

GULF

TIMES



FRIDAY Vol. XXXXVI No. 13853

September 4, 2026
Rabia I 22, 1448 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

published in
QATAR
since 1978

Under the framework the two institutions will work across capacity building, creative indus-

The agreement builds on a run of bilateral projects. Uzbekistan took part in the inaugural Design Doha Biennial, and in late 2024 the Qatar Fund for Development pledged \$4.175mn towards the restoration of the Bibi-Khanyim Mosque complex in Samarkand, one of the great surviving monuments of the Timurid era and, for centuries, among the largest mosques in the Islamic world.

Sheikha Alya meets UNGA president-elect



HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani met with the president-elect of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Dr Khalilur Rahman.

HE Sheikha Alya commended the ongoing co-operation with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, wishing the Rahman success in carrying out his duties, and affirming Qatar's full readiness to continue co-ordinating with the Office, in a way that contributes to the success of the work of the 81st session.

In turn, Rahman voiced his deep appreciation to Qatar for its continued co-operation with the United Nations, praising its active role in supporting the work of the organisation, and affirming his aspiration to continue close co-operation with Qatar. **-QNA**

Qatar takes part in meetings of 118th session of Economic and Social Council

Qatar participated in the meetings of the 118th Ordinary Session of the Economic and Social Council at the ministerial level, held at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, with the participation of the heads and members of Arab delegations.

Dr Saud bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, the deputy undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Finance, led Qatar's delegation.

The Council's agenda covered economic and social issues, foremost among them preparations for the economic and social dossier of the Council of the Arab League at summit level, progress in completing the requirements for the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, and developments relating to the Arab Customs Union.

The agenda included a review of the harmonisation of legislation governing intra-Arab trade.



It further addressed logistical integration and Arab food security, as well as strategic planning for social policies in Arab countries.

In addition, discussions focused on strengthening Arab co-operation in the digital transformation of public financial management and the exchange of expertise in implementing electronic financial systems.

The meeting also reviewed reports from ministerial councils and committees, as well as matters relating to organisations and institutions involved in joint Arab action, along with a number of periodic reports. **-QNA**

Public must present residence permit if asked by police: MoI

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

People must always carry their residency permit (RP) card and present it to a police officer upon request, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) reminded during a webinar organised by its Central Operations Department.

The ministry has also advised the public to join the MoI WhatsApp Awareness Group to receive safety and security updates by sending "yes" to WhatsApp number 66953184.

Speaking at the webinar, Lieutenant Abdul Rahman Abdulla al-Marri from Al Faza'a Police said that it is mandatory for the public to carry their QID card with them whenever they go out.

"They must carry their ID always and show it if demanded by a police officer," he said.

"Whether the policeman is in



Lieutenant al-Marri during the webinar.

uniform or in civilian dress, and if he introduces himself and shows his police ID card, people have to provide their ID cards," Lt al-Marri added. "If a person does not show the ID card, then the police officer can detain him for further questioning."

He also noted that people must avoid gathering at the sites of accidents or other incidents.

"There is a common behaviour among people, if they see any acci-

dents or incidents, they will crowd around the area," the officer said. "This may obstruct the work of Al Faza'a and other competent departments."

He added that people must respect others' privacy in such situations.

"Pictures of the accidents must not be taken and everyone must make sure to keep the privacy of the people involved in the incidents," Lt al-Marri said. "Similarly, pictures and videos of such incidents should never be posted online or on social media platforms."

Another aspect that the officer highlighted are the services provided by MoI Awareness WhatsApp Group.

"People must (obtain) the right information from the right sources, and the MoI provides such information very frequently," Lt al-Marri said, adding: "The ministry's Awareness WhatsApp Group provides frequent safety and se-

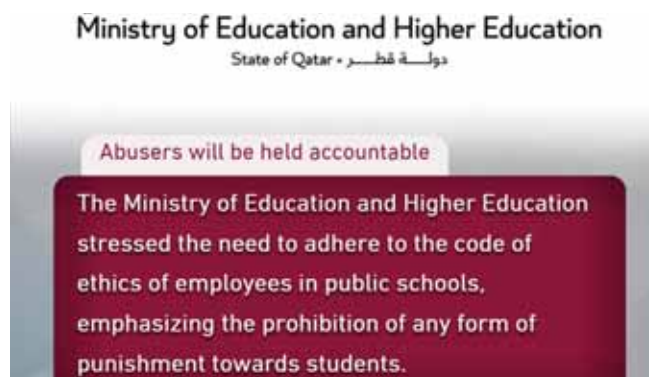
curity updates. People can join the group by sending 'Yes' to the number 66953184."

He also said people can contact Al Faza'a anytime by calling 999, or even contact any police official directly if they come across one.

"All Al Faza'a patrols are available 24/7 to preserve the security and safety of the public," the officer emphasised. "They provide all the assistance necessary for the community members, and people need not be afraid of approaching the officials at any time."

Lt al-Marri also advised callers to 999 to be ready to answer questions from the department and to 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," he said. "Thus, it is important that the caller provides the right answers so that help can reach at the earliest."



MoEHE: All forms of punishment on students prohibited in public schools

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) stressed the need to adhere to the code of ethics of employees in public schools, emphasising the prohibition of any form of punishment towards students.

The ministry said in a circular released by the School and Student Affairs Department directed at principals of public schools that, per the code of ethics, officials must adhere to values and professional and educational practices in handling students and maintaining their dignity and mental and physical health.

The MoEHE also underlines the prohibition of punishing students in all forms, including physical, verbal and mental punishments, as well as all other abuse practices that negatively impact students and their educational environment.

It stressed the importance of handling behavioural violations towards students with appropriate educational methods, based on policies, regulations and circulars approved in this regard.

The School and Student Affairs Department called on employees working in public schools to adhere to these instructions, noting that abusers will be held accountable based on the policies and regulations. **-QNA**

Rafeeq Launches Pearl Club, a Five-Tier Loyalty Program That Turns Every Order Into Rewards

Rafeeq today announced the launch of Pearl Club, a new loyalty program built into the Rafeeq app and designed to reward customers every time they order. Members join at the Bronze tier, collect Pearls on eligible orders and selected in-app activities, and progress through five membership tiers: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond each unlocking a wider set of benefits than the one below it.

Pearl Club brings rewards from across Rafeeq's ecosystem into a single, clear experience. Depending on their tier, members can access cashback across Rafeeq Mart and Rafeeq Electronics, travel tickets and hotel bookings, partner offers, exclusive gifts, discounts and

member-only deals all tracked in one place in the app.

"Pearl Club is our way of thanking customers, built around a simple promise: every order should create more value. By turning everyday activity into visible progress and meaningful rewards, we are making loyalty more personal, more transparent and more connected across Rafeeq's services," said Mr. Abdullah Thamer Alhemaiddi Rafeeq's Chief Executive Officer.

How Pearl Club Works

- Join in the app. Customers enroll through the Pearl Club section of the Rafeeq app and begin their membership at the Bronze tier.

- Collect Pearls. Eligible orders and selected in-app activities add Pearls to the member's balance.
- Progress through five tiers. Pearl balances move members up through Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond, creating a visible journey with richer benefits at each level.
- Unlock benefits. Members see exactly which rewards their tier gives them and redeem them directly in the app.
- Track everything in one place. The app shows tier progress alongside available, incoming and expiring Pearl balances.

Members collect Pearls and progress through Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond to unlock free delivery, cashback, Avios airline miles, partner offers and complimentary hotel stays across Rafeeq's services.

What Members Unlock at Each Tier

Pearl Club is cumulative. Every tier carries forward the full set of benefits from the tiers below it and adds new rewards on top, so members never lose access to a benefit as they progress.

Bronze — where every membership begins. All new members join at Bronze and immediately benefit from free delivery calculation on eligible orders, together with access to discount vouchers. The value of membership begins with the first order rather than after a qualifying period.

Silver — where earning begins to compound. Silver members keep everything Bronze offers and begin earning on what they already spend. Cashback calculation applies to eligible orders across Rafeeq's services, while airline miles are earned through the Avios calculation turning routine ordering into steady progress toward travel.



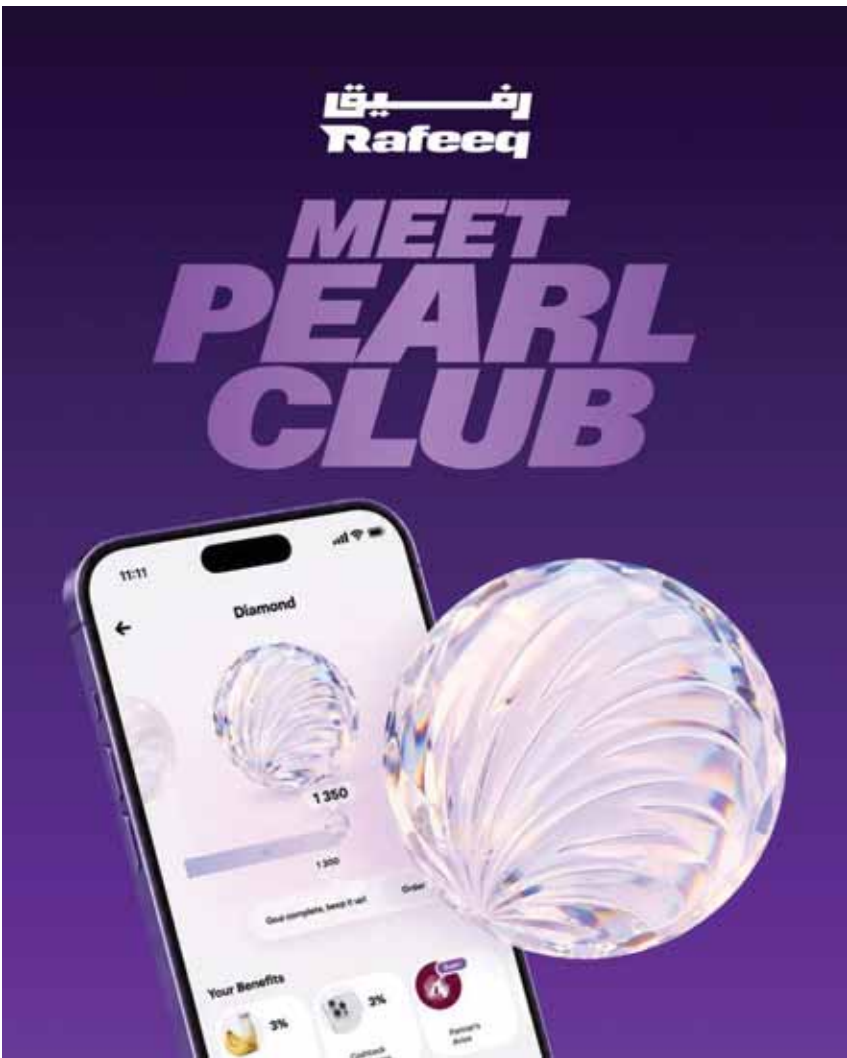
Gold — convenience built around everyday use. Gold adds a set of practical benefits shaped by how members actually use the app: wallet top-up, free orders, the Pick N Drop service and one-click cancellation, plus a birthday surprise each year — alongside every Bronze and Silver benefit.

Platinum — value that extends beyond Rafeeq. Platinum members carry all lower-tier benefits forward and gain partner discounts with selected brands, out-of-zone delivery for addresses outside standard coverage areas, and Wogod vouchers covering fuel and services.

Diamond — the program's most rewarding tier. Diamond is the highest level of Pearl Club and holds its flagship rewards: complimentary hotel room nights with Rafeeq's hospitality partners in addition to the complete set of benefits from every tier below.

Availability

Pearl Club is available now to customers in Qatar through the Rafeeq app, where members can join and explore the benefits available to them. Reward availability, eligibility, earning rates and redemption are subject to the Pearl Club terms and to the offers shown in the app, and may vary by service, partner and offer period.



Qatar participates in Committee Meeting of GCC Directors-General of Civil Defence



Qatar participated in the 35th meeting of the Committee of Directors General of Civil Defence of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries, which was held at the headquarters of the Council's General Secretariat in Riyadh. The Ministry of Interior (MoI)'s delegation was headed by director-general Major-General Hamad Othman al-Duhaimi. The meeting discussed a number of topics on the agenda and made appropriate recommendations regarding them. - **QNA**



Minister leads Qatar's delegation to GCC meeting on food security in Manama

Qatar participated in the 38th Meeting of the Committee of Agricultural Co-operation and Food Security in the GCC States, held yesterday in Manama. HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah led Qatar's delegation at the meeting. The meeting discussed a number of topics on the agenda, within the framework of strengthening joint Gulf co-operation and integration in the fields of agriculture and food security, particularly a study on establishing regional areas for strategic food storage and other needs, the Gulf strategy for food security, in addition to draft laws, regulations and systems related to it, along with other topics of common interest. The committee also adopted a number of decisions and recommendations on the topics on the agenda, which contribute to supporting the joint Gulf action and enhancing integration among the GCC countries in the fields of agriculture and food security. - **QNA**

GTA signs pacts with QU, QFBA

The General Tax Authority (GTA) has signed memorandums of co-operation with Qatar Finance and Business Academy (QFBA) and Qatar University (QU), with the aim of developing the Tax Specialist certificate programme. The memorandum of co-operation with Qatar Finance and Business Academy was signed by GTA president Khalifa bin Jasim al-Jaham al-Kuwari and the academy's chief executive Dr Khalifa al-Salahi al-Yafei. The memorandum of co-operation with the QU was signed by GTA assistant president for tax affairs Ghanim bin Khalifa al-Attiyah and QU executive vice-president for academic affairs Prof D. Ibrahim Mohammed al-Kaabi. The collaboration aims to expand opportunities for partnership and facilitate

the exchange of expertise and knowledge between the GTA and academic and professional institutions. It also seeks to leverage their capabilities to enhance professional qualifications in tax-related disciplines, contributing to the development of qualified national human capital capable of meeting labor market needs and supporting the country's economic development. These partnerships will enable the participating entities to benefit from the Tax Specialist Certificate programme and contribute to its delivery and development. This, in turn, will support the qualification and certification of specialists capable of providing tax services and advisory support in accordance with the regulations, rules, and instructions approved by the authority.



GTA officials signing the agreements with Qatar University and Qatar Finance and Business Academy (right).



It will also contribute to enhancing the quality of professional practices and promoting efficiency, transparency, and compliance in the services provided to taxpayers. The GTA affirmed that building sustainable partnerships with educational and professional institutions was a key pillar in advancing professional qualification and development. The authority also celebrated the graduation of its first cohort of employees who earned the Tax Specialist Certificate. The cohort comprises more than 20 employees from various departments across the authority, marking an important step in the GTA's ongoing efforts to develop specialised national talent and make sustainable investments in human capital. The certificate is the first specialised

professional certification for tax specialists to be accredited by the authority, and is recognised by international professional bodies. This enhances its professional value and contributes to establishing a clear standard for qualification and professional development in the tax field. The director of the GTA's Human Resources Department, Mohammed Jassim al-Najdi, said: "The graduation of the first cohort marks an important milestone in the development of specialised national competencies and reflects the authority's commitment to providing high-quality professional opportunities that enable its employees to further develop their knowledge and skills, while enhancing their readiness to keep pace with the evolving requirements of tax administration."

He added that the GTA believes "that investing in our employees has a direct impact on operational efficiency and the quality of services provided to taxpayers". "We look forward to continuing to develop the programme and expanding its reach in the next phase," al-Najdi said. The graduation of the first cohort marks the beginning of a sustainable professional development pathway through which the authority seeks to foster a culture of continuous learning and development and build a strong pool of qualified national professionals in the tax field. Building on this progress, the GTA is preparing to launch the second cohort of the programme, with plans to expand its reach in the future to include specialists and professionals seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills in taxation. - **QNA**

Cars handed over to sixth draw winners of 'Safari Shop & Drive'

Safari Hypermarket has handed over the cars to the winners of the sixth draw of its mega promotion "Shop & Drive - Win 30 Bestune Cars". The cars were presented to the winners of the draw held on August 2 at Safari Hypermarket in Ezdan Mall. The official handover ceremony was held on September 2 at Safari Mall. The winners of the draw were Monir Ahamad Manik (Coupon No: SDB600054373), Jaiprakash Yadav (Coupon No: SDB601241527), Bashar Hadad (Coupon No: SDB600391854), and Poovathoor Madhavan Anilkumar (Coupon No: SDB601126106), each of whom received a Bestune car as their prize. Anyone can participate in Safari's Shop &



Drive promotion by making a purchase of QR50 from any Safari outlet and receiving an e-rafale coupon.

The seventh and final draw of the promotion will be held on September 13 at Safari Mall, Abu Hamour.

Katara Hospitality's 'Summer Your Way' campaign extended

Katara Hospitality has announced the extension of its "Summer Your Way" campaign until September 30, offering guests additional opportunities to enjoy exclusive seasonal experiences, luxury staycation packages and family-focused benefits across its portfolio of hotels and resorts in Qatar. The campaign, which opened on June 1, brings together some of Katara Hospitality's most iconic hospitality destinations under one summer initiative, providing nationals, residents and Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) visitors with exceptional value and access to a diverse collection of luxury hotels, beach resorts, wellness retreats and family entertainment experiences. Participating properties include The Ritz-Carlton, Doha; Sharq Village & Spa, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel; Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel; Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha; Fairmont Doha; Raffles Doha; Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas; Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha; Simaisima, a Murwab Resort; Sealine Beach, a Murwab Resort; Jouri, a Murwab Hotel; Mövenpick Hotel Doha; Somerset West Bay Doha; and Dana Club.

With the "Summer Your Way" campaign, Katara Hospitality brings together a broad range of experiences across its local portfolio, with the aim of providing guests with the flexibility to design a summer holiday that matches their individual interests, whether focused on relaxation, adventure, wellness, gastronomy or family entertainment. Building on this momentum, Katara Hospitality's summer campaign aims to create memorable experiences for families, couples and leisure travellers seeking luxury escapes within Qatar while supporting the continued growth of domestic tourism. The "Summer Your Way" offer is exclusively available across participating Katara Hospitality hotels and resorts in Qatar, rewarding guests with greater value and benefits based on the length of their stay. Guests booking a one-night stay can enjoy 20% savings on the best available room rate, hotel-operated restaurants and spa treatments. The package includes personalised in-room amenities, early check-in and late check-out subject to availability, as well as the opportunity to upgrade to the next room category for QR200, excluding villas, presidential suites and royal suites. Guests staying for two nights will receive 30% savings on accommodation, dining, and spa experiences, along with the same exclusive benefits and upgrade opportunities. For guests staying three nights or longer, the offer increases to 40% savings on room rates, food and beverage experiences at participating hotel-operated outlets and spa treatments, creating one of the most attractive luxury staycation offers available in Qatar this summer. Recognising the growing demand for day experiences and leisure escapes without overnight stays, the campaign also introduces dedicated benefits for visitors wishing to enjoy hotel facilities during the summer season. Guests can receive 25% savings on participating restaurants and cafés, spa treatments, pool and beach access, as well as admission to selected attractions, including Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, one of the region's largest waterpark destinations.

Islamabad, Doha keen on labour partnership: Pak minister

Pakistan's Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain has affirmed that Islamabad and Doha are looking to build a sustainable strategic partnership in labour and human resource development. He noted that the two countries' ultimate goal is to develop a Pakistan-Qatar Human Resource Corridor that moves beyond traditional recruitment toward co-operation based on certified skills, responsible employment and demand-driven mobility, in support of Qatar's long-term development objectives. In an interview with the Qatar News Agency (QNA) marking the conclusion of his visit to Doha, Hussain said that his discussions with HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Samikh al-Marri and HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal al-Thani were held in a fraternal atmosphere characterised by cordiality and a mutual commitment to strengthening the partnership. The talks, he said, dealt with various aspects of labour co-operation, recruitment practices, skills matching, and the preparation of workers before departure. Hussain added that the meetings resulted in agreement on establishing an institutional co-operation mechanism and creating a joint working group that would meet periodically to coordinate skilled labour requirements, follow up on issues of mutual interest and provide a structured channel to facilitate recruitment procedures and align training programmes with the

evolving requirements of employers in Qatar. The minister praised the support and care provided by Qatar to the Pakistani community and the country's welcoming approach toward migrants. He noted that Pakistani nationals, many of whom have lived in Qatar for generations and regard it as their second home, have historically contributed effectively to the country's development across the construction, transport, energy, healthcare and technical sectors. Hussain highlighted the continuing transformation of the Pakistani workforce, which increasingly includes engineers, technicians and healthcare professionals. He expressed appreciation for the ongoing co-operation between the Qatari authorities and the Pakistani embassy to ensure worker welfare and the responsible management of labour mobility. The minister added that his country's current focus is shifting from simply increasing the number of workers to improving the quality of skilled and employable labour and aligning training with Qatar National Vision 2030 and its pillars related to human development and economic diversification. He also pointed to significant potential for expanding co-operation in strategic sectors, including liquefied natural gas (LNG) and energy, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, logistics, facilities management, information technology and digital services. In this regard, Hussain revealed that options were being explored to launch



Pakistan's Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain during the interview.

joint training programmes and establish mutual recognition of Pakistani qualifications and certifications in accordance with the standards of the relevant Qatari authorities, ensuring the availability of trained and medically fit workers who can increase productivity and strengthen employer confidence. Regarding regulatory reforms, he noted that Pakistan had introduced a series of measures to ensure legal, safe and orderly migration and make overseas recruitment more transparent. These measures, the Pakistani minister said, included implementing a strict licensing and monitoring system for recruitment agencies, with tougher

penalties for violations and irregular practices. He added that mandatory orientation and training courses had been introduced for workers before departure, covering local culture, laws and workplace expectations to ensure their swift integration. The minister said that passport and immigration systems had also been upgraded through the Integrated Border Management System, alongside the establishment of an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered risk analysis unit to strengthen the governance and regulation of labour mobility between the two countries. - **QNA**



GCC honours outstanding Qatari youth, ‘Fazat Al-Adaam Youth’ initiative

The General Secretariat of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) honoured a number of Qatari youth recognised for their distinguished achievements and initiatives, alongside the “Fazat Al-Adaam Youth” initiative.

The recognition included Fatima Saad al-Mohannadi and Saud al-Emadi under the outstanding creative youth category, in addition to honouring the “Fazat Al-Adaam Youth” initiative under the pioneering community initiatives in youth work category, in appreciation of their qualitative contributions and active efforts in serving youth and society.

Fatima Saad al-Mohannadi is considered one of the prominent Qatari youth models in community work and youth leadership.

She represented the State of Qatar as a youth delegate to the United Nations and participated in several



international forums on youth, peace, security, and human rights.

She has achieved numerous accomplishments in scientific excellence, debates, and volunteer work, including the Platinum Medal in the Qatar Award for Scientific Excellence, third place in the “Qatar Datathon Award 2025,” alongside her participation in the Qatar National Debate Team in English and achieving advanced global rankings.

Saud al-Emadi is a chemical

tributed to replacing over 10 tonnes of conventional plastic with eco-friendly alternatives, mentored more than 20 start-up founders, and participated as part of the Ministry of Sports and Youth delegation to the Moroccan-Gulf Forum on Youth Economic and Social Empowerment.

In terms of community initiatives, “Fazat Al-Adaam Youth” was launched in 2023 by a group of graduates from the Youth Leadership Preparation Program in Humanitarian and Development Work organised by the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Participants continued their journey of giving by launching and executing a range of humanitarian and community initiatives targeting various segments of society.

The initiative’s efforts included supporting workers, the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities, as well as implementing health and environmental awareness programs, and promoting values of solidarity, compassion, and social responsibility. Its most prominent initiatives included “Jabr Khawater”, “Azhar” for breast cancer awareness, “Tawaddoo Tarahamu”, the distribution of Iftar meals, and visits to unsupported patients.

The number of beneficiaries from the team’s initiatives and activities reached nearly 10,000 individuals across multiple community segments.

This honour reflects the continuous efforts made by the Ministry of Sports and Youth in supporting and empowering Qatari youth by developing specialised programs and initiatives that contribute to building their capabilities, refining their skills, and expanding their participation in various youth and community fields. (QNA)

UDST, MoPH sign accord to enhance co-operation

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) to establish a framework for co-operation in research, education and community services.

The MoU was signed on behalf of MoPH by Director of the Non-Communicable Disease Prevention Programmes Department Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, and on behalf of UDST by its President, Dr Salem Al-Naemi.

The MoU forms part of efforts to strengthen co-ordination and co-operation between MoPH and UDST in providing educational opportunities for students from the University’s various colleges.

It involves designing and developing postgraduate degree programmes and academic pathways, providing practical training and teaching opportunities for University students at MoPH and its affiliated institutions, supporting students’ graduation projects in health-related fields, and designing and implementing continuing education programmes in business administration, health sciences, engineering and technology, and computing and information technology, based on the needs of both parties.

“The MoU between MoPH and UDST represents a significant



step towards strengthening the national partnership between the health sector and academic institutions. It also provides an organised framework for co-operation in education, training, capacity-building, scientific research and community service in a way that supports MoPH’s priorities and contributes to the development of national capabilities,” Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani said before adding that “through

For his part, UDST President Dr Salem Al-Naemi said that the MoU was the product of years of collaboration with MoPH. He expressed his pride at the partnership that spanned many years, focusing particularly on education and training. He noted that, most recently, this collaboration has included the Executive Master of Science in Health Administration and Master of Science in Midwifery programmes.

He added that the partnership takes on particular significance in light of the National Health Strategy 2024-2030 and its objectives to enhance the quality and efficiency of the healthcare system. He added that the new MoU will see UDST support these priorities by preparing qualified professionals who meet the needs of the health sector, developing academic and professional programmes that respond to future requirements, and strengthening applied research and innovation.

The MoU covers several important areas, particularly co-operation in relation to the programmes offered by the university. These include health administration, environmental health, medical radiography, nursing and midwifery, occupational health, safety and the environment, diabetes care and patient education, emergency medical care, pharmaceutical technology and respiratory therapy, among others. (QNA)



General Prosecution, State Audit Bureau ink pact for joint co-operation

Represented by its Criminal Studies Institute, the General Prosecution signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the State Audit Bureau, for joint co-operation in the fields of training and development, enhancing institutional co-operation and the exchange of expertise.

On the Public Prosecution’s side, HE the Attorney-General and Director of Criminal Studies Institute, Turki Rashid al-Mohannadi, signed the MoU, while on the State Audit Bureau’s side, the MoU was signed by Director of the Center of Excellence for Training and Development, Mohammed Mohdhar al-Saadi. The signing took place in the presence of several leaders and officials from both sides, in addition to several public prosecutors, in a step that underscores the depth

of the institutional partnership.

The MoU aims to enhance joint cooperation between the two sides in training, scientific and research fields by organising joint courses, seminars and workshops, exchanging professional expertise, implementing joint training activities and programmes, preparing joint studies and research, and strengthening ties between researchers and research teams on both sides in areas of mutual interest.

This MoU also comes within the framework of the two parties’ keenness to support and promote joint work in training, scientific and research fields, as well as to benefit from the capabilities and expertise available to both sides in supporting institutional development and developing national capabilities. (QNA)

UDST secures 10-year re-accreditation to its Foundation Program

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has secured 10-year re-accreditation for its Foundation Program and Technician Certificate Foundation Program from the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA), an internationally recognised accrediting agency for English language programs and institutions.

This achievement marks UDST’s second consecutive 10-year accreditation, demonstrating a sustained commitment to quality assurance, continuous improvement, and student success. The re-accreditation affirms the quality and effectiveness of UDST’s preparatory programs and their alignment with international best practices in English language education. It also reflects the University’s commitment to maintaining high educational standards and leveraging academic excellence.

Commenting on the milestone, Krista Jack, the Academic

Manager at the University’s Foundation Program Unit, said: “This achievement demonstrates the University’s commitment to continuous improvement and applied excellence in preparatory studies. Accreditation by CEA ensures that our preparatory programs meet the highest international standards, equipping our students with the language proficiency, academic skills, and confidence needed to succeed in higher education. We are deeply proud of our faculty, staff, and students who contributed to this success.”

The re-accreditation further strengthens UDST’s position as a national leader in education and highlights the University’s contribution to developing a highly skilled workforce. By preparing students for success in higher education and future careers, the Foundation Program supports UDST’s broader commitment to developing talent and contributing to the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. (QNA)



Gulf ministers hail Qatar’s Youth Creativity Award in World of Data

Qatar took part in the 39th meeting of Ministers of Youth and Sports in the GCC States, convened in Manama, Bahrain. Representing Qatar at the meeting was HE Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, Engineer Yasser bin Abdullah al-Jamal.

Addressing the meeting, the ministers said they were grateful for Qatar’s initiative, represented by the ministry, in launching the Youth Creativity Award in the World of Data and bearing all costs related to organising this award, including the recognition ceremony. They further hailed the success that grew out of this award in terms of fostering the participation

of Gulf young people and encouraging them to innovate in data domains.

The meeting approved this award as a shared Gulf initiative and settled on consistently organising it to be incorporated into the joint Gulf plan of action, in addition to deepening and expanding its domains down the road by adding paths related to emerging technologies, chiefly generative AI and data-related cybersecurity. In addition, participants debated the agenda items, foremost of which was the Future Action Plan of the Committee of Ministers of Youth and Sports of the GCC States for 2025-2030. They further discussed the executive plans

aligned with the updates in the current and future phases, the GCC nations’ perspectives, recommendations of the technical panels, and avenues for reinforcing partnership with the private sector.

The gathering further explored areas of cooperation, as well as strategic dialogues with youth-relevant nations and regional and international organisations.

The meeting also discussed an array of recommendations prepared by the 42nd Preparatory Meeting of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Youth and Sports in the GCC States, convened virtually. (QNA)

DFI participates with 8 movies in Venice film fest

The 83rd Venice International Film Festival, the world’s oldest film festival, opened on the Lido di Venezia, featuring a broad selection of independent films and a notable Arab cinema presence, including eight films and projects supported by the Doha Film Institute.

The festival, which runs until Sept 12, opened with *Ink*, directed by British filmmaker Danny Boyle. The film explores the history of British newspaper *The Sun*. American star George Clooney was also honoured during the opening ceremony with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement for his career as an actor, director and producer.

A total of 21 films are competing for the festival’s top prize this year, only two of which are directed by women. Artificial intelligence also has a prominent presence at this year’s festival, both through works exploring the impact of technology and new approaches to film production. Qatar’s presence is particularly significant through the Doha Film Institute, with DFI-supported films and projects featured across four major programmes. *La Maison Du Vent* (House of the Wind), directed by Bernard Auguste, is



competing in the Orizzonti section, while *Conversation with the Sea*, directed by Muayad Alayan, is being presented in Venice Spotlight.

The latter tells the story of a Palestinian man facing legal consequences related to the drowning death of his son more than two decades earlier.

The Venice Gap-Financing Market also includes two DFI-supported films: *Faux Bijoux*, directed by Jessy Moussallem, and *Wolfmother*, directed by Ismael El Iraki. Four projects are partici-

pating in the Final Cut in Venice programme: *A Quarter to Thursday in Algiers* by Sofia Djama, El-dorado, *The Taste of the South* by Alaa Eddine Aljem, *Occupational Hazards* by Bassel Ghandour, and *Plague* by Youssef Chebbi.

This presence reflects the broad scope of support provided by the Doha Film Institute to independent filmmakers, spanning idea development and financing through post-production and access to international platforms and festivals, strengthening the global presence of Arab voices

and film projects from the region.

The Palestinian cause is also represented at this year’s festival through several films, most notably the documentary *NAZA*, directed by Israeli filmmakers Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, which examines the killing of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces. Shot at night from rooftops in Tel Aviv, the film reveals the systems behind the mass killing of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. It has a running time of 80 minutes and is in Hebrew and English. (QNA)

Lusail Museum aims to reframe global cultural exchange

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The museum, expected to open in 2029, is designed by the Swiss architectural practice Herzog & de Meuron, whose previous projects include Tate Modern in London, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Allianz Arena in Munich.

“The design itself is genuinely remarkable, and I would encourage everyone to look at it not just as a building but as an architectural argument – a physical expression of the museum’s intellectual and cultural mission,” said Dr Gonnella.

The design will incorporate a range of materials, including wood, textiles, metals and ceramic tiles,

while local and regional artisans are expected to contribute to selected elements of the project. For Dr Gonnella, this combination of international architectural expertise and regional craftsmanship represents the museum’s wider philosophy of cultural exchange. She said the museum would approach heritage as a living source of knowledge and creativity rather than something static, bringing traditions and histories into dialogue with contemporary issues. Dr Gonnella said considerable work was already underway on the building, collections, institutional structure, team and visitor experience, while emphasising that establishing a major museum involves

much more than constructing a physical building. The museum is also developing its curatorial narratives, research programmes, public engagement strategy and digital presence, with the aim of reaching audiences beyond Qatar.

“Lusail Museum is ultimately a museum for future generations. The collection may provide our starting point, but the conversations it opens are about the world around us and the world that future generations will inherit. Our ambition is to create a museum where those conversations can continue to develop, be questioned and be seen from different perspectives as the world itself changes,” concluded the director.

Foreign support, drones fuel Sudan war, UN probe says

Reuters
Geneva

Foreign weapons, military technology, fighters and logistical networks are helping sustain Sudan’s conflict and expanding the warring parties’ ability to strike distant civilian areas with drones, a UN fact-finding mission said yesterday.

Sudan’s war, which erupted in April 2023 following a power struggle between the military and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has displaced more than 14mn people and created one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.

In a report, the UN mission said more than 1,000 people were killed in drone strikes in the first five months of 2026, accusing both sides of serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in drone operations, with some conduct amounting to war crimes.

The RSF and Sudan’s military did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Reuters. In the past, both have denied abuses.

The mission said investigators found grounds to believe a network involving individuals and entities in the United Arab Emirates, Chad, Libya and Somalia supplied the RSF with weapons, equipment, logistics, training and foreign personnel.

It said up to 2,000 Colombian contractors had helped operate and maintain drone systems and other advanced weapons used by the RSF.

Some were present during operations around the city of Al-Fashir in Darfur, which was captured by the RSF in October 2025 and where the UN mission has previously said mass killings bore hallmarks pointing to genocide.

The UAE has routinely denied accusations that it has backed the RSF militarily. Its diplomatic mission in Geneva repeated that stance, saying it “remains committed to open and constructive dialogue with the Fact Finding Mission”.

Somalia’s government said it took the report’s allegations seriously. It said it did not permit its territory, airspace or ports to be used by parties to the conflict for military purposes, but added that

there had been “gaps” in information-sharing between the federal government and regions.

Colombia told investigators it opposed mercenarism and was taking steps to address the participation of Colombian nationals in foreign conflicts.

The ambassador to Chad’s mission in Geneva, Makaila Ahmad, told Reuters all allegations against the country were false, reaffirming Chad’s neutrality in Sudan’s conflict, and saying it was making significant efforts to secure its borders and prevent arms trafficking.

Libya’s mission in Geneva, which represents the internationally recognised government in Tripoli, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The UN fact-finding mission said its investigation into external support for Sudan’s military was at an early stage but had found evidence that foreign-supplied combat drones and loitering munitions – which can hover over an area before striking a target – had expanded the army’s long-range strike capabilities.

It said some of those weapons were used in attacks on civilian

Iran buries victims of reported US wedding attack

From Page 1

US Vice-President JD Vance said the US is investigating the air strike.

“We’re investigating it because obviously we care. We want to know,” Vance told reporters during a White House press briefing.

“If we do make mistakes, again, this is a big difference between us and Iran, when our military makes mistakes, they learn from them to try to get better from them,” Vance added.

“This is the body of Martyr Amir-Mohammad Karimi, a 4-year-old child who war martyred in an attack on the country’s south by the criminal American regime,” a reporter from Iran’s Mehr news agency said in footage

filmed in front of a pickup truck carrying a flag-draped coffin beneath a canopy of palm fronds.

In other footage of the funeral, mourners threw petals into the air as doleful music played from a loudspeaker. A casket was carried past a row of soldiers standing at attention with rifles.

“If it was a military location, it wouldn’t be so painful. This was a wedding ceremony, but they turned people’s joy into mourning,” the semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted a local man as saying.

Washington launched the air strikes on Tuesday, hitting what it said were military targets along the coast in retaliation for Iranian attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

The sudden escalation of the Iran war has caused a surge in oil prices to levels unseen since July. Price rose for a fourth straight day yesterday, taking Brent crude futures over \$96 a barrel.

Iran reported 18 dead in the last US assault, including the four killed at the wedding. It responded on Wednesday to the US strikes with attacks on US bases in Iraq, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, and carried out further attacks early yesterday, saying it was targeting another US base, in Kuwait.

Kuwait’s military said its air defences had intercepted missiles and drones. But following that, the war’s biggest flareup since July appeared to subside, with no more major attacks from either side reported as the day wore on.



People pray on the day of a funeral procession for two Palestinians killed during a militant settlers’ attack on their village, in Al-Mughayyir, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday. (Reuters)

Two Palestinian teens killed in West Bank raid by Israeli settlers, army

Reuters
West Bank

Two Palestinian teenagers were killed on Wednesday in an attack by Israeli settler militants and army troops on their village in the occupied West Bank, local officials and the Palestinian health ministry said, amid an uptick in violence by Jewish settlers in the territory.

The Palestinian health ministry said the two youths were ages 16 and 19 while a local official told Palestinian news agency WAAFA they died in Al-Mughayyir village near Ramallah.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces had entered Al-Mughayyir to provide security for police officers and an Israeli civilian seeking to retrieve livestock.

Israeli troops fired on and struck “key instigators” of a “violent disturbance” in which

people threw stones at the forces, the military said, adding the incident was under investigation.

The attack comes amid a wave of intensified violence by settler militants in the occupied West Bank after a siege by settlers of Qusra village in August drew international condemnation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government has spearheaded a rapid expansion of settlements in the West Bank, territory captured by Israel in a 1967 war. Israel has established dozens of new settlements and settler outposts in the area.

Rights groups say the increasing settler presence on the edge of Palestinian villages, like Qusra, is part of a wider effort by settlers to seize more land from Palestinians, further eating into territory where Palestinians aim to establish a state.

Libya’s NOC reports drone attack attempt at fuel depot

A remote-controlled drone attack targeted a fuel depot in Libya’s capital Tripoli yesterday, causing minor damage, the state-owned National Oil Corporation (NOC) said in a statement.

The NOC said that technical teams had begun drawing fuel from the tanks to reduce the fuel level as a precaution. There was no immediate claim of responsibility and authorities did not say who they believed was behind the attack.

The attack caused minor damage to some pipelines and tanks no. 213 and 220 due to falling shrapnel, said Ahmed al-Masallati, spokesperson for Brega Petroleum Marketing. (Reuters)

Syria begins destroying chemical weapons

Reuters
Beirut

Syria has begun destroying the remnants of a clandestine Assad-era chemical weapons programme that it recovered in May, the first such destruction in a decade, a Syrian envoy and a UN representative said yesterday.

Reuters reported in May that Syria’s new leadership had located remnants of former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad’s chemical weapons programme, including raw materials and munitions similar to those used in deadly gas attacks during the country’s civil war.

Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament

Affairs, told a Security Council briefing yesterday that for the first time since 2014, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons had verified the destruction of chemical munitions in Syria.

Following the May finding, Syria had found “one additional chemical weapons production facility, a newly discovered chemical used in the production of nerve agents, and empty chemical munitions. It also declared two chemical weapons storage facilities where the newly discovered facilities were being stored,” Nakamitsu said.

Last month, the OPCW deployed a team to Syria to verify the destruction of category three chemical weapons, referring to unfilled munitions and other equipment used to release chemi-

cal weapons. She said the team verified “the irreversible destruction of 42 aerial bombs” as part of that mission.

Syria’s ambassador to the UN, Ibrahim Olabi, told the council that Syria was “protecting the world and the region through such work”.

But he heavily criticised Israel, saying that repeated Israeli attacks had impeded some search and destruction operations, and exposed the Syrian teams at work to risk.

“We cannot safeguard the security of the region if our security is exposed to attacks at the hands of Israel, and they are flouting the security of the region at large and they are breaching the conventions and treaties we have talked about,” said Olabi, whose Arabic remarks were translated at the council.

Gaza seed bank helps farmers cultivate the little land they have left

By Nidal al-Mughrabi and
Hasseen Alwazeer
Reuters

A group of farmers has been working to preserve Gaza’s native crops by rebuilding a local seed bank that was destroyed during Israel’s war in the enclave and by encouraging Palestinians to cultivate what little viable land they have left.

Most of Gaza’s pre-war farmland lies in an area under Israeli military occupation.

Gaza’s entire 2mn population is penned into around 30% of the tiny enclave, much of which was laid to waste by two years of Israeli bombardment.

That includes Gaza farmer Salama Muhanna’s “Bank of Seeds”, which he says was destroyed in Qarara town, south of the enclave, in early 2024, several months after the events of October 7, 2023 that precipitated Israel’s military assault.

Before the war, Muhanna said, “we had refrigerators, solar power, a dryer, a seed-cleaning and sorting machine – we had everything”.

The bank, he said, had once held 70 tonnes of stocks for 42 different crops, including black-eyed peas,



Salama Muhanna, 71, owner of the Qarara Seed Bank, at the seed bank in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip. (Reuters)

watermelon and sage, all staples of Palestinian agricultural heritage.

Muhanna, 71, said he and his team of farmers have rebuilt a modest stock of some 32 local seeds in recent months, through contributions from farmers who worked with the bank before the war.

The seeds are carefully arranged in burlap sacks and plastic containers in a makeshift tent now in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip.

He and his team also cultivate seedlings in fields surrounding the tent.

Local heirloom seeds are more resilient than hybrid varieties available for import, Muhanna said, as they can be saved and replanted year after year.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Farmers see local seed banks as protection against border closures

and supply restrictions, but say they do little to offset the devastation of Gaza’s agricultural sector, once a backbone of the economy.

According to a June report by Gaza’s agriculture ministry, about 560,000 people depended wholly or partly on agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods before the war.

“What is being done through the seed bank, and the seeds currently available, represents only a drop in the ocean compared with the needs facing the agricultural sector,” said Osama al-Mukhalalati, an agricultural engineer with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mustafa al-Astal, who runs a nursery in southern Gaza’s Khan Younis, said local seeds had become “the only lifeline” when Israel tightened import restrictions and humanitarian aid flows during 2025.

Israel said that measure was aimed at pressuring Hamas during ceasefire talks.

It was condemned by Palestinians and rights groups as a form of collective punishment, and a global hunger monitor said it set off famine in parts of Gaza.

Much of Gaza’s farmland lies along and beyond the “Yellow



Hanadi Salama Muhanna, 38, daughter of seed bank owner Salama Muhanna, holds seeds at the Qarara Seed Bank in Deir Al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip. (Reuters)

Line” to which Israeli troops were meant to withdraw under an October 2025 Israel-Hamas ceasefire.

Reuters has reported that Israel has unilaterally moved the concrete blocks marking the Yellow Line on the ground deeper into Hamas-controlled territory.

Local farmers say this has put even more viable farmland off limits, and exposed those who tend areas near it to Israeli gunfire.

Khaled al-Astal, a Palestinian farmer who has been planting seeds from Muhanna’s seed bank in an area 500m from the Yellow Line, said he and other farmers have no plans to leave the area, despite the danger of Israeli attacks.

“We only have about 25% to 30% left (of Gaza),” he said. “So we say: we are here on our land, and we will cultivate it despite them.”

Canada ready for US trade deal that benefits both countries, Carney says

Reuters
Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said yesterday his government was ready to sign a trade deal with the US that benefits both countries, adding any agreement would need to have stability and credibility.

“The deal that’s possible, that’s in the interests of Canadian workers, families and businesses, is also the deal that is in the interests of American families, American businesses, American consumers, and... we’re ready to sit down and strike that deal when the Americans are ready,” Carney told reporters in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Carney dismissed recent comments by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent that Canada walked away from a trade deal because of domestic politics, saying in response to a question, “I don’t think, with all respect, appointed, unelected cabinet members in the US are experts on Canadian politics.”

Carney suggested there had been a recent softening in the US



US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer walks to a meeting with House Republicans to discuss trade with Canada, on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Wednesday. (Reuters)

approach to any trade deal that could spur further discussions.

“There were a few issues that the US was arguing right up to the last hour,” he said, describing it as an “our way or the highway” attitude before talks broke down last month. “Now, they’re not,” he said. “So all of a sudden, they don’t care about Canadian language or culture and those elements. Well, if they didn’t care, they shouldn’t have kept them in

the deal,” Carney said. “It’s good. We welcome that.”

Shortly after Carney spoke, US President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that it was “very good for Canadian Politicians like Prime Minister Mark Carney to make President Donald J Trump ‘the enemy.’” He warned the country’s economy would then collapse and be “Worse than anything that has ever happened to a Canadian politician.”

White House pressures US space firms to skip Paris space summit

The Trump administration pressured US space companies not to attend a high-profile space summit in Paris organised by French President Emmanuel Macron, triggering a last-minute reshuffle and the cancellation of some announcements, according to people familiar with the matter yesterday. The White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy hosted a call a week ago with several US space companies planning to attend the September 9-10 event and said their attendance could suggest support for European policy positions with which the US disagrees, four of the sources said. The summit will feature speeches from Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, as European countries ramp up investments in civil and military space capabilities and reduce reliance on US firms like Elon Musk’s SpaceX for satellite communications and rocket launches. (Reuters)

Britain offers \$541mn loan to Brazil-led tropical forest fund

Reuters
Brasilia

Britain will provide a £400mn (\$541.04mn) loan to the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, a Brazil-led initiative designed to finance the protection of endangered forests.

Brazil launched the initiative last year at the COP30 UN climate summit with an ambition to raise \$10bn of public money in its first year, and has so far secured almost three-quarters of that target.

The TFFF was presented as an innovative model under which the fund is managed like an endowment and pays eligible countries annual stipends based on how much of their tropical forests remain standing.

Britain backed the concept during the summit but did not make an initial taxpayer-funded contribution, with then-Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s government under pressure about how it would balance the books at home.

New Prime Minister Andy Burnham, who has focused even

more tightly on easing domestic cost-of-living concerns since coming to power in July, has since said some of Britain’s international climate contributions should be made in the form of loans, not grants.

“The UK investment into TFFF as a loan, not a grant, ensures value for money for the British taxpayer,” Britain’s Department for Energy Security and Net Zero said in a statement.

In July, Burnham said money saved by switching climate project contributions to loans would help fund a cap on bus fares.

Mauricio Voivodic, executive director of WWF-Brazil, called the UK’s commitment “very significant,” adding that it “reinforces a necessary change in how the world recognises and finances the conservation of tropical forests.”

Two sources told Reuters they expect the \$10bn goal to be met by year-end. If that happens, it could unlock further funding from the US.

Overall, the TFFF aims to raise \$125bn, including \$25 bn from governments and public institutions.

Rights groups urge to drop provision to deepen defence ties with Israel

Reuters
Washington

Dozens of civil rights and advocacy groups are urging Congress to scrap a defence bill provision that would deepen US-Israeli military technology ties, according to a letter seen by Reuters, at a time of growing US scepticism toward the long-time ally.

The provision would deepen co-operation between the US and Israeli defence sectors by accelerating joint military technology development and other partnerships. The bill passed the House of Representatives in July and awaits Senate action.

The provision of the 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), known as Section 219, seeks to set up frameworks for joint ventures, licensing agreements and US-based co-production partnerships with the Israeli industry.

In yesterday’s letter addressed to leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, 56 groups said deeper integration with Israel’s defence sector would be “exceptionally dangerous” and urged lawmakers to remove the provision.

The groups include Amnesty International USA and the civil rights network National Lawyers Guild as well as Arab and Jewish advocacy groups.

“At a time in which American interests are increasingly diverging from those of Israel, and American public opinion is turning increasingly against unconditional support to Israel, creating new points of influence for

Israel in the US defence-technology ecosystem is exceptionally dangerous,” said the letter, which has not been previously reported.

Israel is one of Washington’s closest allies in the Middle East, and the two countries co-operate extensively on defence and intelligence issues. Supporters say deeper ties could help speed military innovation and technology development.

A spokesperson from the Israeli embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment on this story.

US public support for Israel has fallen since the Gaza war began in 2023, particularly among Democrats. A June Quinnipiac University poll found 48% of voters and 66% of Democrats believe the US is too supportive of Israel, up from 16% and 20% when the question was first asked in 2017.

Support for Israel among Democratic voters has plummeted, candidates critical of Israel are winning Democratic primaries and even moderate lawmakers are increasingly willing to challenge decades of US support for Israel.

The letter criticises Israel for its potential violations of international humanitarian law in its war in Gaza and rising settler violence against Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It says such developments should prevent any discussion of deepening military ties.

A memorandum of understanding that provides \$3.8bn annual US military aid to Israel is approaching its expiration date in 2028 and conversations are under way on how Washington’s assistance to Israel would evolve beyond that date.

US to seek back payment from Europe for Ukraine aid: Trump

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday said he would ask European nations to pay back the US for military aid and munitions previously sent to Ukraine amid the ongoing war with Russia and appeared to signal a halt in sales to allied nations.

In a social media post, Trump also slammed reports of heavily depleted US munition stockpiles amid the separate war in Iran, while adding that the US was ramping up production and stockpiling munitions.

“We are taking them for ourselves, the USA, rather than selling them to others, but the sales to Allies will soon again, begin,” Trump wrote.

“Hundreds of Billions of Dollars was given to Ukraine and Nato, free of charge, that Europe would have paid for – If they were only asked, but we will be asking for that money, though somewhat belatedly!” he added, blaming the administration of his Democratic predecessor Joe Biden.

Last year, the US and Nato developed the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List initiative, under which European countries pay to supply Ukraine with US weapons.

Reuters reported last month that the US Army has used up much of its stockpile of highly accurate long-range missiles during the Iran war, raising concerns about the military’s readiness for future conflicts.

Both the wars in Ukraine and Iran – and their economic



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks while hosting a dinner in the Rose Garden at the White House in Washington, DC on Wednesday. (Reuters)

shocks – could impact whether Trump’s fellow Republicans maintain control of both cham-

bers of the US Congress next year.

Yesterday, oil prices hit fresh six-week highs as the latest US strikes on Iran and renewed Israeli threats against Tehran revived concerns about disruptions to Middle East supplies as vessels remain throttled in the Strait of Hormuz.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Wednesday sought to partly blame Kyiv’s recent strikes against Russian energy targets for rising oil and gas prices.

“We are going through an energy shock right now due to both the war in Ukraine – because, you know, Ukraine has decided that they want to blow up Russian energy assets and refined products, so that is creating upward price pressure on a global basis – and then the conflict in Iran,” he told Fox News in an interview.

US House passes bill to crack down on university boycott of Israel

Reuters
Washington

The US House of Representatives passed legislation yesterday to block federal aid for universities that boycott Israel, the latest Republican-backed pro-Israel measure amid growing Democratic criticism of the Israeli government over the war in Gaza.

The Republican-majority chamber voted 237-169 in favour of the “Protect Economic and Academic Freedom Act”, which would have to pass the Senate in order to become law.

The war in Gaza has devastated much of the Palestinian enclave since October 7, 2023, according to Israeli tallies. Israeli attacks since then have killed more than 73,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health ministry.

The conflict sparked protests and calls for boycotts at many US campuses. In response, Republican President Donald Trump targeted colleges and universities with probes and federal funding suspension threats. The administration and many Republicans in Congress allege that the protesters were antisemitic and supported extremism.

Protesters deny this, saying advocacy for Palestinian rights and objections to the devastation in Gaza should not be equated with antisemitism or support for extremism.

Yesterday’s House vote was mostly along party lines, with just two Republicans voting nay and 33 Democrats voting in favour.

US Representative Jerrold Nadler, a New York Democrat, said in a statement before the vote that he opposed the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement but would vote no because he supported Americans’ right to free expression.

“It is the only way to ensure speech I do agree with is equally protected,” Nadler said.

The BDS movement seeks to isolate Israel over its treatment of Palestinians.

The bill’s sponsors said it was not intended to hinder academic speech or debate, but to prevent the targeting of Israel and Judaism.

“It simply says that if your university takes federal taxpayer dollars, it can’t discriminate against academic partnerships or investments with one country,” US Representative Josh Gottheimer, a New Jersey Democrat, said in a speech urging support.

Lula adopts cautious Brazil election campaign

Reuters
Brasilia

Weeks before Brazil’s October election, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is running one of the country’s most cautious presidential campaigns in years as he tries to protect a razor-thin lead in the polls against right-wing Senator Flavio Bolsonaro, advisers close to his campaign told Reuters.

The result has been an unusually subdued campaign, the sources said, amid concerns about misinformation, foreign interference, and accidentally unleashing damaging political narratives.

“The ability to mislead voters today is even greater than it was in 2022, so it’s a real concern. We have to be much more careful about what we do and say,” one adviser said, asking not to be named because they were not authorised to speak publicly on the matter.

Polls show Lula holding a narrowing lead over Senator Bolsonaro, son of former President

Jair Bolsonaro, with the latest polls showing a 1- to 3- percentage-point difference in the second round.

Inside the Planalto presidential palace in Brasilia, officials have been told to closely vet government actions to avoid accusations that state resources are being used for political purposes and to minimise missteps that opponents could exploit.

Ministers have been asked to delete social media posts, and state television has stopped broadcasting presidential events to avoid the risk of violating the Brazilian electoral law, the sources told Reuters. At the same time, official announcements and presidential events are being carefully reviewed to avoid misinterpretation, even if some officials see it as an overly cautious approach, they added.

“I think there’s a certain amount of exaggeration in this concern with violating the law. Previous administrations had absolutely no concern about this,” one source said. “The Brazilian legislation is clear that at some point the in-

cumbent will be president and candidate at the same time.”

Yet all that caution was not enough to spare Lula from a social media storm last week. During an interview, he said he had never met a lobbyist who is currently under investigation in a corruption probe, only for Instagram photos showing the two together to quickly resurface and circulate online.

His campaign claimed he is often approached by people asking for photos, but he maintains he has no relation whatsoever with the lobbyist.

His rival, Bolsonaro, has dealt with his own social media controversy as well. This week, a Brazilian magazine revealed that he had received a payment of \$1.6 mn from Daniel Vercaro, a disgraced former banker investigated for corruption in one of the largest fraud schemes uncovered in the Brazilian financial system. A previous payment of \$24 mn was revealed in May.

Lula’s campaign, however, sees a much more challenging environment with the rise of arti-

cial intelligence, which makes the distortion of information harder to detect, and an administration in Washington that seems to be encouraging a shift to the right in Latin America.

“The US government today has a clear willingness to interfere in elections in the region,” one person close to Lula told Reuters, saying that the Trump administration views Brazil as the next target in a wave of right-wing victories “that they initiated in the region.”

The State Department did not reply to a request for comment from Reuters, but the agency has previously rejected accusations of election interference by Brazil’s government.

The reasons behind the subdued campaign, however, go beyond Lula’s caution.

Analysts point to the polarisation between Lula and the Bolsonaro camp as a factor contributing to voter fatigue, which ultimately translates into the general apathy seen on the streets.

“Both paths are familiar; they’ve already been tried,” explained Cila Schulman, CEO of the Ideia Insti-



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva speaks during a reelection campaign rally at Moca Bonita Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Reuters/File Photo)

tute, a polling and public opinion survey think tank.

Senator Bolsonaro’s campaign is also seeing a subdued public, one person who is close to the senator told Reuters, adding that their surveys show that voters across the political spectrum are tired of the political bickering, which is contributing to lower political engagement.

Brazil’s electoral court, which oversees elections, has also forbidden platforms from showing content from candidates to users who do not follow them, adding to the challenge of reaching voters.

It’s part of the reason why engagement in each campaign is confined to echo chambers, said Luis Fakhouri, director of strategy at Palver, a data intelligence firm that monitors social media. That, he added, could work in favour of Lula and Senator Bolsonaro, the two candidates leading the race.

“For Lula and Flavio’s campaigns, if there’s not much action, it is good for them. They’re firmly in the lead, they don’t need to rock the boat. The minor candidates are the ones that should try to heat up their campaigns,” said Fakhouri.

Over1,700 fall sick from Indonesia free school meals

Another 777 students and teachers contracted food poisoning in Indonesia's Central Java after consuming government-issued free meals, a school principal said yesterday, bringing the total number of people made ill by the scheme to more than 1,700 within three days. In separate incidents in three other locations this week, 950 Indonesians had fallen ill as a result of food poisoning linked to the programme, a member of a parliamentary commission overseeing health said. President Prabowo Subianto launched the multibillion-dollar free meal programme last year to improve nutrition for tens of millions of children, but the costly scheme has been dogged by allegations of corruption, leadership changes and a spate of mass food poisoning outbreaks. Improper food storage and late delivery of cooked meals are often to blame for the food poisoning. In a senior high school in Lasem, Central Java, 752 students and 25 teachers have been suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting after consuming free meals on Wednesday, said the school's principal, Juhartutik. The students in Lasem were given grilled chicken. Before it was distributed, a food taster found that some of it was "slimy", Juhartutik said. "The slimy ones had already been set aside... The kitchen operator said the food was cooked at 3 a.m. and it was eaten at noon," she said, adding that most

of the victims were sent home. Joko Paryanto, a local doctor who treated the victims, said 15 students and teachers have been hospitalised. Sudaryono, head of the National Nutrition Agency which oversees the \$12.94bn programme, told parliamentary hearing that the food poisoning cases would be handled "seriously." On Tuesday, 664 students fell ill in Sidoarjo, East Java, said Herawati Yuwantina, a local official. The kitchen linked to the case was suspended on Wednesday. In two other cases on Wednesday, 49 people in the East Java city of Nganjuk and 237 in the West Sumatra region of Agam contracted food poisoning, said Charles Honoris, a lawmaker and member of the sole political party outside the governing coalition, citing health department data. Charles wrote on Instagram that they were not isolated incidents. "This is a failure of the system," he said. As of September 1, 50,000 individuals had been affected by food poisoning cases, Charles said, citing health department data. In July, a survey by pollster Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting showed only one-third of people were satisfied with the scheme, with poisoning cases cited as a major reason. **(Reuters)**

Thailand shortens visa-free stays for over 60 nations

Thailand will halve the length of visa-free stays for tourists from more than 60 countries and territories to 30 days, effective September 15, the foreign ministry said. Tourism is vital to the southeast Asian nation's economy, but officials say the move is part of an effort to curb crime involving foreign nationals. Under Thailand's current tourism scheme, travellers from more than 90 countries – including Europe's 29-nation Schengen area, China,

India, the US and several South American countries – are eligible to visit for up to 60 days without a visa. The reduction to 30 days visa-free applies to over 60 countries and territories, including China, the US and 27 EU countries, the Thai foreign ministry's consular affairs department said on Tuesday. The visa-free status for around 20 other countries was unclear, with a foreign ministry official declining to comment on Tuesday. Visitors from Peru, Brazil and

Republic of Korea will be granted 90-day visa-free stays, up from 60 previously. Tourists will be able to extend their stays once, at the discretion of an immigration officer, a government spokeswoman told AFP in May when the cabinet approved the measure. Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow said that month that the plan to trim visa-free visits was part of a crackdown on individuals abusing the visa system by committing crimes in the country. **(AFP)**

Beijing accuses Palau of ‘hype’ over its missile test

Reuters
Sydney

Beijing has accused Palau of "hype" over its Pacific missile test, after the host of the regional Pacific Islands Forum yesterday urged the group to condemn China's launch, on the final day of a summit dominated by a dispute between Beijing and Taiwan.

Surangel Whipps Jr, who is also the president of Palau, said he was hopeful the issue would be mentioned in a joint statement by the 18-nation bloc.

"That's definitely something that we'll be discussing today, and a unified Pacific voice is critical in getting Beijing to respect sovereignty, to respect transparency, and to be a responsible partner," he told a news conference.

"We don't want our backyard, our homes, to be threatened and really disrespected."

The July ballistic missile test by Beijing – its first known launch in the Pacific since September 2024 – came hours after Fiji and Australia signed a major defence treaty, marking Fiji's first ever alliance.

A meeting of Pacific Islands



From left: Pacific Islands' Forum Secretary General Baron Waqa, Palau's President Surangel Samuel Whipps Jr, Solomon Islands' Minister for Foreign Affairs Rick Nelson Houenipwela and New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon attend a press conference after the closing ceremony of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in Koror yesterday. **(AFP)**

foreign ministers last month failed to agree to a statement condemning the test, despite individual leaders expressing alarm, publicly and privately, about militarisation of the region.

Beijing has said the test was conducted safely.

Yesterday, its foreign ministry reiterated that position and said it had never engaged in military expansion.

"Palau's repeated hype and attempts to manipulate the positions of other Pacific Islands forum member states are malicious and will not succeed," spokesman Guo Jiakun said at a regular press briefing.

"We are willing to work with South Pacific countries to contribute to maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the region."

Vietnam court sentences 11 to death in drug trafficking case

A court in Vietnam sentenced 11 people to death in one of the country's largest drug trafficking cases after an investigation that began when four flight attendants were caught carrying narcotics hidden in toothpaste tubes in 2023, state media reported yesterday. The Ho Chi Minh City People's Court handed down the death sentences to 11 defendants in a case that involved 227 accused people in total, online newspaper VnExpress reported. Details of the lawyers representing the 11 sentenced to death were not immediately available. **(Reuters)**

Japan to relax overtime regulation under workaholic PM

AFP
Tokyo

Japan will ease overtime regulation in a move meant to help spur economic growth but criticised as a relapse into the country's ingrained workaholic culture.

The move comes after the government led by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi – a self-proclaimed workaholic – adopted a growth strategy in July calling for revisions to the current oversight of work hours.

The change in part reflects calls from certain business sectors for more flexible work styles as they grapple with a deepening labour shortage.

Roughly 40% of businesses in Japan are operating under specific labour-management agreements that legally allow monthly overtime of up to 100 hours, according to the labour ministry.

But those companies were still advised by authorities to cap overtime at 45 hours each month,

Wildfire haze forces 1.4mn students into remote learning in Indonesia

Reuters
Jakarta

Around 1.4mn students in six Indonesian provinces have shifted to online learning due to poor air quality triggered by forest and land fires, an official said on Wednesday.

As of September 2, around 1.43mn students from 12,874 schools in six of the provinces hit hardest by forest and land fires have been studying remotely, Gogot Suhawoto, an education ministry official, told the media.

Indonesia has intensified efforts to contain haze caused by wildfire in the six provinces, which include Riau, Jambi and South Sumatra on the island of Sumatra, as well as West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and South Kalimantan on Borneo.

Of the 1.43mn students, 1.1mn are in West Kalimantan, Gogot said, the province that has recorded the most extensive wildfires so far this year.

The remote learning period will last from August 31 until September 4 and will be continuously evaluated every three days, Gogot said.

The decision to conduct online learning would be based on the



A student, gestures while attending online classes from home in Pontianak, West Kalimantan province, Indonesia, yesterday. **(Reuters)**

Air Pollution Standard Index in each region, he said.

Remote learning would be imposed when the index exceeds 200 in a particular location, Gogot added.

A majority of regions in Kalimantan recorded air pollution readings in excess of 200 on Wednesday, with some even exceeding 1,000, Forestry Ministry data showed. Southeast Pontianak region in West Kalimantan province was the worst hit, with a reading of 1,023.

Indonesia's air quality classification system considers readings

above 300 as "hazardous".

"School principals are authorised to take immediate action in urgent situations. They do not have to wait until conditions worsen or spend too long consulting with other authorities," Gogot said.

Forestry Ministry data showed that about 200,000 hectares of land were burned by wildfires in the first seven months of the year, nearly doubling in July alone.

Wildfires burned around 73,310 hectares of land in six priority provinces, according to Forestry Ministry data.

Philippines stages school safety drill

Reuters
Bulacan Philippines

As an alarm warning of an active shooter threat blared through a Philippine public school yesterday, students and teachers moved swiftly into action.

Some students helped lock and stack chairs against classroom doors, while others drew curtains, switched off lights, and crouched under desks as teachers instructed them to stay quiet and out of sight.

The scene at Carlos F Gonzales High School in Bulacan province was part of a nationwide school safety drill led by the Philippines' Department of Education and its security agencies, as authorities seek to strengthen emergency preparedness following two recent school shooting incidents.

Under a scripted active-attack scenario, which did not use active-shooter role players, school officials alerted emergency responders, activated a warning system and placed classrooms under lockdown while students sheltered in place until police declared the campus secure.



Students take cover during an active-shooter drill following recent school shootings in the country, at Carlos F Gonzales High School in San Rafael, Bulacan, Philippines, yesterday. **(Reuters)**

"Our topmost priority is safety and preparedness," school principal Ceanceno Espirito Jr said, adding that the drills allow schools to assess emergency response measures and identify areas for improvement.

The drill rehearsed a full emergency response, including coordination with police, evacuation to designated assembly areas, headcounts of students and staff, first-aid treatment for simulated casualties and psychosocial support for those affected.

School shootings are rare in the Philippines, where firearms are tightly regulated. But recent incidents have prompted renewed debate about gun ownership, firearm storage, and children's exposure to social media.

A shooting at a high school in the southern Philippines on August 18 left two students dead, including the alleged gunman.

It was the second school gun attack in the Philippines in less than three months and happened days after a high-profile incident in Thailand, where a student went on a shooting rampage at a school on the outskirts of the capital Bangkok.



Nepal must rebuild thousands of homes as search continues

Reuters
Kathmandu/Beijing

Nepal will have to rebuild around 20,000 houses in flood-ravaged areas, authorities said yesterday, as rescuers continued to search for workers trapped in tunnels linked to hydropower projects and thousands remain missing after last week's catastrophe.

A glacier collapse on August 26 sent a deluge of ice, rock and mud sweeping through the impoverished nation's border region with China, wiping out settlements and villages and leaving few houses standing and undamaged.

"Our preliminary estimates are that 7,500 houses have been completely destroyed, either washed away or buried under debris and mud," Dharma Raj Upreti, chief of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, told Reuters.

Even houses still standing were not habitable, Upreti said, with authorities estimating that around 20,000 would have to be rebuilt in different, safer locations.

"We anticipate that the resources required for rebuilding will be substantial," Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal told foreign ambassadors in Kathmandu.

At least 1,252 people were killed in Nepal last week as houses, streets and schools in towns and villages near the border with China's Tibet were swept away. More than 4,200 people are still missing and thousands more displaced.

China has put the death toll in Tibet at 21, with 541 others listed as missing.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah's cabinet set September 7, the 13th day after the disaster, as a day of national mourning in Nepal, the cabinet spokesperson said. In Hindu tradition, the 13th day traditionally marks the end of the formal mourning period.

UK summons Russian diplomat over Leipzig airport attack

Britain has summoned the Russian charge d'affaires to condemn an attempted drone attack at Leipzig/Halle airport last month after the German government said that Russia was responsible for the incident. "The UK stands in full solidarity with Germany following Russia's egregious and reckless attack on Leipzig Airport," the spokesperson said, adding that Russian attempts to undermine the resolve of Ukraine's allies were "futile."

"This is the latest in a clear pattern of attempts by the Russian state to undermine our collective security, and that is why today we have summoned the Russian charge d'affaires to condemn the attack in the strongest terms."

Russia has denied the allegations, saying that they are entirely fabricated. The Russian embassy in London said the summons from Britain was part of a "co-ordinated provocation". "These unsubstantiated and absurd accusations, constructed in a surprisingly familiar British style, were categorically rejected," the embassy said. (Reuters)



A man takes selfie as he is inside a cage on a makeshift zip line as they cross the Trishuli River from Koloni following deadly flash floods that damaged bridges and temporarily stranded residents, in Nuwakot district, yesterday. (Reuters)

More than 9,300 Nepali army troops were on the ground in the affected areas of Timure in Rasuwa, Nuwakot, Dhading, Chitwan and Nawalparasi East, co-ordinating search and rescue of the injured and helping with management of bodies, clearing blocked roads, and providing emergency medical treatment, an army statement said.

An Australian medical student whose partner went missing near the Nepal-China border urged tech companies to do more to help find him and others caught up in the disaster by sharing tracking data that could narrow the search areas for rescue teams.

At least 583 foreign nationals were missing in the floods, Nepal said yesterday, many of them pilgrims and trekkers.

An army officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to the media, said the search was continuing with experts from India, Republic of Korea and China for at least 900 survivors believed to be trapped in the tunnels related to hydropower projects.

Army spokesperson Raja Ram Basnet said two bodies had been recovered from the tunnel of Langtang Khola hydropower plant.

Australia pledged additional support and said it would also share telecommunications data with Nepali authorities.

China has sent a third batch of aid to Nepal, including tents, blankets, medical protective suits and satellite communication equipment, the foreign

ministry said, adding that the weather offices of the two countries were in contact with each other.

Reports on the rescue efforts in Tibet, largely provided by Chinese state media as foreign reporters' access to the region is restricted, have slowed a day after the G216 national highway leading to the site was reopened.

Both China and Nepal have said the floods were a result of climate change, with foreign minister Khanal telling ambassadors that the disaster had a "deeper significance" beyond the immediate emergency.

"Nepal contributes a negligible share of global emissions, yet our people bear a disproportionate burden of the impacts of a warming Himalayas," he said.



France's President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron are welcomed by Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham and his wife Marie-France van Heel upon arrival at 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday. (AFP)

Burnham, Macron discuss drive to get Britain 'closer to Europe'

Reuters
London

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham and French President Emmanuel Macron discussed Britain's "drive to get closer to Europe" in a meeting in London, a Downing Street spokesperson said yesterday.

During their discussion, Burnham told his French counterpart

that the European Union's Made in Europe agenda, which could see the EU prioritising European-made goods in public contracts, "could pose significant challenges for UK industry", the spokesperson added.

Burnham last month said Britain should be bolder in pursuing closer ties with the European Union.

In yesterday's meeting with Macron, the two "agreed it was

vital to work together to find a way forward to protect shared interests", the spokesperson also said.

The two leaders' meeting yesterday followed a visit with Britain's King Charles on Wednesday to the exhibition housing the historic Bayeux Tapestry, which has been loaned to the British Museum from its home in northern France under a deal struck with the French government.

Nepal plans to rebuild early-warning system on border with China

Reuters
Kathmandu

Nepal plans to rebuild an early-warning system for landslides on part of its border with China, installing seismic sensors, cameras and a satellite link, two Nepali government sources told Reuters, a week after a glacial flood killed more than 1,000.

The equipment is being set up at Timure, a border settlement in Nepal's Rasuwa district on the same river corridor along the border with China where a collapsing glacier sent a gigantic wall of mud, water and rock hurtling through mountain valleys.

At least 1,114 people have died in both countries, the vast majority in Nepal, and nearly 4,000 are still missing.

The stretch of border where the instruments will be placed lies in one of the most sensitive parts of Nepal's frontier with China's Tibet region, a high-altitude area closely watched by Kathmandu, Beijing and New Delhi.

Nepal has not formally announced the plans and the two sources spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the issue.

The officials said there was a sense of urgency to act.

"The landscape is adjusting after the mega event, so could trigger a few more landslides," one of the sources said.

Central to the plan is a satellite system known as Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), meant to keep monitoring posts connected even when mobile networks go down, so they can spot fresh hazards and issue warnings quickly, both sources said.

Such a blackout occurred when last week's flood knocked out at least four gauging stations near the border.

"We had sensors and monitoring stations but they were not being monitored extensively," the source said, describing a previous early warning system that would send a message every few minutes but was swept away by Wednesday's floods.

"Because we were unaware, we couldn't check when they failed."

For now, cameras, sensors and the VSAT will be installed at a single site by Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) and more would follow, the second source said, adding that officials have already surveyed the area by helicopter to assess their placement.

In response to questions from Reuters, NDRRMA CEO Dharma Raj Upreti said that new monitoring stations are being set up to replace those swept away, along with a new camera installation.

"That would give the real-time river discharge information to the authorities, and accordingly, the authorities will disseminate SMS messages if any new floods are detected," he said.

China's foreign minister and the country's embassy in Nepal did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Since the disaster, China has said imagery of the affected areas, satellite and hydrological data, as well as early-warning information on upstream barrier lakes, have been shared with Nepal.

The immediate danger from two barrier lakes near the border — formed after the glacial collapse — has passed after they drained. But the terrain remains unstable and is being closely watched, one source said.

An early-warning system for any landslide-triggered events would give authorities only a few minutes to alert downstream communities of another flood, a brief window that could still prove critical.

Australia, US to boost defence ties as China's Pacific influence grows

Reuters
Washington DC

Australia and the US said they would boost their defence ties in a move that could expand the US military presence in Australia, while strengthening deterrence across the Pacific, where China has been expanding its influence.

After meeting US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth in Washington DC, Defence Minister Richard Marles told reporters on Wednesday that "American force posture in Australia is growing" and was on the rise across every domain.

The US-Australia Force Posture Initiatives are agreements that allow US military forces to train and store equipment in Australia, including the rotational deployment of aircraft and logistics support for US vessels.

"We think that's really important in terms of providing deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, providing for stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific, and that's very much in Australia's national interest."

Marles did not specify if the greater level of co-operation would mean more US troops being stationed in Australia, but said further details would be

provided at the next meeting of Australian and US defence ministers later this year.

Australia-US defence co-operation also includes the AUKUS defence pact between the US, Britain and Australia. Some US defence personnel are working at the HMAS Stirling naval base on Australia's west coast, which will house four US-commanded Virginia-class submarines from 2027.

China calls the AUKUS pact dangerous and has warned it could spur a regional arms race.

Hegseth said in a statement that there was "strong alignment" between the national defence strategies of both countries, and stressed the importance of allies investing in their own sovereign security to contribute to collective defence.

"We share a common (understanding) of the complex threat picture in the world today and the need for allies to, both plan together but also ensure our capabilities match and are complementary," he said.

The meeting comes as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) headed into its final day in Palau on Thursday, with the summit overshadowed by the absence of several leaders and China's protest over the presence of Taiwan's foreign minister.

In El Nino-hit Sri Lanka, wells run dry, farmer incomes shrink as drought deepens

Reuters
Galwela Yaya

For the first time in over three decades, Sri Lankan farmer AM Pathmasena says, his well is running so dry that it barely provides enough water for his family and two cows. He has fallen victim to one of the nation's worst El Nino-driven droughts.

Sri Lanka is among the South Asian countries badly affected by weather disruption this year, with some key farming districts recording rainfall deficits of 85% to 100% below long-term averages. The government has arranged for water to be delivered to tens of thousands of people.

"The drought has been intensifying. The amount of water seeping into the well is barely enough," Pathmasena, 48, said while sitting

in his hut in Galwela Yaya, a small village located in one of the worst-hit districts, Ampara.

"We dig a small hole and wait for the water to seep in to bathe."

El Nino is a weather pattern characterised by unusually warm sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, often bringing drier conditions to parts of Asia and severe storms elsewhere.

This year is likely to be marked by a "super" El Nino, which could become the strongest on record, weather forecasters have said.

The soaring temperatures have already left large swathes of Sri Lanka's north, east and southern regions parched, with small tanks, rivers and lakes that usually feed crops and provide drinking water drying out.

The Sri Lankan government has said the impact this year could

be the worst in decades and that water levels at hundreds of such tanks in the country have dropped to about 10%.

Many houses on the main roads and those that are easily accessible get drinking water trucked in every three to five days, while some in remote areas wait for as many as 23 days, according to government officials and interviews with several residents.

In the affected districts, people often wait for water supplies at their gates with large blue plastic water barrels while others gather at tube wells to bathe and collect water to take home to wash dishes and clothes and to cook as well.

"We supplement the water deliveries by gathering the last bit of the water in our well for washing and bathing but even then we sometimes run out," said Konara

Mudiyanse Sumanawathie, 49, who lives in one of the worst-affected areas, Monaragala, around 100 miles (160km) from Colombo.

Farmers' incomes, as expected, are taking a big hit, making it difficult to repay loans and even manage proper meals daily.

Before the drought, Pathmasena said he earned about 20,000 Sri Lankan rupees (\$60) a month growing cowpeas, but the crisis means he has lost it all, forcing him to become a daily-wage labourer to survive.

His son shut his chicken farm weeks ago due to the heat and water shortages. On a recent evening, Pathmasena asked his wife to first give water in tin vessels to their cows, before they sat to consume their meal.

"On some days, when we have nothing, we skip meals," he said.



AM Pathmasena, 48, digs a hole in a dried-out riverbed and clears the water from it before taking a bath, in Galwela Yaya village in Ampara district. (Reuters)

‘You have better knowledge of your worldly affairs’

The Prophets of Allah are the elite of humankind and the most honourable of all people in the sight of Allah, The Exalted. He chose them and entrusted them with conveying His Religion to His Creation. He Says (what means): {Those are the ones to whom We gave the Scripture and authority and prophethood.} [Qur'an 6:89] He also Says (what means): {Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example.} [Qur'an 6:90] The Muslim Ummah unanimously agreed that the Messengers of Allah, may Allah exalt their mention, are infallible with regard to conveying the divine revelation, and this essentially means that they never lie, forget, or make mistakes in this regard.

Al-Qaadhi 'Iyaadh, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The Prophets of Allah are free of all physical and moral deficiencies." Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The Qur'anic verses that establish the prophethood of the Prophets of Allah indicate that they were infallible with regard to communicating the divine revelation. This means that whatever divine revelation they conveyed was unquestionably the truth, and this is the very essence of prophethood." Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The infallibility of the Prophets of Allah, may Allah exalt their mention, means guarding them against all imperfections, distinguishing them with aspects of spiritual perfection, and blessing them with support and steadfastness in all matters, as well as sending down serenity upon them."

The Ijtihad (personal reasoning) of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam (may Allah exalt his mention), that proved to be erroneous or not optimum does not violate his infallibility in the slightest, because he was supported with the divine revelation. Whenever his Ijtihad was correct, he did not receive any remark or correction from Allah, The Exalted, and this serves as an approval from Allah of his Ijtihad and indicates that it is obligatory to follow his Ijtihad in this regard. However, if his Ijtihad proved to be not optimum, the divine revelation came to correct it, clarifying what was optimum in that regard (like the incident regarding the prisoners of war in the Battle of Badr).

In fact, such divine remark and correction render the Ijtihad of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, part of the divine revelation and a binding ruling that must be obeyed and entails that its violation is forbidden. This is the key difference between the Ijtihad of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, and that of the scholars of his nation. As for his Ijtihad and personal opinions on worldly matters, and the incidents where they proved to be erroneous (or not optimum), it does not contradict his prophethood and infallibility in any way. This is because it is conceivable that the Prophets and Messengers of Allah might err with regard to worldly matters, and this does not undermine their prophethood, nor does it contradict their infallibility.

Some sceptics who promote doubts about the Sunnah of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, and his infallibility brought forth as evidence the incident when he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, gave his personal opinion on the artificial



pollination of palm trees in Madinah and that it later proved to be wrong. It was narrated on the authority of Raafi' ibn Khadeej, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said: "When the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, came to Madinah, the people had been artificially pollinating the palm trees. He said: 'What are you doing?' They said: 'We are used to doing this', whereupon he said: 'Perhaps if you do not do that it would be good.' So they abandoned this practice, and then there was a decline in the produce. They mentioned that to him, so he said: 'I am only human; whenever I command you to do something pertaining to your religion, adhere to it, and whenever I command you to do something out of my personal opinion, then (keep in mind) that I am only human.'" [Muslim]

Anas ibn Maalik, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, passed by some people who were artificially pollinating palm trees and said: "If you do not do so, it will still come out right." The dates came out of poor quality. Afterward, he happened to pass by them, and said: "What has gone wrong with your palm trees?" They said, "You said such-and-such (and we acted upon your advice)." He said: "You are more knowledgeable of your own worldly affairs." [Muslim]

In the version narrated by Talhah ibn 'Ubaydillah, may Allah be pleased with him, the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: "If that benefits them, then let them do it (artificially pollinate the palm trees). It was an assumption on my part, so do not blame me for an assumption, but whenever I convey to you anything from Allah (divine revelation), adhere to it; I would never tell a lie about Allah." [Muslim]

The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, did not intend to change their practice of pollinating palm trees, but it was rather Ijtihad on his part regarding a worldly matter that could be right or wrong. This is evidenced by what he

said in the version of the Hadith narrated by Talhah ibn 'Ubaydillah, may Allah be pleased with him: "If that benefits them, then let them do it. It was only an assumption on my part, so do not blame me for an assumption..."

The Companions mistakenly assumed that he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, forbade them from this practice based on divine revelation. Then he explained to them that whenever he communicated divine revelation to them, he would never err with regard to it. This is why he said to them: "... whenever I convey to you anything from Allah, adhere to it; I would never tell a lie about Allah." Lying here means making a mistake; meaning: I would never make mistakes with regard to the divine revelation I convey. It is not conceivable that the Hadith should mean lying in its literal sense because he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, was infallible against it even if he were conveying from other than Allah. Therefore, he said in the Hadith narrated by Raafi' ibn Khadeej: "I am only human; whenever I command you to do something pertaining to your religion, adhere to it, and whenever I command you to do something out of my personal opinion, (keep in mind that) I am only human."

In his commentary on these Ahaadith, Al-Munaawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "His saying (I am only human) means that he is equal to them in humanity and not with regard to (his authority in) religious matters. This is a reference to the Saying of Allah, The Exalted (which means): {Say, I am but a man like yourselves, (but) I receive revelation...} [Qur'an 18:110] He, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, was equal to humans in his humanity, but he was distinguished from them with the duty of conveying the Divine Message.

His statement: 'whenever I command you to do something pertaining to your religion, adhere to it,' means: If I command you to do what benefits you with regard to your religion, then comply with it because it is always the truth and it

is always correct.' His statement: 'and whenever I command you to do something out of my personal opinion, (keep in mind that) I am only human,' means: If I command you to do something pertinent to worldly matters, then I am a human being; my personal opinion on worldly matters may be right or wrong. This is because a human being is prone to forgetfulness and error. By 'opinion' here, he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, meant personal opinion on worldly matters."

An-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, compiled the Ahaadith about the artificial pollination of palm trees cited in Saheeh Muslim under the title: "Chapter on the Obligation of Compliance to His Commands Regarding Religious Matters rather than His Personal Opinions on Worldly Matters." In this chapter, he commented on the Hadith reading, 'You are more knowledgeable of your own worldly affairs,' saying: "Scholars said that it means you are more aware of the worldly matters rather than those pertaining to legislation (and Shari'ah). As for what he said based on his Ijtihad and declared it to be part of the Shari'ah, it is obligatory to act upon it. The pollination of palm trees does not fall under this category but rather the one mentioned before it ...

Scholars said: His saying was not a statement but rather an assumption, as he clarified in the other versions of the Hadith. They said that his personal opinion and assumption on worldly matters are like those of any other person, and therefore it is conceivable that something like this should happen, and it does not imply any deficiency." Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "He did not forbid them from pollination, but they made the mistake of assuming that he forbade them from it."

Shaykh Ahmad Shaakir, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The Hadith is clear and explicit and does not conflict with any other text, nor does it contradict his infallibility with regard to his Ijtihad. It does not indicate that the Sunnah cannot be brought forth as adducible evidence on all matters, nor does it support their claims that the Prophetic Sunnah in its totality is not part of the divine revelation ... Rather, in the Hadith about the pollination of palm trees, he said to them that he did not believe there was a need for that. So he neither commanded nor forbade anything, and he was not conveying divine revelation or establishing an act of Sunnah. Therefore, there are no grounds for expanding the scope of this meaning to the extent of using it as a means to demolish the fundamentals of legislation!"

Our Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, was infallible from erring in what he conveyed to us from Allah, The Exalted, and not with regard to his personal opinions on worldly matters that might have been right or wrong. A Muslim believes with certainty in the infallibility of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, on top of whom comes our Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam. Therefore, we should be extremely mindful and beware of those who seek to challenge and raise doubts about the Sunnah by saying that the opinions of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, on worldly matters might have been wrong and that some of the Shari'ah

rulings that he conveyed to us were actually based on his personal Ijtihad that might have been right or wrong as well! This is a false claim and groundless misconception, and this is why Allah, The Exalted, Says (what means): {Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination.* It is not but a revelation revealed.} [Qur'an 53:3-4]

Al-Baghawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "It means that he never spoke falsehood." As-Sa'di, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "It means that his speech does not emanate from his personal inclination but rather followed the guidance and Taqwa that Allah has revealed to him with regard to his own affairs and those of others. This indicates that the Sunnah is part of the divine revelation from Allah to His Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam. He Says (what means): {And Allah has revealed to you the Book and wisdom...} [Qur'an 4:113] (Wisdom here is a reference to the Sunnah). It also indicates that he was infallible with regard to what he conveyed from Allah, The Exalted, and His Shari'ah because he did not speak from personal inclination but rather from a revelation revealed. Allah, The Exalted, Says (what means): {And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from.} [Qur'an 59:7]

Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "It means that whatever he commanded you to do, do it, and whatever he forbade you from doing, avoid it; for he only commands you to do what is good, and he only forbids you from what is evil." The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: "I have left you with that which, if you hold on to it, you will never go astray; the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet." [Al-Haakim, Al-Albaani: authentic] The Prophetic Sunnah is the rescue ship and the key to deliverance; whoever boards it will be saved, and whoever fails to do so will drown. Az-Zuhri, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "Our early scholars used to say, 'Adherence to the Sunnah is salvation.'"

Maalik, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The Sunnah is (like) Noah's Ark; whoever boards it survives, and whoever fails to do so drowns." Obviously, his saying, "You are more knowledgeable of your own worldly affairs," does not apply to the religious matters, Shari'ah, obligations, and prohibitions. It rather means: 'You, who artificially pollinate palm trees, and others like you who practise different professions in industry, agriculture, and the various crafts, are more knowledgeable of your (respective) areas of specialisation than me.' Al-Munaawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said in Fath Al-Qadeer: "It means that you know about your worldly affairs more than I do, and I know about the affairs of your afterlife more than you do; because the Prophets and Messengers were sent to save people from wretchedness in the Hereafter and help them win eternal bliss."

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/>



‘Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me’

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that: "Three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, and asked how his worship was. When they were informed, they considered their own worship to be insignificant and said: 'Where are we in comparison to the Prophet when Allah has forgiven his past and future sins?' One of them said: 'As for me, I shall offer prayer all night long.' Another said: 'I shall observe fasting perpetually, never to break it.' Another said: 'I shall abstain from women and will never marry.' The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, then came to them and said: 'Are you the people who said such things? I swear By Allah that I fear Allah more than you do, and I am most obedient and dutiful among you to Him, but still, I observe fasting (sometimes) and break it (at others); I perform (optional) prayer (at night sometimes) and sleep at night (at others); I also marry. So whoever turns away from my Sunnah (i.e., my way) is not from me.'" [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Anas also reported: "A few of the companions of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, inquired from his wives about his worship when he would be alone. When they found out, one of them said: 'I shall abstain from women and will never marry.' Another said: 'I shall never eat meat.' Another said: 'I will always offer the night prayer and shall never sleep.' Later, the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, ascended the pulpit, praised and thanked Allah, and then said: 'Why are some people saying such things? I perform (optional night) prayers (sometimes) and sleep at night (at others); I observe fasting (sometimes) and break it (at others); and I marry. So whoever turns away

from my Sunnah (i.e., way) is not from me."

"A few of the companions" in the narration means that there were between three to nine of them, and their asking: "Where are we in comparison to the Prophet when Allah has forgiven his past and future sins?" means that since they did not have this assurance that he had, then it followed that they would have to exert more effort in order to try to attain it; however, he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, explained to them that one may do the things that these men wished to refrain from and still be fearful of Allah and obtain a great reward.

The second narration of this story includes different things that the companions stated that they will abstain from, which proves that they were more than three in number.

Also, the speech of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, in the first narration reflects that he spoke to them directly, whereas the second one indicates that he spoke generally, without directing his speech to them in particular. It may be that he first spoke to everybody in the congregation and explained that such abstention is impermissible, and then spoke to the men concerned in private, addressing them personally so as not to expose their identity to others, which may have caused them embarrassment.

The fact that the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, took an oath was in order to show these men that despite him being forgiven by Allah, he did not do what they planned to do, which was to exaggerate in their worship, and that reward from Allah could be attained without such exaggeration; this is because he who is moderate in his worship is more likely to continue whereas those who exaggerate will eventually

become too weak to continue and give up.

His saying: "...my Sunnah..." did not refer to the Islamic categorisation which refers to recommended acts rather than obligatory ones. Rather, it refers to his complete manner in life and his approach to every matter. He instructed them that the one who worships in any way other than his is not from him, meaning, that he does not follow him; here, he was alluding to the methods that monks have, who innovated extreme ways of worship for which they have been dispraised by Allah.

The one who worships in a way other than that of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, has not left the fold of Islam if he did it in ignorance or was mistaken in his interpretation of the Sunnah, but if he does it due to wishing to deliberately shun the way of the Prophet and thinks that his way and method is better, then he has committed an act of disbelief.

The following are some of many benefits that we can extract from this narration:

- *The recommendation of imitating the ways of one's seniors and following in their footsteps, and that if one is unable to find out about their way of doing things by means of inquiring from men, then it is permitted to inquire from women, provided that nobody will be subjected to temptation.
- *The virtue of marriage and an encouragement of it.
- *One may do righteous deeds openly and inform others about them, provided he feels secure from thereby becoming arrogant.
- *Deeds that are Islamically permitted may become recommended, disliked or prohibited, according to one's intention.

*Imam At-Tabari said: "This narration refutes the claim of those who forbid eating lawful

foods and wearing permissible clothing, claiming that it is better to use harsh clothing and refrain from eating good food." But, Imam Ibn Hajar added to this saying: "The fact of the matter is that the one who gets himself accustomed to always consuming fine things (i.e., food and clothing) may become too habituated to them and therefore cannot live without them, and consequently, when he is deprived from them, he may commit prohibitions in order to attain what he is accustomed to. On the other hand, refraining from them from the perspective of prohibiting them for oneself contradicts the saying of Allah in the verse of Surah Al-A'raaf (which means): "Say: 'Who has forbidden the adornment of [i.e., from] Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?...'" [Qur'an 7:32]

*The good deeds that are continuous are the dearest to Allah, even if they are few.

*The method of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, is the very best one, whereby he would sometimes eat in order to preserve his strength, and fast at other times; he would also sleep at night sometimes in order to have the strength to pray at night on other occasions; also, he would marry in order to fulfil his desires, save himself from following his lusts, maintain his chastity, and increasing the number of Muslims.

*A warning against exaggeration in the matters of the religion because this leads to one stopping the deeds that he is performing. Also, one who exaggerates in acts of worship will eventually become apathetic, which may cause him to stop his obligatory acts of worship and not only the optional ones that he performs. Also, one who only performs the obligatory deeds is also in great danger; if he



loses interest, he may abandon worship altogether; so the best way is to be moderate.

*Finally, There is an indication in this narration that knowing Allah and His rights and commandments is of a higher rank than sim-

ply worshipping Him without it, and that the deeds of the heart are essential for practicing servitude to Allah.

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/>

Ali al-Taher ridge emerges as flashpoint in Israel-Hezbollah war

The Ali al-Taher ridge in southern Lebanon, which is named after a Muslim scholar whose shrine sits at its summit, has become one of the most contested pieces of ground in the Israel-Hezbollah war.

The cluster of hills is not especially large. But what it overlooks in southern Lebanon — and what Hezbollah is suspected to have built beneath it — thrust it to the centre of the fight between Israel and the Iran-backed group. Located about 15km from the Israeli border, the Ali al-Taher ridge has a commanding view of a broad sweep of southeastern Lebanon. Israel held it during a 22-year occupation of south Lebanon that ended in 2000.

After the current war erupted on March 2, Israeli troops pushed deep into southern Lebanon and seized key hilltops, including the historic Beaufort Castle on the route to Ali al-Taher.

In June, Israel's military described the ridge as one of its “primary operational focuses,” and included it in a map of an expanded, self-declared buffer zone where its troops are operating.

The ridge has effectively become a dividing point between a swathe of Lebanese territory occupied by Israeli troops to the south, and towns to the north that Israel's air force has bombed heavily, including Nabatieh. Hezbollah is believed to have built an underground command centre and weapons stores within the ridge itself, Lebanese security sources told Reuters in July. At 600m above sea level, it granted Hezbollah an advantage in launching short-range missiles and drones towards northern Israel, according to analysts.

Ali al-Taher also connects border areas in southern Lebanon to the hilly Iqlim al-Tuffah region further north, which has long served as a key logistical and operational base for Hezbollah, the Lebanese security sources said. The Israeli air force has struck

the ridge heavily in recent months. In June, an Israeli military official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told Reuters that Hezbollah fighters were stuck underground without food or water. *The Times of Israel*, citing a military probe, said on June 20 that one Israeli soldier was killed and 13 wounded during operations to capture a major underground Hezbollah facility beneath the ridge.

Hezbollah has said that Israel has sought to advance but that its fighters still had “full control over the area and are at complete readiness to confront any attempt by the enemy forces to advance or infiltrate.”

Ali al-Taher lies near Zawtar Al Gharbiyeh, a town from which Israeli troops withdrew in July as part of a US-brokered roadmap that would see Israeli troops gradually withdraw from southern Lebanon as Lebanese troops disarm Hezbollah. But with Hezbollah refusing to give up its weapons — and Israel saying it won't withdraw until the group disarms — that plan has ground to a halt.

As Israeli elections planned for October draw closer, capturing Ali al-Taher could be an attractive prize for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. “Before the elections, Israel needs a big win in an area that has always been seen as a Hezbollah stronghold,” said Andrea Tenenti, a strategic communications expert and former spokesperson for the UN force in Lebanon, UNIFIL.

Still, it may prefer a slow siege to avoid Israeli troop casualties, said Hassan Jouni, a Lebanese analyst and retired army general. “Israel is hesitant to storm Ali al-Taher for fear of casualties, especially at this sensitive moment before elections,” Jouni told Reuters.

The deadlock in Lebanon mirrors the wider Middle East standoff — negotiations between the United States and Iran remain stalled, with no breakthrough in sight. — Reuters

The race heats up



Chancellor and leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Friedrich Merz and State Premier of Saxony-Anhalt and lead candidate in the state election Sven Schulze address the media in front of the Finnish UPM Biochemicals company in Leuna, eastern Germany, ahead of the Saxony-Anhalt state election on Sept 6. The poll will elect the 9th Landtag (parliament) of Saxony-Anhalt. (AFP)



Beyond energy: A new EU strategy for Gulf as war disrupts old order



By Joaquim Millan

The war involving the United States, Israel and Iran has done more than trigger another crisis in an already unstable region. It has exposed the profound transformation taking place across the Middle East — and, at the same time, some of the structural weaknesses of European foreign policy.

For the European Union, this should be a moment to rethink its relationship with the Gulf. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain can no longer be viewed primarily through the lenses of energy, trade and security. The Gulf is becoming one of the arenas where a new international order is taking shape, and Europe needs its own strategy to engage with it.

Patrick Costello, a former European Union official and diplomat who served for 27 years across the European Parliament, European Commission and European External Action Service (including as head of the EEAS division for democracy and electoral observation and as a diplomatic adviser to EP President Josep Borrell), argues in his recent *Afkar/Ideas* article on Europe and the Iran war that European governments' differing responses once again revealed the difficulties of developing a genuinely common foreign policy. His broader argument is particularly relevant: Europe needs greater strategic autonomy and the ability to act according to its own interests, rather than simply following those of the United States.

Interestingly, the Gulf states are pursuing their own version of strategic autonomy.

John Calabrese, assistant professor at American University in Washington, DC, and senior fellow at the Middle East Institute who directs the institute's Middle East–Asia Project and focuses on Gulf–Asia interdependence, describes a Middle East increasingly characterised by strategic diversification. Gulf countries are not simply replacing the United States with China, India, Russia or Europe. Instead, they are broadening their partnerships to reduce dependency and increase their room for manoeuvre.

They want to maintain security ties with Washington, expand commercial and technological relations with China and Asia, and simultaneously develop stronger partnerships with Europe.

In other words, they do not necessarily want to choose between Washington, Beijing and Brussels. They want to work with all of them while protecting their own interests.

Giuseppe Dentice, a researcher and analyst specialising in Gulf monarchies' foreign policy and soft power (currently with the Mediterranean Observatory/OSMED at the Institute of Political Studies “San Pio V” in Rome, and previously head of the MENA desk at CeSI and a research fellow at ISPI), adds another important dimension to this debate. The Gulf states have invested heavily in economic diversification and international projection through tourism, culture, sport, infrastructure and investment.

Regional instability therefore threatens much more than energy security. It can also affect their

ambitions to become global centres for business, innovation and knowledge.

Technology is becoming equally important.

Sara Bazoobandi, a researcher at the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University in Germany and visiting scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington who works on digital sovereignty, AI governance and cybersecurity in the Gulf, highlights in her analysis of technological sovereignty and Gulf geopolitics how countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE increasingly seek not only to purchase advanced technologies but also to develop their own capabilities, attract talent and position themselves in strategic sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure.

This leads to a crucial point: economic diversification also means diversifying dependencies. In the twenty-first century, technological dependency may become as strategically important as energy dependency.

Europe has much to offer in this changing environment: technology, universities, research, industrial expertise, renewable energy, healthcare, education, food, culture and advanced services. But the relationship needs to evolve.

Josep Borrell, former EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (2019–2024) and current president of CIDOB, the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, has been particularly critical of Europe's inability to act strategically

in the Middle East. His warning should be taken seriously. Strategic autonomy is not only about defence spending. It is also about diplomacy, energy, technology, trade, investment and the ability to build partnerships.

And the Gulf should be one of those partnerships.

I believe this requires a change of perspective. Europe should no longer approach the Gulf by asking only: “What can we sell there?”

The more important question is: “What can we build together?”

Building bridges between Europe and the Gulf means connecting companies and institutions, but also understanding different business cultures, creating personal relationships and developing long-term trust. Our approach is based on three simple principles: we get involved, we stay close, and we act as facilitators.

Because particularly in the Gulf, economic relationships begin with human relationships.

Europe is seeking greater strategic autonomy. The Gulf states are diversifying their alliances, economies and technological capabilities to achieve greater autonomy of their own.

These two ambitions do not have to push Europe and the Gulf apart. They can bring them closer together.

Europe brings knowledge, technology, companies, universities and institutional experience. The Gulf brings investment capacity, transformative ambition and an extraordinary geostrategic position.

Turning these complementarities into a genuine strategic partnership will require something more: trust.

In an increasingly fragmented world, strategic autonomy does not mean standing alone. It means having the capacity to choose our partners and build relationships based on shared interests, mutual respect and trust.

The European Union and the Gulf countries have an opportunity to make that relationship one of the defining strategic partnerships of the coming decades.

• The writer is Co-founder, LINQUI International Consulting. @linqui_internationalconsulting

What would an AfD-led state government in Germany look like?

The Alternative for Germany (AfD) under lead candidate Ulrich Siegmund is vying to win power for the first time in closely watched elections in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt on Sunday. Under Germany's federal system, state governments sit in the upper house of parliament, the Bundesrat, and also have wide powers in education, domestic security and culture. The party has laid out its plans in its “Vision 2026” election manifesto.

Based on the manifesto, an AfD-led Saxony-Anhalt would launch a state-level deportation offensive and establish a task force to coordinate quicker deportations, in echoes of the United States' efforts to crack down on migration. The party said it would encourage small- and medium-sized businesses to adopt artificial intelligence and digitalise their processes through incentives rather than turn to skilled migrant workers from what it called “culturally alien” backgrounds.

The AfD, which seeks closer ties to Russia, would also advocate for removing war refugee status for Ukrainians in Germany as long as the conflict remains concentrated in eastern Ukraine, arguing they should seek refuge in western Ukraine.

Under the AfD, the children of refugees would be placed in separate classes to convey the message that “their stay in Germany is merely temporary” and prevent “various stresses” on the other children from being around different cultures. Children with disabilities would also no longer be taught in the same classroom as those without, instead being sent to special schools.

The national anthem should be sung by students and staff at school celebrations. It is learnt, the government would also “exhaust all legal avenues” to limit Islamic expression, including banning the call to prayer and stipulating how mosques are decorated. It would make major changes to the school curriculum with a “patriotic cultural policy”, focusing more closely on medieval rulers and 19th-century giants of German history such as the “Iron Chancellor”, Otto von Bismarck. Social and psychological support and integration measures would be scrapped.

It has also pledged to dismantle the current structure of the public broadcasting system in the state and withdraw state funding from some cultural institutions. To tackle Germany's ageing population, the party rejects attempts to attract more immigrants and would instead offer financial incentives to German citizens to bear children. — Reuters

GULF TIMES

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Putin cites chance of peace deal, Ukraine sees ‘new dynamic’ ahead

Reuters
Vladivostok

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday there was a chance of reaching an agreement to end the war in Ukraine, while Kyiv said it expected a “new dynamic” in peace efforts.

Putin, speaking at an economic forum in Russia’s far east, said a number of countries including the US and China were ready to support a peace settlement.

“Ultimately, however, the problem must be resolved by the countries involved in the conflict — Russia and Ukraine,” he said.

“We are grateful to everyone attempting to contribute to a settlement. Is there a chance? In my view, yes, there is.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha told reporters in Kyiv: “I believe that we will now have a new dynamic in the peace efforts, with the return of this active phase of political and diplomatic engagement in many capitals around the world.”

He did not elaborate further, telling reporters to “follow the news”.

After four and a half years of Europe’s deadliest conflict since



Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha attend a joint news conference following their meeting, in Kyiv, yesterday. (Reuters)

World War Two, it is rare for either side to offer an upbeat assessment of peace prospects. They last met for US-mediated talks in February.

Since then, with the US distracted by the Iran war, both Russia and Ukraine have ramped up long-range air attacks deep inside the other’s territory. Hostilities at sea have escalated sharply with attacks by both sides on ports and commercial shipping, pushing up global grain prices.

Chicago wheat futures dropped by more than 2% on Putin’s comments.

However, neither Putin nor Sybiha cited specific reasons to expect progress; on the contrary, the Kremlin leader said Ukraine’s latest actions presented an obstacle.

In response to a question, Putin said Ukrainian attacks on civilian merchant ships and “reported threats of attacks on civilian aircraft” were “acts of state terrorism,” which he said “complicates the prospects for bilateral peace talks”.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned airlines and insur-

ance companies this week that the presence of Ukrainian drones had made Russian skies dangerous, although he said Ukraine would target only Russian military facilities and not threaten civilian aircraft.

On Wednesday, Ukraine urged the UN’s aviation agency to ask members to ban operations in Russian airspace. Ukraine has been cut off from international civil aviation because its own airspace is considered unsafe since Russia invaded in 2022.

Putin said contacts with Ukraine were still taking place.

“It is difficult for me to say right now to what extent these contacts are leading to a peace agreement, given the statements we have heard recently from Ukraine’s top leadership,” he said.

“However, contacts do exist and are continuing on an ongoing basis — again, primarily through intelligence channels.”

Speaking alongside Sybiha in Kyiv, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar said: “If India can be of any help, in any manner, we are there.”

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Putin on Monday that the war in Ukraine needed to end for humanity’s sake and that New Delhi would support every effort to stop the fighting.

Sanchez says no evidence Morocco orchestrated Ceuta border surge

Reuters
Madrid

Spain has found no evidence to conclude that July’s deadly border rush from Morocco into its enclave of Ceuta was orchestrated by Moroccan authorities, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said yesterday, countering allegations in a Spanish police report.

Speaking in parliament, Sanchez responded to claims in the report that emerged this week suggesting the entry of over 70,000 people into Ceuta was not a spontaneous migration but a planned effort to overwhelm border controls.

“I can assure you that no institution — not the diplomatic service, nor the European Commission, nor any international body — has provided the Spanish government with any solid evidence that Morocco planned or carried out the incident. None whatsoever,” Sanchez said.

However, Moroccan police did allow crossings to occur during a key 10-hour period on July 30, when migrant arrivals peaked, he said. Spanish authorities had yet to determine whether this was due

to inaction or inability to contain the influx, Sanchez added.

Sanchez has repeatedly defended Morocco during the crisis, highlighting Rabat’s co-operation in returning the majority of the migrants in the days following the surge.

But yesterday he said Spain summoned Morocco’s ambassador on August 21 because of “unacceptable statements” made by two Moroccan ministers over Ceuta and Melilla, Spain’s other North African enclave. Morocco’s Justice Minister Abdelatif Ouahbi last month publicly reiterated Rabat’s sovereignty claims over the cities.

The police report, commissioned by a High Court judge last month and seen by Reuters, alleged that Moroccan security forces were initially deployed in smaller numbers than usual near the border breakwater and did not make a serious attempt to disperse the crowds.

Some uniformed Moroccan officers gave directions towards the crossing point, while other unidentified people appeared to guide or monitor the flow of people, the report said. It did not identify individual officers or provide independently verified evidence of orders from Moroccan authorities.



Migrants wait to be assisted by the Red Cross after disembarking from a Spanish coast guard vessel at the port of Arguineguin, on the island of Gran Canaria, yesterday. (Reuters)

Five dead on migrant boat rescued off Canary Islands

Reuters
Arguineguin

Five migrants were found dead aboard a boat rescued off Spain’s Canary Islands, maritime rescue authorities said yesterday, while a migrant rights group reported that survivors said dozens more had died during the crossing.

Three survivors were in a serious condition and were airlifted to hospital, while another 41 disembarked at the port of Arguineguin on Gran Canaria in the early hours of yesterday, Maritime Rescue said in a statement.

Helena Maleno, founder of Walking Borders, said on social media that survivors reported that 83 people, including three women and a baby, had died during the crossing. The boat had left The Gambia 27 days earlier.

Reuters could not independently verify that figure. Maritime Rescue said it could confirm only that five bodies were aboard the vessel when rescuers reached it. The bodies could not be recovered because of adverse weather conditions.

Canary Islands regional leader, Fernando Clavijo, said the tragedy underscored the need for a state policy on migration, especially after a deadly migrant surge in Spain’s North African enclave of Ceuta in July.

“It is intolerable that lives continue to be lost. The Canaries cannot get used to or accept as normal the fact that the Atlantic continues to be a death trap,” he said on X.

The vessel had been spotted on Wednesday by a rescue aircraft about 65 nautical miles southwest of Arguineguin.

The Atlantic route from West Africa to the Canary Islands is one of the world’s deadliest migration crossings. Thousands of migrants attempt the journey each year in overcrowded boats seeking to reach Spanish territory despite the risks posed by rough seas, strong currents and long distances.

The number of migrants reaching the Canary Islands from West Africa has fallen so far this year by 57.4%, according to official data.

Norway seizes Russian ship, sparking anger in Moscow

Reuters
Oslo

Norwegian authorities have seized a Russian cruise ship in the Arctic on behalf of Ukrainian energy company Naftogaz, which is seeking to enforce a \$4.22bn compensation award for assets that Moscow took when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

Officials said the vessel, the *Professor Molchanov*, was seized late on Wednesday in Barentsburg, a coal mining settlement that Russia operates on the Norwegian Arctic archipelago of Svalbard under the terms of a 1920 treaty.

Russia called the arrest of the ship an act of piracy and said it had summoned the Norwegian ambassador to deliver a strong protest. The Russian Foreign Ministry said it would work to secure the vessel’s release.

“Amid the restrictive measures imposed by Norway against Russia on Svalbard — measures that violate international law — Russian organisations and citizens operating on the archipelago are effectively under blockade,” it said, accusing Norway of violating the treaty.

Norway said it would propose ways for crew members, passengers and others to travel home if they want to.

“We are in a dialogue with the Barentsburg leadership and are ready to find ways to safely return people to Russia,” Svalbard Governor Lars Faure told broadcaster TV2.

The conflict over the vessel itself is a matter between Naftogaz and Russia and does not involve the Oslo government, Norway’s justice ministry said.

Naftogaz has been pursuing Russia since 2016 to seek compensation for the expropriation of its



Professor Molchanov, a Russian ship seen afloat in Arkhangelsk, Russia, which, according to officials, was seized by Norway in the Arctic. (Reuters/File Photo)

property in Crimea. An arbitration court in The Hague ordered Russia in April 2023 to pay Naftogaz \$4.22bn plus interest and legal costs.

Russia has said it does not recognise the court’s jurisdiction in this case and that it is not going to pay.

“Russia cannot evade responsibility simply by refusing to comply with an international arbitral award,” said Naftogaz acting CEO Sergii Fedorenko.

The 71-metre (233-foot) *Professor Molchanov*, built in Finland in 1982, can carry 32 crew and 52 passengers and has a library, sauna, bar and two restaurants, according to the Cruisemapper website. It is used for scientific expeditions and commercial cruises.

The ship arrived on Tuesday in Barentsburg with a party of Russian scientists, according to a journalist who was accompanying them, who did not say how many people were on board.

Andrei Gorbunov, editor-in-chief of Komsomolskaya Pravda (KP) radio, said the ship had docked without incident and the

expedition members had headed ashore. News did not emerge until Wednesday evening that the ship had been seized.

“No one has been arrested. We are all going about our business as usual,” Gorbunov wrote on KP’s website. “For the time being, the Professor Molchanov is simply forbidden from leaving the port of Barentsburg.”

Clovis Trevino, a partner at US law firm Covington which is representing Naftogaz, said she expected Russia to fight the arrest in court.

“So we need to win another legal battle to be able to auction the vessel and get the money for our clients, which is the ultimate goal,” she told Reuters.

Trevino said Covington and its Norwegian counterpart Wikborg Rein had been monitoring the ship for months. Its likely value is only a small fraction of the total amount owed to Naftogaz, which she said now totals around \$6bn including costs and interest.

But she called its seizure a “very meaningful win”.

The seizure was ordered on

Monday by a district court which required the governor of Svalbard to ensure that the ship is not moved.

“Russia can demand that the district court reassess the case,” the Norwegian Justice Ministry said.

Naftogaz said it would continue to pursue Russian assets around the world until the compensation is paid. It has listed several jurisdictions, including the US, France and Britain as well as Finland, where Russian assets have been frozen. Russia is appealing, saying it was given no notice.

Svalbard, a Norwegian territory since 1925, lies midway between the North Pole and the European mainland and is governed under a 1920 treaty that also allows citizens of signatory states, including Russia, to settle there without a visa.

Barentsburg is one of two Russian settlements on Svalbard which have a combined 392 residents out of a total population of 2,914, according to Statistics Norway.

Body of convicted war criminal Ratko Mladic returns to Serbia

Reuters
Belgrade

Serbian government plane brought the body of former Army commander Ratko Mladic, who died last week serving a life sentence for war crimes, back to Belgrade yesterday for what is expected to be a huge funeral.

Mladic, who was convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during Bosnia’s 1992-95 war, died last week in a UN detention facility in The Hague aged 84.

The plane landed at Belgrade airport minutes before 6pm (1600 GMT) carrying his coffin, which was wrapped in a Serbian flag, along with Mladic’s son, granddaughter and Serbian Justice Minister Nenad Vujic.

Serbian soldiers carried the coffin to a red van which Serbian media said would take it to a military hospital where the autopsy will be



The aircraft carrying the body of Bosnian Serb Ratko Mladic, former general convicted of Bosnia genocide, lands from The Hague, in Belgrade, yesterday. (Reuters)

conducted over the weekend.

A Serbian government minister said initially that Mladic would be given a state funeral but, following an outcry by European leaders, the government has not confirmed that.

Serbian media said a commemoration ceremony will take place tomorrow in the army hall in central Belgrade and the funeral will be held in a church in a Belgrade suburb on Monday, with Mladic

then buried at a cemetery beside his daughter.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said yesterday that he expected tens of thousands of people to attend the funeral and that

it would be a challenge to provide security.

Mladic was found guilty by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), of genocide for his role in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in which about 8,000 Bosniak Muslim men and boys were killed after Bosnian Serb forces overran the UN-designated enclave.

He was also convicted over the 43-month siege of Sarajevo, during which about 10,000 people were killed.

However, he remained a revered figure among many Serbs in Serbia and in Bosnia’s autonomous Serb Republic.

His death stirred tensions in the region, with officials warning that a state funeral would put Serbia’s prospects of joining the European Union at risk.

“The glorification of Ratko Mladic as a war criminal is against fundamental European values and has no place in the European Union or in the countries that aspire

to become members of the Union,” EU enlargement commissioner Marta Kos said on Tuesday.

“I hope that the government in Belgrade is aware of what is at stake.”

Croatia’s Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic put it more bluntly, saying that if “Serbia was to organise a state funeral for Mladic it would close the door to the European Union”.

The Hague-based UN mechanism that deals with residual cases from the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal is investigating the circumstances of Mladic’s death, a regular procedure when inmates die at the UN detention unit in The Hague. It is not yet clear when the results will be made public.

Mladic, who had suffered health problem for years, had been treated in the prison hospital before his death. His relatives, and Russia, had criticised his treatment. The UN war crimes court said his health was fragile but well managed.



Snapshots from the Museum of Islamic Art yesterday evening.

Sheikha Al Mayassa inaugurates two exhibitions on Uzbek heritage at MIA

HE the Qatar Museums (QM) Chairperson Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad al-Thani inaugurated two exhibitions yesterday evening at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), highlighting different aspects of Uzbek culture and heritage.

The opening of “Uzbekistan: Heritage in Motion”, which runs until November 28, and “Ektashif: Uzbekistan”, which continues until November 24, comes as part of cultural exchange efforts and initiatives to introduce audiences to the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan.

The two exhibitions offer a cultural and artistic experience that allows visitors to explore key aspects of Uzbek culture and its diverse arts, customs, and traditions.

They showcase elements of a cultural identity that has been shaped by a long history of interaction among civilisations through a collection of exhibits and content that illustrates aspects of Uzbek life and creative traditions passed

down through generations.

MIA director Sheikha al-Nassr told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that, throughout history, the land of Uzbekistan had served as a meeting point for cultures and ideas, a beacon of learning and knowledge, and the home of some of the most prominent scholars and thinkers, including Ibn Sina, al-Khwarizmi and Imam al-Bukhari.

She added that the two exhibitions present aspects of Uzbekistan’s rich history, spanning from the 8th century to the present day.

Al-Nassr added that “Uzbekistan: Heritage in Motion” features 140 objects from the national collection from 13 museums in Uzbekistan, allowing visitors to explore important milestones in the country’s history and its cultural and civilisational heritage.

She noted that “Ektashif: Uzbekistan” presents a different dimension of this cultural experience and was the result of a



journey undertaken by seven Qatari artists to several Uzbek cities, where they explored landmarks and experienced aspects of local life and culture before translating the inspiration from their journey into a collection of artworks.

“Uzbekistan: Heritage in Motion” celebrates the growing cultural exchange between Qatar and Uzbekistan.

Across four sections, the exhibition brings together historical and

contemporary works, costumes and immersive installations, taking visitors on a journey through centuries of artistic and intellectual exchange while highlighting the enduring influence of Uzbek artistic traditions on art, architecture and craftsmanship through to the present day.

“Ektashif: Uzbekistan” meanwhile broadens the dialogue between Qatar and Uzbekistan by presenting new works by Qatari

artists inspired by research trips to Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara.

The exhibition features works by seven Qatari artists inspired by their journeys to Uzbekistan’s historic cities.

The works highlight architectural details from the Timurid era, geometric brick architecture, ceramic-making traditions, ikat textiles, and traditional craft practices passed down through generations

that remain alive in Uzbekistan today.

The participating artists are Aisha al-Muhammadi, Abdulla al-Fakhroo, Lina al-Aali, Maryam Abel, Ameena al-Boinin, The Nourah, and Hameed al-Qahtani.

Through its diverse artistic approaches and choice of materials, the exhibition allows audiences to explore Uzbekistan’s history and culture from seven distinctive perspectives. – QNA



Lawh wa Qalam: A new chapter in Qatar’s rich cultural scene

Qatar is home to a rich and diverse museum landscape, spanning heritage, Islamic art, sport and contemporary creativity, offering residents and visitors new perspectives on the country, the region and the world.

Adding a distinctive new chapter to this cultural offering is Lawh wa Qalam: M F Husain Museum, an immersive celebration of the life, work and legacy of one of the 20th century’s most influential modern artists.

Since its opening by Qatar Foundation in Education City in November last year, the museum has welcomed more than 9,000 visitors and has been named among *Time* magazine’s World’s Greatest Places 2026.

It is also a member of the International Council of Museums.

Lawh wa Qalam invites visitors to journey through M F Husain’s extraordinary creative career, from the influences that shaped his work to the important final chapter of his life in Qatar.

Today, Lawh wa Qalam brings many dimensions of his life and work together under one roof.

The building itself carries Husain’s creative imprint.

Inspired by his own sketch for a cultural space in Doha, architect Martand Khosla brought the distinctive blue structure to life, and it now stands as a striking addition to Education City.

The experience begins with a reception space inspired by Husain’s home and studio, followed by an immersive 360° room that brings his distinctive brushstrokes to life.



Across the galleries, visitors can explore paintings, photography, tapestries, sculptures and watercolours spanning different periods of his career.

Highlights include *The Artist and His Model*, *Doll’s Wedding* and panels from *India’s 100 Years of Struggle for Freedom*.

Interactive elements add another dimension to the experience, including a Praxinoscope featuring scenes from Husain’s films and a periscope offering panoramic views across Education City.

The “A Curious Mind” gallery explores

his interest in faith, history and civilisation through works including the *Theorama* series.

The museum’s final gallery explores Husain’s connection to Qatar, where he spent the later years of his life.

It was during this period that he embarked on one of his most ambitious projects: a planned series of 99 paintings exploring Arab and Islamic civilisation.

Husain completed more than 30 works before his passing in 2011.

Works including *Warriors and Poets* and *Zuljanah Horse* offer a glimpse into

this important final chapter of his artistic journey.

Lawh wa Qalam also offers a programme of educational and community experiences.

By the end of June this year, the museum had delivered close to 50 workshops and learning activities for more than 700 participants, ranging from school programmes to family and community sessions.

Visitors can also explore the library, auditorium, creativity hub and gift shop, or stop by the café outside the museum.

The only constant



Doha’s evolving cityscape comes into view along its busy roads, where modern skyscrapers, landscaped spaces and well-developed highways reflect the capital’s rapid urban growth and changing skyline. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

AlHosh Gallery unveils ‘Frame and Focus’ as new photo exhibition opens today

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar Museums (QM) opens the doors to “Frame and Focus” today at AlHosh Gallery, marking a fresh addition to its fall 2026-27 season line-up.

A press tour scheduled for 4pm will offer media a first look at the exhibition and an introduction to the photographic experiences on display.

According to the QM, the show features a curated selection of works produced by participants of the Advanced Photography Training Course, a specialised 14-week programme delivered in partnership with Qatar Preparatory School and the VII Foundation.

The course was designed to sharpen participants’ technical skills and deepen their understanding of contemporary photographic practice.

Drawing photographers from within Qatar and abroad, the programme created a melting pot of creative exchange, allowing participants to trade ideas and expertise while shaping their own individual approaches, from subject

selection and visual composition to the art of telling human stories through the lens.

The resulting exhibition captures the growth participants achieved over the course of the programme, underlining how photography can serve as a tool for expression, documentation and storytelling, going beyond the simple recording of scenes and moments.



On display is a broad range of styles, spanning documentary photography, portraiture, visual storytelling, and contemporary photographic approaches, reflecting the participants’ varied interests and perspectives developed during their training.

The works invite visitors to

explore different readings of images and the meanings embedded within them, touching on themes of people, place, memory and everyday life.

The exhibition forms part of the QM’s ongoing commitment to nurturing contemporary artistic talent, offering photographers and artists a platform to present their work to the public.

It also underscores the QM’s efforts to bridge the gap between training and practice, giving participants the chance to turn newly acquired skills into finished art exhibitions.

For those who completed the training course, the exhibition marks a meaningful milestone, bringing together weeks of learning, experimentation and practice under one roof, and offering the public insight into their creative journeys and evolving techniques.

“Frame and Focus” will remain open to the public from September 5 to October 5, giving visitors the chance to experience first-hand the fruits of a training programme built on learning, practice and creativity, and to engage with a diverse array of contemporary photographic perspectives.