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SPORT | Page 1

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Iran's N-enrichment continues: IAEA report

Iran's production of highly enriched uranium continues and it has not improved co-operation with the UN nuclear watchdog despite a resolution demanding this at the agency's last board meeting, watchdog reports showed yesterday. There has been no progress in the past quarter on several long-standing issues between the IAEA and Tehran, including Iran's barring of IAEA inspectors specialised in enrichment and Iran's failure to explain uranium traces at undeclared sites, the reports showed.

Developers to share AI models with govt

Leading generative AI developers OpenAI and Anthropic have agreed to give the US government access to their new models for safety testing as part of agreements announced yesterday. The US agency said it would provide feedback to both companies on potential safety improvements to their models before and after their public release. "Our collaboration with the US AI Safety Institute leverages their wide expertise to rigorously test our models before widespread deployment," said Jack Clark, Co-Founder and Head of Policy at Anthropic.

France, Serbia sign Rafale fighter deal

Serbia signed a contract to purchase 12 Rafale warplanes from France's Dassault Aviation yesterday during a state visit by President Emmanuel Macron to Belgrade. The deal will see Serbia receive nine single-seat and three two-seat jets by 2029. "The total value of the contract is 2.7bn," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said, without specifying the currency. **Page 8**

EU may sanction 2 Israeli ministers

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said yesterday he has asked the bloc's members to consider imposing sanctions on two Israeli ministers for "hate messages" against Palestinians, messages that he said broke international law. He did not name either of the ministers.

Children's Library mascot unveiled



Ramly, the new mascot of the Children's Library at Qatar National Library (QNL), was unveiled yesterday (Thursday). Inspired by Qatar's desert fox. Ramly is 'friendly and curious and loves making new friends at the QNL Children's Library, reading fascinating books and imagining great adventures with the children', a statement said. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam **Page 12**

Ministry concludes new teachers' induction programme 'Tamkeen'

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) yesterday concluded the activities of the induction programme for 410 new teachers, who were recently recruited to work in the teaching profession in government schools in various specialisations. More than 131,000 students will attend classes in 215 schools and 64 public kindergartens, including 70 integration schools and 7 Al-Hidaya Special Needs Schools in the new academic year (2024-2025) starting on September 1. The programme, in which various sectors of the Ministry participated, aimed to prepare these new teachers and prepare them to integrate into the educational and teaching environment and introduce them to the work environment, especially the systems, regulations, policies and laws in force in government schools, in addition to the tasks, competencies, vision and mission of the Ministry. The "Tamkeen" programme, which started on August 21, included training workshops to enhance the capabilities and skills of new teachers in the areas of planning, to enable them to develop effective and systematic study plans, modern teaching and education strategies to improve their educational methods and make them more interactive and comprehensive, in addition to effectively using education assisting technologies inside classrooms and introducing them to the learning management system in force in the ministry.



The programme also included an introduction to the organisational structure of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, its tasks and responsibilities, presented by Training and Capacity Development Specialist at the Training and Development Center, Noura al-Yafei, in addition to a review of the job system, code of conduct, policies and work regulations presented by Abdullah al-Ammari from the MoEHE Human Resources Department. **To Page 5**

Sidra Medicine reverses trend of overseas treatment

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Sidra Medicine has been able to reverse the trend of people travelling abroad from Qatar for treatment of some rare diseases, stated the CEO of the hospital. "Not only are we beginning to take care of children with some of these rare diseases and devastating illnesses, but also seeing non-Qatari come into the country from the region, from as far as the US and Canada (for treatment)," Dr

Iyabo Tinubu-Karch said. Addressing the media during the launch of an awareness campaign on women's and children's health and vision 2030 by Sidra Medicine yesterday, she pointed out that "to date, many of them had to leave the country to obtain care." "We are the first entity in Qatar and the fifth in the world to provide groundbreaking gene therapy in Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, a debilitating illness that imprisons children to a lifelong of dependent care," continued the CEO. Since the opening of the outpa-



Sidra Medicine CEO Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch at the media interaction yesterday. **PICTURE** Thajudheen

Two days of Israeli raids kill 16 in West Bank camps

● Gaza massacre toll 40,602

AFP
Tulkarem, West Bank

Israel yesterday pressed a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank, leaving at least 16 Palestinians dead in two days despite UN concerns it was "fuelling an already explosive situation". The operation underway across the northern West Bank since early Wednesday has killed 16 Palestinians, the Israeli military said. The Palestinian health ministry gave the same figure.

The raids on several towns and refugee camps were launched as violence raged on in the war-battered Gaza Strip, the besieged Palestinian territory separated from the West Bank by Israel.

In the West Bank, columns of Israeli armoured vehicles backed by troops and aircraft were sent in before soldiers encircled refugee camps in Tubas and Tulkarem, as well as Jenin.

The army said it killed seven militants yesterday, including five militants in the Tulkarem refugee camp.

A military statement said one of

the five was Mohamed Jaber, also known as Abu Shujaa, who Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said was its commander in the nearby Nur Shams refugee camp.

Two other fighters were killed in Jenin.

The UN humanitarian office OCHA said "Israeli forces have repurposed homes as military positions" and were "effectively besieging" several medical facilities.

The United Nations on Wednesday said at least 637 Palestinians had been killed in the West Bank by Israeli troops or settlers since the Gaza war erupted on October 7.

In Gaza, the civil defence agency said Israeli shelling killed five displaced Palestinians in a tent east of Khan Younis, southern Gaza's main city.

The war has devastated Gaza, repeatedly displaced most of its 2.4mn people and triggered a humanitarian crisis.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said that at least 40,602 people have been killed in the war, now in its 11th month.

The toll includes 68 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to ministry figures.

Israel, Hamas agree to zoned 3-day pauses for Gaza polio vaccination

Reuters
United Nations

The Israeli military and Palestinian resistance group Hamas have agreed to three separate, zoned three-day pauses in fighting in the Gaza Strip to allow for the vaccination of some 640,000 children against polio, a senior WHO official said yesterday.

The vaccination campaign is due to start on Sunday, said Rik Peepkorn, the World Health Organisation's senior official for the Palestinian territories. He said the agreement was for the pauses to

take place between 6am and 3pm.

He said the campaign would start in central Gaza with a three-day pause in fighting, then move to southern Gaza, where there would be another three-day pause, followed by northern Gaza. Peepkorn added that there was an agreement to extend the humanitarian pause in each zone to a fourth day if needed.

"We are ready to co-operate with international organisations to secure this campaign, serving and protecting more than 650,000 Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip," Hamas official Basem Naim said. **Page 5**

● Patients from countries in the region as well as the US and Canada come to Sidra for treatment

tient clinic in 2016 and the main hospital in 2018, Sidra Medicine has been on a fulfilling journey of executing a tripartite mission of providing clinical care to the vul-

nerable children and women, research and education.

"Our commitment to excellence and innovation continues with our international patient services programme. Since 2018, we've seen over 1,000 patients from around the world, and our international patient census grew by more than 30% in just one year," she said.

The CEO went on to highlight the research aspect of the organisation and said that Sidra Medicine is considered the regional leader in precision medicine and genomics. **To Page 5**



Al-Sulaiti meets Portugal's minister



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti met yesterday with Minister of Economy of the Portuguese Republic Pedro Reis. During the meeting, they discussed relations between the two countries in the fields of transportation and communications, the development and strengthening of the economic partnership in those fields, and pushing them toward broader horizons, especially using modern and smart technology related to the services and activities of the transportation, railway, civil aviation and ports sectors. The meeting was attended by ambassador of the Portuguese Republic to the State of Qatar Paulo Neves Pocinho and the delegation accompanying the Portuguese minister of economy. **(QNA)**

Deputy PM meets Egyptian chief of staff



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah met yesterday with Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Arab Republic of Egypt Lieutenant-General Ahmed Fathi Ibrahim Khalifa, who is visiting the country. During the meeting, they discussed topics of common concern. They also discussed relations between the two sides and ways to enhance and develop them. The meeting was attended by HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit and a number of senior officials and officers from both sides. **(QNA)**

Chief of Staff meets Egyptian counterpart



HE the Chief of Staff of Qatar Armed Forces Staff Lieutenant-General (Pilot) Salem bin Hamad al-Nabit met with Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant-General Ahmed Fathi Ibrahim Khalifa, who is currently visiting the country. The meeting saw the signing of the works of the second Qatari-Egyptian Supreme Committee at the level of Chiefs of Staff. They also visited the Al Zaeem Mohamed Bin Abdullah Al Attiya Air Academy and the National Service Academy, where they discussed topics of joint interest and discussed military co-operation between the two sides, as well as the ways to enhance and develop them. The meeting was attended by a number of senior officers from both sides. **(QNA)**

Al-Muraikhi meets Cameroonian minister



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met with Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon Lejeune Mbella Mbella, on the sidelines of the 50th session of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Yaounde. During the meeting, the two sides discussed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. **(QNA)**

GCC training course in Doha bolsters co-operation against narcotics trade

QNA
Doha

The specialised training course in the field of “cybersecurity and its link to drug crimes” for officers of the anti-drug agencies in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries concluded yesterday in Doha.

The course was organised by the Doha-based GCC Criminal Information Center to Combat Drugs (GCC-CICCD), in co-operation and co-ordination with the Police Academy, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the UN Global Program on Cybercrime.

At the conclusion of the training course, Director of the GCC-CICCD Brig Gen Issa Saeed Zayed al-Kuwari said that the centre seeks to enhance regional and international co-operation in the

field of combating drugs, and contributes to raising the capabilities of those working in the field of combating drugs, including officers, non-commissioned officers, and customs officers through a comprehensive training plan that is developed annually according to the training needs of the member states.

He stressed the need to exchange information and expertise in the field of combating drugs, as it contains new methods and techniques in the field of manufacturing and smuggling narcotics, which contributes to achieving the lofty and noble goals of protecting societies from this scourge and the criminal gangs behind it.

He noted that holding this training course comes within the framework of implementing the partnership agreement between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the GCC



General Secretariat, as the GCC-CICCD is one of the most important channels for implementing the agreement and hosting its activities.

For his part, Regional Director of the UNODC Dr Hatem Ali emphasised the importance of the partnership between the United

Nations and the GCC system. He said that the UNODC is proud of the extended partnership with the GCC General Secretariat through its specialised channels, most notably the GCC-CICCD. He indicated that this partnership has sought over the past decade to support and develop the capabilities

ties and work system of the centre and its specialised officers from member states in confronting the attacks of criminal gangs to manufacture and smuggle drugs and the growing danger of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Regional Director of the UNODC noted the centre's co-operation in stimulating and developing co-operation relations at the regional Gulf level and across the region with different regions and countries of the world that share the same challenges with the centre. He stressed the need for regional co-operation in confronting the challenges of electronic drug promotion and the use of cyberspace in the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Ali pointed out the importance of seeking the help of experts from the Doha United Nations Regional Centre for Combating Cyber-

crime, which comprises experts and tools from the UN Global Program on Cybercrime to reduce these criminal activities. He noted the importance of this course in developing the capabilities of the centre's officers and member states in the Arabian Gulf in detecting, tracking, and preventing the growing use of cyberspace and the dark web to promote drugs.

The five-day training program included a number of important topics, most notably the basic concepts of using the Internet, in addition to the general concepts of computers, types of networks, communication protocols, search techniques, the national legal framework of the GCC countries, the national legal framework for combating cybercrimes and related crimes, in addition to combating drug trafficking via the Internet, artificial intelligence for investigating various data sources, and other topics.

MoJ trains legal professionals in critical areas

QNA
Doha

The three training courses organised by the Legal and Judicial Studies Center at the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for a number of legal professionals from various ministries and government agencies concluded yesterday.

Held from August 25 to 29, the courses covered skills of preparing and drafting administrative contracts, judicial jurisdiction in the field of taxes, and provisions of real estate brokerage and the obligations of the brokers in the field of combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

The course “Skills in Preparing and Drafting Administrative Contracts” aimed to introduce participants and enhance their skills and

abilities in one of the most important topics of administrative law, which is administrative contracts and the provisions and principles that regulate them. It also aimed to introduce the importance of the stage of preparing and drafting the administrative contract and the rules and methods of drafting it.

Participants learned about the role of the administration in monitoring implementation, and the powers and privileges granted to it to make the required amendment according to its interest and that of the specified public facility. To deepen the understanding of the course topics, the course curriculum included four topics that were identified by referring to the Administrative Disputes Settlement Law, the Tenders and Auctions Regulation Law and its amendments and its executive regulations

regarding the settlement of administrative disputes, and Cabinet Resolution No. 33 of 2017 forming a committee to resolve administrative disputes arising from the application of the provisions of the Tenders and Auctions Regulation Law and its executive regulations.

Meanwhile, the course ‘Judicial Jurisdiction in Field of Taxes’ aimed to develop the legal and practical skills of the course participants in the field of judicial warrants granted to some employees of the General Tax Authority, and to familiarise them with the tasks of the judicial officer with jurisdiction in that field, by explaining the nature of judicial jurisdiction, distinguishing between the judicial and general jurisdiction, and the judicial officer with special jurisdiction, explaining the general jurisdiction of judicial officers. The course also covered the

provisions of the Income Tax Law, the provisions of the Selective Tax Law, and the tasks of the judicial officer with special jurisdiction in the field of taxes.

The implementation of the provisions of real estate brokerage and the broker's obligations in the field of combating money laundering and terrorism financing comes within the framework of the Ministry of Justice's efforts to reorganise the real estate brokerage profession and activate regulatory procedures to serve the national economy and the compliance of real estate brokerage dealers with the procedures for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

The course programme aimed to develop the legal and practical skills of those qualified to deal in the field of real estate brokerage, and to be aware of the legal provisions regu-

lating it in Qatari law, and to be familiar with real estate brokerage contracts and the obligations of the real estate broker and the requirements for combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

Director of the Legal and Judicial Studies Center at the Ministry of Justice, Dr Saleh Ali al-Fadala, stressed the importance of these specialised training courses to develop the legal skills of researchers and legal specialists, develop the legal and practical skills of participants, and maximise the benefit from them for the benefit of ministries and government institutions that designed these courses to meet their training needs, noting that the judicial control course was designed specifically for employees of the General Tax Authority within the framework of legal cooperation and partnership in the field of train-

ing and qualification between the Legal and Judicial Studies Center at the Ministry of Justice and various government bodies and institutions.

He explained that the Legal and Judicial Studies Center at the Ministry of Justice, under the direction of HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi, aims to meet the training needs of the state in accordance with the Third National Development Strategy, and in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 in its pillar related to human development, and working to develop legal professions and raise the efficiency of those working in them, as the real estate brokerage course was designed for candidates to obtain licenses for real estate brokerage work.



Awqaf Minister lays foundation for three endowment projects

HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem laid the foundation for three endowment projects in a celebration organised by the General Directorate of Endowments in Lusail City.

HE al-Ghanem reviewed information about the projects of Jabal Thuaileb in Lusail, Al Maamoura, and Abu Hamour in a multi-dimensional interactive experience.

The Jabal Thuaileb Endowment Project in Lusail City is the largest in the country with 881 apartments in addition to social and recreational facilities including an integrated club, a centre for teaching the Holy Qur'an, and a mosque. The project is considered a pioneering step to achieve the ministry's goals in supporting religious and social values in society.

The second project is located in

Al Maamoura area across 12,570sq m, with the residential section occupying 70%.

The third project is located in Abu Hamour area and extends over an area of 11,977sq m, with a total area of 14,650sq m. The project is characterised by a modern design and advanced infrastructure.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohamed bin Ghanem al-Thani, said



that the three projects reflect the commitment of the General Directorate of Endowments to develop endowment projects and fulfil the conditions of the honourable donors, which contributes to enhancing societal and economic values.

He added that the projects aim to enhance investment endowments, achieve sustainable development, contribute to improving the quality of life and creating new

job opportunities, and support the local economy. HE the Minister stressed that endowments are directed to fulfilling the conditions of the honourable donors to meet the needs of society and enhance economic stability, explaining that the role of endowments is not limited to the economic aspect only, but extends to play a vital role in enhancing social values and supporting various governmental and civil institutions. (QNA)



Sidra Medicine officials at the event yesterday. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

Sidra Medicine launches campaign on women's and children's health

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Emphasising the need for greater efforts to provide better healthcare for women and children, Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has launched a new campaign "Innovating Care. Transforming Lives" to raise awareness about its efforts to advancing women's and children's health in Qatar and the region.

At an event yesterday at the Sidra Medicine, the top administrators of the hospital highlighted the journey of the organisation so far and the achievements that have touched the lives of several people for better in the country and beyond.

The campaign also showcases how Sidra Medicine is making significant strides in personalised, research-driven care, contributing to Qatar's National Vision 2030.

Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch, CEO of Sidra Medicine said: "This campaign highlights our innova-

tive approach to healthcare and clinical research which has allowed us to be firmly entrenched into the hearts and minds of our patients, their families, the community and other stakeholders as a trusted healthcare partner and leader."

"We are proud today to share with you the exciting launch of our new awareness campaign, which highlights Sidra's commitment to transformative and innovative care to women and specialty care and rare disease care in children.

"This is all done under the umbrella of personalised, research-driven medicine. We want our campaign to echo our commitment to our patients and to remind families in Qatar that we are their trusted health partner," explained the CEO.

Dr Ahmed al-Hammadi, acting chief medical officer at Sidra Medicine said: "This campaign is a testament to Sidra Medicine's dedication to not only transforming the lives of women and children through exceptional healthcare, but also to propelling

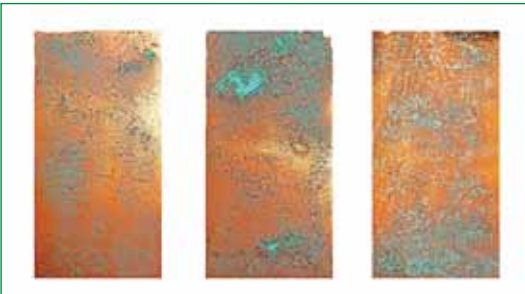
Qatar's Vision 2030 forward. By pioneering research-driven care and nurturing a new generation of medical experts, we are building a healthier future for Qatar and establishing ourselves as a global leader in healthcare innovation."

The CEO and the CMO also shared updates on Sidra Medicine's international patient programme and how it has become a trusted healthcare partner for families. Since 2018, the hospital has cared for over 1,000 patients from around the world. Sam Lock, the executive director, Commercial Development at Sidra Medicine, added:

"We are thrilled to launch our new awareness campaign 'Innovating Care. Transforming Lives,' which embodies our core mission to push the boundaries of medical innovation for cutting-edge, personalised care.

Through this campaign, we are reinforcing Sidra Medicine's unwavering commitment to achieving optimal patient outcomes and solidifying Qatar's position as a hub for medical excellence."

QM announces inaugural Qatar Pavilion at Gwangju Biennale '24



Abdulrahman al-Muftah's Rain on Materiality.

Qatar Museums (QM) has announced its inaugural Qatar Pavilion at the 15th edition of the Gwangju Biennale, the oldest contemporary art biennale in South Korea. The first and only Arab country's standalone pavilion at the 2024 Gwangju Biennale is curated by the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) and open from September 7 until December 1 at Kwangju Bank Art Hall.

On the itinerary is the exhibition, 'Knock, Rain, Knock', exploring the significance of rain in Qatari culture and premiering newly commissioned artworks from seven Qatari and Qatar-based artists: Abdulrahman al-Muftah, Farah al-Sidiky, Fatima Abbas, Guillaume Rousere, Hind al-Saad, Nada Elkharaishi, and Sara al-Naimi.

Salat Al Istisqaa, a rain prayer performed during droughts, forms the central theme of the exhibition. The artworks also delve into Arab and Islamic identity, water symbolism, and communal experiences within public spaces. In a press statement, NMoQ director Sheikh Abdulaziz H al-Thani said: "NMoQ is dedicated to preserving the heritage of our nation and making it a part of contemporary life. In these remarkable artworks, we see how a very deep aspect of our Islamic and traditional identity can inspire artistic interpretations that encourage us to strengthen our connection with the earth."

Knock, Rain, Knock is structured into distinct chapters, each highlighting the profound impact of rain on life in Qatar. The exhibition begins with "landscape", a section offering reflections on the country's diverse terrain.

The Qatar Pavilion is part of the Gwangju Biennale



Nada Elkharaishi



Farah al-Sidiky's Place of Abandon.

Pavilion, presented in parallel with the main exhibition of the 15th Gwangju Biennale Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century curated by artistic director Nicolas Bourriaud. The main exhibition explores sound, visual narrative, and the mapping of the complex contemporary world. The Gwangju Biennale, known for its exploration of global issues, provides an ideal backdrop for the Qatari Pavilion's inaugural participation, which is a significant step forward in the ongoing partnership between Qatar and South Korea.

'Let's Act' showcases art of improvisation

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The 'Let's Act' workshop, which is currently being held at Beit Al Sulaiti and organised by the Theater Affairs Center affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, is currently ongoing and will continue until mid-September.

The workshop hosted the distinguished artist and director Faleh Fayez, who spoke to the participants about the art of improvisation, saying: "Although today's theatre is based on controlling the text and memorising roles accurately, improvisation has an important and appreciated position in contemporary theatre.

Whether in adult theatre or children's theatre, due to its great importance in forming, training and directing the actor. As well as mentally stimulating the recipient, emotionally provoking him, and attracting him to participate in building the show in a participatory manner."

Fayez added: "However, improvisation remains a precise technique and a great responsibility that falls on the shoulders



View from Let's Act workshop on improvisation.

of the actor and director together. As improvisation is not always welcome, especially if the dramatic performances are based on a strong text, a cohesive structure that is growing and developing, and is tightly woven." The artist Faleh Fayez also discussed in the workshop his experience in his artistic career in the theatre in acting and directing.

Critic Dr Hassan Rashid gave a lecture on art criticism in the workshop currently being held at (Beit Al Sulaiti) which is su-

pervised by artist Fahad al-Baker and enjoys a distinguished artistic presence. The workshop previously hosted the distinguished artist Saleh al-Mannai to talk about music and song in the theatrical performance.

He presented his artistic experiences in the workshop participants, in the presence of Abdulrahman al-Dulaimi, Director of the Department of Culture and Arts at the Ministry of Culture, who in turn was keen to support and encourage the participants.



Gold Apple's Beauty Days begin

Gold Apple, described as one of the largest global beauty omni-retailers, is holding the fourth edition of its Beauty Days until tomorrow at its Doha Festival City store. The timing today is from 2pm to 10pm, and tomorrow from 10am to 10pm, a statement said.

Today, from 7pm to 8pm, Syrian singer and online celebrity Bessan Ismail will share her insights into the hottest makeup trends and tips. Local influencer and content creator Sarah Abusadeh is the moderator. Aside from the celebrity sessions, guests can treat themselves to flower arrangements, indulge in delicious treats at the popcorn station, get touch-ups from beauty experts and try their luck at the claw machine for a chance to win beauty prizes. Temporary tattoos will also be available for those looking to get cool designs ahead of the school season.

Gold Apple has also partnered with leading beauty brands, offering attendees a firsthand look at the latest products and trends in the industry. The activities include the Ducray Skin Analysis and Clinique Beauty Bar, CHI hairstyling and braiding, and FILORGA express facial treatments from 3pm to 10pm. Today (Friday), from 5.30pm to 9pm, the RUDE makeup station will be a highlight for beauty enthusiasts. The event will conclude tomorrow with a special makeup and skincare station featuring popular Korean beauty brands Soo'ae, Food Story, Unicorn Glow, and Blessed Moon from 5.30pm to 9pm.

Online shoppers can check out the Gold Apple app on the App Store or the Google Play Store or browse through the online store on the official website, the statement added.



The Thai delegation with QU officials.

Thai delegation seeks to expand academic collaboration with QU

Thai ambassador Sira Swangsilpa led a delegation of academics to Qatar University (QU), seeking to enhance scientific and technological collaboration between the two nations.

The meeting, which included discussions with QU's president and vice-presidents, explored potential partnerships in areas like agricultural research, waste recycling, and Islamic principles in biotechnology, a statement from the Thai embassy said.

Officials and representatives from Kasetsart University (KU), Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT), and Sangtawan Community Enterprise had a discussion with QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari, vice-president for academic affairs Dr

Ibrahim al-Kaabi, vice-president for research affairs Dr Aiman Erbad, and International Affairs Office director Cesar Wazen.

The embassy noted that the discussion also highlighted potential areas of co-operation, which include prospects for facilitating the exchange of expertise, researchers, and students between Thai universities and QU.

This initiative underscores the Thai embassy's commitment to promoting Thailand's research and innovation efforts and strengthening academic co-operation between educational institutions in Thailand and Qatar, the statement said.

According to the embassy, such collaboration is a fundamental foundation for the bilateral

relationship across various dimensions, including political, socio-economic development, and people-to-people connections.

The Thai delegation included Dr Damrong Sripam, vice-president for Carbon Neutrality Affairs of KU; associate professor Dr Singh Intrachooto, Professor of Building Innovation of KU; associate professor Dr Prakit Sukyai, head of Cellulose for Future Materials and Technologies Unit of KU; assistant professor Dr Chanakarn Ruangnarong, vice dean of Department of Textiles at RMUTT; Bunnapa Bualuang, chairperson, Sangtawan Community Enterprise; and Pimchanok Bualuang, Assistant, Sangtawan Community Enterprise, the statement added.



A session from the event.

QF hosts annual induction event

Qatar Foundation (QF) recently held its annual induction day, welcoming more than 350 new teachers and administrators. The event provided a comprehensive overview of the organisation's educational system and provided networking opportunities for both new and current staff.

The QF event, organised by the Education Development Institute (EDI) at Pre-University Education, was designed to promote collaboration and strengthen connections among educators. Attendees received an in-depth overview of QF's organisational structure, learning opportunities, and essential operational guidelines. The orientation also aimed to facilitate the smooth integration of new staff and enhance their effectiveness in their new roles.

Joanna Moe, assistant director, Academic Development at EDI, emphasised QF's essential role in supporting teachers and the comprehensive resources available to them. "The goal of this event is to bring together new teachers,

fostering connections that often evolve into long-lasting professional relationships," Moe explained. "We aim to provide them with a deep understanding of the Qatar Foundation schools ecosystem and our key focus areas. Our objective is for them to gain a robust grasp of our educational framework and how it supports their role."

Sarah Chediac, who recently joined QF's Tariq Bin Ziad School as a new teacher, said: "Becoming part of Qatar Foundation is truly an exhilarating journey. I am eager to embark on a year filled with both challenges and opportunities that will foster my personal and professional growth."

Tariq Bin Ziad School follows the International Baccalaureate system, and Chediac will teach Integrated Humanities in the Middle Years Programme to the school's first Grade 6 cohort. "The level of support from the management has been exceptional," she said. "I feel deeply supported and am appreciative of their commitment to our well-being and continuous pro-

fessional development. This not only helps me grow as an educator but also inspires me to contribute meaningfully to QF's success and to further develop my skills throughout the year."

Abdulaziz Ali Yahya, who has also recently joined Tariq Bin Ziad School as a social worker, said: "Joining the school, with its deep-rooted history and significant role in Qatar's educational landscape, fills me with great pride. This academic institution has been a cornerstone of education in the country, and I am eager to contribute to its ongoing development."

"The success stories of its students and graduates are clear evidence of its significant impact, and I look forward to playing a role in shaping the future and contributing to an organisation that builds a strong and enduring foundation for Qatari society."

QF's ability to bring together a diverse range of cultures under one roof, while preserving the Qatari identity and promoting the Arabic language, is truly extraordinary," he added.



QU among top in THE Award Arab World 2024

Qatar University (QU) is in the top eight Arab universities shortlisted for the Times Higher Education (THE) Award in the Arab World 2024 in the category of 'Outstanding Contribution to Regional Development'. This recognition was based on its leadership in establishing the Arab Network for Interprofessional Collaboration (Anic).

Anic was conceived to address the critical need for a regional network to support and enhance Interprofessional Education (IPE) initiatives, first identified during QU's 2015 Middle Eastern conference on

IPE. Anic now has over 200 members and established itself as a vital contributor to Interprofessional. Global, the Global Confederation for IPE.

Prof Asmaa al-Thani, vice-president for Health and Medical Sciences, said that being shortlisted for the honour underscores QU's commitment to advancing interprofessional education and collaborative practice across the Arab region and a testament to the leadership in fostering partnerships that not only elevate health professions education but also contribute significantly to the global dialogue

on interprofessional collaboration.

The official launch of Anic in November 2023 at the third Interprofessional Global Partnership Symposium marked a significant milestone.

With its upcoming second regional IPE Conference in April 2025 in Abha, Saudi Arabia, Anic continues to drive forward its mission of fostering inclusivity, innovation, and excellence in health profession education. The winners will be announced on December 3 during a gala dinner at the THE Arab Universities Summit in Amman, Jordan, a statement added.



QU welcomes new cohort of students

QNA
Doha

Qatar University (QU) Graduate Studies Office organised its annual new student orientation, welcoming a new cohort of students into its esteemed programs.

The number of students enrolled in the university's graduate programmes for the academic semester (Fall 2024) is 529 students distributed across various colleges and specialisations that offer a wide range of master's and PhD programmes, as well as diploma programmes and the PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences.

During the orientation, officials from the Graduate Studies Office pointed out that the university's colleges have become pioneers in the field of advanced education locally and regionally, as they offer a wide and exceptional range of graduate programmes that combine rigorous academic training with practical research experience, to graduate researchers and professionals who are well-qualified to contribute effectively in their various fields.

They stressed the university's commitment to providing a unique educational experience that focuses on research, innovation, and academic excellence, as well as fostering a collaborative and supportive environment that ensures students are prepared for their professional careers and contribute meaningfully to the global academic and research community.

In this context, Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies at QU Prof Aiman Erbad praised the importance of this orientation for graduate students, emphasising the university's commitment



to creating an enriching and ideal academic environment that fosters development and participation in research and innovation. He noted, "QU welcomes its new graduate students for the Fall 2024 semester in all colleges offering a range of graduate programmes."

For his part, Dean of Graduate Studies at QU Dr Ahmad al-Own warmly welcomed the new students and introduced the various services available to them, including academic support, library resources, and academic advising; all designed to facilitate their studies.

He also highlighted the importance of time management in the lives of graduate students, offering

valuable advice for a successful and distinguished academic journey. Dr Ahmad expressed his best wishes for a promising start at QU.

In turn, Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies for Student Affairs Ghada Saif al-Kuwari, welcomed the new students and explained a set of key policies that govern graduate student life during their time at the university. She also provided a brief overview of the graduate studies awards.

The orientation provided the new students with further insights into the various programmes and research opportunities available, helping them explore potential academic and professional paths.

Qatar Scientific Club (QSC) of the Ministry of Sports and Youth concluded its two-month-long summer camp filled with scientific activities provided to many individuals. QSC's Administrative and Financial Director Fatima al-Mohannadi stated that QSC is receiving great demand for its scientific programmes which can be challenging especially in meeting the expectations of the applicants and being able to accept all who wish to partake in the programmes. She explained that this pushed QSC to increase the number of its workshops as well as provide ones in the morning hours. The club's workshops and programmes will continue within QSC's annual plan following the conclusion of the summer camp until all seats available are filled, al-Mohannadi said. Hamad Adel al-Yafei, head of QSC's activities and events team, said that the summer camp had many great outcomes that best reflect the club's scientific and technical value.

A total of 18 projects and 16 engineering models were accomplished by participants using advanced technological devices, he added. Al-Yafei said that this year's summer camp witnessed great co-operation with a number of entities that helped provide a diverse range of outcomes including co-operation with the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), Traffic Department and Social Cultural Center for Rehabilitation of Special Needs.

(QNA)

Qatar Scientific Club concludes summer camp





Snapshots from the event.



Dreema honours outstanding students

Under the patronage and presence of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, the Orphan Care Centre (Dreema) celebrated two significant occasions through an event that included an honours ceremony for outstanding and distinguished children. The ceremony was attended by several ministers, ambassadors, executive directors of the Social Work Foundation centres, and supporting partners. It was associated with an art exhibition under the slogan *Anticipating Every Success to Come* in recognition of their academic achievements and excellence in extracurricular activities, such as Qur'an memorisa-

tion, sports, and other activities that contributed to the development of their skills and personalities. "Our children are our future, and at Dreema, we believe that every child holds within them the seed of excellence," said Dreema executive director Sheikha Najla bint Ahmed al-Thani. "Today, we celebrate their remarkable achievements and strive to enhance a culture of excellence in their lives." Local artists and students from schools in Qatar are participating in the art exhibition, which marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Dreema centre. The exhibition is being held at Hazm Mall. - QNA

Sidra Medicine reverses trend of overseas treatment

From Page 1

"We have sequenced more than 50,000 gene samples on a research basis with the National Genome Programme," the official said. "We have now taken up that research and are able to offer genetic tests. And we have so far done that, a first in Qatar, in 600 patients in the last nine months."

She said that these achievements are rare feats and have been realised through constant and aggressive investment in research and in precision medicine by Qatar Foundation, which has enabled Sidra Medicine to catalyse and provide the care.

"It has been a great journey with world-class clinical services to shaping the next generation of healthcare leaders and to life-changing research programmes," Dr Tinubu-Karch said. "Our innovative approach to healthcare and clinical research has allowed us to be firmly entrenched in the hearts and the minds of our patients, their families, the communities, and other stakeholders as their trusted partner and leader in healthcare."

"We are not only mending hearts, we're winning them too," she added. "And more importantly, we are changing lives in a very transformative way. We have come a long way on this journey, but there is much more to be done."

Ministry concludes teachers' induction programme

From Page 1

At the end of the programme, Director of the ministry's Training and Development Centre, Iman al-Mohannadi, welcomed the new teachers, wishing them success in their professional career, and said that they would constitute a qualitative addition to the education system and enhance and improve its outcomes.

The process of training and empowering new teachers will continue for the various cadres in the ministry and schools according to the plans set for them in their first year of work in government schools, in addition to their training path designed by the Training and Development Centre, which teachers will go through during their work period.

Changes to senior Saudi military leadership

Saudi Arabia issued royal decrees announcing changes to the heads of its joint forces, navy and land forces, state news agency SPA reported yesterday. The chief of general staff, Lieutenant-General Fayyad bin Hamed al-Ruwayli, was left in place. The next most senior military role, commander of the joint forces, will be taken by Lt-Gen Fahd bin Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Salman, who was promoted from a major-general, the decree said. Lt-Gen Mutlaq bin Salem bin Mutlaq al-Azima, who was formerly in that role, will retire from military service and has been appointed an adviser at the Royal Court. The former head of the navy, Lt-Gen Fahd bin Abdullah bin Saleh al-Ghufaili, was appointed deputy chief of the general staff. - Reuters

Israel agrees to 'pauses' to allow polio vaccinations

Reuters/AFP
United Nations

The Israeli military and Palestinian militant group Hamas have agreed to three separate, zoned three-day pauses in fighting in the Gaza Strip to allow for the vaccination of some 640,000 children against polio, a senior World Health Organisation (WHO) official said yesterday.

The vaccination campaign is due to start on Sunday, said Rik Peepkorn, the WHO's senior official for the Palestinian territories.

He said the agreement was for the pauses to take place between 6am and 3pm local time.

Peepkorn said the campaign would start in central Gaza with a three-day pause in fighting, then move to southern Gaza, where there would be another three-day pause, followed by northern Gaza.

He added that there is an agreement to extend the humanitarian pause in each zone to a fourth day if needed.

Israeli authorities did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday night that the new measures were "not a ceasefire".

The WHO confirmed on August 23 that at least one baby has been paralysed by the type

2 poliovirus, the first such case in the territory in 25 years.

Poliovirus is highly infectious and most often spread through sewage and contaminated water - an increasingly common problem in Gaza with much of the territory's infrastructure destroyed by Israel in its war against Hamas.

The disease mainly affects children under the age of five. It can cause deformities and paralysis, and is potentially fatal.

The UN Security Council is due to meet later on the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The Israeli military's humanitarian unit (COGAT) said on Wednesday that the vaccination campaign would be conducted in co-ordination with the Israeli military "as part of the routine humanitarian pauses that will allow the population to reach the medical centres where the vaccinations will be administered".

The latest bloodshed in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict was triggered by the events of October 7.

Israel's subsequent assault on the Hamas-governed enclave has since killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, while also displacing nearly the entire population of 2.3mn, causing a hunger crisis and leading to genocide allegations at the World Court that Israel denies.



From left: Artwork by Hanadi al-Darwish, Ibtisam al-Saffar, and Salman al-Malik.

Fine art strong supporter of Palestinian cause

A number of artists said that the visual arts can be used as a weapon of resistance to expose the crimes of the Zionist entity, as it does not need to be translated to be understood, expressing what the artist intends to convey.

Accordingly, Al Markhiya Gallery, in co-operation with the Qatar Red Crescent Society, is preparing the exhibition "The Sky Above Gaza ... Imagined" with the participation of more than 50 artists from Qatar, Palestine and a number of Arab countries, in support of the Palestinian people in the Gaza

Strip, on September 17 at its headquarters.

A number of artists spoke to Arabic daily *Arrayah* about their participation.

Salman al-Malik said the exhibition is an opportunity to emphasise that art is not just a tool for visual entertainment.

Ibtisam al-Saffar said: "The Palestinian cause was and still is present in Qatari art through many creations and by many artists."

Hanadi al-Darwish stressed the keenness of visual artists to communicate with the issues of their societies through their creativity in this exhibition.

Qatar takes part in Arab Security Award meeting



Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), took part on Wednesday in a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Prince Naif Award for Arab Security in Tunis. The Qatar delegation was led by HE the Undersecretary of the MoI Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab al-Kaabi. The meeting discussed matters related to the award and made appropriate decisions, a MoI post on X added.



Panama's foreign minister meets Qatar's ambassador

Panama's Minister of Foreign Affairs Javier Martinez Acha held a meeting on Wednesday with Qatar's ambassador to Panama, Ahmed bin Mohamed al-Dehaimi. They discussed co-operation and relations between the two countries. - QNA

Estonia's foreign ministry receives copy of Qatar envoy's credentials



Chief of the State Protocol at Estonia's ministry of foreign affairs, Urmas Eigla, received on Wednesday a copy of the credentials of Mohamed bin Abdullah al-Jaber as Qatar's non-resident ambassador to Estonia. - QNA

China's lending to Africa rises for first time in seven years, study shows

By Duncan Miriri
Reuters

Chinese lenders approved loans worth \$4.61bn to Africa last year, marking the first annual increase since 2016, an independent study showed yesterday.

Africa secured more than \$10bn in loans a year from China between 2012-2018, thanks to President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), but the lending fell precipitously from the start of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020.

Last year's figure, a more than three-fold increase from 2022, shows China is keen to curb risks associated with highly

indebted economies, the study by Boston University's Global Development Policy Centre found.

"Beijing appears to be looking for a more sustainable equilibrium level of lending and experimenting with a (new) strategy," said the university centre, which runs the Chinese Loans to Africa Database project.

The new data comes as Beijing prepares to host African leaders next week for the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation, which takes place every three years.

There were 13 loan deals last year involving eight African countries and two African multilateral lenders, the study found.

Last year's biggest items include a nearly \$1bn loan from the China Development Bank to Nigeria for the Kaduna-to-Kano

Railway and similar size liquidity facility by the lender to Egypt's central bank.

China has vaulted to the top bilateral lender for many African nations like Ethiopia in recent years.

It has lent the continent a total of \$182.28bn between 2000-2023, the Boston University study found, with the bulk of the finances going to Africa's energy, transport and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors.

Africa featured prominently in the initial years of BRI, as China sought to recreate the ancient Silk Road and extend its geopolitical and economic influence through a global infrastructure development push.

China, however, started to turn off the cash spigot in 2019, a shift that was ac-

celerated by the pandemic, leaving a series of incomplete projects around the region, including a modern railway meant to link Kenya with its neighbours.

The reduction in loans was caused by China's own domestic pressures and growing debt burdens among African economies.

Zambia, Ghana and Ethiopia have gone into protracted debt overhauls since 2021.

More than half of the loans committed last year, or \$2.59bn, were to regional and national lenders, underscoring Beijing's new strategy, the study by Boston University found.

"Chinese lenders' focus on African financial institutions most likely represent a risk mitigation strategy that avoids ex-

posure to African countries' debt challenges," it said.

Nearly a tenth of 2023 loans were for three solar and hydropower energy projects, the study found, illustrating a desire by China to move into funding renewable energy instead of coal-fired power plants.

Still, the discernible trends in last year's figures did not offer a clear direction of China's financial engagement with the continent, the study showed, since Chinese institutions also wrote loans to ailing economies like Nigeria and Angola.

"It remains to be seen whether China's partnerships in Africa will retain their quality," the Global Development Policy Centre said.

Wildfires pushed Canada into top four CO2 emitters in 2023: study

AFP
Ottawa

Record wildfires in 2023 bumped Canada into the top four greenhouse gas-emitting countries that year, according to a study that also cast doubt on its forests' future ability to capture and store significant amounts of CO2.

Last year saw a catastrophic number of wildfires across the country, with 15mn hectares – some 58,000sq miles, or about 4% of Canada's total forest area – burned and more than 200,000 people displaced.

Looking at satellite data of smoke plumes from fires that burned from May to September of last year, researchers determined that 2,371 megatonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) and monoxide (CO) were released, pushing Canada's ranking up from eleventh to fourth among the world's top carbon emitters.

It put the country behind only China, the United States and India for 2023.

The research was published in the journal *Nature*.

The researchers warn that the hot, dry weather responsible for those blazes is forecast to become the norm by the 2050s,

and is "likely to drive an increase in fire activity".

"This raises concerns about whether potentially more frequent and intense fires in the coming decades will suppress the ability of Canadian forests to continue serving as carbon sinks," Brendan Byrne, lead author of the study, told AFP.

Canada's boreal forest, a vast swath stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic oceans, holds significant amounts of what is known as "sequestered" CO2.

As scorched forests regrow over decades, the CO2 released by wildfires is usually reabsorbed.

However, a jump in the size and number of annual fires, coupled with droughts in some regions, could mean forests take longer to grow back.

That in turn "could suppress carbon uptake by the forests", said the study.

Canada would have to adjust downward its level of allowable fossil fuel emissions in order "to compensate for reduced carbon uptake by forests", it concluded.

Ottawa has agreed under the Paris agreement to reduce carbon emissions by 40-45% from 2005 levels by 2030.

Canada's total CO2-equivalent emissions from burning fossil fuels in 2022

were 708 megatonnes, according to government data.

As human activity has warmed the planet over the past two decades, the frequency and intensity of extreme wildfires have more than doubled worldwide, according to another study published in June in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

The wildfire situation in Canada this year has been more subdued but still calamitous in some parts, with the beloved tourist town of Jasper in the western part of the country partially destroyed in July.

As of Wednesday, there were 732 fires burning – 136 out of control.

Typhoon Shanshan slams into south Japan

AFP
Tokyo

One of Japan's strongest typhoons in decades dumped torrential rain across southern regions yesterday, with one person missing and at least 80 injured as authorities warned of life-threatening flooding and landslides.

Typhoon Shanshan packed gusts of up to 252kph as it smashed into Japan's main southern island of Kyushu early yesterday, making it the most powerful storm this year and one of the strongest at landfall since 1960.

The storm then weakened, with maximum gusts of 162kph at 5pm (0800 GMT), the weather office said, but it was still dumping heavy rain across Kyushu and beyond as it moved slowly towards the main island of Honshu.

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) warned that "the risk of a disaster due to heavy rain can rapidly escalate in western Japan as Friday approaches".

Even before Shanshan hit, precipitation pummelled large parts with three members of the same

family killed in a landslide late on Tuesday in Aichi prefecture around 1,000km from Kyushu.

Authorities issued their highest alert in places, with more than 5mn people advised to evacuate, although it was unclear how many did.

Kunisaki city in the Oita region of Kyushu warned inhabitants to "evacuate to a safe place or higher place such as the second floor of your houses" because of the risk of flooding.

One person was missing yesterday – reportedly a man on a small boat – and two people were seriously injured, chief government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi said.

At least 80 people were injured across Kyushu, the JMA said.

Rains turned rivers into raging torrents while winds smashed windows and blew tiles off roofs. TV images showed flooded roads and power lines being repaired.

The coastal city of Miyazaki, littered with debris from nearly 200 damaged buildings, reported 25 injuries – including some from a tornado.

Some parts of Miyazaki prefecture saw record rains for August,



People chat next to a fallen tree brought down by strong winds from Typhoon Shanshan in Usa, Oita prefecture. -AFP

with the town of Misato recording a staggering 791.5mm (31") in 48 hours, the JMA said.

Worried student Aoi Nishimoto, 18, said he had called his family in Miyazaki to see if they were safe.

"Our home is fine, but there was a tornado in Miyazaki and power went out in some places," he told AFP in Kyushu's main city of Fukuoka.

"This year, I am away from my parents' home for the first time. So it's a bit scary being all alone," fellow student Rio Ohtsuru, 19, told AFP. "Maybe I will look for a flashlight in case of a power outage."

Kyushu's utility operator said 187,010 houses were without power elsewhere on the island.

Shanshan comes in the wake of Typhoon Ampil, which dumped

heavy rain that disrupted hundreds of flights and trains this month but caused only minor injuries and damage.

Typhoons in the region have been forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change, according to a study released last month.

Another released by World Weather Attribution (WWA) yesterday said that climate change turbocharged Typhoon Gaemi, which killed dozens of people across the Philippines, Taiwan and China this year (**see accompanying report**).

In the city of Usa, retiree Fukushima Oishi looked forlornly at an old tree opposite his house that was already mature when he was a child but had snapped and fallen on the road.

"Oh, it's so sad," he told AFP.

Auto giant Toyota suspended production at all 14 of its factories in Japan.

Nissan and Honda also halted operations at their Kyushu plants, as did chipmakers including Tokyo Electron, reports said.

Kyushu is a hub for the semiconductor industry, with chip giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company opening a plant there in February.

Japan Airlines and ANA cancelled more than 1,000 domestic flights and four international flights yesterday and today, affecting more than 44,000 passengers.

Rail operators suspended most Shinkansen bullet trains between Kyushu's Hakata and Tokyo, and said services would be disrupted elsewhere today.

Scientists say climate change fuelled deadly Typhoon Gaemi

AFP
Bangkok

Climate change turbocharged the winds and rain of Typhoon Gaemi, which killed dozens across the Philippines, Taiwan and China earlier this year, a group of scientists said yesterday.

Gaemi skirted the Philippines in July, triggering floods and landslides that killed at least 40 people, before making landfall in Taiwan and China.

In China, the weather system caused torrential downpours that killed 50 people and prompted authorities to evacuate 300,000.

World Weather Attribution (WWA), a network of scientists who have pioneered peer-reviewed methods for assessing the role of climate change in extreme events, looked at three regions worst affected by the typhoon: the northern Philippines, Taiwan and China's Hunan province.

It found the system's wind speeds were 7% more intense due to man-made climate change, and its rainfall was 14% heavier in Taiwan and 9% heavier in Hunan.

The study could not draw definitive conclusions about the role of climate change on the rainfall in the Philippines, because of the region's complex monsoon rain patterns.

Still, they found the warm seas that



This picture taken on July 25 shows waves crashing on the coast of Sansha town as Typhoon Gaemi approaches, in Ningde, Fujian province, China. -Reuters

helped form and fuel Typhoon Gaemi "would have been virtually impossible" in a world that had not warmed to the current 1.2° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

And the group's modelling found this warming has already increased the number

of similarly strong storms by 30% – up from around five a year to six or seven.

"This study confirms what we've expected – hotter seas and atmospheres are giving rise to more powerful, longer-lived and deadlier typhoons," said Ralf Toumi,

director of the Grantham Institute-Climatic Change and the Environment, at Imperial College London.

Teasing out the impact of climate change on tropical cyclones is complicated, but scientists are focusing more work on these weather systems.

The WWA's method involves assessing how unusual an extreme event is, then modelling the likelihood of a similar event and its intensity in two scenarios: today's world, and one without current levels of warming.

The scientists used that method and a new approach developed by Imperial College London that is tailored specifically to tropical storms.

It uses computer modelling to overcome the relative lack of historical data on tropical cyclones.

While the Asia-Pacific region has long dealt with typhoons, the scientists warned that their work highlighted "gaps in typhoon preparedness and the massive impacts caused by Gaemi".

They called for better urban flood management and targeted warnings that offer more information on the likely impacts of a storm.

The study was released as Typhoon Shanshan made landfall in Japan, which issued its highest level warning for wind and storm surges.

Court rules South Korea climate goals 'unconstitutional'

AFP/Reuters
Seoul

South Korea's Constitutional Court has ruled that much of the country's climate goals were unconstitutional, handing a landmark victory to young environmental activists, who wept for joy on the court steps.

The first such case in Asia, brought by children and teenagers who named an embryo as a lead plaintiff, claimed that South Korea's legally binding climate commitments were insufficient and unmet, violating their constitutionally guaranteed human rights.

"Just now, the Constitutional Court ruled that it is unconstitutional that there is no government goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 2031 to 2050," said Yoon Hyeon-jeong, one of the young activists involved.

"It was ruled that our right to live a safe life from the climate crisis should be guaranteed," she added, barely managing to finish her sentence as she choked up with tears.

The court ruled that the government's limited climate targets violate the constitution as they do "not sufficiently protect the basic rights of the people", the legal representatives of the plaintiffs said after the hearing.

The case – known as "Woodpecker et al. v. South Korea" after the in-utero nickname of an embryo, now toddler, involved – included four petitions by children.

In 2021, South Korea made a legally binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 290mn tonnes by 2030 – and to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To meet this goal, the country needs to reduce emissions by 5.4% every year from 2023 – a target they have so far failed to meet.

As a result of the ruling, Seoul will now have to revise its climate goals, said Yoon Se-jong, a lawyer for the plaintiffs.

"The National Assembly and the government of the Republic of Korea will have to revise regulations related to the Framework Act on Carbon Neutrality and present greenhouse gas reduction goals considering the rights of future generations," Yoon said.

"With today's ruling, we have confirmed that climate change is a matter of our fundamental rights and that everyone has the right to be safe from it," he said.

"Ordinary people like us have come this far. We have led the constitutional petition to protect our rights without relying on authority and power. It took us five years," said youth climate activist Kim Seo-gyeong, 21.

Kim was part of the group that filed the first of the cases in 2020, and said the ruling was a validation for young people who found themselves "living in the climate crisis".

Seoul's ministry of environment said in a statement that it respected the court's decision.

The ministry said it plans "to faithfully implement follow-up measures".

The plaintiffs had argued that unless Seoul moved more quickly on climate goals, future generations would not only have to live in a degraded environment, but also have to bear the burden of undertaking massive greenhouse gas reductions.

This, the case claims, would mean that the state has violated its duty to protect their fundamental rights.

Climate advocacy groups said it was the first high court ruling on a government's climate action in Asia, potentially setting a precedent in a region where similar lawsuits have been filed in Taiwan and Japan.

In April, Europe's top human rights court ruled the Swiss government had violated the rights of its citizens by failing to do enough to combat climate change.

Hong Kong news outlet and editors found guilty of sedition

Hong Kong pro-democracy news outlet Stand News and its two former chief editors were found guilty of sedition yesterday, the first conviction of its kind since the city came under Chinese rule in 1997.

The verdict is part of a crackdown on free speech in the former British colony that has seen critics of China jailed or forced into exile, following huge pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Editors Chung Pui-kuen, 54, and Patrick Lam, 36, are the first journalists to be convicted of sedition since Britain handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997, and the ruling drew resounding international condemnation.

Chung and Lam were in charge of Stand News, a Chinese-language website that gained a massive following during the protests in 2019, before it was raided and shut down in December 2021.

Yesterday district court judge Kwok Wai-kin said the pair were guilty of "conspiracy to publish and reproduce seditious publications".

The parent company of Stand News, Best Pencil Limited, was also found guilty.

"The line (Stand News) took was to support and promote Hong Kong local autonomy" according to a written judgment by Kwok. "It even became a tool to smear and vilify the Central Authorities (Beijing) and the (Hong Kong) SAR Government."

Kwok also pointed to 11 articles published by Stand News that "caused potential detrimental consequences to national security" and had the intention of "seriously undermining" authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong.

Lam was absent from court yesterday due to illness.

The judge granted both men bail before their sentencing on September 26.

Chung and Lam were charged under a colonial-era law, which punishes sedition with a maximum jail term of two years.

A recent security law enacted in March raised the jail term for sedition to seven years. -AFP

US Army criticises Trump staff over incident at cemetery

The US Army has taken aim at Donald Trump's staff over a visit by the Republican presidential candidate to the country's most hallowed resting place for its war dead.

Trump went to the Arlington National Cemetery just outside Washington with family members of some of the 13 service members killed in a 2021 bombing during the last hours of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

His campaign posted photos from the visit, including one showing him giving a thumbs-up gesture while standing with relatives at the grave of one of the Marines killed.

The Army said an Arlington employee was "abruptly pushed aside" when she sought to ensure a law prohibiting political activity on cemetery grounds was followed.

"This incident was unfortunate, and it is also unfortunate that the (Arlington National Cemetery) employee and her professionalism has been unfairly attacked," an Army spokesperson said.

Going on the offensive, Trump's campaign co-manager Chris LaCivita has described the employee as a "despicable individual", while campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said she was "clearly suffering from a mental health episode".

While often touting support for the armed forces, Trump has privately mocked the war dead. -AFP

More than 1,000 killed in Bangladesh violence since July, says health official

Reuters
Dhaka

Violence that erupted in Bangladesh during last month's protests killed more than 1,000 people, the interim health ministry chief said yesterday, making it the bloodiest period in the country's history since its 1971 independence. The violence erupted during a student-led movement against

public sector job quotas, which later intensified into an uprising against then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to India on August 5 moments before her residence was stormed by hundreds of protesters. An interim government led by Nobel prize-winning economist Mohamed Yunus replaced Hasina's administration, quelling the violence that flared for weeks before she fled, as security forces cracked down on protests, and continued

for days after she fled. "More than 1,000 people have been killed and over 400 students lost their eyesight," a statement from the health ministry said, quoting its chief Nurjahan Begum. The ministry did not mention in its statement how it assessed the death toll, but a home ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he believed it was based on hospital records and information from local administration.

Monsoon floods in India's Gujarat kill at least 28

AFP
Ahmedabad

Intense monsoon rains and floods in India's Gujarat state killed at least 28 people in the past three days, some drowning and others hit by falling trees, government officials said. The weather department warned more heavy rain is expected in the western coastal state. Rivers have burst their banks and more than 30,000 people fled their homes. The state government said late on Wednesday that 13 people had died from drowning and the rest from houses or trees collapsing on them. The *Indian Express* newspaper said 35 people had died so far across the state. Some 1,856 people were rescued by disaster and army officials deployed for relief operations. Vadodara was among the worst affected cities, the press release said. Electricity connections were badly affected, with some 1,000 villages grappling without power. Images and video released by disaster officials showed them using inflatable boats and tyres to rescue people stranded by surging waters. Rains cause widespread destruction



An Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation worker distributes drinking water bottles in a flood-affected neighbourhood following heavy rains in Ahmedabad. - Reuters

every year, but experts say climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events. The northeastern Indian state of Tripura was hit by floods and landslides last

week, with more than 20 people killed. In neighbouring Bangladesh, downriver from India, floods killed at least 40 people over the same period, with nearly 300,000 residents taking refuge in emergency shelters.

Some South Indian stars under investigation

Several prominent film actors and directors are the focus of a police investigation into sexual assault and harassment in India's southern state of Kerala, a case that has added to the outrage in the country over violence against women. The allegations come at a time when doctors in many parts of the country are protesting against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in the eastern city of Kolkata, leading to strikes in several hospitals and anger on social media. The investigation in Kerala began when police received complaints from female actors accusing male colleagues of sexual harassment and abuse. The accusations came a week after a government-appointed panel detailed instances of sexual harassment and discrimination in the Malayalam language film industry, based in Kerala, in the past. Police have filed nine complaints against several members of Kerala's popular film industry, including a director and veteran actors, Kerala's south zone police inspector-general, Sparjan Kumar, said. - Reuters

Authorities capture one of three wolves that killed six children

Indian authorities captured yesterday one of three wolves that have killed six children and a woman in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh over the last two weeks. More than 30 villages in the district of Bahriach, home to dense forest, have been attacked by wolves in recent days, said Akash Deep Badhawan, an officer of the Indian Forest Services. During the summer, it's common for villagers in India to sleep on mats or beds made from woven rope outside their homes where it is cooler, which made the victims vulnerable. Three wolves were identified as the killers

and were tracked with drones equipped with cameras and thermal mapping software. The authorities continue to pursue the other two wolves. "The district administration and forest department have deployed several teams to guard the villages and catch hold of them," Badhawan said. "The situation is a bit tricky as this particular species of wildlife is very cunning in nature. We have advised the villagers to not sleep in the open along with their children." While leopard and tiger attacks are regularly reported in India, wolf attacks are unusual.

Authorities in Bahriach have also installed loudspeakers and flood lights to deter the animals. Forest officials from five nearby districts have been deployed to help capture the animals, Badhawan said. "We are planning to use elephant dung and urine to keep the pack of wolves at bay from residential areas," he said, adding that wolves typically live in packs of six to 10 and avoid areas where big animals like elephants dwell. "The burning of the dung cake would create an illusion of elephant presence in the area." - Reuters

Myanmar jails journalist in ongoing crackdown

AFP
Yangon

A military court in Myanmar has jailed a journalist for life and sentenced another to 20 years in prison after convicting them under a counterterrorism law, their editor said yesterday. Myo Myint Oo and Aung San Oo, who work for the independent online news service Dawei Watch, were sentenced after being denied the right to legal defence and not being allowed to speak in court, editor Ko Kyaw told AFP. Since overthrowing Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in February 2021, Myanmar's military junta has waged a sweeping and bloody campaign against dissent, including targeting independent journalists. The two journalists were arrested at their homes in the coastal town of Myeik, about 560km (350 miles) south of Yangon on December 11. Myo Mynit Oo, 40, was handed a life sentence on May 15, while Aung San Oo, 49, was handed a 20-year jail term on February 16. They were "violently inter-

rogated" for four days in a detention centre before being transferred to the Myeik Prison, a statement from Dawei Watch said. Ko Kyaw said he learned about the sentences earlier this year but delayed announcing them for the security of the journalists' families, without providing further details. The court has not given a detailed explanation of the the case, Ko Kyaw said. Myanmar is now one of the world's biggest jailers of journalists with 62 detained, second only to China, according to the Paris-based campaign group Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Myanmar now ranks 171 out of 180 in RSF's 2024 World Press Freedom Index. Last September a Myanmar journalist was jailed for 20 years after being indicted on several charges, including breaching a natural disaster law and a telecommunications law while covering the aftermath of a deadly cyclone. Several foreign journalists have been detained, including US citizen Danny Fenster, who was jailed for 11 years in 2021, before being pardoned and released days later.

Indonesia, Australia sign 'historic' defence pact

Indonesia and Australia signed a new defence agreement yesterday, pledging closer co-operation to counter security threats in the Asia-Pacific region. The pact, announced this month, was signed during Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles's visit to Indonesia this week and includes provisions for joint drills and deployments to each country. The two countries have sought to boost security ties in the face of increased flashpoints in the region including the South China Sea, where several states claim sovereignty over disputed islands and waterways. Indonesia's defence minister, Prabowo Subianto, described the Australia-Indonesia Defence Co-operation Agreement as a "historic milestone". "(The deal) was carried out together to ... increase co-operation to help each other overcome various security threats and promote sustainable peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region," he told a joint news conference yesterday. Prabowo emphasised that the agreement was not a military pact or military alliance, adding that he hoped to forge stronger ties with Australia in the future. Marles said the pact was the most significant defence agreement between the two countries, hailing it as a "treaty-level agreement". "We will see a much greater interoperability between our defence forces, an ability to operate from each other's countries," Marles said. The pact was first unveiled when president-elect Prabowo, who is set to succeed President Joko Widodo in October, visited Canberra last week. The two countries are due to hold a joint military exercise in East Java in November, involving almost 2,000 military personnel. The exercise, which will involve air, land, sea and cyber exercises, will be "the biggest exercise that Australia will do outside of our nation this year", Marles said. - AFP

Indonesian app-based taxi drivers protest low pay

Reuters
Jakarta

More than 1,000 motorcycle taxi drivers staged a strike in several Indonesian cities yesterday to protest against low pay, and called on the government to provide more protection against what they say are unfair practices by ride-sharing companies. Drivers wearing trademark green jackets gathered outside the communications ministry and near the Jakarta offices of Indonesia's largest technology company GoTo and Southeast Asia's biggest ride-hailing and food delivery firm Grab. Motorcycle taxis are ubiquitous across Indonesia, including in the capital Jakarta, known for some of the world's worst traffic congestion, and the protests prompted some complaints on social media of slow services. A spokesperson for GoTo's ride-hailing unit Gojek said yesterday that its operations were running as normal, and that it was open to drivers' input. Grab's tariffs were designed to



Motorcycle taxi drivers working for online ride-hailing start-ups protest against low tariffs in Jakarta. - Reuters

ensure stable demand for its services, while keeping in mind drivers' earnings, said Tirza Munusamy, chief of public affairs for its Indonesian unit. The Singapore-based company did not respond to a query about whether the strike disrupted its operations. Drivers want ride-hailing firms

to raise the share they get for every trip from 80% now and for the government to give special status for their terms of employment so they have more bargaining power over fees, said Andi Kristiyanto, a representative of the National Online Taxi Coalition, which arranged the protest. Driver Wandu said he worked for

Macron, Starmer pledge deeper ties between France and Britain

French President Emmanuel Macron has pledged to deepen ties with Britain over defence, security, migration and energy after a meeting with Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Paris. Starmer and Macron "agreed on the importance of further strengthening and broadening the close relationship between the UK and France in the coming months", a British government spokesperson said, and to work closer together to dismantle migrant smuggling routes and increase intelligence-sharing. Starmer's arrival in Paris, where he attended the Paralympics opening ceremony on Wednesday, was preceded by a visit to Germany where he and Chancellor Olaf Scholz agreed to work on a treaty covering issues ranging from defence to trade. His trip to the EU's top powers, Germany and

France, is part of the pledge he took after winning election on July 4 to improve Britain's relations with its European allies after years of discord over Brexit and to boost its economic growth. Macron and Starmer also discussed the need to de-escalate the situation in the Middle East, reiterating their call for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. They also agreed it was essential to keep supporting Ukraine against Russia's invasion to help ensure the defences and security of Kyiv and of the European continent as a whole. Both leaders had already met on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) summit in July and the European Political Community summit at Blenheim Palace in England, and they spoke by telephone on August 9. - Reuters

UK PM backs tougher outdoor smoking rules

Reuters/AFP
London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said yesterday that he supports the idea of banning smoking in some outdoor spaces, including pub gardens, as a way of reducing the pressure on the state-run National Health Service and the cost to taxpayers. While precise details would be worked out later, Starmer said 80,000 people die each year from smoking and he wanted to reduce deaths from preventable diseases. Asked if he supported a ban on smoking in some public places, including pub gardens, Starmer told Channel 4 News: "I want us to move to a smoke-free environment, want to reduce those preventable deaths. I want to reduce the burden on the National Health Service (NHS), desperately needed ... and obviously I want to reduce the burden on the taxpayer. So, yes, I am supportive." The government is considering a smoking ban in pub and restaurant gardens and terraces, outdoor sports stadiums, children's parks and pavements near hospitals and universities, according to documents seen by *The Sun* newspaper. Britain's centre-left Labour Party, which won a general election last month, said in its campaign manifesto that it planned to introduce some of the world's strictest anti-smoking rules by banning younger people from smoking. The previous Conservative government had announced similar measures but the plan failed to become law before the election was called. Britain banned smoking in almost all enclosed public spaces, including bars and workplaces, in 2007. Cancer Research UK said this led to an estimated 1.9mn fewer smokers, and research in the *British Medical Journal* estimated there were 1,200 fewer hospital

admissions for heart attacks in the year following. Britain's hospitality industry warned that a stricter smoking ban could force some businesses to close. "A ban on smoking in outdoor spaces comes with the prospect of serious economic harm to hospitality venues," said Kate Nicholls, the chief executive of trade body UKHospitality. "This ban would not only affect pubs and nightclubs, but hotels, cafes and restaurants." Reem Ibrahim, of the right-wing Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) think tank, said extending the ban to some outdoor areas would be "another nail in the coffin for the pub industry". The IEA has in the past been criticised by health campaigners for receiving money from leading tobacco companies. Meanwhile Tim Martin, founder of the JD Wetherspoon pub chain, said the proposed move raised a "libertarian issue". "The question is whether the government should interfere in individual liberties where danger is involved," he added, pointing to other potentially perilous activities such as mountaineering and horse riding. About 6.4mn people in Britain were smokers in 2022, the Office for National Statistics has estimated, around 13% of the adult population. That is much lower than other European countries such as Italy, Germany and France, where between 18%-23% of adults smoke, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures. The government estimates smoking costs Britain's health services £17bn (\$22.37bn) a year and there is strong support for greater restrictions on smokers from medical and healthcare experts. England, Wales and Northern Ireland outlawed smoking in enclosed public places and workplaces in 2007 following a similar ban in Scotland in 2006.



The man with four passports: Durov’s international network

The arrest and charging by France of Telegram founder Pavel Durov (**pictured**) has thrown a spotlight on the international connections of a man with at least four passports and high-level contacts but who has also aroused the attention of security agencies around the world.

Born in 1984 under the USSR into a family of academics in Leningrad, now known as Saint Petersburg, Durov spent his childhood in Italy before his family returned to Russia when the Soviet Union fell.

He stopped living in Russia a decade ago as he set up the Telegram messenger, picking up the citizenship of the Caribbean archipelago of Saint Kitts and Nevis as he sought a base.

Finally basing his company in Dubai, he was given Emirati citizenship in 2021 and in the same year, via a special procedure that remains shrouded in secrecy, French nationality.

Here AFP looks at Durov’s key relationships with world powers.

Russia
Durov says he left Russia in 2014, accusing Kremlin allies of seizing

ownership of his first social network, the Russian-language VKontakte, after he refused to hand over data of users involved in 2011-2012 protests in Russia and then 2013-2014 demonstrations in Ukraine.

He was regarded by many at the time as a dissident. The Russian authorities in later years sought to block Telegram but unsuccessfully, and the app is seen as a key tool for the military in the invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking to US right-wing talk show host Tucker Carlson in an interview in April, Durov said only people with “very limited knowledge of where Telegram came from” could claim it was an instrument of the Russian government.

But Moscow has in no way disowned Durov during his current legal problems, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warning France against turning the case into “political persecution”.

According to the Vazhnye Istorii news site, citing leaked border data, his departure from Russia was anything but an abrupt exile and he visited the country more than 50 times between 2015 and 2021.



France
Media have repeatedly noted that Durov’s reception when he was arrested on arrival at Paris Le Bourget airport Saturday was in stark contrast to previous visits.

Le Monde newspaper reported Wednesday that Durov had met President Emmanuel Macron on several occasions prior to receiving French nationality in 2021, via a special procedure reserved for those deemed to have made a special

contribution to France.

A source close to the case, who asked not to be named, told AFP yesterday that after his arrest Durov requested that French telecoms tycoon Xavier Niel, chairman and founder of the Iliad mobile operator and seen as close to Macron, be informed of his arrest.

Durov has said his name in his French passport is written as Paul du Rove, a humorous French translation. His personal Telegram channel is called “Du Rove’s Channel”.

Another source close to the investigation said Durov had emphasised his links to the French head of state during questioning.

Both Pavel Durov and his elder brother Nikolai, a lower-profile figure seen as the mathematical brain behind Telegram, have been wanted by France since March this year.

UAE
Durov says he chose to base Telegram in Dubai after finding the UAE offered a far better business climate than European cities, allowing the company to hire the best people, enjoy a tax-efficient regime and the city’s infrastructure.

“We tried several places. We first went to Berlin... We tried London, Singapore. San Francisco. You name it – we have been everywhere,” Durov told Carlson.

“The bureaucratic hurdles were too difficult to overcome,” whereas the UAE “turned out to be a great place”, he said, lauding the state as “a neutral place... not aligned geopolitically”.

United States
There is no indication Durov ever sought US citizenship but his interview with Carlson threw up some interesting – if unconfirmed – insights about his relationship with the country.

He said that at one point he thought San Francisco “would be the place for us” but he was then attacked by “three big guys” who tried to grab his phone while he was tweeting about meeting then Twitter chief Jack Dorsey.

Durov claimed to have come out the better in the altercation. “There was a short fight and a bit of blood involved.”

He also said US security agencies gave him “too much attention” whenever he visited, complaining that two FBI agents would always meet him at the airport asking questions.

Fighter jet deal at centre of Macron’s Serbia trip

AFP
Belgrade



Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (**right**) and French President Emmanuel Macron inspect an honour guard outside the Palace of Serbia building in Belgrade yesterday. (**Reuters**)

France’s President Emmanuel Macron arrived yesterday in Serbia where the two countries hope to sign a deal worth billions of euros for Paris to supply fighter jets to the Balkan nation.

The Rafale fighter jet deal is looming large over the French leader’s two-day visit, after Serbia’s President Aleksandar Vucic told AFP that he hoped to seal the agreement this week.

The deal to purchase the French Rafale jets would be one of several agreements inked during the visit, according to Vucic.

“There are thousands of things that we’ll have to discuss tomorrow. There are many memorandums of understanding and many contracts that we’re going to sign tomorrow,” Vucic said in an interview Wednesday.

“I believe that we’ll finish everything successfully regarding our military-technical co-operation, which means that Serbia might become a member of (the) Rafale Club, which is a huge, huge contract.”

A source with the French presidency said “intense discussions” were ongoing and hoped a deal could be reached during Macron’s visit.

Macron arrived in Belgrade late yesterday afternoon, where he was greeted with a hug by Vucic and a traditional honour guard. Vucic told a Serbian state broadcaster late Wednesday that financing for the fighter jet agreement was no longer an issue, while adding that some unspecified “guarantees” still needed to be ironed out.

France has been strengthening its economic ties with Belgrade in recent years, with trade between the two countries tripling in the past 12 years, according to Serbia’s finance ministry.

French company Vinci has been overseeing a years-long renovation of Belgrade’s Nikola Tesla airport, and French groups are set to build the capital’s first metro station and a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant.

Belgrade-based analyst Vuk

Vuksanovic said that Vucic likely saw the Rafale deal as crucial for ensuring France’s support in the future.

The president “believes that by purchasing these Rafales, which are an extremely expensive product of the French military and industry, he will buy President Macron’s favour and political protection,” Vuksanovic, a senior researcher at the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, told AFP.

If signed, the agreement would mark the latest in a string of moves by Serbia to curry favour with Europe.

In July, the European Union and Serbia signed a deal to develop the country’s supply of lithium – seen as a crucial building block to achieve Europe’s transition to a green economy.

The Serbian government reinstated the licences for a controversial lithium mine this summer after revoking in 2022 the permits granted to Rio Tinto following a string of demonstrations over environmental concerns.

Blow for Ukraine as US-made F-16 crash kills pilot

Reuters
Kyiv

An F-16 fighter jet used by Ukraine crashed on Monday, Kyiv’s military said, the first such loss reported since the long-awaited arrival of the US-made planes in the country was confirmed this month.

The jet came down and its pilot died while it was approaching a target during a Russian airstrike, the Ukrainian General Staff said yesterday in a statement on Facebook.

The F-16s had “demonstrated high efficiency” and downed four Russian cruise missiles, it added. “Connection with one of the aircraft was lost while it was approaching the next target. As it turned out later, the plane crashed, the pilot died,” the statement added.

Ukraine has not given detail on the size of its new fleet, though the loss is likely to have left a significant dent. The *Times* of London has cited a source familiar with the matter as saying Ukraine had six of the jets.

President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on August 4 his pilots had started flying F-16s, hailing the moment as a major milestone

in the fight against the invasion Russia launched 29 months ago.

He said on Tuesday F-16s were used to repel a major Russian attack a day earlier of more than 200 missiles and drones, which targeted the energy sector.

Monday’s crash did not appear to be the result of Russian fire, and possible causes from pilot error to mechanical failure were still being investigated, a US defence official told Reuters.

Military analysts have said the arrival of the small number of planes, while significant, is unlikely to be a turning point in the conflict.

Russia has had time to prepare defences to try to nullify the F-16s’ impact, and Ukraine has had to survive with a depleted air force that is a fraction of the size and sophistication of its enemy’s.

Ukraine’s Air Force Western command posted on Facebook an obituary of a pilot, Oleksiy Mes, saying he died while repelling Monday’s attack, but did not say he was an F-16 pilot.

CNN said Mes had a call sign Moonfish and reported in 2023 he was training for F-16 missions.

Kyiv has been urging allies to supply modern jets since the start of Russia’s invasion to bolster its small and old post-Soviet fleet.

Govt blames Pak Internet slowdown on underwater cables

Pakistan authorities blamed a mystery months-long Internet slowdown that has drawn backlash from activists and business leaders on damaged underwater cables.

Digital rights experts believe the state is testing a firewall – a security system that monitors network traffic but can also be used to control online spaces.

The government has previously blamed a surge in VPN use for the slowdown whilst also admitting that the country was “undergoing a transition”.

“The ongoing Internet slowdown across the country is mainly due to (a) fault in two of the seven international submarine cables connecting Pakistan internationally,” Pakistan’s Telecommunications Authority said in a statement on Wednesday, adding that the fault would be repaired by early October.

Internet networks have been up to 40% slower than normal since July, according to one IT association, while WhatsApp and VPN connections are severely disrupted.

The government and PTA for weeks refused to comment on the slowdown.

At the start of the month, defence minister Khawaja Mohamed Asif said the country was “undergoing a transition.”

He added that “there will be some controls to prevent threatening and defamatory content against the state and individuals.”

IT minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja later denied that the government was behind the Internet slowdown, blaming it on a surge in VPN use.

It comes as Pakistan’s military – the country’s most powerful institution – says it is battling so-called “digital terrorism”.

Analysts say the main target of the digital disruption is the party of jailed opposition leader Imran Khan, still wildly popular and boosted by a young, tech-savvy voter base.

Global rights watchdog Amnesty International urged Pakistan authorities to be transparent.

Russia detains former deputy defence minister for suspected fraud

A military court here placed Pavel Popov (pictured), a former deputy defence minister, in detention yesterday on suspicion of fraud in the latest of a string of corruption probes of officials tied to ex-defence minister Sergei Shoigu.

The case against Popov, who has served in his role since 2013, is the third investigation into a senior defence official relating to the construction of a military theme park near Moscow.

The court ordered Popov detained until October 29, Russian media said. He denies guilt, his lawyer told the RIA state news agency.

Popov joins at least a dozen officials who, since April, have been caught up in the biggest wave of corruption scandals to hit the Russian military and defence establishment in years.

In May, soon after the first arrests, President Vladimir Putin unexpectedly removed the long-

serving Shoigu as defence minister and replaced him with economist Andrei Belousov in what was widely seen as a move to ensure tighter management of Russia’s vast defence budget and eliminate waste and graft.

Russia is currently engaged in repelling a Ukrainian incursion that began on August 6 and is pressing ahead with its own offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Russian political commentators

said the investigation into Popov was clearly linked to a broader anti-graft crackdown undertaken by Belousov against those with ties to Shoigu.

Popov, 67, graduated from a military academy and served for 17 years in Russia’s Emergencies Ministry. Shoigu, now secretary of Russia’s security council, was head of that ministry from 1991 to 2012.

Popov was relieved of his post as deputy defence minister by

presidential decree on June 17 and removed from military service, an online notice shows.

Journalist Alexei Venediktov said Popov was one of Shoigu’s “closest associates”, serving as his assistant and then deputy in the defence ministry.

“Now this is, of course, a blow to Shoigu,” Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, wrote on Telegram yesterday.

Jolie ‘terribly nervous’ about playing diva in new film

Angelina Jolie confessed she was afraid about being able to “live up” to Maria Callas in her new biopic about the great diva’s extraordinary yet tragic life that premieres yesterday at the Venice Film Festival.

In *Maria*, the American movie star tackles the tormented final years of the 20th century’s most celebrated opera singer who mesmerised audiences around the world.

“The bar in this... are the Maria Callas fans and those who love opera,” Jolie told a press conference ahead of the premiere of the movie by Chilean director Pablo Larraín.

“And my fear would be to disappoint them.”

“I really came to care for her so I felt I didn’t want to do a disservice to this woman,” she added.

Jolie said she hoped to honour the “legacy” of the diva, who died nearly alone in 1977 aged 53, after a whirlwind life and career that was nevertheless marked by great sadness.

The film’s premiere last night on the festival’s second day is the last in Larraín’s trilogy of movies

about iconic women – after 2021’s *Spencer* about Princess Diana and 2016’s *Jackie* about Jacqueline Kennedy.

The director has said only a larger-than-life star in her own right could play the role of the American-born Greek singer, whose successes at La Scala, La Fenice, Covent Garden and New York are the stuff of opera legend 100 years after her birth.

“This movie would not have existed without Angelina,” said the director.

Absent from the screen since 2021, the 49-year-old American actress and director has kept a relatively low profile even as her lengthy, acrimonious divorce from Brad Pitt continues to make headlines.

The public’s fascination with Jolie’s private life has parallels with Callas, whose stormy life and loves – including her relationship with the Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis, who left her for Jacqueline Kennedy – were similarly fodder for the tabloids.

But while the paparazzi will be out in full force yesterday for her premiere, Jolie will not cross



Angelina Jolie attends the photocall of the movie Maria during the 81st International Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido, yesterday. Right: Maria Callas attends the premiere of the show by American comedian, Jerry Lewis, at the Olympia theatre in Paris, in April 1971. (**AFP**)

paths with Pitt during her visit.

Pitt’s action comedy *Wolfs*, in which he and George Clooney play rival professional fixers, is playing out of competition on the Lido on Sunday, as purposely planned by festival organisers to avoid awkward encounters.

One of 21 films in competition for Venice’s prestigious Golden Lion prize, *Maria* opens with a whirlwind look at the highlights

of Callas’ life as seen through the eyes of the paparazzi, with Jolie here singing *Casta Diva* in Paris in her red silk wrap, there accepting ovations at La Scala or frolicking with Aristotle Onassis on his yacht.

Jolie said she studied for nearly seven months ahead of filming, training herself to mimic the great artist’s cadences and tones as the film mixes in her own singing



voice with that of the celebrated soprano.

“I was terribly nervous,” Jolie said. “I was frightened to live up to her.”

Taped master classes taught by Callas served as a guide, however: “I got very lucky because the best way in, I got to be taught by Maria.”

Jolie said she related to Callas’ softer side, “the part of her that’s extremely soft and doesn’t have

room in the world to be as soft as she truly was, and as emotionally open as she truly was.”

“I share her vulnerability more than anything.”

While some critics found flaws with Callas’s voice, it was nevertheless deeply expressive, able to impart dramatic intensity to any role, which combined with her beauty and presence often brought frenzied standing ovations.

A towering talent with a tireless work ethic, Callas was often portrayed as a “temperamental” star, a label she rejected, defending herself as a disciplined perfectionist with high standards.

She single-handedly revived the 19th-century bel canto operas of Donizetti, Rossini and Bellini – whose *Norma* was one of Callas’s signature roles.

But the diva’s voice began to fail and even as she struggled to rekindle it, the “critics were so cruel”, said Jolie.

“I don’t know if she passed knowing that she did her best and she was appreciated and loved. I think she may have died with a lot of loneliness and pain.”



Envy a disease of the heart

Strictly speaking, envy (*hasad*) is hatred and disliking the good condition of the envied one. This is of two types:

1) The blameworthy type of envy is unrestricted dislike of the blessings bestowed upon the envied. This is the type of jealousy that incurs blame, so when one hates something he is then hurt and grieved by the existence of what he hates, and this becomes a sickness in his heart such that he takes pleasure in the removal of the blessings from the envied even if this does not result in any benefit to him except the single benefit of having the pain that was in his soul removed.

But this pain is not removed except as a result of his continuously watching the envied so that the jealous person finds relief when the blessing is removed, but then it becomes more severe as is the case of the one who is sick, for it is possible that this blessing, or one similar to it, returns to the envied. This is why the second group said: 'It is a desire to have the blessings removed,' for indeed the one who dislikes the blessings bestowed upon other than him desires them to see removed.

2) That he dislikes the superiority of that person over him, and he desires to be like him or better, so this is jealousy and has been called *ghubta*, and the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, called it *hasad* in the *hadith* reported by both al-Bukhari and Muslim from the *hadith* of ibn Mas'ood and ibn 'Umar, *radiallahu 'anhuma*, that he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "There is no envy except in two cases: a person to whom Allah has granted wisdom, and he rules by this and teaches it to the people, and a person to whom Allah has granted wealth and property along with this the power to spend it in the cause of Truth."

This being the wording of Ibn Mas'ood. The wording of Ibn 'Umar is, "A person to whom Allah has given the Qur'an and he recites it night and day, and a person to whom Allah has granted wealth and property from which he gives in charity night and day."

...So the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, forbade *hasad*, with the exception of two cases which are referred to as *al-ghubta*, meaning that a person loves the condition of someone else and dislikes that this person be superior in this way (without his wishing that it be removed from that person).

So if it is asked: "Then why is this (*ghubta*) called envy when he loves only that Allah bestow these blessings upon him?" It is said, "The starting point of this love is his looking towards the favours Allah has bestowed upon someone else and his disliking that this person be favoured over him. So if this other person were not present then he would not have desired these blessings. So because the starting point of this love is this dislike that someone else be made superior to him, then this is called envy due to the love following the dislike. As for desiring that Allah bestows favours



upon him without consideration of people's material conditions then this is not envy at all.

This is why the generality of mankind have been tried with this second type of envy that has also been called *al-munaa-fasah* (competition) because two people compete in a single desired matter, both of them trying to attain the same good. The reason for their trying to attain it is that one of them dislikes that the other be blessed with this matter over him just as any one of two competitors dislikes that the other beat him.

Competition is not considered blameworthy in general, rather it is considered to be praiseworthy when competing for righteousness. The Exalted said:

"Indeed the pious will be in delight. On thrones, looking on. You will recognise in their faces the brightness of delight. They will be given to drink pure sealed wine. The last thereof (that wine) will be the smell of musk, and for this let those compete who want to compete." [Al-Mutaffifeen (83):22-26]

So one is commanded to compete for these delights and not compete for the delight of this fleeting world.

...The souls do not envy the one who is in severe hardship and this is why the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, did not mention it even though the mujaahid, fighting in the Way of Allah, is superior to the one who is spending wealth.... Similarly, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, did not mention the one who prays, fasts and performs the pilgrimage, because there is no tangible benefit attained from the people for these actions by which the person can be exalted or disgraced, as can

be attained in teaching and spending.

Fundamentally, envy occurs when someone else attains power and authority; otherwise the one who is performing these actions is not normally envied, even if this person be blessed with far more food, drink and wives than others, as opposed to these two blessings of power and authority, for they cause a great deal of envy.

...Allah praised the Ansaar with His saying, "And they have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (the *muhaajiroon*), and give them preference over themselves even though they were in need of that." [Al-Hashr (59):9]

As for the jealousy that is totally blameworthy then Allah has said with regards to the Jews, "Many of the People of the Book wish that if they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from their own selves even after the truth has become clear to them." [Al-Baqarah (2):109]

'They wish' meaning that they hope to make you apostatise from your religion out of jealousy. So jealousy was the deciding factor behind their wish even after the Truth had been made clear to them. This because when they saw you attain what you attained of blessings – in fact they saw you attain that which they themselves had never attained – they became jealous of you.

Similarly this is mentioned in another verse, "Or do they envy men for what Allah has given them of His bounty? Then We have already given the family of Abraham the Book of Wisdom, and conferred upon them a great kingdom. Of them were (some) who believed in him (Muhammad) and of them were some who averted their faces from him and enough is Hell for

burning (them)..." [An-Nisaa' (4): 54-55]

"Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak. From the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness. And from the evil of the witchcrafts when they blow in the knots. And from the evil of the envier when he envies." [Al-Falaq (113):1-5]

...So the one who is jealous, hating the favours bestowed by Allah upon someone else is an oppressor, going beyond bounds due to this. As for the one who dislikes that someone else be blessed and wishes to be blessed in the same way, then this is forbidden for him except in that which will bring him closer to Allah. So if he were to wish for something that has been given to someone else which would help bring him closer to Allah then there is no problem in this. However, his wishing for it in his heart, without looking to the condition of someone else is better and more excellent.

Then if this person were to act, dictated by this jealousy, he would be an oppressor going beyond bounds, deserving of punishment unless he repents...

Jealousy is one of the sicknesses of the soul, and it is an illness that afflicts the generality of mankind and only a few are secure from it. This is why it is said, "The body is never free from jealousy, but debasement brings it out, and nobility hides it." It was said to Al-Hasan Al-Basree, "Can a believer be envied?" He replied, "What has made you forget Yusuf and his brothers, have you no father? But you should keep (this envy should it occur) blinded in your heart, for you cannot be harmed by that which you did not act upon in speech or action."

So the one who finds that he harbours jealousy in his soul towards someone else, then it is upon him to treat it with patience and taqwa of Allah, and dislike it being in his soul... As for the one who actually takes a stance against the envied, either with words or actions then he will be punished for this, and the one who fears Allah and is patient and does not become one of the oppressors – Allah will benefit him for his *taqwa*.

...In the *hadith* there occurs, "There are three sins from which no one can be saved: jealousy, suspicion and omens. Shall I tell you of what will remove you from this: When you envy do not hate, when you are suspicious then do not actualise your suspicions, and when you see omens then ignore them." Reported by Ibn Abi Ad-Dunya from the *hadith* of Abu Hurairah.

In the *Sunan* from the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, "You have been afflicted with the illness of the nations that came before you – jealousy and hatred. They are the shearers, I do not mean the shearers of the hair, rather they are the shearers of the religion." [At-Tirmidhi, at-Tabarani and al-Hakim who said it was *saheeh*].

So he called jealousy an illness just as he called miserliness an illness in his saying, "And what illness is worse than miserliness?" [Ahmad, Hakim and others, *saheeh*]

...In the first *hadith* jealousy was mentioned along with hatred. This is because the envier, first of all dislikes the bounty bestowed by Allah upon the one who is envied, and then begins hating this person. This is because the hatred of the thing being bestowed leads to hatred of the one upon whom it is bestowed, for when the blessings of Allah are bestowed upon an individual, he would love that they go away, and they would not go away except by the one who is envied going away, therefore he hates him and loves that he not be there.

Jealousy necessarily leads to desire and hatred just as Allah informed us of those that came before us that they differed, "After there came to them knowledge out of mutual hatred and desire." [Aal 'Imraan (3):19]

... "Do not envy one another, do not hate each other, do not oppose each other..." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

"By the One in Whose Hands is my soul, none of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

... Greed is a sickness as is miserliness, and jealousy is worse than miserliness, as occurs in the *hadith*, "Jealousy eats away at good deeds, just as fire eats away at firewood." [Sunan Ibn Majah]

This is because the miser only stops himself from having good but the envier dislikes the favours of Allah bestowed upon His servants.

[Excerpted and adapted from Imam Ibn Taymiyyah's *Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures*]

Ways we can cope with our own illness

Always keep in mind that trials are inevitable and people deal with trials in a variety of ways. Allah Says (what means): "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." [Qur'an 2:155-157]

Commenting on this verse, Ash-Shara-baasi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "You all are going to be tried with some kind of these trials. But you will be different in your attitude and responsibility towards these trials."

Some people have patience and others have none. Some recover and others do not. Trials teach all of us, but only one group is deserving of the reward. "And give good tidings to the patient." This suggests that since man must be subjected to trials, and since he is going to be afflicted by one form of a trial or another, it is then better for him not to become anxious.

Man is going to be tried whether he accepts this fact or not. Since he is going to receive a reward for the trial if he is patient, it is then better for him to be considered from this good group "And give good tidings to the patient."

Don't become pessimistic: Don't shut your eyes only seeing the darkness of grief and worry. It will lead you into depression and isolation waiting for death to arrive, and that is a bleak existence for anyone, especially for someone who is faced with illness. Try not to allow grief and sadness overcome your heart or over burden your mind. Don't give an opportunity for the devil to whisper to you and try to cause you mental distress that will only add to your pain and suffering. Al-Sa'adee said: "Don't you know that weakness of the heart and its delusions are truly the incurable illness?"

The strength of the heart and its reliance upon Allah are the examples of strong men. How many hospitals are filled with patients suffering from delusions and paranoia? These delusions and anxieties affect even healthy people and will sometimes cause madness and mental problems.

Therefore, the health of the heart is the basis for the health of the body, and the disease of the heart is the true disease.

Man may go through psychological instability where he finds the world a narrow place of distress. But, if the sick allow these thoughts to control their mind, it will add to their distress and their wish for death – possibly to the extent of contemplating suicide.

One may wish to die because of pressure and pain, but we must realise that an early end results in punishment within the grave. So, by living they are afforded more time to repent and turn back towards Allah, and that is surely better. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "No one among you should wish to die because of distress. But if he must do so, then he should say, 'O Allah give me life as long as life is better for me, and cause me to die as long as death is better for me.'" [Al-Bukhari]

Look within yourself for the cause of your illness and treat it with lawful medical treatments. Don't ignore your illness – seek medical attention right away. Doctors have only been able to make as many strides in medicine thus far because Allah has allowed them to do so. Every disease has a cure except death. Try to search out and find a righteous Muslim physician if possible.

You should question yourself and be fair, do not deceive yourself: If you are afflicted with a distress hardship, look first for the reasons and reprimand yourself. Allah Says (what means):

"What comes to you of good is from Allah, what comes to you of evil (O Man) is from yourself..." [Qur'an 4: 79]

"And whatever strikes you of disaster, it is what your hands have earned." [Qur'an 42: 30]

When you are grieving and don't know the reason behind it, then do not let grief find a way into your heart. Learn that Allah decrees everything and nothing that strikes you should have missed you; and nothing that has missed you, should have struck you. Beware of saying anything that may indicate irritation and dissatisfaction with Allah's Decree, such as saying: "O Lord, why have you afflicted me with this?"

Be confident that Allah knows what is best for you: You should place your trust in Allah and must remember that you do not know the wisdom behind this trial, perhaps it will make you stronger and lead you on a path to a better life. We should never limit Allah's wisdom to our comprehension level, because we will never be

able to comprehend it – it is above our capability to understand. We should, however, know for a certainty that Allah does not intend harm because it is harmful. Harm with Allah is not intended for itself but for other things that may bring good.

Ibn Uthaymeen, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "Allah doesn't particularly intend harm for a person when He causes him to become ill. Allah intends for the disease to take place and the disease is what may harm man. But He did not intend harm for man. He intends for him only the good from it. Sometimes, the Divine Wisdom may be apparent to the sick, and sometimes it may not. As Allah has said (what means): "And fear a trial which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in penalty." [Qur'an 8:25]

Remember Allah and ask Him for forgiveness much: Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "When Allah guides His servants to ask for forgiveness, He helps them to achieve what they request." Allah has said (what means): "But Allah would not punish them while you are amongst them. And Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness." [Qur'an 8:33]

Allah has told us that He would not punish someone who seeks forgiveness, because sincere forgiveness removes the sin that is the reason for the punishment. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "He who is constant in seeking forgiveness, Allah will make for him a way out of any distress, release from grief, and provide for him from where he does not expect it." [Abu Daawood and Ibn Maa'jah]

So whoever believes in Allah alone and seeks forgiveness from Him, He will provide for him an appointed term, and whoever does good after that, He will increase him from His Grace.

Supplicate with a humble heart and a crying eye asking Allah to cure you: Try to take advantage of the time when supplications are more likely to be answered, praising Allah and calling upon Him with His Beautiful Names. It is also recommended to give something in charity from the best of your possessions before making your supplications. Understand and realise that illness is not the end of your life. If Allah has taken something from you, think of all the things that He has given you and all of the things that you still have.

A believer always strives for the pleasure of his Lord and does not stop because

of disease or a trial. The best example is the example the scholar of this nation; Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, when he lost his vision and said: "If Allah has taken from my eyes their light, it is in my tongue and heart that I will find the light. My heart is bright and my mind has no defects. And in my mouth there is a sharp, authentic sword."

Guard the mandatory acts of worship (*Faraa'id*): do not neglect them to the best of your ability. If you have any questions, ask people of knowledge. Perform many good and righteous deeds as possible. If someone else can do them for you on your behalf, this is also acceptable. Beware of any practice that is not lawful, especially those against our faith, such as slaughtering animals to anything other than Allah, hanging charms, seeking refuge with jinn or going to sorcerers.

When you are physically able, try to occupy your time with beneficial things like reading. Find activities that you enjoy and that will distract you from your disease and worries.

Always remember that your faith can and does make miracles: Do not underestimate the effect of reliance upon Allah. There are many incidents that have been witnessed where the impossible becomes possible by the power of faith.

Although the cure for illness is out of our hands and is up to Allah alone, we can still do something to make a difference to those who are suffering. It is unfortunate that often times we belittle the impact we can have on others, especially to those who are ill. Just a smile or a funny story to make someone laugh and forget their worries for a moment is something that can be remembered for years – because it made an impact and it made a difference.

How many times have we experienced the impact ourselves in our own lives when someone visited us or gave us a call – just at the time when we were at our lowest moment? Most of us will never forget that person who took the time to think about us, and we always remember them fondly because they – without realising it – helped to shine some light on our dark days.

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

Eye of the envier

1. Envy is one of the major sins which is bound to destroy good deeds as fast as the fire burns the wood and dry grass to ashes. "Jealousy eats away at good deeds, just as fire eats away at firewood." [Sunan Ibn Majah]

2. Envy was described as a sickness by the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*.

3. Envy is hating that good happens to others.

4. Envy is displeasure with Allah's decree and His granting blessings upon others.

5. "Faith and envy do not go together in the heart of a servant." [Ibn Hibban, *saheeh*]

6. "The people will be fine as long as they do not envy one another." [At-Tabarani with trustworthy narrators]

7. Envy is a characteristic the Jews displayed towards the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, causing them to inflict him harm.

8. Envy leads to hatred.

9. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, described envy as a shearer of the religion.

10. Muslims are commanded in *Surah al-Falaq* to seek refuge from the evil of the envier when he envies.

11. Envy is worse than miserliness; this is because the miser only stops himself from having good but the envier dislikes the favours of Allah bestowed upon His servants.

12. No one attains true belief until one loves for one's brother what one loves for oneself.

13. It is said that the people who have the greatest degree of restlessness are the envious. Such a person has no peace and is continuously grieved.

14. The greatest harm from envy comes to the envier, who with one's displeasure with Allah's decree attains a great loss to oneself.

Al-Mubarrad recited the following lines: The eye of the envier always sees scandal, bringing out faults and hiding the good. He meets you cheerfully, with a smiling face, while his heart conceals his true feelings. The envier's enmity comes without provocation, yet he accepts no excuses while he attacks.

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GULF TIMES

Protecting informal workers from extreme heat

Today's escalating climate crisis disproportionately affects the world's two billion informal workers. As heat waves become increasingly frequent and intense, the absence of global occupational safety and health (OSH) protections against climate-related risks leaves these workers dangerously exposed. Forced to labour in record-breaking temperatures, their health and even lives are in jeopardy.

In 2022, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) declared a "safe and healthy working environment" a fundamental right. But although many countries have recognised extreme heat as an occupational hazard and implemented workplace-safety protections, these measures rarely extend to the world's most vulnerable workers: those working informally in fields, landfills, street markets, and homes.

More than 2.4bn workers worldwide are exposed to extreme heat annually. With heat stress projected to increase rapidly over the next few decades, the international community must urgently reform labour-protection frameworks to ensure workers' health, safety, and livelihoods. Without decisive action, millions will continue to suffer needlessly, trapped in a cycle of rising temperatures and hazardous working conditions.

This danger is particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries, where informal jobs account for roughly 90% of total employment. While data on these workers' health and safety are limited, a growing body of research suggests that extreme heat has a profoundly negative impact on their well-being and livelihoods.

Without co-ordinated action, the future of work will be increasingly dangerous and uncertain

50° Celsius in May, the death of a 53-year-old labourer prompted the lieutenant governor to issue new guidelines adjusting labourers' working hours and expanding access to drinkable water. As a recent World Health Organisation editorial notes, the severe effects of extreme heat on informal workers include an increased risk of skin cancer.

While discussions about protecting informal workers from heat stress often focus on outdoor labourers such as farmers and street vendors, extreme heat also affects those who work indoors in poorly ventilated spaces with limited access to potable water. In Brazil, a waste picker told WIEGO researchers that "the heat is sometimes unbearable. Being inside a shed, which has a zinc roof, affects everyone." Finding sustainable cooling solutions is also important for domestic workers and caretakers, most of whom are women.

But despite recent advances on establishing global OSH standards, policymakers face significant challenges in addressing the issue. Notably, 64% of informal workers are self-employed. Without employers to finance essential safety measures, economically vulnerable workers must use their limited resources to protect themselves. As Yuleina Carmona, WIEGO's Mexico City co-ordinator, observed, "Those who work on the street buy their own water, carry their umbrellas, wear hats, and mitigate the effects of the heat with their own resources."

This weakness reflects a disconnect between local and national policymakers. In urban areas, informal workplaces are typically regulated by municipal authorities that rarely co-ordinate with national labour agencies responsible for workplace safety. Moreover, informal workers are often stigmatised and seen as an undesirable source of crime and urban blight. Even when national and local authorities manage to co-ordinate their efforts, significant gaps remain. India's heat action plans, for example, aim to tackle climate-related risks across multiple levels of government. But these plans overlook the realities of informal work and the need for targeted interventions at the municipal level, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

While establishing global norms and standards is necessary, they must be translated into concrete measures that protect informal workers in the regions most affected by rising temperatures. In particular, local and municipal authorities must adopt inclusive labour regulations and invest heavily in appropriate infrastructure, including expanded access to potable water, shade, indoor ventilation, and high-quality occupational health services. To prevent the rise in morbidity and mortality rates associated with heat stress, these services must be affordable, adequately funded, and accompanied by structural shifts at the national level to provide vital income support to workers grappling with climate-related displacement.

In addition to such worker-driven solutions, OSH protections must be integrated into climate policies. As heat-related hazards continue to evolve and intensify, a staggering number of workers – including those in informal employment – face the risk of chronic illness, death, and disability. Without co-ordinated action, the future of work will be increasingly dangerous and uncertain, leaving millions of workers to face the brunt of the climate crisis. — Project Syndicate

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Misreading the impact of monetary policy

By Adam S Posen
Jackson Hole

This year's Jackson Hole Economic Symposium of central bankers from around the world is right to focus on the monetary-transmission mechanism, the channel through which monetary policy influences broader economic and financial conditions. Although the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates by 500 basis points between March 2022 and July 2023, it seems that little damage has been done to the US real economy or its financial system.

This low cost of disinflation is shocking (though certainly welcome). Even if we have strong hypotheses to explain ex post why the United States has been able to combine growth with disinflation for the last two years – notably high immigration, a surge in productivity, and (above all) well-anchored inflation expectations – the lack of a visible direct impact from rate increases is remarkable.

Evidently, current US monetary policy is meaningfully looser than many Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) members and market participants think it is. What's more, the impact of monetary policy on the economy is more conditional, and probably on average weaker, than commonly believed. This

assessment is directly relevant to the FOMC's upcoming monetary-policy choices, but even more so to policymaking further in the future.

This past June, multiple FOMC members expressed concern that monetary conditions have been tightening further as declines in inflation lead to higher real interest rates. But this view fails to account for the magnitudes and channels of monetary transmission. Here, the focus on the policy instrument, the federal funds rate, is misleading. It is a mistake to assume that the settings of the instrument are close to optimal at any given time, or that they must be fine-tuned with each twist and turn in the inflation forecast. The assessment of monetary conditions should focus more on actual financial-market outcomes than on preconceived notions of the effect of policy.

As we saw with the 2008 global financial crisis, financial markets are segmented, and central banks often must intervene directly in particular markets to have an impact. For example, commercial lending by non-bank financial intermediaries is affected differently by interest rates and (the lack of) supervision than is traditional bank lending. Private equity and unlisted investments react differently to policy adjustments than commercial paper, bonds, and even traded

equities do. Even in the absence of financial-liquidity constraints, regulation and international barriers impede the transmission of credit flows uniformly across jurisdictions.

Thus, as a forward indicator, financial conditions are at least as important as the slightly backward-looking signals sent by the labour market. Moreover, financial indicators remain quite accommodative. Equities have returned to high valuations, and the decline in longer-term Treasury rates has persisted. Interest-rate spreads (such as those between lower-rated corporate bonds and comparable duration Treasuries) have widened somewhat but remain very low by historical standards, let alone for the end of a Fed tightening cycle.

The same holds true for delinquent auto and consumer loans and for real-estate losses. These have come off their lows, but not by much. It is rather odd to call monetary policy "tight" when credit remains easy and balance sheets are barely distressed.

Another problem with focusing primarily on changes in the real federal funds rate (assuming all else is equal) is that it ignores a more important benchmark for the impact of monetary policy: where that interest rate is in relation to the neutral interest rate (r*), the rate where monetary

policy is neither "loose" nor "tight" for an economy growing near trend. The gap between the underlying long-term return to safe capital in the economy and what the Fed sets as the minimum lending rate for very short-term loans thus reflects the traction of monetary policy on the economy. If the neutral rate has moved up a lot, any rise in real rates as inflation declines could be more than offset.

As Fed Chair Jerome Powell rightly pointed out at previous Jackson Hole conferences, the economic stars (neutral interest and unemployment rates) are not directly observable, or even robustly estimated. Yet there are overwhelming reasons to believe that r* has risen substantially above its pre-Covid levels, which means that monetary-policy settings have actually become looser over time.

Foremost, US federal deficits are much higher on a sustained basis, and spending on defense, environmental, and industrial policies will keep them up. These additional outlays will drive up rates on government borrowing, which is a key determinant of r*.

At the same time, Chinese and American officials alike are discouraging capital flows from Chinese investors into US markets, shrinking the pool of savings available to finance US deficits – which also increases long-term rates. But after the pandemic, US savings rates fell as consumers bought in to a "YOLO" (you only live once) mindset and internalised the lesson that there will always be government support in times of crisis (thankfully). Again, this will make rates go up as debt levels rise.

Finally, if the recent acceleration in productivity growth is sustained – perhaps because AI or green-tech becomes more widespread – that, too, will raise the real return on capital, and thus r*. However one weighs these various factors, all trends point to an increase in r* by as much as 1.5%.

To be sure, the fact that US monetary policy is looser than many believe should not discourage the Fed from cutting rates in September and November. From a risk-management perspective, if inflation is forecast to continue on a downward trend and unemployment is rising, loosening policy to forestall a recessionary slide is prudent (at least until the economic impact of November's US election becomes clear next year).

But warnings that Fed policy is potentially dragging the economy down are unjustified. When the US economy proves resilient yet again, and the time for rate increases returns, the FOMC should be prepared not only to raise rates more than it is used to, but also to track how its hikes transmit across diverse financial markets. — Project Syndicate



INFERENCE: From a risk-management perspective, if inflation is forecast to continue on a downward trend and unemployment is rising, loosening policy to forestall a recessionary slide is prudent (at least until the economic impact of November's US election becomes clear next year).

• Adam Posen is President of the Peterson Institute for International Economics.



Astronauts' plight piles pressure on Boeing's struggling space unit

Boeing's Starliner to return home empty after glitches

Musk's SpaceX steps in to return marooned astronauts

Failure caps years of mishaps at Boeing space

Boeing's new CEO Ortberg left with space headache

By Joey Roulette
Washington

Nasa's decision to send Boeing's Starliner capsule home without astronauts follows years of missteps by the planemaker in its space business and raises doubts over the future of the unit, analysts and industry sources said.

Taking Nasa astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams to the International Space Station (ISS) was to have been a turning point for Starliner after years of delays, technical glitches and supply chain mishaps. Starliner has cost Boeing \$1.6bn in overruns since 2016, according to a Reuters analysis of securities filings.

The astronauts were to stay at the ISS for about eight days, but problems with Starliner have extended that to eight months.

Starliner's propulsion system malfunctioned and Nasa deemed the troublesome thrusters unsafe for the return journey. So Wilmore and Williams will be brought home in a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule next year, the latest humiliation for Boeing at the hands of Elon Musk's dominant space company.

The mission was meant to be a final test before Nasa could certify Starliner for routine flights. Boeing's new CEO Kelly Ortberg now must decide whether to keep pouring money into Starliner, which analysts doubt will ever be profitable, or to unravel the capsule business and focus on rebuilding the tarnished reputation of its core planemaking division.

Elsewhere in its space business, US government watchdogs have repeatedly reported Boeing is years behind schedule and several billions of dollars over budget as main contractor on Nasa's giant Space Launch System (SLS) rocket, a centrepiece vehicle of America's moon programme.

And the aerospace giant is already trying to sell a separate rocket launching firm it jointly owns with Lockheed Martin, Reuters reported last month.

Nasa administrator Bill Nelson said he

spoke to Ortberg on Saturday and left that conversation 100% sure Starliner would fly astronauts again. But that is no guarantee of a long-term commitment if Starliner's troubles persist.

Asked whether Boeing would stay in the programme after Starliner's current mission, a Boeing spokeswoman declined to comment, telling Reuters the company is focusing on getting the spacecraft back safely.

"I am not sure the decision will ultimately be Nasa's. Boeing is going to have to foot much of this bill, as they have been," said Lori Garver, former Nasa deputy administrator who was a key architect of Nasa's Commercial Crew Program.

Ortberg, who started as CEO this month, is busy trying to convince Boeing workers, investors, airline customers and the flying public that safety issues are under control after a panel dramatically flew off a 737 MAX jet in midair in January.

Analysts said Boeing will probably keep

Starliner alive, partially because Boeing has experienced worse in other programmes in its defence business. In the future, Starliner could serve customers other than Nasa, such as private space stations meant to replace the ISS after 2030, but those efforts could change.

Nasa sees Boeing as a crucial backup to Musk's SpaceX, the only entity capable of putting humans in orbit other than US rivals Russia and China.

Boeing has spent more than half of its \$4.5bn Nasa contract awarded in 2014 and Starliner has yet to be certified. The contract, which has swelled by \$300mn despite its fixed-price structure, includes six post-certification Starliner missions that will fall farther behind schedule with each mishap.

SpaceX's Crew Dragon was certified in 2020 and has flown 10 crewed missions for Nasa since signing a contract initially worth \$2.6bn. Nasa has bought more Crew Dragon missions to make up for Boeing's



A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket carrying two astronauts aboard Boeing's Starliner-1 Crew Flight Test (CFT), is launched on a mission to the International Space Station, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, US on June 5, 2024. (Reuters)



Nasa astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams pose ahead of the launch of Boeing's Starliner-1 Crew Flight Test (CFT), in Cape Canaveral, Florida on April 25, 2024. (Reuters)

delays, boosting SpaceX's contract to \$4.9bn.

Boeing may have to re-do the astronaut mission to the ISS in order to get the space capsule certified by Nasa. The company already had to repeat an uncrewed 2022 mission at a cost of nearly \$500mn.

"I wouldn't rule anything out. We have options for how we move forward," Nasa's space operations chief Ken Bowersox, a former astronaut, told reporters on Saturday when asked if Starliner can be certified without a do-over. He did not specify the options.

It has been five years since the Starliner's first uncrewed test failed because of several critical software glitches. Since then, SpaceX has outpaced Boeing in rocket launches, crewed space flight and satellite manufacturing.

Nasa's inspector general has estimated Crew Dragon's mission price as around \$55mn per seat, while Starliner's is around \$90mn.

For years, Boeing's space unit has suffered an exodus of skilled staff; many have joined SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. Boeing's clunky supply chain makes designing spacecraft more complicated than for Musk's more nimble, largely vertically integrated operation, according to 10 people who have worked with Boeing's space unit.

Boeing, in a statement to Reuters,

said the company is proud of its Starliner workforce and noted that it has acknowledged the workforce and supply chain challenges on earnings calls.

Throughout Starliner's development, the hardware and sometimes the software of the propulsion system have been persistent issues. New problems were found just hours before the spacecraft made an initial attempt to launch this summer. Helium, used to pressurise the propellant, was leaking through a small seal in a flange.

Nasa saw the leak as low-risk and allowed Starliner to launch. Yet officials said the propulsion system had a "design vulnerability" Boeing must address before its next mission.

The Space Launch System (SLS) rocket is another problem for Boeing's space unit. An August report by Nasa's inspector general cited deep issues with quality control, while saying Boeing's SLS workforce in Michoud, Louisiana "lacks sufficient aerospace production experience, training, and instruction."

A Boeing spokeswoman said the company disagrees with many of the report's "assertions, including any suggestion that our Michoud workforce is unqualified."

Unlike Starliner, Nasa foots the bill for delays and development problems with SLS. The extent of cost overruns are unclear because Nasa does not accurately track them, inspector general reports have repeatedly said.

Nasa is trying to hand ownership of SLS to Boeing and co-contractor Northrop Grumman to bring the costs down, but that appears unlikely.

"Boeing's other businesses aren't terribly vulnerable to disruption. But space? That's another story," said Richard Aboulafia, an aerospace analyst.

Aboulafia believes Ortberg will crunch the numbers and negotiate with Nasa to make Starliner viable, although he is not convinced that is the right step.

"If I were an adviser to Kelly Ortberg, which I'm not, I'd say... for space, well boss, you might want to consider selling it," said Aboulafia. — Reuters

Do political leaders deserve a break?

By Ngaire Woods
Oxford



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer seen here visiting the Siemens Energy plant, part of German industrial conglomerate Siemens in Berlin, cancelled his summer holiday to deal with the riots across the country. (Reuters)

without breaks, their decisions became increasingly conservative and less resource-efficient. Surgeons also benefit from breaks, with one study showing that the intervals between a surgeon's operations directly affected mortality rates following hip fracture surgery. The researchers suggested that reducing decision fatigue could lead to better treatment choices, ultimately improving health outcomes.

More broadly, taking breaks from work has been shown to boost productivity by enhancing mental and physical health, as well as overall safety. This is why most national and international labour regulations require regular rest periods.

When it comes to political leaders, sound judgment is crucial, given that their countries depend on them to address unexpected crises, absorb new facts and data, assess the implications of policies, and make tough decisions. But the more fatigued a leader is, the more likely they are to fall back on habits, false analogies, and heuristics, undermining their ability to govern effectively.

To be sure, striking the right balance between taking time off and remaining vigilant is no easy feat. In France, for example, ministers are required to vacation within two hours of Paris so they can fulfil their duties if needed. Likewise, as China faced devastating floods last year, President Xi Jinping's chief of staff and government experts were called to his official holiday residence in Beidaihe, a coastal resort not far from Beijing.

This is not to say that leaders should indulge in extravagant holidays. Instead, they must prioritise restraint over excess and avoid conflicts of interest and undue influence. The last thing voters want to see, especially when asked to tighten their belts, is their elected representatives enjoying lavish, paid-for vacations. That said, there is a strong case for giving leaders time to rest, clear their minds, and recharge, so that they are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. — Project Syndicate

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Will Google search blow supercharge the US antitrust enforcement?

By Tara Pincock
Washington, DC



Earlier this month, Google suffered a major blow that could pave the way for a wave of antitrust cases against Big Tech firms. In the first of the two lawsuits filed by the US Department of Justice (DoJ) against the company, District Judge Amit Mehta ruled that Google violated antitrust law by maintaining an illegal monopoly in the online search and search-advertising markets.

This raises the question of what remedies Google will face, with the DoJ reportedly considering a breakup of the company. But the more important question is whether the case will catalyse the reforms needed to foster competition in today's monopolised tech industry or ultimately be remembered as a missed opportunity.

As a former antitrust enforcer who spent years investigating and litigating against Google, I believe Mehta's well-reasoned decision has an excellent chance of surviving on appeal. While simply holding a monopoly is not inherently illegal, wielding that power to stifle competition – as Google did – is. By leveraging exclusivity contracts to block rivals from securing default placement on key search access points like the Safari browser on iPhones and charging supracompetitive prices in the text-ad market, Google was able to crush potential competitors.

Google has already announced its intention to appeal the decision to the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia – the same court that held Microsoft violated the Sherman Antitrust Act in 2001. This underscores the striking parallels between the two cases. Like the Microsoft ruling, the Google case was not based on novel legal theories or fringe interpretations of antitrust law. Instead, Mehta closely followed the reasoning laid out in the Microsoft decision, adopting a conservative approach that should enhance his ruling's chances to withstand Google's challenge.

If the decision is upheld, it could fundamentally change how Big Tech platforms and other dominant companies conduct business, making them more reluctant to enter into exclusive contracts aimed at shutting out competitors. But the extent of this shift will depend more on the severity of the remedies than on the ruling itself.

To restore competition in the search and search-advertising markets, the remedies must be multi-pronged, structural, and, most importantly, address the root causes of the harm caused by Google's anti-competitive practices. A slap on the wrist will not suffice; the penalty should be severe enough to serve as a warning to other monopolists.

The implications of Google's defeat go well beyond this case, showing that Big Tech is not untouchable and that the 1890 Sherman Act can still be applied to hold monopolists to account. With the US government already pursuing antitrust lawsuits against Apple and Amazon, as well as another case against Google – this time in the

advertising technology (ad-tech) market – Big Tech monopolists could soon face a painful reckoning. In particular, Mehta's decision could significantly affect the Google ad-tech trial, which is scheduled to begin on September 9. While the ruling that Google is a monopolist in general search does not guarantee a similar outcome in the ad-tech case, there are clear similarities between Google's conduct in these markets. In each, Google exploited its dominance to suppress competition and extract excessive profits by manipulating advertising auctions.

Given these similarities, US District Judge Leonie Brinkema will likely rely heavily on Mehta's decision when deciding the ad-tech case. With the Apple and Amazon antitrust trials still years away, the influence of the Google search ruling on these cases will largely hinge on the outcome of the appeal.

Regrettably, the Google search ruling was not a total victory for antitrust enforcers, as additional claims brought by state attorneys general were dismissed. For example, the court rejected the claim that Google's SA360 search-engine management tool unfairly favoured its own services.

In his decision, Mehta argued that the company was not liable for this conduct because it had no obligation to deal with its competitors, despite having promised that SA360 would remain a neutral third party when it was acquired in 2008. Mehta ruled in favour of the government only on the most narrowly defined charges.

So, will the Google search decision catalyse real competition in the tech sector? Probably not. Although it represents a step in the right direction, US antitrust law is still burdened by bad precedents, and courts are often reluctant to rule against large corporations.

Despite being relatively straightforward – essentially an updated version of the Microsoft antitrust case – the Google search trial dragged on for ten weeks, culminating in a 286-page decision that could yet be overturned. It is increasingly clear that Congress must step in and reform antitrust laws to ensure that small businesses have a fair chance to grow and thrive. Google may have lost this battle, but the war for competitive markets will not be won in the courts. — Project Syndicate

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Boys line up for an activity at the event.



Mascot Ramly strikes a pose



Happy faces on seeing the mascot

QNL unveils new mascot ‘Ramly’ at Children’s Library



Children greet Ramly, the mascot.



A fun activity for children on the occasion.

The Qatar National Library (QNL) yesterday launched a new mascot, Ramly, for its Children’s Library. Inspired by Qatar’s desert fox, Ramly is friendly and curious and loves making new friends at the QNL Children’s Library, reading fascinating books and imagining great adventures with the children, a statement said.

Ramly fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment that appeals to young readers, further advancing QNL’s efforts to engage children and families in early childhood education and literacy development.

Over 300 children aged 4 to 11 met Ramly at the QNL Special Events Area. The three-hour launch event featured a variety of interactive activities to introduce children to Ramly, including a series of creative workshops ranging from colouring and face painting to hand puppet crafting and story writing.

The activities were designed to bolster a sense of community and belonging among children, empowering QNL staff to build a

positive relationship with youth by leveraging the new mascot.

Studies by the American Library Association have shown that mascots are effective tools for engaging children. Libraries that use mascots report increased attendance and participation in programmes, particularly among children and families.

“QNL is committed to encouraging the love of reading among our youth,” said Abeer al-Kuwari, director of Research and Learning Services at QNL. “Inspired by Qatar’s natural environment, Ramly is not just a mascot, but a valuable part of our mission to encourage families to adopt early literacy. This initiative enhances our library’s role as a hub for inclusive and dynamic community engagement and learning,” al-Kuwari said.

The mascot will also be used to promote children-oriented events such as storytelling and reading clubs, instilling in young readers a sense of ownership over QNL’s resources and programmes.



Ramly, the new mascot of QNL's Children's Library, makes a grand entry at the event yesterday. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam

Msheireb Galleria brings ‘Back-to-School’ nostalgia with educational fun

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s “Back-to-School” campaign, taking place at Msheireb Galleria until tomorrow, continues to draw large crowds of children to the educational and fun-filled activities.

Mostafa Sawda, project manager of Me Visual Company for the Back-to-School event, told *Gulf Times* that this year’s edition, themed “My School, My Second Home”, offers a blend of interactive experiences and a journey back in time.

“There are several engaging activities for children,” he said, noting the ‘Checklist’ competition is comprised of various stages; from The Stage, Arts and Crafts, The Classroom and Workshops to Reading Corner, Donation Station, Stationery and Retail, Canteen, and The Bus.

The event includes a nostalgic “Classroom” showcasing old school books, tools, pictures, films, and other educational materials, allowing visitors to reminisce

about their own school days.

“This serves as a flashback to the Qatari schools in the 80s,” Sawda said, allowing participants to take pictures and post it on a dedicated wall.

He said part of the activity is donating to Education Above All (EAA) where participants can buy from participating retailers, show their receipts, and get a stamp – required to complete the checklist.

The campaign, organised in collaboration with Mowasalat (Karwa), Msheireb Properties, and Me Visual Company, aims to prepare students for the new academic year (2024-2025) with a range of recreational and educational activities.

Sawda cited the uniqueness and popularity of the campaign, saying: “We invite students from different schools to participate, but due to high demand, we can’t expand it much. We are full every day because of the checklist competition.”

He added that the event has become an annual tradition for families and children, expressing optimism for more exciting additions planned for future editions.



The Back-to-School event at Msheireb Galleria has been attracting a large number of children eager for educational and fun-filled activities. PICTURES: Joey Aguilar

