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### Qatar attends Green Development Forum

Qatar participated in the Green Development Forum of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), which concluded yesterday in Qingdao, China, with a delegation headed by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie. HE the minister delivered Qatar's speech at the two-day forum, during which he emphasised the great importance that Qatar attaches to green development and harmonising economic and social growth with the preservation of the environment and natural resources. **Page 2**

### Kyiv hospital took direct hit: UN

A UN rights mission said yesterday there was a "high likelihood" that Kyiv's main children's hospital took a direct hit from a Russian missile during a series of airstrikes on Ukrainian cities, as the Kremlin continued to deny involvement. Ukraine flew its flags at half mast in a national day of mourning to mark the deaths of 44 people across the country from Monday's air attacks. **Page 11**

### 8 killed after Beryl sweeps across US

At least eight people were killed in the southern United States after storm Beryl felled trees and caused heavy flooding, before being downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone yesterday. In Texas, at least seven people were killed, while another person died in neighbouring Louisiana. **Page 7**

## PM meets US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf, who is visiting the country. The meeting discussed the close strategic relations between Qatar and the United States of America, and ways to support and strengthen them. It also discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, along with developments of the joint mediation efforts to end the war on the Strip, in addition to a number of topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

## Interior minister meets Qatari force securing Paris Olympics 2024

**QNA**  
Doha

**H**E the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met with the Qatari security force set to participate in securing the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

HE Sheikh Khalifa encouraged the force, comprised of leaders, experts, and security specialists, along with members of specialised teams and units, to utilise their skills and extensive experience to ensure the successful security of the event. He emphasised that Qatari national cadres have gained global recognition, especially following Qatar's outstanding success in hosting various international events to the highest security standards.

His Excellency conveyed greetings and directives from His High-



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani

ness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and his directives that their mission in France is an extension of their responsibilities in Qatar, therefore, they have to perform their duties impeccably to ensure security and co-operation with all parties, representing not only Qatar but also the Arab and Islamic worlds. **To Page 2**



## Over 40 killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza

**Reuters**  
Cairo/Gaza

**T**wenty-nine Palestinians were killed by an Israeli strike that hit tents housing displaced families outside a school in the town of Abassan east of Khan Younis in southern Gaza yesterday, the director of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office said.

Across Gaza, more than 40 Palestinians were killed yesterday in Israeli air strikes on Gaza City in the north, Al-Bureij, Deir Al-Balah and Al-Nuseirat in central Gaza and in Rafah in the south, according to medics.

Palestinians fled as tanks thrust deeper into Gaza City as Israel stepped up an offensive that resistance movement Hamas said could jeopardise cease-fire talks.

Footage circulated on social media showed families packed onto donkey carts and in the backs of trucks piled with mattresses and other belongings making their way through Gaza City's streets to flee areas under Israeli evacuation orders.

"Gaza City is being wiped out, this is what is happening. Israel is forcing us to leave homes under fire," Um Tamer, a mother of seven, said.

Israeli tanks pushed deeper into several city districts including Shejaia, Sabra and Tel



A child sits amid the rubble as Palestinians inspect a house destroyed in an Israeli strike in Nuseirat refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

Al-Hawa, where residents have reported some of the most fierce fighting in months.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said all of its medical clinics were out of service in Gaza City due to Israeli evacuation orders that have driven thousands of people westward towards the Mediterranean and to the south.

The UN Human Rights Office said it was "appalled" at the way civilians, many of whom have been displaced multiple times, have been ordered to head to areas where "military operations are ongoing and where civilians continue to be killed and injured".

Gaza City residents have now been told to move south to Deir

Al-Balah, which the UN office said "is already seriously overcrowded" with displaced Palestinians.

Nine months of war and displacement have caused a hunger crisis, and the recent deaths of several more children from malnutrition in the Gaza Strip indicate that famine has spread throughout the coastal enclave, a group of independent human rights experts mandated by the United Nations.

In Al-Nuseirat in central Gaza, an Israeli air strike early yesterday on a house of several storeys killed 17 people, including 14 children and a woman, Hamas' media office said. **Page 6**

## Gaza ceasefire talks to resume in Doha today

**Reuters**  
Cairo

Negotiations to secure a ceasefire in the Gaza war will resume in Doha today, with the intelligence chiefs of Egypt, the United States, and Israel in attendance, Egypt's state-affiliated Al-Qahera News TV and sources said yesterday. The Egyptian security delegation in Doha, led by intelligence chief Abbas Kamel, will be "on a mission to bring viewpoints closer between Hamas and Israel in order to reach a truce agreement as soon as possible". Al-Qahera News quoted a senior source as saying. "There is an agreement over many points," the source said, adding the negotiations will be back in Cairo on Thursday.

Israel's spy chief David Barnea will also attend the meeting, a source said. US Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns will also attend, after he met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo yesterday. Al-Sisi affirmed in the meeting the Egyptian position "rejecting the continuation of military operations in the Gaza Strip," the presidency said in a statement. Egypt and Qatar have been spearheading mediation in the nine-month-old war between Israel and Hamas in hopes of ending the fighting and securing the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel. Senior US officials were in the region to push for a ceasefire after Hamas made concessions last week.

## Democrats divided over Biden fitness



US President Joe Biden

Joe Biden's faltering re-election bid received some much needed support from senior Democrats yesterday, even as the party's lawmakers fell short of reaching a consensus on keeping the president as their 2024 White House nominee. While the 81-year-old tries to shore up his international reputation in a speech at the Nato alliance's 75th anniversary summit in Washington, his own party is in crisis mode weighing whether to jettison Biden as their election candidate. **Page 7**



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The 10th Ministerial Conference of the **CHINA-ARAB STATES COOPERATION FORUM**







# Qatar committed to green future: al-Subaie

**QNA**  
Qingdao, China

Qatar participated in the Green Development Forum of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), which concluded yesterday in Qingdao, China, with a delegation headed by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie.

HE Dr al-Subaie delivered a speech at the two-day forum, during which he emphasised the great importance that Qatar attaches to green development and harmonising economic and social growth with the preservation of the environment and natural resources, which is reflected in the Qatar National Vision 2030, which is based on four basic pillars include “environmental development”, which always seeks to achieve synergy between economic expansion and environmental preservation.

He pointed to Qatar’s recent launch of the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030), which serves as the main catalyst in advancing the country’s economic diversification while ensuring environmental sustainability.



HE Dr al-Subaie highlighted that ensuring energy security remains a fundamental global obstacle to development and that Qatar, as a leading global supplier of natural gas, enjoys a distinguished position that qualifies it to assume a major role in global green development and the transition towards a low-carbon future. Qatar also launched the National Renewable Energy Strategy, which aligns with its

commitment to a greener and more prosperous future.

He indicated that the issuance of Green Sukuk was recently announced, which is considered the first of its kind in the region and represents the entry of Qatar into a new phase of financing environmentally-friendly projects, and its focus on achieving a balance between human needs and preserving the environment. He noted Qatar’s announcement

of the ESG and Sustainability Strategy for the Financial Sector, which aims to enhance the efficiency of the financial system in supporting national sustainability goals.

On the sidelines of his participation in the forum, HE Dr al-Subaie met with a number of ministers and international officials, including Maldives Minister of State for Climate Change, Environment and Energy Mohamed Rasheed, Chinese Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus Ivan Prykhodzka.

He also met separately with Secretary-General of the SCO Zhang Ming, Vice-President of Iran and Head of Iran’s Environmental Protection Organisation Ali Salajegheh, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of Uzbekistan Aziz Abdulkhakimov, and Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan Yerlan Nyssanbayev.

The meetings discussed a number of issues, most notably supporting joint efforts to address climate challenges, and enhancing co-operation between all parties to preserve the environment and biodiversity.

## AlKhater in Bosnia meetings

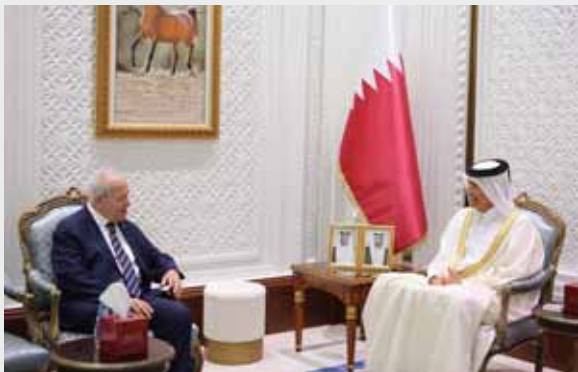


HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met in Sarajevo yesterday with Bosnian Minister of Human Rights and Refugees Dr Sevid Hortic. Discussions during the meeting dealt with co-operation relations between the two countries and means to support and enhance them, especially in human rights, in addition to a number of issues of common interest. During the meeting, the Bosnian minister expressed his country’s aspiration to strengthen bilateral co-operation in all fields, especially in the education and development sectors, and praised the role of Qatar and its efforts to achieve ceasefire in Gaza. HE AlKhater received from Dr Hortic the Flower of Srebrenica medal, which expresses the desire to show solidarity. Qatar’s ambassador to Bosnia Meshal bin Ali al-Attiah attended the meeting. **(QNA)**



Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Denis Becirovic received yesterday in Sarajevo HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater. The meeting dealt with bilateral co-operation and ways to support and enhance them, and discussing developments in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, especially developments in the joint mediation to end the war on the Strip, in addition to a number of topics of joint interest. Becirovic expressed his country’s appreciation for the role of Qatar and its efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza, and stressed its keenness to strengthen joint bilateral co-operation, especially in economy, tourism and culture. He praised Qatar’s resounding success in hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. For her part, HE AlKhater expressed thanks and appreciation to Bosnia and Herzegovina for its positions in support of Qatar in international forums. The meeting was attended by Qatar’s ambassador to Bosnia Meshal bin Ali al-Attiah. **(QNA)**

## Shura Council Speaker meets Palestine, Singapore envoys



HE the Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem met yesterday separately with the ambassador of the State of Palestine Munir Abdullah Ghanam, and Singaporean ambassador Wong Chow Ming. During the two meetings, they reviewed Qatar’s parliamentary relations with the State of Palestine and Singapore and ways to strengthen and develop them. **(QNA)**



# Qatar-WIPO partnership growing in multiple areas

**QNA**  
Geneva

Qatar has participated in the 65th series of meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), currently being held in Geneva from July 9-17.

Qatar’s Permanent Representative to the UN Office and other international organisations in Geneva HE Dr Hind bint Abdulrahman al-Muftah led Qatar’s delegation at the meetings.

Delivering a statement before the WIPO’s inaugural session, HE Dr al-Muftah said the co-operation between Qatar and WIPO has witnessed a new year of growing partnership in multiple areas of intellectual property, extending sincere thanks to the general-directorate’s efforts in advancing this co-operation in the areas of higher education, entrepreneurship, and alternative means of dispute settlement.

She noted Qatar’s efforts to accelerate the process of joining numerous international WIPO-run conventions, affirming that the document of the State’s accession to the Madrid Protocol for the International Registration of Marks has been recently delivered and will enter into force on Aug 3, along with the ongoing efforts with the WIPO’s general-directorate to continue to comport with the national measures in line with the requirements of this accession.

She underscored Qatar’s determination to continue to modernise the legislative framework for the intellectual property protection, congratulating the success of the Diplomatic Conference on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, along with its significance in promoting transparency in the patent system and achieving equitable benefit-



sharing, especially with indigenous peoples and local communities.

HE Dr al-Muftah underlined that Qatar’s delegation backs the ongoing negotiations in a variety of WIPO’s committees and looks forward to constructively working with the member states in order to ensure the success of the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude and Adopt a Design Law Treaty, due to be convened in Saudi Arabia, from Nov 11-22, emphasising that Qatar countenances the proposals submitted by the Arab Group to incorporate the Arabic language into all WIPO’s works and systems.

Qatar’s delegation has actively participated in the series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO.

WIPO is one of the oldest professional agencies in the UN system and the largest international organisations in Geneva, the global forum for intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information, and co-operation. It has 193 member states and primarily develops a balanced and effective international intellectual property system that encourages innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

The organisation was established through the signing of the WIPO Convention in Stockholm on July 14, 1967, and entered into force in 1970, was amended in 1979, with Qatar joining the organisation in 1976.

# Ministry trains new employees on financial awareness

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), in collaboration with Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI), yesterday organised the first training sessions of the financial awareness programme devoted to the new employees, those who are about to get married and debtors to equip them with the fiscal management tools.

Held under the title of “financial awareness”, the two-day session intends to train the participants from both genders on ways to conserve resources, craft saving policies, expenditure rationalisation to achieve financial sustainability, and propagating the culture of financial awareness with a new technique that essentially draws young people in the society.

Besides, the session included an array of themes about financial spending, the notion of correct spending, human financial age, personal budget determination skills, strategies of identifying the priorities of monthly purchases and ways to achieve the successful equation, serving versus spending.

The session shed the light on the 12 saving skills and the eight spending skills coupled with a practical and successful mock



drill training, along with a tour of the world of debtors who turned into rich.

Presenting the session, Head of the Training and Programme Development Department at the Centre of Excellence for Training and Consulting Dr Mona Babi highlighted the importance of the financial awareness as one of the most significant topics to be laid out today in most of the developed countries to conserve the resources, achieve financial sustainability and ensure the well-being of life in society, calling on the target groups of the programme, including those in debt, those about to get married, and new employees, in addition to the university students, to realise that mastering and practising the best financial policies in life achieves balance and stability in public life.

Social guidance consultant at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Hessa al-Dhiyab stressed the value of



preserving the family’s capabilities, which comes through wise spending and planning for household expenditures.

She added that everyone is required to have the necessary skills and knowledge about the best practices to achieve financial balance in life, and to work to help future generations to live within a rationalisation framework.

The ministry, through the programme, seeks to build financial awareness based on lofty Islamic values in spending, and to use integrated models and means to manage financial life, which has been greatly affected by global economic transformations.

The initiative aims at keeping young people and new families from unnecessary consumerism for luxury by building a conscious and sustainable society that guarantees future generations equal opportunities for prosperity and sustainability. **(QNA)**

## Qatar stresses full support for Libyan political track

Qatar stressed its full support for the Libyan political track, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and all peaceful solutions that maintain unity, stability, and sovereignty of Libya; and achieve the aspiration of its fraternal people for security, peace, development, and prosperity. In Qatar’s statement during the interactive dialogue on the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on providing technical assistance and capacity building to improve the human rights situation in Libya, within the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Third Secretary at the Department of Human

Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Abdullah Nasser al-Khalifa, voiced Qatar’s condemnation of all violations committed against the fraternal people of Libya. He urged all Libyan parties to respect their obligations under international laws and agreements, avoid escalation, resort to the voice of wisdom, overcome differences through dialogue, give priority to the national interest, create appropriate conditions for holding national presidential and parliamentary elections in all parts of Libya, promote transitional justice and national reconciliation, and ensure

accountability for all violations committed against Libyans. He also urged the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the international community to continue co-operation with the Libyan authorities, develop and implement technical assistance programs, build capabilities in line with the priorities set by Libya that contribute to building its national institutions and ensuring the rule of law, strengthening the capabilities to confront illegal immigration and combat human trafficking, and promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. **(QNA)**

## Interior minister meets Qatari force securing Paris Olympics

**From Page 1**

During the meeting, HE the minister reviewed the final preparations of the Qatari security force for the event, which fall under the administrative agreement on security co-operation between Qatar and the French Republic. This participation underscores the expertise gained by Qatari security forces in organising and securing major global events. HE the interior minister listened to detailed explanations from the leaders of the teams and specialised units regarding the specific tasks the force

will undertake, according to the established plans and arrangements for the participation of the Qatari security forces in securing the event, in co-ordination with the organising committee and related committees. The Qatari security forces will contribute to the security operations with teams representing specialised units, such as the special unit (Lfdaweia), personal protection unit, tracking unit, explosives disposal unit, cybersecurity unit, security patrols, mounted patrols, anti-drone teams, planning teams, logistics teams, airport security teams, as

well as the Command and Control Center and the International Police Co-operation Center (IPCC). This participation reflects the robust and growing strategic partnership between Qatar and France, particularly in security fields. Notably, the Qatari security forces completed a special training programme for the Paris 2024 Olympics security mission, which lasted three weeks and included various training courses, workshops, and case studies of real events and situations from previous Olympic Games hosted in France and other countries, to derive valuable lessons.



# Awqaf opens new mosque at Aba Al Heeran

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Mosques, has opened a new mosque at Aba Al Heeran. Spread over an area of 6,410sq m, the mosque can accommodate 350 male and female worshippers, according to an official statement from Awqaf.

The opening of the new mosque by Mohamed Hamad Khatam al-Mahshadi al-Maadheed comes within Awqaf's plan to expand the number of mosques in all regions of the country, keeping pace with urban and population growth, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

With number MS 1409, the mosque has a main prayer hall with space for 300 male worshippers in addition to a women's hall for 50 worshippers.

The mosque also includes a spacious ablution place in addition to a large number of public parking lots, several of which are allocated to persons with disabilities.

The entrances and exits of the mosque are disability-friendly. The mosque also has a tall minaret.

The Department of Engineer-



ing Affairs at the ministry is concerned with fulfilling the needs of the regions in the country for mosques and prayer grounds while providing temporary mosques and supervising their preservation as well as preparing the annual plan for the maintenance of mosques and imams' residences. These are in co-ordination with the competent authorities.

For mosque designs, the department takes into account the re-

quirements of different areas along with the guidelines for green and sustainable buildings.

Also, the department focuses on the conditions for sustainability in the use of electricity and water, and preserving the aesthetics of heritage in designs that reflect the authenticity of Qatari and Islamic heritage by the highest standards.

The ministry's plans to build mosques also take into account the population density map along with

engineering, architectural specifications and the heritage aspect within the framework of caring for the mosques to perform worship and to serve the worshippers.

Awqaf's website provides the facility to search for mosque locations geographically, according to the global navigation system, through accurate and specific maps that facilitate access to mosque locations in all cities across the country.



## Visual Art Centre unveils summer activities for kids



QNA  
Doha

Visual Art Centre of the Ministry of Culture has launched a wide variety of activities for children of various age groups under the title of "summer and art". The event is set to run until the end of July 2024.

Director of Visual Art Centre Hoda al-Yafei, said the programme primarily intends to encourage the entire community to practise visual art, discover art talents and care for them, affirming that the programme features a package of art workshops such as sea voyage, where participants design and execute sea-themed elements on bags

and fabric, as well as a workshop titled; day with an artist, which seeks to explore painting styles inspired by Qatari heritage aesthetics.

Besides, the event features a mosaic art workshop for girls to design flowers using colourful mosaic pieces. The events are due to be held at the centre's premises in Al Azizya. Also, the programme includes a workshop on heritage buildings for girls to draw the Qatari heritage buildings utilising oil colours at the centre's premises in the cultural district of Katara, alongside a workshop on heritage to depict the Qatari heritage landmarks and methods of learning planning, drawing, and colour blending techniques. (QNA)

# Indian embassy to start building chancery soon

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

To realise the aspiration of the largest expatriate community in Qatar of having its own embassy building, the Indian mission is all set to start the construction of its chancery within a few months, disclosed the ambassador.

In an exclusive interview with *Gulf Times*, Indian ambassador, Vipul said the Qatar government has allotted about 5,000sq m of land for the chancery project.

"In February this year, we floated the expression of interest for participating in the project," the envoy said while explaining that more than 10 companies have taken part in the initial bidding process.

"Right now, all these bids by the companies are being evaluated and analysed by the Ministry of External Affairs in India. Once the evaluation is completed, the final list of companies for the construction of the building will be ready. Thereafter, the final tender or bids will be invited from the selected companies," noted the ambassador.



Indian ambassador Vipul speaking to *Gulf Times*. PICTURE: Thajudheen

"Once these companies submit the final bids with the design and the cost of the construction, we will choose and approve one and start the construction of the building. We hope that the whole process will be completed in the next few months and the construction will start very soon," he continued.

According to the envoy, the project will get started fairly soon in about a few months and will be completed well on time if everything goes well.

"This is one of the major priorities for the community and I hope to see it completed well on time. I don't know what will be the timeline that the selected

company will need to complete the project, but it will be our efforts to complete the project fully or substantially during my tenure," he pointed out.

Vipul also said that currently, the Indian population in Qatar is slightly in excess of 800,000 and the new embassy building will facilitate many of the needs of the growing community in the country.

**"This is one of the major priorities for the community and I hope to see it completed well on time. I don't know what will be the timeline that the selected company will need to complete the project, but it will be our efforts to complete the project fully or substantially during my tenure"**

"The plot allotted for the chancery is approximately 5,000sq m. We have to follow the local rules and regulations for the built-up area and accordingly the final area of the chancery will be decided," added ambassador Vipul.



## Sidra signs partnership deal with US hospital

QNA  
Doha

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Children's National Hospital from Washington DC, to establish a nursing partnership and engagement programme.

The MoU will support Sidra Medicine's journey towards nursing excellence and establishing itself as a Magnet hospital through its Pathways to Excellence programme. It will also create opportunities to lead to the formation of Sidra Medicine and Children's National as sister hospitals.

Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch, Chief Executive Officer at Sidra Medicine, stated: "Nursing plays a vital role in Sidra



Officials at the MoU signing.

Medicine's mission and vision to become a centre of excellence for learning and discovery. With over 1,200 nurses as a critical part of our care team across women's and children's services, we want to create opportunities and resources to help them excel in their fields. Our partnership with Children's National will be integral to creating stronger training and upskilling opportunities for our paediatric-focused nurses and supporting them in

their career development paths."

DeAnn Marshall, President of Children's National Hospital Foundation and co-signatory of the MoU, said: "We are thrilled to partner with Sidra Medicine. This MoU represents a significant step forward in our relationship with the women's and children's hospital in our mission to provide high-quality healthcare services to patients worldwide. In partnering with Sidra Medicine, we aim to support their ever-growing need to train and educate the nurse leaders in the region."

Children's National has been ranked among the top paediatric hospitals in the United States by US News & World Report. Additionally, the hospital has received Magnet recognition from the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) Magnet Recognition Program in 2010, 2015, and 2020.

## QPEC Honored for Contributions to Qatar Beautification Program



In a ceremony held on 7th July 2024, QPEC was honored with an award for its outstanding participation in the "Let's make it More Beautiful" initiative to preserve the cultural and aesthetic face of the city of Doha. This initiative, aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the nation's public spaces, has seen active engagement from various sectors, with QPEC standing out for its significant contributions.

Director General of Doha Municipality Mr. Mansour bin Ajran Al - Buainain, in his address, praised QPEC's involvement, stating, "We deeply appreciate QPEC's participation in the beautification program. Their efforts reflect a commendable commitment to our community. The policy of giving back to society, as embraced by QPEC, sets a valuable example for others."

The award also highlighted QPEC's continuous support for community-focused initiatives, a core part of their corporate philosophy. The company's CEO Mr. Irshad Ahmad Mir expressed gratitude for the recognition, saying, "We are honored to receive this award. It serves as a testament to our dedication to enhancing the community's environment. We thank the Baladiya for this acknowledgment and assure our continued participation in future programs to support Qatar's vision for a greener and more beautiful nation."

QPEC's commitment to societal welfare through active participation in such initiatives underscores the company's dedication to contributing positively to the community. As they look ahead, their involvement in future programs promises to further the collective goal of a more vibrant and sustainable Qatar.



## President of Dutch Senate meets Qatar’s ambassador



President of the Dutch Senate Jan Anthonie Bruijn met with Qatar's ambassador to the Netherlands, Dr Mutlaq bin Majid al-Qahtani. During the meeting, the two sides discussed co-operation relations between the two countries. (QNA)

# Qatar, Iraq discuss ways to enhance economic, trade ties

QNA  
Baghdad

HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani and Iraqi Minister of Commerce Atheer Daoud Salman al-Ghurairi co-chaired the seventh session of the Qatari-Iraqi Joint Committee for Economic and Trade Co-operation, held in Baghdad on July 7-8. The session reflected the mutual commitment to enhancing bilateral co-operation, developing economic partnerships, and improving joint mechanisms between the two sides.

In his opening remarks, HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad praised the strong fraternal relations between Qatar and Iraq, noting that these relations serve as a catalyst for strengthening and deepening economic, trade, and investment co-operation. He highlighted the deep-



rooted historical ties between the Qatari and Iraqi private sectors to build partnerships. The discussions focused on the substantial investment opportunities available between Qatar and Iraq, encompassing vital sectors such as industry, infrastructure, renewable energy projects, digital transformation, financial and logistics services, and other sectors where co-operation can enhance relations and increase trade volume.

At the conclusion of the seventh session of the Qatari-

significant opportunities for the Qatari and Iraqi private sectors to build partnerships. The discussions focused on the substantial investment opportunities available between Qatar and Iraq, encompassing vital sectors such as industry, infrastructure, renewable energy projects, digital transformation, financial and logistics services, and other sectors where co-operation can enhance relations and increase trade volume.

At the conclusion of the seventh session of the Qatari-

Iraqi committee, a joint report was signed outlining areas of co-operation. These included trade, industry, investment, free zones, the private sector, energy, finance, taxation, customs, transportation, civil aviation, telecommunications, information technology, construction, public housing, municipalities, infrastructure, agriculture, water resources, education, higher education, scientific research, health, environment, culture, youth, sports, labour, social welfare, and justice.

## Qatar takes part in workshop on child labour in Arab countries

QNA  
Cairo

Qatar has participated in an Arab workshop on the impact of current economic conditions on child labour in Arab countries. The workshop was organised by the Arab League's General Secretariat, in co-operation with the Arab Council for Childhood and Development and the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND), and the Arab Labour Organisation. It was attended by representative of Qatar's Permanent Delegation to the Arab League Amna Abdulrahman

al-Sulaiti, along with representatives of national mechanisms concerned with childhood, ministries of labour, employers and workers organisations in the Arab countries, as well as representatives of relevant international, regional and national organisations and experts. The Arab League explained, in a statement, that the workshop aims to identify the reality of the effects of the global economic crisis on the volume and pattern of child labour in Arab countries and its repercussions, by discussing a number of topics, including child labour in Arab countries, multiple dimensions of poverty and child labour, and the sustainable development goals, and child

labour and human and legal protection in light of the economic crisis. In this context, ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector at the Arab League, said the workshop comes in recognition of the seriousness of the issue of child labour, which represents a clear violation of children's rights, and in continuation of the efforts undertaken by the League with regional and international partners within the framework of a study on child labour in Arab countries, which was prepared in 2019 and adopted as a guidance document to support the efforts of Arab countries to eliminate the phenomenon of child labour.



### Dolphin Energy Limited

#### Invitation to Tender

Tender Number	Description	Tender Bond	Deadline for Tender Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on
ITT-QC-PCU-1795	Warehouse Operations and Management Services	QAR 70,000	August 19, 2024
ITT-QC-OPU-1793	L TSA for Laboratory Support Services	QAR 50,000	August 19, 2024

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Tender(s).

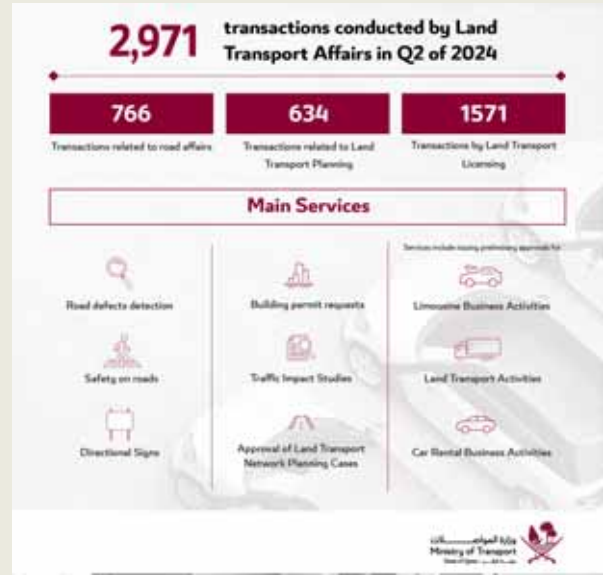
Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, technical knowledge, as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

**How to Tender**

Expression of Interest (EOI) Form and Scope of Services/Works can be downloaded from the company's website [www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement](http://www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement)

Interested companies must complete the EOI Form and submit to company's email address within two (2) working days from the publication date of this advertisement.

Following receipt of completed EOI Form, interested companies will receive a Request for Proposal (RFP) through Dolphin's SAP Ariba to tender.



## 2,971 land transport transactions in Q2

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) has conducted 2,971 transactions through its Land Transport Affairs in the second quarter of 2024, an X post said yesterday. These included 766 on road affairs, 634 for Land Transport Planning and 1,571 about Land Transport Licensing. The main services of the land transport sector include road defects detection, safety on roads, directional signs, building permit requests, traffic impact studies, land transport activities, car rental business activities, approval of land transport network planning cases and rural access roads requests.

### QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED QAFAC

#### TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

No.	Tender No.	Description	Collection Fee	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	QTC/060/24	Four (4) Years Call off Contract for Maintenance Services of Control Valves at QAFAC, Mesaieed	Qrs. 300/-	Qrs. 125,000/-	11 <sup>TH</sup> August 2024

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

- Collection Date :** From Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- Collection Time :** 08:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- Location :** The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- Tender Fees :** As shown above, (*Non-refundable*) can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- Validity :** Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- Bid Bond :** Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 Days from closing date.
- Authorization :** Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
  - Official authorization on Company Letter Head
  - Proper Identification
  - Copy of Company's Commercial Registration
  - Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)
  - Valid ICV Certificate (Mandatory)

Note: "Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of state of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV digital Portal :- <https://icv.qa/US>

## Jeep, Land Rover, Toyota, Audi, models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with United Cars Almana, has announced the recall of Jeep Grand Wagoneer 2023 model, as a possible malfunction in the engine's thermostat, could lead to leading to overheating. The MoCI, in co-operation with Al Abdulghani Motors, announced the recall of Toyota Hilux 2024 model, as the sport bar brackets may crack under certain extreme usage conditions, causing the sport bar to detach from the vehicle. The MoCI, in co-operation with Q-Auto, announced the recall of Audi RS E-tron and the E-tron GT 2022 - 2023 model, due to a possible technical problem in the high voltage battery modules, which increases the risk of fire or injury. The MoCI, in co-operation with Alfordan Premier Motors, also announced the recall of the Land Rover Defender 110 and S/Wagon models manufactured in 2015-2016, due to a possible defect in the assembly of the brake pipes in the main brake system. This measure comes within the framework of the MoCI's continuous co-ordination and follow-up to ensure that all vehicle dealerships in Qatar comply with addressing and correcting vehicle defects to protect consumers quickly and efficiently.

# WAREHOUSE FOR RENT

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## Canadian accreditation for UDST pharmacy technology programme

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) announced that its College of Health Sciences' Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy Technology programme has been officially certified by The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programmes (CCAPP). The CCAPP certification is another achievement for UDST reflecting its commitment to providing outstanding applied education, a statement said. This accreditation ensures that graduates of the Pharmacy Technology programme are exceptionally well-prepared with cutting-edge knowledge and best practices. As they embark on their professional careers, these graduates possess the essential



knowledge and skills to deliver premier services, significantly contributing to the healthcare sector. Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST, stated: "This accreditation by CCAPP is an important achievement for our College of Health Sciences and the entire UDST community. It validates

the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and students in maintaining the highest standards of education. Our graduates are now even more empowered to make a positive impact in the healthcare industry, equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices."

## Qatar-UK collaboration on AI: QRDI Council calls for proposals

The Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council has announced a call for project proposals under the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF) 2024-2025, scoping project on Qatar-UK Collaboration on Artificial Intelligence (AI), with call open for non-profit organisations, NGOs, and government entities globally that demonstrate technical competency in AI, particularly in relevant sub-domains.

In a statement, QRDI Council said that proposals, due for submission on August 12, should aim to identify and scope practical and ambitious ways to enhance Qatar-UK co-operation and support both countries' respective AI and critical technologies strategies, especially considering that the focus is on building and scaling AI ecosystems, as well as enhancing bilateral relationships.

The project aims to utilise local Research, Development, and Innovation

(RDI) talent in Qatar, by encouraging the awarded implementers to include Qatari graduates to support their professional development, analyse Qatar-UK collaboration opportunities to launch AI-enabled companies and integrate AI into existing enterprises, as well as promote safe and secure AI development through Qatar-UK diplomatic co-operation, along with enhancing AI utilisation in diplomacy, supporting shared foreign policy challenges and recommending ways to integrate AI co-operation into existing Qatar-UK diplomatic structures.

The project is set to run from September 2024 to March 2025, with funds ranging from £50,000-80,000, led by the British embassy in Doha and co-designed with QRDI Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology's AI Committee.

QRDI Council's Secretary-General

engineer Omar al-Ansari said: "This initiative aims to advance bilateral co-operation in AI, leveraging both countries' combined expertise and initiatives like Qatar's Digital Vision 2030 and the UK's significant investments in AI research and development."

Al-Ansari added that working on this project will be beneficial for strengthening the bilateral relationship between RDI communities in Qatar and the UK and facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge to achieve common goals.

The Gulf Strategy Fund is a UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) fund within the FCDO's international programme, which aligns with the UK government's strategic priorities in its co-operation with Qatar, enhancing mutual prosperity by promoting inward investment as well as creating investment opportunities across various sectors. (QNA)

## New leadership for Safari Toastmasters

Safari Group has announced a new leadership team for the Safari Toastmasters Club. The executive committee for the 2024-2025 term comprises: president - Praveen Manjery Ramakrishnan; vice-presidents - Tijomon Chamakunnel Philipose (education), Varun Balu Kannappassery Varish (membership), Mohamed Asdullah Khan (public relations); secretary - Wiliria Angeles Leoncio; treasurer - Prasanth Chandrasekharan Nair; sergeant at arms - Md Tuhinul Islam; immediate past president - Biju Gangadharan.

"The club's success is greatly supported by Shaheen Backer, managing director of Safari Group," a statement said. "His commitment to the club extends beyond the workplace, recognising the significant value it adds to employees' development. Whether it's providing dedicated space for activities, allocating resources for meetings, or personally attending events,

his support is key to maintaining the club's vibrant and successful atmosphere providing valuable outcomes for its members," it was explained.

The recent ceremony was guided by Hafees Mohamed, past Area 21 director and current Division F club growth director. Following the ceremonial gavel exchange, each new executive committee member was introduced, highlighting their qualifications and roles. This introduction helped members connect with their new leaders, encouraging a sense of unity and collective responsibility.

As he took over the gavel, the new president expressed his sincere thanks to the Safari management for their ongoing support and creating opportunities for the club's advancement. In his role as immediate past president Gangadharan shared his experiences and provided advice to support the club's future growth, the statement added.



Biju Gangadharan



Praveen Ramakrishnan



Wiliria Leoncio



Md Tuhinul Islam



Prasanth Nair



Tijomon Philipose



Varun Balu Varish



Mohamed Khan

### FREE VEHICLE RECALL

وزارة التجارة والصناعة  
Ministry of Commerce and Industry  
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### LAND ROVER Defender 110 S/Wagon

Manufacturing Year  
2015 - 2016



DEFECT

A possible defect in the assembly of the brake pipes into the brake modulator



PROCESS

Contact the dealer for the free required repair



CONTACT

Alfardan Premier Motors  
Phone: 44477566



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### FREE VEHICLE RECALL

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### Audi RS E-tron, E-tron GT

Manufacturing Year  
2022 - 2023



DEFECT

A possible technical problem in the high voltage battery modules, which increases the risk of fire or injuries



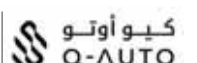
PROCESS

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CONTACT

Q-Auto  
Phone: 44452333  
aselim@q-auto.com



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# UN experts say Gaza children dying in Israel’s ‘starvation campaign’

AFP  
Geneva

UN rights experts yesterday accused Israel of carrying out a “targeted starvation campaign” that has resulted in the deaths of children in Gaza.

“We declare that Israel’s intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people is a form of genocidal violence and has resulted in famine across all of Gaza,” 10 independent United Nations experts said in a statement.

The UN has not officially declared a famine in the Gaza Strip.

But the experts, including the UN special rapporteur on the right to food Michael Fakhri, insisted there was no denying famine was under way.

“Thirty-four Palestinians have died from malnutrition since October first we last year, the majority being children,” said the experts, who are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, but who do not speak on behalf of the United Nations.

Their statement was immediately slammed by Israel’s mission to the UN in Geneva, which charged that “Mr. Fakhri, and many so-called ‘experts’ who joined his statement, are as much accustomed to spreading misinformation, as they are to supporting Hamas propaganda and shielding the fighter organisation from scrutiny”.

The UN experts meanwhile listed three children who had recently died “from malnutrition”, after a number of others were said to have starved to death in northern Gaza



Palestinian mother Ghaneyma Joma sits next to her malnourished son Younis Joma as he receives treatment at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

earlier this year. “Fayez Ataya, who was barely six months old, died on May 30, 2024, and 13-year-old Abdulqader al-Serhi died on June 1, 2024 at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah,” they said.

Nine-year-old Ahmad Abu Reida died just two days later “in the tent sheltering his displaced family in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis”, they said.

“With the death of these children from starvation despite medical treatment in central Gaza, there is no doubt that famine has spread from northern Gaza into central and southern Gaza,” they said.

The experts decried that the world had not done more to avert this disaster. “When a two-

month-old baby and 10-year-old Yazan al-Kafarneh died of hunger on February 24 and March 4 respectively, this confirmed that famine had struck northern Gaza,” they said.

“The whole world should have intervened earlier to stop Israel’s genocidal starvation campaign and prevented these deaths.”

“Inaction is complicity.”

Gaza has been facing a deep humanitarian crisis since the war erupted following Hamas’ October first week storming of southern Israel.

In response, Israel has carried out a military offensive that has killed at least 38,243 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in

the Hamas-ruled territory.

The UN has been warning for months of a looming famine in Gaza, especially in the north, but one has not been officially declared.

The Israeli mission highlighted yesterday that the latest assessment by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) partnership determined that famine had not materialised after aid access improved somewhat.

“Israel has continuously scaled up its co-ordination and assistance in the delivery of humanitarian aid across the Gaza Strip,” it said, claiming Hamas “intentionally steal and hide aid from civilians”.

## Palestinian health ministry says boy killed by troops

AFP  
Ramallah

The Palestinian health ministry said yesterday that Israeli troops shot and killed a 13-year-old boy near the occupied West Bank’s main city of Ramallah.

The Israeli army also bulldozed the main street in the Nur Shams refugee camp in a 15-hour raid, officials said, highlighting a spike in tensions since the Gaza war erupted in the first week of October.

Ghassan Gharib Zahran “was martyred by occupation bullets” at Deir Abu Mishal, near Ramallah, a health ministry statement said.

The Israeli army told AFP that “fighters threw stones at Israeli vehicles in the Deir Abu Mishal area”.

Troops “responded by opening fire... which led to the injury of one of the fighters”, the army added in a statement.

The boy’s cousin, Munther Zahran, said the dead boy was hit by a “bullet in the stomach” while he was in Deir Abu Mishal’s main street.

“The road is used by settlers and the army is constantly monitoring it,” he added.

The boy’s body was wrapped

in a Palestinian flag and carried through the streets of Ramallah for his funeral, just hours after the shooting.

Occupied by Israel since 1967, the West Bank has seen an escalation in violence since the Hamas attack on southern Israel set off a bitter conflict in the Gaza Strip over nine months ago.

At least 572 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli troops or settlers since October first week, according to Palestinian officials.

The Nur Shams camp, near Tulkarem, has also been the target of several army operations in recent weeks. Army bulldozers tore up the camp’s main street and destroyed several buildings yesterday, an AFP journalist saw.

The army said one person was arrested and that it blew up “dozens of explosives hidden under the road to injure our soldiers”.

Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohamed Mustafa said there would be major “humanitarian repercussions” from the Israeli action.

“Recent events have shown the unprecedented destruction of essential infrastructure, including the water and electricity networks, and significant demolition” of Palestinian homes, Mustafa said in a statement.

## Iranian warship sinks despite rebalancing efforts

Reuters  
Dubai

The Iranian Navy frigate Sahand entirely sank in shallow waters yesterday in the southern port of Bandar Abbas, Nournews agency said, after it was briefly repositioned following its initial capsizing on Sunday.

“The Sahand warship, which was rebalanced on the water with great difficulty on Monday, has now sunk after the rope holding the ship broke,” said Nournews, a news agency affiliated to the Supreme National Security Council.

On Sunday, state media said the ship had capsized during repairs at a wharf due to water ingress and that efforts were being made to rebalance it.

The Iranian-built stealth warship was first launched in 2018 and is equipped with a flight deck for helicopters, torpedo launchers, anti-aircraft and anti-ship guns, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles and electronic warfare capabilities according to local media.

Iran has developed a large domestic arms industry in the face of international sanctions and embargoes that have barred it from importing many weapons.

It launched its first locally made destroyer in 2010 as part of a programme to revamp its navy equipment, which dates from before the 1979 revolution and is mostly US-made.

In 2021, the Iranian Navy ship Kharg sank after catching fire in the Gulf of Oman during a training mission, without causing casualties.

## Two killed in strike on Hezbollah vehicle in Syria

AFP  
Beirut

A war monitor said two people were killed yesterday in an Israeli strike on a vehicle belonging to Lebanon’s Hezbollah group in the Damascus countryside near the Lebanese border.

Hezbollah has traded almost daily cross-border fire from Lebanon with the Israeli army since October in support of Palestinian ally Hamas, with Israel targeting operatives from the group in both Lebanon and neighbouring Syria.

“At least two people were killed and one was wounded in an Israeli drone strike on a Hezbollah car” on the Syrian side of the border with

Lebanon, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The car was targeted near a Syrian army checkpoint, the monitor said.

Since the Syrian civil war erupted in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in the country, mainly targeting army positions and fighters, including from Lebanon’s Hezbollah.

The strikes intensified after Palestinian Hamas group’s October first week storming of Israel sparked war in the Gaza Strip, before easing after an April 1 strike blamed on Israel hit the Iranian consular building in Damascus, sending regional tensions soaring. Israeli strikes have killed at least 24 Hezbollah fighters in Syria since the Gaza war erupted, according to an AFP tally.

Last month, an Israeli strike targeted a convoy of tankers entering Lebanon from Syria, the Observatory had said, with Hezbollah announcing three dead and a source close to the group saying they were killed in east Lebanon’s Hermel area. Earlier yesterday, the Syrian defence ministry said an Israeli strike caused damage but no casualties near the coastal city of Baniyas, with the Observatory saying Iranian military advisers were based in the area.

Israeli authorities rarely comment on individual strikes, but have repeatedly said they will not allow Iran to expand its presence in Syria.

Syria’s war has killed more than half a million people and displaced millions more since it erupted in 2011 after Damascus cracked down on anti-government protests.

## UN probing alleged mass grave on Libya-Tunisia border

Reuters  
Geneva

The UN human rights chief said yesterday that his office was following up on reports of a mass grave in the desert along the Libya-Tunisia border, after the bodies of at least 65 migrants were found at another site this year.

Volker Turk denounced widespread violations against migrants and refugees in Libya, which straddles a dangerous transit route through the Sahara Desert and across the southern Mediterranean.

Abuses against migrants were being “perpetrated at scale, with impunity” by both state and non-state actors, Turk said, listing crimes including human trafficking, torture, forced labour, extortion, starvation, detention and mass expulsions.

“I urge the authorities to respond swiftly to our inquiries, and to investigate these crimes fully,” he told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva in a speech addressing Libya’s record over the last year, where he noted “disturbing developments”.

He gave no further details of the mass grave.

A spokesperson at Turk’s office said: “We have not received information from the authorities but we are continuing to

follow up on this.” In March, at least 65 bodies of migrants were discovered at a mass grave site in southwest Libya’s al-Jahriya valley about 420km south of Tripoli, the UN’s International Organisation for Migration said.

Libya’s Justice Minister Halima Ibrahim Abdulrahman stressed her country’s commitment to human rights and did not respond directly to Turk’s comments on the mass graves.

“Libya gives special importance to the rights of refugees,” she told the council, adding that some of Turk’s points were “not in line with reality”.

Tunisia’s ambassador Sabri Bachtobji did not directly address Turk’s findings in his address.

Libya and Tunisia are vital partners in the European Union’s efforts to stem the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean from North Africa into southern Europe.

A UN fact-finding mission on Libya has previously found grounds to believe crimes against humanity such as torture have been committed against migrants.

The mission expired last year, however, Gambia has filed a motion at the ongoing council meeting to provide assistance to help Libya improve its human-rights record, a UN document showed.



A municipal worker attempts to unclog a flooded road in Newlands during heavy rains in Cape Town, South Africa, yesterday.

## Stormy weather wreaks havoc in SA’s Western Cape

AFP  
Johannesburg

Strong winds and heavy rains have damaged buildings and left thousands of people homeless in South Africa, authorities said, as weather services warned yesterday that more bad weather was coming.

The Cape Town region has been battered by several cold fronts over the past few days, with mountainous areas experiencing rare heavy snowfalls.

The Western Cape government said 82 schools were damaged, forcing five to remain closed yesterday. In some cases, wind gusts blew away roof sheeting.

Over the weekend, almost 4,000 people were left homeless as strong winds destroyed about 1,000 homes and other structures in the impoverished township of Khayelitsha.

Localised flooding, fallen trees, electricity outages and road closures were reported across the province, authorities said. The South African Mari-

time Safety Authority (Samsa) said 18 crew members of a cargo ship were rescued on Monday after they were forced to abandon their vessel as it listed severely in the rough seas.

The seafarers, all Filipino nationals, were found in a life raft off South Africa’s Atlantic coast and recovered by two nearby cargo vessels, it said.

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) said more “disruptive rain leading to flooding and possible mudslides” was expected to hit the province today and continue tomorrow.

### TRAGEDY

## Spanish tourist killed by elephants in South Africa

A Spanish tourist was trampled to death by an elephant after stepping out of his vehicle to take photos of a small breeding herd at a renowned South African park, authorities said yesterday, AFP reported from Johannesburg.

The 43-year-old man was attacked on Sunday at the Pilanesberg National Park, a tourist magnet about 200 kilometres northwest of Johannesburg, according to park officials. The man, his fiancée and two women were driving their own vehicle within the reserve when they spotted three elephants and three calves, police said. “Reports suggest that the man stopped the vehicle, alighted and went closer to the elephants to take pictures,” police spokesman Sabata Mokgwabone said.

### POLICY

## Bamako reiterates irreversible exit from regional bloc

Mali’s Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop has reiterated the irreversible exit of his country, Burkina Faso and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), despite reconciliatory efforts from the bloc, AFP reported from Dakar.

The military leaders of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso broke away from regional grouping Ecowas earlier this year and formed a confederation of their own on Saturday. Ecowas heads of state met in Abuja a day later and appointed the presidents of Senegal and Togo as mediators of dialogue with the three Sahel states.



# Beleaguered Biden hosts Nato gathering today

AFP  
Washington

US President Joe Biden geared yesterday to kick off a Nato summit in Washington aimed at showing resolve against Russia and support for Ukraine – but the meeting was being overshadowed by his fight for political survival.

The 81-year-old leader will try to use the three days of pomp marking Nato's 75th anniversary to reassure allies over US leadership, and his own ability to govern, as calls grow for him to quit the fight for a second term in office.

Biden has so far defied pressure from some within his party to step aside, after a disastrous TV debate against election rival Donald Trump last month fuelled fears that he lacks mental acuity and physical fitness.

The US president was set to open the summit with a speech in the room where Nato's founding treaty was signed in 1949 and expected to emphasise how the alliance has been strengthened on his watch.

Other leaders appeared keen to rally around their host, with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz insisting as he set off from Berlin yesterday that he was “not concerned” by the president's fitness.

But as doubts swirl over Biden, the 32-nation alliance is nervously eyeing a potential return to the White House by



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (right) holds a bilateral meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at the State Department on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Washington yesterday. (Reuters)

Trump after elections in November.

On the campaign trail, the volatile ex-reality TV star has threatened to blow apart the principle of mutual self-defence that has underpinned Nato since it was founded in the wake of World War II.

It's not just the United States, however, that faces political questions.

French President Emmanuel Macron is struggling to form a government af-

ter divisive elections, new British Prime Minister Keir Starmer makes his first international outing, and Hungary's premier Viktor Orban flies in after a much-criticised meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

While they wrestle with the minefield of US politics, Nato leaders will have to show they haven't been distracted from the reality of the battlefield in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived yesterday expecting to secure additional Patriot advanced air defence systems that he has been begging his backers to send for months to stave off Russian attacks. White House said yesterday he is also set to meet Biden separately.

His war-torn country's vulnerability to Moscow's missiles was cruelly exposed by a strike Monday on a children's hospital in Kyiv.

“We are fighting for more air defence systems for Ukraine, and I'm confident we will succeed,” Zelensky said after touching down in Washington.

“We urge decisive actions from the US and Europe – actions that will strengthen our warriors.”

The Kremlin said it was following the summit “with the greatest attention... the rhetoric at the talks and the decisions that will be taken and put on paper.”

The promise of more weaponry is set to be the biggest win the Ukrainian leader will get as his troops struggle to hold ground two and a half years into Russia's invasion.

Worried about dragging Nato closer to war with Russia, the United States and Germany have shut down any talk of giving Ukraine a clear invitation to join their alliance.

Instead diplomats say Kyiv's path to eventual membership may be described as “irreversible” in the summit declaration and say the country is on a “bridge”

to joining. Nato members will vow to keep supporting Ukraine at the rate they have been so far since Moscow invaded – roughly €40bn annually – for at least another year.

They will also agree the alliance will take more control of co-ordinating weapon deliveries to Ukraine from the US military in a move to help insulate supplies from any changes in Washington if Trump wins the election.

European countries in Nato have ramped up defence spending in response to Russia's war – and the alliance is showcasing the rises to make the case to Washington that it isn't carrying all the financial burden.

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg said allies would sign a pledge to spend more on weaponry in a bid to get defence firms to ratchet up capacity.

While Nato views Russia as its main threat, it is also paying greater attention to the challenge from China and accuses Beijing of playing a key role in keeping Moscow's war effort going by supplying tech to the Kremlin's military.

The leaders of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea will come to Washington to bolster ties with the alliance.

China's foreign ministry hit out at the “smear and attacks” against Beijing from Nato and said the alliance was seeking an excuse to expand its influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Nato agency places \$700mn order for Stinger missiles

Nato has placed an order for Stinger anti-aircraft missiles worth almost \$700mn in the name of several member states, the alliance's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday. “Just today, the (Nato procurement agency) NSPA signed a new multinational contract for Stinger missiles worth almost \$700mn,” he told a gathering of defence industry leaders on the sidelines of the Nato summit in Washington.

The last contract for Stinger missiles, made by RTX's Raytheon division, was awarded in May 2022 when the US Army contracted for \$625mn worth of the anti-aircraft missiles in order to replenish stocks sent to Ukraine.

The shoulder-fired Stinger missiles have been in hot demand in Ukraine, where they have successfully stopped Russian assaults from the air, and in neighbouring European countries which fear they may also need to beat back Russian forces.

## US judge, 97, loses lawsuit seeking reinstatement

Reuters  
Washington

A 97-year-old judge who was suspended from a US appellate court last year after being accused of unfitness due to cognitive and physical impairment related to her age lost a lawsuit yesterday that she had filed in a bid to return to work.

Judge Pauline Newman challenged her suspension from the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which focuses on patents, trademarks and certain other matters, in a lawsuit alleging that a 1980 law called the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act that sets out the process for removing judges ran afoul of the US Constitution.

US District Judge Christopher “Casey” Cooper yesterday ruled against Newman's claims that the law violated constitutional due process rights. Cooper in February rejected other constitutional claims Newman had raised.

Her attorney Greg Dolin told Reuters that Newman will appeal the decision. A spokesperson for the Federal Circuit declined to comment.

Judge Kimberly Moore, the Federal Circuit's chief judge, said in orders made public last year that Newman had shown signs of serious cognitive and physical impairment and accused her of refusing to co-operate with inquiries into her mental health.

Newman is the oldest US federal judge not to have taken part-time senior status. Appointed to the Federal Circuit by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, she is a respected figure in patent law and a prominent dissenter at the court, which frequently rules on cases involving major companies.

The fight over her suspension has marked a rare public dispute over US judicial fitness. Yesterday's ruling coincides with calls by some Democratic lawmakers for President Joe Biden, 81, to step aside in this year's presidential election over concerns about his fitness.



SETBACK: Pauline Newman.

## 8 dead after Beryl sweeps across US

AFP  
Houston

At least eight people were killed in the southern United States after storm Beryl felled trees and caused heavy flooding, before being downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone yesterday.

In Texas, where Beryl entered as a Category 1 hurricane early Monday, at least seven people were killed, while another person died in neighbouring Louisiana, authorities said.

Beryl's death toll is now at least 18 after it tore through the Caribbean last week – at one point as a Category 5 hurricane, the highest recordable strength.

Some 2.2mn households in Texas were without electricity yesterday due to damaged power grids, even as temperatures were forecast to reach 41C (106F) with humidity factored in. Another 14,000 homes were also without power in Louisiana. Air-conditioned shelters for residents were set up while crews worked to restore service.

Beryl weakened yesterday and was heading northeast towards Canada with 30 miles per hour winds, the US National Hurricane Center said, warning it could still



A boy immerses himself in flood waters outside a home in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, in Rosenberg, Texas. (Reuters)

generate flooding and tornadoes.

The sprawling city of Houston, home to 2.3mn people, was badly battered by hurricane-strength winds and flooding.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said on X that a 53-year-old man and 74-year-old woman had died in separate incidents of trees falling on houses.

Later, Houston Mayor John Whitmire told a press conference that one person died after a lightning strike possibly ignited a fire, while a police department employee died in floodwaters on his way to work.

Meanwhile in Louisiana, one death was announced by the Bossier Parish sheriff's office,

also caused by a tree falling on a home. Rose Michalec, 51, told AFP that Beryl blew down fences in her south Houston neighbourhood. “It's quite a bit of damage... It's more than we expected,” she said. In downtown Houston, several areas were inundated, including the park where 76-year-old Floyd Robinson usually walks.

“I'm seeing more of this kind of damaging water than I've ever seen before,” the lifelong Houston resident told AFP.

“This is just the beginning of July and for us to have a storm of this magnitude is very rare.”

Along the Texas coastline, several waterfront homes and buildings had their roofs torn off by the wind. Beryl first slammed Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a Category 4 storm, before ploughing past the Cayman Islands and Jamaica, and at one point strengthening to Category 5. It hit Mexico on Friday, flattening trees and lamp-posts and ripping off roof tiles.

Beryl left a deadly toll with three deaths in Grenada, two in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, three in Venezuela and two in Jamaica. It is the first hurricane since NHC record-keeping began to reach the Category 4 level in June, and the earliest to hit the highest Category 5 in July.

## Climate media awards highlight injustice and accountability

Exposing universities that use stolen Indigenous land to boost oil production and turning a daily TV weather forecast into a climate update were among the standout work celebrated at the annual Covering Climate Now Journalism Awards unveiled yesterday.

The successful entries were hailed by CCNow director Mark Hertsgaard for “setting the tone for what it means to be a climate journalist” and providing “a service to the public and a challenge to journalists everywhere.”

Tristan Ahtone, an editor-at-large for Grist, was honoured for leading an investigation revealing how land-grant universities in the United States use stolen Indigenous land to increase oil and gas production.

Audrey Cerdan, of France Televisions, was recognised after she replaced the national public broadcaster's traditional evening weather forecasts with “weather-climate reports” that boosted viewer numbers. Another winner was CNN's Rachel Ramirez, who filed stories focused on climate justice while also supporting fellow Pacific Islander journalists via the Uproot Project and the Asian American Journalists Association. Agence France-Presse won an award for exposing how consultancy giant McKinsey & Company – which publicly lauds efforts to stop global warming – behind closed doors at COP28 pushed plans that would enable fossil fuel companies to sustain oil and gas production for decades. Other news outlets on the roll of honour

included local public broadcasters in Louisiana and Connecticut, and newsrooms on the frontline including Philstar.com in the Philippines, the Nigerian Tribune, Uganda's InfoNile and the People's Archive of Rural India.

“Judges were astonished not just at the volume of stories but at their consistent quality,” said Kyle Pope, CCNow head of strategic initiatives.

“In every category, story after story was told with passion and care, informing audiences about the most important story of our time,” Pope said. Covering Climate Now is a global media project that promotes high-quality news coverage as part of tackling climate change.

## Baldwin manslaughter trial over *Rust* shooting begins

Alec Baldwin's trial for involuntary manslaughter over a fatal shooting on the set of Western movie *Rust* got under way yesterday with the selection of a jury who must decide if a crew member's death was his fault.

The Hollywood A-lister was pointing a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during a rehearsal in 2021 when it fired a live round, killing her and wounding the movie's director.

Baldwin, 66, says he did not know the gun was loaded and did not pull the trigger. Prosecutors say he acted recklessly on set and has repeatedly changed his story since the tragic event, which happened nearly three years ago.

After multiple attempts by Baldwin's lawyers to have the case thrown out all failed, the matter will now be settled at a courthouse in Santa Fe, in the southwestern state of New Mexico.

Jury selection got under way last morning. Underlining the challenges inherent to high-profile cases, only a couple of the dozens of potential jurors raised their hands when asked by the judge if they had not previously heard or read anything about the *Rust* shooting.

Due to the 30 *Rock* actor's immense fame, and the rarity of on-set deaths, the story has garnered global attention while sharply polarising public opinion. Sympathetic observers view Baldwin as a victim who has been pursued by prosecutors in part due to his status as a celebrity and liberal darling.

Others see the death as the easily avoidable result of a movie star's allegedly unpredictable behaviour during filming.

“To watch Mr Baldwin's conduct on the set of *Rust* is to witness a man who has absolutely no control of



Actor Alec Baldwin walks towards the courthouse in Santa Fe, New Mexico, yesterday. (Reuters)

his own emotions and absolutely no concern for how his conduct affects those around him,” special prosecutor Kari Morrissey has said. If found guilty, Baldwin faces up

to 18 months in prison. It is not yet known if he plans to take the stand in his defence. Opening arguments are due to start today. The entire trial is

scheduled to conclude Friday of next week, with jury deliberations to follow.

Hutchins – a talented 42-year-old cinematographer originally from Ukraine, who grew up on a Soviet military base in the Arctic Circle – was killed in October 2021.

The accident occurred during a rehearsal in a small chapel on the Bonanza Creek Ranch, on a sunny afternoon mid-way through the filming of *Rust*. Baldwin was practicing a scene in which his character, an aging outlaw who has been cornered in the church by two marshals, draws his Colt six-shooter.

The actor says he was told the gun was safe, was instructed by Hutchins to aim the revolver in her direction, and did not pull the trigger. Live bullets are in any case banned from movie sets, and Baldwin has said it was not his responsibility as an actor to

check for them. Filming of *Rust* was halted by the tragedy, but completed last year on location in Montana.

The film's armorer was convicted of manslaughter in the same courthouse earlier this year, and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Her trial revealed arguments the prosecution will likely level against Baldwin. At the time, armorer Hannah Gutierrez's defence lawyers said Baldwin “violated some of the most basic gun safety rules you can ever learn,” including never pointing a gun at a person unless you intend to fire it. “Alec Baldwin's conduct and his lack of gun safety inside that church on that day is something that he's going to have to answer for,” responded Morrissey. “Not with you and not today. That'll be with another jury, on another day.” That day has now arrived.





A passerby holding a parasol wipes her face as she walks on the street as the Japanese government issued a heatstroke alert in Tokyo and other prefectures, yesterday.

# Six dead in Tokyo as nation swelters amid heatwave

AFP  
Tokyo

Six people have died of heatstroke in Tokyo as Japan swelters under a rare rainy season heatwave, prompting authorities to issue a flurry of health warnings.

Over the weekend, the central Shizuoka region became the first in Japan to see the mercury reach 40 degrees Celsius this year, far surpassing the 35-degree threshold classified by weather officials as “extremely hot”.

Such severe heat in the middle of Japan’s rainy season is “rather rare”, caused in part by a strong South Pacific high-pressure system, a weather agency official told AFP.

Temperatures also hit record highs near 40 degrees Celsius on Monday at observation posts in Tokyo and in the southern Wakayama region, according to local media.

The past few days have seen authorities issue heatstroke alerts in much of the country,

urging residents to avoid exercising outside and to use air conditioning.

The capital logged three deaths linked to heatstroke on Saturday and three more on Monday, when the mercury hovered around 35 degrees Celsius at midday, according to the city’s medical examination office.

“Without the AC on, I find it difficult to survive,” Tokyo resident Sumiko Yamamoto, 75, said, adding she feels “it’s gotten drastically hotter” since last year.

“Through the advice given on TV, I try to stay hydrated as much as possible. Because I’m old, I’m being careful not to collapse,” she said.

Heatstroke is particularly deadly in Japan, which has the second-oldest population in the world after Monaco.

Yamamoto’s age puts her in the demographic flagged by health experts as particularly vulnerable to heatstroke, along with infants and those living alone or who are too poor to afford air conditioning.

The Japanese Association

for Acute Medicine on Monday warned of the rising death toll from heat exhaustion nationwide, which grew from just a few hundred per year two decades ago to around 1,500 in 2022.

The sheer number of fatalities suggests that heatstroke now poses a danger on par with that of “a major natural disaster”, the group said, warning against non-essential outings.

Tokyo business executive Mikio Nakahara, 67, says the difference between Tokyo 50 years ago and now is stark.

“Tokyo wasn’t as hot as it is now,” he told AFP.

But these days, “I try to work remotely as much as possible so I don’t have to go outside.”

With ever-hotter summers becoming the norm around the world, tourists like Ainhua Sanchez, 29, aren’t too surprised by Tokyo’s temperatures.

“So the plan is going sightseeing a little bit. Drinking a lot of liquids. Maybe when we get too hot, we can get into a shop, look around, chill a bit and then go back to the street,” she told AFP.

# China to probe alleged use of fuel tanker trucks carrying cooking oil

Reuters  
Beijing

China’s food safety commission will investigate the alleged use of fuel tanker trucks to transport cooking oil, state media reported yesterday, amid fears of possible food contamination.

Local daily *The Beijing News* last week reported that state stockpiler Sinograin’s fuel tankers were found transporting food products like cooking oil, soybean oil and syrup, without cleaning the tankers in between. The food safety commission will hold

a special meeting with state planning agency the National Development and Reform Commission, the State Administration of Grain and Reserves, and other ministries to discuss and investigate the allegations, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

“Illegal enterprises and relevant responsible persons will be severely punished in accordance with the law and will not be tolerated,” CCTV said.

Chinese food products have come under scrutiny domestically and globally after a series of scandals, especially the lethal milk scandal in 2008 where infant formula was found containing the industrial chemical melamine.

# Disney to add new ship in Tokyo to expanding cruise business

Reuters  
Urayasu

Walt Disney and Japan’s Oriental Land Company unveiled plans yesterday to launch a new cruise ship that will set sail from Tokyo in 2029, adding a ninth vessel to the brand’s growing fleet.

The new ship will be modelled after the *Wish*, the largest vessel in Disney’s fleet. OLC, the operator of Tokyo Disneyland, will also operate the new cruise vessel.

Disney currently has five cruise ships in operation. In addition to the Tokyo-based vessel, it has plans for three others, including one that will set sail from Singapore in 2025.

The ship in Tokyo will have a maximum capacity of 4,000 passengers and is expected to bring in about 100bn yen (\$621.77mn) in annual sales within several years of launch, OLC said.

“To set sail from Japan will make Disney vacations at sea more accessible to Japanese guests, who

we know are some of our biggest fans,” Thomas Mazloum, president of Disney Signature Experiences, told reporters.

The cruise industry has been enjoying a rebound from a global shutdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Cruise Lines International Association expects the number of passengers to reach 34.7mn this year, up 17% from 2019. Josh D’Amaro, chairman of Disney Experiences, told Reuters in a recent interview that the ships provide the opportunity to bring themed entertainment to places not close to the company’s theme parks, such as Melbourne or Vancouver.

Disney also reaches a segment of the cruise market that had gone unaddressed – families.

“Forty percent of the people on those ships today will say, ‘The only reason I’m on a cruise ship today is because Disney’s here,’ which means we’re creating a market,” D’Amaro said.

“When we are in Singapore, with this unbelievable ship that we’re building, the same thing is



Disney and Oriental Land Company executives pose with Disney characters at the unveiling of an expanded cruise line, in Urayasu, Japan, yesterday.

going to happen,” he added. “We know there’s an insatiable demand for everything Disney.” Disney’s experiences business, which includes its domestic and international parks and cruise line, ac-

# Indonesia resumes search for 35 missing after deadly landslide

Reuters  
Jakarta

Indonesia deployed a helicopter and hundreds of rescuers yesterday as it resumed a search for 35 people still missing after a landslide at an illegal gold mine on the island of Sulawesi killed at least 23, the search and rescue agency said.

Torrential rain triggered Sunday’s disaster, which engulfed miners and residents in the district of Suwawa in Gorontalo province, more than 2,000km east of Jakarta, the capital.

Nearly 400 people assisted by a helicopter were involved in yes-

terday’s rescue effort, restarted after heavy rain temporarily halted operations on Monday, said search agency official Salama, who uses one name.

So far 66 survivors have been plucked from the debris, although efforts were being hampered by thick mud with some rescuers having to walk more than 20km to reach the disaster site, he said by telephone.

Nopri, a miner, told news channel MetroTV that he spent about eight hours buried under about a metre of debris before he got out.

He and his companions survived by breathing air flowing in through gaps in the debris, and had some water left to fend off

thirst, but they had been forced to wait for rescue, he added.

“When we tried to get out, dirt fell back again,” he said. “So we were resigned, we just waited for help.” Landslides are frequent in Indonesia, with the risk often increased by deforestation and small-scale illegal mining operations in remote districts that are difficult for authorities to regulate.

Earlier yesterday, the death toll stood at 17, with 45 missing.

In May, flash floods and mudslides killed more than 50 people in the province of West Sumatra, following heavy rain.

In April, a landslide after high-intensity rains in South Sulawesi killed 18 people.

# Philippines rejects China’s accusation of ‘green’ damage in South China Sea

Reuters  
Manila

The Philippines rejected yesterday China’s accusation that its grounded warship on the contested Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea had damaged the coral reef ecosystem in the area, laying the blame for damaging the marine environment on Beijing.

The Philippine task force on the South China Sea in a statement called for an independent, third party marine scientific assessment of the causes of coral reef damage in the South China Sea.

“It is China who has been found to have caused irreparable damage to corals. It is China that has caused untold damage to the maritime environment, and jeopardised the natural habitat and the livelihood of thousands of Filipino fisherfolk,” the task force said.

On Monday, China’s Ministry of Natural Resources said in a report that Philippine warships have been “illegally beached” around Second Thomas Shoal near what it calls Nansha Islands for a long time, “and it has seriously damaged the diversity, stability and sustainability of the reef ecosystem”.

The Philippines and Beijing



File photo shows an aerial view of the BRP Sierra Madre on the contested Second Thomas Shoal, locally known as Ayungin, in the South China Sea.

have been embroiled in confrontations at the Second Thomas Shoal where Manila maintains a rusting warship, BRP Sierra Madre, that it beached in 1999 to reinforce maritime claims. A small crew is stationed on it.

China has in turn dredged sand and coral to build artificial islands in the South China Sea, which it says is normal construction activity on its territory, but which other nations say is aimed at enforcing its claim to the waterway.

A report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies last year found China’s construction activity buried more than 4,600 acres (1,861 acres) of reef.

China claims almost all of the

vital waterway, where \$3tn worth of trade passes annually, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

But The Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague in 2016 found China’s expansive claims in the South China Sea had no legal basis. Beijing does not accept the ruling. The Philippine task force, which warned of attempts by “Chinese experts” to sow disinformation and conduct malign influence, said it has evidence that China has been responsible for “severe damage to corals” in several areas in the South China Sea, including in Scarborough Shoal and Sabina Shoal.

# Fireworks disposal mishap injures 27

AFP  
Manila

A batch of suspect fireworks exploded accidentally during their disposal in the southern Philippines, injuring 27 people, most of them explosives experts, police said yesterday.

The blast happened on Monday as a team of police, coast guard, marine and fire personnel dis-

posed of firecrackers retrieved from a nearby warehouse, where an explosion on June 29 killed five people and injured 38 others, in Zamboanga city on Mindanao island.

The fireworks were the third and final batch to be taken from the warehouse to an abandoned government-owned shooting range for a controlled explosion, regional police spokeswoman Lieutenant Colonel Helen Galvez told AFP by

telephone. They had been offloaded from a pick-up truck and were being doused with water when they ignited prematurely.

“It was accidental,” Galvez said.

“It was not intended to be a massive explosion.” Twenty members of the disposal team were injured, including six seriously.

Seven civilians suffered minor injuries when the blast damaged a dozen houses and other buildings nearby, as well as four vehicles.

the new vacation island, Lookout Cay.

The rising tide for Disney’s cruise lines could help offset any softness in the company’s domestic theme park business, UBS analyst John Hodulik said. The company said its second quarter booking occupancy is at 97% for all five ships.

The rapid expansion of Disney’s cruise capacity “helps de-risk the medium-term outlook” for the parks business, Hodulik said.

Disney has announced a 10-year, \$60bn expansion of its theme parks and cruise business.

Other recent investments include three new areas at the Tokyo DisneySea theme park, recreating the worlds of “Frozen,” “Tangled” and “Peter Pan,” the opening of a “Frozen”-themed area at Hong Kong Disneyland, and a “Zootopia” experience in Shanghai.

The company is expected to announce plans for new attractions at Disneyland in California and Walt Disney World in central Florida in August, at its D23 fan convention.



## Queen Camilla hosts literacy champions



Britain's Queen Camilla hosts community volunteers and authors at Clarence House to celebrate the National Literacy Trust charity's 30th anniversary, in London, yesterday.

## Six police, government officials suspended for stampede deaths

Reuters  
Lucknow

Indian authorities have suspended six police and government officials after a stampede that killed 121 people last week, accusing them of “negligence” in handling the event featuring a religious preacher.

One of India's worst stampedes in recent years took place after about a quarter of a million people flocked to listen to a self-styled guru, far in excess of the number of 80,000 authorities had permitted. Yesterday's preliminary findings of a panel investigating the incident held the event organisers responsible, saying they failed to meet conditions set for the gathering.

“The organisers obtained permission for the event by concealing facts,” the government

of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh said in a statement, citing the findings of the panel it set up to look into the matter.

“They did not make adequate and smooth arrangements despite inviting an unexpected crowd, nor did they comply with the conditions set by the local administration.”

In response, A P Singh, a lawyer for the preacher, denied wrongdoing by organisers, saying they did not conceal anything from authorities, adding instead that the stampede was part of a conspiracy by “anti-social elements” whom he did not identify.

Police have arrested nine people involved in organising the event, Singh said.

The government said the panel had not ruled out “the possibility of a major conspiracy behind the accident”, but it needed further investigation.

# India PM tells Putin deaths of children in war ‘terrifying’

Reuters  
Moscow

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday that the death of innocent children was painful and terrifying, a day after a lethal strike on a children's hospital in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

The visiting Indian leader used emotive language to deliver an implicit rebuke to Putin at a summit intended to underscore the deepening partnership between their two countries.

Winding up his two-day trip, the two sides set out nine key areas for closer co-operation, ranging from nuclear energy to medicine, and said they aimed to boost bilateral trade by more than half to hit \$100bn by 2030.

But given that Putin has rarely been publicly criticised face-to-face over the war in Ukraine by the leader of a country that Russia sees as a friend, Modi's televised comments were striking.

“Whether it is war, conflict or a terrorist attack, any person who believes in humanity is pained when there is loss of lives,” Modi said.

“But even in that, when innocent children are killed, the heart bleeds and that pain is very terrifying.”

Ukraine says it has recovered fragments of a Russian Kh-101 cruise missile at the Kyiv children's hospital which was hit on Monday during a wave of Russian attacks that killed 44 Ukrainians, including four children, across the country.

At the hospital itself, two adults were killed and Interfax Ukraine said eight children were among about 50 people wounded.

Russia said, without providing evidence, that it was a Ukrainian anti-missile system that struck the hospital.

Modi appeared to criticise Rus-



Russia's President Vladimir Putin and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, yesterday.

sia once before over its actions in Ukraine when he told Putin in September 2022 that “today's era is not an era of war”. Putin said at that time he understood Modi's concerns.

India, however, has not condemned Russia's invasion and has taken the opportunity to buy record amounts of discounted Russian oil as sanctions have decimated Moscow's trade with the West.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra, accompanying Modi on the trip, said India wanted to further strengthen energy ties and could seek deals with Rosneft and other leading Russian oil firms. The two countries said they were also exploring an increase in Russian coal sales to India.

In joint statements, they further outlined plans for closer co-operation in developing the Northern Sea Route through Arctic waters and for working together in space exploration, among other areas.

For Russia, India has become an increasingly important partner, both economically and diplomatically, as Moscow seeks to demonstrate that Western attempts to isolate it over the war in Ukraine have failed.

Putin, speaking before Modi, said their two countries enjoyed a “particularly privileged strategic partnership”.

“I thank you for the attention you are paying to the most acute problems including trying to find ways to resolve the Ukrainian crisis, above all by peaceful means, of course,” he said.

Modi told him: “Solutions are not possible on the battleground. Amidst guns, bullets and bombs, peace talks cannot be successful. We have to find the path to peace only through talks.”

Putin did not visibly react to Modi's remarks and it was not clear if they had influenced the summit's course. The Kremlin said an expected round of delegation-level talks would not take place as the two leaders had covered the agenda in full.

**SENSITIVE TIMING**

The timing of the Ukrainian hospital incident was embarrassing for Modi, just as he began his visit on Monday.

As Modi shared his image hugging Putin on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said it was a “huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day”.

The US State Department said on Monday it had raised concerns with India about its relationship with Russia.

## Labour assumes governing seats as UK parliament returns

AFP  
London

Britain's new lawmakers excitedly squeezed into parliament yesterday with Labour sitting on the government's side of the chamber for the first time in 14 years following last week's landslide election win.

More than 400 Labour MPs jostled for space on the ruling side of the green-benched House of Commons, with many having to stand, as parliament returned after being dissolved before Thursday's vote.

New Prime Minister Keir Starmer addressed the house for the first time as Britain's leader, vowing to “put an end to a politics that has too often seemed self-serving and self-obsessed”.

“We all have a duty to show that politics can be a force for good,” he added.

He also noted the new parliament was “the most diverse parliament by race and gender this country has ever seen”.

According to the House of Commons Library, a record 263 or 40 percent of the 650 MPs are women, up from 220 in 2019.

Some 90 are from minority ethnic backgrounds, an increase from 66 five years ago.

Rishi Sunak — Conservative prime minister until last week — made his first speech as leader of the opposition, and congratulated Starmer on his victory.

He described being an MP as the “greatest honour, privilege and responsibility”, in a congenial session that contrasted



Reform UK Party Leader Nigel Farage speaks on the day of the election of Speaker of the House of Commons, in London, yesterday.

sharply with the usual arguing and shouting seen in the chamber. The session started with lawmakers re-electing Lindsay Hoyle as speaker of the house unopposed.

Tradition dictated that he was physically dragged to the speakers' chair by colleagues, a custom rooted in the speaker's original function to communicate the Commons' opinions to the monarch. Historically, if the monarch did not agree with the message being communicated then the early death of the speaker could follow — leading to reluctance among some to take up the post.

After the addresses by Starmer and Sunak, other party leaders had their turn, including arch-Euro-sceptic Nigel Farage who declared the five MPs from his anti-immigration Reform UK party the “new kids on the block”.

“We have no experience in this parliament whatsoever, even though some of us have tried

many times over the years previously,” he said, a reference to his previous seven failed attempts to be elected.

Parliament then began the lengthy process of swearing in all 650 MPs. Some 335 of them are new to parliament.

They are required by law to make an oath or affirmation of allegiance to the British monarchy and are not allowed to speak in debates, vote or receive their salary until they do so.

Since Monday, new MPs have been receiving tours of the parliamentary estate, while some ex-lawmakers who lost their seats last week have been seen saying their goodbyes.

Labour won 411 seats, securing a majority of more than 170 as it returned to power for the first time since Gordon Brown was prime minister in 2010.

The Tories suffered their worst-ever electoral defeat, succumbing to just 121 MPs.

## Floods swamp national park, killing six rhinos

AFP  
Guwahati

Devastating floods in India's northeast that have killed scores of people also swamped a national park drowning six threatened rhinos and other wildlife, government officials said yesterday.

Floods have begun to ease, Assam state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a statement, noting the “water level of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries is below the danger level in most places”.

More than 1.8mn people have been affected

across 3,000 villages, as well as 72 killed since mid-May, according to state disaster officials.

Monsoon rains across South Asia from June to September offer respite from the summer heat and are crucial to replenishing water supplies, but also bring widespread death and destruction.

The intensity of rain and floods has increased in recent years, with experts saying climate change is exacerbating the problem. As the waters recede, the impact on wildlife from the deluge is also being seen, including in Kaziranga National Park.

“Floods have affected humans and animals alike,” Sarma said, adding officers had been “working round the clock to aid everyone”.

# Starmer goes to Washington on first foreign trip as PM

AFP  
London

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer jets off to Washington to attend Nato's 75th anniversary summit, his first foreign trip since becoming British leader last Friday following a landslide election victory.

He will reaffirm Britain's enduring support for the Western military alliance and Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression.

Starmer, 61, told a meeting of his top team that the summit represents an opportunity to “reset relationships, reinvigorate our unshakeable commitment to the alliance and demonstrate the strength of Britain on the world stage”.

The visit kicks off a whirlwind of international diplomacy in Starmer's first two weeks in power, with the UK also hosting a European leaders' conference next week.

“It will be an opportunity for him to learn and get to know other

leaders as much as to communicate any particular messages,” foreign policy expert James Strong told AFP. Britain's previous Conservative government was one of Ukraine's staunchest allies, providing money, weapons and troop training to help it repel Russia's invasion.

Starmer has pledged continued support for Kyiv under Labour, and is expected to reaffirm that message in person to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the Nato meeting. Starmer's De-

fence Secretary John Healey has already visited Ukraine since last Thursday's election, and Foreign Secretary David Lammy has been visiting European Nato members.

Labour is committed to the alliance and wants to match the Conservatives' promise to raise defence spending to 2.5% of GDP, above the Nato target of two %.

“We can expect lots of talk about ‘business as usual’,” added Strong, a lecturer at Queen Mary University of London.

While Starmer will stress con-

tinuity on the main foreign policy issues, he will also be keen to signal a reset in relations with allies that were soured by Brexit.

Labour has pledged closer co-operation with European neighbours, including on bilateral deals with France and Germany but also on agreements with the EU bloc as a whole. “We can expect to hear a lot of talk about improving relations, about being a more reliable partner, and above all about being more stable and predictable,” said Strong.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria board a plane at Stansted Airport in Essex, yesterday.



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TIMES

# India ‘jobless growth’ is seen blunting its population edge

India’s joblessness, especially among young people, was a key concern among voters in the recent elections and was cited as a reason for the drop in support for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Between 2012 and 2019, employment in India grew by a mere 0.01% annually, with most new jobs being low-productivity roles in agriculture and construction, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). India will struggle to create enough jobs for its growing workforce over the next decade even if the economy grows at a rapid pace of 7%, Citigroup said last week, suggesting the world’s most-populous nation will need more concerted steps to boost employment and skills. Citi estimates India will need to create about 12mn jobs a year over the next decade to absorb the number of new entrants to the labour market. Based on a growth rate of 7%, India can only generate 8mn-9mn jobs a year. The quality of jobs being created in India is another challenge. An analysis of the official data showed about 46% of the workforce is still employed in agriculture, even though the sector contributes less than 20% to gross domestic product. Manufacturing accounted for 11.4% of total jobs in 2023, a lower share than in 2018, the figures show, a sign that the sector hasn’t bounced back since the pandemic. The Indian government on Monday rejected the Citi report and said in a statement that the authors failed to consider the positive trends and comprehensive data from official sources, asserting that the Asian nation has generated more than 80mn jobs in the five years through 2022.

Citigroup estimates India will need to create about 12mn jobs a year over the next decade to absorb the number of new entrants to the labour market

people, or more than the entire population of the Americas or Africa or Europe. For sure, there are pros and cons for being the most populous nation on the earth. India’s population boom is an opportunity; it can be an economic threat, too. Not only does India have more people, it also has one of the youngest populations, UN data shows. More than half its population is under the age of 30, with a median age of 28. That compares with about 38 in both the US and in China. This youth advantage could play a critical role in unlocking economic growth. With over two-third of its people of working age – between 15 to 64 years old – India could both produce and consume more goods and services, drive innovation and keep pace with the constant technological changes. Here, then, is the flip side. India needs to effectively address core problems of poverty, hunger and malnutrition; provide better health and education; and build infrastructure. Close to a third of the nation’s youth are not in any employment, education or training. Only 5% of the country’s workforce is recognised as formally skilled, according to a 2023 Bloomberg report. Citi’s economists have proposed a series of measures to boost jobs in India, such as strengthening the export potential of manufacturing sectors, extending incentives to attract foreign companies and filling up about 1mn government vacancies. The government also needs to consolidate multiple employment generation programmes for better impact. Looking ahead, the short-term economic thinking should give way to a sustainable, futuristic growth vision to create jobs, lift millions of Indians out of poverty and ensure social inclusion.

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# Macron’s huge bet paid off

By Hugo Drochon  
Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron shocked his country – and the world – when he called a snap election last month, immediately after his party was trounced by the far-right National Rally (RN) in the vote for the European Parliament. Aside from a small group of advisers, Macron warned no-one, not even his prime minister, Gabriel Attal. Yet the move seemed carefully planned. And for Macron, it worked well enough, because defeat did not become debacle. Since the legislative elections in 2022, Macron had only a plurality in the National Assembly. But by picking up votes on the left or on the right – or legislating by decree – his government enacted significant reforms, not least raising the retirement age from 62 to 64 and tightening immigration. But, as Macron confessed to his father two months ago, to his mind the National Assembly had become “ungovernable,” adding that he was going to dissolve it. He was looking for a way out. Either way, his government was facing a vote of no-confidence after the summer recess and was likely to fall. Better to take the bull by the horns. When Macron was first elected in 2017, he seemed to be a bulwark against the far-right populist wave that was crashing through the West, first knocking the United Kingdom out of Europe and then lifting Donald Trump to power in the United States. Macron beat Marine Le Pen of the National Front (as RN was then known) by a landslide, 66% to 34%, and repeated the feat five years later, winning 59% of the vote. But Macron’s popularity has since waned, while support for RN has surged. The writing was already on the wall in the 2019 European elections, when National Rally pushed Macron’s party into second place, 23% to 22%. Five years later, it wasn’t even close: in June’s European Parliament election, RN won 31%, more than double Renaissance’s 15%. Macron’s apparent rationale for immediately dissolving the National Assembly was that by putting the spotlight on RN during

THE DRAMATIC RUNOFF IN FIGURES

France is bracing for a protracted period of political uncertainty after snap elections won by the left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) over the far-right National Rally (RN). Here is an overview of the election, which has left the country with a hung parliament.

Leftist alliance surprise winner

The NFP stunned the country by winning 193 seats in Sunday’s vote to become the biggest bloc in parliament. The coalition includes 74 lawmakers from the hard-left France Unbowed (France Insoumise), 64 Socialists and 33 ecologists. That is a gain of 42 seats compared to the 2022 elections. President Emmanuel Macron’s centrists and their allies came second with 164 seats. The big loser of the evening was the National Rally (RN) and its allies, which came first in the first round on June 30 but came only third in the run off with 143 seats (125 seats for the RN and 17 for its allies). That is however 36 extra seats compared with its previous record of 89 in the last parliament.

Anti-far right pacts

What sealed the fate of the RN, which was in the lead after the first round of the election in 258 of the 501 voting districts still up for grabs on Sunday, was that the centre and the left withdrew their third-placed candidates in constituencies where the RN looked poised to win, effectively pooling their voters. Some 8.745mn voters still opted for the RN, 700,000 more votes than those cast in the same constituencies in the first round.

Cities vote overwhelmingly left

In France’s 10 biggest cities, including Lyon, Nantes and

Strasbourg, the NFP came first with 41 seats out of 58 and got 12 seats out of 18 in Paris. Macron’s party won 10 constituencies, including six in Paris. The RN and its allies only got seven seats in cities, all of them in southeastern France, including all three seats up for grabs in the resort city of Nice and three of the seven seats going in France’s second biggest city Marseille.

Voters punish Macron’s MPs

Of the 577 National Assembly members elected in the two-round vote, 420 were incumbents. Of the big parties, the one that suffered the biggest losses was Macron’s. Of the ruling party’s 229 outgoing MPs, 78 failed to win re-election. The RN’s lawmakers fared better, with 81 out of 89 getting back in again.

Biggest turnout in quarter century

Turnout in both rounds of the election was very high. Two thirds of registered voters, or 66.71%, cast a ballot in the first round and nearly as many turned out again on Sunday (66.63%) – the highest turnout at the second round since 1997, when Lionel Jospin’s Socialists won. Since 1997 turnout has been steadily dropping, hitting a historic low in 2017 of 42.64%.

Fewer women

Of the 577 National Assembly members, 208 (36%) are women, down from 224 in 2017 and 215 in 2022. The New Popular Front has the most women MPs, at 40.4 percent, just ahead of Macron’s centrists on 40.2%. The National Rally has just 32.2%.

— AFP

a short election campaign, Le Pen’s party would start to crack. With another three years to go on his presidency, better to face the RN now and try to take the wind out of their sails than to allow their vote to continue to increase and carry Le Pen to the Elysée in 2027. During the first round of voting, chinks started to appear, not least the fact that RN walked back many of its landmark policies. A “national preference” for French citizens over foreigners for jobs, housing, and welfare? Not anymore (only that dual citizens are to be excluded from strategic positions within the French state). The reduction of value-added tax to 5.5%? Only on gas, petrol, and electricity. Retirement at 60? Actually, in some cases, RN will increase the minimum age to 66. Leaving the European electricity market? Maybe yes, maybe no, depending on who you ask. Only on immigration has RN been

consistent, although much of what it proposes has already been done. Nonetheless, RN won the election’s first round handily, with 33% of the vote, while Macron’s Ensemble (Together) coalition finished not second but third, behind the hastily cobbled-together left-wing alliance, the New Popular Front, which received 28%. Yet the presidential coalition increased its share of the vote by five percentage points compared to the European election, winning 20%, owing partly to high turnout. In the second round, the chinks are to be excluded from strategic positions within the French state). The reduction of value-added tax to 5.5%? Only on gas, petrol, and electricity. Retirement at 60? Actually, in some cases, RN will increase the minimum age to 66. Leaving the European electricity market? Maybe yes, maybe no, depending on who you ask. Only on immigration has RN been

declaring support for Jordan Bardella, RN’s new president. In the end, RN never came close to achieving an absolute majority, falling well short of the required 289 deputies. In fact, it finished third, behind the New Popular Front and Ensemble, which did much better than expected. Today the dominant force in the National Assembly is not the far-right but the left, although none of the voting blocs – left, centre, and far right – has an absolute majority. So, now what? Although the possibility of a technocratic government, to see out the Olympic Games, has been mooted, the likelier scenario is an agreement among the “republican” parties, stretching from the Communists through to the Greens, Socialists, centrists, and conservatives, together with a political programme for the next year. This type of grand coalition has been foreign to French politics since the founding, under Charles de Gaulle, of the Fifth Republic, with its strong president. But it was a feature of the Third and Fourth Republics, and is hardly foreign to other European countries. The last couple of years, when Macron’s government has lacked a parliamentary majority, prefigured the potential of such an arrangement. Ironically, it was just such a grand coalition that lifted Macron to the presidency in the first place, back in 2017. Three years is a long time in politics, and the challenge for the next government, whichever form it takes, is to resolve the cost-of-living crisis. If Macron has won this battle, he hasn’t yet won the war. — Project Syndicate

THE GAMBIT: French President Emmanuel Macron leaves after voting in the second round of the early French parliamentary elections, at a polling station in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, on Sunday. (Reuters)

• Hugo Drochon, Associate Professor of Political Theory at the University of Nottingham, is the author of Nietzsche’s Great Politics.



# Europe’s new Ariane 6 rocket blasts off for first time

**ESA chief hails ‘very important moment’ for the continent**

**AFP**  
Kourou

Europe’s new Ariane 6 rocket blasted off for the first time smoothly yesterday, carrying with it the continent’s hopes of regaining independent access to space.

The much-delayed inaugural flight of the European Space Agency’s most powerful rocket yet launched from Europe’s spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana at 4pm local time.

Crews on the ground at the launch site, which is surrounded by jungle on the South American coast, applauded as the rocket soared into clear skies.

Ariane 6’s first launch, which was originally planned for 2020, is hoped to bring an end to a difficult time for European space efforts.

Since the last flight of its workhorse predecessor, Ariane 5, a year ago, Europe has been unable to launch satellites or other missions into space without relying on rivals such as Elon Musk’s US firm



A tank of Ariane 6, Europe’s next-generation space rocket, is pictured in a production line of Ariane Group in Bremen, Germany. (Reuters file photo)

SpaceX. ESA chief Josef Aschbacher said it was a “very important moment for Europe”.

“We are re-establishing independent access to space for Europe,” he said just before the launch. Earlier yesterday, the giant metal structure housing the rocket

was rolled away, unsheathing the 56-metre behemoth in light rain, an AFP journalist observed. After a positive weather report, the rocket’s tanks were filled with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen.

The planned time for liftoff was delayed by an hour after routine checks revealed

a small data issue that was resolved, according to the ESA.

Tony dos Santos, Kourou technical manager, said that teams on the ground would only be able to “breathe our first sigh of relief when the first satellites have been released”.

That is expected an hour and six minutes after liftoff. The entire flight is scheduled to take nearly three hours.

The mission will be considered successfully complete when the rocket’s reusable upper stage splashes down into the Pacific Ocean.

In Kourou, more than 200 experts were concealed in a bunker near the launch site, checking for any potential problems before liftoff.

They were in constant contact with the Jupiter control room, the communications hub between the teams — and data sent from the rocket. A large number of armed forces also watched over the launch, including three fighter jets deployed to deter any curious aircraft nearby.

Successful inaugural flights are by no means guaranteed. Historically, nearly half of the first launches of new rockets have ended in failure. That includes Ariane 5, which exploded moments after liftoff in 1996. But out of 117 launches over nearly 20 years, only one other Ariane 5 flight completely failed. Space has become

big business and competition is soaring, particularly from SpaceX’s fully re-usable Falcon 9 rockets.

Yet in recent years Europe has found itself without an independent way to give lucrative satellites a ride into space.

Russia pulled its Soyuz rockets, long used for European launches at Kourou, after Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Later that year, Europe’s Vega-C light launcher was grounded after a launch failure. Ariane 6 delays compounded the crisis.

Yesterday’s launch will mark Europe’s “return” to the space scene, ESA space transportation director Toni Tolker-Nielsen said.

Selected by the ESA back in 2014, Ariane 6 will be able to place satellites in geostationary orbit 36,000km above Earth, as well as satellite constellations a few hundreds of kilometres up.

The rocket’s maiden flight will carry 17 different “passengers”, including 11 university micro-satellites, as well as re-entry capsules and small scientific experiments.

One more Ariane 6 launch is scheduled for this year, followed by six in 2025 then eight in 2026.

In the future, it is booked to launch some of Amazon’s Kuiper constellation of internet satellites.

## Pakistan to delay power tariff hike until after summer

Pakistan plans to delay raising power tariffs until October, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said yesterday, offering respite on power rates, a key component in the country’s agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Reining in unresolved debt across Pakistan’s power sector is a top concern of the IMF, with which Islamabad plans to sign a deal this month.

Poor and middle class households are still feeling the impact of the IMF’s bailout of Pakistan last year, which involved a series of power tariff hikes over 12 months as part of the IMF programme which ended in April.

“We are giving this respite for three months: July, August and September,” Sharif told a press conference, with a view to cooling temperatures in October when electricity consumption falls. Annual power use in Pakistan is expected to fall consecutively for the first time in 16 years, due to higher tariffs curbing household consumption.

Sharif said the decision to delay the raising of power tariffs would benefit 94% of domestic households as the country of 300 million people face summer temperatures surging to a near record. He added that Pakistan has no choice but to enter a new IMF programme and that Islamabad wants to sign a three-year deal. Pakistan has set a tax revenue target of Rs13tn (\$47bn) for the fiscal year that began on July 1, a near 40% jump from the previous year. It aims to lower its fiscal deficit to 5.9% of gross domestic product from 7.4% last year.

While the budget may win approval from the IMF, high taxes on a struggling economy could fuel public anger, according to analysts.

## Germany, 8 Baltic Sea nations seek to jointly buy naval mines

Germany and eight other countries on the Baltic Sea aim to jointly procure naval mines. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said yesterday, as Russia is taking an increasingly assertive stance in the Baltic Sea region.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Nato summit in Washington, Pistorius said Russia had been challenging the borders in the Baltic Sea time and again.

“Just recently we have seen how Russia tries to extend Russian territorial waters outside Kaliningrad. We are all unmistakably clear that we will not allow such advances,” he said.

“To that end, we need the necessary capabilities for deterrence and defence, one of them being naval mines.”

Pistorius was referring to an incident in May when Estonia blamed Russian border guards for removing navigation buoys from the Estonian side of the Narva River separating the two countries.

The location of buoys between Russia and Estonia had been disputed since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the Estonian police and border guard said.

Used by an average of 1,500 vessels per day, the Baltic is one of the world’s busiest seaways. Shallow and crowded, it can only be accessed through three narrow straits.

Russia has significant military capabilities at St Petersburg and Kaliningrad, and Nato sees shipping lanes as well as undersea cables at risk in case of a conflict.

If any of the straits were to be closed, sea freight traffic to Sweden and Finland would be hit hard and the Baltic states completely cut off. Mines can be used to protect ports or block waterways.

# Leftists pitch the potential next French PM candidates

**AFP**  
Paris

French leftist parties yesterday pitched potential candidates to head a minority government, with parliament adrift following an election in which no one political force claimed a clear majority.

Defying expectations, the New Popular Front (NFP) alliance of left-wing parties won the most seats in Sunday’s second-round National Assembly runoff.

Combined, it holds 193 out of 577 seats in the National Assembly but is well short of the 289-seat threshold for a majority.

As newly elected members of parliament showed up to visit their workplace ahead of a first session on July 18, the coalition of Greens, Socialists, Communists and the hard-left France Unbowed (LFI) insisted they should form the next government.

The alliance was abuzz with debate over who to put forward as a potential prime minister, and whether the alliance should seek a broader coalition.

Olivier Faure, the boss of the Socialist party — a moderate member of the NFP coalition — threw his hat in the ring yesterday, saying he was “willing to accept” the job, on the basis of “dialogue” with the other coalition members.

The Socialist party’s secretary-general, Pierre Jovet, had prepared the ground earlier, saying that “Faure alone has the profile to reassure and be prime minister”.

This, observers said, was an open invitation to the hard-left LFI party to back the Socialist as a consensus choice rather than LFI’s own highly divisive boss Jean-Luc Melancon.

Some party members, meanwhile, have suggested that LFI deputy Clemence Guette, 33,



Former French president Francois Hollande, Member of Parliament of the French Socialist Party and the left-wing parties alliance named “Nouveau Front Populaire”, poses for a family photo with Olivier Faure, First Secretary of the French Socialist Party, Boris Vallaud, and newly-elected PS lawmakers as they arrive at the National Assembly in Paris following the second round of the early parliamentary elections. (Reuters)

could be a promising alternative from within their own ranks.

Either way, NFP members plan to name a potential prime minister “by the end of the week,” leading LFI figure Mathilde Panot said.

In the French system, the president nominates the prime minister, who must be able to survive a confidence vote in parliament — a tricky proposition with three closely balanced political forces in play.

Macron’s camp came second in Sunday’s vote, taking 164 seats after voters came together to block the far-right National Rally (RN) from power.

This left the anti-immigration, anti-Brussels outfit in third place with 143 lawmakers.

The president has kept Prime Minister Gabriel Attal’s government in place for now, hoping horse-trading in the coming days and weeks could leave an opening for him to reclaim the initiative.

Members of Macron’s camp have been eyeing both the centre-left Socialists and conservative Republicans as possible allies of convenience for a new centrist-dominated coalition, which would leave them at least partly in charge.

“None of the three leading blocs can govern alone,” Stephane Sejourne, head of Macron’s Renaissance party, wrote in daily *Le Monde*.

Red lines including that coalition members must support the European Union and Ukraine and maintain business-friendly policies, he said.

These requirements, he warned, “necessarily exclude LFI” and the caustic Melancon.

Markets are paying close attention to the European Union’s second-largest economy.

Ratings agency Moody’s warned it could downgrade its credit score for France’s more than €3tn debt pile if a future government reverses Macron’s

widely-loathed 2023 pension reform, echoing a Monday warning from S&P on the deficit.

Even as politicians struggle to define the immediate path ahead, eyes are also already turning to the next time French voters will be called to the polls.

Macron’s term expires in 2027 and he cannot run a third time — potentially leaving the way open for his twice-defeated opponent, RN figurehead Marine Le Pen, to finally capture the presidency.

The far-right outfit has been digesting a disappointing result after polls suggested it could take an absolute majority in parliament. Party sources told AFP its director-general Gilles Pennelle had resigned.

In an unrelated development, French investigators said yesterday they were looking into Le Pen’s 2022 campaign finances following allegations of embezzlement, forgery, fraud, and that a candidate on an electoral campaign accepted a loan.

# Kyiv hospital ‘likely took direct hit from Russian missile’

**Reuters**  
Kyiv

A UN rights mission said yesterday there was a “high likelihood” that Kyiv’s main children’s hospital took a direct hit from a Russian missile during a series of airstrikes on Ukrainian cities, as the Kremlin continued to deny involvement.

Ukraine flew its flags at half-mast in a national day of mourning to mark the deaths of 44 people across the country from Monday’s air attacks, including four children and two people at the Okhmatdyt children’s hospital in the capital.

“Analysis of the video footage and an assessment made at the incident site indicates a high likelihood that the children’s hospital suffered a direct hit rather than receiving damage due to an intercepted weapon system,” said Danielle Bell, head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Ukraine’s security service said it had unequivocal evidence the medical facility was hit by a Russian Kh-101 cruise missile during the deadliest series of strikes in months, and published images of what it said were fragments of the weapon’s engine.

The Kremlin said, without providing evidence, it was Ukrainian anti-missile fire, not Russia, that hit the children’s hospital, which is one of Europe’s largest and treats patients with serious conditions such as cancer and kidney disease.

Damage at the site prompted millions of dollars in donations from inside Ukraine and abroad, more than 28 months into Russia’s full-scale invasion. Eight children were wounded at the hospital, health authorities said.

The United Nations Security Council convened yesterday — at the request of Britain, France, Ecuador, Slovenia and the United States — over the attack.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky flew into Washington for



Inna, a nurse who was injured when a Russian missile struck the Okhmatdyt Children’s Hospital, stands as she looks for medical equipment to salvage among the debris in Kyiv yesterday. (Reuters)

a three-day summit of Nato leaders in which he hoped to win commitments from allies to beef up Ukraine’s air defences and boost their military support.

Russian forces are slowly ad-

vancing and claimed yesterday the capture of the village of Yasnobrodivka in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk region. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine, which has reported heavy fighting in the re-

gion for months.

Zelensky has condemned Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s trip to Russia, calling it “a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts”.

The Ukrainian leader vowed retaliation against Russia after Monday’s attacks and Russia’s Defence Ministry said it had subsequently shot down 38 drones. A Russian regional governor reported fires at an oil depot and an electricity substation in a joint operation.

A security source told Reuters that Ukrainian drones had attacked a Russian oil refinery, a military airfield, and an electricity substation in a joint operation.

Rescuers concluded operations at the children’s hospital earlier yesterday. Elsewhere in the Ukrainian capital, five bodies were recovered from the ruins of a residential building where 12 people were killed, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

The death toll stood at 33 in Kyiv and 11 in the Dnipropetrovsk region, officials said, taking the total to 44.

Shelling separately killed three others in the eastern town of Pokrovsk, but they were not counted as they were not killed by missiles.

Okhmatdyt’s general director, Volodymyr Zhovniir, told reporters one of its young doctors had been killed, that the building for dialysis had been completely destroyed and that it no longer had electricity supply.

“At least four buildings of the hospital were partially destroyed,” he said.

Ukrainian business leaders rushed to announce donations to rebuild the hospital.

There was no available figure for the total amount of donations, but Reuters calculations based on statements and Ukrainian media reports put the figure from Ukraine’s corporate section at about 300mn hryvnia (\$7.3mn).

In Kyiv, Oleksandr Baraboshko, 34, a strategic communications consultant, said aerial attacks like Monday’s served to unite Ukrainians against Russia.





## High humidity prevails across Qatar

Humidity ranging from 25-95% is forecast to prevail across Qatar until tomorrow (Thursday) before dipping to 15-65% on Friday and 20-50% on Saturday, according to information from the Met office. Yesterday, humidity was in the 30-80% range, while today, it is expected to be 30-80%. Yesterday's minimum and maximum temperatures were in the 27-33C and 36-46C range, respectively. Today's minimum and maximum are forecast in the 26-32C and 36-41C range, respectively. Picture shows a sunset scene from Old Doha Port yesterday.

**PICTURE:** Thajudheen

# Beauty of poster design showcased at M7 exhibition

The exhibition demonstrates the ability of design to build bridges, ignite creativity, and foster understanding, reflecting the initiative's commitment to expanding the global reach of Arabic graphic design

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

Qatar residents and visitors can immerse themselves in the beauty of Arabic poster design at Msheireb Downtown Doha's M7, featuring 100 captivating designs by artists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Titled '100/100 Hundred Best Arabic Posters', the exhibition, a part of the biennale Design Doha, provides a glimpse into the region's graphic design landscape until August 5.

Featured are 100 posters selected from the fourth round of the "Hundred Best Arabic Posters" competition. An independent jury reviewed more than 7,400

submissions from 23 countries to choose these remarkable works.

The exhibition demonstrates the ability of design to build bridges, ignite creativity, and foster understanding, reflecting the initiative's commitment to expanding the global reach of Arabic graphic design.

The posters on display present a diverse range of styles and techniques, highlighting the reinterpretation of script, image, and style in contemporary times. The work of Malik Saleh Alafiefe (Yemen/Saudi Arabia), titled 'Lawha in Lawha', features a bold, symmetrical arrangement of Arabic script.

Other highlights include Tawfiq Dawvhey Porter's (Jordan) poster for the Makhtout Design Challenge, Zaynab Kriouch's (Morocco) "Up-side

Down" series exploring cartography, and Meryem Fekhari's (Morocco) poster, which is for the illustration workshop of fictitious concerts in Ecole Supérieure des Arts Visuels, Marrakesh.

Beyond the 100/100 exhibition, Design Doha celebrates creative innovation in the Mena region. Previous exhibitions have featured works like Maryam Omar's "Weaving Poems" installation, which celebrates traditional crafts; and "Craft and Symbol: The Evolution of Contemporary Design in Turkey", underlining the historical context of Turkish design.

According to Qatar Museums, Design Doha is a unique platform for showcasing and fostering design excellence in Qatar and the wider region. It aims to create a space where creativity flourishes and new talents can be nurtured.



The '100/100 Hundred Best Arabic Posters' exhibition at M7 provides an insight into the distinctive styles and innovations shaping the region's graphic design landscape.

**PICTURES:** Joey Aguilar



## MDD lines up summer activities from July 15-Aug 31

Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) has announced an array of summer activities for all ages from July 15-August 31. "We are excited to welcome everyone to experience the unique charm and endless possibilities our downtown offers," said Dr Hafiz al-Abdulla, senior director of Corporate Communications at Msheireb Properties.

The Skill Fest by Visit Qatar at Msheireb Galleria from July 15-August 15 will engage visitors in various skill-enhancing activities. The Skill Fest Zone will also include an exhibition on Qatar's stunning natural landscapes and marine ecosystems, showcasing the work of wildlife photographer and artist Azzam al-Mannai.

A creative pop-up play area will also be set up at Msheireb Galleria from July 15-August 31 for children to explore, create, and express their creativity in a safe and engaging environment.

The Giant Maze at Msheireb Galleria from July 18-August 31 will provide a modern twist on a nostalgic experience for all ages. Designed with dynamic lighting, captivating sound



effects, the maze activation will immerse participants in active play.

An inflatable water activity (Splash Zone) located on the roof terrace of the Msheireb Galleria will feature a variety of water inflatables for all ages to enjoy from August 1-31, including a refreshments area and comfortable family seating arrangements.

Msheireb Galleria's Checklist Version 2, running from August 15-31, will welcome the back-to-school

activities, taking a look back at traditional Qatari school days, complete with a vintage school theme. Visitors will engage with displays of vintage school items and notebooks, enjoy spelling bees, face painting, arts and crafts, and storytelling sessions in a dedicated reading nook. Complementing this immersive experience, retail booths will sell school products to help families get ready for the new school year.

## Eritrean hero Girmay rides high on Al Jazeera Documentary

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

Al Jazeera Documentary has announced the screening of the film *Black Bicycles Dreams* soon. The film, which will continue its journey at international festivals during 2024, monitors Eritrean Biniam Girmay's rise in the world of bicycle racing since he was 17. He is 24 now.

The film follows Girmay's journey with his favourite sport, and his dream of participating in the most important global race, and perhaps winning it. The film also monitors Girmay's life in his home country Eritrea, where many athletes excelled in cycling around the world, but none of them were able to win in the Tour de France.

The film was produced by Time Escape, and Al Jazeera Documentary has been participating in its production since 2021. The film was selected to participate in the Dok.fest Munich and Belgian Docville festivals, as well as the MOVE Festival in the Netherlands.

The Tour de France, which began in 1903, is an annual cycling race that is held in several stages, most of which are located within the borders of France. It is the most prestigious and important race among the three major global cycling races. The only non-European riders who have ever won the race are from the US



and Colombia, thus highlighting the importance of Girmay's achievement. Girmay recently won the third stage in The Tour de France, becoming the first African winner in the history of the race, which began 121 years ago.