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TUESDAY Vol. XXXXVI No. 13402

June 10, 2025
Dhul-Hijjah 14, 1446 AH

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Eid al-Adha show at Old Doha Port



Eid al-Adha festivities at Old Doha Port concluded yesterday with many cultural activities including some of the traditional maritime performances such as Al Fejry, Fan Al Sawt, and Al Lewa.

PICTURE: Thajudheen Page 12

US, Chinese officials meet in London for pivotal trade talks

Top US and Chinese officials met in London yesterday to try to defuse a trade dispute that has widened from tariffs to restrictions over rare earths, threatening a global supply chain shock and slower economic growth. The US team wanted a handshake from China on rare earths after President Donald Trump said Chinese President Xi Jinping had agreed to resume shipments in a rare call last week. **Page 6**

Day of the Jackal author dies at 86

British novelist Frederick Forsyth, who authored best-selling thrillers such as *The Day of the Jackal* and *The Dogs of War*, has died aged 86, his publisher said. A former correspondent for Reuters and the BBC, and an informant for Britain's MI6 foreign spy agency, Forsyth made his name by using his experiences as a reporter in Paris to pen the story of a failed assassination plot on Charles de Gaulle.



Largest Diana auction features frocks, bags

From colourful frocks and hats to handbags and shoes, items belonging to the late Princess Diana go under the hammer this month in what Julien's Auctions says is the largest collection of her fashion to go to auction. The live and online "Princess Diana's Style & A Royal Collection" sale will take place on June 26 at The Peninsula Beverly Hills, offering an array of fashion items Diana wore. "This is the largest Princess Diana auction because we have over 100 items from her amazing life and career..." Martin Nolan, executive director and co-founder of Julien's Auctions, said.

Cockpit smoke forces emergency landing

Smoke in the cockpit forced a plane carrying 143 passengers and six crew to the eastern French city of Lyon from Budapest to make an emergency landing in Graz, Austria. "No people were injured in the incident. The cause of the smoke is currently unclear," police in the Austrian state of Styria, said. Sources said the flight was EasyJet flight 4400.

Israel seizes Gaza aid boat carrying Thunberg

Reuters
Jerusalem/Ashdod

Israeli naval forces boarded and seized a charity vessel carrying Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, which had tried to break the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip yesterday. The British-flagged yacht, Madleen, which is operated by the pro-Palestinian Freedom Flotilla Coalition, had aimed to deliver a symbolic amount of aid to Gaza and raise international awareness of the humanitarian crisis there.

"If you see this video, we have been intercepted and kidnapped in international waters by Israeli occupational forces or forces that support Israel," Thunberg, 22, said in a video released by the FCC, filmed before the vessel was captured. "I urge all my friends, family and comrades to put pressure on the Swedish government to release me and the others as soon as possible."

The boat carrying 12 activists reached Israel's Ashdod port later yesterday, north of the blockaded Palestinian territory.

Israel's navy escorted the Madleen to the Israeli port, reaching Ashdod at around 8.45pm.

Israel has called Thunberg an "antisemite" and dismissed the aid ship as a stunt.

Rima Hassan, a French member of the European parliament who was also on board, posted on X that the crew had been "arrested by the Israeli army in international waters around 2am."

A photograph showed the crew seated on the boat, all wearing life jackets, with their hands in the air.



Madleen escorted by an Israeli military boat approaching Ashdod yesterday.

Gaza blockade a scandal, shameful, says Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday the humanitarian blockade of Gaza was a "scandal" and "shameful", calling for the reopening of humanitarian supply routes. Macron also called for a truce in the besieged Palestinian territory.

The yacht is carrying a small shipment of humanitarian aid, including rice and baby formula. The foreign ministry said it would be taken to Gaza.

The Swedish foreign ministry said it was in contact with Israeli authorities.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office said the president has asked Israeli authorities to release the French nationals on board as soon as possible.

The French and Spanish foreign ministries said they had requested consular protection for their citizens aboard.

Palestinian resistance movement Hamas condemned the seizure of the boat as "state terrorism" and said it salutes its activists. **Page 3**



Qatar's comprehensive reforms highlighted at global labour forum

QNA
Geneva

Qatar participated yesterday in the General Session of the 113th International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva.

The conference brought together ministers of labour, heads of delegations, and representatives of workers and employers from the International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s member states.

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri headed Qatar's delegation.

Qatar's participation, represented by a senior delegation from the Ministry of Labour, highlights the country's ongoing commitment to engage actively with international organisations and maintain dialogue on the evolving global labour landscape.

In his speech, HE Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri highlighted Qatar's comprehensive reforms aimed at developing its labour market over recent years.

These reforms focus on key areas such as strengthening the legislative and regulatory framework for occupational health and safety, as well as implementing extensive awareness and training



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met with ILO Director-General Gilbert F Houngbo on the sidelines of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva. **Page 2**

programmes for both workers and labour inspectors. Qatar has also built strong partnerships with the ILO to promote decent work practices, especially in critical sectors.

HE the minister voiced Qatar's appreciation for the ILO's continued efforts to promote social justice and decent work at the regional and global levels.

He noted that the director-general's report offers an honest and thorough analysis of the structural challenges facing labour markets

amid global crises. He stressed that social justice is no longer just an ideal, but a necessary foundation for social stability and peace.

HE Dr al-Marri emphasised that the report highlights the importance of embedding democratic values, participation, and fairness in building resilient and fair labour systems. He underlined the urgent need to enhance social dialogue as a key mechanism for developing inclusive solutions. **To Page 3**

Trump backs arrest of Newsom

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he would support the arrest of California Governor Gavin Newsom over possible obstruction of his administration's immigration enforcement measures, amid protests in the state. Trump border czar Tom Homan threatened on Saturday to arrest anyone who obstructed enforcement efforts in the state, including Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. Both sharply criticized the Republican president's deployment of



Governor Gavin Newsom

National Guard troops to Los Angeles. "I would do it if I were Tom. I think it's great. Gavin likes the publicity but I think it would be a great thing," Trump told reporters upon arrival at the White House.

Newsom, a Democrat, responded that he hoped he would never see the day that a president called for the arrest of a sitting governor.

"I don't care if you're a Democrat or a Republican this is a line we cannot cross as a nation - this is an unmistakable step toward authoritarianism," Newsom said in a post on X.

"It's just more talk, more bluff, more bluster, more threats," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said on Monday at a press conference in which he announced that the state was suing the Trump administration over its deployment of National Guard troops in Los Angeles. **Page 8**

Apple announces updates at annual meet

Apple unveiled upgrades to operating systems across its devices yesterday, including overhauled visual elements, a fresh naming system for software updates and new features in its Apple Intelligence suite.

At its annual Worldwide Developers Conference, the company also said it would open up the underlying technology it uses for Apple Intelligence to developers.

These are some of the key announcements from the event:

LIQUID GLASS: Apple is rolling out a new "Liquid Glass" design language across its software, bringing sleek translucence and a glass-like shine to app interfaces.

Inspired by visionOS on the Vision Pro augmented reality device, the design adapts to light and dark modes and reacts dynamically to movement using real-time rendering.

The new design will be imple-



Apple CEO Tim Cook during the conference yesterday.

mented in buttons, sliders, media controls and larger elements such as tab bars and sidebars, along with matching redesigned toolbars and navigation.

Apple is releasing updated Application Programming Interfaces so that developers can begin adapting their apps ahead of the new design rollout later this year.

OPERATING SYSTEMS: This

year's major iOS release would have originally been called iOS 19, following the usual sequence after iOS 18.

However, Apple is now changing its naming convention: future iOS versions will be numbered based on the year following their release - similar to how car manufacturers name new models. Business



Qatari Haj pilgrims begin returning home: ministry



QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has announced that the first batch of pilgrims from Qatar have begun returning to the homeland, since yesterday, via several convoys aboard Qatar Airways and Saudi Airlines.

The ministry said in a statement yesterday that the return of pilgrims from Qatar will continue today, while the arrival of all pilgrims will be completed tomorrow, amid extensive arrangements and continuous monitoring by the Qatari Haj Mission and its support units.

The ministry said that the Qatari Haj Mission is providing the country's pilgrims with the utmost care and attention, ensuring their safety throughout their religious journey and until their safe arrival to the homeland.

Ibrahim Mohammed al-Nema, representative of the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs in the Qatari Haj Mission, emphasised that the pilgrims' return comes after they have completed the Haj rituals with ease and peace, having spent the days of Tashreeq in Mina and after having performed the stoning of the Jamarat in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), whether on the 12th day of Dhul-Hijjah for those who were in a hurry or on the 13th day for those who delayed, based on the words of God Almighty: "But whoever hastens [to depart] within two days, there is no sin upon him; and whoever delays, there is no sin upon him - for him who fears God."

Al-Nema noted that the Communications and Support Unit closely monitored the movement of pilgrims leaving Mina to perform the stoning of the Jamarat, communicating directly with the officials and co-ordinators of the Qatari Haj Missions to ensure that pilgrims adhered to the scheduled times set by the Mis-



sion, and according to the specified routes that ensure smooth flow of movement and the safety of all.

He said that the unit also ensured field support for pilgrims through field teams of its members, who carried the banners of the Qatari Haj Affairs Office. This facilitated communication with pilgrims during their travels, particularly during the stoning of the Jamarat and their departure from Mina to Makkah Al Mukkaramah. This reflects the mission's commitment to providing continuous support to pilgrims throughout all stages of the rituals, including their safe return home.

For his part, Dr Khaled Abdel Hadi, head of the Medical Unit of the Qatari Haj Mission, said that this year the unit established a mobile medical ambulance unit (rotating ambulance).

This is a unique initiative consisting of mobile ambulance teams that accompany pilgrims as they leave the camps in Mina for the Jamarat.

These teams continue to accompany them during the stoning of the small, medium, and large Jamarat and until their return to the camp.

This is to ensure the safety of all pilgrims, especially women and the elderly.

He added that the medical unit established two fixed ambulance units on the Jamarat Road, equipped with all the necessary

medical equipment to handle emergency cases.

He noted that the unit also provided three paramedics equipped with innovative HT Rescue Jacket, a miniature model of a mobile ambulance.

The mobile ambulance contains all the necessary equipment for rapid intervention in emergency situations, with direct communication and connectivity with the two fixed ambulance units, he added.

The three paramedics use electric scooters with the mission logo while accompanying the campaigns.

In the same context, the Co-ordination and Follow-up Unit and the Airport monitored the pilgrims' departure from Makkah Al Mukkaramah after completing the Farewell Tawaf, assisting them with their procedures at King Abdulaziz Airport and the Haj Airport in Jeddah. This was done in co-ordination with the airlines to ensure smooth and seamless departure procedures.

These integrated efforts by the Qatari Haj Mission and its supporting units convey an implicit message from the Qatari Haj Mission that the Mission is with the pilgrims throughout their faith journey, wherever they may be, from the time they leave their homeland for the Holy Land, through the performance of their rituals, and until their safe return home after performing the fifth pillar of Haj.

Amir sends congratulations to Jordan king

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani have sent cables of congratulations to King Abdullah II Ibn al-Hussein of Jordan, on the occasion of Accession to the Throne 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 of Jordan Dr Jaafar Hassan, on the occasion. **(QNA)**

Health minister meets Saudi counterpart



HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud met with Minister of Health of Saudi Arabia Fahd bin Abdulrahman al-Jalajel at the National Center for Health Crisis and Disaster Management in the Holy Sites. The meeting discussed enhancing co-operation between the countries in the health sector, in addition to the key efforts made to serve the health and safety of pilgrims. The Minister of Public Health commended Saudi Arabia's significant efforts in serving the pilgrims, praising the level of organisation and comprehensive healthcare provided during the Haj season. **(QNA)**



Labour minister meets ILO director-general

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Gilbert Houngbo, on the sidelines of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva. The meeting focused on enhancing joint co-operation between Qatar and the ILO as well as means of advancing it in the upcoming period. **(QNA)**

Al-Marri meets International Labour Conference president and Malaysian, Botswana counterparts



HE Minister of Labour, Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with President of the International Labour Conference and Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe, Hon. Edgar Moyo on the sidelines of the 113th session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva. The meeting addressed emerging global trends in the world of labour and discussed concrete measures to tackle workplace challenges arising from rapid digital transformation and advances in artificial intelligence. **(QNA)**



HE the Minister of Labour, Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri held high-level meetings on the sidelines of the International Labour Conference in Geneva with Minister of Social Human Resources of Malaysia, Steven Sim Chee Keong and Minister of Labour and Home Affairs of Botswana, Pius Mokgware. These discussions focused on co-operation in the labour sector and on measures to enhance and develop partnerships. **(QNA)**



Al-Khulaifi meets Sweden's FM and migration minister

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi held talks yesterday in Stockholm with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden Maria Malmer Stenergard. The agenda included ways to foster co-operation between the countries, the latest regional and international developments, along with other topics of shared interest. The Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs praised Qatar's mediation efforts to resolve several regional and international disputes, primarily the joint mediation efforts in Gaza. **(QNA)**



HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met with Minister of Migration of Sweden Johan Forssell in Stockholm yesterday. The meeting discussed co-operation between the countries and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of issues of common concern. **(QNA)**

Qatar’s comprehensive reforms highlighted at global labour forum

From Page 1

HE the minister also pointed out that key conference topics, especially the draft programme and budget for 2026-2027, represent important steps towards strengthening the ILO’s capacity to carry out its strategic goals. These include supporting social dialogue, advancing decent work, and addressing labour market challenges in developing countries.

Reaffirming Qatar’s strong support, HE the minister of labour also spoke in favour

of elevating the status of the State of Palestine in international organisations. He emphasised the importance of empowering Palestinian institutions to protect the rights of Palestinian workers amid ongoing challenges caused by the occupation. He warmly welcomed the decision to grant Palestine “Non-Member Observer State” status at the ILO. He described this as a clear endorsement of the organisation’s commitment to justice and legitimacy, as well as recognition of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, including

their right to self-determination and dignified existence.

HE the minister reaffirmed Qatar’s commitment to supporting the ILO’s mission and to co-operating with international partners to promote social justice and build a future based on decent work and respect for human dignity.

The current session of the International Labour Conference brings together nearly 5,000 participants from 187 member states, including governments, employers, and workers.

Among the key issues under discussion are the director-general’s report, titled “Jobs, Rights and Growth,” and a report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. The conference agenda also covers topics such as protection against biological hazards in the workplace and decent work in the platform economy, with the first-ever discussion on setting standards. Additionally, the conference explores innovative approaches to addressing the informal economy and encouraging formal employment.

Held annually in Geneva, the International Labour Conference, often called the global parliament of labour, sets the ILO’s public policies, including conventions and recommendations. It also makes key decisions on the organisation’s policies, work programme, budget, and elects members to its governing body.

Participants include heads of state and government, relevant ministers, representatives of employers and workers, as well as officials from international, governmental, and labour organisations.

Qatar participates in UN Ocean Conference in Nice

Qatar represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), is participating in the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference, which commenced in Nice, France yesterday, and which will run until June 13.

HE Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie headed Qatar’s delegation at the conference.

The conference aims to accelerate international efforts to protect the oceans and ensure their sustainable use, in support of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14), which is concerned with conserving the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

The conference will discuss several key themes, including working towards the successful completion of ocean-related multilateral processes to raise the level of ambition for ocean protection; mobilising funding



for SDG14 and supporting the development of a sustainable blue economy; and strengthening and better disseminating marine science knowledge for improved policy-making.

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) serves as a framework for the conference’s work, during which various events are organised to integrate marine science into the core of

international ocean protection initiatives and efforts.

The conference is being held at a crucial time, marking the midpoint of the Decade of Ocean Science, providing an opportunity to assess progress, review the impact of existing initiatives, and to accelerate the implementation of desired goals by developing the scientific knowledge needed to ensure a sustainable future for the oceans. (QNA)

Turkiye, Iran slam Israel for intercepting Gaza-bound aid boat

AFP
Istanbul/Tehran

Turkiye slammed Israel for intercepting a Gaza-bound boat carrying activists including Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg early yesterday, describing it as a “heinous attack”.

The Madleen left Italy on June 1 to raise awareness over food shortages in Gaza, which the United Nations has described as the “hungriest place on Earth”, with the entire population at risk of famine.

“The intervention by Israeli forces on the ‘Madleen’ ship... while sailing in international waters is a clear violation of international law,” Turkiye said, calling it as a “heinous attack” by the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a statement, the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) said Israeli troops “forcibly intercepted” the vessel in international waters at 0102 GMT as it was approaching the Gaza Strip.

Turkiye’s foreign ministry said

there were Turkish nationals among those on board, with FFC’s website indicating there were 12 people from seven countries, including Turkiye.

Two of them hold Turkish passports.

Gaza’s Hamas rulers condemned the move in a statement that said the Madleen was being taken to the Israeli port of Ashdod.

A Turkish foreign ministry source said the boat was “expected to reach land in the evening” and that its consular officials had taken “the necessary initiatives to meet them as soon as they disembark from the ship and to ensure their release”.

“We are also in contact with other countries whose citizens are on board. The families of our citizens are being regularly updated,” the source added.

The ministry earlier said Israel’s “aggressive and lawless attitude will not silence the voices defending human values” and that the international community’s “justified reaction to Israel’s genocidal policies, which use hunger as a weapon in Gaza and prevent the

delivery of humanitarian aid, will continue”.

The boat’s interception came just over 15 years after Israeli commandos staged a botched raid on the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish ship carrying activists to Gaza, killing 10 civilians - all of them Turkish nationals.

The assault sparked a years-long diplomatic crisis between Turkiye and Israel.

The Gaza war was triggered by Hamas’ October 2023 storming of Israel. Israel has hit back with force in an ongoing military assault that Gaza’s health ministry says has killed at least 54,880 people, mostly civilians.

IRAN CONDEMNS

Meanwhile, Iran yesterday condemned Israel’s interception of a Gaza-bound aid vessel carrying international activists, describing it as an act of piracy.

“The assault on this flotilla - since it happened in international waters - is considered a form of piracy under international law,” foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Bagaei told a press briefing in Tehran.

Iran says has intel to strike Israel in response to ‘any’ attack on N-sites

AFP
Tehran

Iran’s top security body said yesterday that using intelligence it had obtained about Israeli nuclear facilities, Iranian forces could launch counter-attacks should Israel strike the nation.

Israel has repeatedly warned that it could attack Iranian nuclear sites, vowing to stop Iran from acquiring an atomic bomb, which Tehran has consistently denied it was seeking.

The Israeli warnings have escalated since Tehran and Washington began nuclear talks in April.

An intelligence trove that Iran claimed it had obtained “would enable the fighters to immediately strike (Israel’s) hidden nuclear facilities in response to any possible

attack by the Zionist regime on Iran’s nuclear facilities,” the Supreme National Security Council said in a statement.

It also said Iran would respond in a “precisely proportional” manner to any Israeli attack on its military or economic infrastructure.

On Saturday, state media reported that Tehran had obtained a trove of “strategic and sensitive” Israeli intelligence in a covert operation, including files related to Israel’s undeclared nuclear facilities and defence plans.

Iran’s Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib later said that the seized documents included information related to Western countries including the United States, and “will be published soon”.

Yesterday, the head of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hossein Salami, said the intelli-

gence would make “the impact of Iranian missiles more precise” in case of a confrontation.

Iran and Israel have fought a shadow war for years, with Tehran accusing Israel of having carried out a wave of sabotage attacks and assassinations targeting its nuclear programme.

The two sides have exchanged rare direct attacks for the first time last year against the backdrop of the Gaza war.

Rafael Grossi, head of the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog, said that his agency had no “official communication” about the intelligence Iran reportedly had.

Speaking at an International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, Grossi said the information “seems to refer to Soreq”, an Israeli “research reactor and a research facility” monitored by the IAEA.

Protests in France over Gaza aid boat stoppage

Participants gather during a rally to show their support for activists aboard a boat stopped by Israeli forces enroute to deliver aid to Gaza, during a rally in Lyon, southeastern France, yesterday.



South Sudan army to ‘forcibly’ disarm youth in volatile state

AFP
Juba

South Sudan’s army said yesterday it would carry out a voluntary then “forceful” disarmament of young people in an area where President Salva Kiir has announced a state of emergency.

The young nation has been plagued by insecurity and poverty despite its oil riches.

Kiir declared a six-month emergency in Warrap State and Mayom County last week after a surge of inter-communal violence over cattle raids.

The army has deployed forces to the area in order to

conduct the disarmament, the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces (SSPDF) spokesperson Lul Ruai Koang told reporters in the capital, Juba. Initially, it will be a “voluntary disarmament”, he said, allowing armed youth in the area a “grace period of one week to voluntarily start handing over their weapons”.

Then, he said, “SSPDF forces will launch coordinated and simultaneous forceful disarmament exercises in Warrap and Mayom County”.

“Failure will result in the administration of harsh and punitive measures,” he added.

The move follows a rise in violence between cattle herders - a longstanding issue in South Sudan, where water is scarce and grazing lands are heavily contested.



Tunisians wave the Palestinian flag as they gather at a meeting point in Tunis yesterday, ahead of the departure of a land convoy named “Steadfastness” to break the siege on Gaza. **Right:** Participants of a Tunisian-led land convoy, who aim to reach Gaza and call for an end to the conflict in the region, wait to board buses, in Tunis.

Tunisia activists launch Gaza-bound convoy in ‘symbolic act’

AFP
Tunis

Hundreds of people, mainly Tunisians, launched yesterday a land convoy bound for Gaza, seeking to “break the siege” on the Palestinian territory, activists said.

Organisers said the nine-bus convoy was not bringing aid into Gaza, but rather

aimed at carrying out a “symbolic act” by breaking the blockade on the territory described by the United Nations as “the hungriest place on Earth”.

The “Soumoud” convoy, meaning “steadfastness” in Arabic, includes doctors and aims to arrive in Rafah, in southern Gaza, “by the end of the week”, activist Jawaher Channa told AFP.

It is set to pass through Libya and Egypt, although Cairo has yet to pro-

vide passage permits, she added.

“We are about a thousand people, and we will have more join us along the way,” said Channa, spokeswoman of the Tunisian Co-ordination of Joint Action for Palestine, the group organising the caravan. “Egypt has not yet given us permission to cross its borders, but we will see what happens when we get there,” she said.

Channa said the convoy was not set to

face issues crossing Libya, “whose people have historically supported the Palestinian cause”, despite recent deadly clashes in the country that remains divided between two governments.

Algerian, Mauretanian, Moroccan and Libyan activists were also among the group, which is set to travel along the Tunisian and Libyan coasts, before continuing on to Rafah through Egypt.

After 21 months of war, Israel is facing

mounting international pressure to allow more aid into Gaza to alleviate widespread shortages of food and basic supplies. On June 1, the Madleen aid boat, boarded by activists including Swedish climate campaigner Greta Thunberg and European parliament member Franco-Palestinian Rima Hassan, set sail for Gaza from Italy.

But yesterday morning Israel intercepted it, preventing it from reaching the Palestinian territory.



South Africa wants return of apartheid, colonial-era remains

AFP
Johannesburg

South Africa is determined to repatriate the remains of its people taken abroad during the colonial era and those who died in exile as anti-apartheid activists, the culture minister said yesterday.

The minister of sports, arts and culture announced a plan to rebury the remains of 58 indigenous people who had been removed for study by museums and other institutions

The government was in contact with foreign institutions over the return of remains of indigenous people, including from the KhoiSan group who are regarded as among the country's "first people", minister Gayton McKenzie told reporters.

Government teams would also visit neighbouring countries such as Angola and Zimbabwe to inspect cemetery records to trace people who may have died there during the struggle against apartheid so they could be repatriated, he said.

"These are acts of justice, remembrance and healing," he said. "They affirm our government's commitment to restore dignity, promote cultural restoration, and confront the painful legacy of colonialism and apartheid."

The minister of sports, arts and culture

announced a plan to rebury the remains of 58 indigenous people who had been removed for study by museums and other institutions.

The remains were among those taken from graves during the colonial era, he said.

"They were displayed in museums, studied in labs, and held in foreign institutions without consent or respect. We are correcting these injustices," he said.

"We call on all institutions, both here and abroad, to engage in honest and action-driven processes of restitution and repatriation."

McKenzie cited as a success the repatriation in 2012 of the remains of a KhoiSan couple, Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, who were illegally exhumed in 1909 and shipped to Austria for study.

He also referred to the return in 2002 of the remains of a KhoiSan woman, Sarah Baartman, who died in France in 1815 after being taken to Europe and paraded as a spectacle in one of the country's most emblematic such cases.

Later, in the fight against apartheid which was ended in 1994, "thousands of our people went into exile during the liberation struggle," McKenzie added.

"Many never came home. Some died unknown, buried in unmarked graves, without their families having the chance to mourn," he said.

A mission was headed to Angola in the next weeks with a list of 400 people to find, he said.

The government was in talks with an Australian demining firm for help to access areas that were still mined after Angola's decades of civil war that ended in 2002. More than 1,000 anti-apartheid activists died in exile in countries in Africa but also in Cuba and Europe, officials said in September when the remains of 42 exiles were returned.



Protesters hold placards and chant anti-government slogans as they attempt to block traffic on a main road during a march over the death of Kenyan blogger Albert Ojwang, who died in police custody under disputed circumstances, in Nairobi, yesterday.

Kenya custodial death victim was arrested for criticising cop online

AFP
Nairobi

Kenya's police chief said yesterday that a man who died in custody over the weekend had been arrested for criticising a senior officer.

The country was already on edge as it marks a year since massive protests over tax rises and corruption that triggered a police response in which at least 60 were killed.

Albert Ojwang, 31, was found unconscious in a cell in Nairobi's central po-

lice station on Saturday and later pronounced dead in hospital. The police said he hit his own head against the wall.

"We saw the body yesterday... (it) had a lot of injuries on the hands, the shoulder area, the head was swollen all around the frontal part... and there was a lot of blood oozing from the nose and mouth," Julius Juma, lawyer for Ojwang's family, told reporters and supporters gathered outside the city's morgue yesterday.

Police Inspector General Douglas Kanja told reporters that Ojwang was arrested along with several others following a complaint by his deputy, Eliud

Kipkoech Lagat. "There was a complaint that had been launched by the (deputy inspector-general) about his name being tarnished," Kanja said.

Local media said the group were arrested over posts on social media.

Ojwang was arrested in western Kenya but transferred more than 250 kilometres to Nairobi, "without proper orders from the court", the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) said yesterday.

The move was evidence of "bad faith and malice in the arrest", the LSK said, adding that it refuted "any proposition that his death was an accident".

Amnesty International earlier said Ojwang's death "must be urgently, thoroughly and independently investigated".

Kenyan authorities have been accused of a harsh crackdown on critics of the government, with more than 80 illegally detained since the June 2024 protests, according to rights groups - some just for sharing cartoons or satirical images of President William Ruto.

Former attorney general Justin Muturi, who says his own son was illegally detained by security forces during the protests, said the circumstances surrounding Ojwang's death were "not just suspicious, they are outrageous".

"They insult the intelligence of Kenyans and raise very serious questions about the conduct and accountability of our law enforcement agencies," he wrote on X.



Kenyan police officers guard the entrance to Central Police Station during a protest over the death of blogger Albert Ojwang, in Nairobi, yesterday.

Kenyan mother's search for son year after protests

AFP
Nairobi

Susan Wangari has lost count of the morgues, hospitals and police stations she has visited in search of her son, who went missing at the height of Kenya's mass protests last June.

She last saw Emmanuel Mukuria, 24, on the morning of June 25, 2024, the day that thousands of Kenyan youths thronged the streets of Nairobi and stormed parliament in protest at planned tax rises and corruption.

"It would be better if my son were dead; at least I could visit his grave," she said.

Rights groups say at least 60 people were killed during the protests in June and July, and more than 80 abducted by the security forces since then, with dozens still missing.

Mukuria's friends say he was arrested during the protests in the city centre, where he worked as a minibus tout.

"We do not have peace in this house," his mother, 50, told AFP during a visit to her single-room home in the Kasarani slum area.

"I sleep lightly at night in case he comes knocking at my window like he always did," she said.

"Every time we hear that bodies have been found somewhere, we are anxious to know whose they are."

Two men told her they shared a cell with Mukuria, but they are too afraid to speak publicly about their ordeal.

One was only released in February, giving her hope that her son is still alive in captivity.

"They told me they were beaten and questioned about the protests. They were being asked who paid them to participate," Wangari said.

Last month, President William Ruto, in a clear admission that security forces had engaged in kidnappings, said all those abducted during the protests had been "returned to their families".

Rights groups say dozens are still missing and police have shown little progress in investigating the disappearances despite Ruto claiming an "accountability mechanism" was put in place.

Questioned by AFP, the president's office said the police were "handling the brief", while a police spokesman referred AFP back to the president's office.

The police spokesman said they had no information on Mukuria's case. An officer-in-charge at the station where Wangari reported him missing said the matter was still under investigation.



Susan Wangari Wanjohi, mother of one forced disappearance victim Emmanuel Mukuria Kamau, poses for a photo at her house in Kasarani during an interview with AFP recently.

Many other families are still dealing with the aftermath of the violence.

Rex Masai, 29, was the first to die during the protests, shot and killed in the city centre on June 20.

The inquest into his death is still dragging on.

"We are hoping for the best but we are not near the truth," Masai's mother Gillian Munyao said at her home, where a photo of her dreadlocked son hangs on the wall.

She found her son lying lifeless in a pool of blood at a clinic where he was taken that day.

The state prosecutor has said a lack of witnesses has delayed progress in the case.

One potential witness was scared off for fear he might be "forcibly disappeared" by the police, Munyao said.

Hussein Khalid, head of rights group Vocal Africa, blamed a "lack of co-operation by the authorities".

"When you get evidence, the unfortunate bit is you have to take it to the police themselves," he said.

He lost count of the number of funerals he attended after the protests, estimating between 20 and 30.

"Was it necessary to unleash this kind of brute force against young, innocent Kenyans?" he said.

Politicians have shown little interest in accountability or learning from the unrest. "People were killed, we sympathised, we moved on," Bashir Abdullahi, a member of the ruling coalition, told parliament during a debate on the protests last month. But for victim's families, the search for justice "means a lot", said Masai's father, Chrispin Odawa.

"The wound will never heal," he said.

WHO maintains mpox alert amid West Africa surge

AFP
Geneva

The World Health Organisation said yesterday that the mpox virus epidemic remains an international health emergency with more than 37,000 confirmed cases reported since it erupted.

WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the extension of the emergency following a meeting of international experts who noted progress in some countries but also highlighted a surge in west Africa and the spread of the virus outside Africa.

The WHO said since the epidemic started in early 2024 in Democratic Republic of Congo, there have been more than 37,000 cases in 25 countries, including 125 deaths.

DR Congo accounts for 60% of the confirmed cases and 40% of the deaths from

the virus, that causes a rash and severe flu-like symptoms.

Uganda and Burundi have been the next worst hit, followed by Sierra Leone, which the WHO said has seen a surge in cases this year.

WHO first declared mpox an international emergency in August last year. The International Health Regulations emergency committee met last Thursday to discuss the epidemic.

It decided that the epidemic remains an international emergency "based on the continuing rise in the number of cases, including a recent increase in West Africa, and likely ongoing undetected transmission in some countries beyond the African continent."

It said some countries were still struggling to monitor the epidemic and with a lack of funding for treatment there was a need for "continued international support".



Public Announcement

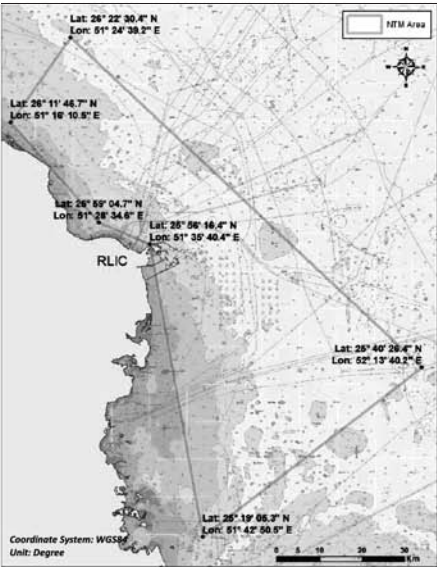
To all Ships, Fishermen and Mariners
Seismic Survey Acquisition by Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Innovator and Safa Searcher
Seismic Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 27th November 2024 – 27th November 2025

Pursuant to and under directives from the Department of Seafarers Affairs & Registration, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen that QatarEnergy LNG intends to perform Ocean Bottom Node Seismic Survey Works with Vessels AOS Glory, Stanford Hawk, GMS Apollo, Voyager Explorer, BGP Innovator and Safa Searcher in the locations bound by the coordinates shown in the diagram below.

All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations.

QatarEnergy LNG takes no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operation, following publication of this notice.

| Point | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE |
|-------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 26° 22' 30.4"N | 51° 24' 39.2"E |
| 2 | 25° 40' 26.4"N | 52° 13' 40.2"E |
| 3 | 25° 19' 05.3"N | 51° 42' 50.5"E |
| 4 | 25° 56' 16.4"N | 51° 35' 40.4"E |
| 5 | 25° 59' 04.7"N | 51° 38' 34.6"E |
| 6 | 26° 11' 46.7"N | 51° 16' 10.5"E |



Any further inquiries should be addressed to: Tel. +974 44531797

India May inflation ‘likely cooled to 3%’ as food price pressure eases

Reuters
Bengaluru

India's consumer inflation rate likely eased to a more than six-year low of 3% in May thanks to a favourable base and a further moderation in food prices, a Reuters poll forecast, supporting last week's

larger-than-expected interest rate cut.
On Friday the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stunned financial markets by slashing its key policy rate by 50 basis points, double what was predicted, to boost economic growth as inflation has remained subdued.
The central bank, which targets inflation in the middle of

its 2-6% range in the medium term, also shifted its policy stance to 'neutral' from 'ac-commodative'.
A snap Reuters poll after the decision found the RBI was likely done with cutting rates, wrapping up one of its shortest and shallowest easing cycles in more than a decade.
The June 5-9 Reuters poll of

50 economists, published yesterday, forecast inflation measured by the annual change in the consumer price index (CPI) fell even further to 3% in May from 3.16% in April.
That would mark the fourth consecutive month below the RBI's 4.0% medium-term target, the longest such streak in nearly six years.

It would also be the lowest inflation rate since April 2019, welcome news for many Indian households where food takes up a significant share of monthly expenses.
Forecasts for the data due on Thursday at 1030GMT ranged from 2.7-3.7%.
“We are expecting a cooling of inflation to 3% on a combina-

tion of a favourable base effect and... sequential moderation in prices of cereals and pulses even as most other segments started to strengthen,” said Kanika Pasricha, chief economic advisor at Union Bank of India.
“Prices of most food segments though continue to slide but the pace of correction is losing ground,” she added.

Shein, Reliance ‘aim to sell India-made clothes abroad within a year’

Reuters
Mumbai/London

Fashion retailer Shein and partner Reliance Retail plan to rapidly expand their Indian supplier base and start international sales of India-made Shein-branded clothes within six to 12 months, said two people with knowledge of the matter.

The China-founded, Singapore-headquartered Shein has been discussing plans with the Indian retailer since before the US imposed tariffs on Chinese imports that intensified the need to diversify sourcing, the people said. The aim is to raise Indian suppliers to 1,000 from 150 within a year, they said.

In a statement Shein said its partnership with Reliance was limited to the licensing of its brand to Reliance Retail for Indian domestic consumption only. Reliance did not respond to queries.

Shein sells low-priced apparel such as \$5 dresses and \$10 jeans shipped directly from 7,000 suppliers in China to customers in around 150 countries. Its biggest market is the US, where it is adjusting to tariffs on low-value e-commerce packages from China which could previously be imported duty free.

The retailer launched in India in 2018 but its app was banned in 2020 as part of government action against China-linked firms amid border tension with its northeastern neighbour.

It returned in February under a licensing deal with the Reliance Industries unit which launched

SheinIndia.in selling Shein-branded clothes produced in local factories. In contrast, Shein's other websites mainly list goods from China.
Reliance, controlled by Asia's richest person, Mukesh Ambani, has contracted 150 garment manufacturers and is in discussion with 400 more, said the two people, declining to be identified due to confidentiality concerns.
The goal is 1,000 Indian factories making Shein-branded clothes within a year for both the Indian market and to service some of Shein's global websites, the people said.

Shein initially wants to list India-made clothes on its US and British websites, one of the people said. Discussions have been ongoing for months and the launch time of six to 12 months could change depending on supplier numbers, the person said.

The scale of supplier expansion and export time frame is being reported for the first time.

Shein has licensed its brand for domestic use to Reliance which “is responsible for manufacturing, supply chain, sales and operations in the Indian market alone,” Shein said in a statement.

In December, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal told parliament that the Shein-Reliance partnership aimed to create a network of Indian suppliers of Shein-branded clothes for sale “domestically and globally.”

Shein is a fast-fashion behemoth earning annual revenue of more than \$30bn through low prices and aggressive marketing. Most of its products are from China with some

made in countries such as Turkey and Brazil.

Its expansion in India mirrors interest in the country from the likes of Walmart and others throughout the global fashion and retail industries, particularly those looking for suppliers outside China due to the US-China trade war.

The Shein India app has been downloaded 2.7mn times across Apple and Google Play stores, averaging 120% on-month growth since its launch, data from market intelligence firm Sensor Tower showed.

Offerings during its first four months have reached 12,000 designs, a fraction of the 600,000 products on Shein's US site. In the women's dresses category, its cheapest item was priced at Rs349 (\$4) compared to \$3.39 on the US site as of June 9.

Shein's Indian partner Reliance, which operates the app, is working with suppliers to assess whether they can replicate Shein's global best-sellers at lower cost, the two people said.

Reliance aims to emulate Shein's on-demand manufacturing model, asking suppliers to make as few as 100 pieces per design before increasing production of those that sell well, they said.

Executives from Reliance recently visited China to understand Shein's “innovative” supply chain operations, “data driven” design processes and “disruptive” digital marketing, Manish Aziz, assistant vice president Shein India at Reliance Retail, said in a LinkedIn post in which he called Shein's scale and speed “truly incredible”.



Smoke billows from the cargo vessel that caught fire off Bepore coast in India's Kerala state, yesterday.

Explosions, fires on cargo ship off India's Kerala coast

Reuters
Kochi, India

Multiple explosions and fires erupted on a cargo ship bound for India's financial capital Mumbai yesterday, causing 40 containers to fall into the Arabian Sea and forcing several crew members to jump overboard to escape the flames, officials said.

The Singapore-flagged WAN HAI 503 met with an accident about 144km off the coast of the southern Indian state of Kerala, said Shekhar Kurriakose, secretary of the state's disaster management authority.

“According to preliminary information... there were 22 workers on board the ship... 18 jumped into the sea and are in rescue boats. Efforts are underway to rescue them,” he said, adding that the vessel was not “currently sinking”
Pictures and videos shared by the Indian coast guard on X showed a thick plume of black smoke rising from the ship, and some containers lying open and in disarray near the point where the smoke was escaping.

“Vessel is presently on fire and adrift,” a defence ministry public relations officer said on X.

Officials did not disclose the nature of the cargo in the con-

tainers, nor what caused the explosions.

A container vessel sank in another accident off Kerala last month, releasing 100 cargo containers into the Arabian Sea. The directorate general of shipping said on Friday there were no reports of oil pollution because of that incident.

Meanwhile a coast guard aircraft and a warship was deployed to tackle the fire, the defence ministry said.

Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) said in a statement that there were “some injuries” among the crew, with four members unaccounted for.

India faces two years of sugar surplus: growers

India is set to produce surplus sugar for at least two consecutive years, as millions of farmers expand the area under sugarcane cultivation amid ample rainfall, boosting crop yields, growers and industry officials said.
The rebound in production would allow the world's second-largest sugar producer to increase exports in 2025-26, they said, after poor rainfall cut sugarcane yields and led to two years of export restrictions.
“Sugarcane usually gives us good returns, but sometimes we can't plant it due to a lack of water,” said Umesh Jagtap as he planted the crop on a three-acre plot in Maharashtra, a leading sugar producing state in the west.
“This year, we had heavy rain in May, and the forecast says more rain is on the way. So we're planning to plant more than usual.”
Farmers from Maharashtra and neighbouring Karnataka struggle to irrigate their sugarcane crop in May. This year, however, Maharashtra and Karnataka received 1,007% and 234% more rainfall than average, respectively.
The rainfall will benefit the crop to be harvested in the 2025-26 season, starting October, and will also support planting for the 2026-27 harvest, said Prakash Naiknavare, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCFSF).
(Reuters)

India ride-hailing platform Rapido to enter food delivery

Rapido is entering the food delivery segment with a new platform that charges restaurants a fixed fee per order, according to a proposal to restaurants, as the Indian ride-hailing platform looks to compete with Swiggy and Eternal's Zomato. Swiggy and Zomato charge commission fees ranging from 16% to 30% on restaurant partners. Restaurants argue this forces them to inflate menu prices on these platforms, resulting in higher prices for consumers compared to in-store dining. Rapido, Eternal and Swiggy did not immediately respond to requests for comment.
In its proposal, Rapido has asked partners to keep its pricing the same on the platform and in-store, with restaurants paying a fixed delivery fee of Rs25 and taxes for orders worth more than Rs100.

Curfew in Imphal



Security personnel stand guard along a street during a curfew in Imphal, Manipur, yesterday, after violence erupted following the arrest of members of Arambai Tenggol, a radical Meitei group. Manipur in India's northeast has been rocked by periodic clashes for more than two years between the Meitei and Kuki community.

Panic, Plan B as US visa pause impacts Indian students

Thomson Reuters Foundation
New Delhi

Over the last few weeks, 28-year-old Raj Iyer and his family have been scrambling to figure out ways to fund his master's programme at Columbia University in the US.

Iyer, who used a pseudonym to avoid potential reprisals, received a partial scholarship but still needed to come up with nearly \$110,000 to cover tuition and living expenses, for which his family took out a loan and used their savings.

Now Iyer fears it is all for naught. Less than three months before classes start, Iyer has been left stranded after the US government announced it is pausing student visa interviews.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio last month instructed embassies to stop scheduling new visa appointments, saying the Trump administration would review the process and expand vetting

of students' social media profiles.

Officials have not said when student interviews will resume, plunging the education of students from abroad into doubt, including those in India, the biggest contributor of international students to US schools of higher learning.

According to the US embassy in India, more than 331,000 students went there in 2024.

Students hoping to attend university in the US are now deleting their social media posts, writing e-mails to their universities and laying out hastily crafted backup plans.

Even before the decision to pause student visas, the Trump administration had revoked visas or terminated visa records belonging to 1,600 international students by May 7, according to data from the US-based National Association of Foreign Student Advisors.

Indian students have borne the biggest brunt of these actions, the data showed, with 309 visas revoked, follow-

ing closely by Chinese students.

In March, the Trump administration cancelled the visa of Indian PhD student Ranjini Srinivasan for her activism on campus.

Vibha Kagzi, founder and CEO of ReachIvy, a Mumbai-based education consultancy that helps Indian students seek admission at foreign universities, said she was seeing “anxiety and a flurry of queries” from both students and parents.

“There's a deep sense of uncertainty, ranging from fear of deferral to questions around return on investment,” Kagzi told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Iyer, a filmmaker, is especially concerned about the introduction of stringent social-media vetting and is unfollowing pages and undoing previous “likes” on political posts on his accounts.

“I have always been a person with strong convictions, and I don't walk

back on them. I am going to a place where I know my freedom of speech is going to be curtailed,” he said. “This is making me feel like a hypocrite.”

After finishing his studies, Iyer had planned to find work to pay off the loan his family has taken to fund his degree.

“It weirdly feels like the Trump administration has a level of leverage over me,” he said.

Some of the students interviewed for this story said their universities had not reached out about potential next steps.

Kagzi said she is advising students to “keep calm” and wait for updates from their schools, including possible alternatives, like online classes, while students wait for their visa appointments.

“We're seeing increased demand for reassurance, planning support and alternative pathways as they try to keep their dreams on track,” she said.

The uncertainty has prompted some Indian students to consider enrolling at universities outside of the US.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. A18033657
QID No. 28905004902

hereby change my name

from

TASLIMA MD YOUNUS MIAH

to

TASLIMA ABDUL LATIF

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.



S Korea president calls for extra budget to be ready swiftly

Reuters
Seoul

South Korean President Lee Jae-myung yesterday urged officials to swiftly draw up a supplementary budget plan aimed at supporting economic recovery and spurring consumption, his of-

fice said. Lee, who took office last week, has made economic recovery a priority, launching an emergency economy taskforce with government officials.
The economy contracted in the first three months of the year as exports and consumption stalled amid fear over the impact of US tariffs, fanning expectations of interest rate

cuts. If the extra budget is finalised under Lee, that would add to the country's earlier supplementary budget of 13.8tn won (\$9.7bn) approved on May 1.
During his election campaign, Lee had emphasised the need for an extra budget to provide short-term economic stimulus.
At the taskforce meeting yester-

day, he also asked for measures to stabilise prices, saying the increasing cost of living is causing "too much pain". "Prices are causing too much pain for the people, so please check the current situation and see if there are any possible measures and report them even before the next meeting," Lee said, referring to higher prices of instant noodles.

Prices of chicken and eggs have risen since an outbreak of avian flu in Brazil, a vice finance minister told Lee during the meeting.
The government has restricted chicken imports from avian flu-affected areas in Brazil.
The left-leaning president is expected to pursue fiscal expansion policies, including increased cash

subsidies and welfare, aimed at bolstering economic growth despite concerns over rising debt levels.
Meanwhile, President Lee and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba agreed during a telephone call to strengthen bilateral ties, a South Korean presidential spokesperson and Japan's foreign ministry said yesterday.

US, China begin key trade talks in London

AFP
London

China and the US began a new round of trade talks in London yesterday, Beijing's state media reported, as the world's two biggest economies seek to shore up a shaky truce after bruising tit-for-tat tariffs.

The two sides are meeting in the historic Lancaster House, run by the UK Foreign Office, following a first round of talks in Geneva last month.

Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng was again heading the team in London. Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported the start of the talks.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer are leading the US delegation, President Donald Trump said on Friday.

"The meeting should go very well," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

His press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, told Fox News on Sunday: "We want China and the US to continue moving forward with the agreement that was struck in Geneva." While the UK government reiterated that it was not involved in the discussions, a spokesperson said:

"We are a nation that champions free trade." UK authorities "have always been clear that a trade war is in nobody's interests, so we welcome these talks", the spokesperson added. The talks in London come just a few days after Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping finally held their first publicly announced telephone talks since the Republican returned to the White House.

Trump said Thursday's call reached a "very positive conclusion". Xi was quoted by Xinhua as saying "correcting the course of the big ship of Sino-US relations requires us to steer well and set the direction". Tensions between the two nations have soared, with Trump accusing Beijing of violating a tariff de-escalation deal reached in Geneva in mid-May.

"We need China to comply with their side of the deal. And so that's what the trade team will be discussing tomorrow," Leavitt said on Sunday. A key issue will be Beijing's shipments of rare earths - crucial to a range of goods including electric vehicle batteries and which have been a bone of contention for some time. "Rare earth shipments from China to the US have slowed since President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariffs in April," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB.



A minivan lies on the side of the road after it collided with a bus in Gerik-Jeli, in Malaysia's Perak state.

Malaysia bus crash kills 15

AFP
Kuala Lumpur

A bus carrying university students back to their campus smashed into a minivan in northern Malaysia yesterday, killing at least 15 people, police and rescue services said.

Thirteen victims died at the scene near the town of Gerik, on the busy East-West Highway near the Thai border, while two died in hospital.

The accident is the deadliest in more than a decade on Malaysia's hazardous roads and came as students were returning to school after the Eid holidays over the weekend.

"It looked like the bus had lost control and hit the (minivan) from behind," Perak State Police chief Hisam Nordin said, based on initial investigations.

Images from the scene taken by the fire and rescue department showed a green bus overturned on its right side with a smashed rear end cover, while the red minivan had slid into

a ditch, with its windows blown out.

"Some victims managed to get out on their own, some victims were thrown out while others were still (trapped) in the bus," the Perak state disaster management authority said in a statement.

Rescuers had to use a hydraulic cutter to free people from the bus.

The death toll included 14 students from the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), while the last victim was a bus attendant, the emergency services said.

Thirty-three others were injured, with seven in critical condition taken to hospital, it added.

Police chief Hisam later said some of the injured were discharged. The number of injured still in hospital was not known.

Most of the victims were aged between 21 and 23. They were travelling from the town of Jerreh in northeast Malaysia when the accident happened shortly after lam.

"The journey was fine until I suddenly smelled something like burnt rubber or brakes," said Wan Muhammad Hanifah Wan

Azman, 22, an animation student at UPSI.

"The bus then sped up and swerved to avoid a car ahead before flipping over," Wan Muhammad Hanifah told the *New Straits Times* daily.

"It all happened so fast. One moment we were on the road, the next everything went black. When I opened my eyes, people were crying and calling for help. Bodies lay everywhere - some bleeding, some motionless," he said.

Hisam said officers were investigating whether the crash "involved human negligence or if it was a technical issue".

Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim ordered the higher education ministry to help the victim's families and said he and his wife Azizah were "deeply saddened" by the tragedy.

"Heartbreaking disasters like these that are repeated often should be a lesson to all to be careful and not to rush," Anwar wrote on Facebook.

"Your lives are too precious and can't be replaced," he added.

Tangled whale sparks rescue mission off Australia

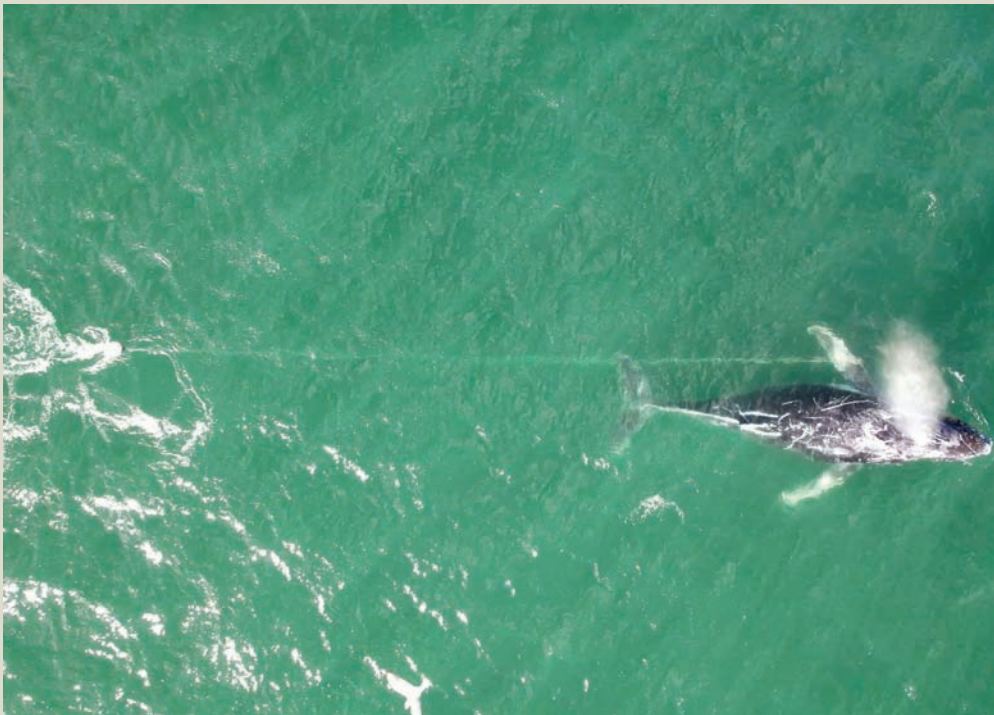
Wildlife rescue teams scoured Australia's east coast yesterday to find and free a distressed humpback whale tangled in a rope.

Aerial footage showed the whale swimming south of Sydney Harbour trailing a rope attached to a floating buoy. "It makes it more difficult for the whale to dive," said Pip Jacobs from whale rescue group ORRCA.

"It's tiring for the whale, which is already in a state of distress being tangled." The whale was about 25 feet long, Jacobs said, indicating it was still "quite young".

The rope appeared to be tangled around the whale's left pectoral fin, she said. "The way it is moving is quite erratic," Jacobs said. "It's moving south which is unusual. They should be heading north as part of their migration."

Teams of volunteers and wildlife rescue experts were searching the coastline to pinpoint the whale's location, she said. But efforts had been hindered by choppy waters and blustery winds. "If conditions allow and we have eyes on the whale, the best-case scenario is we have a successful disentanglement.



A distressed humpback whale tangled in a rope swims south of Sydney harbour.

Starbucks cuts prices in China as competition grows

Reuters
Beijing

Starbucks China will lower the prices of some of its iced drinks by an average of 5 yuan (\$0.70) across the country, the company announced yesterday, as competition intensifies and consumers become more cautious about spending.

In a post on its Weixin social media account, the US coffee chain said it would offer more "accessible" prices on dozens of its drinks, including non-coffee drinks and the Frappuccino, from today.

While China is Starbucks' second-largest market after the US, the coffee market is highly competitive and consumers have become more cautious about spending because of the

slowing economy and concerns about job security. The new approach means some of Starbucks' drinks will be priced as low as 23 yuan, the post said.

Domestic rivals such as Luckin Coffee and Cotti have priced their drinks as low as 9.9 or even 8.8 yuan, while deep-pocketed internet companies JD.com and Alibaba Group have entered the food delivery market, adding to the competition. With offers and vouchers, Chinese coffee consumers can buy themselves a drink for as little as 2.9 yuan.

A person close to Starbucks, said the company was not reducing prices in response to intense price competition, but looking to attract more customers in the afternoon.

The individual requested anonymity as they were not in a role that allowed them to comment to the media.

Philippines uses mangrove buffer zones to protect coastlines

Thomson Reuters Foundation
Manila

Often battered by typhoons and floods, protecting the coastline is a priority for the sugar-producing Philippines province of Negros Occidental.

But instead of man-made defences, local leaders have turned to reviving natural barriers with 100-metre-wide strips of vegetation, including coastal mangroves and beach forest species to counter erosion and protect from storms.

Negros Occidental began setting up its "coastal greenbelt" network in 2022, the first of its kind in the

Philippines. It led to the establishment and protection of more than 1,000 hectares of mangroves, beach forests and wetlands across Negros Occidental, which now serve as living buffers against typhoons, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion, directly contributing to the province's disaster risk reduction strategy.

The Negros Occidental coastal greenbelt could become a model for the country's thousands of miles of coastline, which are threatened by climate change, urban expansion and deforestation.

"Local government units are already aware of the benefits of coastal greenbelts in terms of sav-

ing lives and properties from destruction," Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice-president of ocean conservation group Oceana Philippines.

More than 90 local government units have since passed their own policies or ordinances designating parts of their areas as greenbelt zones, according to her organisation.

Negros Occidental is also home to the 89,000-hectare Negros Occidental Coastal Wetlands Conservation Area, which hosts several endangered species, such as turtles and dolphins, and was declared as wetland of international importance in 2016.

A 100-metre strip of mangrove

can reduce the energy of waves, by up to 66%, a 2012 study by British scientists said.

With 60% of Filipinos living in coastal areas and vulnerable to climate disasters, wetland experts are now pushing for a similar measure nationwide and lawmakers have introduced legislation to establish national coastal greenbelt zones.

The Philippines House of Representatives unanimously passed a coastal management bill in 2023 that would require coastal towns and municipalities across the country to create 100m greenbelt zones similar to Negros Occidental.

But the bill is still waiting approval by the senate as it has not

been considered a priority for debate.

Millions of Filipinos benefit from coastal ecosystems like mangroves, seagrasses, mud flats and corals in both rural and urban communities, according to Wetlands International Philippines.

But these coastal protections have suffered for decades.

By the 1990s, Philippines had already lost nearly half of its 450,000 hectares of mangroves. Kisha Muana, policy and advocacy officer of Wetlands International Philippines, said mangroves had been cut down due to "destructive projects along the coasts like reclamation". Muana said the bill would help

the government monitor where the current greenbelts are and identify areas it could restore.

"There are areas in the Philippines where the stretch of mangroves from the coast to open waters do not reach the 100-metre requirement to block wave energy, so the law can compel territories to supplement them with beach forests," she said.

Julie Ann Bedrio, the provincial environmental officer of Negros Occidental, said proposed developments in coastal areas such as land reclamation and wind power projects had a bigger impact than individuals cutting back vegetation.

UK to boost ‘homegrown talent’ in new AI skills drive

AFP
London

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday pledged to boost “homegrown talent for the AI age” by teaming up with tech giants to train 7.5mn workers in artificial intelligence skills.

Speaking at the start of Lon-

don's Tech Week, with a line-up of speakers including Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, Starmer said: “In this global race, we can be an AI maker and not an AI taker.”

Starmer was due to have a one-on-one conversation with the chief of the star Silicon Valley semiconductor firm whose chips are critical for artificial intelligence applications and research.

Ahead of the event bringing to-

gether industry giants, Starmer announced a government-industry partnership to train 7.5mn workers in AI skills, including in using chatbots and large language models to boost productivity.

Tech firms including Nvidia, Google, Microsoft and Amazon committed to make training materials freely available to businesses over the next five years.

Google EMEA region president

Debbie Weinstein called it a “crucial initiative” essential for developing AI skills, unlocking AI-powered growth “and cementing the UK's position as an AI leader”.

In his opening speech, Starmer said Britain must build “the digital infrastructure that we need to make sure AI improves our public services”.

The UK has a “responsibility” to “harness this unprecedented opportunity and to use it to improve the lives of working people”, Starmer added.

“We are going to build more homes, more labs, more data centres, and we're going to do it much, much more quickly.”

His government has pledged to fire up the UK's flagging economy, including with “pro-growth” AI regulations to attract tech investment and turn Britain into an “AI

UK restores winter fuel payments to most pensioners in major U-turn

Reuters
London

Britain will make winter fuel payments to millions of older people this winter, in a major U-turn of the deeply unpopular cuts after months of political pressure on Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

After taking office last July Starmer's Labour government cut winter fuel payments for all but the poorest pensioners in England and Wales as part of wider spending reductions which it said were necessary to fix a hole in the public finances left by the previous Conservative administration.

The reversal announced yesterday will restore those payments to 9mn pensioners, excluding only 2mn who earn above £35,000 (\$47,495) from the £200-£300 subsidy for heating bills in the colder months.

Starmer and Finance Minister Rachel Reeves had faced opposition from dozens of Labour lawmakers on the initial cuts and they were cited as one factor in the party losing ground to Nigel Farage's right-wing Reform UK party in recent local elections. Reform also leads opinion

polls nationally.

Reeves said it was right to continue excluding wealthier pensioners from the payment, and that last year's “difficult decisions” had been justified.

“Because of those decisions, our public finances are now in a better position, which means that this year we're able to pay the winter fuel payment to more pensioners,” she told reporters.

The U-turn will cost the government £1.25bn and means-testing of the payment will save around £450mn.

The move would not lead to permanent additional borrowing, with funding details to be set out at a budget later this year, the Treasury said.

Speaking at a press conference in Wales, Farage said the reversal showed Labour's policy was being driven by his campaigning.

“The Labour government are in absolute state of blind panic, they are not quite sure what to do,” he said. “Reform are leading now much of their agenda.”

Starmer signalled last month that he would reverse the cuts.

The cuts had meant that around 85% of pensioner households that received the payments lost the benefit, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies think tank.

King Charles opens Whitewell Coronation Woodland Garden



Britain's King Charles, The Duke of Lancaster, unveils a plaque commemorating his visit as he opens the Whitewell Coronation Woodland Garden, in Lancashire, Britain, yesterday.

Ireland to exempt sitting tenants from rent cap changes

Sitting Irish tenants will not face rent increases above the current 2% a year limit under reforms to rent controls being considered by government, Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin said yesterday.

Ireland introduced controls in 2016 in a bid to slow runaway rental costs, limiting increases in designated “rent pressure zones” that cover most of the country at an initial 4% a year before cutting it to 2% from 2022.

Reforms to the system are due to be brought to Cabinet for sign off today.

“Renters right now will be protected from the entire package of measures that will come before government today, and the emphasis is more in terms of new builds and new developments that we need,” Martin told national broadcaster RTE.

Local media reported that under the proposals, rents in newly-built properties will no longer be capped at 2% annually from next year but can instead be tied to the rate of inflation.

Ireland's central bank forecasts average annual inflation of 2.1% next year and 1.4% in 2027. The government had hoped the controls would buy it time to sharply increase supply, but a recovery in homebuilding stalled at 30,000 units last year, pushing the government further from its target of an average of 50,000 new homes a year to 2030. That included a 24% year-on-year fall in the number of apartments built, most of which are earmarked for the rental sector.

£1bn paid out to postmasters in accounting scandal: govt

AFP
London

The UK government yesterday said more than £1bn (\$1.3bn) has been paid out in financial settlements to self-employed managers running Post Office branches who were caught up in a faulty accounting software scandal.

The figure comes just weeks after Alan Bates, the former subpostmaster who led the fight for justice, said the compensation process had “turned into quasi-kangaroo courts”.

According to the department for busi-

ness and trade (DBT), a total of 7,569 claims out of the 11,208 received had now been paid, leaving 3,709 claims still to be settled. The Post Office prosecuted over 900 subpostmasters between 1999 and 2015 after errors in tech giant Fujitsu's then-new “Horizon” accounting software wrongly made it appear that money was missing from their accounts.

Many ended up bankrupt, after being forced by the Post Office to pay back the missing funds, and were shunned by their communities. Some were jailed. At least four people took their own lives, and dozens of those so far exonerated died without ever seeing their names cleared.



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Carney speaks during his tour of the Fort York Armoury in Toronto. -AFP

Canada ‘to hit 2% defence spending target this year’

AFP/Reuters
Toronto

Canada will reach Nato's defence spending target of 2% this year, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced yesterday, arguing that the country had to revitalise its military “to defend every inch of our sovereign territory.”

Canada currently spends about 1.4% of GDP on defence.

“Now is the time to act with urgency, force, and determination,” Carney said.

His speech at the University of Toronto included stark warnings about the global security order being shaken by US President Donald Trump.

However, it extended beyond his concern over future US relations.

The prime minister warned Canada has not done enough to prepare itself for evolving threats from China, Russia, cyberattacks and the advancing national security implications of climate change.

“The long-held view that Canada's geographic location will protect us is becoming increasingly archaic,” Carney said.

With threats facing the country multiplying, the prime minister said Canada “will achieve Nato's 2% target this year – half a decade ahead of schedule.”

“We are too reliant on the United States,” he added.

Trump has repeatedly pressured North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) members to increase defence spending, arguing the United States was paying more than its fair share for collective security.

In April, the alliance announced that 22 of its 32 members hit the two percent spending target.

However, Trump has pushed Nato members to spend even

more and warned the US could refuse to protect countries that don't commit what he considers enough resources to defence.

Carney said Canada had become used to a post-war order with the United States as “the global hegemon” and Canada's “closest ally and dominant trading partner.”

“Now the United States is beginning to monetise its hegemony: charging for access to its markets and reducing its contributions to our collective security,” he said, condemning Trump's trade war.

Carney said Canada would pursue new security relationships with “like-minded partners” with a specific focus on Europe.

“We are actively seeking to strengthen transatlantic security,” he said, indicating a Canada-EU summit this month will be “will be more important than ever.”

Since taking office in mid-March, Carney has emphasised the changing security landscape in Canada's Arctic, where receding ice caused by climate change is opening the region's vast natural resources to fierce competition.

He won the April 28 election on a promise to stand up to Trump's tariffs and also to reduce the country's military reliance on Washington.

Carney has previously announced plans to substantially expand Canada's military presence in the region, and yesterday he said that the “Arctic is becoming more accessible and vulnerable to commercial and military activities.”

Russia and China are seen as two major rivals who could present increasing Arctic security challenges in the years ahead.

Carney framed yesterday's military spending announcement as a move designed “to protect Canadians, not to satisfy Nato accountants.”

Trump says he would support arrest of California governor

Reuters/AFP
Washington/Los Angeles

President Donald Trump said yesterday that he would support the arrest of California's Gavin Newsom, in a dramatic escalation of a growing conflict with the Democratic governor over immigration protests that roiled Los Angeles over the weekend.

The Republican president's remarks came after Newsom vowed to sue the federal government over the deployment of National Guard troops to Southern California, calling it an illegal act.

As Los Angeles faced a fourth day of protests over immigration raids in the city, Democrats and Republicans clashed over what has become the biggest flashpoint in the Trump administration's aggressive efforts to deport migrants living in the country illegally.

“This is exactly what Donald Trump wanted. He flamed the fires and illegally acted to federalise the National Guard,” Newsom, who is viewed as a potential Democratic presidential contender in 2028, said on X.

California Attorney-General Rob Bonta said in a release that his office had sued.

Reuters could not immediately confirm that a lawsuit had been filed.

Federal law allows the president to deploy the Guard if the nation is invaded, if there is “rebellion or danger of rebellion” or the president is “unable with the regular forces to execute the laws of the United States.”

Returning to the White House after a night at Camp David, Trump was asked by a reporter whether his border czar, Tom Homan, should arrest Newsom.

Homan has threatened to arrest anyone who obstructs immigration enforcement efforts, including the governor.

“I would do it if I were Tom. I think it's great,” Trump replied. “Gavin likes the publicity, but I think it would be a great thing.”

Newsom on X called the arrest threat an “unmistakable step toward authoritarianism.”

The streets in Democratic-led Los Angeles were calm early yesterday after protests erupted on Friday night.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

(ICE) agents had arrested at least 44 people on alleged immigration violations.

The sometimes-violent demonstrations continued over the weekend, leading Trump to order deployment of the National Guard without first consulting the governor, a highly unusual move.

The White House and congressional Republicans contended that the protests were a further reason for Republicans in Congress to pass Trump's “one big beautiful bill” that would increase border security and military spending.

The bill, now in the US Senate after clearing the US House of Representatives, would also slash taxes, cut Medicaid benefits and do away with green-energy initiatives.

“We need the One Big, Beautiful Bill to pass ASAP!” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt posted on X.

House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson echoed her comments, posting on X: “The lawlessness happening in LA is ANOTHER reason why we need to pass the One Big Beautiful Bill IMMEDIATELY.”

Fiscal conservatives in the Senate, along with former Trump adviser Elon Musk, have balked at the bill's cost, saying it will inflate the nation's budget deficit.

US Northern Command said 300 members of the California National Guard had been deployed to three spots in the Los Angeles area.

The Department of Homeland Security said the Guard's mission was to protect federal buildings.

Law enforcement officers stood yesterday at intersections surrounding the Edward R Roybal Federal Building, which houses the detention facility where many detained immigrants were sent after ICE actions in Los Angeles neighbourhoods.

Some National Guard troops stood at the vehicle entrance to the detention centre.

Anti-ICE graffiti covered walls and windows of the federal building and teams worked to cover the slogans with paint.

Schools across Los Angeles were operating normally yesterday, while the rhythms of life in the sprawling city appeared largely unchanged.

Hundreds of protesters gathered near Los Angeles City Hall for a rally in support of detained union leader David Huerta.



Trump gestures on his arrival at the White House. - Reuters

They waved placards calling for Huerta's release and chanted in Spanish “we are all David Huerta”.

Trump has pledged to deport record numbers of people who are in the country illegally and to lock down the US-Mexico border, setting the ICE border enforcement agency a daily goal of arresting at least 3,000 migrants.

For Democrats, lacking leadership since Trump won the presidential election last November, the Los Angeles protests have served as a rallying point, allowing them to find some political footing while standing up to the administration's policies.

The episode has provided Newsom, serving his second term as governor, with a national platform that has allowed him to portray himself as Trump's chief antagonist.

However, it has also underscored the risks of appearing too sympathetic to protesters, some of whom have set cars on fire and thrown bottles at police.

During his first term, Trump castigated Democrats for civil unrest during riots protesting the murder of George Floyd, a black man, by a white police officer in 2020.

In one demonstration of that delicate balancing act, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass blamed the Trump administration for inciting tensions by sending in the Guard, while also condemning protesters.

“I don't want people to fall into the chaos that I believe is being created by the administration completely unnecessarily,” Bass told a press conference on Sunday.

Trump accused Newsom and Bass of playing down the violence.

“We made a great decision in sending the National Guard to deal with the violent, instigated riots in California,” he posted on social media yesterday. “If we had not done so, Los Angeles would have been completely obliterated.”

“The people are causing the problems are professional agitators and insurrectionists,” Trump told reporters in Washington.

On social media, he said protesters spat at troops and if they continued to do so, “I promise you they will be hit harder than they have ever been hit before. Such disrespect will not be tolerated!”

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum also tried to defuse the situation after protesters over the weekend were seen carrying Mexican flags and denouncing Trump's policies.

“We call on the Mexican community to act peacefully and not fall for provocations,” Sheinbaum said at her daily press conference.

She did not specifically call for an end to the protests.



Demonstrators rally against the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and call for the release of union leader David Huerta, the president of SEIU California and SEIU-USWW, who was arrested on June 6 during federal immigration operations, at Gloria Molina Grand Park in Los Angeles. - AFP

US judge dismisses \$400mn lawsuit against Blake Lively

A US judge has dismissed actor Justin Baldoni's \$400mn defamation lawsuit against actress Blake Lively, who had accused Baldoni of sexually harassing her while filming the 2024 movie *It Ends With Us*.

Baldoni had accused Lively, her husband Ryan Reynolds, their publicist, the *New York Times* and others of orchestrating a smear campaign to extort him.

He accused Lively of trying to “hijack” the movie, whose themes included domestic violence, and then blame him when her “disastrous” promotional approach prompted an online backlash against her.

It Ends With Us garnered mixed reviews, but grossed more than \$351mn worldwide, according to Box Office Mojo. - Reuters

Small plane carrying 6 crashes

The US Coast Guard and other agencies are searching yesterday for six people that were onboard a twin-engine Cessna 414 that crashed in the Pacific Ocean three miles west of San Diego.

The plane crashed on Sunday around 12.30pm, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said, off the coast of the Point Loma peninsula. The FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating. - Reuters

US team investigating foreign bribery dwindles: sources

By Andrew Goudswaard, Sarah N Lynch and Chris Prentice
Reuters

The US Justice Department (DOJ)'s team dedicated to investigating allegations of foreign bribery has dwindled as President Donald Trump's administration reviews its enforcement of a decades-old law aimed at preventing corruption, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The DOJ's Fraud Section unit tasked with enforcing the anti-

bribery law has shrunk to about 15 prosecutors, according to two of the sources.

That number is down from 32 as of a January report published on the department's website.

The cuts follow Trump's executive order in February calling for a pause in enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), a 1977 law that prohibits companies that operate in the US from bribing foreign officials and has become a cornerstone of federal efforts to combat corruption.

A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment.

The DOJ launched a 180-day review of its enforcement of the FCPA following Trump's order, which kicked off an exodus of staff from the unit.

Prosecutors largely moved elsewhere in the Justice Department's Criminal Division, including its Healthcare and Marketplace Fraud units, two of the sources said.

New guidance on how prosecutors are to handle FCPA cases is being drafted and expected to be released soon, one of the sources said.

Attorney-General Pam Bondi in February directed foreign bribery prosecutors to prioritise cases re-

lated to drug cartels, a Trump administration emphasis that has not traditionally been a focus of the unit.

A memo from the Criminal Division last month listed foreign bribery below issues such as fraud in government programmes and tariff evasion as corporate enforcement priorities for the Trump administration.

The DOJ has been scaling back its enforcement against white-collar crimes and focusing on different types of cases.

It has also dropped other initiatives aimed at preventing corruption.

Bolsonaro, seven others to testify in trial over coup charges



Jair Bolsonaro

AFP
Brasilia

Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro helped draft a plan to “redo the election” he narrowly lost in 2022, a co-accused testified in the former president's coup trial yesterday.

Prosecutors accused the 70-year-old far-right leader, who governed Brazil from 2019 to 2022, of having led a “criminal organisation” plotting to prevent leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva taking power.

The plot failed, the charge sheet says, for a lack of military backing.

Bolsonaro and six co-accused appeared in the Supreme Court yesterday to undergo questioning.

A seventh took part via videoconference from prison.

Former right-hand man Mauro Cid, who has turned state's witness, told the court that Bolsonaro had “received and read” a draft decree for the declaration of a state of emergency.

He then “edited” the document, which

would have paved the way for measures to “redo the election” Lula had narrowly won, and also envisaged the imprisonment of officials.

Apart from the alleged coup plot, Bolsonaro also stands accused of having been aware of plans to assassinate Lula, his vice-president Geraldo Alckmin, and Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes – an arch-foe.

Bolsonaro, who is hoping to make a comeback in 2026 presidential elections despite being barred from running, denies all charges.

He and his former aides risk sentences of up to 40 years behind bars.

Although he has the right to remain silent, the former president told reporters he plans to respond “without any problem” to questions from the court.

“It's an excellent idea to speak openly about the coup. I will be very happy to have the opportunity to clarify what happened,” the former army captain said last week. “It's the moment of truth.”

The Supreme Court headquarters in Brasilia, where Bolsonaro will take the stand – likely today or tomorrow – was

one of the targets of rioting supporters known as “Bolsonaristas” – who raided government buildings in January 2023 as they urged the military to oust Lula.

Bolsonaro was abroad at the time of the last gasp effort to keep him in power, after the alleged coup planning fizzled.

For the former president, the trial marked a reunion with former allies and sworn enemies including Cid, who has been labelled a traitor for testifying against his former boss.

His testimony had allowed police to identify various actors in the alleged coup plot and to lay hands on compromising information, according to the investigation.

Four former ministers and the former heads of Brazil's navy and intelligence agency will also be giving testimony in an in-person questioning session expected to run no later than Friday.

The proceedings are broadcast live.

Bolsonaro will face questions not only from prosecutors and defence attorneys, but also judge Moraes, whom the former president calls a “dictator”.

Since the alleged plot was conceived

over a long period, and because some of the charges are new to the Brazilian system, “an extremely complex legal discussion” is expected, according to Rogerio Taffarello, a criminal law expert at the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

New witnesses may yet be called before the court gets to closing arguments and sentencing deliberations.

Bolsonaro spent the weekend with his lawyers preparing his testimony at the residence of Sao Paulo state governor Tarcisio de Freitas, local media reported.

In a preliminary phase, Freitas, who served as Bolsonaro's infrastructure minister, testified that his boss had “never touched” on the subject of a coup or “mentioned any attempt at constitutional disruption.”

However, two former army commanders said Bolsonaro had hosted a meeting where the declaration of a state of emergency was discussed as a means to overturn Lula's election victory.

Bolsonaro's trial is the first for an attempted coup under a democratic regime in Brazil.

UN urges ratification of treaty to protect fragile oceans

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged world leaders to ratify a treaty that would allow nations to establish protected marine areas in international waters, warning that human activity was destroying ocean ecosystems.

Guterres, speaking at the opening of the third UN Ocean Conference in Nice, cautioned that illegal fishing, plastic pollution and rising sea temperatures threatened delicate ecosystems and the people who depend on them.

“The ocean is the ultimate shared resource. But we are failing it,” Guterres said, citing collapsing fish stocks, rising sea levels and ocean acidification.

Oceans also provide a vital buffer against climate change, by absorbing around 30% of planet-heating CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions.

However, as the oceans heat up, hotter waters are destroying marine ecosystems and threatening the oceans’ ability to absorb CO₂.

“These are symptoms of a system in crisis – and they are feeding off each other. Unravelling food chains. Destroying livelihoods. Deepening insecurity,” Guterres warned.



Guterres with Macron prior to a bilateral meeting on the sideline of the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), in the French riviera city of Nice. - AFP

The High Seas Treaty, adopted in 2023, would permit countries to establish marine parks in international waters, which cover nearly two-thirds of the ocean and are largely unregulated. Hitherto, only an estimated 1% of inter-

national waters, known as the “high seas”, have been protected.

The drive for nations to turn years of promises into meaningful protection for the oceans comes as President Donald Trump pulls the United States and its money out of climate projects and as some European governments weaken green policy commitments as they seek to support anaemic economies and fend off nationalists.

The United States has not yet ratified the treaty and will not do so during the conference, Rebecca Hubbard, director of The High Seas Alliance, said.

“If they don’t ratify, they are not bound by it,” she said. “The implementation will take years but it is critical we start now and we won’t let the US absence stop that from happening.”

French President Emmanuel Macron, the conference’s co-host, told delegates that 50 nations had now ratified the treaty and that another 15 had promised to do so.

The treaty will only come into force once 60 countries ratify it. Macron’s foreign minister said he expected that would happen before the end of the year.

The United States has not sent a high-

level delegation to the conference.

“It’s not a surprise, we know the American administration’s position on these issues,” Macron told reporters late on Sunday.

Britain’s Prince William said on Sunday that protecting the planet’s oceans was a challenge “like none we have faced before”.

Ocean experts have also seized on the conference as an opportunity to rally investment for the ocean economy, which has long struggled to attract sizeable funding commitments.

At a two-day gathering of bankers and investors in Monaco over the weekend, philanthropists, private investors and public banks committed €8.7bn euros over five years to support a regenerative and sustainable blue economy.

Investments in ocean health totalled just \$10bn from 2015-19 – far below the \$175bn per year needed, the UN has said.

To address this gap, the UN said on Sunday that it was starting work to design a new financing facility, to be launched in 2028, which aims to unlock billions of dollars to restore ocean health by mobilising new and diverse sources of capital.

- Reuters

Italy referendums fail due to low turnout

Reuters/AFP
Rome

Low voter turnout yesterday sank Italian opposition referendum proposals to ease citizenship laws and tighten job protection rules, with senior figures in the coalition of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni saying that the outcome boosted the government.

Near-final data from polling stations in Italy showed only around 30% of eligible voters had cast their ballots at the end of two days of voting, far short of the 50% plus one of the electorate needed to make the vote legally binding.

The outcome – which will be final once votes from Italians living abroad are counted – is a blow for the coalition of centre-left opposition parties, civil society groups and the CGIL trade union behind the referendum questions, and a win for Meloni who strongly opposed them.

“The opposition wanted to turn the referendum into a vote on the Meloni government. The response is very clear: the government emerges from this stronger and the left is weaker,” said Giovanbattista Fazzolari, a cabinet undersecretary and a close aide to Meloni.

Meloni and her right-wing allies encouraged their supporters to boycott the vote.

The prime minister visited a polling station in Rome on Sunday but opted not to cast a vote.

Opposition forces had hoped that latching on to the issues of labour rights and Italy’s demographic woes could help them challenge Meloni, something

they have struggled to do since she came to power in 2022.

“Our goal was to reach a quorum, it is clear that we did not reach it. Today is not a day of victory,” said CGIL union leader Maurizio Landini, who added millions of Italians went to vote and that was “a starting number” to keep fighting for change.

One of the five referendums was about reducing the period of residence required to apply for Italian citizenship by naturalisation to five years from 10 years, which according to organisers would have affected about 2.5mn people.

In a country suffering a sharp decline in the birth rate, some economists believe attracting more foreigners is vital to boosting an anaemic economy, while rights groups campaigned for a “Yes” vote to promote the integration of migrant workers.

According to initial figures around 35% of voters were against easing the citizenship requirements, indicating that the “No” vote could be much higher than in the other questions where the “Yes” looked poised for a very strong majority.

Even had it passed, the reform would not have affected a migration legislation many consider unfair: that children born in Italy to foreign parents cannot request nationality until they reach 18.

The other four referendum questions concerned a reversal of labour market liberalisations introduced a decade ago, and a broadening of liability rules on accidents at work for companies relying on contractors and sub-contractors.

6 held over abuse of patients at Bulgaria nursing home

Six people have been arrested in a Bulgarian village on suspicion of beating and drugging patients in a private nursing home for older people and those with dementia or other mental health problems, authorities said yesterday.

As elsewhere in Europe, incomes in Bulgaria have failed to keep pace with the rising costs of elderly and nursing care, and a few providers have exploited vulnerable patients with sub-standard or even abusive levels of care.

“The scariest thing we saw was people who were subjected to constant physical abuse – tied up, beaten, there is also evidence of drugging,” Ivan Krastev, deputy minister of labour and social policy, told Nova TV.

On Friday, police raided a hospice with 75 residents in the central village of Yagoda, arresting five people on suspicion of mistreating patients and another on Sunday.

They are charged with unlawful imprisonment and obstruction of free movement, failure to provide due assistance to a person in danger, physical violence, and causing bodily harm, district prosecutor Tanya Dimitrova told reporters yesterday.

Eleven patients were taken to a nearby state hospital, while the remaining 64 were either taken in by relatives or accommodated in state-run facilities.

Bulgarian media reported that some patients had been found with their feet tied, under the influence of narcotics or locked in rooms without proper hygiene, bedding or contact with the outside world.

“They lock us up like dogs. They give us two slices of bread and in this heat they don’t open the door to let air in, as they’re afraid we’ll escape,” 70-year-old patient Milka Raeva told BTV TV. “They were four very difficult years. God helped me. Many people died hungry, without doctors, with wounds, tied up.”

Bulgarian media reported that the facility was charging 990 leva (\$580) per month per room.

Another illegal nursing home in Govedartsits with 23 patients was closed down yesterday. - Reuters

Russia-N Korea train service resuming

Russia and North Korea plan to restart a direct passenger train service between Moscow and the North Korean capital Pyongyang this month for the first time since 2020, Russia’s state-owned rail monopoly said yesterday.

Russian Railways said it had agreed with North Korea’s railways ministry to resume a twice-monthly service between the two capitals on June 17, a journey it said took eight days and which, at over 10,000km, was the longest direct rail journey in the world.

Another service between Pyongyang and Khabarovsk, a Russian city close to China’s northeast border, restarts two days later. - Reuters

Russia and Ukraine swap first PoWs in large-scale exchange

Reuters/AFP
Kyiv/Moscow

Russia and Ukraine exchanged prisoners of war (PoWs) under the age of 25 yesterday in emotional homecoming scenes, the first step in a series of planned prisoner swaps that could become the biggest of the war so far.

The exchange was the result of direct talks between the two sides in Istanbul on June 2 that resulted in an agreement to exchange at least 1,200 PoWs on each side and to repatriate thousands of bodies of those killed in Russia’s war in Ukraine.

The return of PoWs and the repatriation of the bodies of the dead is one of the few things the two sides have managed to agree on as broader negotiations have failed to get close to ending the war, now in its fourth year.

Fighting has raged on, with Russia saying yesterday that its forces had taken control of more territory in Ukraine’s east-central region of Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv saying that Moscow had launched its largest drone attack of the war.

Officials in Kyiv said some of the Ukrainian prisoners who came home yesterday had been in Russian captivity since the beginning of the war.

At a rendezvous point for the returning Ukrainian prisoners, soon after they crossed back into northern Ukraine, an official handed one of the freed men a cellphone so that he could call his mother, a video released by Ukrainian authorities showed.

“Hi mum, I’ve arrived, I’m home!” the soldier shouted into the receiver, struggling to catch his breath because he was overcome by emotion.

The released Ukrainian men were later taken by bus to a hospital in northern Ukraine where they were to have medical checks and be given showers, food and care packages including mobile phones and shoes.

Jubilation was tinged with sadness because outside the hospital were crowds of people, mostly women, looking for relatives who went missing while fighting for Ukraine.

The women held up pictures of the missing men in the hope that one of the returning PoWs would recognise them and share details about what happened to them.



People hold up photographs of their missing or captured relatives and friends to Ukrainian prisoners of war (PoWs) following a prisoner exchange, at an undisclosed location. - AFP

Some hoped their loved ones would be among those released.

Oksana Kupriyenko, 52, was holding up an image of her son, Denys, who went missing in September 2024.

“Tomorrow is my birthday and I was hoping God will give me a gift and return my son to me,” she said, through tears.

Neither side said how many prisoners had been swapped, but the Russian defence ministry said in its own statement that the same number of military personnel had been exchanged on each side.

Kremlin aide Vladimir Medinsky said at the weekend that a first list of 640 PoWs had been handed to Ukraine.

The Russian military said its returned servicemen were now in Belarus, a close Russian ally, where they were receiving psychological and medical assistance before being transferred to Russia for further care.

Footage broadcast by Russia’s RIA state news agency showed a group of freed Russian soldiers on board a coach raising their hands in the air and shouting: “Hurrah we’re home.”

The same group was shown holding a Russian flag and chanting “Russia! Russia!” before boarding the coach.

“It is very difficult to convey what I’m feeling inside now. But I am very happy, proud and grateful to everyone who took part in this process, in the exchange and bringing us home,” said one freed Russian soldier.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country had received a first group of prisoners from Russia and that it would take several days to complete the swap.

Both sides say the intention for this round of prisoner swaps is also to hand over people who are gravely ill or severely injured.

The people seen being handed over so far yesterday appeared to be fit and well.

“Today’s exchange has begun. It will be done in several stages in the coming days,” Zelensky said on the Telegram app.

“The process is quite complex, with many sensitive details, and negotiations continue virtually every day,” he said. “We count on the full implementation of the humanitarian agreements reached during the meeting in Istanbul. We are doing everything possible to bring back every single person.”

He posted images of soldiers draped in Ukrainian flags, cheering and hugging.

After the talks in Istanbul, both said it would involve more than 1,000 captured soldiers, making it the largest exchange of the war.

The swap itself had appeared in jeopardy over the weekend, when Moscow and Kyiv traded accusations of delaying and thwarting the planned exchange.

In Sunday Zelensky accused Russia of playing a “dirty, political game” and of not sticking to the agreed parameters – to free all captured soldiers that are sick, wounded or under the age of 25.

Russia said Kyiv was refusing to take back bodies of dead soldiers, 1,200 of which it said were waiting in refrigerated trucks near the border.

Russia fired record 479 drones at Ukraine overnight

Moscow fired a record 479 drones at Ukraine, including on the western region of Rivne that has been largely spared from attacks, Kyiv said yesterday, also claiming an attack on a Russian factory hundreds of miles east of Moscow.

Russia has escalated its attacks across Ukraine in recent weeks, which Kyiv says demonstrate that the Kremlin has no intention of stopping its more than three-year invasion and is not serious about peace talks.

Moscow said yesterday that its strikes are continued retaliation for a bold Ukrainian attack on its bomber planes parked deep inside Russia, including in Siberia, that infuriated the Kremlin.

The overnight Russian attacks caused damage in several Ukrainian regions. There were no reports of people killed or mass casualties.

“Enemy air strikes were recorded in 10 spots,” the Ukrainian air force said.

The mayor of the western city of Rivne, Oleksandr Tretyak, called it “the largest attack” on the region since the start of the war.

Regional governor Oleksandr Koval said that 70 buildings – including private houses and a nursery – were damaged in the attack.

Russia said it had targeted an airfield near the village of Dubno in the Rivne region.

“This is one of the retaliatory strikes against terrorist attacks by the Kyiv regime on Russian military airfields,” its defence ministry said.

Russia had vowed revenge last week and had already called strikes on Kyiv retaliation to the brazen Ukrainian operation.

Ukraine also said it had launched its own overnight strike on an electronics factory that makes part for Russian drones, in the city of Cheboksary in Chuvashia – some 600km (372 miles) east of Moscow.

Russian officials said the facility had to temporarily suspend production after the attack. - AFP

Foreign influence used as ‘alibi’ in democracies: think tank

Foreign interference in elections is a real concern but sometimes used as an “alibi” by democracies to divert attention from domestic issues, the head of a democracy think-tank said yesterday.

According to a new report by Stockholm-based International IDEA, disinformation and manipulation of social media algorithms to influence results are among the major threats to democracies during election campaigns.

The threat is “exacerbated by the explicit willingness of domestic, foreign and non-state actors to

engage in such activities”, the report said, highlighting states such as China, Russia and Iran.

Among 54 elections covered in 2024, 80% experienced “deliberate campaigns of disinformation trying to shape the electoral result”, IDEA’s secretary-general Kevin Casas-Zamora told AFP.

However, when politicians blame foreign influence, it risks diverting the debate from real issues, and whether such campaigns “succeeded or not is anybody’s guess”, he added.

“The question of inequality, the question of how a lot of citizens feel left behind and that they’re not

being heard by their political institutions, deserves probably at least as much attention as the external threats that come in the shape of foreign interference or disinformation,” Casas-Zamora said.

“The excessive emphasis on foreign interference is a kind of alibi, it’s a kind of convenient explanation to excuse domestic political actors from their responsibility to rethink the working of democracy and make sure that it delivers for citizens,” he said.

For Casas-Zamora, it is equally urgent to question and analyse the shortcomings fuelling the loss of citizens’ trust in their political

institutions, if “we care about the future of democracy”.

In 2024, about 1.6bn people voted in 74 national elections worldwide, demonstrating a strong willingness among populations to make their voices heard, even though trust in politics remains “in short supply”, he said.

“Arguably, the most important source of mistrust in political institutions is the performance of the state in delivering public goods and services,” the Costa Rican former politician said. “Because that’s what shapes the relationship of citizens with state institutions.”

- AFP

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GULF TIMES

End of German complacency

When German Chancellor Friedrich Merz assumed office on May 6, 2025, few anticipated how swiftly he would begin reshaping the country's foreign policy. Yet the change in tone has been unmistakable. Germany's long era of strategic hesitation is ending.

Central to this reorientation is a clear-eyed reassessment of Germany's most essential alliance: the once-sacrosanct transatlantic relationship, which has been severely eroded. Merz, long a committed transatlanticist, now openly concedes that the United States can no longer be trusted as a credible guarantor of European security or reliable economic partner. In a striking public rebuke, he recently condemned top Trump administration officials' interference in German politics for being as "drastic, dramatic, and shameful as that from Moscow."

This shift is more than rhetorical. Since 1945, Western Europe (followed by much of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989) has rooted its identity and security in alignment with the US. But after 80 years, the Merz government is turning Germany's focus inward, investing heavily in domestic defence and advocating for a more autonomous Europe. Ironically, this shift draws on a traditional American value: faith in the power of democracy and freedom. If Europe can reassert this principle independently, it could emerge as a decisive player in today's evolving global order.

So far, the new German foreign-policy stance rests on three pillars: steadfast military support for Ukraine, which Merz views as strategically foundational, a more nuanced posture toward Israel, and a deliberate push for European sovereignty. The Merz government's resolve has only strengthened in the face of Russia's relentless aggression, President Vladimir Putin's evident disinterest in ceasefires or negotiations, and inconsistency on the part of the Trump administration.

Under Merz, Germany is finally beginning to lead on its own terms

During Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to Berlin on May 28, Germany announced a major €5bn (\$5.7bn) aid package that includes €1bn for air-defence systems as well as technical and financial assistance for the joint development of long-range weapons on Ukrainian soil. This commitment marks a notable departure from the more cautious approach taken by Merz's predecessor, Olaf Scholz. Looking ahead, Germany's stance will be tested by European negotiations over stronger sanctions against Russia and, crucially, by the inevitable confrontation with China over its indirect support for Putin's war effort.

Merz has also begun to recalibrate Germany's approach toward Israel, which has traditionally been one of unwavering support. According to recent estimates, Israeli war actions in Gaza have resulted in more than 53,000 Palestinian deaths, leading Merz and key members of his cabinet to re-evaluate Germany's position. They have voiced concerns over the scale of Israel's military response and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, and this rhetorical shift echoes what one hears from the German public. Younger generations, in particular, are less tethered to Holocaust-era guilt and have been shaped by a more diverse, pluralistic society that includes a substantial Muslim population.

To be sure, Germany and Israel remain mutually dependent. Following a ten-month suspension of German arms deliveries to Israel between November 2023 and August 2024, Germany resumed weapons transfers and remains committed to purchasing Israeli Arrow 3 air-defence systems and Heron drones – for use in supporting Ukraine. Yet the change in tone is significant, and it may well herald policy shifts. A looming test will be whether Germany supports initiatives for a two-state solution and a suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. This agreement has provided Israel with privileged access to the European market since 2000, and its suspension is increasingly seen as a tool to push Netanyahu to respect international humanitarian law and eventually end the attacks in Gaza.

But the most far-reaching element of Merz's early foreign policy is his emphasis on pursuing European strategic autonomy. Confronted with American retrenchment, Germany has embarked on its largest rearmament effort since 1945, allocating €400bn to defence and security.

This massive increase in defence spending was made possible by a constitutional amendment to loosen the country's "debt brake" (a cap on annual deficits). While the previous government broke new ground by stationing a full German brigade in Lithuania, Merz has already built on these initiatives and made them his own, thus solidifying Germany's credibility as a reliable partner within Nato and beyond.

These moves may not constitute a revolution in German foreign policy, but they do represent a meaningful evolution. Long comfortable in its role as an economic powerhouse and diplomatic player, Germany is assuming geopolitical responsibilities commensurate with its capabilities.

Will Merz be remembered as the German leader who carried out the Zeitenwende (historic turning point) that Scholz declared after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022? In a world where power is being renegotiated and alliances are being tested, Germany is finally beginning to lead on its own terms. — Project Syndicate



The climate challenge as a development chance

By Navroz K Dubash
New Delhi

When climate change is framed as a global problem requiring collective regulation of greenhouse-gas emissions, developing-country governments see little reason to prioritise the issue over others. After all, the rich, industrialised countries who contributed disproportionately to the problem are themselves backing away from decarbonisation and climate-finance commitments, while low-income countries bear the brunt of the costs of climate change. Decision-makers in developing countries understandably conclude it may be more rational to hunker down and focus on climate resilience rather than emissions reductions.

But this is not the only way to frame the problem. While climate change undoubtedly poses a global collective-action problem, in practice climate outcomes are shaped by myriad decisions concerning development objectives such as industrial development, urbanisation, job creation, and local pollution management. Because late developers often have not entirely locked into energy systems, transport infrastructure, urbanisation plans, and energy consumption patterns, they have greater flexibility to steer investment and consumption choices toward lower-carbon and climate-resilient options.

In other words, the climate challenge can be framed as a choice among alternative development pathways. In many cases, development choices are also climate choices, and in a world where being a low-carbon economy confers a competitive edge, the absence of structural lock-in could be turned into an advantage.

Pursuing a climate-as-development approach is not easy or foolproof: It requires considerable state capacity,

strategy-setting capabilities, and full mobilisation of the necessary technologies and finance. Importantly, it does not negate concerns about climate equity. Developing countries may opt to pursue the climate-as-development opportunity, but rich countries that disproportionately caused the problem remain on the hook to support this transition. Yet, this perspective offers an alternative to the zero-sum framing of climate policy and a basis for nationally specific visions.

An important starting point is that elites internalise and support low-carbon development as a potential opportunity, with climate resilience as a necessary component. Climate objectives cannot trump development goals, but, equally, development innocent of climate considerations is no longer viable. To be politically feasible, any strategy must be rooted in the national context. Low-carbon development pathways are not easily replicable and need to be tailored to geography, local capacities, and other variables. And, as with any long-term structural change, a durable, widely shared national narrative is needed (South Korea's "green growth" in the 2010s is a useful example).

Shifting from narrative and vision to policy and implementation requires high levels of state capacity. Technical capabilities, along with the ability to identify climate-as-development opportunities and sources of climate vulnerability, are necessary, but by no means sufficient. In addition, as sociologist Peter Evans' analysis of East Asian industrial policy reminds us, the state must be simultaneously "embedded" to engage and support private-sector players, and maintain sufficient "autonomy" to avoid capture.

In practice, this means building institutions that can set the strategy, co-ordinate across sectors and at different scales, and provide trusted platforms to mediate conflict, ideally

enshrined in law. All too often, climate policymaking is entrusted to relatively weak or siloed environmental ministries that cannot organise or enforce an all-of-government approach.

Moreover, because broad structural changes can introduce distributional concerns and leave some communities behind, deliberative bodies – such as South Africa's Presidential Climate Commission – can help to entrench low-carbon options by mediating social frictions and maintaining broad-based political buy-in.

Another major challenge for developing and emerging economies facing high capital costs is mobilising adequate finance for capital-intensive low-carbon development. There are no easy answers here. According to BloombergNEF, global investment in the low-carbon energy transition in 2024 was only around one-third of the annual amount required through 2030, and there were wide disparities in spending.

Developing countries have experienced few tangible gains from multilateral initiatives to scale up climate finance and reform the international financial architecture. Holding advanced economies to their financing commitments should remain a priority; but developing countries also need to mobilise more domestic finance and develop credible investment programmes to attract global capital.

Recent efforts to create "country platforms" – government-led co-ordination mechanisms that articulate a vision and identify financing pathways to achieve it – suggest one way forward. In preparing to host this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30), Brazil is seeking to lead the way with a comprehensive multisectoral development programme to mobilise investment. Independent research suggests that Brazil has all the ingredients for a successful green industrial transformation: a strong resource base, a legacy

of advanced manufacturing, and a large market. Such models are worth exploring elsewhere, provided that they reflect a national vision, not donor-driven objectives.

One common criticism of nationally led, multi-objective development strategies is that the urgency of the climate crisis demands more direct action focused on emissions reduction, rather than on the indirect pathways suggested here. But this view ignores political reality. If climate action is seen to be at odds with other development objectives, it will lose. The only option is to devise strategies that can realise both sets of goals. The most effective climate policy over the long term might be one that shapes structural choices regarding urbanisation and industrialisation, rather than one that focuses narrowly on regulating emissions.

With the scope for global co-operation receding in today's fraught geopolitical environment, these arguments should not be interpreted as a call for atomisation. On the contrary, developing national visions for low-carbon, resilient economies would benefit from mutual learning and enhanced co-ordination rooted in attention to local contexts.

Moreover, deploying low-carbon technologies will require investment in stable value chains, which depends on political and economic predictability. Developing countries, in particular, will have to be strategic and nimble in finding a niche for themselves. And the provision of finance at the necessary scale will still depend on a threshold degree of global co-operation.

But there is only one foundation that can support all these elements: a domestically developed vision of a low-carbon, competitive, and resilient economy. — Project Syndicate

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America’s retreat gives Europe a major opportunity to grow

By **Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg**
New Haven

The United States is at a turning point. For reasons that future historians will debate – and that will leave many dumbfounded – the country is attacking the very foundations of its strength: its openness, its institutions, and its global engagement.

The shift began with President Donald Trump’s tariffs. Their chaotic and inconsistent deployment in pursuit of ill-defined objectives has not only raised the cost of imports and disrupted global trade, but also undermined America’s credibility as a reliable economic partner, prompting questions about the dollar’s future as the world’s reserve currency.

Then came the attacks on US universities, long a cornerstone of the country’s scientific and technological leadership. Cuts to research funding, higher taxes on endowments, and restrictive visa policies are weakening their ability to attract and retain top global talent. The result is a loss not just for academia, but for US innovation and thus the broader economy.

Meanwhile, the country’s most dynamic sector – technology – has come under political and regulatory pressure. Apple, Alphabet (Google), and Meta face intensifying scrutiny at home while their competitors abroad benefit from supportive industrial policies. As most countries position themselves to compete in the twenty-first-century economy, the US has adopted a policy that reflects the past (reviving domestic manufacturing, relaxing child labour protections).



Behind all these recent policy shifts is a fundamental misreading of the positive spillovers that the US has historically generated. American leadership in science, security, and innovation has certainly benefited others; but rather than viewing this as a sign of strength, the Trump administration treats it as evidence of exploitation. The response has been to withdraw, even if that means damaging the institutions that have enabled and sustained US global leadership.

Rather than curbing the rise of other countries, America’s retreat creates openings for them to advance. Nowhere is this more evident than in continental Europe. Faced with longstanding economic

challenges – low productivity growth, ageing populations, and missed opportunities in the digital transformation – European policymakers increasingly regard America’s inward turn as a chance to catch up.

Two recent developments have given them hope. First, Germany’s relaxation of its constitutional “debt brake” (a cap on annual deficits) has created fiscal space for sorely needed public investment. Second, in the face of geopolitical and economic fragmentation, there is a growing political consensus that Europeans must act with greater unity and purpose. But seizing the moment requires more than optimism. Four conditions are essential if Europe is to fill the

void left by US disengagement.

First, the European Union must resist the Trump administration’s divide-and-rule strategy by avoiding bilateral bargaining with the US by any member country. Only by presenting a united front can the EU leverage its market power and defend its interests.

Second, Europe must embrace openness, particularly to talent and trade. With the US becoming increasingly hostile to international students and foreign labour, Europe can benefit from the coming US brain drain by welcoming skilled migrants and researchers. Further, since developing new technologies requires critical minerals and rare earths that are currently unavailable in Europe, it also

POINTS TO PONDER

- America’s inward turn is undermining its strengths – openness, institutions, and global leadership – while creating opportunities for others
- Europe sees a strategic opening, but must unify, stay open to talent and trade, and reform its regulations to seize it
- Immigration reform is critical for Europe’s future dynamism, despite political resistance

must maintain productive trade relations with others – not least China. That will require political will and a recognition that openness, managed well, is a source of strength.

Third, Europe needs regulatory reform. While European standards for food safety, environmental protection, and labour rights are rightly admired, excessive or poorly designed regulations in other sectors have stifled investment and innovation and impeded productivity growth. This is especially true when rules serve incumbent interests rather than broader societal goals. For example, qualified refugees are often unable to work because of bureaucratic hurdles.

To be sure, loosening such constraints will be difficult, particularly in countries where high living standards make change politically costly. Workers in Europe will not willingly log more hours, give up job security and long vacations, or take on unpleasant tasks. But failing to make the necessary changes would mean sacrificing future dynamism to preserve past achievements.

Lastly, Europe must tackle its growing labour shortages through immigration policies that apply to skilled and less-skilled individuals alike. Demographic

decline and rising living standards mean that many jobs – especially in care, construction, and services – are going unfilled. There is no path to sustained growth or innovation if the workforce is stretched thin meeting basic household and social needs.

Reforming immigration policy does not mean accepting uncontrolled borders; but it does mean creating legal pathways for those willing to contribute. Politically, this may be the hardest challenge of all, given the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and far-right parties. But it is essential.

America’s retreat from the global stage presents Europe with an opportunity it has not had in decades. Whether it can rise to the occasion will depend on its ability to form a united front, remain open, modernise its regulatory frameworks, and embrace a pragmatic approach to immigration. Otherwise, the momentum may pass once again to Asia, which has never stopped preparing for the future. – Project Syndicate

● *Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg, a former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review, is Professor of Economics at Yale University.*

How companies should – and should not – deploy AI

By **Vinciane Beauchene** and **Allison Bailey**
Paris

Even though nearly half of office workers now turn to generative AI (GenAI) in their daily work, fewer than one in four CEOs report that the technology has delivered its promised value at scale. What is going on?

The answer may lie in the fact that GenAI was initially presented as a productivity tool, which led to it being strongly associated with cost-cutting and workforce reductions. Spotting the risk, some 42% of employees surveyed in 2024 worried that their job might not exist in the next decade.

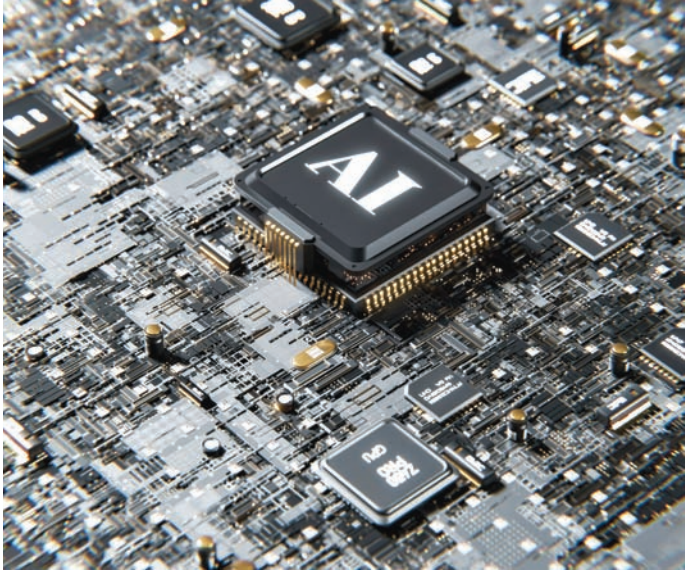
In the absence of training and upskilling to harness the technology’s potential, it is not surprising that there would be more resistance than enthusiasm. Like antibodies fighting off a foreign body, there can be an “immune response” within organisations, with employees and managers alike resisting change and looking for reasons why AI “won’t work” for them.

In addition to slowing adoption, such resistance has prevented a fuller exploration of other potential benefits, such as improved decision-making, enhanced creativity, and higher job satisfaction. As a result, there has been little consideration of how to “reinvest” the time that AI can save.

Yet our research finds that employees who use GenAI regularly can already save five hours per workweek, allowing them to pursue new tasks, further experiment with the technology, collaborate in new ways with coworkers, or simply finish earlier.

The challenge for business leaders, then, is to emphasise these potential benefits and provide guidance on where to refocus one’s time to maximise value creation.

Consider the example of a



global health-care provider that recently deployed GenAI across its 100,000 employees. It created a scalable AI learning program with three objectives: high AI literacy across the organisation, so that all employees could make the most of the technology; a broad suite of AI tools for every work scenario; and compliant usage. Owing to this holistic approach, the company soon improved employee satisfaction and productivity at the same time.

But AI adoption is not about saving minutes. It is about reinventing work for the benefit of employees and the organisation. When a company treats GenAI merely as a time-saving tool, it is more likely to chase piecemeal use cases – ten minutes saved here, 30 minutes saved there – which will not have a meaningful impact on the overall business. After all, small-scale AI applications that yield diffuse productivity gains are difficult to reinvest or capture on a profit and loss statement.

Without a holistic strategy to redesign their core processes around AI, organisations risk optimising isolated tasks rather than fundamentally improving how work gets done. The result, all too often, is that bottlenecks will simply be relocated to

other parts of the process or value chain, limiting overall productivity gains. For example, in software development, an AI that speeds up coding can lead to more arduous debugging or other delays, negating any efficiency gains. Real value comes from integrating AI across the entire development lifecycle.

This example also raises a larger issue: Too many organisations pursue scale without first reimagining the structures and workflows needed to harness cumulative gains. The usual result is a missed opportunity, because time savings that are not reinvested strategically tend to dissipate. Rather than adopting a let-a-hundred-flowers-bloom approach, organisations should pursue a few big transformational initiatives focused on reimagining work from end to end.

The true promise of GenAI lies in unlocking what we call the Golden Triangle of value: productivity, quality, and engagement/joy. An AI strategy should reimagine workflows to eliminate inefficiencies; augment decision-making and processes to encourage innovation and creativity; and enhance work, not mechanise it. Employees are more likely to embrace AI enthusiastically

when it eliminates drudgery, feeds creativity, and accelerates learning. Proper attention to upskilling will ensure that the technology augments human potential, boosting workplace engagement and job satisfaction.

By emphasising engagement and the quality of experience alongside productivity, organisations can move beyond a cost-driven perspective to one that creates more value for the business, its employees, and its customers. AI can be much more than an automation mechanism, provided that firms adopt a comprehensive strategy for deploying it.

Business leaders should keep five imperatives in mind. The first is to focus on the biggest pools of value with the best-defined business cases for integrating AI. The second is to reimagine work, rather than simply optimising it. AI should be used to transform entire workflows, not just automate a few steps.

Third, managers must invest in upskilling, so that everyone understands the technology and its potential. Fourth, the Golden Triangle, with its balance between productivity, quality, and employee engagement/joy should be businesses’ Golden Rule.

Lastly, organisations should measure value beyond cost savings. Businesses that deploy GenAI most effectively will track its effects on workforce empowerment, agility, and new revenue streams, not just operational costs.

By heeding these imperatives, companies can use AI as a force for reinvention, rather than just a productivity tool. In the process, they will set the pace for the next era of business. – Project Syndicate

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Court blow to Germany’s new govt on asylum: what happens now?

By **Thomas Escritt**
Berlin

A court ruling that Germany could not simply return to Poland three asylum seekers who entered the country in May dealt a blow to the signature migration policy of Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s new government: turning illegal migrants back at the borders.

Here is a closer look at a court case and its consequences:

What happened?

Police in May sent back to Poland three Somalis who crossed Germany’s eastern border by train and requested asylum. With the help of asylum rights organisation Pro Asyl, they challenged this in a Berlin court. Last Monday, a Berlin court issued an emergency injunction saying Germany had broken the law.

Under the European Union’s so-called Dublin rules – hitherto honoured mainly in the breach – refugees can only claim asylum in the first EU country they enter.

The Berlin court said that before sending them back, authorities should have started the “Dublin process” of establishing which country was responsible for assessing their asylum claim, whether or not that was Poland.

Germany only has land borders with other EU countries and Switzerland meaning that, in principle, nobody who arrives by land is eligible for asylum in the country.

Why the ruling is a problem for the govt

During his election campaign, Merz promised to crack down on migration on his government’s first day in office. Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, a fellow conservative, announced the policy of returning asylum seekers at the border.

Following the ruling, he said the court’s decision applied only in this particular case, set no precedent, and that the government would continue turning away asylum seekers crossing the land borders.

This is true in a narrow sense: the ruling only applies to the three Somalis and does not bind any other judges. Other judges are bound by the same laws, however, so there is no reason to think they will rule differently.

“The German government will lose every single case on this point, all the way up to the European Union’s court,” migration policy expert Gerald Knaus told **Stern* magazine.

What happens next?

While migration is a signature issue for Merz and Dobrindt, their Social Democrat coalition partners are less comfortable with it. Justice Minister Stefanie Hubig said in a tight-lipped statement that “the court’s ruling must be followed”.

Legal experts say that, to be successful, German authorities would have to reject migrants before they enter the country’s territory – something for which they would need neighbouring countries’ co-operation.

But Poland is no less racked by migration debates than Germany. Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s government has just been dealt a heavy blow by Sunday’s election victory of a right-wing candidate for whom reducing the number of migrants was a key topic.

In the short term, it is likely to be difficult to get neighbouring countries, all of which feel more exposed to migration pressure than Germany, to accede to Dobrindt’s demands.

Does this matter politically?

Perhaps not. The far-right Alternative for Germany was quick off the mark in condemning the “failure” of the new government’s migration policy.

But the next major regional election is almost a year away and overall migration levels, initially driven up by the Syrian civil war and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, have been on a downward trend for several years, independent of any policies adopted by individual EU countries. – Reuters



Eid festivities end at Al Wakrah Old Souq



The Eid al-Adha activities at Al Wakrah Old Souq came to an end yesterday.

The activities here, according to an official statement from the Private Engineering Office (PEO), recorded a remarkable turnout of visitors during the Eid holiday.

“The event was attended by a large crowd and was filled with joy and happiness, reflecting the market’s growing status as one of the most prominent tourist and heritage destinations in Qatar and the region,” the statement said.

The events were organised within the framework of the souq management’s commitment to providing an integrated experience that blends entertainment, shopping and heritage, reflecting the souq’s identity as a landmark that promotes authentic cultural and social concepts and provides an attractive environment for all visitors.

The activities were organised in a manner that suitable for different age groups.

The waterfront at Al Wakrah Old Souq featured fireworks displays along with recreational activities for children and cultural programmes in a festive atmosphere.

Many visitors expressed their admiration for the level of organisation and cultural diversity that characterised the events.



Eid festivities conclude

Old Doha Port concluded Eid al-Adha festivities yesterday with many activities, including fireworks displays and performances.

PICTURES: Thajudheen

