partnerships with institutions supporting orphans.

For his part, Adviser to the CEO of Qatar Charity, Ahmed Yusuf Fakhroo, said the association launched the Furqan initiative under Rofaqaa to teach the Holy Qur’an and Arabic to orphans. A number of countries were selected for the first phase, with Qur’an memorisation centres incorporated into the initiative.

Fakhroo told QNA co-operation with the ministry led to the launch of a special branch for Qatar Charity’s orphans, benefiting from the Sheikh Jassim Competition’s diverse branches and wide participation.

He explained that qualifiers and tests were held in participating countries under the supervision of Qur’an memorisation centres, with the best students selected and prepared for the Doha finals.

He said the preparation lasted several months and included Qur’an revision and assessment of contestants’ levels ahead of the two-day final stage.

Qatar attends conference on protecting family and identity

The State of Qatar participated in the 11th International Conference of Egypt’s Dar Al Ifta and the General Secretariat for Fatwa Houses and Authorities Worldwide, which opened yesterday in Cairo for two days under the theme “Family Challenges Amidst Major Transformations: A Fatwa-Based Approach to Protecting the Family, Envisioning its Future, and Preserving Identity”. Qatar was represented by HE

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi; Assistant Undersecretary for Islamic Affairs at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Khalid bin Shaheen al-Ghanem; and Executive Director of the Doha International Family Institute Dr Sharifa al-Emadi. In her address during the opening session, Dr Sharifa al-Emadi said the conference comes at a critical

moment as Arab and Muslim families face rapid transformations, making their protection and preservation of identity an existential issue requiring concerted efforts. She noted that Islam has established the family on solid foundations of affection and mercy. She warned of unprecedented value-based and intellectual challenges that have entered societies, including the dilution of authentic concepts of identity,

disruption of sound human nature, complex challenges posed by the digital environment and cyberspace, reluctance to marry, growing acceptance of divorce, and parenting-related challenges. She added that studies and statistical evidence in the Arab region indicate that a large proportion of divorces occur during the early years of marriage, exceeding 40-50% in some countries. **(QNA)**

QRCS provides vital nutrition for Gaza children

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), as part of its humanitarian response to the health and food crisis in Gaza, began providing baby formula at a total cost of \$426,000 to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian families who cannot access essential nutrition for their children.

Dr Akram Nassar, head of QRCS’ representation office in Gaza, explained that the new project was directly supporting 10,000 infants and young children across Gaza, with 25,000 tin cans of high-quality, international-standard baby formula being distributed.

According to him, the distributions started at the clinics of NECC Gaza in both Gaza and Deir Al-Balah Governorates, to help save the lives of malnourished children. “We made sure to provide baby



formula varieties suitable for different age groups and varying physical needs,” added Dr Nassar. “The distributions included SMA 1 and SMA 2 milks for newborns,

as well as Nido 3+ for toddlers”. He described the project as a lifeline for thousands of families in Gaza, amid critical conditions and insufficient supplies, which make

it increasingly difficult to ensure the necessary nutrition to protect children from the serious health complications of malnutrition.

The project is part of QRCS’ ongoing relief efforts in Gaza, demonstrating its commitment to helping the most vulnerable groups and easing the unprecedented humanitarian crisis that has been affecting the blockade for the past three years.

QRCS is raising funds to launch a child-focused health plan for Gaza, which involves multiple interventions, as follows:

1. Supply of 20 incubators, medications, and medical supplies for up to 5,000 newborns.
2. Medical care for 300 children with type 1 diabetes, including regular examinations/consultations, insulin pens, nutritional supplements, blood glucose me-



ters, healthy lifestyle awareness sessions/activities for parents, and psychological support.

3. Medical care for children with autoimmune disorders (celiac disease and PKU), by providing specialised medical formulas and gluten-free flour.

To secure the QR 5,640,000 budget needed to make these

projects a reality and bring about the desired positive change in the lives of Gaza children, QRCS welcomes donations via its website (www.qrcs.org.qa), mobile app (QRCS), donor service hotline (66666364), home donation collection hotline (33998898), or donation collection agents/boxes at malls and shopping centres.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **AKSHITA VERMA**

holder of

Indian Passport No. W8110129
QID No. 31235604482

hereby change my name

from

AKSHITA VERMA

to

AKKSHHITA VERMA

Any objection, please contact

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **SKARYA SITEPPANOSE CHERIAN**

holder of

Indian Passport No. AI989214
QID No. 28735627439

hereby change my name

from

SKARYA SITEPPANOSE CHERIAN

to

SKARIYA STEPPANOSE CHERIAN

Any objection, please contact

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Qatar partakes in GCC Customs Union Authority meeting

The State of Qatar has participated in the 18th meeting of the Customs Union Authority of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), held in Bahrain. HE Chairman of the General Authority of Customs and President of the Executive Council of the Customs Union Authority, Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Jamal, has represented Qatar at the meeting. The meeting has discussed a number of matters related to strengthening and advancing joint GCC customs co-operation, foremost among them the decisions of the 125th meeting of the Financial and Economic Co-operation Committee concerning the implementation steps required to complete the establishment of the Customs Union. Discussions also have addressed ongoing efforts related to transit and customs clearance procedures in light of current developments, reviewed reports submitted by technical committees and teams, and followed up on the

implementation of the Executive Council’s decisions. The meeting has also reviewed progress on projects included in the Authority’s strategic plan, particularly the project to develop and operate a customs data exchange platform among GCC member states, along with a number of related technology projects. Updates on the Authority’s operational activities have also been reviewed. These periodic meetings form part of ongoing efforts to advance GCC customs integration and strengthen co-ordination and co-operation among customs authorities and administrations across the member states. They contribute to harmonising customs procedures, enhancing mechanisms for joint action, facilitating the smooth flow of intra-GCC trade, and improving the efficiency of the GCC customs system in support of the member states’ shared objectives. **(QNA)**



Evolution Nation: How public art became part of Qatar’s cultural identity

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Across Qatar, art increasingly appears where people live, work and gather: along the Corniche, in parks, at cultural institutions, in neighbourhoods and across the desert landscape. For HE Dr Eng Saad bin Ahmad al-Muhamnadi, former member of the Qatar Museums (QM) Board of Trustees, the growing public art programme is among the key achievements that have helped shape Qatar’s cultural identity. Speaking as part of Evolution Nation, al-Muhamnadi recalled his five years with QM and the development he witnessed during that period. “I joined Qatar Museums for five years as a member of the Honorary Trustees, and I honestly witnessed the passion and dedication of the organisation’s executive

team in implementing Qatar Museums’ strategy. “Honestly, one of the most important achievements I found was that it added value to the State of Qatar and truly highlighted Qatar’s identity and creativity that is the subject of public art, where Qatar Museums embraced public art projects and artworks in various locations across the country. In addition to this, the involvement of Qatari artists and designers in these works played a major role in shaping the identity of the State of Qatar,” he added. That vision can now be encountered throughout the country. QM’s public art collection includes works by Qatari, regional, and international artists, placing art beyond traditional gallery spaces and into the everyday spaces people encounter. Among the most recent additions is Erwin Wurm’s Pink Convertible Big, now installed at Place Vendome. Created in 2019



Dr Eng Saad bin Ahmad al-Muhamnadi

from cast aluminium and lacquer, the sculpture belongs to Wurm’s celebrated Fat Car series, in which familiar automobiles are given exaggerated, swollen proportions. The work turns an object associated with luxury, speed, and status into a humorous yet provocative com-

Former trustee looks back on QM’s cultural journey and the expansion of public art across the country

mentary on consumerism, materialism, and excess. It joins a public art landscape that ranges widely in subject and setting. At the Museum of Islamic Art Park, Fischli and Weiss’s Rock on Top of Another Rock creates an unlikely balancing act, while Richard Serra’s monumental East-West-West-East extends across the desert at Brouq Nature Reserve. At Hamad International Airport, Urs Fischer’s Lamp Bear—the monumental yellow teddy bear positioned beneath an oversized lamp—has become one of the most recognisable public artworks encountered by travellers ar-

riving in and departing from Doha. Along the city’s waterfront, Salman al-Malek’s Toub Toub Ya Bahar draws from a traditional Qatari song associated with sailors, while Hassan bin Mohammed al-Thani’s Motherland at the National Museum of Qatar draws directly from the country’s history and traditions. Works by Qatari artists, including Ahmed al-Bahrani, Shouq al-Mana, Bouthayna al-Muftah, and Aisha Nasser al-Sowaidi, further place local artistic voices within Qatar’s public realm. According to QM, the growing collection has expanded the places and ways in which audiences experience art in Qatar, with works appearing in familiar public spaces and becoming part of the country’s evolving visual landscape. For al-Muhamnadi, preserving those cultural foundations while continuing to develop them remains essential for future genera-

tions. “My advice to the next generation is to preserve the heritage and Qatari culture and to develop it in a way that keeps pace with global progress in this field,” he said. The Evolution Nation video series forms part of the wider Qatar Creates cultural movement by QM. The campaign was launched to mark 50 years since the establishment of the original National Museum of Qatar in 1975, celebrating the people, institutions and ideas that have shaped Qatar’s cultural development. Through its stories, Evolution Nation highlights individuals who have contributed to Qatar’s artistic and historic landscape over the past five decades. The series is available on the Qatar Creates YouTube channel and across QM’s social media platforms, offering audiences a closer look at the people behind the country’s ongoing cultural, creative, and sporting evolution.



Career hub upskills 200 guidance experts

Qatar Career Development Centre (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation (QF), concluded ‘Career Counsellors Hub 2026’ yesterday, a two-day event that brought together more than 200 academic and career guidance professionals from schools, educational institutions, and organisations across Qatar. The hub, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), the US Embassy in Doha, and QF Higher Education, featured 15 training sessions, workshops, and discussions in Arabic and English. Participants gained practical knowledge and tools to strengthen their ability to guide students amid increasingly diverse academic pathways, evolving skill requirements, and the rapid evolution of today’s labour market. Saad Abdulla al-Kharji, executive director of QCDC, said: “The impact of developing one career counsellor reaches every student they support. Our investment through the hub is therefore an investment in the quality of the decisions young people can make about their education and future careers.” “Over these two days, we have focused on giving counsellors the expertise they need in their work. Strengthening this community of practitioners helps us build more consistent and effective guidance across the education system and better prepare young people for their transition into higher education and the labour market,” he added. In the same context, Maha Zayed Qaqaa Alruwaili, assistant undersecretary for Educational Affairs at MoEHE, stated: “This hub represents an important pro-

fessional platform that enables counsellors to learn from experts, stay abreast of the latest practices and trends, exchange experiences, and build professional partnerships. It also gives them the opportunity to engage with universities and educational institutions and learn about the opportunities and pathways available, enabling them to provide students and their parents with accurate and reliable information.” She added: “There is no doubt that the quality of academic and career guidance begins with the quality of counsellor preparation and their continuous development. Investing in the development of counsellors is a direct investment in students and in their ability to make more informed educational and career decisions, and to transition successfully into higher education and professional life. In this context, I would like to emphasise the Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s pivotal role in supporting counsellors’ professional development, given their position as key partners in preparing students for the future and strengthening their readiness for the requirements of education and the labour market.” For his part, Dr Francisco Marmolejo, president of Higher Education at QF, said: “By empowering career counsellors, we empower the ‘enablers of dreams’ who help students recognise their potential, navigate an evolving world, and confidently shape their own futures.” The opening day of the hub featured a debate titled “Implementing Career Guidance at All Educational Levels,” bringing together a group of academic counsellors from schools across Qatar. The

discussion explored the importance of greater integration and continuity in the guidance services provided to students throughout their educational journey. Over the two-day programme, participants explored topics directly relevant to counsellors’ day-to-day practice, including university admissions, scholarship pathways, future labour market skills, international study opportunities, artificial intelligence and its role in student guidance, career readiness, and professional development. Participants also engaged directly with specialists and experts from the education sector, government entities, career development organisations, and international institutions, helping them translate acquired knowledge into more practical and effective guidance for students. The hub’s accompanying networking exhibition also enabled participants to meet representatives from more than 30 universities and educational and training institutions in the public and private sectors, and to learn directly about their programmes, academic pathways, services, and available opportunities. This, in turn, equips counsellors with relevant information to share with students at their schools and institutions. The hub also reflected the complementary expertise of its partners. MoEHE contributed its expertise in academic and career guidance and scholarship pathways; QF Higher Education provided counsellors with deeper insight into the opportunities and pathways available across Education City universities; and the US Embassy Doha contributed its expertise on opportunities for study in the US.

Qatar Museums online collection grows 60%, adds digital features

QNA
Doha

Qatar Museums (QM) has expanded its Online Collection platform by 60% since its launch in April 2025, increasing the number of objects featured from approximately 1,000 to more than 1,600. The platform has also introduced a range of new digital features, including artist-created animations, games and quizzes, personalised collections, an interactive timeline and AI-powered recommendations. Available in both English and Arabic, the Online Collection gives audiences in Qatar and around the world digital access to artworks and cultural objects from the National Museum of Qatar, Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and other Qatar Museums collections.

New objects are added regularly. The latest enhancements were developed as part of a project sponsored by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), with Qatar-based digital experience company Applab serving as the development partner. The platform now allows visitors to create personal accounts, save favourite objects and organise them into custom collections, making it easier to revisit items of interest. An interactive timeline enables users to explore objects chronologically, spanning periods from 300,000 BCE to the present, while filters allow browsing by museum, material and other collection details. Each object page provides details including its title, place of production, date, period, material, technique, dimensions and holding museum. Users can compare objects side by side and explore related information through

clickable metadata. New recommendation tools suggest objects based on shared characteristics such as material, category and period, while AI-powered visual matching identifies visually similar objects across the collection. Games and quizzes provide an interactive way for audiences to learn more about the objects and their stories. The platform also features artist-created animated videos by Andrey Zakirzyanov, offering new visual interpretations of selected works. Zakirzyanov is known for hand-crafted animations that bring iconic paintings to life through motion. His reinterpretations of works by Vincent van Gogh and Pierre-Auguste Renoir have attracted millions of views on social media. The platform features categories including paintings, printed and written materials, numismatics, accessories and jewelry, archaeology, textiles and clothing, and machinery and equipment.

Qatar slams renewed Iran attacks

From Page 1

The draft aims to protect and promote free and fair competition, combat monopolistic practices and curb conduct that may harm, restrict or undermine competition, while regulating the oversight of economic concentration — measures expected to improve market efficiency and the business and investment environment in line with international standards and the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030). It provides for the establishment of a Competition Regulation Committee and defines its competencies; covers prohibited agreements, acts and practices; abuse of dominance; exemption applications; the notification and review of economic concentration transactions within specified timeframes; complaints and investigation procedures; measures and financial penalties; appeals against the committee’s decisions before the Investment and Trade Court; settlement; and exemption from penalties. The Cabinet reviewed the

findings of a study of the Shura Council proposal titled “Enhancing Parental Care and Supporting Family Cohesion” and took the appropriate decision. Relevant entities signalled their intention to develop and implement a package of family programmes, policies and initiatives, including expanded parenting support services, benefits and measures supporting work-life balance, improved nursery and kindergarten services, stronger partnerships between families and educational institutions, and intensified awareness and media efforts to reinforce sound upbringing, family values and national identity. Among the agreements approved were a draft letter of intent on co-operation between the Ministry of Interior and its Spanish counterpart on security arrangements for the FIFA World Cup 2030; a draft letter of intent on security co-operation in training and the exchange of expertise with the Federal Ministry of the Interior of Germany; a draft memorandum of understanding on labour co-operation with the Ministry of Economy and Labour

of North Macedonia; a draft MoU on tourism co-operation with Serbia; a draft executive programme for sports co-operation with the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2026-2027; and an extension of the memoranda of understanding between the OECD and 20 governments, Qatar among them, on the OECD’s hosting of the secretariat of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. The Cabinet closed by reviewing the 63rd report of the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons, covering January 1 to April 30, 2026; the 2025 annual report of the General Tax Authority; a report on the finance minister’s participation in the annual meetings of the Islamic Development Bank Group in Azerbaijan in June; a report on the municipality minister’s visit to The Netherlands and participation in GreenTech 2026; and a report on his participation in the 39th session of the general assembly of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in Kuwait. It took the appropriate decisions on each.

Qatar partakes in Moscow Book Fair

The Moscow International Book Fair kicked off yesterday, bringing together more than 300 publishing houses from Russia and other countries. Running through Sept 6, the event also features the participation of Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Culture, as part of the ministry’s commitment to raising the profile of Qatari culture on the global stage. It broadly aims to showcase Qatari intellectual materials to a substantial audience, thereby underscoring the nation’s stature as an incubator of creativity and a hub of diverse cultural and civilizational traditions. Qatar’s booth is distinctively adorned with the characteristics of traditional architecture, offering a multifaceted cultural experience, alongside handicrafts displayed on interactive screens and a calligrapher on hand to showcase the intricate beauty of Arabic calligraphy. (QNA)

Latest campaign against Iran ‘won’t last long’, says Trump

From Page 1

Iran said its own strikes targeted US assets in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq, vowing to drive American forces from bases across the Middle East. Iran’s military command warned that “American evil in the region will be met with heavier, more widespread, and devastating responses,” and said any country co-operating with the US military must accept “dangerous consequences.” Iran accused the US of striking a wedding party in Sirik County, killing four people including a 4-year-old and wounding dozens; its health ministry later put the total death toll from the latest US strikes at 18, with 108 injured. Iranian media

released images of injured children and scenes of rubble, though Reuters could not independently verify the wedding incident. US Central Command said it was aware of the reports originating from Iranian state media and reiterated that the US military does not target civilians. US officials also said initial assessments found no American casualties from Iran’s retaliatory strikes, despite Tehran’s claims of killing US forces in Jordan and northern Iraq. Asian and European stocks fell after the airstrikes, while Wall Street opened higher as investors focused on AI developments. Oil prices edged up in a volatile session, briefly touching levels not seen since July, on concerns about the

war’s impact on the global economy. Washington maintained that the Strait of Hormuz remained open to shipping despite Iranian attacks, with Energy Secretary Chris Wright saying more than 17mn barrels of oil exited on Monday. Iran, however, blacklisted 11 more vessels, bringing to 56 the number of ships it says could face fines, confiscation or detention if they transit without Tehran’s permission. Trump repeated his assertion that the strategic waterway — which handled 20% of global oil and liquefied gas shipments before the war — was under US control, posting on Truth Social: “Now that we have it under U.S.A. control, should we change the name Hormuz Strait to TRUMP STRAIT???” (Reuters)

Over 70 global partners tie up for Web Summit Qatar 2027

From Page 1

The meeting brought together representatives from government entities and strategic partners, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Qatar Investment Authority, Invest Qatar, Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways, alongside members of the Web Summit team. Much of the discussion centred on the Runway to Web Summit Qatar Embassy Series, a joint GCO-Web Summit initiative rolling out in major technology and innovation hubs worldwide, among them Washington DC, Stockholm and Berlin. The series is designed to forge partnerships and deepen international engagement in the run-up to the summit. Committee members also reviewed progress on the Road to Web Summit Qatar bootcamp, which will prepare a cohort of Qatari startups for investor meetings and a shot at the PITCH stage competition at Web Summit Qatar 2027. Now in its fourth year, Web Summit Qatar has grown into the Middle East and North Africa’s fastest-growing technology event, pulling in global tech leaders, investors and decision-makers while feeding directly into Qatar’s drive for economic diversification and digital transformation.



Ebola response in Congo must be scaled up: WHO

Reuters
Geneva

The head of the World Health Organisation yesterday said the Ebola response needs to be scaled up to tackle the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with tracking the chains of transmission still posing a challenge.

“Until every chain is found and broken, the epidemic will continue and will continue to pose a threat to DRC, its neighbours and the region as a whole,” the WHO’s director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told reporters in Geneva.

The number of deaths in Congo’s Ebola outbreak has surpassed 3,000, government data showed yesterday, as the country’s worst epidemic continues to spread across its northeast.

The outbreak, caused by the Bundibugyo species of Ebola, became the largest and deadliest in Congo’s history after surpassing the 2018-2020 epidemic.

It is now second only to the 2014-2016 West African outbreak, which infected over 28,600 people and killed more than 11,000 across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

But there is now hope of possible progress in treatments and vaccinations. The WHO aims to start clinical efficacy trials of potential vaccines next month or in November, and trials on treatments are under way.

However, Tedros said many

deaths were among people who were not on a list of known contacts.

“That means there are chains of transmission we don’t know about,” he said, adding that many of those who died were still being buried unsafely, which is fuelling transmission.

He urged the international community to increase and accelerate funding for the Congolese government-led Ebola response plan, which is seeking \$1.3bn.

While the WHO has managed to ship 320 tons of supplies, and has increased testing capacity to 3,000 tests per day, it needs further funding to help support its response – including to increase bed capacity at Ebola treatment centres. Luca Fontana, technical officer for health and technical logistics with the WHO, said it costs \$15mn per month for a 1,500 bed treatment centre.

“We know that we are making this request at a time when financing for humanitarian assistance has contracted,” Tedros said. “But as we know from previous Ebola outbreaks, we can control this epidemic if we choose to.”

More than 300 Ebola patients have been enrolled for a trial of two treatments, Tedros said.

Trials are also under way for the antiviral drug obeldesivir among people considered high-risk contacts of Ebola cases, to assess if it is effective in preventing disease after exposure to the virus.

Iraq probes over 5,700 IS suspects from Syria

AFP
Baghdad

Iraq’s judiciary on Tuesday said it completed the interrogation of more than 5,700 Islamic State group suspects whom the US transferred from neighbouring Syria earlier this year. The cases will now proceed to trial, while more than 450 Syrians will be released and handed over to their country.

Iraq’s Supreme Judicial Council said it concluded “the interrogation phase” of the 5,704 IS suspects who were brought from northeast Syria, and referred them to trial.

The investigations led to identifying several IS commanders, including top-ranking figures, who were involved in “crimes at the international-level”, according to the council.

Six suspects were found to be “directly” involved in forcing people from the Yazidi minority, which suffered some of the worst atrocities at the group’s hands, into “slavery”. In February, the US completed the transfer of the detainees who had been held in Syria for years in camps overseen by Kurdish-led forces.

Washington stepped in following Damascus’s recapture of territory surrounding the camps.

Upon their arrival in Iraq, the judiciary began interrogating the detainees ahead of taking legal action against the suspects from 67 countries.

The judicial council said they include around 3,497 Syrians and 474 Iraqis.

The rest are foreign nationals, including from European and other Arab countries.

The judicial council said 457 Syrians will be released and handed over to their country after investigations found no evidence warranting legal action against them.

In April, Iraq handed over two detained foreigners, from Finland and the US, to their countries after they were cleared of suspicion of belonging to the jihadist group.

Another seven Iraqis were also released. Many prisons in Iraq are packed with IS suspects, and courts have handed down hundreds of death sentences and life terms to those convicted of terrorism offences, including foreign fighters. IS swept across Syria and Iraq in 2014.

Xi calls for new Middle East security framework in Cairo

Reuters

Cairo/Beijing

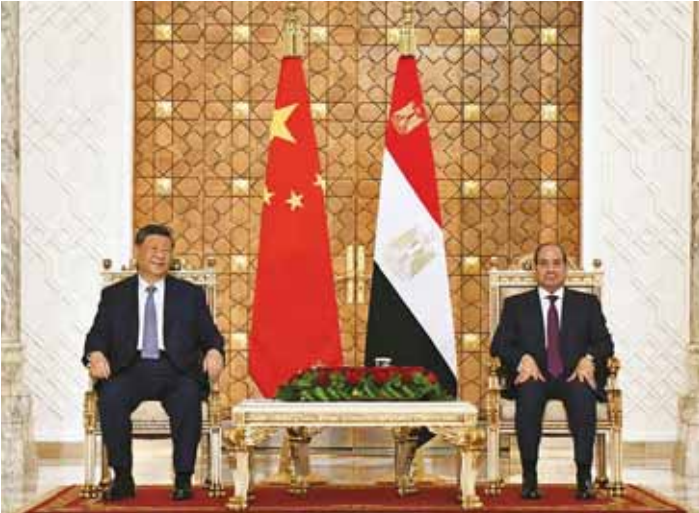
Chinese President Xi Jinping called on Middle Eastern nations to oppose external interference and consider reshaping the region’s security order during a visit to Egypt yesterday, as Beijing seeks to expand its influence amid the US war against Iran.

Xi’s first trip to the Middle East in four years comes as US partners in the region reassess their strategic relationships after months of conflict that have disrupted trade, shaken economies and raised questions about Washington’s long-term role.

Egypt, itself a major US defence partner that receives around \$1.3bn annually in military aid from Washington, has been steadily increasing economic and military co-operation with China in recent years.

Welcomed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi with a military ceremony in Cairo, Xi said countries in the region should be “masters of their own destiny” and explore a new regional “security architecture”, according to China’s state news agency Xinhua.

Xi also said China was ready to work with regional countries to safeguard shipping routes, an issue that has taken on greater importance after conflict disrupted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb. The leaders



President Xi Jinping (L) and his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi during their meeting at the Ittihadia Presidential Palace in Cairo. (AFP)

agreed to deepen security co-operation and counterterrorism co-ordination, Xinhua said.

The two sides also agreed to expand co-operation in data centres, semiconductors and critical metals supply chains and strengthen the use of each other’s currencies in trade and investment, according to a joint statement.

For Egypt, stronger ties with China fit a broader effort to diversify international partnerships. In an article published ahead of the visit, al-Sisi said Egypt pursued a policy of “strategic balance” at a time of growing global rivalry.

“Egypt wants to widen the circle

of its relations with major world powers, including China,” former Egyptian diplomat Ayman Zaineldine told Reuters. “So the visions converge.”

For China, Egypt’s regional influence and strategic location make it an important partner as Beijing seeks a broader economic role and tries to chip away at US influence in the region.

“Egypt represents something quite valuable to Beijing – a large domestic market for investment opportunities, and a lot of diplomatic weight in the region, including the Palestine question, as well as connectivity to Africa,” said H

A Hellyer, a scholar at the Royal United Services Institute think tank.

Growing military ties were on display last month during Egypt’s “Eagles of Civilisation” exercises with China, which included a rare air combat drill involving Chinese-made J-16 jets and French-made Rafale aircraft.

Enthusiasm for the Chinese president’s visit has been evident for days in Egypt’s capital, where streets have been decked out in Chinese flags and images of iconic sites including Egypt’s Sphinx and China’s Great Wall.

Home to the Suez Canal and a population of more than 110mn, Egypt is an important market for China, importing some \$10bn of Chinese goods in the first half of this year alone.

Chinese investment has risen rapidly since al-Sisi visited China and signed a strategic partnership agreement in 2014, with Chinese companies pouring billions into container ports, green hydrogen projects and facilities to make iron pipes, car tyres, and satellites.

Egypt’s cabinet says the Suez Canal Economic Zone has attracted about \$4bn in Chinese investment.

Yesterday, Egyptian authorities announced plans to expand a Chinese-developed industrial area in the zone, while ZC Rubber Group signed a preliminary agreement to study a \$500mn tyre making complex.

Two killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza Strip

QNA
Gaza

Two Palestinians were killed yesterday as Israel continues its aggression against the Gaza Strip.

According to local sources, one Palestinian was killed while several others were injured in an Israeli military drone attack in the Asda area of Al-Mawasi, west of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, a boy was also killed in Israeli shelling on the Al-Hawja area of the Jabalia refugee camp, in the northern Gaza Strip.

The sources pointed out that the Israeli navy arrested a fisherman fishing in the waters of Gaza City.

These developments come amid a rise in Israeli airstrikes, shelling, and gunfire against several targets across the Gaza Strip.

Kenyan editor found safe after abduction, Standard Group says

Reuters
Nairobi

An editor of one of Kenya’s largest news outlets was abducted by armed men and released hours later at the edge of a dam more than 200 km away, his employer said in a statement yesterday.

Alex Kiprotich, an associate editor for Standard Group, was taken from a car near the city of Nakuru shortly before 9:20pm on Tuesday, the company said in a statement.

Dashcam footage shared by Standard Group appeared to show four armed and masked men emerging from a vehicle parked on a busy road. Screams could be heard from the car carrying Kiprotich. He was dumped near the Masinga Dam more than 200 km southeast of Nakuru, where he was found safe, the company said, without providing further details of his condition or the circumstances of his release.

Kenyan police spokesperson Muchiri Nyaga did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the incident.

Dozens of government critics and activists have been reported abducted or missing in Kenya since anti-government demonstrations in June 2024. Human rights groups have accused state security agencies of being responsible. Government officials have denied those allegations.

Kurdish women fighters seek role in new, post war Syria

Reuters
Qamishli, Syria

Female Kurdish fighters who became global symbols of the fight against Islamic State are negotiating with Syria’s new authorities to retain a combat role after a government overhaul left their future uncertain.

The Women’s Protection Units, known as the YPJ, fought alongside the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) during Syria’s civil war, helping drive Islamic State from large parts of the country’s north and east. The group became one of the conflict’s most recognisable fighting forces, drawing international attention for its all-female ranks in battles against Islamic State fighters.

Yet the future of the force has been thrown into uncertainty since the downfall of former president Bashar al-Assad in late 2024 and the emergence of a new government led by Islamist rebels.

The new authorities have sought to fold formerly autonomous armed groups into state institutions.

Last week, the SDF was formally dissolved, with its commander Mazloum Abdi appointed as an adviser to President Ahmed al-Sharaa and other SDF members

joining the defence ministry.

But there are no women in Syria’s new defence ministry, and the YPJ’s commander Nowruz Ahmed said she was told in meetings with al-Sharaa last week in Damascus that her fighters had no place in the military.

“We were aiming to join the army, because our forces have experience and expertise that would enable them to protect themselves in an organised way in the form of an independent brigade or battalion,” she told Reuters at a military base in the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli.

“Our main condition was that this force must be organised, must not be deployed to any place, and must not be in small groups. They rejected this proposal.”

The YPJ is now in talks with Syria’s interior ministry as it seeks an alternative route to maintain an organised fighting force.

The discussions come as the new administration reshapes Syria’s security institutions following the end of a war that lasted more than a decade.

The interior ministry already includes female personnel through a tourism police force. Earlier this year, Syria’s central authorities proposed that YPJ fighters join that unit, according to sources briefed on the delibera-



Women’s Protection Units (YPJ) fighters gather in Hasakah. (Reuters)

tions. The proposal was rejected by the YPJ, the sources said.

A YPJ spokesperson denied such an offer was ever made.

Ahmed told Reuters the YPJ had instead proposed joining the interior ministry’s special operations forces, which more closely mirror her units’ capabilities and could help increase female representation in otherwise male-dominated forces.

“When we discussed with the interior ministry, we told them that our forces comprise more

than 1,500 fighters and we asked whether all these forces would be merged or not,” she said. Ahmed expects a response “in the coming days.”

Syria’s defence and interior ministries did not immediately respond to Reuters questions about the discussions.

In a statement to Kurdish outlet Rudaw on Friday, interior ministry spokesperson Nouredine al-Baba said YPJ fighters would be welcomed into the ministry’s ranks, but gave no details on their

potential role. Baba said units would be deployed all over Syria, and not be limited to one geographic zone.

The talks are taking place against a backdrop of lingering Kurdish mistrust toward Syria’s new rulers.

Many Kurds remain wary of Syria’s new authorities, citing mass violence perpetrated by government-linked forces against minorities in 2025 and al-Sharaa’s former role as the head of Al Qaeda’s Syria branch before he broke ties with the group.

The question of the YPJ’s future has broader significance for many Kurdish women, who view the force as a symbol of hard-won political and social gains achieved during the conflict.

“They always see women as weak. We as women don’t draw our strength from men, nor do we draw our strength from the current state,” said 20-year-old YPJ fighter Goksu Ciyager.

“Of course, we want to have a special case and we insist on this.” Penaber Baran, a 31-year-old YPJ unit commander, said Syria’s constitution should explicitly guarantee a role for the force.

“Until today, we have never waited for anyone to defend us,” she said. “We as women defended ourselves.”

China restores access to Tibet disaster zone

Reuters
Beijing

China has fully reopened the only road leading to the Gyirong border crossing into Nepal a week after sections were washed away by catastrophic flooding, allowing heavy machinery to reach the main disaster zone for the first time.

The extensive damage to the G216 national highway had meant that China had been airdropping equipment and supplies to frontline rescuers, some of whom trekked through the mountains to get to the site.

Large numbers of heavy machines have now reached the area where a Chinese border inspection complex once stood, along with equipment to reinforce search operations, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said.

Showing footage of rescue teams and excavators, CCTV said rescue crews equipped with life-detection devices and search dogs had been deployed.

Progress has been hampered by persistent rain and challenging terrain, as crews have to work in a narrow mountain gorge, hemmed in between unstable cliffs and a fast-flowing river.

Authorities, which have been monitoring upstream lakes that could cause more flooding if they burst, said those risks have diminished but landslides were still a concern.

In Nepal, authorities said hopes of finding more survivors were fading. At least 1,114 people have been killed there and nearly 4,000 remain unaccounted for.

Across the border in Tibet, China's official death toll climbed to 21 on Wednesday, and 541 remained missing. Authorities previously said 104 Nepali citizens, 49 Indians, 33 Latvians and six Canadians were among the people missing.

Karlis Eihlenbaums, Latvia's ambassador to China, said the country's embassy was in permanent contact with the Chinese foreign ministry and authorities in Tibet for updates.

Embassy personnel have not sought to visit the Tibetan disaster site as information received from Nepal suggested the missing Latvians could have been swept away to the Nepali side, he said.

Canada said in a statement on Tuesday that its officials were in regular contact with representatives of China's foreign ministry, who have confirmed that response efforts continue to locate missing Canadians in Gyirong County.

Jury in Clancy's murder trial deliberates for fifth day after reporting deadlock

Jurors in Lindsay Clancy's US murder trial resumed deliberations for a fifth day yesterday after informing the judge a day earlier they were deadlocked over whether to convict her for killing her three young children at her Massachusetts home.

No one disputes that Clancy, 36, strangled her three children to death in 2023 with exercise bands in the basement of her home in the Boston suburb of Duxbury. She then cut herself with a knife and jumped from a second-story window in an attempt to end her own life that paralyzed her. Her attorney, Kevin Reddington, sought to convince jurors throughout the trial that she should be found not guilty by reason of insanity. He argued she was a loving mother who had been in the midst of a psychotic episode when she killed her kids in 2023. (Reuters)

Canadians disregard US as rift grows

Reuters
Ottawa

For more than 20 years, Diane Hosker has lived on Trump Avenue in Ottawa's leafy west end, a neighbourhood with New York-themed street names including Central Park, Bloomingdale Street and Gotham Private.

Trump's latest actions – imposing new tariffs on goods from Canada and signing an executive order renaming Lake Ontario as “Lake America” – have triggered a renewed surge of anger and patriotism in a country better known for being easygoing.

Some Canadians have boycotted US products and stopped travelling south of the border since Trump returned to office in early 2025, but his renewed attacks on Canada are prompting what may be a more permanent rupture between two longtime allies.

From street names to supply chains to vacation bookings, Canadians are severing everyday ties in ways that could outlast the



A street sign for Trump Avenue, which some residents want renamed amid the ongoing Canada-US tariff dispute, in Ottawa, Ontario. (Reuters)

tation process and help for residents to adjust their documents when the change happens.

Some lighthearted suggestions, from members of the public, include TACO, a reference to “Trump Always Chickens Out,” or naming the street after former US President Barack Obama.

“Street names in Canada's capital are named after people of

honour and integrity and (who) work in partnership, in this case, with Canada,” Brockington said. “(Trump) does not meet any of those standards.”

The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

An Abacus Data poll released last week found that more than 70% of Canadians support Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to suspend trade talks with the US, despite the likelihood of job losses and economic uncertainty. A Reuters/Ipsos poll showed only 20% of Americans support the tariffs on Canadian goods and even fewer agree with renaming the lake.

Some dual citizens are deepening their ties to Canada.

Sara Seager, a Canadian-American astrophysicist, is moving to Toronto after being recruited by the University of Toronto from MIT under the Carney government's push to attract top academics from abroad.

Seager said when she renewed her Canadian passport, she explained to the passport officials why she was moving home.

Nepal flood rescue hopes dim, only tunnel offers a glimmer

Reuters
Kathmandu/Beijing

Rescue teams raced yesterday to reach dozens of workers believed to be trapped inside hydropower tunnels in Nepal's mountains, offering one of the last hopes of finding survivors a week after a Himalayan flood killed more than 1,100 people.

The flood, triggered by the collapse of a glacier near Nepal's border with China, devastated towns and valleys across the mountainous region. At least 1,114 people have been confirmed dead and nearly 4,000 remain missing.

Rescue efforts have increasingly centred on hydroelectric project tunnels where authorities believe workers may have survived after being cut off by floodwaters and debris.

Some tunnels contain chambers with air supplies, and rescuers were trying to reach more than 600 missing workers.

“We are very confident that there is life in there because ... there is food and water in the building, that was likely built for communication purposes and as a resting place,” Amshu Kiran Shahi, a board member of the Nepal Electricity Authority, told Reuters.

The chance of finding survivors elsewhere was fading, authorities said, but there was no let up in rescue operations as teams scoured the mountainside along the border with China where floods tore through towns and valleys.

“The hope of finding survivors is decreasing,” said Phanindra Paudel, a senior official at Nepal's National Emergency Operation Center. “We pray and are hopeful. Hope is hope!”



Nepal army soldiers work outside a tunnel near the Hydropower Project sites, in Rasuwa district, Nepal. (Reuters)

‘As soon as information was received that the flood was approaching, our security personnel were deployed to warn local residents. Some of those personnel themselves went missing,’ – Prime Minister Balendra Shah

Prime Minister Balendra Shah told parliament the search would continue.

“Our priority remains clear: To continue our search and rescue operations, find those who are still missing and continue supporting everyone affected,” he said.

Major rescue operations were under way or planned at four hydropower projects. Two sites, where about 90 people are missing, offered the strongest prospect of finding survivors because of the presence of air inside the tunnels, Shah said.

At Trishuli-3A, officials believe there was a dry chamber inside and expected oxygen to be flow-

ing through the tunnel, with pipes also being used to push oxygen inside, Shah said.

Specialised rescue teams from India, China and the United States were involved in the tunnel rescue attempts.

Across the border in Tibet, China raised its death toll to 21, with 541 others still listed as missing. The update came after Beijing fully reopened the road leading to the Gyirong border crossing into Nepal yesterday, allowing heavy machinery to reach the core disaster zone for the first time.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV showed excavators, rescue teams, search dogs and life-detection equipment being deployed in a narrow mountain gorge where rain, unstable cliffs and a fast-flowing river have hampered operations.

China's official toll of those missing includes 104 Indians, 49 Nepali citizens as well as 33 Latvians who are believed to be part of two tourist groups. Most Indians were part of groups visiting Lake Mansarovar and Mount Kailash in Tibet, holy pilgrimage sites for Hindus.

Trump meets CEOs of travel industry on tourism push

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump will meet with major travel company executives yesterday including representatives from American Airlines, Marriott, MGM Resorts and Carnival amid a decline in international visitors.

US tourism got a big boost from the FIFA World Cup this summer. Travel spending rose 6.2% year over year in June to \$122.1bn, its strongest monthly reading in a year and FIFA reported its best-ever attendance at this summer's tournament.

In 2025, international arrivals to the US fell 5.5%, with travel officials citing a number of factors including lengthy visa interview wait times, higher airline ticket prices, stricter immigration policies, tariffs, and US travel restrictions for some countries. Overseas visitors are down another 4.7% through July 2026, the Commerce Department said.

Visitors from Canada fell 20%

last year amid tensions and has impacted US tourism destinations like Las Vegas and in border states. The number of Las Vegas tourists fell by 7.5% in 2025.

Trump is meeting with members of the US Travel Association and Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy is also set to attend. Other companies taking part include Caesars Entertainment, Hard Rock International, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Venetian and Raffles & Fairmont.

White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers said Trump is meeting travel companies “to celebrate the accomplishments that produced a historic summer travel season and delivered a strong boost to our local economies and small businesses.”

The White House noted that it has made airport screening easier. It also aims to create more biometric fast lanes for returning US citizens and quicker international connections to domestic flights. The industry faced a number of hurdles over the last year as partial government shutdowns snarled airport security lines and flights.

US govt backs OpenAI in NYT case

Reuters
New York

The Trump administration has filed a brief supporting OpenAI in its dispute with the *New York Times* and other newspapers over the company's use of their work to train the large language models behind ChatGPT, saying AI training generally makes fair use of copyrighted material.

The brief, filed in Manhattan federal court on Tuesday, appears to be the first time the US government has weighed in on a wave of cases brought by copyright owners including authors, publishers, music labels and news outlets over AI training. A brief has advisory rather than legal weight but could bolster tech companies as they fight the claims.

“The US has a strong interest in this court rejecting any argument that training LLMs on copyrighted texts violates copyright law” based on concerns including scientific advancement and national security, the brief said.

Spokespeople for the Times and OpenAI did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the filing yesterday.

“AI dominance is critical to promote national security, prosperity, and economic mobility for all Americans,” US Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward said in a statement posted to X. “This Administration will never let our Nation be at a disadvantage relative to our foreign adversaries based on a plainly incorrect understanding of copyright law.”

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick separately told G20 officials at a meeting in North Carolina yesterday that their countries should embrace fair use and allow AI companies to train their models on creators' work while finding a way to “protect artists.”

The *Times*' lawsuit, first filed in 2023, accuses OpenAI and its largest financial backer, Microsoft, of using millions of newspaper articles without permission to train OpenAI's popular chatbot. The case is one of dozens brought by copyright holders against tech companies such as OpenAI, Anthropic and Meta Platforms for what they say is misuse of their material to train AI systems.

All of the pending cases will likely revolve around whether AI systems make fair use of copyrighted material by using it to create new, transformative content.

After 286 days at sea, US sailors in Thailand for rest, recreation

Reuters
Laem Chabang

US Navy aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln steamed into Thailand's Laem Chabang yesterday after 286 days at sea, including a lengthy deployment in the Middle East, amid reports of mental health concerns and deteriorating conditions on board.

The Lincoln, with roughly 5,000 sailors and Marines, was involved in the US naval blockade and combat operations in the war with Iran. It set a modern-day record for consecutive days at sea, according to Democratic lawmakers. Accompanied by other US naval vessels, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier's stop in Thailand – the United States' only treaty partner in mainland Southeast Asia – will be for rest and recuperation and will last five days, according to Thai officials.

The Lincoln was deployed in November last year. Typically naval deployments are for between six and nine months, but those can be extended during times of conflict.



Aircraft are seen on the flight deck of US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) as it heads towards Laem Chabang Port, near the city of Pattaya yesterday. (AFP)

“Our arrival in Laem Chabang provides a well-deserved opportunity for our Sailors and Marines to rest and recharge,” the commander of Carrier Strike Group 3, Rear Admiral Robert E. Loughran, said in a statement.

“What this strike group has accomplished is truly historic. I could not be prouder of the exceptional professionalism and

expertise demonstrated by every member of this team during our operations.”

Thailand became a US treaty ally in 1954, before being designated a major non-Nato ally in 2003. Both countries' militaries maintain strong relations and hold annual joint exercises.

Bangkok has made clear the visit is not connected to the con-

flict in the Middle East and the port call is for rest and recuperation and logistics, in line with treaty commitments.

The Lincoln, its broad flight deck packed with helicopters and warplanes, including the latest F-35 fighter jets, arrived in Laem Chabang early yesterday.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. docked in Sri Racha, about 10km away. Both vessels were streaked with rust and showed mottled paint along the waterlines.

The crew remained on board as of early afternoon. The arrival of thousands of military personnel has raised hopes of an economic boost for the nearby resort city of Pattaya, which also has a long-standing reputation as a sex tourism destination.

A fleet of around 40 buses will ferry the military personnel between Pattaya and the port at Laem Chabang where the vessels will dock, Pattaya Mayor Poramase Ngampiches said. Pattaya sits on the Gulf of Thailand, about 150 km southeast of Bangkok.

“There are certain places and activities that the personnel are prohibited from participating in,

such as all kinds of water sports, jet skiing, bungee jumping, wrestling, and boxing,” he told Reuters.

Police will deploy additional patrols around Pattaya's main beachfront and nightlife district, following raids over the weekend that led to 40 to 50 people being detained for suspected prostitution, officials said.

Although illegal in Thailand, the sex industry operates openly in tourism hubs, including in Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya, despite occasional crackdowns.

On the eve of the Lincoln's arrival, Pattaya street vendors near the city's infamous “Walking Street” nightlife zone were excited by the prospect of a boost in sales.

“It's been so quiet these days,” said clothes seller Kadsalin Ketpa, 43, who stocked up on basketball vests and elephant-patterned trousers ahead of the port visit.

“I hope with their arrival they would drive my sales up. I've prepared some products for them, I don't know if they will like them.”

Food seller Saroch, 45, said port visits by the US military were good for business and always something to look forward to.

Fighting Indonesia’s wildfires

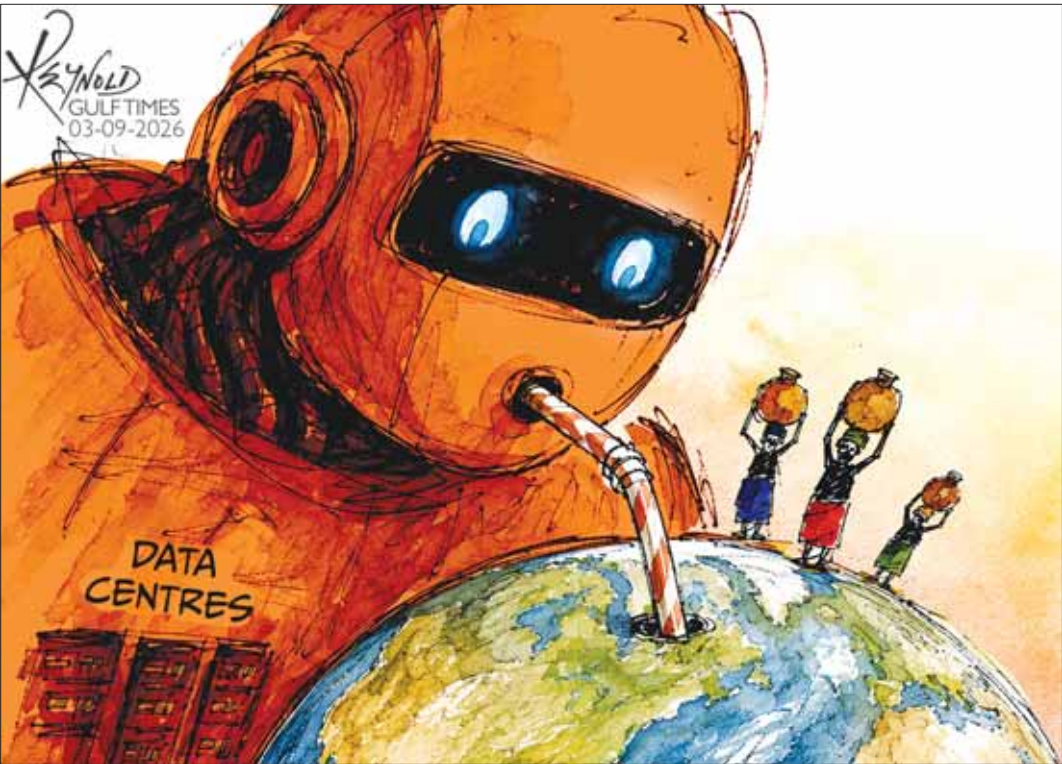
As Indonesia's wildfire season intensifies, authorities are on high alert as they work to contain the damage and avoid the devastation that hit the archipelago in 2015, the last time it faced such severe “super-El Nino” weather conditions. Indonesia has deployed cloud-seeding and firefighting aircraft in an effort to prevent fire and smoke from spreading in several key “hotspots”, particularly in five provinces on Borneo island, home to vast stretches of fire-prone peatland. While El Nino is not a direct cause of fires, it serves as a catalyst, Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency chief told Reuters, with the additional heat and dryness enabling them to spread more quickly. The El Nino index has already exceeded 2015 levels, Indonesian authorities said, while Columbia University climate scientist James Hansen has described this year's El Nino data as “off the charts”.

Mean global sea surface temperatures, normally at their highest in March and April, rose to a record-breaking 21.1C on August 22, according to Copernicus, the European Union's climate monitoring service. Drought has caused a surge in wildfires across the Northern Hemisphere, driving up air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions throughout North America, Eurasia and even the Arctic.

According to Copernicus’ Fire Emissions Watch, carbon emissions from Indonesian fires in the last seven days reached 17.1mn metric tonnes, 429% higher than the seasonal mean and second only to Russia. Fire emission intensity in Indonesia stood at 1,302 kg/sq km, compared to 185 kg/sq km in Russia, the data showed. Wildfires destroyed nearly 95,000 hectares of Indonesian land in July, nearly doubling the damage done in the previous six months, with average temperatures for the month at their highest in 35 years.

As yet, wildfire damage has not matched the devastation wreaked 11 years ago. In 2015, Indonesian wildfires generated more daily carbon dioxide emissions than the whole of the EU, and later studies estimated that wildfire pollution caused more than 100,000 excess deaths throughout Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

Despite crackdowns, burning forests to clear land for agriculture and other economic activities has been a common practice in Indonesia. Deforestation has also put Indonesia at greater risk by lowering water tables and reducing soil moisture. Fires are considered especially difficult to manage in Borneo, where vast stretches of peatland can sustain blazes underground for much longer and at lower temperatures. — Reuters



Rethinking alliances

By Rory Miller



Alliances are forms of cooperation between states intended to reduce the vulnerabilities and increase the security and prosperity of members. Alliances vary in size and format. They can be large or small in terms of the number of members. They can be formal and require members to follow rules and obligations or they can be informal with low barriers to entry and few burdens on members once they have joined.

In recent years, concurrent developments on the global stage have forced states across the world to think innovatively on how alliances can help them to navigate between national security, economics, technology, resources and finance. Much of this thinking is on the design and function of alliances. Decisions on these matters are being made in real time, as is evident to those following the daily updates on the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

Technological innovations, shifting patterns of trade and finance, and changes in energy markets, have led to the establishment in recent years of several novel tech and energy-focused alliances. The East Mediterranean Gas Forum, and Central Asia's Mineral Security Partnership are two such examples. If developed properly going forward, alliances like this can become important instruments of consensual power that promote regional economic order over selfish national interests to the benefit of all involved.

Likewise, growing threats to human security, including the devastating impacts of climate change, is becoming an important driver of cooperation between states. Frameworks like the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCHA), founded by several EU member states, and the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA), founded by Costa Rica and Denmark, are just two examples. These, and other likes them, have the potential to become pro-active contributors to societal and developmental goals on the national and regional levels.

The above examples underscore the extent that participation in alliances is not simply an exercise in hard power. This is easy to forget in the current strategic environment. However, the non-military function of alliances is especially important for smaller regional actors. They rely heavily on the cooperation and collaboration gained from participation in alliances to build national resilience. Alliances can also play an important role in protecting the political and economic sovereignty and national identity of smaller states.

The shift to a multipolar world also makes a reconsideration of the design and function of new alliances more vital than ever. We should not exaggerate America's decline. Washington can still demonstrate impressive global reach and its military footprint in the the Middle East, and other regions, remains deep. At the same time, one cannot ignore the generational American failure to achieve its military and political objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan and now in Iran.

Taken together, along with many other factors, they have eroded, if not undermined, America's unipolar status. There is uncertainty in policy-

making circles across the world over whether Washington is reliable and whether it retains the legitimacy and the requisite political will to provide leadership and to support partners across the international system. This has led to increasing dissatisfaction among regional decision-makers with what they consider to be ineffective traditional alliance structures built around a major external actor and long-term political alignments. In response, they are exploring alternative alliance arrangements to address future security challenges.

As noted above, this is not solely a consequence of the regional and global instability caused by the US failure to achieve its goals in its ongoing conflict with Iran. For more than a decade, regional actors, in Africa as well as the Middle East, have attempted to find viable alternatives to reliance on Western security alliances.

Between 2022 and 2025, for example, six West African states broke off their long-time security partnerships with France. Things have not moved so quickly in the Middle East. But in November 2015, a senior Emirati official argued that the Saudi-UAE led Yemen War coalition could become a viable “alternative model” to western intervention across the Middle East. Two years later, speaking at a meeting of defence ministers of member states of another Saudi-led coalition – the Islamic Military Counter Terror Coalition – Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman described this alliance as a “clear signal” that the Arab and Muslim worlds wanted to “work together” under local leadership.

However, the current Iran crisis has illuminated more clearly than ever the willingness of regional middle powers like Saudi Arabia, as well as Pakistan and Turkiye – the founding members of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement – to use new alliances to fill the growing security vacuum.

Such efforts are driven, in part, by a desire to expand regional influence and autonomous security and enforcement capabilities. But they are also part of a new push to build alliances that promote collective moves toward conflict resolution at the regional level.

It has long been acknowledged by scholars and practitioners that, under the right conditions, alliances can incubate a conception of security that includes consensus building and conflict resolution. In the current climate, new locally-led alliances can attempt over time to champion the confidence building measures and informal mechanisms, in particular assurance mechanisms, needed to initiate and then facilitate and sustain the kind of dialogue required for regional reconciliation.

Changing patterns of power in the international system, alongside rapidly shifting global conditions, are forcing states everywhere to rethink conventional understandings of the role of alliances. They are also forcing states across the world to contemplate the possibility that for the first time in many decades – and for some since the 1940s - they will have to navigate emerging security, economic and resource challenges without American backing.

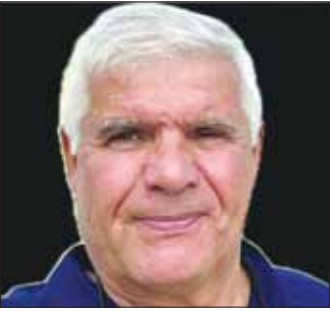
This is a daunting challenge but one that may, in time, lead to the gradual integration of competing actors, especially regionally isolated ones like Iran, into inclusive multilateral security frameworks that not only bring security and stability but redefine our understanding of the role and function of alliances.

● *The writer is professor of International Politics and director of the Small States and Energy Studies Programs at Georgetown University in Qatar @RoryDavidMiller*



Representatives pose before the first committee meeting under the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, in Istanbul, Turkiye, in August. (Reuters)

Read the instruments: Earth is about to boil



By Jamil K Mroue

A pilot flying into a storm does not argue with the altimeter. He may fear it, he may wish it read otherwise, but he flies by what it says, because the alternative is the ground. This year, humanity's instruments are all reading the same way, and we are arguing with them. While the region's attention has been consumed by the Iran – Israel – US war and its unfinished aftermath, another front has been advancing without communiqués.

In April the tropical Pacific tipped into El Nino; by August, the consensus of 14 international modelling centres – 667 model runs analysed by Carbon Brief – projected a peak near 3.6°C above average, with over 90% of runs exceeding the strongest El Nino ever observed. The previous record, set in 2015–16, was 2.75°C. Nothing in a century and a half of measurement approaches what the models now call the base case for this winter.

The consequences read like a war ledger. Europe has watched some 530,000 hectares (half of Lebanon's area), burn since June – France's largest fire since the Second World War Spain's largest in its history – with more than 300,000 people evacuated and damage estimates reaching \$22bn. And the deadliest reading is the quietest: Spain's official mortality monitor attributes 5,232 deaths to heat so far in 2026, its worst year on record, while across barely half of Europe at least 35,000 more people died in this summer's heatwaves – some 14,000 in Germany, over 7,000 in France.

These are wealthy states with cool Atlantic nights, universal health care and heat-emergency plans in force since 2003. They still lost tens of thousands. That number should be read very carefully in a Gulf where summer nights no longer relent and millions labour outdoors.

Because the Middle East is not a spectator to this story; it is its leading edge, warming at roughly twice the global average. Trace the arc of the region in 2026 and the instruments repeat the same reading in every language.

Begin in Anatolia. Turkiye's two hottest years on record are 2025 and 2024; its all-time record – 50.5°C at Silopi – is barely a year old; and its own climatologists now describe a structural slide into chronic aridity, warning that

2026 could bring the most severe drought the republic has known. This matters far beyond its borders, for Anatolia is the water tower of the Fertile Crescent, and what dries or is dammed there arrives as crisis downstream.

It has arrived. Syria, reassembling itself after 14 years of war, has been struck by its worst drought since the 1980s: rainfall more than 50% below average, a wheat harvest down 40% by Reuters' account – farmers in Hasakah called it a “zero season.”

Then, cruelly, flood followed famine: exceptional May rains and emergency releases from the Tabqa Dam sent the Euphrates surging through Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, drowning farmland just as the meagre harvest began. Iraq has declared its reserves the lowest in the modern state's history – roughly 8% of storage capacity in the driest year since 1933 – suspending planting and trading oil for Turkish water infrastructure: sovereignty's most fungible asset exchanged for its most existential one.

Iran is in its fifth consecutive year of drought: 19 major dams effectively empty, Tehran's reservoirs at single digits, a president speaking – not rhetorically – of rationing, of evacuation, even of relocating the capital of a nation of 90mn. The war then struck desalination plants and water lines, compounding a crisis that had already sent protesters into the streets. Israel, for all its desalination prowess, has had its Water Authority declare the worst drought in a century – so that since October the state has been pumping desalinated Mediterranean water uphill into the Sea of Galilee, a biblical lake on life support, while July's heat dome pushed forecasts on its shores to 47°C. And at the region's other hinge, the Mediterranean is claiming Alexandria's shore at 3.5m a year, with a quarter of the Nile Delta – Egypt's agricultural heart – projected to be under water by century's end.

The Gulf sits at the centre of this arc. The regional heatwave began in mid-May and has not truly broken: Jahra, in Kuwait, endured eight consecutive days above 50°C with nights that refused to fall below 35°C; August's heat dome pushed past 50°C outside Abu Dhabi. Along our coasts, heat and marine humidity now combine into wet-bulb conditions that persist after dark – stealing the

night, the one recovery window on which the body's survival arithmetic, and every midday work ban, silently depends.

Set the whole ledger out. Human loss: 546,000 heat deaths a year worldwide (Lancet). Economic loss: \$224bn in 2025 alone (Munich Re), a year the reinsurer called fortunate, against an adaptation-finance flow to developing countries of just \$26bn, when the UN puts the need at \$310–365bn annually: a gap of 12 to 14 times.

And here is the fact that should embarrass us most. This is the age in which humanity trusts machines to read what we cannot – scans in medicine, risk in markets, targets in defence, money in finance. The largest technology firms will spend some \$600–700bn this single year, roughly 25 times the world's entire annual adaptation finance, building the infrastructure of machine reading.

We have constructed, at staggering cost, a civilisation-scale instrument panel, and it has read the data: the model runs, the reservoir gauges, the mortality monitors, the reinsurers' ledgers. The readings agree. A world that stakes its health, wealth and security on computed evidence, then ignores that evidence when it concerns the habitability of its own ground, is not sceptical. It is simply not flying by its instruments.

Which returns us to the wars. Iran, Israel and the United States have spent 2026 contesting, at enormous cost, questions of messianic destiny and transactional advantage – the theatre of dominance to which Washington under Mr Trump seems addicted – while beneath every capital from Ankara to Cairo to the Gulf, the physical preconditions of their ambitions degrade in union.

There is no deterrence doctrine for a 3.6-degree Pacific, no strike package against an empty reservoir. The same drought grips the Golan and the Bekaa; the same heat kills in Basra and Beersheba. The resources consumed by the wrong battles are precisely those the coming reckoning will demand. Sobriety is not complacency. The pilot in the storm is calm because he is reading, not because the storm is mild. The instruments are in front of us. It is time to fly by them.

● *Jamil K Mroue is Lebanese writer and previous editor of Al Hayat newspaper in London and The Daily Star in Beirut.*



French firefighters work to extinguish burning haystacks in a field at a farm near Loretz-d'Argenton, in the Deux-Sevres department, during a heatwave affecting a majority of the country in June. (Reuters)

Meloni-led hard-right govt becomes Italy’s longest-lasting

AFP
Rome

Giorgia Meloni's hard-right government yesterday becomes the longest-lasting in Italy's postwar history — a notable record that belies considerable challenges ahead of elections next year.

In a country once a byword for political instability, Italy's first woman leader will have been in charge of the same administration for 1,413 days, one more than the late Silvio Berlusconi managed during one of his four stints in office.

"It is certainly a point of pride," Marco Osnato, a prominent lawmaker with Meloni's far-right Brothers of Italy (FdiI) party, told AFP of the milestone.

The record is likely to boost the prime minister's image as Italy,

which has had almost 70 governments over the past 80 years, gears up for a national vote in 2027, analysts say.

With FdiI constantly topping opinion polls, it might seem Meloni is on track for a repeat of her 2022 win.

But recent events have complicated the path to re-election, said Lorenzo Pregliasco, of the YouTrend polling institute.

This year Meloni was undermined by a justice reform referendum defeat that showed voters there "may be an alternative majority" to the coalition currently in power, Pregliasco said.

The drubbing also raised questions about the government's record.

With plans to strengthen the powers of the prime minister and increase regional autonomy, the reform was one of three flagship coalition pledges that the govern-



Italy's new Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni holds the cabinet minister bell during a handover ceremony at Palazzo Chigi in Rome. (AFP/Files)

ment has so far failed to deliver.

And critics say results have fallen well short of expectations in other areas too. The government, which enjoys an ample parliamen-

leader of the centre-left opposition Democratic Party's parliamentary group.

"It did not lead to any significant improvement in people's living standards or business competitiveness"

Italy's economy is forecast to grow a lacklustre 0.6 % in 2026, while real wages have been virtually stagnant since the early 1990s.

Unemployment has fallen from above 7 % to around 5 % over the past four years, but the number of economically inactive people — those who could work but are not looking for a job — remains high.

"This government has primarily sought to survive" by "doing as little as possible", said Tito Boeri, an economist at Milan's Bocconi University.

Supporters counter that the administration has cut taxes and increased tax revenues, brought fiscal discipline to the highly in-

debted nation, and won Italy a more prominent role on the global stage at a fraught geopolitical time.

"When it comes to foreign policy, Italy has never been so central, particularly in Europe," Osnato said, noting that from a hardening of migration rules to energy policy Rome was now considered a driving force in Brussels.

Politically, Meloni's coalition risks bleeding voters to Roberto Vannacci, a former general who regularly bashes migrants.

His newly-created Futuro Nazionale party polls at around 7 % and could emerge as a kingmaker next year.

But support for the ruling alliance, which includes the far-right League of Matteo Salvini and conservative Forza Italia, is buoyed by perennial infighting within the left-leaning opposition and increasing abstentionism, analysts say.

Mechanism needed for Black Sea safety before crisis escalates: Erdogan

Reuters
Istanbul

Turkiye's President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday a mechanism is needed to permanently ensure the safety of commercial maritime transport in the Black Sea before a grain crisis escalates.

Earlier this week, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Turkiye had prepared a plan for the safe passage of grain via the Black Sea, and that it was in contact with both Russia and Ukraine regarding it.

Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks on Tuesday in Bishkek on the sidelines of a Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit, and Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Putin had discussed the situation in the Black Sea with Erdogan.

In remarks to journalists on his return flight from the trip to Kyrgyzstan, Erdogan said a grain crisis had resurfaced particularly in Africa, and action needed to be taken before the problem escalated further, according to a transcript shared by his office yesterday.

"The safety of all civilian maritime transportation in the Black Sea is important to us. The fighting between parties should not escalate to a point where it undermines



President Tayyip Erdogan

the safety of civilians and commercial life," Erdogan said.

"We need to resolve this issue," he added.

In July 2022 Turkiye and the United Nations helped mediate the so-called Black Sea Grain Initiative to allow the safe export of nearly 33 million metric tons of Ukrainian grain via the Black Sea, despite the war.

However, Russia withdrew from the agreement in 2023, complaining that its own food and fertiliser exports faced serious obstacles.

In comments on recent efforts to reach a deal, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said yesterday that Moscow sees no grounds for the Black Sea grain agreement to resume.

EU tightens sanctions on Russia

The EU will look to tighten the enforcement of sanctions against Russia, while further ramping up pressure on the country and increasing support for Ukraine, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said yesterday.

"We are working on new proposals to tighten sanctions enforcement .. and we are moving ahead with more sanctions. Attempts to intimidate Europe will fail," Kallas said after an informal meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers in Ireland.

Kallas said there was "broad support" among ministers to move ahead with an EU visa entry ban for Russian ex-combatants and to impose tougher visa restrictions for Russian tourists.

Several ministers also raised again the idea to use frozen Russian assets to fund Ukraine, and discussions on that matter would continue, Kallas said.

The EU's top diplomat said member states had also pledged more support for Ukraine to help it withstand the ongoing attacks by Russia. "We were pleased to hear today announcements by member states to provide air defence that we have been so long asking for," Kallas said. (Reuters)

Russia torments Kyiv with 7th day of strikes

Reuters
Kyiv

Russian drones tore into central Kyiv yesterday morning, wounding 11 people and damaging residential and university buildings on the seventh day of nearly round-the-clock attacks that have upended daily life in Ukraine's capital.

Moscow's new air campaign against Kyiv and the surrounding region has killed dozens of civilians and disrupted logistics as the city struggles to shoot down the jet-powered drones that have swarmed the area in waves.

Yesterday's attack on a downtown university took place while students were in class, forcing some 160 to seek shelter, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

"Unfortunately, there has been far too little response from the world and its most influential leaders to this latest Russian escalation of strikes," Zelensky wrote on X.

The mounting attacks come with Ukraine already bracing for a new season of Russian strikes on energy infrastructure, amid a critical shortage of US-designed missile interceptors needed to down Moscow's ballistic missiles.

Earlier yesterday, Russia struck power facilities in the southern Odesa region with missiles and drones, authorities said, knocking out power to more than 350,000



Dark smoke rising above the Kyiv skyline after Russian attacks. (AFP)

homes. Russian President Vladimir Putin said late on Tuesday he had ordered his forces to prepare a new campaign of "massive" strikes.

Two people were also killed and eight wounded in strikes on the southeastern city of Dnipro, the regional governor said, where food warehouses and educational buildings were damaged. Loud explosions thundered through central Kyiv yesterday morning as air defences targeted incoming drones. The hiss of their jet engines could be heard streaking across the sky.

While launched in small numbers, they have sparked frequent air raid alerts that have snarled public transport in the city of several million and forced lawmakers underground.

Parts of Kyiv's Soviet-era metro

system have been suspended during alerts, leaving residents mired in heavy traffic.

Many of those interviewed by Reuters expressed fatigue mixed with resignation. "What scares me is that I'm fatalistic about them (the alerts) — that there's no sense of threat, or a desire to hide somewhere," said a resident Yulia, a marketing specialist, adding she felt only "total powerlessness".

Alerts interrupted parliament twice yesterday, prompting lawmakers to test a new digital voting system from underneath the legislature. Later yesterday, Zelensky said Ukraine's alerting system would be revised into two tiers — for missiles and drones — allowing for more "predictability and a better understanding of how to react".

Sri Lanka-US agents bust drug network

AFP
Colombo

Anti-narcotics agents from the US and Sri Lanka seized almost half a ton of crystal methamphetamine following a joint operation targeting a Pakistani drug network, police said yesterday.

Some 463 kilos (1,020 pounds) of the synthetic drug were seized from a shipping container that arrived in Colombo over the weekend and two Pakistani men were arrested, police deputy inspector-general Ashoka Dharmasena told reporters.

The US embassy in Colombo said the narcotics, valued at \$21mn and concealed in bath towels, were meant to be smuggled to international markets via Sri Lanka. The US Drug Enforcement Administration's office and Sri Lanka Police Narcotics Bureau conducted the joint operation, the embassy said, after tracking shipping containers from Pakistan between August 14-29.

"This operation underscores the strength of the US-Sri Lanka partnership in dismantling transnational criminal organisations that threaten communities in both our countries," it said.

Dharmasena said they had also

arrested a local man in connection with the latest methamphetamine seizure and confirmed the operation followed a "tip-off".

Sri Lanka's ongoing anti-narcotics drive since October has resulted in the seizure of nearly 14 tonnes of illegal drugs, he added.

Sri Lanka's Public Security Minister Ananda Wijepala told parliament that most of the illegal drugs originated in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and were being smuggled into the island by sea.

In October 2024, a Sri Lankan court sentenced 10 Iranian men to life imprisonment after they pleaded guilty to heroin smuggling.

Ukraine urges ICAO to back flights ban in Russian airspace

Ukraine has urged the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to ask its members to fully ban operations in Russian airspace, a day after President Volodymyr Zelensky warned it was "becoming completely unsafe".

On Tuesday, top Ukrainian officials said the country would step up retaliation against Russia's intensified strikes on Kyiv, which has been under continuous air raid alerts for seven days and has suffered hits on civilian infrastructure.

Ukraine would only target Russian military facilities and not threaten civilian aircraft, Zelensky added, but stressed that the growing number of Ukrainian drones in Russian skies should "be taken into account". In the letter to ICAO chairman Juan Carlos Salazar, a copy of which was exclusively shared with

Reuters, Ukraine's infrastructure minister Mykola Kalashnyk said Kyiv believed the risk of tragedies in the skies should be minimised.

Ukraine asked ICAO to encourage aviation authorities and airlines to safeguard civil aviation, "including by facilitating the full prohibition by ICAO member states of civil aircraft operations within the airspace" of Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin said Zelensky's comments amounted to "state terrorism". Moscow vowed to head off any disruption to civil aviation. In 2024, 38 people were killed when an Azerbaijan Airlines plane heading to Russia crash-landed in Kazakhstan after diverting from its course. Putin later said two Russian missiles detonated near the aircraft after Ukrainian drones entered the airspace. (Reuters)

'Belgium's position on frozen Russian assets unchanged'

Belgium's position against the use of Russia's frozen assets has remained unchanged, the country's foreign minister said yesterday after a group of European countries sought to reopen a discussion on using frozen funds to help Ukraine.

The Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden called last week for the European Union to consider using Russia's frozen assets for Ukraine, with some ministers reiterating the idea at an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Ireland.

"The debate was brought back to the table at the initiative of four European countries. However, it generated little enthusiasm or appetite among colleagues," Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot said in a statement after the talks.

"I made sure to reiterate our position, which has remained unchanged for a year. The reasons behind our opposition have not magically disappeared." (Reuters)

Ceuta residents call for calm as Spain rallies over enclave's crisis

Reuters
Ceuta

Residents in Spain's Ceuta appealed for calm yesterday as hundreds of rallies were planned nationwide in solidarity with the North African enclave, which is suffering an unprecedented migration crisis that many blame on the central government.

Nearly five weeks after at least 72,000 people crossed from Morocco in a deadly border surge, Ceuta's authorities estimate that over 10,000 migrants, including unaccompanied minors, remain stranded in makeshift camps or scattered across streets and beaches in the enclave.

Their presence has triggered near-daily protests by locals against the Spanish government's handling of the crisis, with demonstrators calling for the migrants to be sent back to their countries of origin or redistributed across Spain.

"The government has failed to act in a critical situation. It's spi-



A Spanish flag stands in the middle of improvised shelters in Trampolin Beach following recent mass crossings of migrants. (Reuters)

ralling out of control. We're tired, just like those who came are getting tired, and tensions are rising. There's a point where this will become a powder keg," said Lola, a middle-aged Ceuta resident who gave only her first name.

Francisco Garcia Segado, who heads residents' association FPAV

Ceuta, said organisers of the demonstration wanted it to be "clean, free, without disrespecting anyone", and to bar the far right from taking part over concern that activists coming from mainland Spain could stoke violence.

"What we want is tranquility... to go back to normal. Going back

to normal means everyone being sent back where they came from," he said.

Recent protests featured sporadic attacks against a makeshift migrant camp at El Trampolin beach and arrests of Moroccan citizens who lobbed stones and bottles at army patrols.

Yesterday's Spain-wide protests were called by the FEMP federation of municipalities, dominated by the main opposition conservative People's Party (PP).

Spain's leftist government distanced itself from the initiative, accusing the right of exploiting the crisis for political benefit.

"This is not about defending Ceuta and the Ceutans, it is about attacking the government," Territorial Policy Minister Angel Victor Torres told radio station RNE.

A manifesto by citizens' initiative 'Por Ceuta' (For Ceuta), which calls for respect for residents' and migrants' human rights, the orderly return of those without the right to remain, and more security reinforcements, has garnered nearly 65,000 signatures. The initiative

says it has no political affiliation.

Left-wing collectives and unions organised counter-gatherings in several cities, including Madrid, to condemn "racist and Islamophobic persecutions and attacks" against migrants in Ceuta since the rush.

Negotiations between local and central government on how to handle the crisis are deadlocked, with the PP, which governs most regions, some in coalition with the far-right Vox, calling for all those remaining, including minors, to be deported.

The government has increased capacity at temporary accommodation centres to more than 3,400 places from about 500, and deployed over 1,600 police.

But local groups and political leaders say this still falls far short of what is needed to keep citizens and migrants safe.

"The central government needs to provide funds and the local government needs to provide space... that's the battle we're in," said Juan Miguel Morales, director of Sur Acoge charity.

Sheikh Joaan felicitates QOC staff for service, professional development

HE President of the Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani has honoured 102 of the organisation's staffers for their career achievements and professional development. The ceremony was held yesterday in Doha and recognized the honorees' years of service, professional excellence and participation in development programs, with the committee highlighting its efforts to promote continued learning and career development. The event was attended by senior QOC officials including Mohammed bin Youssef al-Mana, the first vice-president; Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, the second vice-president and Jassim bin Rashid al-Buenain, the secretary general. Of the 102 employees honoured, 30 received recognition awards, while 72 were graduates of the committee's professional development programs in 2025. The service award included employees who had completed



25 years or more with the committee, as well as retirees who had concluded their careers. Excellence awards were presented across three categories covering supervisory positions, specialist roles and

other employees. Five incentive awards recognized professional commitment, initiative, teamwork, outstanding team leadership and effective participation in organizing sporting events. Seven

employees also received the Tomouh (ambition) award for obtaining academic qualifications during 2025. Director of the committee's Human Resources and Administrative Affairs Department Maryam al Kuwari



said the organisation was focused on attracting talented professionals from leading universities, particularly in specialized fields. She said 277 employees from different departments

had graduated from the five development programs since their launch. The committee also delivered nearly 100 training, awareness and educational courses and programs during 2025, she added. (QNA)

Doha Debates holds Toronto town hall on football, money and fandom

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Football fans embody club loyalty that no boardroom can manufacture. But as global capital reshapes the world's most-watched sport, who it belongs to is increasingly contested. This question is at the heart of Qatar Foundation's latest Doha Debates town hall, 'Football fandom: Community or commodity?', now available on Doha Debates and Al Jazeera Digital platforms. The episode was filmed at The Terminal Theatre in Toronto in partnership with the Qatar, Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture, a national initiative that builds lasting

relationships between countries by creating spaces where people can meet and learn from different perspectives. This Doha Debates collaboration brought that purpose to life through a conversation connecting young people across borders. Moderated by journalist Imran Garda, the Majlis-style debate brought together Shireen Ahmed, senior contributor at CBC Sports; David Goldblatt, a football historian and sociologist; and Kely Nascimento, president of the Nascimento Foundation, to explore the sport's evolution. As many as 20 students from Qatar, Canada, Mexico and beyond joined the discussion. Goldblatt held firm that football—and its fans—cannot be

bought or sold: "Football clubs should not be privately owned by anyone. They shouldn't be owned by states, or by rich men or rich women. They are collective forms of cultural capital," he said. Nascimento, a documentary filmmaker and the daughter of football legend Pele, challenged that position, questioning whether football was necessarily healthier before the influx of wealth. "I did some research into what it was like before the money. It didn't seem like it was that great," she said, going on to question whether Goldblatt's stance was more of a utopian idea than reality. Ahmed challenged her fellow debaters to more closely examine where the money is coming from

and how it is used. "This discussion that money is bad in all cases—it's nuanced, and it's complicated. So I would rather have accountability for that money and transparency," she said. The students added other relevant dimensions to the debate. "I wonder why the working class have difficulties attending, and it's not accessible for them to attend Premier League matches," said Nawaf al-Kuwari, a naval architecture and marine engineering graduate from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. It seems to me like it's more of a luxury than it is accessible." Regina Aldrete, an international relations student at Tecnológico de Monterrey University, com-



mented on the game's political nature. "Football is inherently political. Therefore, it is like a mirror of society," she said, pointing to tensions surrounding football matches between El Salvador and Honduras as an example of how the sport can reflect global conflict. For Amjad Atallah, managing director of Doha Debates, the con-

versation reflected Doha Debates' commitment to in-depth examination of timely topics. "Very few things hold a billion people's attention at once—fewer still spark this much passionate debate. In Toronto, our expert guests and students refused the easy answer, and that is what truth-seeking looks like."

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