

### Endless Options, Seamless Solutions: Your Real Estate Partner

Worker Accommodation Solutions | Warehouses  
Villas | Apartments | Retail Spaces | Open Yards

**+974 3030 0880**  
**+974 6664 3794**

Locations:  
Doha | Al Shamal | Abu Naqfa | Umm Birka  
Umm Sal | Al Khor | Birkat Al Awamer





### Ready Cafeteria For Rent

#### A Running Cafeteria For Rent With Full Equipment & Furniture, Attractive Location & Nice View

Call: 33598672,52038746,50576993,

### Shop & win win is back!

Order groceries  
worth 85 QAR for  
a chance to win!

Use code: **WINTMART**

500 QAR



### Sky Vision Real Estate Offer

#### Lounge & Club For Rent

#### Inside a 4 Star Hotel With All Equipment & Decoration

Call: 33598672,52038746,50576993,

[www.gulf-times.com](http://www.gulf-times.com)



[gulftimes](#)



[GulfTimes\\_QATAR](#)



[gulftimes](#)



[GulftimesVideos](#)

## Haj pilgrimage to start on June 14

Saudi Arabia said the Haj will start on June 14 after astronomical observatories spotted the crescent moon yesterday evening, signalling the beginning of the month in which the annual pilgrimage falls. The Supreme Court determined that Dhu al-Hijjah, would begin on Friday, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said. The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means.

## Sudan's RSF kills more than 100 in attack on village

The Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces attacked a village in Gezira State on Wednesday, killing more than 100 people, local pro-democracy activists said, noting that the army did not respond to pleas for help. The army did not respond to a request for comment. The top United Nations official in Sudan called for an investigation into the incident in Wad Alnouri village in central Sudan.

## Russia arrests French man for 'espionage'

Russia said yesterday it had detained a Frenchman suspected of gathering information about the Russian military, a serious charge at a time of acute tension between Moscow and the West over the war in Ukraine. A Swiss-based nonprofit, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), said the arrested man was its employee and named him as Laurent Vinatier, 47, an adviser on Russia and Eurasia.

## Bannon ordered to report to prison

Steve Bannon, a former top adviser to Donald Trump, must report to prison by July 1 to serve a four-month sentence for contempt of Congress, a federal judge said yesterday. The decision means Bannon will likely be behind bars for a critical stretch of the US presidential campaign as former President Trump faces Democratic President Joe Biden in the Nov. 5 election. **Page 8**



Palestinians check a UN-school housing displaced people that was hit during Israeli bombardment in Nuseirat, in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

## 37 killed in Israeli strike on UN school in Gaza

Reuters/AFP  
Cairo/Jerusalem

**A** Gaza hospital said at least 37 people were killed in an Israeli strike yesterday on a UN-run school.

Video footage showed Palestinians hauling away bodies and scores of injured in a local hospital after the attack, which took place at a sensitive moment in mediated talks on a ceasefire that would involve releasing hostages held by Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and many of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

The United States issued a joint statement with other countries calling on Israel and Hamas to make whatever compromises were necessary to finalise a deal after eight months of war in the Gaza Strip. Ismail al-Thawabta, the director of the Hamas-run government media office, rejected Israel's assertion that the UN school in Nuseirat, in central Gaza, had hidden a Hamas command post.

Washington said it expected Israel to be fully transparent in making information about the strike public.

The school, run by the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), was sheltering 6,000 displaced people at the time,

## No response from Hamas yet: Qatar

Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari said mediators had yet to receive a response from Palestine's Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) on the latest proposal for a ceasefire and prisoner swap deal between Hamas and the Israeli occupation forces. Hamas said it was considering the proposal, Dr al-Ansari told Qatar News Agency (QNA). He affirmed that Qatar, Egypt and the United States of America are pressing on their joint mediation efforts, calling for not paying attention to unverifiable media reports and relying on reliable official sources, especially amid the current sensitive negotiations. **(QNA)**

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said.

The United Nations condemned the "horrific, tragic" attack.

The building was once used as a school, but with no schools now operating in Gaza it was being used as a shelter, he added.

## New rules give huge benefits to Qatar retirees

QNA  
Doha

**T**he General Retirement and Social Insurance Authority (GRSIA) has confirmed that the two recent Cabinet decisions regarding the conditions for early retirement eligibility and the formation of a dispute resolution committee, including its operational system and procedures, came in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.

The vision that aims to establish an effective social protection system for all Qataris, safeguarding their rights, valuing their active participation in society, and ensuring them a sufficient income for a dignified life.

Director of the Legal Affairs Department at GRSIA, Ali bin Rashid al-Marri told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the Cabinet decision on early retirement eligibility adds exceptional benefits for certain service ending cases. This allows individuals to benefit from the pension under the Social Insurance Law according to the previous rules regarding age and service periods, serving as transitional provisions between the repealed Retirement and Pensions Law and the current Social Insurance Law.

He explained that the decision applies to those whose service ended starting from the effective date of the Social Insurance Law on January 3, 2023. The decision took into account the gradual adjustment of the retiree's age, the subscription period, and the service duration to avoid harming long-time subscribers from the changes in the new law, al-Marri said.

He also noted that the Cabinet decided that those subject to the repealed Retirement and Pensions Law No. (24) of 2002 and whose service ended under the new Social Insurance Law, due to resignation, disciplinary action, or other reasons, could benefit from the pension under specific conditions.

According to the decision, in cases of resignation without pension entitlement, individuals born in 1983 and earlier can benefit from early retirement at age 42 instead of the 50 years stipulated in the law, provided they have at least 17 years of insurance subscription

instead of 25, and a minimum of 12 years of actual service instead of 20.

For those born in 1984, early retirement eligibility requires a minimum age of 44, at least 19 years of subscription, and 14 years of actual service. The age, subscription period, and service duration will gradually increase by two years until they meet the minimum periods specified in the Social Insurance Law.

In cases of service termination due to disciplinary action or other reasons without pension entitlement, the same exceptional rules for resignation apply, except for the age adjustment.

**The decision took into account the gradual adjustment of the retiree's age, the subscription period, and the service duration to avoid harming long-time subscribers from the changes in the new law**

For those born in 1983 and earlier, a subscription period of 17 years and a minimum actual service duration of 12 years are required. For those born in 1984, a subscription period of at least 19 years and a minimum actual service of 14 years are needed, with gradual increases to meet the minimum requirements of the Social Insurance Law.

Regarding the Cabinet's decision to form the dispute resolution committee and its operational system, al-Marri explained that the new decision introduces different provisions compared to the previous committee formation decision (Cabinet Decision No. 27 of 2007). The new formation includes judicial elements, balanced representation from all work entities and subscribers, and special procedures and timelines to ensure swift resolution without compromising the fundamental guarantees and principles of litigation. The decision also allows for resolving disputes through negotiation and mutual agreement, avoiding lengthy litigation processes. Additionally, the committee's decisions are given executive power, making them enforceable immediately.

The decision also streamlined the process by limiting appeals against the committee's decisions to the Court of Appeal, ensuring prompt justice.

## Spain joins S. Africa's Gaza genocide case at UN court

AFP  
Madrid

**S**pain said yesterday it would join South Africa's case at the UN's top court in which Pretoria has accused Israel of "genocide" in the Gaza Strip.

The statement came a week after Spain, along with Ireland and Norway, recognised the state of Palestine, sparking fury from Israel.

"Our sole goal is to put an end to the war and to advance on the road of applying the two-state solution", Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares told journalists.

South Africa brought the case before the International Court of Justice last year. It alleges that Israel's Gaza offensive breached the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

Israel has strongly denied the accusation.

Albares, asked if he felt Israel's actions in Gaza amounted to genocide, said it was up to the court to decide.

"At the moment we see a large-scale war that does not distinguish between civilian and military targets in Gaza, as well as the enormous risk of regional spillover", he added.

Several Latin American na-



Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares

tions, including Colombia and Mexico, have already joined South Africa's proceedings before the court.

Until now, however, no European country has taken that step. Ireland has also indicated it plans to join the case.

Set up after World War II, the Hague-based ICJ rules in disputes between states.

The ICJ on Friday ordered Israel to ensure "unimpeded access" to UN-mandated investigators to look into allegations of genocide.

In a ruling on January 26, the ICJ also ordered Israel to do everything it could to prevent acts of genocide during its military operation in Gaza.

But South Africa has since returned several times to the ICJ arguing that the dire humanitarian situation in the territory compels the court to issue further fresh emergency measures.

On May 24, the court ordered Israel to "immediately" halt its military offensive in the city of Rafah and keep open the key border crossing there for "unhindered" humanitarian aid.

It also called for the "unconditional" release of hostages taken by Palestinian resistance group Hamas on October 7.

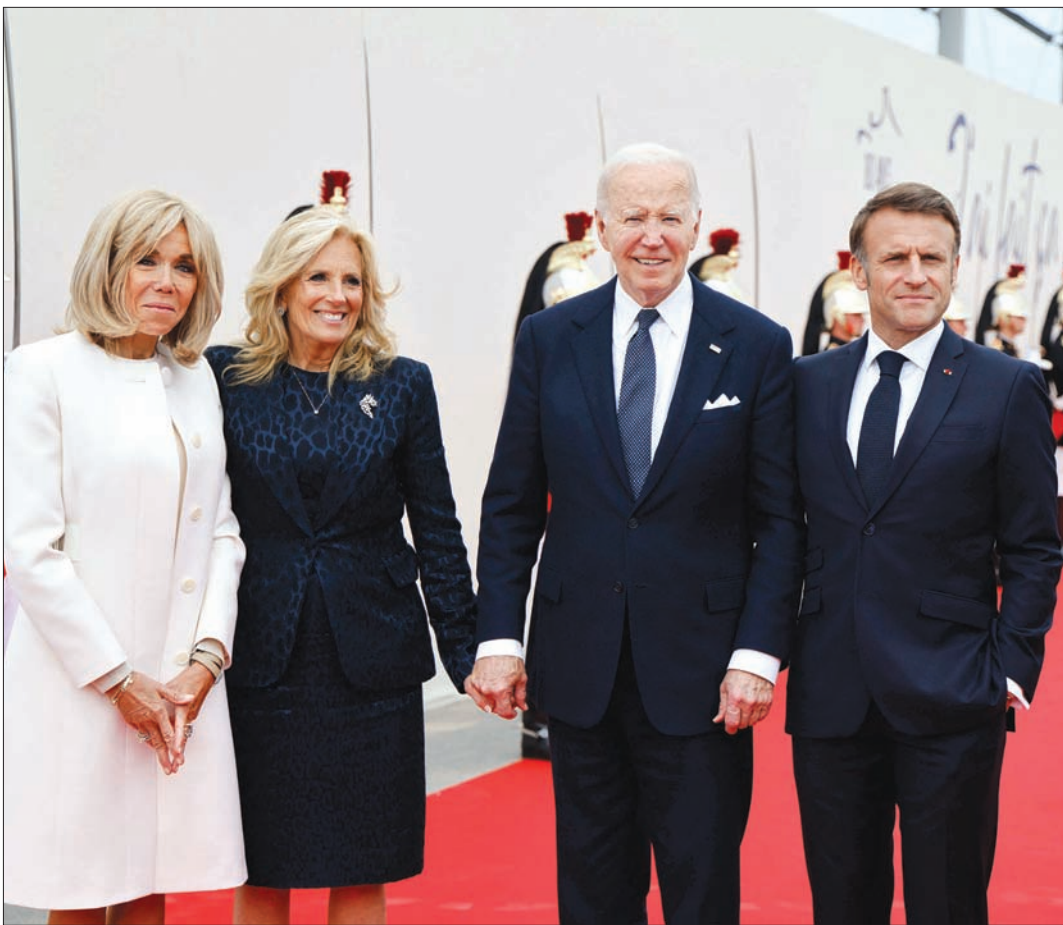
"It is urgent that we all support the court so that precautionary measures aimed at stopping any military operation are respected," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said at an economic forum.

"And it is essential that we all strengthen the United Nations, supporting the role of the court as the highest judicial organ of a rules-based international system.

"Have no doubt: Spain will stand on the right side of history."

While ICJ rulings are legally binding, the court has no concrete means to enforce them. For example, it ordered Russia to halt its invasion of Ukraine, to no avail.

## 80th anniversary of World War II 'D-Day'



France's President Emmanuel Macron (R), French President's wife Brigitte Macron (L) pose with US President Joe Biden and US First Lady Jill Biden upon their arrival to attend the International commemorative ceremony at Omaha Beach marking the 80th anniversary of the World War II "D-Day" Allied landings in Normandy, in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, in northwestern France, yesterday. The D-Day ceremonies on June 6 this year mark the 80th anniversary since the launch of 'Operation Overlord', a vast military operation by Allied forces in Normandy, which turned the tide of World War II, eventually leading to the liberation of occupied France and the end of the war against Nazi Germany. **Page 9**





## Ministry of Interior completes basic aviation security training for officers

The Ministry of Interior concluded yesterday a training course on basic aviation security for officers, organised by the Airport Security Department. The five-day training brought together officers from the Airport Security Department and from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in implementation of the outcomes of the meetings of the Airport Security Officials Committee of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). The course offered knowledge and exchanged expertise on the laws and regulations governing the work and procedures of airport security. **(QNA)**



## Amir receives joint written message from Jordan king, Egyptian president, UN chief



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a joint written message pertaining to relations from King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein of Jordan, President of Egypt Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Antonio Guterres. The message was handed to HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi during his meeting with ambassador of Jordan Zaid Mufleh al-Lawzi and ambassador of Egypt Amr El Sherbiny. **(QNA)**

## Minister meets director-general of Arab Urban Development Institute



HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met with the Director General of Arab Urban Development Institute Dr Anas al-Mughairy. The meeting discussed aspects of co-operation between the Ministry of Municipality and the Institute in areas of common interest. The meeting also touched on the institute's strategy, programmes and activities that aim to serve various municipalities in Qatar, and work to enhance partnership between cities and global urban organisations. **(QNA)**

## Official

## Amir sends cables of congratulations to king of Sweden

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King Carl XVI Gustaf of the Kingdom of Sweden on the occasion of his country's National Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson on the occasion. **(QNA)**

## Amir receives written message from transitional president of Burkina Faso

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from Transitional President of Burkina Faso Captain Ibrahim Traore pertaining to bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received the message during his meeting yesterday with Special Adviser to the Transitional President of the Republic of Burkina Faso Inoussa Traore. **(QNA)**

## Qatar condemns storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli occupation government officials, Knesset members, settlers

Qatar condemned in the strongest terms the storming of the courtyards of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli occupation government officials, members of the Knesset and settlers and the organisation of a march in the occupied Jerusalem under the protection of the occupation forces, as a flagrant violation of international law and the Hashemite custodianship of the holy sites in occupied Jerusalem. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned of the Israeli occupation government's escalating policy in the occupied Palestinian territories, and stressed that the concurrent attempts to undermine the religious and historical status of Al-Aqsa Mosque are not only an attack on the Palestinians but on millions of Muslims around the world. The MoFA also warned of the consequences of continuing such violations against the Palestinian people and their Islamic and Christian sanctities, and the resulting expansion of the circle of violence, especially in light of the ongoing war on the Gaza Strip, urging the international community to take urgent action to stop these attacks. It reiterated Qatar's firm position on the justice of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, including the full right to practice their religious rituals without restrictions, and to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. **(QNA)**

## Qatar strongly condemns shooting attack on US embassy in Lebanon

Qatar expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the shooting attack that targeted the United States Embassy in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and resulted in the injury of one of the embassy's guards. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm position on rejecting violence, terrorism and criminal acts, regardless of the motives and reasons. The ministry also stressed the importance of providing the necessary protection to all diplomatic missions and their staff as they are among the pillars of the international system. The ministry expressed Qatar's wishes of a speedy recovery for the injured. **(QNA)**

# Workshop explores experiences in circular economy, waste treatment

**QNA**  
Doha

The Waste Recycling and Treatment Department at the Ministry of Municipality, in co-operation with the embassy of Spain in Qatar and the Chamber of Commerce of Spain, organised a workshop on circular economy and waste management.

In a statement, the Ministry of Municipality said that the workshop, which was attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Public Services Affairs Eng Abdullah Ahmed al-Karani and Spanish ambassador Javier Carbajosa Sanchez, aimed to exchange expertise and transfer knowledge and modern experiences between the two sides in the field of circular economy and waste treatment, in addition to the best methods used to treat and recycle waste, as well as the laws and legislation related to recycling.

In this context, Eng Abdullah Ahmed al-Karani emphasised that Qatar has provided various distinguished and successful experiences in the field of effective waste management, such as achieving a zero waste rate during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and other sports tournaments,



the most recent of which was the Asian Cup Qatar 2023.

He indicated that this was the first time that this percentage had been achieved in the history of the World Cup tournaments, as this waste was converted into fertiliser or into clean energy at the Domestic Solid Waste Management Center (DSWMC) in Mesaieed, which is considered the first centre in the Middle East that receives and treats household waste on a daily basis, produce electricity and fertiliser, and sort recyclable materials.

He said that the Ministry of

Municipality has worked carefully to get rid of all the tyre stock that has accumulated in the country for many years, as a well-thought-out plan has been developed to safely dispose of discarded tyres, and to find successful solutions to recycle them in all its sites, in co-operation with local private sector companies and tyre recycling factories in the Al Afja area for recycling industries, which the country has designated for recycling industries.

He pointed out that in light of the increasing interest Qatar attaches to sustainability, recycling,



and waste treatment to implement the third national development strategy 2024-2030 in accordance with the Qatar National Vision 2030, the ministry was keen to organise the Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition, which is considered an important platform for exchanging experiences in the field of waste recycling and sustainability. This conference has been held annually since 2020, with the participation of various local, regional, and international bodies, in addition to the participation of private sector companies and

factories, which will contribute to treating and recycling waste in the State of Qatar.

He indicated that this workshop constitutes an exceptional opportunity to meet with experts from the Spanish side to benefit from the distinguished Spanish experience in the circular economy and recycling and to learn about the advanced experiences of both sides to benefit from them to integrate efforts to achieve the strategic goals of Qatar in the field of improving the quality of life and sustaining and preserving resources.

# MoPH celebrates World Food Safety Day

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) joins the world to celebrate the World Food Safety Day which falls on June 7 each year. Under the theme 'Food Safety: Prepare for the Unexpected', this year's celebration aims to raise awareness and support actions and plans to achieve 'safer food for a healthier planet!'

It highlights the role of governments in preparing for the unexpected by committing to national plans for food safety emergency responses, strengthening surveillance systems, and enhancing monitoring capabilities.

The celebration also emphasises the importance of the roles of both food companies and consumers in preparing for unexpected incidents. It aims to raise awareness about the importance of improving communication and co-ordination among government bodies, the private sector, and the public to respond effectively to food-related incidents.

In this context, MoPH is launching an extensive awareness campaign through various media outlets. This includes disseminating food safety awareness messages via social media and the ministry's website, as well as distributing brochures and booklets

on food safety. Additionally, the exterior of the Ministry of Public Health building will be illuminated in orange, symbolising World Food Safety Day.

The ministry is also organising numerous important activities and events. One of the highlights is a workshop to present and discuss key food safety management projects with strategic partners, aimed at involving all stakeholders in making decisions related to food safety.

Furthermore, the ministry participated in Qatar University's event celebrating World Food Safety Day, during which the first batch of students specialising in

food safety graduated. Director of the Food Safety Department at the Ministry of Public Health, Wasan Abdullah al-Baker stated that the celebration of World Food Safety Day contributes to enhancing the ministry's efforts in monitoring imported foods at Qatar's entry points and inspecting local food establishments. The celebration is also an occasion to underline the roles of all stakeholders in ensuring food safety.

She noted that the Food Safety Department has achieved numerous accomplishments in the area of "preparing for the unexpected," which is this year's World Food Safety Day theme. Key achieve-

ments include effective communication with the International Food Safety Authorities Network, with the Food Safety Department serving as the national contact point for Qatar. Additionally, a multidisciplinary team has been activated to manage food incidents, and the roles of surveillance, response, and emergency preparedness in food safety have been strengthened. A guide for the procedures of withdrawing food products has also been prepared.

In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared World Food Safety Day to raise awareness about the importance of food safety globally.



## Minister of Interior participates in Italian Carabinieri's 210th anniversary celebrations



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani participated in the celebration of the 210th anniversary of the foundation of the Carabinieri held in the Italian capital, Rome, in the presence of President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella. On this occasion, HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) praised the Italian Carabinieri's long history and professionalism, expressing his confidence that their partnership with Lekhwiya will be a valuable model for international security co-operation. The ceremony saw the participation of officers from Lekhwiya in the military parade, and was attended by a number of security and diplomatic officials from both countries. **(QNA)**

# Haj Mission making co-ordinated efforts to serve pilgrims: Awqaf

The Qatari Haj Mission continues its efforts to help the pilgrims from the country perform Haj smoothly and provide them with appropriate facilities. "The Qatari Haj Mission and its supporting administrative and technical units continue their efforts in an integrated manner," a statement from the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs said.

Deputy head of the Qatari Haj Mission Ali Sultan al-Musaifri holds daily meetings with members of the advisory committee and heads of the administrative and technical units supporting the mission. This is to assess the latest preparations and equipment made by all units and affiliated committees and to discuss the remaining work and the mechanism for implementation rapidly.

Al-Musaifri explained that all units continue the work through specific plans and programmes that are constantly updated according to the needs and current circumstances. They are

discussed directly and daily with the heads of the concerned units, with the aim of unifying efforts and providing the necessary support to all units leading to the completion of all arrangements for the camps at Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah.

The mission is supported by several units that provide qualitative services to the country's pilgrims. These include Shariah, medical, information systems and communication units along with a support centre. Also, there are units of control and inspection, logistics services, co-ordination, follow-up and airport. The public relations and media unit also works with the mission.

The Medical Unit is working to provide the necessary health services to the pilgrims in Makkah. A specialised team of doctors will accompany the pilgrims from Qatar. The unit will provide all the necessary capabilities, equipment, medicines and treatments for Qatari pilgrims with specialised doctors, nurses, paramedics and pharma-



The Qatari Haj Mission holds daily meetings.

cists accompanying the Qatari Haj delegation.

To provide high-level care that guarantee the safety and

health of the country's pilgrims the team will work in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health, Hamad Medical Corpo-

ration and the Primary Health Care Corporation. The Co-ordination, Follow-up and Airport Unit at Qatari Haj Mission is

making the final preparations to ensure the travel procedures of the pilgrims from Qatar are completed smoothly.

## Police Academy receives two prizes in Prince Nayef Arab Security contest

**QNA**  
Tunis

The Police Academy received the first place award for the security studies branch, and the third place award for the best pioneering security programmes for the Al Gad (future) Police programme at the level of the Arab world, within the competitions of the Prince Nayef Award for Arab Security for the year 2023, which was announced previously.

The two awards were presented during a meeting of the Police Academy delegation with Secretary-General of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers Dr Mohamed Ali Koman, and Secretary-General of the Prince Nayef Award for Arab Security at the headquarters of the Awards General Secretariat in the capital, Tunis.

After receiving the award, Vice-President of the Police Academy and Director of the Police College Lieutenant Colonel Fahd Saeed al-Subate affirmed the academy's keenness to encourage and support scientific research and the spirit of innovation and creativity, to confront developments in the arena of security and legal work and move forward in achieving this.



## Ministry reiterates push to enhancing quality of educational service centres

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, represented by the department of educational services centres for quality assurance and control, has reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing the quality of services provided by educational centres, amidst the rapid developments in continuous regular education.

In a statement, Iman Ali al-Naimi, director of the department of educational services centres at the ministry, highlighted that continuous regular education aids in learning new skills required in the evolving job market, which necessitates an effective system for monitoring educational centres and ensuring the quality of services offered.



Al-Naimi outlined the operational mechanism of these centres in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. She emphasised that the ministry mandates all educational and training service centres not to engage with any

external entities or offer courses, events, or conferences outside the centre's premises without approval from the department of educational services within the Ministry's Private Education Affairs Sector.

She explained that this directive underscores the ministry's dedication to ensuring the quality of practices and regulating training processes, thereby benefiting all stakeholders across various sectors and institutions in the country.

She stressed that by maintaining quality assurance and control, educational centres can provide high-quality continuous education that meets the needs of all community members. **(QNA)**

## QNA concludes training course on crafting news stories for new media

**QNA**  
Doha

Qatar News Agency (QNA) concluded a training course titled 'Crafting News Stories for New Media in the Era of Evolving News', with participation from journalists from QNA and the Kuwait News Agency (Kuna). The five-day training course, held at QNA's training halls, aimed to enhance the skills of journalists working in news agencies, particularly those involved in publishing news stories on new media and social media platforms.

The course focused on familiarising participants with QNA's experience in publishing news stories on the agency's website and its social media pages, in addition to drawing on the expertise of Kuwaiti journalists in the fields of media, news editing, and social media publishing.

The training programme included theoretical and practical lessons



on editing and publishing techniques used in new media, with an emphasis on hands-on training to improve journalists' abilities to handle the two key characteristics of this new media format: speed and reach.

At the end of the course, the trainees presented final projects that reflected the editorial skills and practical knowledge they had acquired during the training.

Such courses are significant for their ability to provide specialised training spaces for journalists who deal with social media as sources

of news and produce news by allowing them to create publishable journalistic content for new media and influencing how audiences receive human-interest stories. QNA offers high-quality technical equipment and professional human resources. Its training halls provide an outstanding training experience for both journalists and trainers, aligning with the agency's values, mission, and future vision to enhance media efficacy, making it an indispensable training platform in the Gulf and regional media landscape.

## Qatar attends AIDSMO General Assembly

Qatar participated in the 28th session of the General Assembly of the Arab Industrial Development, Standardisation and Mining Organisation (AIDSMO), which was held in the Moroccan capital, Rabat.

Ambassador of Qatar to Morocco, Sheikh Abdullah bin Thamer al-Thani, chaired Qatar's delegation to the meeting. **(QNA)**







# Malaysia, Qatar enhance co-operation across multiple sectors: ambassador

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

The recent visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Qatar has significantly strengthened the already warm and friendly relations between the two nations, bolstering co-operation across multiple sectors, Malaysian ambassador Zamshari Shaharan has said.

“Our Prime Minister’s recent visit, I think, just provided this momentum to bring the bilat-

eral relations to greater heights,” the envoy told *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the “Malaysia Truly Asia: Food Culture” event in Doha. In the area of culture and arts, Shaharan highlighted the importance of showcasing Malaysia’s rich and diverse culinary landscape in the country, saying that food culture is a melting pot of different tastes in the South-east Asian nation.

He pointed out that Malaysian food culture is a fascinating blend of various influences, including Indian and GCC flavours, among others, making it a

captivating experience for international visitors. The recently-held ‘Malaysia Truly Asia: Food Culture’ in Doha aims to bridge the cultural gap between the two countries through shared gastronomic experiences.

Shaharan noted that the organising of this event will foster people-to-people connections and highlight the multi-ethnic heritage of both Qatar and Malaysia. In the area of medical tourism, the envoy underlined the potential for attracting Qatari patients to Malaysia’s advanced healthcare system. He,

however, admitted that while efforts have been made to promote this sector, success has been limited, citing a number of factors.

However, Shaharan said he remains optimistic, stressing that Malaysia is on the right direction as it continues to woo Qataris and the potential for improvement through government-to-government arrangements. “We have the attractions, hospitals, and everything, but I think we still need to work on marketing our capabilities,” he admitted. “We are trying to do that”.

To further bolster medical

tourism initiatives, Shaharan said the Malaysia Healthcare Tourism Council is planning a symposium this year. This event, he added, is anticipated to strengthen collaborations between the two countries and elevate Malaysia’s profile as a medical tourism destination for Qatar.

Reiterating the significance of the prime minister’s recent visit as a catalyst for strengthening the ties between Qatar and Malaysia, he expressed confidence that the momentum will lead to increased co-operation in various sectors.



Malaysian ambassador Zamshari Shaharan. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

## Substitute for the Secretariat of the Vatican receives copy of Qatari envoy’s credentials



Substitute for the Secretariat of State of the Vatican, Archbishop Edgar Pena Parra received a copy of the credentials of Asma bint Najj al-Amri, as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar (Non-Resident) to the Vatican. **(QNA)**

## Raffles Doha unveils host of Eid al-Adha festivities

Raffles Doha, has announced some special package and has invited guests to create unforgettable moments this Eid al-Adha. The ultra-luxury hotel with 132 suites, two swimming pools, and an array of distinguished dining venues promises an unforgettable family celebration with its new Dive into Summer Bliss offer, Eid Brunch and Breakfast at the elegant L’Artisan, and the ultimate wellness escape at the exclusive Spa Suites at Raffles Spa & Wellness.

Guests can enjoy beautifully designed suites with stunning Gulf views, personalised butler service, an extensive beverages and snacks and bespoke amenities. They can also elevate the leisure with complimentary access to the Bagatelle Beach Club, or venture into the vibrant heart of Doha with captivating city excursions.

The little guests are invited for

an adventure at Raffles Kids’ Club, where they will be entertained all day with games, activities, Lego, a mindfulness area, climbing wall, VR gaming station and more. There is also a role-play area with a giant kitchen and stations for cooking and baking classes, a quiet room with yoga mats for meditation, and a creative room for arts and crafts.

Package starts from QR1,500 per suite per night. Amid the fun and relaxation, spectacular culinary experiences are also a highlight at Raffles Doha. Guests can start the Eid morning with a delightful breakfast at L’Artisan, where the celebration of Eid Al-Adha begins with a feast for the senses, honouring tradition and savouring the special moments with loved ones.

Alternatively, there is a joyous Eid feast at L’Artisan where the art of dining takes centre stage. There is also a festive brunch that

embodies the spirit of sharing and celebration.

The special Eid menu features an enticing spread of freshly baked delights and traditional sweet and savoury mains, all made with the freshest seasonal and sustainable ingredients.

Eid Breakfast: June 16 -22, 7am to 11am: QR180 per person. Eid Brunch June 16, 1pm to 4.30pm, starting from QR330 per person. Those searching for rejuvenation and relaxation can delight in restorative spa treatments and enjoy 30% off the second treatment and complimentary 60-minute private suite facilities.

Guests will have access to state-of-the-art private wellness facilities which include hydrotherapy, plunge pools, hammams, outdoor pools, jacuzzi and recovery areas. For reservations, contact [reservations.doha@raffles.com](mailto:reservations.doha@raffles.com) or call +974 4030 7100

## Fire Station’s Artist in Residence programme opens two exhibitions

Fire Station: Artist in Residence unveiled two exhibitions this week titled “Neighbours of the Sea” and “Etherscape” by current and former Fire Station residents. These exhibitions, on display until August 17 at Gallery 3 and Gallery 4, are part of the Fire Station’s Artists in Residence and Ruwad in Residence programmes, aimed at fostering local talent through production support, curatorial guidance, and expert mentorship.

“Neighbours of the Sea,” a collaborative exhibition by renowned Qatari artists Wafika Sultan al-Issa and Hassan al-Mulla, showcases more than 30 mixed-media paintings that delve into the profound connection between the artists’ inner worlds and their environment, society, and heritage.

This exhibition will highlight how their creative expressions intersect, despite differing artistic styles, by drawing from the rich cultural tapestry and unique environmental landscape of Qatar. Their art takes the local environment and cultural heritage as a shared source of inspiration, reflecting the influence of the desert and sea on Qatari life, urbanism, and traditions.

Al-Essa, a resident in Fire Stations’ Ruwad in Residence pro-

gramme and a Qatari visual artist since 1972, is a founding member of the Qatar Fine Arts Association and one of the pioneers of art in Qatar.

Al-Mulla, another resident in Fire Stations’ Ruwad in Residence programme and an influential Qatari visual artist, has left a mark on Qatar’s art landscape. With a presidency at the Qatar Society for Fine Arts and solo exhibitions spanning Qatar, India, and Saudi Arabia, his contributions are widely recognised.

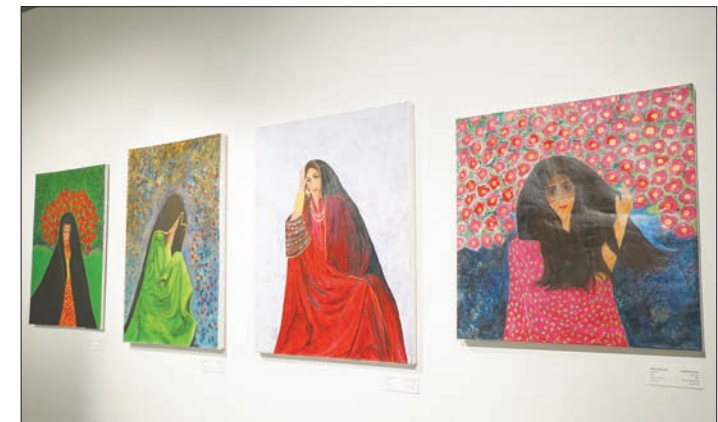
Many of the pieces were developed during their residency at the Fire Station’s Ruwad in Residence programme that was launched by Fire Station in 2021 to support established Qatar-based artists, continuing the legacy of the programme that supported Qatari artist Faraj Daham.

The second exhibition, “Etherscape”, is an immersive art installation by two former Artists in Residence, Dr AlKhuzama AlHar-ami and Guillaume Rousere, that merges the art of image and sound and delves into the interaction between nature and modern society.

As visitors step into the space, they will be immersed in a sensory experience that combines captivating video projects of desert landscapes and calligraphy, with



An array of artworks on display at “Neighbours of the Sea” and “Etherscape” exhibitions.



## MoI undersecretary visits HIA air cargo building

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab al-Kaabi visited the air cargo building at Hamad International Airport. During the visit, according to a statement by MoI on X, al-Kaabi inspected the procedures in place for monitoring the entry of goods into the country. He also received a brief explanation about the modern equipment used for inspecting goods and their types, and about the level of integration between the various sectors operating in the air cargo building. He appreciated all the workers for their sincere efforts.

Al-Kaabi was accompanied during the visit by Maj Gen Abdullah Mohamed al-Suwaidi, assistant undersecretary of MoI for Technical and Specialised Affairs, Col Nayef bin Faleh al-Thani, assistant undersecretary of MoI for Security Affairs and several department directors from the ministry.







# Investiture ceremony held at BPS

Birla Public School hosted the Investiture Ceremony to swear in its student leaders for the 2024-25 academic year.

The 34-member prefectorial board and student council members took their oaths to serve their peers and school community.

Chairman Gope Shahani, director Lukose K Chacko, management representatives Chindhu Antony, Neville Lukose, and Siddharth Shahani, principal Dr Anand R Nair, non-academic head Vinod Kumar, and vice-principals Radhika Rele and Edna Fernandez were present.

The principal emphasised the importance of leadership, teamwork, and commitment to the values upheld by the school.

The chairman exhorted the student leaders to lead by example, upholding integrity and dedication. The director re-



minded the newly elected student body of the responsibilities of leaders.

Riaan Jigar Shah and Ivana Geoji Thomos of grade XII were sworn in as the head boy and

head girl. Mohamed Saheel and Veena Vishnu of grade XII were appointed as the vice-head boy

and vice-head girl. Presidents, vice-presidents, speakers and secretaries of the

Student Council, cultural secretaries, campus correspondents, sports captains, prefects, martnets, assistant prefects, student council members, house masters and mistresses, house captains, and vice-captains were also inducted into their offices.

The inductees were administered the oath and presented with badges and sashes as symbols of their roles and responsibilities.

During the ceremony, the Aditya Birla Memorial Award and Sarala Birla Memorial Award were conferred on the toppers of grade XI 2023-24 batch. The first two toppers of Science, Commerce, and Humanities streams received the awards which consist of a certificate and cash prize, for the outstanding academic performance in the academic year 2023-24.

## Cultural performances at ICC fiesta



Colourful group dances captivated the audience at the Indian Cultural Centre's Wednesday Fiesta held on May 29 in association with Kalakshetra. ICC officials, presidents of other associated organisations and senior community leaders were present.



## Merit awards distributed

The Qatar Incas Pathanamthitta District Committee organised an annual family get together and merit awards distribution for member students who excelled in this year's CBSE class X and XII exams. The occasion also saw the conclusion of school kits distribution to the needy children in the district through the Thanal Project. President Ronsy Mathai presided. Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) managing committee member Abraham K Joseph, Indian Community Benevolent Forum secretary Varkey Boban,

Indian Sports Centre secretary Pradeep Pillai, Incas general secretary Basheer Tuvarikal, Incas vice-president Tajudheen, Radio Malayalam 98.6 FM RJ Shifin, ICC Youth Wing president Edwin, Incas Youth Wing president Deepak, ladies wing president Ciniil George, Incas Pathanamthitta vice-president P C James and Anish George spoke. Incas Pathanamthitta general secretary Sibin Abraham proposed a vote of thanks. Incas Pathanamthitta Youth Wing president Allen Mathew Thomas, Jetty George and Aby P Varghese were the programme conveners.



## TSA announces affiliation with ISC



The Telugu Sports Association Qatar (TSA) has announced its official affiliation with the Indian Sports Centre (ISC), under the esteemed aegis of the embassy of India. A ceremony saw ISC president E P Abdulrahman formally present the affiliation documents to TSA president Sridhar Abbagoni and his team. TSA vice-president Syed Rafi, general secretary Swapna, joint general secretary Sharath Babu, Satheesh Chandra and advisory board members Koduru Shivaram Prasad and Krishna Kumar, Andhra Kala Vedika president Venkappa Bhagavatula and vice-president Vikram, ISC vice-president John Desa, general secretary Nihad Ali and managing committee members were present.

## IIS duo win badminton trophy

Ideal Indian School students Aman Sayeed (class X) and Noman Sayeed (class VIII) won the under-16 category in the Bunts Qatar Badminton Tournament. Noman had also won a bronze in the under-15 category in the Qatar Badminton Association Leg 2 tournament. School principal Shaik Shamim Saheb congratulated the achievers.



## Omani actor feted



Indian Cultural Centre, under the aegis of the embassy of India, felicitated Omani actor Dr Talib al-Balushi, for his contribution in the Indian cinema. Dr al-Balushi was recently seen in the blockbuster Malayalam film *Aadujeevitham*.

## Galfar Toastmasters celebrates 15 years



The Galfar Toastmasters Club celebrated a milestone meeting on May 28 to mark its 15 years in the presence of past international president Lark Doley. The dignity was introduced by HSE manager John Henry. She spoke about the century-long history of the organisation. Galfar Al Misnad executive director Satish G Pillai presented Doley with a poster created by Ravindran C. Mohamed

Hashir in his report reflected on the club's journey to become the best corporate club of the country.

Founder member and deputy general manager Anwar Sadat, Area 3 director Poonam Janapareddy and divisional HR manager Aparna were present. President Subramanya Hebbagelu welcomed the gathering and vice-president (education) Faisudheen Kannothe proposed a vote of thanks.

## Pice Qatar marks 17th Foundation Day

The Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers (Pice) Qatar Chapter commemorated its 17th Foundation Day with a number of sports activities over two days recently. The members participated in various games, including billiards, darts, table tennis, and foosball. The festivities began with a special event titled 'Bowling for a Cause.' An Inter-Colour Basketball League and the Presidents Cup followed. The awards ceremony was opened by Pice Qatar president Dave G Sanchez. Founding president Roy L Baquiran, shared a short history of the chapter, which started with only 25 founding members on May 25, 2007. Other past Pice Qatar presidents also spoke.







TRAGEDY

Five dead, more missing in Myanmar landslide

A landslide at a rare earth mine in Myanmar killed at least five people, including two Chinese citizens, and left at least seven others missing, a worker at the mine and local media reported. Part of a hillside at the mine at Pangwa in Kachin state on the border with China slipped away, a source at the mine said speaking on condition of anonymity. "The whole hill fell down... it wiped out even big trees," the source said, adding that at least seven people were unaccounted for. Rescuers have found five bodies, including two Chinese citizens, two security guards and one worker, the source said.

PEOPLE

Vietnam tycoon on death row faces fresh charges

A Vietnamese property tycoon sentenced to death in a \$27bn fraud case could now face prosecution for money laundering, state media said yesterday. Truong My Lan, chair of major developer Van Thinh Phat, was found guilty in April of swindling cash from Saigon Commercial Bank (SCB) over a decade in one of the biggest corruption cases in history. Police said they are seeking to prosecute 34 people in the same case, accusing them of fraud, money laundering and cross-border money trafficking. The police statement did not provide further details, but state media said Lan was among the 34.

DECISION

Hong Kong announces blanket ban of e-cigarettes

Hong Kong yesterday announced plans for a blanket ban on e-cigarettes, citing a "consensus" on the need for action and their impact on the health of young people. The move came about two years after the Chinese city banned the import, manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products. "We will fully ban all alternative smoking products," Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau said using the government term for products such as e-cigarettes. Hong Kong already bans possession of e-cigarettes "for commercial purposes" and yesterday's proposal would extend the ban to retail buyers, even if they intended to smoke in private.

ENTERTAINMENT

Thailand warns Jurassic World producers over filming impact

Thai officials have given *Jurassic World* producers a stern warning not to damage beaches and national parks when they film the next instalment of the blockbuster franchise in the country. Hollywood superstar Scarlett Johansson has reportedly been lined up to star in the seventh movie in the long-running dinosaur series. Shooting for parts of the movie - slated for release next year - will take place in Bangkok and at national parks in Krabi, Phuket, Phang-nga and Trang, starting next week and running into July. Natural Resources and Environment Minister Phatcharavat Wongsuwan said Thailand was "honoured" to host the filming.

China's Chang'e-6 probe transfers moon samples to spacecraft

Reuters  
Beijing

China's Chang'e-6 probe transferred samples it collected from the moon's far side to a spacecraft in lunar orbit yesterday, state news agency Xinhua reported.

After receiving the samples, the uncrewed spacecraft will fly back to Earth, with an expected landing in China's Inner Mongolia region on June 25. If successful, China will be the first country to ever return lunar matter from the side of the moon that permanently faces away from Earth.

**"Current China-US space co-operation faces some problems, the root cause is that US domestic laws such as the Wolf Amendment have hindered normal exchanges and dialogues between the two countries"**

The Chang'e-6 probe took off from the moon's far side on Tuesday, after spending two days on the surface digging up samples. While on the moon, the probe unfurled a Chinese flag made of basalt, a material that is abundant on the lunar surface, Xinhua said.

The mission has been a source of national pride in China.

The probe's launch in May drew thousands of tourists to the southern island province of Hainan and its every subsequent move, from landing on the moon's far side to the

return journey to Earth, has been a viral item on Chinese social media.

The successful transfer yesterday of the precious samples, which scientists hope can reveal more about the origins of the solar system, also comes as the US expresses growing concerns about the advances in China's lunar and space exploration programmes.

Asked about the Chang'e-6 mission on Wednesday, US space agency Nasa chief Bill Nelson congratulated China but asked it to be more open about its space activities.

Nelson has repeatedly warned that the US was in a "space race" with China to go back to the moon and that China would claim any water resources it found there as its own. Responding to Nelson's comments, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said yesterday the Chang'e-6 probe's successful sampling on, and departure from, the moon's far side represented historic steps for "mankind's peaceful use of outer space" and that many countries praised the mission.

Mao also criticised the Wolf Amendment, a law passed by the US Congress in 2011 that banned Nasa from collaboration with "China or any Chinese-owned company unless such activities are specifically authorised."

"Current China-US space co-operation faces some problems and difficulties, the root cause is that US domestic laws such as the Wolf Amendment have hindered normal exchanges and dialogues between the two countries' space agencies," Mao said.

Ex-Malaysia premier attends appeal hearing



Former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak (centre) is escorted by prison officers during an appeal hearing at the Kuala Lumpur High Court.

Malaysia 'evicts 500 sea nomads in crackdown on migrants'

Reuters  
Kuala Lumpur

More than 500 people from sea-faring communities around the coast of Malaysia's Sabah state have been evicted from their homes this week as part of a crackdown against undocumented migrants, local activists said.

The Bajau Laut are a community of mostly stateless sea nomads, living offshore in wooden houseboats or huts built on stilts in the Semporna district of Sabah on Borneo island.

Born without identification documents, most do not have access to basic facilities such as education, financial or health services. They often live in fear of being deported or detained by immigration authorities, who do not

make a distinction between stateless residents and undocumented migrants.

An estimated 1mn undocumented migrants and stateless residents are believed to be living in Sabah, accounting for a third of the state's population. Malaysia in recent years has stepped up enforcement against illegal migration, detaining around 45,000 undocumented people since May 2020, Human Rights Watch said in March this year.

Since Tuesday, enforcement officials have been burning and demolishing houses belonging to the Bajau Laut on seven islands in Semporna, said Mukmin Nantang, the founder of Sabah-based social advocacy group Borneo Komrad.

The officials were unidentified but were believed to be part of an enforcement task force, Mukmin said, adding that some communi-

ties had received prior notice of the operation from Sabah Parks, a conservation body managed by the state government.

"Some of the houses were pulled down by large boats, some were burned down," he said.

A video posted by Borneo Komrad on social media showed various structures burning offshore, while another showed several men, some in uniform, smashing a wooden hut on a beach with large sticks before burning it down.

Sabah Parks and Malaysia's home affairs ministry, which oversees the police and immigration department, did not respond to requests for comment.

Malaysia does not keep official statistics on the Bajau Laut population, who have roamed the seas of north-eastern Borneo and the southern Philippines for centuries.

Highest waterfall in China gets a little help from a pipe, say officials

Park operators in China's Henan province were forced to acknowledge that the country's highest waterfall got a helping hand from a pipe due to a lack of rainfall. Video from a Douyin user, or the Chinese version of TikTok, showed a tourist revealing a large pipe burrowed at the top Yuntai Falls - the country's steepest and a popular attraction inside the Yuntai Mountain scenic area. The video unleashed a torrent of social media comments, forcing park officials to release a letter that blamed seasonal factors and admitting to a "small enhancement during the dry season." The move was meant to "enrich the visiting experience" and make the "trip worthwhile" for those "who have travelled a long way," operators wrote on their Weibo social media account. Chinese netizens jumped on the pipe disclosure. "The main thing is that the water pipe is so crudely installed, others at least disguise it in a superior way," wrote a user.

Waterlogged road



People ride motorbikes through a flooded street in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Japan lawmakers probe UFO security 'threat'

AFP  
Tokyo

UFO sightings should not be dismissed out of hand because they could in fact be surveillance drones or weapons, say Japanese lawmakers who launched a group yesterday to probe the matter.

The non-partisan group, which counts former defence ministers among its 80-plus members, will urge Japan to ramp up abilities to detect and analyse unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAPs), more commonly known as UFOs.

Although the phenomenon is often associated with little green men in the popular imagination, it has become a hot political topic in the US.

Washington said last year it was examining 510 UFO reports

- more than triple the number in its 2021 file - and Nasa in September said it wants to shift the conversation "from sensationalism to science".

The Japanese parliamentarians hope to bring the domestic perception of UAPs in line with its ally's following several scares related to suspected surveillance operations.

"It is extremely irresponsible of us to be resigned to the fact that something is unknowable, and to keep turning a blind eye to the unidentified," group member and former defence minister Yasukazu Hamada said before the launch.

In an embarrassment for Japan's defence ministry, unauthorised footage of a docked helicopter destroyer recently proliferated on Chinese social media after an apparent drone intrusion into a military facility.

Australia's fearsome 'dinosaur bird' stares down extinction

AFP  
Airlie Beach, Australia

With legs like a velociraptor and a striking neon blue neck, the southern cassowary cuts a fearsome figure in the rainforests of northeast Australia.

It is best to admire these human-sized birdies - and their rapier-sharp 10 centimetre talons - from afar.

"It's a modern-day dinosaur," said Peter Rowles, the rugged president of a community group protecting the endangered birds.

Fiercely territorial, when threat-

ened they hiss and make a deep rumbling boom.

"When you first look at them eye to eye, that can be intimidating, because they've got big eyes, and they look straight at you and they do look a bit fierce," said Rowles.

These flightless birds are only found in Australia, New Guinea and some Pacific islands.

The Australian government lists them as endangered and estimates about 4,500 remain in the wild.

They are considered a "key-stone species", meaning they play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity and helping spread seeds in the rainforest. If cassowaries go extinct, the rainforests will suffer.



A cassowary bird stands next to a road that passes through the township of Ettu Bay, located in the Cassowary Coast region of North Queensland, south of Cairns.

"We thought if we could save cassowaries, we also could save enough habitat to keep a lot of other species alive," Rowles explained.

His group is doing what it can to save these formidable birds, which stand five feet tall and can weigh up to 75kgs. This includes making signs urging drivers to slow down, redesigning roads to better protect native habitats and running a cassowary hospital for injured birds.

The main threats to the cassowary are car strikes, clearing of native habitats, dog attacks and climate change.

"Cassowaries are not aggressive when they're treated well," said Rowles, with few recorded deaths

caused by the species.

A young Australian boy was killed in 1926 after he chased the bird, who severed his jugular vein, while a Florida man perished in 2019 when his pet cassowary attacked. In the past 300 years, about 100 of Australia's unique flora and fauna species have been wiped off the planet.

This rate of extinction will likely increase, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

"There is so much that has to be done and resources are not available to have a significant impact," said Darren Grover, WWF Australia's acting chief conservation officer.



# RBI seen holding rates today as economic growth robust

Reuters  
Mumbai

India's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India, is widely expected to keep interest rates steady and retain its tighter monetary stance at its policy review today amid robust economic growth and an uncertain inflation outlook. However, a weakened mandate for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance has raised concerns about

a potentially slower pace of fiscal consolidation alongside increased welfare spending. Such a scenario could pose a risk to India's inflation and monetary policy outlooks over the medium to longer-term. Though fiscal consolidation prospects remain intact, the pace of debt reduction could slow in the wake of the election results, Moody's ratings said. All but one of 72 economists in a May 17-30 Reuters poll expected India's Monetary Policy Commit-

tee (MPC) to hold the repo rate steady at 6.50%, at the conclusion of its June 5-7 meeting. Most economists believe the 6.50% rate is the peak of the current monetary cycle. "The Reserve Bank of India's view is based on macro fundamentals. Given that inflation remains above target levels, RBI is expected to remain on pause. Strong growth conditions provide policy space to remain focused on inflation," said Gaura Sen Gupta, chief economist at IDFC First Bank.

The MPC last changed rates in February 2023, when the policy rate was hiked to 6.5%. Annual retail inflation, rose at a slower rate of 4.83% in April, from a gain of 4.85% in March but was still well above the MPC's 4% medium-term target. "We expect the MPC to extend the pause of rates in June, with an unchanged policy stance," said Radhika Rao, an economist with DBS Bank in Singapore. "An 8% GDP growth print, above-target inflation and uncer-

tainty over the US Fed's direction is expected to keep the RBI MPC comfortable in its stance at this juncture," she added. GDP data last week showed the economy expanded at a faster-than-expected pace of 7.8% in the March quarter, taking the South Asian nation's full year growth to 8.2%. Though markets have largely factored in a 'no surprise' policy today, there is an outside chance of a change in policy stance to neutral, a handful of analysts believe.

If the MPC does change its stance to 'neutral' from 'withdrawal of accommodation,' bond yields are expected to fall, in hopes of an earlier rate cut than anticipated. "We think that the committee will lay the foundation for policy easing by officially changing its policy stance," Capital Economics said. "We think the easing cycle will begin in August and we expect slightly more rate cuts by the end of the year than the consensus is forecasting."

# Modi's allies demand funds, cabinet posts as coalition gears to form new govt

Reuters  
New Delhi/Hyderabad

Parties in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alliance yesterday demanded more funds for their regional states as well as federal Cabinet positions as negotiations began to form a coalition government. Modi was named leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on Wednesday, after his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost its outright majority and found itself reliant on support from regional parties - mainly the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United). The NDA won 293 seats in the 543-member lower house of parliament, where 272 constitutes a simple majority. But Modi's BJP won only 240, making TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu and JD(U) head Nitish Kumar, also the chief minister of the eastern state of Bihar, kingmakers in the alliance with their 16 and 12 seats respectively. TDP also won a regional election in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh and Naidu is set to become chief minister there. Both parties are pushing long-standing demands to grant special

status to their states, according to one TDP spokesperson and five NDA sources. Special status allows states to receive more federal development funds, and on simpler terms. While Bihar is India's poorest state, Andhra Pradesh lost some of its resources in 2014 when the new state of Telangana was carved out of it. Besides special status and Cabinet positions, TDP is also seeking more funds for irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh and to complete the building of its new capital, Amaravati, two sources familiar with the matter said. "This is not the first time we are in NDA, so we are confident that we will get what is due to us," TDP spokesperson Jyothsna Tirunagari said. "In our earlier terms with NDA, we had ministerial berths and also the Lok Sabha [lower house] speaker from our party. This time we are a strong partner and share a clear vision for the country," she said. JD(U)'s Kumar also wants support for new industrial projects in Bihar along with federal cabinet positions, one NDA source said. Top BJP leaders were due to discuss ministerial portfolios with the allies yesterday, a day before Modi is expected to meet President Drou-

padi Murmu to present his claim to form the next government, one BJP source said. The negotiations are a throwback to an era before 2014 - when Modi swept to power with an outright BJP majority - in which alliance partners haggled for positions and benefits in exchange for supporting coalition governments. The BJP's loss of its majority unnerved markets and raised the prospect of a government less stable and sure-footed than the outgoing one. But Shivraj Singh Chouhan, a top BJP leader and newly elected lawmaker, told the CNN-News18 TV channel that Modi's new government would last its full five-year term and "come back with a better performance". A survey published yesterday suggested that a lack of jobs, high inflation and falling income had cost Modi votes, even though he personally still commanded wide support. Some 30% of voters said they were worried about inflation, compared to 20% prior to the election, according to the Lokniti-CSDS post-election survey published by the Hindu newspaper. In a survey for the Hindu conducted before the election, unemployment had been the main concern of 32% of respondents.



Rahul Gandhi, a senior leader of Congress party, shows a paper as he speaks during a media briefing at the party headquarters in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

# Rahul seeks probe into stock market moves during election

Reuters  
New Delhi

India's opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi yesterday demanded a parliamentary probe into stock market moves before and after the exit polls following the country's recently concluded national elections. During a press conference, Rahul pointed out that the stock markets experienced a surge following the release of "fake" exit polls, only to crash on June 4, the day the Lok Sabha poll votes were counted. He emphasised this was the "big-

gest stock market scam" and that retail investors suffered a staggering loss of Rs30tn. Rahul alleged that BJP leaders had prior knowledge that the exit polls were inaccurate and demanded a JPC probe into the matter. Meanwhile, two pollsters said the exit polls could not accurately capture discontent among the social and economic castes in the key states, resulting in an overestimation of electoral support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party. Three of five polls initially projected Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party would win more than the 303 electoral seats it won in 2019, while the

opposition INDI alliance led by Rahul Gandhi's Congress party would win 125 to 182 seats. However, vote counts showed much lower numbers - around 240 for the BJP and 293 for Modi's alliance that includes regional parties. Pradeep Gupta, head of Axis My India poll agency, said the survey failed to capture a shift among voters in the less privileged sections of society in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra states, where 170 seats in total were up for grabs, and where BJP lost a whopping 45 seats, compared to 2019. "This is our mistake," Gupta said.

**Blizzard in Himalayas kills nine trekkers**  
At least nine Indian trekkers died in the Himalayas after getting trapped during a blizzard, authorities said, as rescue teams airlifted their bodies and five survivors to safety. The Indian Air Force shared footage that showed rescue teams working near a helicopter in the snow-covered mountains. The group of climbers from the southern state of Karnataka were hit by heavy snowfall in the remote mountains of Uttarakhand state in north India, said Krishna Byre Gowda, a top Karnataka minister. "Snow intensified into blizzard. By 6pm, two trekkers succumbed to bad weather. Snow and wind made movement impossible. Visibility dropped to nil. They huddled together for the night on the route. Some more succumbed in the night," Gowda wrote in a social media post. A guide with the group alerted rescuers about the situation on Tuesday evening after trekking for a while to find mobile network connectivity, and teams reached the spot early on Wednesday, the minister added.

## Anti-Israel protest in Dublin



People sit at the University College Dublin (UCD) 'Palestinian Liberation Encampment' where student protesters in tents are asking UCD to boycott and divest from Israel ties, amidst the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Hamas, in Dublin, Ireland, yesterday.

# India's monsoon hits Maharashtra

Reuters  
Mumbai

India's monsoon rains have advanced into the western state of Maharashtra after covering almost all of the southern region, but they could weaken and deliver lower-than-normal rainfall next week, two senior weather officials said. Summer rains, critical to spur economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy, usually begin in the south around June 1 before spreading nationwide by mid-July, allowing farmers to plant crops such as rice, corn, cotton, soybeans and sugarcane. The monsoon arrived in Maharashtra yesterday after spreading through the southern states earlier than usual, a senior official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Maharashtra is India's biggest producer of sugar and its second largest producer of cotton and soybeans. India has received 7% more rainfall than normal since the season began on June 1, the IMD says. The monsoon will advance further across India in the next few days but could weaken from next week, another weather official said. "The monsoon will take a pause for few days," the official added. "Except for the west coast, most of the other regions will receive less rain," the official added. Farmers need to wait for proper moisture levels in the soil before sowing summer crops and should not sow them in a hurry, the official said. Both officials sought anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media.

# Sinn Fein ambitions face reality check at Irish local, EU polls

Reuters  
Dublin

Sinn Fein's ambitions of governing Ireland for the first time and advancing a bid for unity with Northern Ireland are facing a potentially huge setback in local and European elections today as their commanding poll advantage melts away. The former political wing of the Irish Republican Army has seen a huge and near three-year unbroken lead almost completely disappear in most recent polls as immigration challenges the housing crisis at the top of the list of voters'

concerns ahead of a general election due by next March. The most recent survey put the left-wing Sinn Fein level with Prime Minister Simon Harris' more moderate Fine Gael on 22%, a drop of seven points in less than a month. Harris' main coalition partner Fianna Fail stood on 17%. Ireland's already large block of independent candidates, many of whom have staked out the hardest lines on migration, have again been the biggest beneficiaries of Sinn Fein's slide, becoming the biggest group on 23% in Sunday's survey. "Based on the current numbers, I think Sinn Fein's chances of leading the next government look pret-

ty slim," said Kevin Cunningham, a lecturer in politics at TU Dublin, who helped compile the Ireland Thinks survey. Sinn Fein's problem is that Fine Gael and Fianna Fail want to govern together again without Sinn Fein, who likely need to be back up around the 30% mark that they were averaging six months ago to cut off their two centre-right rivals' path to re-election. A Sinn Fein-led government would turbo-charge the party's chief goal of seeking a referendum on unifying with Northern Ireland, the British region where it is already the lead party. It would also mark a swing to the

left from the pro-business policies that have made the economy so reliant on foreign multinational investment and jobs. While Harris' coalition is struggling to deal with record numbers of refugees, immigration's emergence as a key issue has taken voters' focus away from the severe lack of affordable housing that had helped catapult Sinn Fein up the polls. Analysts see the party as far less sure-footed on immigration, caught between its traditional working class voters who are more sceptical on the issue and its newer, younger middle class supporters concerned about migrants' rights.

An Irish Times/Ipsos B&A survey last month suggested Sinn Fein supporters held the toughest line on immigration, with 70% of them wanting to see a tighter border policy and support for more deportations. Eoin O'Broin, Sinn Fein's spokesman for housing, said that while immigration is playing a part in this campaign in a way it has not done previously, it is "nowhere near the top of the list of issues." He also cautioned against reading too much into the local and European polls. "This will give us a temperature gauge but only a temperature gauge, and anybody who is either

saying something is inevitable or unlikely this far out from a general election I think is foolish," he said. The party's support sank to a mere 9% in a 2019 local election before Sinn Fein shocked the establishment by securing 25% - the most for any single party - at the last general election, held nine months later. "Sinn Fein are falling victim to the latest manifestation of the extreme volatility in Irish politics for 15 years since the economic crash," said Dublin City University politics professor Gary Murphy, who described its chances of leading the next government as "ebbing away."





## Pakistan, Greece, Somalia among incoming UN Security Council members

AFP/Reuters  
United Nations

Pakistan, Denmark, Greece, Panama and Somalia have been elected by secret ballot yesterday at the United Nations General Assembly to serve on the Security Council for the 2025-2026 term.

The Security Council is the only UN body that can make legally binding decisions such as imposing sanctions and authorising use of force.

The top UN panel is comprised of 15 nations, including five veto-wielding per-

manent members: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Ten others are elected to two-year terms, half of which are renewed each year.

The five nations elected yesterday had run unopposed.

“Our tenure will be guided by the full commitment to multilateralism and respect of the principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter,” said Somali Foreign Minister Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, who last month called for the departure of the UN mission in his country by the end of the year.

“We will strive to strengthen the co-op-

eration between the Security Council and the regional organisations, including the African Union,” he said.

Greek Foreign Minister Giorgios Gera- petritis highlighted how his country’s position “at the crossroad” of three continents could help build bridges between north and south, east and west.

“We aspire to give a new meaning to the idea of peaceful settlement of disputes,” he said.

Human Rights Watch denounced the non-competitive vote.

“Uncontested elections for seats on the Security Council or any other UN body

make a mockery of the word ‘election,’” Louis Charbonneau, UN director for the non-governmental organisation (NGO), said on X, formerly Twitter.

“Member countries should give themselves a choice so governments responsible for serious human rights abuses can be rejected,” he said.

Charbonneau noted how Russian ally Belarus was defeated by Slovenia last year in a competitive election for the East European regional group seat, as members strongly opposed Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The five incoming countries will replace

Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland starting from January 1, 2025.

They will join the other five non-permanent members elected last year: Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and South Korea.

To ensure geographical representation, seats are allocated to regional groups.

However, even if candidates are running unopposed in their group, they still need to win the support of more than two-thirds of the General Assembly.

Denmark received 184 votes, Greece 182, Pakistan 182, Panama 183 and Somalia 179 votes.

## Boeing’s Starliner capsule docks with space station

Reuters/AFP  
Washington

Boeing’s new Starliner capsule and its inaugural two-member Nasa crew safely docked with the International Space Station (ISS) yesterday, meeting a key test in proving the vessel’s flight-worthiness and sharpening Boeing’s competition with Elon Musk’s SpaceX.

The rendezvous was achieved despite an earlier loss of several guidance-control jet thrusters, some of them due to a helium propulsion leak, which the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) and Boeing said should not compromise the mission.

The CST-100 Starliner, with veteran astronauts Barry “Butch” Wilmore and Sunita “Suni” Williams aboard, arrived at the orbiting platform after a flight of roughly 26 hours following its launch from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

The reusable gumdrop-shaped capsule, dubbed “Calypso” by its crew, was lofted into space on Wednesday atop an Atlas V rocket furnished and flown by Boeing-Lockheed Martin’s United Launch Alliance joint venture.

It autonomously docked with the ISS while both were orbiting some 250 miles (400km) over the southern Indian Ocean at 1.34pm EDT (1734 GMT).

The spacecraft’s final approach



This screengrab from Nasa shows astronaut Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore (in blue) with the crew of the International Space Station (ISS) after the docking of the SpaceX Starliner yesterday. —AFP/Nasa

to the ISS and docking, following a brief interval when Wilmore manually controlled the capsule, was shown on a Nasa webcast.

Wilmore and Williams are the first crew to fly Starliner, which Boeing and Nasa are hoping to certify for regular rides to the ISS – a role SpaceX has been fulfilling for the past four years, at significantly lower cost to the US taxpayer.

Starliner is just the sixth type of US-built spaceship to fly Nasa astronauts, following the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programmes in the 1960s and 1970s, the Space

Shuttle from 1981 to 2011, and SpaceX’s Crew Dragon from 2020.

Boeing’s programme faced setbacks ranging from a software bug that put the spaceship on a bad trajectory on its first uncrewed test, to the discovery that the cabin was filled with flammable electrical tape after the second.

A successful mission would help dispel the bitter taste left by years of safety scares and delays, and provide Boeing a much-needed reprieve from the intense safety concerns surrounding its passenger jets.

During their roughly week-long stay on the orbital outpost, Wilmore and Williams will continue to evaluate the spacecraft systems, including simulating whether the ship can be used as a safe haven in the event of problems.

After undocking from the ISS, Starliner will re-enter the atmosphere, with the crew experiencing 3.5G as they slow down from 17,500mph (28,000kph) to a gentle parachute- and airbag-assisted touchdown in the western United States.

## Canada police break up group that smuggled people into US

Canadian authorities have broken up a large-scale human smuggling ring that they say moved hundreds of migrants illegally into the eastern US over a year-long period, police said yesterday.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said they had arrested four people and issued arrest warrants for four others.

The gang allegedly charged migrants thousands of dollars each before moving them through communities along the St Lawrence River and then across into the United States between July 2022 and June 2023.

“Many people from all over the world come to North America desperately seeking a better life,” said RCMP Inspector Etienne Thauvette, part of a special unit combating cross-border crime.

The RCMP said some migrants had lost their lives during night-time crossings, but gave no details.

Two of the people that police have charged come from the Akwesasne indigenous reserve that straddles both sides of the St. Lawrence River, with land in Ontario and Quebec on the Canadian side, and New York. — Reuters

## SpaceX’s Starship survives return to Earth

SpaceX’s Starship rocket survived a fiery, hypersonic return from space and achieved a breakthrough landing demonstration in the Indian Ocean yesterday, completing a full test mission around the globe on the rocket’s fourth try.

Starship’s controlled plunge into the Indian Ocean just 65 minutes after launching from Texas capped the latest advance in the company’s test-to-failure rocket development campaign, a multibillion-dollar effort by Elon Musk’s space company to build a reusable satellite launcher and moon lander.

The three previous test missions ended with Starship blowing up or disintegrating.

The two-stage, nearly 400’ (120 metre) tall rocket system, consisting of the Starship vessel mounted atop its towering Super Heavy rocket booster, blasted off from the company’s Starbase launch site near Boca Chica Village in South Texas, sending powerful shockwaves rippling through the Gulf Coast’s morning fog.

Super Heavy detached from the Starship upper stage at an altitude of 74km (46 miles), as Starship ignited its own engines to ascend further toward space.

Meanwhile, Super Heavy returned to the Gulf of Mexico and nailed a soft splashdown, demonstrating a touchdown that would otherwise be on land.

In space, a SpaceX live stream showed Starship, outfitted with onboard cameras, coasting around 16,000mph (25,750kph) at roughly 125 miles (200km) in altitude as it made its way toward the Indian Ocean for a return to Earth, setting up for a key demonstration in its reusable design.

The rocket’s first launch in April 2023 exploded minutes after liftoff some 25 miles (40km) above ground, while its second attempt in November blew up after reaching space.

The rocket’s third test flight in March made



SpaceX’s Starship launches its fourth flight test from the company’s Boca Chica launchpad, designed to eventually send astronauts to the moon and beyond, near Brownsville, Texas.

it much farther but broke apart during atmospheric reentry some 40 miles (64km) over the Indian Ocean.

Yesterday Starship appeared to have overcome those past technical challenges.

“Despite loss of many tiles and a damaged flap, Starship made it all the way to a soft landing in the ocean!” SpaceX chief executive Elon Musk, who had said Starship’s reentry was the mission’s biggest goal, posted on social media after the splashdown.

The rocket was partly covered with hundreds of small black tiles designed to protect against the extreme heat encountered while diving through Earth’s atmosphere at hypersonic speeds.

Designed to be cheaper and more powerful than SpaceX’s workhorse Falcon 9 rocket, Starship represents the future of the company’s dominant satellite launch and astronaut business.

It is due to be used by the National Aeronau-

tics and Space Administration (Nasa) in the next few years to land the first astronauts on the moon since 1972.

Much is riding on SpaceX’s development of Starship, relied upon by Nasa as it aims to return astronauts to the moon in 2026 in a rivalry with China, which plans to send its astronauts there by 2030.

China has made several recent advances in its lunar programme, including a second landing on the moon’s far side in a sample retrieval mission.

Despite Starship’s development appearing quicker than other rocket programmes, it has been slower than Musk originally envisioned.

A Japanese billionaire who in 2018 paid to fly Starship around the moon, at the time expected to occur last year, cancelled his flight last week, citing schedule uncertainties.

Musk’s drive to rapidly build Starship has endangered SpaceX workers in Texas and California, a Reuters investigation found.

“Congratulations SpaceX on Starship’s successful test flight this morning!” Nasa chief Bill Nelson wrote on X. “We are another step closer to returning humanity to the Moon through #Artemis – then looking onward to Mars.”

Starship is key to Musk’s vision of colonising the Red Planet and making humanity an interplanetary species.

Musk, who founded SpaceX in 2002, has said Starship must launch hundreds of times before it carries humans, suggesting it could be years before the rocket flies crews or lands astronauts on the lunar surface.

SpaceX routinely flies astronauts to and from the International Space Station in low-Earth orbit for Nasa using its Crew Dragon capsule, which launches atop the company’s Falcon 9 rocket.

No private company has ever sent humans to the moon. — Reuters/AFP

## After a bitter break-up, Trump makes up with billionaire donors

Reuters/AFP  
San Francisco/Washington

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump (pictured) will attend a fundraiser hosted by two tech venture capitalists in San Francisco, a high-dollar event expected to draw Silicon Valley investors turned off by the Biden administration’s policies.

Venture capitalists David Sacks and Chamath Palihapitiya, as well as Sacks’ wife Jacqueline, will host the reception and dinner with Trump, according to an invitation seen by Reuters.

While San Francisco is heavily liberal – Democrat Joe Biden won 85% of the city’s vote in the 2020 election against then-president Trump – a growing number of high-profile local venture capitalists have thrown their support behind Trump ahead of his November rematch against Biden.

Trevor Traina, a San Francisco-based tech executive and former Trump ambassador to Austria, said business regulations implemented during Biden’s presidency had alienated some people in the tech industry.

Biden last week vetoed what he described as a Republican-led resolution that would “inappropriately constrain the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission)’s ability to set forth appropriate guardrails and address future issues” relating to cryptocurrency assets.

“That might have been just the final domino,” Traina said of why some tech executives were now backing Trump.

The crypto industry is increasingly trying to influence US politicians as it faces heightened scrutiny from regulators, especially since bankruptcies at major crypto firms in 2022 spooked investors, exposed fraud and misconduct, and left millions of investors out of pocket.



Sacks and Palihapitiya have talked publicly about their investments in crypto, especially in bitcoin.

Jacob Helberg, an adviser to data analytics provider Palantir and a Democrat until about 2021, said he recently donated around \$1mn to Trump’s campaign.

“In 2016, the number of people from Silicon Valley I knew who supported Trump was a sample of one, which was Peter,” Helberg said, referring to Palantir co-founder and conservative venture capitalist Peter Thiel. “Today I count them in the dozens, if not more than that. Over the course of the past six months, we’ve started to see the dam break.”

Billionaire Elon Musk, a friend of Sacks, responded on Wednesday to a post about the fundraiser on his social media platform X, writing “the SF Bay Area is shifting towards Trump”.

Economist Paul Krugman believes these heavy hitters are making their political picks based on personal interests, not the health of the nation.

“One straightforward answer is that the wealthy will almost certainly pay lower taxes – and corporations will be less regulated – if Trump wins than if Biden stays in office,” the Nobel Prize-winning Krugman wrote in April in the *New York Times*.

Biden has made no secret of the idea that, should he be reelected and his Democrats win an outright majority in both houses of Congress, he will place a new tax on the super-rich.

## Trump aide Bannon ordered to report to prison by July 1

AFP  
Washington

Former top Donald Trump adviser Steve Bannon was ordered by a federal judge yesterday to report to prison by July 1 to begin serving his four-month sentence for contempt of Congress.

Bannon, 70, was convicted of contempt in July 2022 for defying a subpoena to testify before the congressional panel that investigated the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by Trump supporters.

One of the masterminds behind Trump’s successful 2016 presidential campaign, he was sentenced to four months in prison in October 2022, but has remained free while appealing his conviction.

A US federal appeals court upheld the conviction last month. US District Judge Carl Nichols revoked his bail at a court hearing yesterday and ordered him to report to prison by July 1.

A defiant Bannon addressed reporters outside the Washington courthouse after the judge’s order, saying that “there’s nothing that can shut me up and nothing that will shut me up”.

“There’s not a prison built or a jail built that will ever shut me up,” he said.

“We’re going to win on November 5th in an amazing landslide,” he added in a reference to the date of the White House election expected to be a rematch between Trump and Democratic President Joe Biden.



Bannon leaving the E Barrett Prettyman US Courthouse in Washington, DC yesterday.



## Pakistan submits details, photos of ex-PM Khan's life in jail

Reuters  
Islamabad

Pakistan's government submitted to the Supreme Court yesterday details of the living conditions of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, seeking to rebuff his claim of mistreatment and of being held in solitary confinement without access to lawyers.

The government submission seen by Reuters included photographs of the cell that showed a collection of books including Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, apparently intended to

highlight Khan's freedom to read what he wishes in jail.

The submission also contained a list of family and friends, lawyers and party members who have seen Khan since he was jailed in August last year on corruption charges.

Khan, 71, is also fighting dozens of other cases that he and his party say are politically motivated to thwart his return to power.

The government asked the court in its submission to appoint a judicial officer to verify the facts.

Khan complained to the court last week that he was being kept in solitary confinement without access to his lawyers.

In an appearance before the court via

video-link later in the day, Khan asked Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa to have his cell conditions inspected.

Isa said he would appoint a commission to pay a surprise visit to the prison cell.

Khan's party stood by its claim that he had been mistreated, and added that the pictures included were of the cell where Khan was being kept in solitary confinement.

"It is a contradiction to the claim that a former prime minister is entitled to an A class cell with an air-conditioned room & a helper to attend to the errands," his party said in response to the submission.

The pictures in the government submis-

sion showed a messy bedroom with a study table, a chair, a single bed, a cooler, a wash-basin next to a washroom in the corner, with a flat TV screen hung on a wall.

It shows shirts thrown on the back of the chair and trousers, pants and a towel hung on a wall.

Another picture shows a walkway with a barracks on both sides, describing it as an "exclusive gallery for walk, twice a day".

Another shows what it says is a separate kitchen with condiments, one more showed a collection of books on Islam, history and politics, and other pictures show a room with an exercise bike and fitness equipment.

## WHO waits on data after fatal human H5N2 bird flu case

AFP  
Geneva

The World Health Organisation (WHO) said yesterday that it is awaiting the full genetic sequence data after a man died of bird flu in Mexico in the first confirmed human infection with the H5N2 strain.

No further infections linked to the case have been detected thus far, said Aspen Hammond, a technical officer at the UN health agency's global influenza programme.

"The characterisation of this virus is still under way and genetic sequence data should be available soon," Hammond told a webinar. "H5N2 viruses have been detected for a long time in birds."

The 59-year-old, who died after developing fever, shortness of breath, diarrhoea and nausea, had "no history of exposure to poultry or other animals" and "multiple underlying medical conditions", the WHO said in a statement.

The resident of the state of Mexico, on the edge of the capital, was hospitalised on April 24 in Mexico City and died the same day, the statement said.

It was the "first laboratory-confirmed human case of infection with an influenza A(H5N2) virus reported globally", the WHO said.

Mexico's health ministry said in a statement that the victim had "chronic kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, (and) long-standing systemic arterial hypertension".

"There is no risk of contagion for the population," the statement said, adding that "all samples from identified contacts (of the patient) have been negative".

Authorities are monitoring farms near the victim's home and have established a permanent monitoring system to detect other cases in wildlife in the area, the statement added.

Mexican health authorities reported the confirmed case to the WHO on May 23 after conducting laboratory tests.

The source of exposure to the virus was currently unknown, the WHO said, although cases of H5N2 have been reported in poultry in Mexico.

Based on the available information, the risk to the general population is "low", the Geneva-based agency added.

A different variant of bird flu, H5N1, has been spreading for weeks among dairy cow herds in the US, with a small number of cases reported among humans.

However, none of them are human-to-human infections, with the disease instead jumping from cattle to people, authorities have said.

There is no specific vaccine to prevent infection from the avian influenza virus.

However, candidate vaccines have been developed as part of pandemic preparedness.

The WHO indicates that it has concluded agreements with 15 vaccine manufacturers to have real-time access to around 10% of the production of future vaccines in the event of an avian flu pandemic.

Doses would be distributed to countries based on public health risks and needs.

## At D-Day event, Biden vows continued Ukraine support

Reuters

Omaha Beach, France

US President Joe Biden made an impassioned call yesterday for the defence of freedom and democracy at the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, urging Western powers to stay the course with Ukraine and not surrender to Russian tyranny.

At a joint ceremony with French President Emmanuel Macron and US veterans at the Normandy American Cemetery, Biden said it is "simply unthinkable" to surrender to Russian aggression and he promised no let-up in support for Ukraine.

He urged Western and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) allies to recapture the spirit of D-Day and work together at a time when he said democracy was under greater threat than at any time since the end of World War Two.

"Isolationism was not the answer 80 years ago and is not the answer today," Biden said in his speech.

On June 6, 1944, more than 150,000 Allied soldiers invaded France by sea and air to drive out the forces of Nazi Germany, coming ashore at five beaches codenamed Omaha, Juno, Sword, Utah and Gold or dropping from the sky.

With the numbers of veterans fast dwindling - many are aged 100 or more - this is likely to be the last major ceremony in Normandy honouring them in their presence.

Biden said it was the highest honour to salute the assembled US veterans, some huddled in warm blankets, turning to tell them: "God love ya."

"The men who fought here became heroes," he said. "They knew beyond any doubt there are things that are worth fighting and dying for."

Veterans, around 200 of whom were present, have been the stars of commemorations throughout the week.

As veterans arrived at an international commemoration at Omaha Beach yesterday, world leaders applauded each of them as they were pushed past them on wheelchairs, some of them smiling proudly and saluting.

Some leaders, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, kneeled to be at the same level as the veterans in wheelchairs as they exchanged a few words.

With war raging in Ukraine on Europe's borders, the anniversary of this turning point in World War II carries special resonance.



The French Air Force elite acrobatic flying team 'Patrouille de France', followed by the British Royal Air Force (RAF)'s aerobatic team, the 'Red Arrows', perform a flypast above during the International commemorative ceremony at Omaha Beach marking the 80th anniversary of the World War II 'D-Day' Allied landings in Normandy, in Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, northwestern France.

It also takes place in a year of many elections, including for the European Parliament this week and in the US in November.

Critics fear former president Donald Trump, who will go head-to-head with Biden in the election, would reduce US support for Ukraine.

Zelensky and his wife Olena Zelenska received an ovation when they arrived at the Omaha Beach ceremony as World War II bombers flew overhead.

Zelensky hugged Macron and talked with many of the heads of state present.

"Allies defended Europe's freedom then, and Ukrainians do so now. Unity prevailed then, and true unity can prevail today," Zelensky said on the social media platform X.

Macron echoed Biden's comments, also making a link between Ukraine and D-Day.

"Thank you to the Ukrainian people for their courage, for their love of freedom. We are here and we will not weaken," Macron said at Omaha beach to applause from other world leaders.

Speaking at a British commemoration in Ver-sur-Mer earlier in the day, Britain's King Charles, in full military uniform, also urged



Macron awards US WWII veterans Dick Rung (second left), Joseph Miller (seated centre) and Arlester Brown (seated front right) with the Legion of Honour during the ceremony at Omaha Beach.

greater international collaboration to fight tyranny.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and many others also took part in the day of tributes.

Russia, which invaded Ukraine in 2022, touching off Europe's biggest armed conflict since World War II, was not invited.

In a speech, however, Macron paid tribute to the contribution of the Red Army and soldiers across the Soviet Union to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Leaders were set to adopt a declaration saying democracy was once more under threat in Europe and promising to defend freedom and democracy, two sources said.

Thousands of service personnel from Britain, the United States, Canada and other nations were killed, as well as their German foes and thousands of civilians across Normandy.

At the US ceremony in Colleville-sur-Mer, where row after row of white marble crosses - some with names, some unmarked - show the toll of the invasion, Macron awarded the Legion d'Honneur to US veterans, many sporting caps that read "WWII veteran".

"You are back here today at home, if I may say," Macron told the 180 American World War II veterans, including 33 D-Day veterans, saying that France would not forget their sacrifice.

Moving letters from some of them were read out at the British ceremony.

"I want to pay my respects to those who didn't make it. May they rest in peace," veteran Joe Mines said, in words read by actor Martin Freeman. "I was 19 when I landed, but I was still a boy ... and I didn't have any idea of war and killing."

## Four dead, more than 20 injured in Czech train crash

Reuters  
Prague

Four people from Slovakia and Ukraine were killed and more than 20 injured when a passenger express train and a freight train collided in the Czech city of Pardubice late on Wednesday, emergency and government officials said.

In addition to the deaths, three people were seriously hurt and at least 20 suffered light injuries in the crash, which occurred around 11pm (2100 GMT) on the main rail corridor from Prague to the east, Interior Minister Vit Rakusan said.

The Ex 1021 express train, operated by the Czech private service RegioJet, was travelling overnight from Prague to Kosice in eastern Slovakia and onward to the Ukrainian town of Chop, according to the Czech Railway Administration.

The passenger train had failed to

stop at a red light, the Rail Safety Inspection Office said, adding that it was likely to take months to ascertain whether the cause was human error or a technical fault.

The dead were two Slovak women and two women from Ukraine, the Slovak and Ukrainian foreign ministries said.

Czech police did not reveal any details on the victims.

RegioJet offered support and compensation to the victims in a statement expressing its sorrow.

"We will do everything for a proper investigation," its owner Radim Jancura said.

Rescue services said more than 300 passengers had been on board, and dozens of police, fire and emergency service units helped to evacuate the carriages.

Footage released by the fire brigade showed that at least one sleeper carriage had been mangled and left the track, and that both trains' locomotives were damaged.



A view shows the site of a crash in which a passenger train collided with a freight train in Pardubice, Czech Republic.

Czech Television cited a fire brigade spokesperson as saying that the freight train was transporting the

industrial chemical calcium carbide, but that no leak had occurred as the first two wagons were empty.

## Portugal police raid hospital, ministry in probe of costly treatment for twins

Police raided Portugal's health ministry and largest hospital yesterday in an investigation into whether officials broke laws by giving preferential access to a costly medical treatment to baby twins whose family had sought help from the president.

The prosecutor-general's office said in a statement that the authorities were looking into possible crimes of malfeasance in public office, abuse of power and qualified fraud.

Searches also encompassed social security offices, other health service units and private homes.

It did not identify officials who were suspected or discuss any connection to President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa.

The high-profile case dates back to 2019-2020 when the Brazilian-born twins, then 15 months old, were treated with Zolgensma - one of the world's most expensive drugs - at Lisbon's Santa Maria hospital, costing the state around €4mn (\$4.35mn).

Zolgensma is used to treat babies and toddlers under the age of two for spinal muscular atrophy - a rare and serious hereditary disease. The twins' mother later said in an interview that after a doctor showed reluctance to provide the medicine, she used her "contacts" to speed up the process, and that one of them was the president's daughter-in-law.

Rebelo de Sousa has confirmed that his son had contacted him about the need to treat the children, but denies any involvement in the case. The twins' treatment has become an issue because of both the public expense and concern over whether they might have bypassed other patients who had requested the same treatment.

A spokesperson for the hospital said it would collaborate with authorities, and a health ministry spokesperson confirmed the searches but declined to provide further details. - Reuters



CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- editor@gulf-times.com
- 44350478 (News),
- 44466404 (Sport),
- 44466636 (Home delivery)
- 44350474
- facebook.com/gulftimes
- twitter.com/gulftimes\_Qatar
- instagram.com/gulftimes
- youtube.com/GulftimesVideos

GULF TIMES

Can Sheinbaum shake Obrador’s oil legacy?

Mexico’s President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, an accomplished climate scientist, could struggle to fulfil her environmental pledges after she sailed to victory, in part, on the popularity of a predecessor who doubled down on fossil fuels.

Sheinbaum, elected as Mexico’s first woman president by a sweeping margin, inherits a country grappling daily with climate change and environmental challenges: pervasive drought, a water crisis in the sprawling capital of Mexico City, and rampant deforestation.

The 61-year-old leftist leader, who was part of a United Nations panel of climate scientists that received a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, has spoken about her belief in an academic and scientific approach to politics. She campaigned on a pledge to significantly boost renewable energy in the oil-producing country to as much as 50% by the end of her term in 2030.

But despite her best intentions to improve Mexico’s green record, Sheinbaum’s mentor, the highly popular outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, spent billions propping up Mexico’s fossil fuel-dependent state energy giants, oil firm Pemex and power utility CFE.

Her overwhelming victory — and the possible congressional super majority won by the ruling coalition — is in many ways a referendum on Lopez Obrador’s policies and initiatives, said Mariana Campero, senior associate with the CSIS Americas Program.

Sheinbaum could be hard-pressed to break cadence with Lopez Obrador’s style at the risk of losing support, limiting her ability to prioritize climate change policies.

President-elect is a vocal believer in the role of the state in Mexico’s energy sector

Sheinbaum has credited her upbringing by a chemical engineer father and cellular biologist mother for fostering her interest in science and politics. She has a doctorate in energy engineering from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. As mayor of Mexico City, she installed a roof-top solar project at a busy central market and inaugurated a 100% electric bus line.

But she faced criticism for some projects, including the construction of a bridge in the Xochimilco ecological zone that community members said damaged wetlands. She also supports some of Lopez Obrador’s most controversial projects, including the Mayan Train, a tourist railway that activists and scientists decry for endangering pristine wilderness and ancient cave systems beneath the jungle floor.

Still, her rise to the presidency has fuelled hope among some that she could turn things around for the country’s track record on climate change policies, which deteriorated under Lopez Obrador, according to the Climate Change Performance Index, largely due to increased subsidies for fossil fuels and poor progress in curbing deforestation.

“I definitely think that she has that will and intention to put Mexico back on net-zero targets and in the good graces of the international community,” Arthur Deakin, director of energy at consultancy America’s Market Intelligence.

Sheinbaum has pledged to boost wind and solar energy as part of a \$13.57bn investment in new energy generation projects. She is, however, also facing the biggest budget deficit in decades, left behind by Lopez Obrador, a reality that will force her to pick and choose how to dedicate spending.

Despite being the world’s most indebted energy company, Pemex is still a major contributor to state coffers, said Alejandra Lopez, a public policy consultant who specialises in energy issues.

The firm is a heavy emitter of greenhouse gases, but it is also an important national symbol of energy sovereignty for many Mexicans, including Lopez Obrador.

Pemex stirs a sense of “emotional, historical and sentimental” importance within the country, Lopez said.

Sheinbaum is a vocal believer in the role of the state in Mexico’s energy sector, long dominated by Pemex, which could make it tough to keep her promise to increase renewable energy.

A business-savvy approach could enable her to attract investment and spur realistic change towards decarbonising the energy and transportation sectors, Deakin said.

Sheinbaum could start by increasing the limit for Distributed Generation (DG) projects, typically small privately-funded solar or wind farms that are built to supply energy to a specific factory or industrial site. Upping the cap from the current 0.5 megawatts to 5 megawatts, like Brazil has done, could increase clean electricity for commercial industrial users, Deakin said. She could introduce biofuel policies and increase electric vehicle (EV) subsidies and charging infrastructure. A national carbon credit framework could help accelerate interest in low carbon initiatives.

“It’s a little harder when you’re struggling with a more constrained budget, but there’s other ways that emerging markets are able to create a more attractive environment for renewable electricity,” Deakin said. — Reuters

**To Advertise**  
gtadv@gulf-times.com

**Display**  
44466621  
44418811

**Classified**  
44466609 44418811  
gtcad@gulf-times.com

**Subscription**  
circulation@gulf-times.com

© 2024 Gulf Times. All rights reserved

‘Never be ashamed of your idealism. Never be afraid to speak the truth’

HH Sheikha Moza bint Nasser’s heartfelt message for Class of 2024

Dear Class of 2024, I congratulate you on your achievements.

As you graduate from your school or university, wherever you are in the world, you are told you can change it — that you can make it a better place. You are talented, capable and you have the energy and enthusiasm of youth. You hold all the tools to make positive change. You are the ones who can and will transform society.

We who are older watch with mixed emotions as you go out into the world. Pride is at the forefront — so much pride in all you have achieved and all you will achieve. But we are also wistful and nostalgic. You remind us of ourselves, back in the days before we were tamed by society and its expectations, in the days when we too were filled with the idealism of youth.

It was a time when we were honest with ourselves, not yet burying our honesty under layers of duty and respectability. As time has gone by, our lives have been filled by responsibilities: work, families, and the pressure to conform that comes with modern-day life. Gradually we have learnt to prioritise the expectations of others over our dreams.

Over the years, we have been instructed many times to “be realistic”. Idealism is apparently seen by much of the world as something frivolous. And yet, isn’t idealism a precious asset — one of the most important attributes in the world? How can



it be frivolous to be idealistic? Where would we be without idealism, a potent concoction of enthusiasm, energy and faith that inspires our actions, but is so easily lost? If only it were possible to bottle idealism, because if we do not hold onto our ideals, then we will stop striving to achieve them, and if no-one strives for a better world, then it will never happen.

Of course, idealism must be married with dedication and hard work if you are to make real change, but I ask you not to be cowed by so-called reality checks. “You can never end poverty in the world.” “You can never stop wars.” “There can never be equality.” Maybe so, but should that stop you from aiming for an ideal world? One where everyone can go about their daily lives without fear of guns or bombs? Where every child has a full belly and a roof over their head? Where students may read their books in peace and debate their ideas without threat? All the work in the world is of no use if there is nothing to motivate it.

Never be ashamed of your idealism. Never be afraid to speak the truth. The alternative is conforming to pressure and succumbing to cynicism. Instead, build your world view on a foundation of what you know to be right and you will lead the way on whichever path you choose to follow.

Your generation faces great challenges, greater perhaps than ever before. But if you hold on to the fire within you, then I believe there is nothing you cannot achieve. As you follow your chosen path, it can be difficult to bear the burden, not only of your own hopes and dreams, but of those who came before you and those who will come after. I beg you not to allow the pressures of life’s challenges to blind you to your values and your belief in the possibility of a better world. Remain always true to yourself, your hopes, dreams and ideals.”

**Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation**

World hits streak of record temperatures

By Kate Abnett and Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber  
Brussels/Geneva

Each of the past 12 months ranked as the warmest on record in year-on-year comparisons, according to the EU’s climate change monitoring service, as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for urgent action to avert “climate hell”.

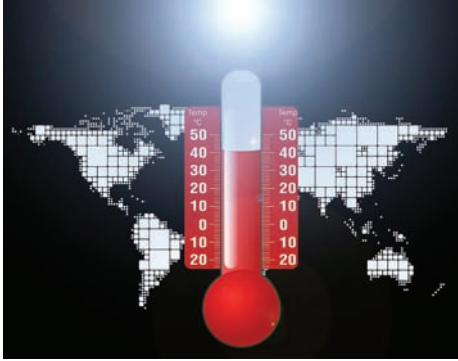
The average global temperature for the 12-month period to the end of May was 1.63 degrees Celsius (2.9 degrees Fahrenheit) above the pre-industrial average — making it the warmest such period since record-keeping began in 1940, the Copernicus Climate Change Service said.

This 12-month average does not mean that the world has yet surpassed the 1.5C (2.7F) global warming threshold, which describes a temperature average over decades, beyond which scientists warn of more extreme and irreversible impacts.

In a separate report, the UN’s World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said there is now an 84% chance that at least one of the next five years will mark the first calendar year with an average temperature that temporarily exceeds 1.5C above pre-industrial levels — up from a 66% chance last year.

Speaking about the findings, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres emphasised how quickly the world was heading in the wrong direction and away from stabilising its climate system.

“In 2015, the chance of such a breach was near zero,” Guterres said in a speech marking World Environment Day.



With time running out to reverse course, Guterres urged a 30% cut in global fossil fuel production and use by 2030.

“We need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell,” he said, adding: “The battle for 1.5 degrees will be won or lost in the 2020s.”

Carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels — the main cause of climate change — hit a record high last year despite global agreements designed to curb their release and a rapid expansion in renewable energy.

Coal, oil and gas still provide more than three quarters of the world’s energy, with global oil demand remaining strong.

The latest climate data show that the world is “way off track” from its goal of limiting warming to 1.5C — the key target of the world’s 2015 Paris Accord, WMO Deputy Secretary-General Ko Barrett said.

“We must urgently do more to cut greenhouse gas emissions, or we will pay an increasingly heavy price in terms of trillions

of dollars in economic costs, millions of lives affected by more extreme weather, and extensive damage to the environment and biodiversity,” Barrett said.

Barrett described the cooling effect of La Nina weather conditions, which are expected to take hold later this year, as “a mere blip in the upward curve” in the heat felt across the globe.

“We all need to know that we need to reverse this curve and we need to do it urgently,” she said.

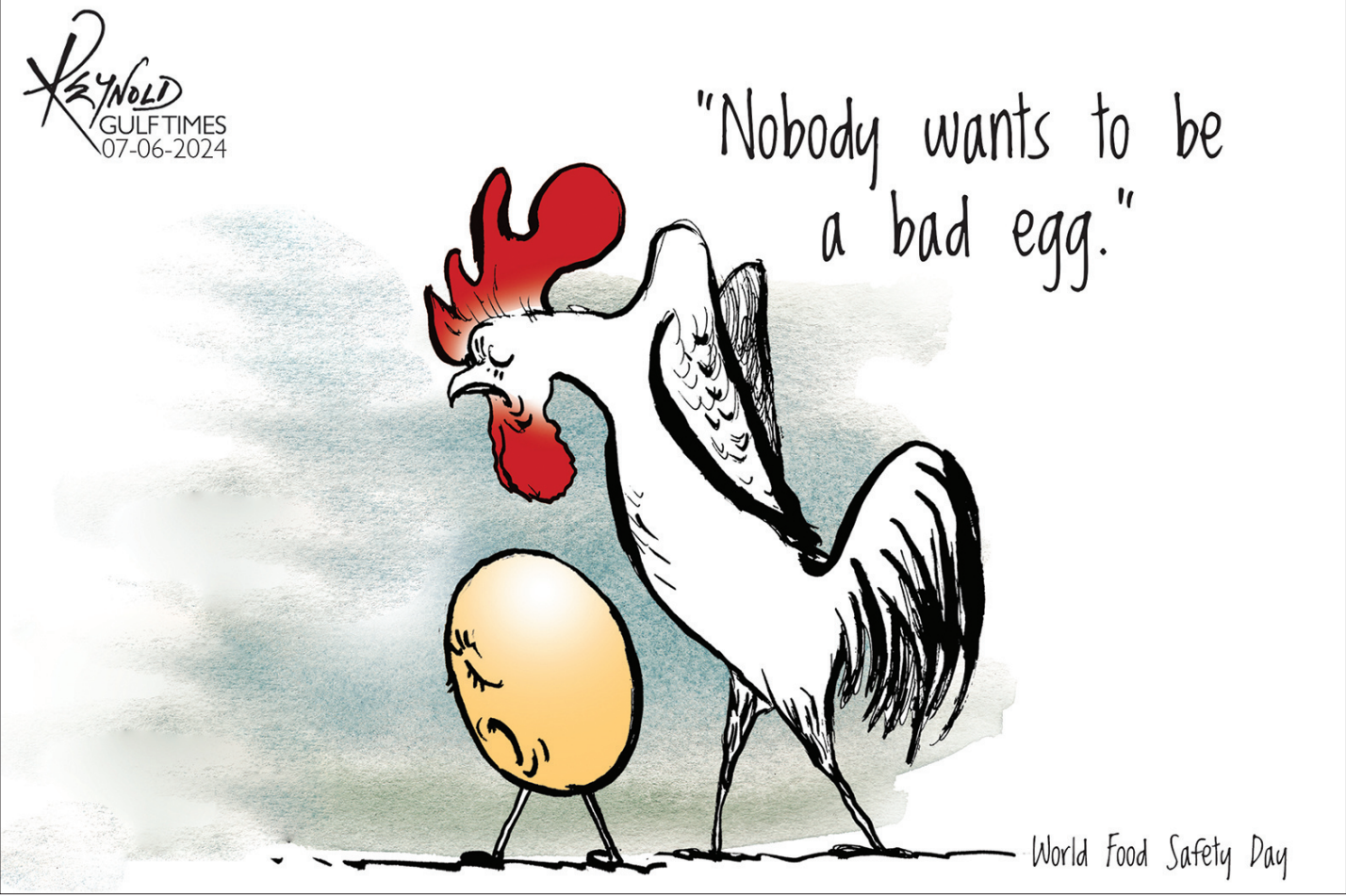
While last year registered as the warmest calendar year on record at 1.45C (2.61F) above pre-industrial temperatures, at least one of the next five years is likely to be even warmer than 2023, the WMO data show.

Scientists at Copernicus said there were some surprising developments — such as the steep loss of Antarctic sea ice in recent months — but that the overall climate data were in line with projections of how rising greenhouse gas emissions would heat the planet.

“We have not seen anything like this in the last several thousand years,” said Copernicus Director Carlo Buontempo.

Guterres took aim at fossil fuel companies. “The Godfathers of climate chaos — the fossil fuel industry — rake in record profits and feast off trillions in taxpayer-funded subsidies,” he said.

Drawing a comparison with many governments’ restrictions on advertising for harmful substances like tobacco, he said, “I urge every country to ban advertising from fossil fuel companies, and I urge news media and tech companies to stop taking fossil fuel advertising.” — Reuters





# Haj contemplations

1. This is a journey that was taken by Prophets and Messengers before you. Those who take the path of the Prophets magnify the *Tawheed* of Allah and His House. There are those, however, who come to perform Haj and their hearts are attached to other than Allah. They invoke the dead and the righteous, whether present or absent. This is the opposite of *Tawheed*, it is *Shirk* no matter what they call it because it is setting up rivals besides Allah. So, free your intention from any kind of devotion to other than Allah. Repent and come with a sincere heart submitting to Allah remembering what Ibrahim and his son Isma'il said when they were raising the foundations of Allah's House, the Ka'aba.

"O our *Rabb!* Accept from us and make us submit to You in Islam and show us our *Manaasik* (all the rite of Haj) and accept our repentance." – Qur'an 2:128

2. You are set to depart and you may or may not return to your home. Make this journey to Allah's House as Allah wants it. Think of the next journey that is surely coming, the one that leads to the meeting of Allah, Most High. This raises questions like: What did I prepare for that Day? Am I following Allah's Commands? Am I a follower of the *Sumnah* of Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*? Do I really know of Allah? Am I a believer that Allah is above the seven heavens over His 'arsh as He has stated in His Book and as His Messengers have asserted? Am I a believer that believes Allah has a true Face that suits His Majesty as He has affirmed in the Qur'an and as has been affirmed by His Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*? Am I a believer in all of Allah's Names, Attributes and Actions which He has affirmed in His Book and by His Messengers? Or do I just take and accept by my doubt, rejecting, or distorting (through what is called figurative interpretation of His Attributes) the meanings of Allah's Attributes and Actions?

And invoke not any other ilaah (god) along with Allah, *la ilaaha ilaa huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), Everything will perish save His Face, His is the Decision, and to Him (all) shall be returned. – Qur'an 28:88

3. Know, may Allah's Mercy upon you, that when you reach the *Meeqaat* there is another *Meeqaat* that is still to come. It is the *Meeqaat* (appointed meeting) on the Day of Resurrection:

Say (O Muhammad): (Yes) verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for an appointed Meeting of a known Day. – Qur'an 56:49-50

4. When you start saying the *Talbiyah* remember the Command of Allah to Prophet Ibrahim:

And proclaim to mankind the Haj. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from deep and distant (wide) mountain highways (to perform Haj). – Qur'an 22:27

The *Talbiyah* you make is in response to Prophet Ibrahim's proclamation to visit Allah's house of worship. Allah is Most Great.

5. Upon entering Makkah remember that you are in the Secure Sanctuary:

Have We not established for



them a secure sanctuary (Makkah), to which are brought fruits of all kinds, a provision from Ourselves, but most of them know not. – Qur'an 28:57

Let one commit himself to repentance, having a good opinion of Allah, hoping that Allah will grant him security from His Punishment.

6. You will enter one of the gates of *Al-Masjid Al-Haraam*. Then there you are before the magnificent House of Allah, Most High, the Ka'aba. Now you see what you hoped to see for a long time. Thank Allah for making this possible and hope that He will grant you the greatest reward of seeing His Majestic Face on the Day of Resurrection. This thankfulness is not just in saying "*alhamdu-lillaah*," but also by obeying Allah while on Haj and for the rest of your life.

7. You start your *Tawaaf* knowing that it is a great time for magnifying Allah the Exalted. Remember Him by His Names, Attributes and Actions. Also while in *Tawaaf* try to reflect upon the time when Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was prevented from doing the same thing you are doing today. Then think about what he did in clearing out the site from the symbols signifying worship to other than Allah! All idols were demolished. Busy yourself with *du'aa*. Ask Allah, the Most Great to make you hold to the correct belief and Path of the Salaf and make you die on it. Ask Allah to save you from all forms of *Shirk* and *Bid'ah*.

8. While in Sa'yi, contemplate on Haajar, the mother of Isma'il, when she asked her husband Ibrahim: "Did Allah order you to do this (leaving her and her baby Isma'il in Makkah)? He said: "Yes." Her great response was: "Then He (Allah) will not neglect us!" Think about this great dependence upon Allah when you are in the Sa'yi walking the same path which Haajar took in search for water and for the means of life around the mounts of Safa and Marwah. Think about her endurance, perseverance and truth in Allah. The Sa'yi exemplifies the strong belief that we are in need for the One Who Sustains and Provides – Allah, the Exalted.

Think about Ibrahim's invocation on his way to Palestine:

O our *Rabb!* I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley with no cultivation, by Your Sacred House (the Ka'aba at Makkah); in order, O our *Rabb*, that they may offer prayers perfectly, so fill some hearts among men with love towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits so that they may give thanks. – Qur'an 14:37

Men and fruits came to Makkah from many places. Ibrahim returned to visit and later to share with his son Isma'il the noble task of raising the foundations of the Ka'aba.

9. The standing on 'Arafaat is the Haj. The crowds should remind you of the Day of Resurrection. Humble yourself to Allah, manifest your '*Uboodiyah* to Him Alone through *du'aa*, sincere intention and strong determination to free yourself from the sins of the past and to build up a commitment to rush for doing what is good. Think of becoming a better person when you return. Rid yourself of false pride and showing off because it may ruin what you may gain on this day.

10. You gathered the pebbles and you are about to embark on stoning the Jamarat. This is an act of obedience and remembrance of Allah, Most Magnificent. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "When you cast the small pebbles (ie at the *Jamarat*), it will be a light for you on the Day of Resurrection."

11. When performing the sacrifice remember that saying of Allah, the Most High:

It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah, but it is your devotion that reaches him. – Qur'an 22:37

12. When you have completed your Haj, do not think that the remembrance of Allah has ended. Listen to what Allah says:

So when you have accomplished your *Manaasik* (ie the rites of Haj) remember Allah as you remember your forefathers or with a far more remembrance. – Qur'an 2:200

Special note: If you go to Madinah then the objective of your visit should be according to the *Sumnah* and not Bid'ah. Your intention is to set on a journey to visit the Prophet's mosque and not his grave. When you reach the mosque and you pray upon entering then you may go to the grave and say, "As-salaama 'alayka ayyuhan-nabiyy." The same salaam is also mentioned when you pass by Abu Bakr and 'Umar without innovations like:

- Visiting the grave of the Prophet before praying in the mosque.
- Making *du'aa* facing the grave.
- Seeking nearness to Allah by means of the Prophet. This is a prohibited form of tawassul.
- Seeking intercession from the Prophet.
- Placing the hands upon the grills around the room containing the Prophet's grave to seek blessings, etc.

Remember the Prophet's sayings: "Do not make my grave an

'Eid (place of celebration)..."

"May Allah's curse be on the Jews and Christians for taking the graves of their Prophets as places of worship."

"Those before you took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship. Do not take graves as places of worship for verily I forbid you to do so."

13. The Haj journey is not meant to gain any material reward. It is a selfless sacrifice solely for Allah, Most Majestic. It demands true love and fear of Him. It should be performed with full consciousness of one's heart, with full humility and submission to Allah. It should not be thought of as a tourist-type excursion or be performed as mere physical rites. It develops sincerity, piety, humility, self-control, sacrifice, and true knowledge of the meaning of submission and obedience to Allah, Most High. It helps the pilgrim to be a better person who is devoted to Allah in every aspect of life.

## PRIOR TO HAJ AND/OR 'UMRAH THE MUSLIM SHOULD:

- Purify his creed ('*Aqeedah*) from any aspects of shirk, greater or lesser, as shirk destroys one's deeds.
  - Devote his Haj purely and sincerely for Allah.
  - Sincerely repent for all of his sins.
  - Acquire knowledge about Haj and its rites.
  - Use *Halaal* (lawful) means to support this great journey, taking what he will require (ie not begging while on Haj to meet his needs).
  - Record all of his debts and include them in his Islamic Will.
  - Relieve himself from any kind of injustice which he may have inflicted upon others.
  - Secure the needs of his family members whom he leaves home.
  - Accompany the knowledgeable and righteous Muslims and stay away from the *Mubtadi'ah* (innovators in *Deen*).
  - Perform *Salaat* on time and as prescribed during the journey and in the Haj period.
  - Safeguard his tongue from backbiting, arguing, complaining.
  - Keep his beard and not shave it for Haj or for any other reason, as this is prohibited.
  - Remember that it is unlawful for men to wear gold (rings included).
- Note: The position of the scholars regarding visiting the grave sites by women can be summarised as follows:
- Disliked but not unlawful
  - Allowable, if done infrequently. If a woman is known as being unable to behave herself within the limits of *Shariah* at a grave site, then she should be prevented from visiting the graves.
  - Forbidden, and
  - A grave sin
- Many scholars state that women visiting the Prophet's Mosque may pronounce their *salaam* upon the Prophet away from the grave site since it is confirmed by many *Ahaadith* that the *salaam* is related to the Prophet wherever the person may be. The Prophet is in a state of *Barzakh* (a state of existence that begins with death and lasts until the Day of Resurrection) the nature of which is only known to Allah.

## The season of worship

Praise be to Allah Who has created time and has made some times better than others, some months and days and nights better than others, when rewards are multiplied many times, as a mercy towards His slaves. This encourages them to do more righteous deeds and makes them more eager to worship Him. This season of worship brings many benefits, such as the opportunity to correct one's faults and make up for any shortcomings or anything that one might have missed. Each of these special occasions involves some kind of worship through which people may draw closer to Allah, and some kind of blessing through which Allah bestows His favour and mercy upon whomsoever He, Almighty, Wills.

The Muslim must understand the value of his life, increase his worship of Allah and persist in doing good deeds until the moment of death. Allah Almighty says (what means): "And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (death)." [Qur'an 15:99] The commentators said: "The 'certainty' means death." *Ahaadith* indicate that these 10 days are better than all the other days of the year, with no exceptions, not even the last 10 days of Ramadan. But the last 10 nights of Ramadan are better, because they include the Night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree), which is better than a thousand months. Thus the various reports may be reconciled. [See Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 5/412]

# Shall you offer a sacrifice?

The *Sumnah* indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must stop cutting his hair and nails and removing anything from his skin, from the beginning of the 10 days until after he has offered his sacrifice, because the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "When you see the new moon of *Dhul-Hijjah*, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, then he should stop cutting his hair and nails until he has offered his sacrifice." According to another report he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "He should not remove (literally, touch) anything from his hair or skin." [Muslim]

The Prophet's, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, instruction here makes one thing obligatory and his prohibition makes another *Haraam* (prohibited), according to the soundest opinion, because these commands and prohibitions are unconditional and unavoidable.

However, if a person does any of these things deliberately, he must seek Allah's forgiveness but is not required to offer (an extra) sacrifice in expiation; his sacrifice will be acceptable. Whoever needs to remove some hair, nails, etc. because it is harming him, such as having a broken nail or a wound in a site where there is hair, can do so, and there is nothing wrong with that. The state of *Ihraam* is so important that it is permitted to cut one's hair if leaving it will cause harm. There is nothing wrong with men or women washing their heads during the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah*, because the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, only forbade cutting the hair, not washing it.

The wisdom behind this prohibition of the one who wants to offer a sacrifice from cutting his hair, etc., is so that he may resemble those in *Ihraam* in some aspects of the rituals performed, and so that he may draw closer to Allah by offering the sacrifice. So he leaves his hair and nails

alone until the time when he has offered his sacrifice, in the hope that Allah will save him in his entirety from the Fire. And Allah knows best.

If a person has cut his hair or nails during the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah* because he was not planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides later, during the 10 days, to offer a sacrifice, then he must refrain from cutting his hair and nails from the moment he makes this decision.

Some women may delegate their brothers or sons to make the sacrifice on their behalf, then cut their hair during these 10 days. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, whether or not he (or she) delegates someone else to carry out the actual deed. The prohibition does not apply to the person delegated, only to the person who is making the sacrifice, as is indicated in the narration. The person who is sacrificing on behalf of someone else, for whatever reason, does not have to adhere to this prohibition.

This prohibition appears to apply only to the one who is offering the sacrifice, not to his wife and children, unless any of them is offering a sacrifice in his or her own right, because the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, used to sacrifice "on behalf of the family of Muhammad," but there are no reports that say he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, forbade them to cut their hair or nails at that time.

If a person was planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides to go and perform Haj, he should not cut his hair or nails if he wants to enter *Ihraam*, because the *Sumnah* is only to cut hair and nails when necessary. But if he is performing *Tamattu'* [whereby he performs 'Umrah, comes out of *Ihraam* and enters *Ihraam* anew for Haj], he should trim his hair at the end of his 'Umrah because this is part of the ritual.

# Virtues of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah

By Shaykh Abdullah Ibn Abdur-Rahman al-Jibrein

All praise is due to Allah, and may He render our Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, safe from every derogatory thing, and exalt his mention, and the mention of his household and Companions.

Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these 10 days." The people (the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them) asked: "O Messenger of Allah, not even Jihad in the path of Allah?" He, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Not even Jihad in the path of Allah, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing (lost both his property and life)." [Al-Bukhari]

In another version, Ibn Umar, *radiallahu 'anhuma*, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "There are no days during which good deeds are greater or more beloved to Allah than these ten days. So recite more often the *Tahleel* (*Laa Ilaaha Illallah*), *Takbeer* (*Allahu Akbar*), *Tahmeed* (*Alhamdulillah*). (Imam Ahmad)

Jaabir reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: The best day is the Day of Arafah.

## Ten Kinds of Observances In These Days

First: Performing Haj and 'Umrah, which are the best of all observances. Its excellence is signified by many Prophetic traditions. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi*

*wa sallam*, said: Performing 'Umrah and following it with another expiates sins that are committed in between. And the perfect Haj would be requited with nothing other than *Jannah*. There are also many authentic traditions to that effect.

Second: Observing fasting on all or some of these days, particularly on the Day of Arafah. There is no doubt that fasting is the best of observances; for it is one of the observances which Allah relates to Himself, according to the holy tradition (*hadith Qudsi*): Fasting is for Me, and I shall requite it. My slave relinquishes his desires, food, and drink for My sake.

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, *radiallahu 'anh*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: Any slave of Allah who observes fast of a day in the cause of Allah, Allah would separate between him and the Fire a distance of seventy years on account of observing that day. (Agreed upon).

Abu Qataadah, *radiallahu 'anh*, narrated that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: Observing fasting on the Day of Arafah; I expect Allah to expiate the sins that were committed during the preceding year, and the sins that will be committed in the year after. (Imam Muslim)

Third: Reciting *Takbeer*, and *Dhikr* in these days according to the words of Allah, the Exalted: And mention the name of Allah in certain days. [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:203] These certain days are said to be the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah*. Therefore, scholars recommend *Dhikr* more often during these days, according to a tradition which is reported by Ibn Umar, *radiallahu 'anhuma*: Therefore, recite more often, *Tahleel*, *Takbeer*, and *Tahmeed*.

Ibn Umar and Abu Hurairah (*radiallahu 'anh*) used to go out to the marketplaces during the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah* and recite out loud the *Takbeer* and people would repeat it after them.

Ishaq (*rahimahullah*) reported that the jurists (*rahihamullah*) used to recite during the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah*: "*Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Laa Ilaaha illallah, wallahu Akbar, wa lillaahil-hamd*." It is commended to recite them out loud in marketplaces, at homes, roads, mosques and elsewhere. According to the commands of Allah: That you may exalt Allah for having guided you, and that you may be grateful to Him. [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:185]

It is not permissible to recite the *Takbeer* in unison. That is, when a group of people recite the *Takbeer* in one voice, for it has never been reported that the Pious Predecessors did so. The proper way, according to the *Sumnah*, is that everyone recites the *Takbeer* individually. This applies to all supplications and *Dhikr*; unless one is ignorant, then someone may teach him and he recites after him. It is permissible to recite whatever forms of *Takbeer*, *Tahmeed*, and the rest of the legitimate supplications.

Fourth: Repentance and relinquishing acts of disobedience and all sins, in order to acquire forgiveness and mercy. Acts of disobedience are means of banishing, while acts of obedience are means of gaining favour with Allah. Abu Hurairah, *radiallahu 'anh*, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: Verily Allah feels jealous, and the jealousy of Allah is aroused when man violates what Allah prohibits. (Agreed upon)

Fifth: Accomplishing more good deeds of voluntary observances, such as: salaah,

charity, Jihad, Qur'anic recitation, enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong, and the like; for the rewards of such observances are multiplied during these days. Observances during these days are unsurpassed in excellence and they are better and more beloved to Allah than other excellent observances including Jihad, which is the best of deeds, unless one sacrifices both, his life and his steed.

Sixth: It is legal during these days the recitation of the *Takbeer* in general at all times, day or night until 'Eid prayer. The restricted *Takbeer* is that which is to be recited after the obligatory prayers. As for the non-pilgrims, the *Takbeer* begins from the Day of Arafah, and for pilgrims it begins from the noon prayer of the Day of Sacrifice and continues until Asr prayer of the last of the days of *Tashreeq*.

Seventh: Offering the sacrificial animal during the day of sacrifice and the Days of Tashreeq. It is the *Sumnah* of our father Ibrahim, may Allah exalt his mention, in commemoration of the occasion when Allah ransomed Ibrahim's son with a large ram. It has been authentically confirmed that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, sacrificed two black and white rams with horns. He killed them with his own hand, and invoked the name of Allah upon them, recited the *Takbeer*, and placed his foot on their sides, when he killed them. (Agreed upon.)

Eighth: Umm Salamah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: When you see the new moon of *Dhul-Hijjah*, and one of you wants to sacrifice an animal let him refrain from cutting or shaving his hair or clipping his finger nails, or toenails. In another version: Let him not cut his hair or

his fingernails until he has slaughtered his sacrificial animal. This perhaps is enjoined on non-pilgrims to have something in common with the pilgrims who bring along with them their sacrificial animals. Allah, the Exalted, says: And do not shave off your heads until the sacrificial animal is slaughtered. [Surah Al-Baqarah 197] This prohibition seems to apply only to a person who is making the offering, not his dependents, unless one of them has his own sacrificial animal. There is no harm in washing the head even if some hairs fall off.

Ninth: The Muslim must make sure to observe Eid prayer in its designated place, and attend the Khutbah of the Eid. He should also know the purpose of the Eid, and that it's a day of giving thanks and a chance for accomplishing good deeds. He should not turn it into a day of mischief, disobedience, or an excuse for violating the prohibited things; such as singing music, illegitimate amusements, consuming liquor, or the like. All of these things are detestable and nullify the good deeds that one may have accomplished during the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

Tenth: After knowing all the above observances, every Muslim, male or female, must utilise these days in obedience to Allah, remembering Him, expressing gratefulness to him, fulfilling all the obligatory observances, avoiding the reprehensible things and taking advantage of this season to acquire His mercy and the pleasure. It Allah alone who grants success and guides to the right path.

May He exalt the mention of Muhammad, and his household, and Companions, and may He render them safe from every derogatory thing.





Festival 24 will be held on the sidelines of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

# Generation Amazing sponsors youth festival at Paris Olympics

The Generation Amazing Foundation, the human and social legacy initiative of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, is sponsoring the participation of youth from Qatar, India and Pakistan to the upcoming Festival 24, an international solidarity youth festival held on the sidelines of the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympics.

Under the theme *United by Sport*, the festival will take place in Lyon and Paris from July 19-29th, and will emphasise inclusivity, welcoming more than 500 youth from 36 countries, covering all five continents.

Organised by Sports dans la Ville, it will feature programmes and panels based around promoting social and professional integration through sport and will immerse attendees in enriching cultural experiences.

“Over the past 14 years, our mandate at Generation Amazing has been to implement education and capacity-building programmes in disadvantaged communities worldwide,” said Generation Amazing executive director Nasser al-Khori.

“The FIFA World Cup 2022 significantly amplified our reach and impact, and we

look forward to partnering with Sports dans la Ville as they similarly leverage the Olympics platform to provide a transformative learning experience to youth globally,” he said. “We have seen how sport has this unique ability to break down barriers, foster peace and resilience, and bring people together.”

Paris 2024 is poised to make Olympic history by achieving gender parity on the playing field for the first time ever.

Operating in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Gender Equality and Inclusion, Generation Amazing’s partnership with Festival 24 underscores their commitment to educating and empowering youth through the transformative power of sport and to building a more equitable and inclusive world.

As a leading sponsor of the programme alongside the European Union, the French Ministry of Sports and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Visa, among others, Generation Amazing has organised two delegations of youth from Right to Play in Pakistan and Slum Soccer in India, along with young leaders from Qatar to participate in the festival.



They will attend creative workshops, cultural visits of Lyon and Paris, inclusive sporting events, panels and conferences on inclusivity through sports, and the Olympics opening ceremony.

“A trip like this can change a life,” said Sport dans la Ville managing director Philippe Oddou. “Through the encounters and discoveries it entails, travel is an invaluable source of inspiration, ambitions and dreams.”

“We believe in the unparalleled power of happy memories, which allow us to grow, to move forward, and to be inspired by the differences of others,” he said. “We look forward to sharing this great moment of sport, celebration and solidarity with all the young people at our Festival 24, and with all those who helped make it happen.”

Students have been selected from within their communities for their merit, commitment and motivation.



With their experience at Festival 24, they will become role models and pass it on to hundreds of young people, families and communities in their home countries.

Each organisation will also continue this legacy by organising a sharing event in their communities, such as a photo exhibition or a presentation of their trip, to bring the experience and the Games to as many people as possible in the 36 countries represented. – QNA



## MoEHE honours Tomoh Programme 2024 grads

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has honoured Qatari graduates of the Tomoh 2024 programme.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Maha al-Ru-

waili and acting Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs at the MoEHE Dr Harib Mohamed al-Jabri honoured the 185 graduates during the introductory meeting organised by the ministry.

During the event, director of the MoEHE’s Educational Guidance Department Maryam Nauman al-Emadi made a presentation on the importance of the teacher’s role in creating the future generation, in human development, and involving students in the process of learning and development within the classroom, and in professional development, stressing everyone’s pride in the teaching profession as a profession of raising generations.

She also addressed the necessity of proper planning for the educational process and creating the appropriate environment for it.

Al-Emadi reviewed the quarterly and daily plans and the contents of each, and the importance of the teacher working to develop themselves on the personal and practical levels, and benefiting from the

guidance of mentors, pointing out that the educational journey is enjoyable and requires an inspiring teacher.

Director of the MoEHE’s Training and Development Centre Iman Salman al-Mohannadi provided an explanation of the journey of the graduate of the “Tomoh” programme, reviewing the programmes, with an explanation of the goals, philosophy, outcomes, and partners of each of them.

She also spoke about the Qatari Teachers Fellowship Programme (Khebrat), which the MoEHE celebrated its first batch after their return from Finland, where, over a period of two months, they learned about the educational experience there and acquired educational skills that they applied in the classroom.

Alam Othman al-Olan from the MoEHE’s Human Resource Department made a presentation on how to apply for jobs and the options available in this regard, while student Sayyida Hadi Saleh al-Mansour praised in a speech on

behalf of her fellow graduates of the “Tomoh” programme.

In a press statement, student guidance consultant Amal Hamad al-Mojil of the MoEHE’s Scholarships Department stressed the importance of the “Tomoh” programme in terms of attracting Qatari students who wish to join the teaching profession.

She indicated that the goal is to graduate educationally and scientifically qualified cadres to meet the needs for teaching positions in the educational field.

Al-Mojil added that since the launch of the programme in 2010, around 1,200 have graduated from it.

Sponsored by the MoEHE in coordination with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CGB) and the College of Education at Qatar University, the Tomoh programme is concerned with attracting students to the teaching profession after obtaining a bachelor’s degree in education in various scientific and literary specialisations. – QNA

## Ministry celebrates conclusion of Holy Qur’an memorisation contest for schools

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), in co-operation with Cambridge schools, celebrated the conclusion of the first edition of the Holy Qur’an memorisation competition in private schools and kindergartens, in which winners were honoured.

A total of 1,021 students from 182 private schools and kindergartens participated in the competition.

It focused on memorising the Holy Qur’an according to directives determined by a judging committee from the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, Al Azhar Al Sharif institution, and Cambridge schools.

Assistant Undersecretary for Special Education Affairs at the MoEHE, Omar Abdulaziz al-Naama, said that the competition aimed to encourage students in private schools and kindergartens to memorise the Holy Qur’an as it has a profound personal impact as well as its impact on their future.



Director of the MoEHE’s Private Schools and Kindergartens Department Dr Rania Mohamed said that the competition came about as a result of Cambridge schools’ launch of programmes aimed at identity rooting and consolidating Islamic values.

Sheikh Ahmed Fathi Othman, the head of the Al Azhar Al Sharif judging committee, also spoke during



the ceremony about the competition’s judging, stages, and importance.

Assistant Undersecretary al-Naama honoured the 50 winners of the competition at the conclusion of the ceremony, in addition to honouring 35 distinguished participants from various private schools and kindergartens in Qatar. – QNA

