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# GULF TIMES



SUNDAY Vol. XXXV No. 13190

November 10, 2024  
Jumada 18, 1446 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

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People take part in a demonstration in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, in Istanbul, Turkiye yesterday.

## Gaza mourns children killed in Israeli strike

Reuters  
Gaza

A Gaza family sat weeping yesterday over children killed by an Israeli strike as they were getting ready to play soccer, amid an intensified bombardment that Palestinian health authorities said has killed 44 people over the past 24 hours.

The strike was in Mawasi, a southern coastal area where hundreds of thousands of people have sought shelter after Israel's military told them to leave other areas it was bombing in its war against Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

Palestinian health authorities say Israel's military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 43,500 people, with another 10,000 believed to be dead and uncounted under the rubble.

On-off talks for a ceasefire and hostage release deal mediated by the United States, Egypt and Qatar have made little progress.

The UN Human Rights Office said on Friday that nearly 70% of fatalities it had verified in Gaza were women and children.

Strikes overnight and yesterday morning killed at least 40 Palestinians across the enclave, health officials said. In one air strike on a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City six people including two journalists were killed, while another killed two at a tent inside Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip, they said.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said the deaths of Mohammad and Zahara Abu Skhaila raised the number of journalists killed by Israeli fire to 188 since Oct. 7, 2023.

For the past month, Israel's main military focus has been in northern Gaza, the first part of the tiny, crowded territory that its troops overran early in the conflict last year.

A committee of global food security experts warned on Friday that there was a strong likelihood of imminent famine in northern Gaza amid the renewed fighting.

## Gaza mediation efforts currently stalled: Qatar

- Media reports about Hamas Doha office inaccurate
- Doha to join talks when 'parties' ready to end war

QNA  
Doha

Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari said that the media reports about Qatar's withdrawal from mediation regarding the ceasefire in Gaza are not accurate, and that Qatar notified the parties 10 days ago during the last attempts to reach an agreement, that it would stall its efforts to mediate between Hamas and Israel if an agreement was not reached in that round.

He stated that Qatar will resume those efforts with its partners when the parties show their willingness and seriousness to end the brutal war and the ongoing suffering of civilians caused by catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the Strip, stressing in this context that Qatar will then be at the forefront of making every good effort to end the war and return the hostages and prisoners.

Dr al-Ansari stressed, in a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), that "The State of Qatar will not accept that mediation be a reason for blackmailing it, as we have witnessed manipulation since the collapse of the first pause and the women and children exchange deal, especially in retreating from obligations agreed upon through mediation, and exploiting the continuation of negotiations to justify the continuation of the war to serve narrow political purposes."

The official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm commitment to supporting the brotherly Palestinian people until they obtain all their rights, foremost of which is their independent state on the 1967



Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari

The official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm commitment to supporting the brotherly Palestinian people until they obtain all their rights

borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, stressing the centrality of the Palestinian issue to the State of Qatar.

Dr al-Ansari pointed out that the media reports regarding the Hamas office in Doha is inaccurate, stating that the main goal of the office in Qatar is to be a channel of communication between the concerned parties, and this channel has contributed to achieving a ceasefire in previous stages, and contributed to maintaining calm in the Strip in the lead to exchanging hostages and detainees of women and children in November of last year, stressing in this context the need to obtain information from its official sources.

## Qatar Boat Show a huge draw

The Qatar Boat Show 2024 has achieved remarkable success, underscored by the exceptional engagement and innovative contributions of exhibitors.

According to the organisers, the third day of the event witnessed a complete sell-out, solidifying its position as an unmissable highlight in Qatar's event calendar. It captured the attention of both marine enthusiasts and industry leaders as well as visitors, offering a series of exceptional maritime and entertainment celebrations.

Visitors were treated to exhilarating watersport demonstrations, including an exciting dragon boat performance, complemented by cultural displays such as a military band parade and traditional music.

Attendees strolled through impressive showcases of luxury super-yachts and marine vessels, offering a glimpse into the opulent boating lifestyle. For those intrigued by the marine industry, the exhibitor booths provided insights into the latest innovative technologies, while a kayak fishing competition and an enchanting performance of dancing fountains added to the day's excitement.

The festivities extended beyond the boat show itself; at the Mina District, attendees enjoyed thrilling competitions and exper-



rienced the artistry on display at the craftsman and painters' showcases.

"Our vision for the Qatar Boat Show 2024 was to create an event that would resonate deeply with both local and international audiences, and the overwhelming response we've seen is a testament to Qatar's vibrant maritime culture and event-hosting prowess," said Old Doha Port CEO and the chairman of the Organising Committee of the Qatar Boat Show 2024 Mohamed Abdulla al-Mulla.

"We were delighted by the level of participation from both local and international exhibitors, which was reflected in the significant turnout of visitors and enthusiasts of the sea and marine sports," he added.

The Qatar Boat Show 2024 is celebrating the country's rich maritime heritage in alignment with the port's strategy to support the maritime sector and marine tourism through an event that will contribute to strengthening the economy and its maritime sector.

Additionally, organisers said the event is creating a new trading platform while preserving Qatar's cultural identity and maritime heritage. It also fosters economic growth through tourism and promoting environmental sustainability through investments in eco-friendly marine practices.

Organisers noted that this synergy positions Qatar as a regional leader in maritime innovation and cultural conservation, further enhancing its unique identity on the global stage. **Page 12**

## Qatar 'observatory' to monitor social changes

QNA  
Doha

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad announced the beginning of preparations to establish the "Qatar Social Observatory", a significant initiative designed to enhance Qatar's interactive social monitoring capabilities.

In a press statement, HE al-Misnad emphasised that the observatory will act as an early warning system to monitor social phenomena impacting families and society at large. She described it as a robust scientific tool that will foster the skills of national talent in social and humanitarian research fields.

HE the Minister underscored the importance of a strategic partnership with the National Planning Council, which plays a vital role in supporting and guiding the project towards its national objectives. Additionally, she noted the involvement of the Ibn Khaldon Center for Humanities and Social Sciences at Qatar University as a key research partner, contributing academic and scientific expertise to enhance the observatory's effectiveness and development.

HE al-Misnad explained that communication with the ob-

servatory, for submitting social observations or reports, will be facilitated through a dedicated electronic page on the Ministry of Social Development and Family's website. The observatory will operate in close co-operation with the National Planning Council and the Ibn Khaldon Center at Qatar University, utilising three primary monitoring mechanisms: field monitoring through surveys and questionnaires, digital monitoring with advanced programmes, and direct interviews and community dialogues.

She reiterated the value of the strategic partnership with the National Planning Council and the pivotal role of the Ibn Khaldon Center at Qatar University as a research partner in strengthening the observatory's operations.

Secretary-General of the National Planning Council, Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa stated, "The National Planning Council will play a major role in supporting and implementing the Qatar Social Observatory, which will serve as an effective tool for analysing social data and providing a scientific foundation for the development of social policies and national plans. This will aid in achieving cohesive efforts toward our sustainable development goals." **To Page 12**



We extend our heartiest greetings to

His Highness  
**Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness  
**Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani**  
Father Amir

His Highness  
**Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani**  
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar  
on the occasion of

**The success of the referendum on the draft  
constitutional amendments,**  
which won the approval of the honorable Qatari people  
in a historic event that embodied the meanings of  
national cohesion between the leadership and  
the people under the wise leadership of  
His Highness The Amir of the country.



علي بن علي القابضة  
Ali Bin Ali Holding

# Qatar Charity signs agreement with Children's Cancer Hospital in Egypt

**QNA**  
Doha

Qatar Charity (QC) has signed a framework co-operation agreement with the Children's Cancer Hospital Foundation – Egypt 57357 (CCHE 57357), aiming to enhance healthcare support for children with cancer.

This agreement is part of Qatar Charity's efforts to support health and development initiatives, provide essential humanitarian assistance to enhance healthcare for children, and ensure effective treatment opportunities for them. The agreement reflects the commitment of both parties to achieving the goals and principles of humanitarian and developmental work.

The agreement was signed by Chief Global Officer at Qatar Charity, Nawaf Abdullah al-Hammadi and Deputy Executive Director at Children's Cancer Hospital Group – Egypt 57357, Sherif Hussin.

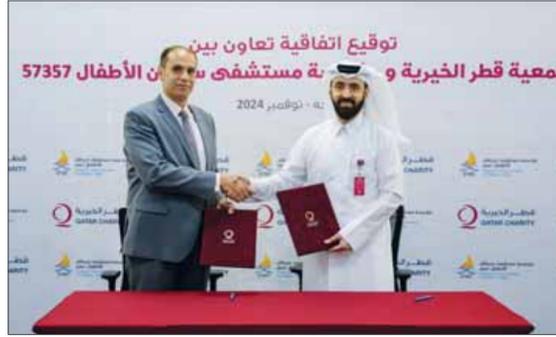
The agreement will open opportunities for collaboration between both parties in humanitarian and development initiatives.



On the sidelines of the signing, both sides emphasised the importance of this partnership in providing comprehensive healthcare for children with cancer and supporting their families. They expressed their commitment to expanding co-operation to meet the growing needs of patients and improve their quality of life.

On this occasion, Nawaf Abdullah al-Hammadi expressed his delight at signing the agreement with the Children's Cancer Hospital Foundation – Egypt 57357. He stated: "This agreement marks our first collaboration in the health sector in Egypt. We are committed to making this partnership fruitful by delivering effective services to children and contributing to higher recovery rates and reduced mortality among cancer patients in the near future." Al-Hammadi also expressed hope for this partnership to be long-term, encompassing various fields to facilitate knowledge exchange, capacity building, and funding. He voiced his aspiration that it will support healthcare activities and centres in the region through shared experiences and expertise.

For his paper Deputy Executive Director at Children's Cancer Hospital Group – Egypt 57357, Sherif Hussin expressed pride and happiness in the strategic collaboration with Qatar Charity. He emphasised that this partnership is a significant step toward improving the quality of healthcare provided to children with cancer, considering Qatar Charity a strategic partner for the hospital.



Hussin added, "With this new partnership with Qatar Charity, we look forward to expanding our medical services and reaching a greater number of children, which will help improve recovery rates and achieve more positive outcomes."

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Hun Manet. (QNA)

**Official**

## Amir sends cables of congratulations to King of Cambodia

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Hun Manet. (QNA)

## Qatar attends Asian Family Conference

Qatar has participated in the 2024 Asian Family Conference, held in Singapore, under the title (Strong and Resilient Asian Families: Challenges and Opportunities). Qatar was represented at the conference by Assistant Undersecretary for Family Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Sheikhha Sheikhha bint Jassim bin Ahmed al-Thani.

On the sidelines of the conference, Sheikhha met with Masagos Zulkifli, Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development, Second Minister for Health, and Minister Responsible for Islamic Affairs. During the meeting, common issues related to the family were discussed. (QNA)

## Qatari publishers make distinguished presence at Algiers Book Fair

**QNA**  
Algiers

Qatari publishing houses participating in the 27th Algiers International Book Fair 2024, held under the slogan "Read to Triumph," have made a prominent and distinguished appearance, showcasing some of the finest literary and intellectual works by authors and creatives from Qatar.

Qatar is this year's Guest of Honour at the fair, which runs from Nov 6 to 16, with the participation of 1,007 publishing houses from 40 Arab and foreign countries.

Abdul Karim Saeed al-Humaidi, supervisor of the Qatari Ministry of Culture's pavilion at the fair, told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the strong Qatari participation reflects the deep cultural ties between Qatar and Algeria.

He noted that the pavilion's design draws inspiration from traditional Qatari architecture, highlighting the country's heritage. The pavilion features a range of Qatari publications, including ministry releases and a comprehensive cultural programme with Algeria. The programme includes lectures, discussions with Qatari authors and thinkers, a poetry evening, and a live display of Qatari folk arts.

A special children's section is also included with activities tailored to young attendees.

Amira Ahmed al-Muhammadi, Director of Katara Publishing House, stressed Katara's commitment to participating in Arab book fairs regularly as an opportunity to introduce its diverse publications. She noted that many of the featured works are award-winning books and novels translated into French and English alongside the original Arabic.

Al-Muhammadi also commended the significant interest from Algerian visitors in the Qatari pavilion, especially in books that have won the Katara Prize for Arabic Novel.





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CELEBRATING TWO DECADES IN QATAR

## Qalam: Great Writers in Conversation with Kamila Shamsie

### Ahdaf Soueif, Booker Shortlisted Author

Sunday, November 10 | 5:30-7:00 PM | Auditorium, Georgetown University in Qatar



Ahdaf Soueif is a writer and activist. She is the author of the celebrated novel, *The Map of Love*, shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2000 and translated into more than 30 languages. Ms. Soueif is the translator of Mourid Barghouthi's *I Saw Ramallah*, and the curator and editor of *Reflections on Islamic Art* and *This is Not A Border*.

Ahdaf Soueif is the Founder and Chair of the Palestine Festival of Literature (PalFest), a Patron of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and the Caine Prize for African Writing (UK), a Trustee of *al-Mawred al-Thaqafi* (Beirut) and of the International Prize for Arab Fiction - IPAF. She was the first recipient of the Mahmoud Darwish Award in 2010, and in October 2019, she was honoured with the European Cultural Foundation's Princess Margriet Award for Culture.



**Kamila Shamsie**  
Women's Prize for Fiction winner, *Home Fire*  
Inaugural Writer-in-Residence  
Georgetown University in Qatar



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 <b>1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Mahmoud Reda	 <b>1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Fathima Noreen Nusair Shantiniketan Indian School	 <b>1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Sheeja Anis	 <b>1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Jitesh Adhithya M.E.S. Indian School
 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Fawad Abdul Waheed Kasu	 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Anaswara Anil DPS Monarch International School	 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Swetha Raghuraman	 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP</b> Hiba Nasir Bright Future International School



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# Qatar-Japan strategic partnership soars, driven by energy, tech and defence ties



Japanese envoy Satoshi Maeda

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

Japanese ambassador Satoshi Maeda lauded the growing strategic partnership between Qatar and Japan, citing increased air travel, expanding sectors such as semiconductors and batteries, and strengthened defence ties as key indicators of progress.

Speaking at a recent farewell press conference, the envoy said: "For over half a century, Japan and Qatar have cultivated a strong and enduring relationship, built on mutual trust and friendship".

Highlighting the long-standing energy partnership, he noted that

Japanese companies have been instrumental in Qatar's LNG plant construction since 1990, while Qatar's reliable energy supply has been crucial to Japan's economic growth. However, he stressed that the relationship has now broadened considerably.

Maeda said the elevation of bilateral ties to a strategic partnership, formalised during Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit last year to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, has spurred tangible results. He noted that 2024 witnessed Japan Airlines launching direct flights between Tokyo and Doha, and Qatar Airways resuming direct flights between Osaka and Doha. He said

these enhanced air links are poised to stimulate tourism and increase people-to-people exchanges.

Looking beyond tourism, Maeda underscored the promising investment opportunities in emerging sectors such as semiconductors and batteries, aligning with Japan's aim to double inward foreign direct investment by 2030. He expressed optimism for increased collaboration in these areas.

He pointed out that the increasing defence relationship is equally significant, citing the first Qatar-Japan Military-to-Military Dialogue, held in Doha in November 2023, along with the Qatar-Japan Defence Ministerial Meeting in

Singapore in June. These, including the recent visit of the Japanese Self-Defence destroyer "Murasame" to Doha Port, all underline the deepening security co-operation between the two nations.

About the progress of the strategic partnership, Maeda said: "The level of progress is exceptional. The strategic partnership is yielding tangible results across multiple sectors, demonstrating the strength and breadth of our collaboration."

He acknowledged the long-standing energy partnership as a cornerstone of the relationship, yet stressing that the current dynamism is driven by a diversification into new, high-growth areas.

About the upcoming third strategic dialogue, the envoy confirmed that Doha will host the session. While a date is yet to be set, he expressed confidence that it will take place soon. He said the dialogue will focus on building upon the strong foundation laid by Prime Minister Kishida and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani in July 2023.

"Regular discussions are being held between our high officials to further strengthen relations in a wide range of areas including bilateral co-operation on regional developments, economic ties, policy dialogue on security issues, and cultural exchange," Maeda added.

## Mathaf Artists' Residence to host 'Sensory Experience'

In an innovative artistic step aimed at enhancing empathy for the deaf and blind, Mathaf: Artists' Residence will host today the "Sensory Experience" event, designed by Qatari artist Noura al-Shahwani.

The event will continue until November 25, in Mathaf Studios 101 and 104, where visitors will have a unique opportunity to explore a world without sight or sound through an influential and distinctive artistic experience.

The event will be held daily from Saturday to Thursday from 9am to 7pm, while its doors will open on Friday from 1:30pm to 7pm. Entry is free and open to all ages. Through this event, Noura al-Shahwani seeks to enrich visitors' awareness of the experiences of the sensory impairment, through a series of activities that focus on sensing emotions and



appreciating life beyond traditional senses.

The event will be a stimulating event for emotions, and to enhance human understanding of life from a different perspective. This project is part of Mathaf's commitment to providing innovative artistic platforms that highlight social and humanitarian issues, using art as a means of expression and communication.

## QNB platinum sponsor of EuroCHRIE conference 2024

QNB Group announced its Platinum Sponsorship of the 2024 Annual EuroCHRIE Conference organised by the EuroCHRIE (European Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education) Association held at Al Rayyan International University College campus.

This sponsorship aligns with QNB's strategy to support Qatar's status as a global hub for major international events, including hospitality and tourism and implementing its CSR commitments to support the national economy and the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Heba al-Tamimi, senior executive vice-president at QNB Group Communications said: "We're delighted to be sponsoring this prestigious annual event and reaffirming our commitment to supporting hospitality and tourism as a priority sector integral to diversifying Qatar's economy. This sponsorship comes as part of the bank's comprehensive strategy to promote the rich culture of Qatar through this unique platform where



This sponsorship aligns with QNB's strategy to support Qatar's status as a global hub for major international events.

hospitality innovation meets cultural experiences."

The EuroCHRIE Conference is one of the most anticipated events in the field of hospitality and tourism education, attracting academics, researchers, industry professionals, and students from across Europe and around the world. This year's event featured a diverse range

of presentations, workshops, and panel discussions on key topics in the hospitality and tourism industry, including trends, innovations, best practices, and future challenges. It serves as a platform for networking and collaboration, fostering meaningful connections between industry professionals and academic leaders.

## US embassy celebrates milestone in new embassy compound construction

The US embassy in Qatar celebrated a key milestone in the construction of its new embassy compound with a "Topping Out" ceremony recently, marking the successful completion of the structural concrete work for the chancery building. This significant event recognises two years of dedicated work and collaboration in completing the main structure of the embassy.

The "Topping Out" ceremony is a time-honoured tradition in construction, symbolising the completion of a building's core structure. In the presence of Jassim Mohammed al-Asmakh, director of the Department of American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, US ambassador Timmy Davis, and other key project stakeholders, took part in the ceremonial placing of the final bucket of structural concrete into the Chancery.

Ambassador Davis addressed the gathering, emphasising the strong partnership between the United States and Qatar and the crucial role the Qatari government and local entities have played in the project's success. "The new embassy will enhance US-Qatari diplomatic, security, and commercial relations, serving as a hub for collaboration and engagement. Looking to the future, this facility will further strengthen new avenues for collaboration and promote peace and prosperity for both our nations," said the US ambassador. In addition to his remarks,



Jassim Mohammed al-Asmakh and US ambassador Timmy Davis at the function.

ambassador Davis poured the final bucket of concrete, further marking the completion of this important phase in the project's development. The new Chancery building, expected to open in 2026, will serve as a symbol of the continued co-operation between the United States and Qatar. The project is a testament to the close ties between the two nations and the shared commitment to mutual progress and diplomacy.

## Ajyal 2024 to spotlight storytelling sessions

Ajyal Film Festival 2024, presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), will host renowned Palestinian actress Hiam Abbass and acclaimed filmmaker and photographer Misan Harriman in this year's Ajyal Spotlight sessions, bringing their powerful perspectives on the intersection of storytelling and social change to young audiences. Ajyal Spotlight honours storytellers who inspire change and aligned with this year's theme of Moments that Matter, the two influential voices featured bring an unyielding commitment to storytelling as a force for change. Their shared insights and personal journeys will inspire young audiences to explore the transformative power of art as a catalyst for understanding, compassion and empathy.

In a press statement, DFI CEO and festival director Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "Through their work, both Hiam Abbass and Misan Harriman have embodied the potential of creative voices to challenge perspectives, inspire positive change, and foster deeper cultural understanding". Abbass is one of the most recognisable voices in global cinema. Born in Nazareth and raised in Deir Hanna, her career spans continents, cultures, and decades. Harriman, a Nigerian-born photographer, creative director, and founder of 'What We See', has carved a unique space in the world of photography.



### U.S. Embassy Doha Online Auction

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### QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY

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#### QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-6000001960	CARRYING OUT GENERAL MAINTENANCE WORKS AT QAFCO RESIDENTIAL AREA AND DOHA OFFICE	500/- (Non-refundable)	2,110,000.00/- (two million one hundred ten thousand)	10.11.2024 11.11.2024 12.11.2024 13.11.2024 14.11.2024 17.11.2024 18.11.2024	19-12-2024

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
  - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
  - IBAN : **QA51QNBAA00000000013025828058**
  - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) or on 44227797
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Tender Office, between 09:30 - 11 :00 hours during the Holy month of Ramadan and 09:30 - 11:30 hours and 12:30 - 14:00 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".



### Qatar Chemical Company Limited

Al Dafna - Amwal Tower - First Floor  
P.O. 24646 Doha / Qatar - Tel. 44847111 - Fax 44847695  
Website: [www.qchem.com.qa](http://www.qchem.com.qa)

#### ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDERS

No.	Document No.	Description	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1.	QC/TC/COM/78/24	Freight Forwarding Services for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II and RLOC	QR 2,411,500/-	12:00 hrs on 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2024
<b>Brief Scope:</b> Company requires the services of an experienced Freight Forwarding Contractor to carry out a Worldwide Freight Forwarding & Expediting Services on Call-Off Basis, i.e., as and when required by the Company. This includes all modes of transportation such as air, ocean, overland except the Courier services.				
2.	QC/TC/ENV/86/24	Hazardous Waste, Healthcare Waste Transportation and Incineration Services on Call Off basis for Q-Chem, Q-Chem II, RLOC and RLP	QR 500,500/-	12:00 hrs on 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Brief Scope:</b> The scope includes collecting hazardous waste and healthcare waste from Company facilities and dispose it at its approved facility. Contractor shall submit to Company a valid consent to operate permit for the incineration facility, duly issued by Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) and a valid transportation permit for hazardous waste and healthcare waste.				

Tender Documents for the above description can be obtained as follows:

**A. Pay to Bank and send the original receipt with authorization letter via email**  
For each tender pay a **non-refundable document fee of QR 1,000/-** Payable to Q-Chem, Bank Account (Contract Services - Tender) - Account Number 001-242007-003 with HSBC Bank) and submit the original receipt with an Authorization letter on Tenderer Company Letterhead with ID copy of the Tenderer representative via email to [tadvertising@qchem.com.qa](mailto:tadvertising@qchem.com.qa) In the authorization letter Tenderer shall nominate a single focal point with contact mobile number, **official email address**, office number, fax number for the communications related to this tender for the transfer and receipt of the tender documents. **The Bank receipt must indicate the tender number and the tenderer name (company name).**

**B. Date and Time of Tender documents Issuance via email**  
Tender documents issuance from **10<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 8am-12noon**

**C. Proposal details**  
Proposals should be valid for **240 days** from the tender closing date.

**D. Submission of Proposals**  
Guidelines for Electronic Bids Submission is attached in the Tender documents.

# Iran urges Trump to change 'maximum pressure' policy

AFP  
Tehran

Iran signalled an openness towards Donald Trump yesterday, calling on the US president-elect to adopt new policies towards it after Washington accused Tehran of involvement in a plot to kill him.

Vice-President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif urged Trump to reassess the policy of "maximum pressure" he employed against the Islamic republic during his first term.

"Trump must show that he is not following the wrong policies

of the past," Zarif told reporters.

His remarks came after the US accused Iran of conspiring to assassinate Trump.

**DENIES PLOT**

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday called the accusations "fabricated" in a post of social media platform X.

"As a killer does not exist in reality, scriptwriters are brought in to manufacture a third-rate comedy," Araghchi said of the US claims.

Earlier, his ministry described the accusations as "totally unfounded".

Tehran and Washington severed diplomatic relations shortly

after the revolution in 1979.

Zarif, a veteran diplomat who previously served as foreign minister, helped to seal the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and Western powers, including the US.

However, the deal was torpedoed in 2018 after the US unilaterally withdrew from the deal under Trump, who later reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

In response, Iran rolled back its obligations under the deal and has since enriched uranium up to 60%, just 30% lower than nuclear-grade.

Iran has consistently pushed back against Western accusa-

tions that it was pursuing nuclear weapons.

Araghchi in his post said: "Iran is not after nuclear weapons, period." "This is a policy based on religious teachings and our security calculations," he added.

Zarif said that it was Trump's political approach towards Iran that led to the surge in enrichment levels.

"He must have realised that the maximum pressure policy that he initiated caused Iran's enrichment to reach 60% from 3.5%, and increased its centrifuges," he said.

"As a man of calculation, he should do the maths and see

what the advantages and disadvantages of this policy have been, and whether he wants to continue or change this harmful policy," Zarif added.

Iran insists that it uses nuclear technology for safe and civilian purposes.

During his first term, Trump also ordered the killing of revered Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani, who led the IRGC foreign operations arm, the Quds Force.

Soleimani was killed in a drone strike while he was in the Iraqi capital Baghdad in January 2020.

On Tuesday, election day in the US, Trump told reporters he was

"not looking to do damage to Iran".

"My terms are very easy. They can't have a nuclear weapon. I'd like them to be a very successful country," he said after casting his ballot.

On Thursday, foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said he hoped the president-elect's return to power would allow Washington to "revise the wrong approaches of the past", although he avoided mentioning Trump by name.

Trump's election victory came after Iran and Israel attacked each other directly, raising fears of a further regional spillover of the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon.

## Iran foreign minister warns of risk of 'expansion of war' beyond Middle East

AFP  
Tehran

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday warned that the wars in Gaza and Lebanon, where Israel is battling Tehran-backed groups, could spill over beyond the Middle East.

"The world should know that in case of the expansion of war, its harmful effects will not be limited only to the West Asia region; insecurity and instability can spread to other regions, even far away," Araghchi said in speech aired on state TV.

Israel has been waging a devastating war in the Gaza Strip against Palestinian group Hamas since it launched its shock storming of Israel in October 2023.

Israel has more recently shifted its focus to Lebanon, where it has been engaged in full-fledged battle since September with Hezbollah, a Lebanese group which is fi-

nancially and militarily supported by the Islamic republic.

On October 26, Israel conducted air strikes on military sites in Iran in response to Tehran's October 1 attack on Israel, itself retaliation for the killing of fighter group leaders and a Revolutionary Guards general.

Iranian officials said Israel's October 26 attack killed four soldiers and resulted in "limited damage" to radar systems. Iranian media also reported that a civilian was killed. Tehran has since vowed to retaliate despite the US and Israel's warning against it.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has maintained that a potential ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon could affect Iran's response.

"If they (the Israelis)... accept a ceasefire and stop massacring the oppressed and innocent people of the region, it could affect the intensity and type of our response," Pezeshkian said early this month.

# Famine looming in north Gaza: UN-backed report

AFP  
Rome

Famine is looming in the northern Gaza Strip amid increased hostilities and a near-halt in food aid, a UN-backed assessment said yesterday.

Israeli forces have intensified their operations in large swathes of devastated northern Gaza since early October, where evacuation orders are in place.

Aid shipments allowed to enter the Gaza Strip were now lower than at any time since October 2023, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report.

The alert from the Famine Review Committee warned of "an imminent and substantial likelihood of famine occurring, due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip".

On October 17, the body projected that the number of people in Gaza facing "catastrophic" food insecurity between November and April 2025 would reach 345,000, or 16% of the population.

The IPC report classified that figure as Phase 5 — a situation when "starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident".

Since that report, conditions have worsened in the north of Gaza, with a collapse of food systems, a drop in humanitarian aid and critical water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, the committee said.

"It can therefore be assumed that starvation, malnutrition, and excess mortality due to malnutrition and disease, are rapidly



Palestinians stand at the site of an Israeli strike on a tent housing displaced people, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

increasing in these areas," it read.

The Israeli military yesterday questioned the UN-back report's credibility.

"To date, all assessments by the IPC have proven incorrect and inconsistent with the situation on the ground," the army said in a statement, denouncing "partial, biased data and superficial sources with vested interests".

Access to food continues to

deteriorate, with prices of essentials on the black market soaring. Cooking gas rose by 2,612%, diesel by 1,315% and wood by 250%, it said.

"Concurrent with the extremely high and increasing prices of essential items has been the total collapse of livelihoods to be able to purchase or barter for food and other basic needs," said the alert.

The body expressed concern

over Israel's cutting ties last month with the UN aid agency for Palestinians (UNRWA), warning of "extremely serious consequences for humanitarian operations" in Gaza.

The US — Israel's biggest supporter — has given Israel until November 13 to improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip or risk the withholding of some American military assistance.

### UNSC sanctions two Sudan paramilitary chiefs

The UN Security Council has added two Sudanese paramilitary officers to the list of individuals sanctioned because of their actions in the fighting there, the council's British presidency announced, AFP reported. It singled out Abdul Rahman Juma, a major general with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and its west Sudan commander; and Major General Osman Mohamed Hamid Mohamed, who heads RSF operations. The two were being sanctioned "following ethnically motivated attacks and atrocities in Sudan," the British mission at the UN said on X. A special Security Council committee with representatives of all 15 member countries makes decisions on such sanctions matters. The conflict in Sudan pits the regular army, under Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the RSF, led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo. It has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced more than 11mn, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

## Jordan's tourism industry struggles amid war

Reuters  
Petra/London

Enas al-Hinti has cut staff pay in half and asked workers to take unpaid leave in an effort to keep her hotel in ancient Petra open as Western holidaymakers fearful of conflict shun destinations in the Middle East.

A crisis across the region's tourism industry since the start of the Israel-Hamas war 13 months ago is being felt acutely in Jordan, whose border with Israel along the Red Sea and Dead Sea is studded with beach resorts.

Sites such as Petra, Wadi Rum and crusader castles have been drawing visitors for decades — more than 1mn a year before the war, mainly Americans and Europeans. But Reuters reporters on a recent trip to the city carved from rose-coloured rock — Jordan's most-visited tourist attraction — found businesses boarded up by their owners.

"There are no revenues, it's all losses," al-Hinti, who runs the Nomads hotel, told Reuters. Data and interviews with seven hotel and business owners and tour operators underline the damage to the tourist industry, which last year made up 12.5% of the economy.

Flight ticket bookings to Jordan, which is not involved in the conflict, were down 35% year-on-year between Sept 16 and Oct 4, data from travel intelligence firm ForwardKeys shows.

The situation has worsened since Iran's drone strike attack on Israel in April and following tit-for-tat military strikes between Israel and Iran, said Seif Saudi, the managing director of Amman-based Direct Tours.

"Things were starting to look up for October, but the second attack erased all those gains." The tourist industry across the Middle East is struggling. Flight book-



Visitors walk near the treasury site in the ancient city of Petra, Jordan.

ings to the region are down 6% year-on-year since the war erupted after Hamas-led fighters stormed Israel in the first week of October 2023, ForwardKeys data shows.

Bookings to Israel and Lebanon fell even more sharply than those to Jordan between Sept 16 and Oct 4, while Oman, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have seen smaller declines.

The recent regional escalation of the conflict, including intensified Israeli attacks on Lebanon's Hezbollah armed group, has dashed hopes for a recovery in the cooler autumn months, a key season for Middle East tourism.

International tour groups like Intrepid and Riviera Travel said they cancelled tours to Jordan and Egypt after Iran showered Israel with ballistic missiles on Oct 1.

Hotel occupancy rates in Petra have fallen on average to as low as 10%, estimates Abdullah Hasanat, president of the Petra Hotels Association.

"We are searching for a saviour. All the investments in Petra are in intensive care. When tourism stopped, bookings stopped," Hasanat, who owns a hotel himself, told Reuters. Most international carriers have halted flights to Beirut and Tel Aviv, but some, such as Ryanair, have also paused flights to Jordan, in part due to its

proximity to Israeli and Lebanese airspace.

Hotel owners said Ryanair's decision in particular meant far fewer Western tourists came to the country. Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary told Reuters in October it was a "sensible" move given the closure of airspace at the time.

Business owners say the damage will be long-term. Future bookings have evaporated, forcing hotel managers like al-Hinti to dip into their financial reserves to continue paying salaries. She is keeping her hotel open, but with fewer floors available.

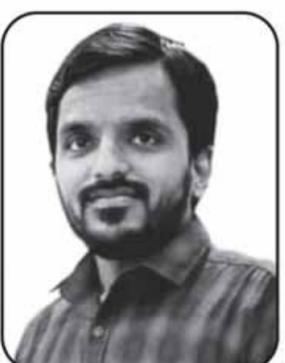
Jordan's tourism sector has survived previous crises related to the prolonged conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, Tourism Minister Lina Annab told Reuters.

"This calls for us to really focus on our most resilient markets, which are not as affected by the situation," Annab said, adding that visitors are still coming from neighbouring countries.

Some Western tourists are undeterred too. "We knew that the trip would be cancelled if it was really risky," said Dorothy Lawson, a tourist from California, walking around Petra in late October. "They said we could come. So we came and we're really glad we did." But businesses that rely on big crowds are struggling to survive.

**CONDOLENCES**

The Vicars, Managing Committee and Members of  
**Malankara Orthodox Church, Doha**  
Deeply mourn the sad demise of



**Richu Paul Zachariah (33)**  
Munjattu Malayil, Angadical South, Chengannur

**Who entered into eternal rest on 08.11.2024**

We express our heartfelt condolences to  
all his family members

Funeral service held at St. Marys Orthodox Cathedral,  
Puthencavu, Chenganoor on Saturday 9th November 2024.

*May Almighty God rest his soul in eternal peace,  
and give grace and fortitude to the bereaved family to  
bear this irreparable loss.*



## Palestinian, Lebanese support gatherings in South Africa



Pro-Palestinian and Lebanon demonstrators hold placards during a protest outside the Israeli embassy in Pretoria, yesterday.



## New militant group kills 15 in Nigeria village attack

AFP  
Kano

Gunmen killed 15 people in an attack on a northwest Nigerian village, officials confirmed yesterday, amid reports of a newly arrived militant group operating in the area.

The deputy governor of Kebbi State said Friday's assault on Mera, around 50 kilometres from the Niger border, had been carried out by "unknown gunmen".

But the latest massacre came after officials warned that a group known as "Lakurawa", thought to hail from Mali and Niger, had crossed into Nigeria.

Kebbi's deputy governor, Umar Tafida, and senior security officials attended funeral prayers for the 15 victims in Mera yesterday, his office said in a statement.

Nigeria has been plagued by armed violence since the 2009 emergence of the Boko Haram group in the Lake Chad basin, in the northeast of the country.

Various groups have split from or emerged alongside the insurgency, notorious for several mass kidnappings of school girls, despite a military crackdown.

Armed bandits and kidnap gangs have also spread chaos across the region, alongside sometimes bloody conflicts between farming communities and nomadic herders.

The unrest has spread to northwest Nigeria and contributed to a looming famine, which UN agencies say could see 33mn people facing "acute food insecurity" by next year.

On Tuesday, Idris Muhammad Gobir, the deputy governor of Kebbi's neighbour Sokoto State, briefed the federal military on the emergence of the Lakurawa group.

Gobir said "the group possessed sophisticated weapons and their criminal activities were observed in about five local government areas of the state".

The group arrived two months ago and settled near the bor-

der with Niger. From there, it launches attacks on remote villages, rustling herds and imposing a tax on communities, according to Isa Salihu Kalenjeni, the political administrator of Tangaza district.

The group has also set up camps in Tsauni forest, which stretches into Niger.

It preaches to local communities, encouraging them to rebel against secular authorities, while imposing its own strict interpretation of sharia law, Kalenjeni added.

The group recruits young men in the villages by giving them seed money to set up various trades, he said.

In Friday's attack, members of the group invaded Mera, seizing seized farm animals while residents were at the mosque for Friday prayers.

Bashir Isah, a community leader in Mera, said villagers mobilised to defend their herds but lost 15 residents in a battle with better-armed militants.

## South Sudan floods affect 1.4mn, displace 379,000: UN

AFP  
Nairobi

Devastating flooding in South Sudan is affecting around 1.4mn people, with more than 379,000 displaced, according to a UN update that warned about an upsurge in malaria.

Aid agencies have said that the world's youngest country, highly vulnerable to climate change, is in the grip of its worst flooding in decades, mainly in the north.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said about 1.4mn people were affected by floods in 43 counties and the disputed Abyei region, which is claimed by both South Sudan and Sudan.

"Over 379,000 individuals are displaced in 22 counties and Abyei," it added in a statement issued late on Friday.

A surge in malaria has been re-

ported in several states, it said, "overwhelming the health system and exacerbating the situation and impact in flood-hit areas".

Since gaining independence from Sudan in 2011, the world's youngest nation has remained plagued by chronic instability, violence and economic stagnation as well as climate disasters such as drought and floods. The World Bank said last month that the latest floods were "worsening an already critical humanitarian situation marked by severe food insecurity, economic decline, continued conflict, disease outbreaks, and the repercussions of the Sudan conflict", which has seen several hundred thousand people pour into South Sudan.

More than 7mn people are food insecure in South Sudan and 1.65mn children are malnourished, according to the UN's World Food Programme.

The country also faces another period of political paralysis after the president's office announced

in September yet another extension to a transitional period agreed in a 2018 peace deal, delaying elections by two years to December 2026. Key provisions of the transitional agreement remain unfulfilled – including the creation of a constitution and the unification of the rival forces of President Salva Kiir and his foe Reik Machar.

The delay has left South Sudan's partners and the UN exasperated, with UN envoy Nicholas Haysom on Thursday describing it as a "regrettable development".

All local and international parties involved "must collectively seize the opportunity to make this extension the last, and deliver the peace and democracy that the people of South Sudan deserve," added Haysom.

South Sudan boasts plentiful oil resources but the vital source of revenue was decimated in February when an export pipeline was damaged in neighbouring war-torn Sudan.

## Nigeria's Tinubu to call for Gaza ceasefire

Reuters  
Lagos

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu will call for an immediate ceasefire and peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict when he attends the upcoming Arab-Islamic summit in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh, his office said yesterday.



File photo of Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"Nigeria will also advocate for renewed efforts to revive the

two-state solution as a pathway for lasting peace in the region," said presidential spokesperson Bayo Onanuga.

The yearly summit, due to start on Nov 11, is held at the invitation of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Nigeria is a member of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation and it is invited in that capacity.

## Iraqi PM urges Trump to 'work towards ending' Mideast wars

AFP  
Baghdad

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed S al-Sudani expressed hopes during a phone call with US President-elect Donald Trump that he would keep his "promises to work towards ending wars" in the Middle East.

Amid Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon, Sudani – who was named premier by a majority bloc of political factions – has been in a delicate balancing act to ensure his country is not drawn into the fighting.

In the phone call, the Iraqi premier pointed to Trump's "campaign statements and promises to work towards ending wars in the region", a statement from

Sudani's office said late Friday. "The two sides agreed to co-ordinate efforts in achieving this goal," it added.

About 2,500 American troops are deployed in Iraq as part of a US-led coalition that was formed to help battle the Islamic State group.

Bases hosting the American troops have been the target of dozens of rocket and drone attacks launched by groups in Iraq, which have also claimed attacks against Israel.

Baghdad has for years called on Washington to provide a clear timeline for the withdrawal of their remaining coalition troops.

The US and Iraq announced in late September that the international coalition would end its decade-long military mission in federal Iraq within a year, and by September 2026 in the autonomous Kurdistan region.

## Senegal's urban cycling trend offers chance to boost green transport

Reuters  
Dakar

Doctor Philip Moreira's commute to hospital on an electric bicycle is a dangerous, smog-infused weave through the chaotic traffic of Senegal's capital Dakar.

Moreira, 58, is part of a small but budding community of urban cyclists that have become a more common sight in recent years, zipping around Dakar's gridlock for exercise and fun, signalling a shift in the city's transport dynamics.

Cycling groups have never had so many members, and say authorities are not doing enough to turn the growing interest in bicycles into plans to reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

Moreira's club "Velo Passion" saw its memberships double to over 500 in the last five years.

Yet many of Dakar's cyclists still venture out only on weekends when traffic is lighter, due to concerns about poor infrastructure and reckless driving.

"Between cars that cut in front of you and those who honk at you relentlessly, it can be very difficult," said Moreira, recalling a close call with a bus.

As African leaders push for more funding for climate solutions



Bicycle enthusiasts take part in their usual weekend ride in Dakar, Senegal. **Right:** Bike instructors from InstaBike School assist women in learning to ride a bicycle during their training session in Dakar.

ahead of COP29 next week, campaigners in Senegal say improving road safety and government-led cycling campaigns would get more people to switch away from cars – a cost-effective way to meet emission targets.

"You may not be able to convince people used to blasting AC in their SUVs," said campaigner Baye Cheikh Sow. "But you can target the new generation." According to a 2022 UN Environment

Programme report, Africa has the highest global average of walking and cycling at 56 minutes per person per day, compared to the global average of 43.9 minutes.

But this is not being retained as cities and incomes grow, because urban transport and status are biased towards motorised vehicles.

The rapid and often unregulated expansion of African cities has also turned the continent into the deadliest for cyclists and pedes-

trians, according to UNEP.

"In the African context we have a modal share of active mobility that countries in Europe would love to have...because people don't have a choice," said Carly Gilbert-Patrick, who leads the UNEP team for active mobility.

**MORE CYCLING LANES**  
In an effort to meet the growing demand for sustainable urban mobility, Senegal is among a few African nations that have incor-

porated cycling into their plans.

Dakar's urban transport agency CETUD aims to construct a 175-kilometre integrated cycling lane network by 2035. However, the opening of the first 12-kilometre section has been delayed for several months, raising scepticism among the cycling community.

CETUD acknowledged via e-mail that existing cycling infrastructure was inadequate, and that the government still had no

policy to encourage urban cycling.

On a scorching Sunday, visibly irritated drivers were stopped to make way for cyclists racing in a loop on a highway outside Dakar.

Guisse Mohammed, a 39-year-old pharmacist who rarely misses Sunday outings on his sports bike, still drives to work for safety reasons. "I have been thinking about buying a city bike," he said. "Having more cycling lanes could be a motivation."



## North Korea jams GPS signals, affecting ships, aircraft in South

AFP  
Seoul

North Korea staged GPS jamming attacks on Friday and yesterday, an operation that was affecting several ships and dozens of civilian aircraft in South Korea, Seoul's military said.

The jamming allegations come about a week after the North test-fired what it said was its most advanced and powerful solid-fuel ICBM missile, its first such launch since being accused of sending soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine.

The South fired its own ballistic missile into the sea on Friday in a show of force aimed at demonstrating its resolve to respond to "any North Korean provocations".

"North Korea conducted GPS jamming provocations in Haeju and Kaesong yesterday (Friday) and today (Saturday)," Seoul's joint chiefs of staff said in a statement, adding several vessels and dozens of civilian aircraft were experiencing "some operational disruptions".

The military warned ships and aircraft operating in the Yellow Sea to beware of such attacks.

"We strongly urge North Korea to immediately cease its GPS provocations and warn that it will be held responsible for any subsequent issues arising from this," they said in the statement.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with the North launching a flurry of ballistic missiles in violation of UN sanctions.

It also has been bombarding the South with trash-carrying balloons since May, in what it says is retaliation for anti-Pyongyang propaganda mis-sives sent North by activists.

The South Korean military said Pyongyang also attempted to jam GPS signals in May, but added at the time that it did not hinder any military operations in the South.

In Friday's drill, South Korea fired a Hyunmoo surface-to-surface short-range missile into the



A general view shows houses in the countryside outside the North Korean city of Kaesong, seen across the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) from the Ganghwa Peace Observatory, on the South Korean island of Ganghwa on Friday.

West Sea, which the military said was to show Seoul's "strong resolve to firmly respond" to any North Korean threats.

The Hyunmoo missiles are key to the country's so-called 'Kill Chain' preemptive strike system, which allows Seoul to launch an attack if there are signs of an imminent North Korean attack.

Experts say such jamming attacks can lead to other incidents that could escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula.

"It remains unclear whether there is an intention to divert the world's attention from troop deployments, instil psychological insecurity among residents in the South, or respond to Friday's drills," Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, told AFP.

"However, GPS jamming attacks pose a real risk of serious incidents, including potential aircraft accidents in the worst-case scenario," Ahn Chan-il, a defector-turned-researcher who runs the World Institute for North Korea Studies, told AFP the North's jamming could be "to shield their own communications and intelligence exchanges during critical military operations" both at home and abroad.

## China's Xi hails 'new chapter' in relations with Indonesia

AFP  
Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping told his Indonesian counterpart that Beijing hopes for a "new chapter" in bilateral relations, as the two leaders met yesterday.

Xi held talks with President Prabowo Subianto in Beijing, the first stop of the Indonesian leader's inaugural foreign tour since he took office in October.

China is keen to work with Indonesia to "write a new chapter of joint self-reliance, solidarity and cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win results as major developing countries", Xi told Prabowo in front of journalists.

Beijing and Jakarta are key economic allies, with Chinese companies ploughing money into extracting Indonesian natural resources in recent years, particularly the nickel sector.

But the two countries have sparred verbally over disputed claims in the South China Sea.

Prabowo said that the relationship between the two countries was "getting stronger and stronger".

"I would like to reiterate our commitment...to work together for the mutual benefit of our two peoples and for the prosperity, peace and stability of all of Asia," he added.

Xi held a welcome ceremony for Prabowo at Beijing's Great Hall of the People yesterday.

After their talks, officials from the two countries signed a series of documents including memorandums of understanding on maritime safety and water resources co-operation.

Prabowo, who landed in China on Friday, is also meeting Premier Li Qiang and number three official Zhao Leji during his trip, which ends today.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto attend a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.

He will travel onwards to Washington, at the invitation of US President Joe Biden, as part of a world tour which will also include Peru, Brazil and Britain.

Prabowo has pledged to stick to Jakarta's traditionally non-aligned foreign policy while making the world's fourth-most populous nation more active abroad.

Confrontations over what Indonesia says are Chinese incursions into its territorial waters have weighed on the trading partners' relationship in recent years.

In 2020, Indonesia deployed fighter jets and warships to patrol around the Natuna islands in the South China Sea after Chinese vessels entered the area.

Last month, Indonesia said it drove Chinese coast guard ships from contested waters in the South China Sea on three separate occasions.

Indonesia says it is trying to

stop foreign vessels from fishing in its waters, costing the economy billions of dollars annually.

Huge unexploited oil and gas deposits are believed to lie under the South China Sea, though estimates vary greatly.

Beijing has for years sought to expand its presence in the contested waters, brushing aside an international ruling that its claim to most of the waterway has no legal basis.

It has built artificial islands armed with missile systems and runways for fighter jets, and deployed vessels that the Philippines says harass its ships and block its fishers.

The recent confrontations were an early test for Prabowo, who has pledged to bolster the defence of Indonesian territory.

Prabowo has promised to be bolder on foreign policy than his predecessor Joko Widodo, who focused more on domestic issues.



### Child onboard

A woman rides a cart with a child onboard at the back of the cart in Beijing yesterday.

# Qatar Talks 2024: A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The eagerly awaited Annual Communication Championship has spoken, and Qatar has its new Champion Speakers!

In the Adult's Inspirational speech segment, Pooja George claimed the Champions title as she wove her coherent speech around the title, "Circle of life". How she dealt with the situation when she became the parent of her parents.

The 2nd place Winner, Mahmoud Reda, articulate speech titled "The power of an unexpected turn" in his trademark style his enthusiastic voice spoke about his struggles during the initial days of his career and how he got his dream job because of his strong determination.

The 3rd place Winner, Fawad Abdul Wahed Kasu, speech titled "Journey of the Best" enthused everyone by sharing his real-life anecdote. In his speech around the theme,

of her dance performance. She believes in chasing her passion and gave the message to the audience don't stop dreaming. Turn your nightmares into your greatest strength.

2nd place Winner had an inspiring story to boot. Fathima Noreen Nusair from Shantiniketan Indian School speech titled "Ready, set Accelerate". Are you ready to accelerate to speed up your life?

The 3rd place went to Anaswara Anil from DPS Monarch International School, with the speech titled "The Cake beneath the candles". She talked about her life challenges. She gave the message that life will come with candles, choice is yours take the courage to learn from your past blows.

The contests were launched in 2004 by the Founder Convener M.I. Farid. The Qatar Talks erstwhile known as



THE ADULT INSPIRATIONAL CHAMPION MS. POOJA GEORGE WITH HER TROPHY AND GIFTS.



THE ADULT INSPIRATIONAL WINNERS WITH THEIR TROPHIES AND GIFTS ALONG WITH JUDGES AND ORGANIZERS.



THE YOUTH HUMOROUS CHAMPION MS. MARIA ALESSANDRA WITH HER TROPHY AND GIFTS.



YOUTH HUMOROUS WINNERS WITH THEIR TROPHIES AND GIFTS ALONG WITH JUDGES AND ORGANIZERS.



THE ADULT HUMOROUS CHAMPION MR. MAHMOUD MOHAMMED REDA WITH HIS TROPHY AND GIFTS.



THE ADULT HUMOROUS WINNERS WITH THEIR TROPHIES AND GIFTS ALONG WITH JUDGES AND ORGANIZERS.



THE YOUTH INSPIRATIONAL CHAMPION MS. DIVNEET KAUR SARIN WITH HER TROPHY AND GIFTS.



THE YOUTH INSPIRATIONAL WINNERS WITH THEIR TROPHIES AND GIFTS ALONG WITH JUDGES AND ORGANIZERS.



THE QATAR TALKS 2024 - ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

there is no exact time to achieve your goals. A True fighter will keep trying until he achieves his goal.

The adult's Humorous Champion was Mahmoud Reda. He delivered funny incidents about his India visit and how he became very famous among his students by singing Hindi songs being an Egyptian. His speech was titled "Wake Up! You are going to India".

The 2nd place Winner Sheeja Anis delivered her speech under the title "The nuts who drive me crazy". She shared a humorous account how her family deals with situations and funny incidents about her kids and husband. There is no return back policy in her marriage.

The 3rd place Winner, Swetha Raghuraman, delivered a funny treatise in her speech titled "The one and only". Being Single, She shared few incidents where few men approached her for marriage and how she divided them in different categories and is still waiting for her one and only. Eventually the wishes come to true those who wait for that.

The Youth speech contests this year brought us confident students with innumerable talents. Of them, all the champions stood out.

In the Humorous speech contest, Maria Alessandra B. Endaya from Philippine International School was declared the Champion speaker. A funny take on Maria's title "Down to earth". How she got benefits because of her short height and what are the disadvantages she faced.

The 2nd place Winner, Jitesh Adhitya from M.E.S Indian School with the title "Comedy of errors" talked about his school experiences and his parent's expectation from him in a humorous account.

The 3rd place Winner, Hiba Nasir from Bright Future International School had nailed with a catchy speech titled "Women Drivers". She talked about her funny experiences with different women drivers, her mother and aunt and how they deal with strange situations while driving.

In the Youth Inspirational speech contest, the Champion's trophy was claimed by Divneet Kaur Sarin from Doha British School, with the speech title "Dancing between dreams and nightmares". She shared her personal experience

ICC ONE Communication Championships has inspired more than 2000 Qatar residents to explore their public speaking skills and have been received with much gusto throughout Qatar.

This event is an acknowledgement of the International Competent Communicator's Social Commitment towards promoting public speaking in Qatar. Participation in the Adults category is open to all residents above 18 years of age and in the Youth category through schools who are invited to send 2 participants each in both categories. Eliminations are conducted one month before the Finale and six finalists vie for the Champions trophy.

Mr. Muneer Ahamed Sheikh, the Chief Convener, opened the proceedings at Radisson Blu, Ms. Diana Eid the engaging Master of Ceremony navigated the Championships with her vibrance and presence of mind. She was ably supported by the Contest chairs, Hanna Safardokht, Hamad Al-Nesf, Didric Ferrer, Tarrío Dorcas Matibri and the timing team.

At the scintillating Prize Distribution Ceremony the Trophies and Lucky Draw Prizes were given away by Adnan Adel Shehab, Ahmad Rahmatollah, Daneiella, Dennis Mujana, Anastasia Gavrilova, Dr.Wafaa Ammar, Farzana Lone, Heshmi Hamadi, ManzoorMoideen, Anwar Ghanim, Easton Phidd, Elavan Adiyaman, Georgina Phidd, Ollancio Soares, Sindhu Nair, Pavel Tzenkov and Muhammad Aboushala.

Silver Sponsors STARLINK had a computerized draw giving away 5 Android phones.

A Bonus draw was arranged by ABN Corporation AL MISNAD MEDICORP giving away 10 General Electric Glucometers.

The event had the announced 10 complimentary Lucky Draw for all attendees.

The event culminated in a sumptuous dinner. All those who attended had only praise for the organization, the quality of speeches, expertise of the Contest Chairs & Master of Ceremonies, the complimentary lucky draws and of course the mouth watering Snacks and Dinner.

# Probe into UK royals' private estates sparks calls for reform

AFP  
London

Britain's royal family is facing calls for more transparency and reform of their private estates after an investigation alleged they have been profiting from public bodies while benefiting from major tax exemptions.

The UK media probe also accused the estates of King Charles III and his eldest son Prince William of making big profits from charities and individual renters while in some cases failing to meet environmental standards. The centuries-old estates – the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall – have made millions of pounds (dollars) from lucrative deals with the publicly-funded National Health Service (NHS) and other cash-strapped ministries, according to the investigation.

Both estates – portfolios of land, property and assets across England and Wales held in trust for the king and his heir – are exempt from paying UK corporation or capital gains taxes. The extent of their holdings and commercial deals, such as lease agreements, is not publicly disclosed.

But the probe by UK television network Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme and *The Sunday Times* claims to have uncovered them for the first time. It has prompted calls for a review by parliament as well as demands by pro-republicans for the duchies to be abolished.

Norman Baker, a former law-

maker from the centrist Liberal Democrats party and longtime royal critic, told AFP the findings confirmed his view that the royals were "taking the public for a ride". "These are Crown lands which belong to the public... all that money should be going into the Crown Estate, which is a public asset," he said.

The royals have long maintained that profits from the duchies fund their public, charitable and private activities. The duchies, owned by the monarchy since the Middle Ages, were not part of a 1760 agreement which sees the monarch's Crown Estate profits surrendered to the government.

Fifteen percent of those profits are returned as a Sovereign Grant, which pays for official engagements, staff salaries and the royal palaces' upkeep. Next year the grant will total £132m (\$171m).

Baker notes the vast private estates were not included in that arrangement because at the time they did not generate much income.

But two centuries on, their assets are worth £1.8bn, with profits topping £50m in 2023, according to their annual reports. It has helped keep Charles on *The Sunday Times* Rich List, which ranks the 1,000 wealthiest people or families in the UK, with an estimated worth of £610m.

Lucrative deals leasing land to the crisis-hit NHS, armed forces, publicly-funded schools, charities and renters have boosted his bottom line, according to the media probe. In one example, Charles' estate will earn nearly

£12m over 15 years storing a new fleet of electric ambulances owned by a London hospital in one of its warehouses. In another, William's estate will net £37.5m over 25 years from the Ministry of Justice for leasing the currently empty Dartmoor Prison.

Graham Smith, head of anti-monarchy pressure group Republic, said the investigation "shows how the duchies are doggedly pursuing profit at every turn, at huge expense to the public and charities". The duchies have denied any wrongdoing. It is not the first time that they have stoked controversy.

In 2006, an influential parliamentary committee pressured the government over why they benefit from major tax exemptions.

Baker said the Public Accounts Committee should refocus on it. "It's only under pressure like that that they'll change," he added. "Unless they're forced into doing something, they won't do it." The former MP believes the royals are "in danger of losing public support big time" over the issue. But David Haigh, head of consultancy firm Brand Finance, argued the duchies are operating like "any large aristocratic family estate".

"Is it really unreasonable for them to expect market rate rents when they rent properties to government agents and departments? In my opinion it's not," Haigh added the estates were "simply acting within the law in the best interests of their private capital," comparing them to successful entrepreneurs like James Dyson and Richard Branson.

## Dublin protests



Students lean out of Trinity College Dublin's windows waving Palestinian flags during a protest calling for the government to impose sanctions on Israel, during a demonstration in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza and Lebanon, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Dublin, Ireland.

## India says oil prices would have rocketed without its Russian imports

## Man jailed for organising boat crossings

AFP  
London

Global oil prices "would have hit the roof" if big importer India had not bought oil from Russia following the Ukraine war, India's oil minister said, adding that prices would determine where the country buys oil from. India, the world's third largest oil importer and consumer, has become the top buyer of discounted Russian sea-borne oil shunned by Western countries since Ukraine's invasion began in early 2022. Before that, India bought little oil from its long-running defence partner, Russia. New Delhi has repeatedly defended its purchases from Russia as necessary to keep prices in check in the developing country of 1.42bn people. "What many around the world don't seem to realise is that global oil prices would have hit the roof if India had not bought oil from Russia," India's oil minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, wrote on X late on Friday. "We owe it to our citizens – India will buy oil from wherever our companies get the best rates."

– Reuters

An Iranian man was jailed for 17 years for organising small boat Channel crossings for migrants to enter the UK, as Britain vows to "smash the gangs" of people smugglers. Amanj Hasan Zada, who called himself "the best smuggler", was found guilty of three counts of facilitating illegal immigration, the National Crime Agency (NCA) said.

He was linked to three small boat crossings of Kurds from northern France in November and December 2023, which the NCA said he organised from his home in Lancashire, northwest England. Zada, 34, used social media to promote his services, including videos of those he had smuggled thanking him.

One video uncovered by investigators showed him being feted in a Kurdish song as "the best smuggler" as he threw cash in the air and fired a gun in celebration.

"Amanj Hasan Zada ran a sophisticated people smuggling enterprise, using social media to advertise his services", said

NCA Branch Commander Martin Clarke. "While we have uncovered evidence directly linking him to three specific crossings, there is no doubt in my mind that he was likely to have been involved in many more."

The conviction came just days after the NCA arrested nine other people in the UK as part of Interpol's largest-ever operation against people smuggling. This week British Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged additional funding to "smash the gangs" behind the crossings, as concerns grow over the number of undocumented migrants making the perilous journey.

Addressing international police chiefs, Starmer said people smuggling was a "global security threat" comparable to global terrorism.

Since coming to power in July, his Labour government has been struggling to make good on election promises to reduce irregular immigration, with over 3,000 people arriving in small boats in the last two weeks.

A total of 133 people crossed into the UK on two boats on Thursday, taking the total so far this year to nearly 32,000.

# Quest welcomes Haribo's first-ever corner in Qatar

The world-renowned candy brand Haribo has officially opened its first corner in Qatar, nestled within the vibrant Time retail store at Quest – Qatar's largest indoor theme park and one of the amazing adventure experiences for all ages at Doha Oasis. This exciting addition marks a new chapter for candy lovers, Haribo fans, and Quest enthusiasts, promising a magical world of iconic sweets and joyful treats.

The newly launched Haribo corner offers Quest visitors a unique experience, where they can explore a wide range of Haribo products, including



favorites like Goldbears, Happy Cola, Starmix, and Chamallows. With a dedicated entrance through Time Quest store, the Haribo corner welcomes all guests looking for a delightful treat, making it an irresistible stop for a sweet escape.

Heiko Engels, General Manager of Quest, expressed his excitement about the launch:

"We are immensely proud to welcome Haribo



to Quest at the heart of Doha Oasis, marking a partnership between two brands committed to creating unforgettable, joyful experiences.

This is a testament to our promise of delivering only the finest to our guests. Together, we are redefining what it means to bring joy, merging the

thrill and wonder of Quest with Haribo's world-class confections. The Haribo corner isn't just an addition for our park guests, it's a treat for the

entire community, offering a delightful experience to all."

The opening of the Haribo corner reflects Quest's commitment to continually enhancing its offerings and creating memorable experiences for everyone. Located within the vibrant Time Quest store, this unique space invites guests not only to explore the world of Haribo but also to discover an exclusive

selection of Quest-branded souvenirs and products. Time Quest isn't just a store; it's an immersive shopping experience where adventure meets nostalgia, making it a must-visit for children, friends, families, and anyone looking to take a piece of Quest magic home with them.

The Haribo Corner is now open, bringing a unique blend of sweetness and joy to visitors in Doha. Step into a world of delicious fun at Qatar's largest indoor theme park, Quest at Doha Oasis. Whether you are here for the thrills or just to indulge, the Haribo Corner awaits right here at Time Quest Store.

# California spearheads new 'Trump resistance'

AFP  
Los Angeles

California is spearheading a new resistance to the incoming Donald Trump administration that will test the power of Democratic states to battle mass deportation, defend reproductive rights and combat climate change. Trump's sweeping election victory this week came off the back of promises to swiftly expel millions of illegal immigrants and roll back nationwide environmental protections. Critics fear his allies could move to restrict access to abortion medication. But under the US constitution, states wield significant power and any such moves will certainly be met with lawsuits. California's top prosecutor stood in front of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge this week and vowed to "take on the challenges of a second Trump Administration — together."

"We lived through Trump 1.0. We know what he's capable of," said California Attorney-General Rob Bonta. "We'll continue to be a check on over-reach and push back on abuse of power," he promised. Governors and attorneys general of other liberal states including New York, Illinois, Oregon and Washington have made similar proclamations. "If you try to harm New Yorkers or roll back their rights, I will fight you every step of the way," Governor Kathy Hochul vowed. "You come for my people, you come through me," Illinois Governor JB Pritzker said, as Democratic prosecutors across the nation coordinate their strategies. The pre-emptive manoeuvres have swiftly drawn the ire of Trump, who singled out California Governor Gavin Newsom in an angry social media riposte on Friday. "He is using the term 'Trump-Proof' as a way of stopping all of the GREAT things that can be done to 'Make California Great

Again,' but I just overwhelmingly won the Election," complained Trump. State plans to disrupt his agenda will bring an unwelcome sense of déjà vu for Trump, whose efforts to rescind Barack Obama's immigration and health care policies during his first term were repeatedly stymied in court. During the last Trump administration, California alone sued over 100 times in a variety of areas, slowing down or restricting its policies. Republican states echoed that strategy under Joe Biden's administration. "It was as successful as you can get," said Julian Zelezer, professor of political history at Princeton University. "States, especially a state as large as California, do have the power to resist some of the changes that will come from the administration, to uphold emissions regulations and other laws, including on reproductive rights." A benefit of litigation is that "cases move about as fast as snails," said Kevin

Johnson, a law professor at University of California, Davis. "Some cases go around the lower courts, and by the time they hit the Supreme Court, there's a new president," he told AFP. Immigration is expected to be a flash-point in the looming battle. Republican states may co-operate with the Trump administration in identifying and detaining undocumented people. But Democratic states are likely to refuse. During Trump's previous term California was the first to declare itself a "sanctuary state", prohibiting local law enforcement from working with federal agents to arrest illegal immigrants. Trump could withhold federal funding to certain states as a means of exerting pressure. He has also floated more radical measures, including massively expanding a process called "expedited removal" to evict undocumented people without court hearings, or even using the military to ar-

rest suspected illegal immigrants. But "there would almost immediately be a request for a preliminary injunction," predicted Johnson. "If you send the military on the border" to detain or deport immigrants, "it is unprecedented in all kinds of ways, and it raises all kinds of issues." One downside for states is the enormous financial cost of countless legal battles. "State budgets are tight, and so that money has to come from somewhere else," said Zelezer. With Trump having won the popular vote and increased his vote share even in most liberal states, "politically, it might be a little harder as they try to move forward with doing this again," he said. Still, California's leaders' zeal in opposing Trump appeared undaunted. "As is so often said, as California goes, so goes the nation," said Bonta. "In the days and months and years to come, all eyes will look west."

## 26 dead in Pakistan railway station blast by separatists

AFP  
Quetta

A bombing claimed by Pakistani separatists killed 26 people including 14 soldiers at a railway station in the southwestern Balochistan province, a hospital spokesman said yesterday. The blast hit as passengers waited on a platform at the main railway station in the provincial capital Quetta. "Fourteen members of the army and 12 civilians were killed," said Wasim Baig, spokesman for Quetta's Sandeman Provincial Hospital, raising an earlier toll of 25 provided by police. Forty-six members of the security forces and 14 civilians were wounded, the spokesman added. An AFP journalist saw pools of blood and ripped backpacks at the scene, where a large metal sheet protecting passengers from the elements had been blown off. Mohammed Oumer, one of the casualties, said he went to the station to get a train home to his village. "But just as we arrived, there was the explosion and I found myself wounded and in hospital," he told AFP.

Despite frequent attacks in Balochistan the toll of yesterday's blast was particularly high for the southwestern province, which borders Afghanistan and Iran.

The train station explosion hit at around 8:45am and was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), one of the area's main separatist groups.

The attack "was carried out on a Pakistani army unit at Quetta railway station...after completing a course at the Infantry School," the BLA said in a statement.

The Associated Press of Pakistan, the official news agency, cited railway officials as saying the blast happened near the ticket booth when two trains were scheduled to depart.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the attackers "will pay a heavy price", according to a statement from his office.

The BLA frequently claims deadly attacks against security forces or Pakistanis from other provinces, notably Punjabis.

At Quetta station, police said they were working to determine the cause of the blast.

"When we reached here, initially it appeared that some explosive had perhaps been hidden or left in the luggage. But now we think it may be a suicide bomber," Muhammad Baloch, a senior local police official, told journalists. Firefighters, rescuers and passengers were working through abandoned luggage on the platform, guarded by heavily armed members of the security forces.

At the hospital, Mohammed Irfan had to identify two of his relatives killed in the bombing. "As we woke up we found out there was an explosion," he said. "Then we discovered that my uncle and another relative had gone to have tea at the station."

# Germany marks 1989 Berlin Wall fall with 'Preserve Freedom' party

AFP  
Berlin

Germany marked 35 years since the Berlin Wall fell with festivities on Saturday under the theme "Preserve Freedom!", against the sombre backdrop of war in Gaza and Ukraine, and fears that democracy is under attack around the world.

The liberal ideals of 1989 "are not something we can take for granted", Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Friday, just days after his governing coalition collapsed.

"A look at our history and at the world around us shows this," added Scholz, whose three-party alliance imploded the day Donald Trump was re-elected US president, plunging Germany into political turmoil and towards new elections.

November 9, 1989, is celebrated as the day East Germany opened the borders to the West after months of peaceful mass protests, paving the way for German reunification and the collapse of Soviet Communism.

That "joyful day" underlines the sombre fact "that freedom and democracy have never been a given", Berlin mayor Kai Wegner told a commemoration service at the Berlin Wall Memorial yesterday.

One Berliner who remembers the momentous events, retiree Jutta Krueger, 75, said it was "a shame" Germany's political crisis had erupted just before the anni-



The Brandenburg gate illuminated during celebrations marking the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Berlin yesterday. (AFP)

versary weekend. "But we should still really celebrate the fall of the Wall," she said, hailing it as the moment East Germans could travel and "freedom had arrived throughout Germany".

Bernhard Hodtke, 93, lived in East Berlin and recalled crossing into the other side with a colleague the next day.

"We went down Friedrichstrasse", a central avenue formerly divided by the wall, "and pinched our arms".

Yesterday's event at the Berlin Wall Memorial, which was attended by President Frank-Wal-

ter Steinmeier, honoured the at least 140 people killed trying to flee the Russian-backed German Democratic Republic (GDR) during the Cold War.

In the evening, a "freedom party" with a music and light show was to be held at Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate, on the former path of the concrete barrier that had cut the city in two since 1961.

Today, Russian protest punk band Pussy Riot is to perform outside the former headquarters of the Stasi, former East Germany's feared secret police.

Pro-democracy activists from

around the world have been invited for the commemorations — including Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya and Iranian dissident Masih Alinejad.

Talks, performances and an open-air art exhibition will mark what culture minister Claudia Roth called "one of the most joyous moments in world history".

Replica placards from the 1989 protests are on display along 4km (2.5 miles) of the Wall's route.

Among the art installations will be thousands of images created by citizens on the theme of "freedom", to drive home the en-

during relevance of the historical event.

Berlin's top cultural official, Joe Chialo, said the theme was crucial "at a time when we are confronted by rising populism, disinformation and social division".

Axel Klausmeier, head of the Berlin Wall foundation, said the values of the 1989 protests were "the power-bank for the defence of our democracy, which today is being gnawed at from the left and the right".

The fall of the Berlin Wall — symbol of the Cold War and the division between an Eastern and a Western Bloc — contributed to the collapse of Communism in eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany a year later.

The 155km "wall of shame" was erected around West Berlin in 1961 to end an exodus of citizens from the Western Bloc enclave in Communist East Germany.

Most East Germans are grateful the GDR regime ended but many still have unhappy memories of the perceived arrogance of West Germans, and resentment lingers about a remaining gap in incomes and pensions.

These sentiments have been cited to explain strong support for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) in eastern Germany, and for the Russia-friendly, anti-capitalist BSW.

Strong gains for both at three state elections in the east in September highlighted enduring political divisions between eastern and western Germany, more than three decades after reunification.

## Over 130 homes lost in California wildfire

AFP  
Camarillo

Firefighters grappling with a blaze that has destroyed at least 130 homes in California said Friday they had made progress in their fight as a turn in the weather offered a break.

Hurricane-strength winds this week fuelled an explosion in the Mountain Fire near Camarillo, outside Los Angeles, which grew rapidly to over 20,000 acres.

Thousands of people in the path of the inferno were forced to flee, some with only minutes to gather possessions and pets as unpredictable flames leapt from home to home.

Robin Wallace told AFP the home she grew up in was destroyed minutes after everyone fled.

"We were expecting we'd be able to go back and get some things. But of course, that didn't work out.

"It was completely gone by the afternoon. It went very quickly!"

Linda Fefferman said she knew she had to go when she smelled smoke. "I'm trying to load the car with animals and important papers, my oxygen concentrator, and when it got too smoky for me, I knew I had to get out," she told a local broadcaster.

A neighbour with a chainsaw helped remove a fallen tree that was blocking her path. "I went down to the Goodwill parking lot, watched the smoke, you know, probably our own house burning.



The metal frame of a home destroyed by a wind driven wildfire stands amongst debris on West Highland Drive in the aftermath of the Mountain Fire in Camarillo, California. (AFP)

"Nothing is left. It's gone," she said. "It's all gone." Fefferman said she thought 14 or 15 houses on her street had been destroyed by the flames.

Authorities said on Thursday that initial inspections revealed at least 132 homes had been lost, with 88 more damaged.

The area is home to around 30,000 people, with approximately 10,000 having been told to evacuate. The blaze erupted Wednesday morning and spread rapidly, fanned by fierce seasonal Santa Ana winds from California's desert interior.

Gusts up to 80 miles an hour pushed smoke and flames sideways, with terrifying footage showing fire engulfing brush, orchards and

properties. Those winds dropped Friday, with meteorologists saying they did not expect them to return for at least a few days.

That was welcome news for firefighters, some of whom had been on the frontlines for 36 hours straight. The change in weather meant fire crews were able to make progress in their fight, said Nick Cleary of the Ventura County Fire Department, with 14 percent of the perimeter of the blaze contained.

"Today on the fire, we had a very successful day," he told reporters, with a mild onshore breeze bringing some much-needed humidity.

More than 2,400 personnel, as well as engines, bulldozers and aircraft were involved in the fight.

## Biden, Trump to meet at White House ahead of historic return

Joe Biden will meet with President-elect Donald Trump at the White House on Wednesday after the US leader pledged an orderly transfer of power back to the Republican he beat in elections just four years ago.

Trump — who never conceded his 2020 loss — sealed a historic comeback to the presidency in the November 5 vote, cementing what is set to be more than a decade of US politics overshadowed by his hardline right-wing stance.

Biden will join the tiny club of US presidents to return power to their White House predecessor — with a previous instance coming when president Benjamin Harrison handed back to Grover Cleveland in the 19th century.

The Democrat will meet Trump at the Oval Office at 11am, the White House said yesterday, with the clock ticking down to the president's return to power in January.

The 78-year-old ex-reality TV star won wider margins than before, despite a criminal conviction, two impeachments while in office and warnings from his former chief of staff that he is a "fascist." Exit polls showed that voters' top concern remained the economy and inflation that spiked under Biden in the wake of the Covid pandemic.

Biden, who dropped out of the race in July over concerns about his ability to continue at the age of 81, called Trump on Wednesday to congratulate him after his election win.

The Democratic leader urged Americans in a solemn televised address to "bring down the temperature," in stark contrast to Trump's refusal to accept his 2020 election defeat.

Trump has begun to assemble his second administration, naming campaign manager Susie Wiles to serve as his White House chief of staff.

She is the first woman to be named to the high-profile role and the Republican's first appointment to his incoming administration.

"Susie is tough, smart, innovative, and is universally admired and respected," Trump said of the steely 67-year-old Florida native. "Susie will continue to work tirelessly to Make America Great Again."

The other frontrunners for a place in the Trump 2.0 administration reflect the significant changes it is likely to implement.

Robert F Kennedy Jr, a leading figure in the anti-vaccine movement for whom Trump has pledged a "big role" in health care, told NBC News on Wednesday that "I'm not going to take away anybody's vaccines."

The world's richest man, Elon Musk, could also be in line for a job auditing government waste after the right-wing SpaceX, Tesla and X boss enthusiastically backed Trump.

Trump is expected to wield the axe on many of Biden's signature policies. He returns to the White House as a climate change denier, poised to take apart Biden's green policies with his pledge to "drill, baby, drill" for oil.



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**GULF TIMES**

# Emerging markets face uncertain path under Trump

Investors hoping for a “Goldilocks” moment for emerging markets in 2025 following years of global interest rate hikes are grappling with significant uncertainty ahead of Donald Trump’s impending return to the White House.

The dollar’s rigorous rally, and worries over US tariffs, potential unfunded spending sprees and slowing interest rate cuts from the Fed knocked a string of emerging market currencies and weighed on some bonds as the election results rolled in.

Now, investors are tallying up the likely costs of Trump’s policies for developing world assets.

“Although we’ve been positive on emerging market assets this year, and performance has been strong, we have to think about next year and position ourselves in a more cautious way in both local currency and hard currency,” said Yerlan Syzdykov, global head of emerging markets at Amundi, Europe’s largest asset manager.

The prospect of a “red sweep” - with Republicans also taking control of the House, in addition to the presidency and the Senate - would be a “bit of a game changer”, Syzdykov said.

Investor inflows to emerging markets have been rebounding after painful years of low risk appetite during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic that stayed subdued as central banks worldwide hiked rates. This led investors to keep their money in safer developed world assets.

Net portfolio inflows into developing economies’ stocks and bonds, which fell to virtually nothing in 2022, have rebounded to just under \$250bn through September this year, above the \$177bn for all of last year, according to data from the Institute of International Finance.

“Before the election, there was a lot of optimism around emerging markets,” said Anders Faergemann, senior portfolio manager with PineBridge Investments, noting that emerging market growth differentials versus the developed world were at their highest in a decade.

JPMorgan’s emerging market hard-currency bond index has returned around 6% this year, while local government bonds are trading water.

This might mirror 2016, when EM local currency bore the brunt of

Trump’s surprise election win, Allianz Global Investors said in a note to clients.

Faergemann said the Trump win left China under pressure, and emerging market currencies, including Poland’s zloty and Hungary’s forint, which slumped to a two-year low, are at risk due to their reliance on trade - and the risk of Trump tariffs.

Mexico’s peso - a bellwether for emerging market currencies - dropped as much as 3.6% this week after Trump’s sweep became clear, but quickly retraced losses. The decline was much less pronounced than the near-8% drop it suffered in 2016.

Many are watching closely for clues on Trump’s spending

and the impact that could have on the Fed interest rate trajectory; higher fiscal deficits could lead to slower rate cuts.

“Higher rates and a strong US dollar are a headwind... (as are) some of the proposed policies like tariffs,” said Sonal Desai, chief investment officer for Franklin Templeton Fixed Income.

But some optimism remains.

Countries such as India could benefit from Trump’s headline approach to China, Amundi’s Syzdykov said, while Argentina has also lured investors back with spending cuts and reform.

“There are certain sectors, countries that could benefit from a Trump victory,” said Shamaila Khan, head of fixed income for emerging markets and Asia Pacific at UBS Asset Management. “You can generate a lot of value in an emerging market portfolio.”

A sea change in geopolitics could fuel other turnaround stories.

Ukraine’s international bonds and GDP warrants rallied strongly after Trump’s win, lifted by optimism he could hasten the end of its war with Russia.

Argentina’s stocks and bonds also rallied as investors cheered potentially closer ties between Trump and Argentina’s brash libertarian President Javier Milei - part of what has been dubbed the “strongman trade.”

Bankers had hoped that this year’s debt issuance boom could continue into 2025. But some worry volatility before and after Trump’s January inauguration - traditionally a heavy issuance month - could impact primary market issuance.

Barclays estimates that emerging market sovereign international bond sales will reach as much as \$160bn this year, and around \$130bn next year.

High debt costs could further crimp emerging markets’ access to cash, which is already a key worry for the likes of the International Monetary Fund.

But overall, investors say the fear, market gyrations and risk aversion that followed Trump’s 2016 win were less likely this time round - meaning developing countries and assets inside them with a good narrative can continue to attract capital.

“We’ve seen Trump before, so we’ve seen that movie before - and we survived,” Amundi’s Syzdykov said.

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But some optimism remains.

Countries such as India could benefit from Trump’s headline approach to China, Amundi’s Syzdykov said, while Argentina has also lured investors back with spending cuts and reform.

“There are certain sectors, countries that could benefit from a Trump victory,” said Shamaila Khan, head of fixed income for emerging markets and Asia Pacific at UBS Asset Management. “You can generate a lot of value in an emerging market portfolio.”

A sea change in geopolitics could fuel other turnaround stories.

Ukraine’s international bonds and GDP warrants rallied strongly after Trump’s win, lifted by optimism he could hasten the end of its war with Russia.

Argentina’s stocks and bonds also rallied as investors cheered potentially closer ties between Trump and Argentina’s brash libertarian President Javier Milei - part of what has been dubbed the “strongman trade.”

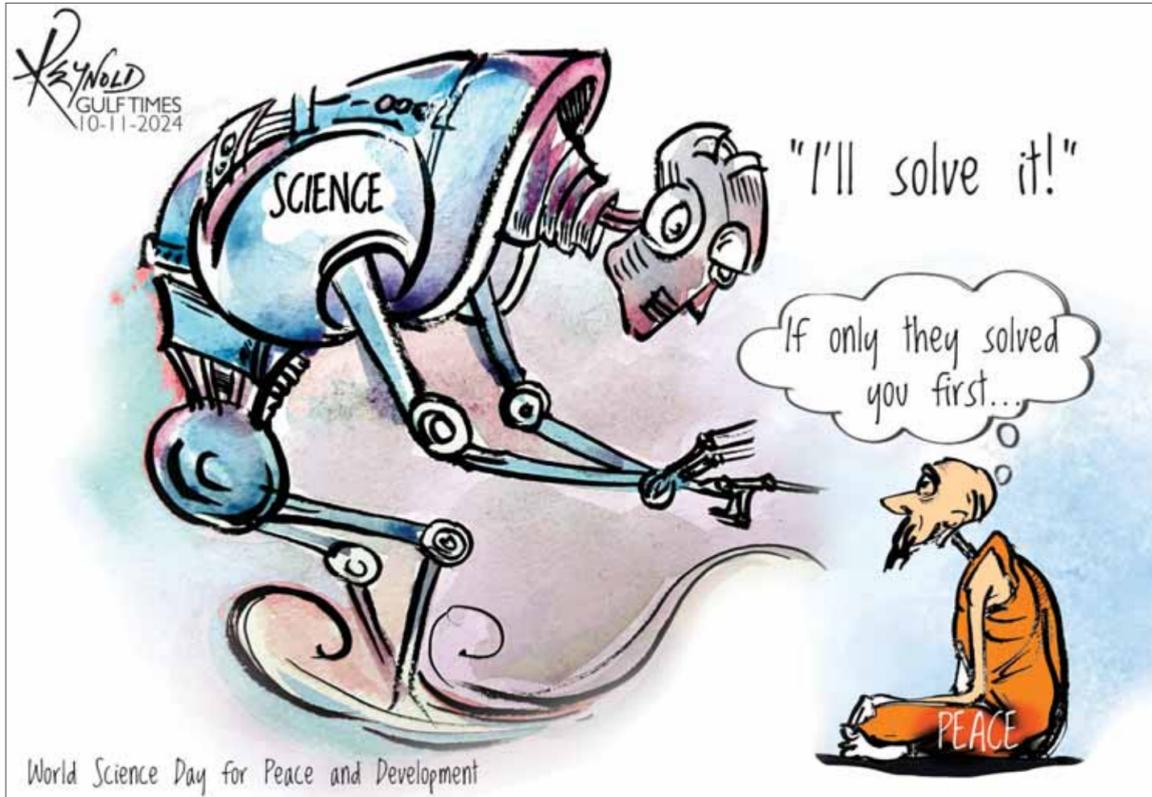
Bankers had hoped that this year’s debt issuance boom could continue into 2025. But some worry volatility before and after Trump’s January inauguration - traditionally a heavy issuance month - could impact primary market issuance.

Barclays estimates that emerging market sovereign international bond sales will reach as much as \$160bn this year, and around \$130bn next year.

High debt costs could further crimp emerging markets’ access to cash, which is already a key worry for the likes of the International Monetary Fund.

But overall, investors say the fear, market gyrations and risk aversion that followed Trump’s 2016 win were less likely this time round - meaning developing countries and assets inside them with a good narrative can continue to attract capital.

“We’ve seen Trump before, so we’ve seen that movie before - and we survived,” Amundi’s Syzdykov said.



World Science Day for Peace and Development

# How China scrambled to meet second Trump shock

- China prepares for Trump’s return by deepening ties with allies
- Economy more vulnerable than in 2016, may need more stimulus
- China boosts self-reliance in tech amid US export controls

**By Antoni Slodkowski, James Pomfret and Laurie Chen**  
Beijing/Hong Kong

After Donald Trump first stormed the White House eight years ago, Chinese leaders responded to his tariffs and fiery rhetoric with force, resulting in a trade war that plunged ties between the globe’s largest economies to multiyear lows.

This time around, Beijing has been preparing for Trump’s return by deepening ties with allies, boosting self-reliance in tech, and setting aside money to prop up the economy that is now more vulnerable to fresh tariffs already threatened by Trump.

While some retaliation to those moves might be unavoidable, China will focus on exploiting rifts between the US and its allies, experts say, and aim to lower the temperature to help strike an early deal to cushion the blow from trade friction.

Zhao Minghao, international relations expert at Shanghai’s Fudan University said China probably wouldn’t replay the playbook from the first Trump presidency when Beijing had a very strong reaction to Trump’s moves on tariffs.

He pointed out Chinese President Xi Jinping’s message to Trump from Thursday, in which Xi called for “co-operation” and not “confrontation,” emphasising “stable, sound and sustainable”

relations between the two superpowers.

“Trump is not a stranger to Beijing at this time,” Zhao told Reuters. “Beijing would respond in a measured way and make efforts to communicate with the Trump team.”

While Chinese tech giants are now far less reliant on US imports, the economy - hit by a property crisis and saddled with unsustainable debt - is in a weaker position than in 2016, struggling to eke out 5% growth compared to 6.7% then.

To make things worse, Trump has pledged to end China’s most-favoured-nation trading status and slap tariffs on Chinese imports in excess of 60% - much higher than those imposed during his first term.

Fudan’s Zhao said Beijing has this scenario gamed out but expects tariffs to come in below the level pledged on the campaign trail because “that would significantly push up the inflation in the US”.

Still, that threat alone has unnerved producers in the world’s largest exporter because China sells goods worth more than \$400bn a year to the US and hundreds of billions more in parts for products Americans buy elsewhere.

Li Mingjiang, a scholar at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, said that as a result, the Chinese economy might require even more stimulus than the \$1.4tn expected on Friday.

“It’ll be a very serious blow to

China’s international trade that will affect jobs and government revenues,” said Li. “China will probably have to come up with a much bigger stimulus package domestically.”

**Charm offensive**

To boost global trade, China has been on a diplomatic blitz, shoring up alliances, mending fences with foes, and continuing difficult talks with the European Union, even after the bloc imposed stiff tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles.

Last month China ended a four-year military stand-off with India on their disputed border; in August, it resolved a two-year spat with Japan over the discharge of radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear plant; and Premier Li Qiang in June visited Australia - the first such trip in seven years.

Also last month, both Xi and Li attended separate summits of BRICS - which now accounts for 35% of the global economy - and the 10-state Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, as China deepens ties with the Global South.

“The first Trump administration did not show a lot of interest in robust engagement in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, which provided the Chinese a lot of latitude to operate in these markets largely uncontested,” said Eric Olander, editor-in-chief of the China-Global South Project.

In Europe, trade tensions with

China could be counterbalanced by worries over Trump’s potentially reduced role in the Ukraine war and his economic policies, creating an opening for Beijing, say some experts.

“China will carry on reaching out to Europeans, the British, the Australians and even the Japanese, not only to try to drive a wedge between the U.S. and the countries of the north,” said Jean-Pierre Cabestan, an expert at Hong Kong’s Baptist University.

“But also as part of its mission to rebalance its foreign trade in favour of the Global South,” he said.

**Tech punchline**

During the first trade war, Trump banned high-tech exports to China and sanctioned companies including China’s largest chipmaker SMIC, prompting its tech sector to become domestic-focused and self-sufficient.

Winston Ma, a former managing director for the China Investment Corporation (CIC), China’s sovereign wealth fund, said a major trigger for this shift was Trump’s ban on the sale of components to Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE in 2018.

That was “really scary from a China perspective, so they began to prepare. It was the start of that sort of defensive thinking,” added Ma.

Soon after, Xi urged the nation to boost self-reliance in science and tech, pushing China to build-up crucial industries including AI and space.

The result: Eight years ago, China had only four government procurement projects worth over \$1.4mn, replacing foreign hardware and software with domestic alternatives. That number has exploded to 169 such projects this year, data show.

Despite these strides, chipmakers “definitely feel the tightening - these Chinese companies couldn’t supply to global clients and can’t have access to the latest chips,” said Ma.

Nazak Nikakhtar, a Commerce Department official under Trump who knows his advisers, said she expected Trump to be “much more aggressive about export control policies towards China.”

She anticipated “a significant expansion of the entity list,” that restricts exports to those on it to capture affiliates and business partners of listed companies.

Ma, the ex-CIC executive, said the restrictions will have an impact for some time as the US expands the sanctions regime to overseas suppliers.

“I think the punchline is that the coming years are the most critical for this US-China tech rivalry,” - Reuters



US President-elect Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping shake hands ahead of their bilateral meeting during the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan, on June 29, 2019. (Reuters)

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# What went wrong as Spain endured its worst flood disaster in recent history

By David Latona, Corina Pons, Pietro Lombardi and Aislinn Laing  
Paiporta

The water was already knee-high on the ground floor of the hotel where Aitana Puchal had taken refuge when she received a text alert from the regional government of Valencia at 8 pm on October 29 warning people to shelter in place from severe flash floods.

"We could have done with (the warning) about six hours earlier," said the 23-year-old, who had fled with other local residents and guests to the first floor of the hotel near the town of Paiporta. "We were all calming down a little from the panic and drying our feet."

Others were not so fortunate. Carlos Martínez, another Paiporta resident, told local television the flood alert came when he was stranded in a tree "seeing bodies floating past".

Dozens of inhabitants of flooded communities told Reuters that by the time they received the regional government's alert, muddy water was already surrounding their cars, submerging streets of their towns and pouring into their homes.

After days of storm warnings from the national weather service since Oct 25, some municipalities and local institutions had raised the alarm much earlier. Valencia University had told its staff the day before not to come to work. Several town halls across the region of eastern Spain had suspended activities, shut down public facilities and told people to stay home.

But the mixed messages and confusion cost lives, dozens of local residents and experts told Reuters. More than 220 people died and nearly 80 are still missing in what is the most deadly deluge in a single European country since 1967, when floods in Portugal killed around 500. The national weather service AEMET had raised its threat level for heavy rains to a red alert at 7.36am on October 29, following heavy rains in mountainous areas west of the city of Valencia from the early morning. In the 12 hours it took for the regional government's shelter-in-place order to come through, waters running through the usually dry Poyo ravine - the epicentre of the flooding - had surged to more than three times the flow of Spain's largest river, the Ebro.

As climate change exacerbates weather patterns along Spain's Mediterranean coast, floods are becoming commonplace and some previous incidents have been deadly. But after at least five decades without a major catastrophe, many people in Valencia were unaware of the grave dangers posed by flash flooding or how to respond.

Puchal, the 23-year old who sought refuge in the hotel, said she had never received much information about the risks of floods.

"At school, they gave talks about fires," she said. "But not floods." That, combined with poor co-ordination among regional and national authorities as well as political decisions taken years ago not to invest in waterways infrastructure,



Soldiers search wrecked cars damaged by flooding in Massassana, region of Valencia, eastern Spain in the aftermath of deadly floods. (AFP)

worsened the calamitous loss of life, seven experts consulted by Reuters said.

"It was foreseeable that we would have catastrophic flooding here," said Felix Frances, professor of hydraulic engineering and environment at Valencia Polytechnic University. Deaths were recorded in 14 of the 24 towns that had already been identified in environment ministry reports as at high risk of flooding, a Reuters review found.

Experts including hydraulic and civil engineers, geologists, urban planners and disaster relief specialists said successive failures - to conduct flood mitigation work on nearby rivers, better protect houses built on flood plains, educate people and warn residents quickly - added to the fatalities.

With better infrastructure, "those deaths would have been infinitely less," said Luis Bañon, an engineer and professor of Transportation Engineering and Infrastructure at the University of Alicante.

One central government source said they expect multiple judicial enquiries to examine decisions made and to attribute responsibility for the high death toll.

As more of the world's population settles on flood plains, climate events become more extreme and Europe warms faster than the global average, what happened in Valencia underscores the need for strategic, coordinated measures to protect people in European cities, said Sergio Palencia, professor of urbanization in Valencia Polytechnic University. Frances said he had helped draw up a plan 17 years ago to build flood works for the Poyo ravine at a cost then of €150m (\$162m). On November 5, a week after the floods, the national government earmarked €10.6bn to help victims. The plan Frances worked on expired

in 2017 because "no work had been initiated," Spain's State Secretary for the Environment Hugo Moran told Reuters. The government had to start from scratch and some works are underway, he said.

Frances said some people were so unaware of the risk they didn't know, for example, that it would be unwise to go down to a basement "to save the car."

## Multiple alerts

AEMET had already warned of a storm known locally as DANA - a high-altitude isolated depression - on October 25. In following days, its warnings became more specific until October 29, when the alert was upgraded to red - the highest level, meaning high risks for the population.

At 8.45am, the regional branch of AEMET posted footage on the social media platform X showing cars being swept down roads by a tide of brown water.

Just after noon, the public body managing the region's river basins, the Júcar Hydrographic Confederation (CHJ) emailed regional authorities saying the flow of water through the Poyo ravine had reached 264 cubic meters per second. That's stronger than the average flow of the Guadalquivir river, one of Spain's largest.

The CHJ said it can only feed the information to regional emergency services, which are responsible for issuing alerts to citizens. Three experts told Reuters that once water started rising, it would take less than nine hours to reach the towns. Over the next eight hours, officials from the regional and national governments, environmental authorities and emergency services exchanged phone calls, emails and held emergency meetings.

For some time that afternoon, the data from the CHJ suggested the flow was

declining. Carlos Mazon, the region's president and the main person responsible for issuing a shelter-in-place alert, has become a focus for anger over authorities' reaction to the storm. Despite signs of severe flooding, he did not change his schedule.

At a news conference at lunchtime, he cited a national weather forecast saying the storm's intensity would decrease around 6pm, according to a tweet he later deleted.

As the day went on Mazon, a member of the conservative People's Party that sits in opposition to the Socialist-run national government, appeared in photos tweeted by his staff receiving a sustainable tourism certification, and discussing budgetary matters.

His office did not respond to requests for comment on his handling of the disaster. Mazon told reporters on Thursday that he had a "work lunch" on October 29 and was constantly in touch with his team handling the situation.

At 5pm, as the authorities met again, the CHJ gave "verbal notification" of a generalised increase in water flows running through or near the towns, according to a statement.

At 6.43pm, CHJ sent another email warning that the flow of water through the ravine had reached 1,686 cubic metres per second - more than triple the pace of the Ebro, Spain's largest river by volume.

Twelve minutes later, the CHJ said the Poyo flow had risen to 2,282 cubic metres per second before destroying the sensor that measured it.

"That could fill an Olympic pool every second," said Nahum Mendez, a geologist at Valencia University.

By 7pm, many towns were without power, making it difficult to send alerts immediately to phones or radio stations, officials said.

Maria Isabel Albalat, the mayor of Paiporta, which lies in the outskirts of the city of Valencia, said she called the national government delegate in the region to tell her that "my town was flooding" and "people were already dying". Police drove through the town with sirens, lights and loudspeakers telling people to stay off the bridge and leave the streets.

At 8pm, Spain's environment secretary Moran, who was travelling in Colombia, called the regional official in charge of the emergency services Salomé Pradas to say there was a risk a dam would fail.

Pradas told local television on Thursday that a technical advisor then suggested the services send a text alert.

"How is it possible that with all the information that was available...the agencies responsible for activating the alarms did nothing?" Moran said.

Mazon, the regional head, later said the CHJ data showing water flows declining had added to the confusion and delays. Moran, whose department oversees the CHJ, told Reuters its task was just to provide real time information to emergency teams, not to make decisions on their response.

Paiporta mayor Albalat said that by the time the alert came, "we had been up to our necks in water for more than an hour and a half"

## Flood protections

Political decisions to not invest earlier in better flood defences to protect a wider area have multiplied the economic cost "by 200," said Bañon, the Alicante professor.

"This type of works aren't sexy, don't give political profitability until something happens," he said. "Now they have no choice but to undertake the works."

In other countries such as the United States and Japan, natural disasters are more commonplace so people have a better sense of how to respond, said María Jesus Romero, 50, Professor of Urban Planning Law at the Polytechnical University of Valencia. Some Valencia residents remembered past floods, including a major one in 1957. After that, the city of Valencia was protected by hydraulic works completed under dictator General Francisco Franco in 1973.

Paiporta residents Rosario Masia, 84, and her husband Cristóbal Martínez, 87, said past floods were "nothing" compared with this one.

"We had a hard time, but not like now," said Masia. "We are in pieces."

Many properties hit by the floods were built before 2003 when revised guidance on building in flood zones was issued, experts said. The new guidance either bans construction or includes strict pre-requisites including that properties built in flood zones should not have basements.

In the largely working-class suburbs of Valencia, the car is vital to get to work. Many of those interviewed by Reuters in the flood zone said their first move when it rains is to move their cars out of underground car parks of their apartment blocks so the engines aren't damaged by flooding.

— Reuters

# Germany's coalition collapse brings more pain to its ailing economy

By Maria Martinez  
Berlin

The collapse of Germany's ruling coalition is set to bring more economic pain in the months ahead and just a glimmer of hope for Europe's ailing economic giant if, and that is a big if, it can lead to a less fractious government and more coherent policies. The break-up came at a critical juncture for Europe's biggest economy, just hours after Donald Trump won the US presidential election, raising the spectre of a tit-for-tat trade war with Germany's main trading partner.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Wednesday sacked his finance minister, paving the way for a snap election after months of bickering in his three-party coalition that has further hurt confidence in an economy struggling with high energy costs and eroding competitiveness.

The world's third-largest economy has lagged the European Union average since 2021 and is expected to shrink for the second year running in 2024, making it the worst performer among the Group of Seven major economies.

The coalition collapse is likely to deal another blow to consumption and investment in coming months, already poised to decline, with a third of German companies indicating in a recent survey plans to scale it back.

"In combination with the Trump win, economic confidence is likely to drop significantly and makes a contraction of



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz during a presser at an informal EU summit in Budapest on Friday. (Reuters)

the economy in the fourth quarter more likely," said Carsten Brzeski, global head of macroeconomics at ING.

He said the following quarter would bring more weakness, possibly further contraction, but maybe also a much-needed fresh impulse.

"With elections coming in March, hope is that the new government will bring an end to the economic paralysis and provide finally economic policy guidance and certainty," Brzeski said. Scholz plans to hold a parliamentary confidence vote in his government on January 15, which could

trigger snap elections by the end of March. Until then, he is expected to head a minority government with his Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, relying on cobbled-together parliamentary majorities to pass legislation.

Right now Christian Democrat (CDU) conservatives lead in the polls, but there is currently no polling majority for a purely centre-right or centre-left coalition. That suggests that finding policy compromises might prove equally hard in the future, JP Morgan analyst Greg Fuzesi said.

"In this sense, we note new elections will

result in a similar government," he said.

Yet there is an argument to be made that any new government can provide the economy at least some momentum.

"Once the dust settles and a new government with a new and fresh agenda takes power after snap elections, the impact will likely be positive," Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg, said.

In the near term, a likely delay in next year's budget, means no spending on new projects, though some outlays such as more aid for Ukraine could still pass. The cabinet agreed on the budget in the summer and it was due for parliamentary approval before year-end, but now could get pushed back until mid-2025.

But ultimately the departure of finance minister Christian Lindner could allow more spending to prop up the flagging economy. Lindner, of the free-market Free Democrats (FDP), opposed Scholz's plans to suspend the debt brake which limits public debt.

Scholz has argued that Germany has sufficient leeway to spend without compromising the health of its finances. "Among all large economically strong democracies, we have by far the lowest debt," Scholz said on Wednesday. "There are solutions for how we can finance our public institutions and responsibilities soundly."

Germany's public debt is seen at 64% of its economic output in 2024 with the budget deficit of 1.75% gross domestic product, well below the EU's 3% limit. Meanwhile, France expects its debt-to-GDP ratio to hit 113% this year and Italy of 135%. Alongside its budget draft, the

government also adopted a growth package of 49 measures it said could generate additional growth of more than half a percentage point in 2025.

The plans must be approved by parliament this year to be implemented, meaning the coalition government needed votes from opposition conservatives in the upper house, which represents Germany's 16 federal states. Scholz said he would speak with CDU opposition leader Friedrich Merz to discuss possible cooperation on steps needed to boost Germany's economy and defence.

"Our economy cannot wait until new elections are held," Scholz said.

Trump's upcoming presidency underscores the urgency.

A report by German economic institute IW found that in a scenario where the new US administration imposed tariffs of 20% on the EU, as Trump has signalled during his campaign, and the bloc retaliated in kind, Germany's export-dependent economy could shrink as much as 1.5% in 2027 and 2028.

Current forecasts show the economy poised for stagnation or further contraction next year, which would make it the longest spell without economic growth since Germany's reunification in 1990.

While ING's Brzeski now expects a 0.1% contraction, Schmieding is more optimistic that a fresh start with the new government could help the economy recover from a likely first-half slump.

"A further contraction in GDP for 2025 as a whole is possible, but it is not my base case," Schmieding said. — Reuters

# Cultural diplomacy festival at Katara winds up

The Cultural Village Foundation - Katara has wrapped up the two-day Cultural Festival of the International Public Diplomacy to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the international diplomatic network.

The event was organised by Katara in collaboration with the embassies of 29 countries from the network's member states and drew record turnout from people of various nationalities.

Secretary-General of the General Public Diplomacy Network and CEO of the Katara Public Diplomacy Centre, Maryam Majid al-Saad, expressed her pleasure with the festival's accomplishments, highlighting both its success and the unique cultural experiences it offered, where people from various nations engaged with one another, pointing out that the festival was not merely a cultural event, but rather a platform for



civilisational communication and confirmation of the major role that cultural diplomacy performs in promoting understanding among nations.

Al-Saad lauded the effective collaboration between Katara and the embassies of the network's member states, adding that she is grateful to all participants for their contributions to the success

of the event. She also praised the incredible public attendance and the outstanding interaction during the festival.

For his part, Director of Turkish Cultural Centre in Doha Prof Dr Ahmet Uysal expressed his happiness for the centre's participation in the festival, pointing out throughout the past years, Katara and its General Public Diplomacy



Network have been providing all members of the network with the opportunity to hold numerous events in multiple realms to introduce cultures.

Prof Dr Uysal noted the long-standing co-operation between Katara and the Turkish Cultural Centre, which has led to numerous events showcasing Turkish culture, heritage, art, and history. He

added that public diplomacy plays a pivotal role in strengthening relationships between nations and peoples, as it helps foster shared understanding and respect amid mounting global challenges and cultural differences.

He underlined that public diplomacy has become a fundamental tool for breaking cultural barriers and enhancing

understanding among nations by fostering this understanding through a variety of events that help people internalise each other's cultures.

The festival featured several activities, exhibitions, workshops and recreational shows, such as the cultural exhibition that showcased a collection of exhibits on handicrafts and workshops, in addition to a coin and stamp exhibition showcasing a selection of stamps from 29 countries of the network's member states, reflecting the culture of the participating countries in promoting environmental sustainability.

The audience also enjoyed the shows at the Al Thuraya Planetarium, featuring films from Qatar, Ukraine, Bulgaria, South Korea, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as entertainment performances from several countries of the General Public Diplomacy Network member states. (QNA)

## Qatar Boat Show 2024 draws record visitors



Qatar Boat Show 2024 saw a record-breaking turnout, attracting both marine enthusiasts and water sports lovers. The extensive participation of both local and international exhibitors significantly contributed to the high public engagement the event has witnessed. The overwhelming response is a testament to Qatar's vibrant maritime culture and its ability to host world-class events. The show has marked a resounding success.



## Qatar 'observatory' to monitor social changes

From Page 1

He added that this support aligns with the council's mission under the Third National Development Strategy of the State of Qatar 2024-2030. He emphasised the council's commitment to fostering strategic partnerships across sectors to promote national initiatives that contribute to Qatar's cohesive social development objectives, as envisioned in Qatar National Vision 2030.

HE al-Khalifa affirmed the council's full support for the observatory and its intention to proceed with practical measures to ensure that the Qatar Social Observatory becomes a sustainable platform, enriching integrated development efforts, achieving ambitious national outcomes, and advancing the social development pillar outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030.

The Qatar Social Observatory



HE Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad

aims to provide early warnings to decision-makers regarding social phenomena that may require intervention, enabling the development of effective solutions to social challenges. Its approach is centred on the scientific collection of information and data to support community-targeted research and programmes, thereby strengthening the community's capacity to proactively address its challenges.

## Campers urged to avoid harming local environment

Maintaining the wellbeing of the local environment and strictly adhering to the safety measures should be the top priorities of campers while enjoying the camping season at the various designated areas across the country.

A number of Qatari men, who have already started to prepare their camping areas for the winter season, stressed that campers should avoid any misconducts or practices that would negatively impact the local environment. They should also adopt a positive approach to nature, where they would use the period of camping to help improve and maintain the natural surroundings such as planting new trees suitable to the local environment and take care of these, and avoid causing any harms to the natural green cover of some areas.

Meanwhile, they stressed that to enjoy convenient and trouble-free camping season, they should make sure that all the recommended safety standards are strictly followed, including using high quality and tested equipment, well-insulated wires, avoid making fire in the open at the direction of the wind, and use high-quality LNG cylinders keeping them secured in the designated places.

Nasser al-Nuaimi said that all campers should adhere to the instructions of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in this regard. They should be very careful to maintain the wellbeing of the various components of the Qatari environment. He also urged young campers to avoid stunt driving for their own safety and the safety of others in the surrounding areas. Besides, he warned that lighting up a fire inside tents could cause lots of unexpected damages that sometimes could not be easily controlled.

Ahmed al-Sahli stressed that campers should take extra



care when handling LNG cylinders and avoids keeping them within the direct sunlight or near a source of fire and heat. In addition, electric connections and wiring should be done by highly qualified technicians and should be inspected regularly to detect any possible malfunctioning before the situation gets out of control. He also urged campers to regularly keep the place and its surroundings clean and dispose of the waste at the designated areas only.

Jabir al-Ahbabi pointed out that campers should be keen to plant some local trees at their camping sites and take care of them all through the camping period until handing over the place to the concerned department.

Kifah al-Dossari said that the winter camping season gives young people a unique opportunity to enjoy nature in the old way of the ancestors, so they should be very careful to help in the protection of the natural scenery and meadows, avoiding any irresponsible practices that may harm the environment.

## Young falconers start to enter competition



Yesterday young falconers started to take their turn at the 6th Ras Laffan Falcons Championship, organised by Al Gannas Qatari Society and sponsored by Ras Laffan Community Outreach Programme and the supporting companies. It resumed its competitions on Friday morning and will continue until November 13. The organising committee has dedicated two categories for the youngsters: the first for the young falconer

aged 6-10 years old and the other category for the aspiring falconer aged 6-15 years old. This is part of the committee's keenness to keep falconry traditions alive for the upcoming generations. Accordingly, the first five winners will be given encouraging financial awards in each category. Meanwhile, Al Tala'a (release of falcons to hunt) competitions continued, with seven winners added to the qualifiers for the finals.



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