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PM launches MSDF strategy 2025-30

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani launched yesterday the National Strategy 2025-2030 of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, under the theme "From Care to Empowerment." The ceremony was attended by a number of ministers, senior officials, and representatives of government bodies and civil society institutions. **Page 2**

Qatar Airways 'retimes' flights

Qatar Airways has 'retimed' a number of flights for the coming weeks, which the national airline said is "to ensure connectivity and minimise disruptions across the airline's global network." "In some cases, departure times may be earlier than originally scheduled," the national airline said in a travel alert yesterday. Ahead of travel, passengers are urged to verify their flight departure times via qatarairways.com or by using the Qatar Airways mobile app to ensure a seamless journey. Already, the national airline has cancelled flights "temporarily" to Iran, Iraq and Syria due to the current situation in the region. The affected airports in Iran include: Imam Khomeini Airport, Mashhad and Shiraz. In Iraq, the affected airports are: Baghdad, Erbil, Basra, Sulaymaniyah and Najaf. In Syria, the affected airport is Damascus International Airport.

Attack threatens ME peace, stability: OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) described the targeting of nuclear facilities in Iran as "a dangerous escalation that could lead to heightened tensions and threaten regional security, peace, and stability." In a statement issued yesterday, the OIC's General Secretariat condemned and denounced the violation of Iran's sovereignty and international laws and conventions, calling for de-escalation and self-restraint, in addition to resorting to dialogue, negotiations, and peaceful means. **(QNA)**

Syria condemns church attack

Syria's foreign ministry condemned an attack on a Damascus church that killed 20 people yesterday, calling it an attempt to undermine coexistence in the multi-sectarian, multi-ethnic country. Syria considers "this criminal act, which targeted members of the Christian community, a desperate attempt to undermine national coexistence and to destabilise the country", the foreign ministry said in a statement.

World awaits Iranian response after US hits nuclear sites

- Iran considers closing Strait of Hormuz
- Regime change not our goal: US

Reuters
Washington/Jerusalem

The world braced yesterday for Iran's response after the US attacked key Iranian nuclear sites, joining Israel in the biggest Western military action against the Islamic Republic since its 1979 revolution.

With the damage visible from space after 30,000-pound US bunker-buster bombs crashed into the mountain above Iran's Fordow nuclear site, Tehran vowed to defend itself at all costs.

It fired another volley of missiles at Israel that wounded scores of people and flattened buildings in Tel Aviv. The US State Department ordered employees' family members to leave Lebanon and Iraq, and advised citizens elsewhere in the region to keep a low profile or restrict travel.

An advisory from the US Department of Homeland Security warned of a "heightened threat environment in the United States." Law enforcement in major US cities stepped up patrols and deployed additional resources to religious, cultural and diplomatic sites.

Tehran has so far not followed through on its threats of retaliation against the United States – either by targeting US bases or trying to choke off global oil supplies.

As Iran's leaders struck a defiant tone, President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed that the United States would "receive a response" to the attacks.

Speaking in Istanbul, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said his country would consider all



A closer satellite view shows holes and craters on a ridge at Fordow underground complex, after the US struck the underground nuclear facility, near Qom, Iran yesterday.

possible responses. There would be no return to diplomacy until it had retaliated, he said.

Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said on X that the initiative was "now with the side that plays smart, avoids blind strikes. Surprises will continue!"

US President Donald Trump, in a televised address, called the strikes "a spectacular military success" and boasted that Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities had been "completely and totally obliterated."

The International Atomic Energy Agency said no increases in off-site radiation levels had been reported after the US strikes.

A senior Iranian source told Reuters that most of the highly enriched uranium at Fordow had been

moved elsewhere before the attack.

Trump immediately called on Iran to forgo any retaliation, saying the government "must now make peace. If they do not, future attacks would be far greater and a lot easier," he said.

US Vice-President JD Vance said Washington was not at war with Iran but with its nuclear programme.

In a step towards what is widely seen as Iran's most effective threat to hurt the West, its parliament approved a move to close the Strait of Hormuz.

US officials have stressed that they were not working to overthrow Iran's government.

"This mission was not and has not been about regime change," Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told reporters at the Pentagon.

Qatar, Saudi, UAE stress de-escalation in region, diplomatic solutions

- Amir receives calls from UAE president, Saudi crown prince

QNA
Doha

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with his brother Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud the strong fraternal relations between the two countries, as well as a number of regional and international developments of common concern, particularly the Israeli attack on the Islamic Republic of Iran. This came during a phone call received yesterday by His Highness the Amir from the Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister. Both sides emphasised the need to de-escalate tensions and to reach diplomatic solutions. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with his brother President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan the fraternal



relations between the two countries. They also discussed a number of regional and international developments of common concern, particularly the Israeli attack on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This came during a phone call received by His Highness the Amir yesterday from the UAE president. Both sides emphasised the need to de-escalate tensions and to reach diplomatic solutions. **(QNA)**

Amir, Macron discuss attacks on Iran nuclear facilities

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron discussed the developments following the recent attacks on the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran, which targeted its nuclear facilities, and efforts to return to dialogue and diplomatic tracks to resolve outstanding issues. This came during a phone call His Highness the Amir received yesterday from the French president. Also during the call, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries, in addition to regional and international developments of common concern. **(QNA)**

Amir, Italy PM discuss regional developments

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, Giorgia Meloni, the latest regional and international developments of common concern. This came during a phone call His Highness the Amir received yesterday from the Italian prime minister. The discussion also addressed the recent attacks on the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran, including the targeting of its nuclear facilities, as well as efforts to resume dialogue and diplomatic initiatives to resolve the outstanding issues. Additionally, the two sides reviewed the bilateral relations, and explored ways to further strengthen and develop them. **(QNA)**

Amir appoints new undersecretaries

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday issued Decree No. 59 of 2025 appointing HE Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Maadheed as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport. The decree is effective from its date of issuance and is to be published in the official gazette. **(QNA)**
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday issued Decree No. 60 of 2025 appointing HE Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak bin Ghanem Mohammed al-Ali as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture. The decree is effective from its date of issuance and is to be published in the official gazette. **(QNA)**

Qatar regrets deterioration of situation following bombing of Iran N-facilities

Qatar expressed regret over the deterioration of the situation following the bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities, and is closely monitoring developments with deep concern in the aftermath of the recent attacks on the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran targeting its nuclear sites. Qatar emphasised the urgent need to halt all military operations and immediately return to dialogue and diplomatic channels to resolve outstanding issues. In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that the current dangerous

tensions in the region could lead to catastrophic consequences at both the regional and international levels. It expressed hope that all parties will act with wisdom, exercise restraint, and avoid escalation which the peoples of the region, already burdened by conflicts and their tragic humanitarian consequences, cannot bear. The ministry also affirmed Qatar's full support for all regional and international efforts aimed at resolving disputes and defusing crises through peaceful means, in order to promote peace and stability in the region.

Israel strikes Gaza camps; massacre toll 55,959



People rush towards a truck carrying aid as it drives along al-Rashid street in western Jabalia yesterday.

Five Palestinians were martyred and several others injured, including a young boy and girl, as Israeli occupation warplanes carried out multiple air strikes yesterday targeting different areas in the central and northern parts of Gaza Strip. In another strike, Israeli warplanes targeted a public kitchen ("Takiya") where hundreds of civilians had gathered in Al-Mawasi area west of Khan Younis, in southern Gaza, resulting in multiple civilian injuries.

With these latest attacks, the number of martyrs in Gaza yesterday has risen to 29, including six people who were martyred while

waiting to receive humanitarian aid.

Earlier yesterday, the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza reported that the death toll from the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, has risen to 55,959, in addition to 131,242 injured.

The Israeli military said yesterday that it had recovered the bodies of three hostages in Gaza more than 20 months after they were abducted by Hamas fighters, AFP reported.

"In a special operation... the bodies of the hostages Ofra Keidar, Yonatan Samerano and Staff Sergeant Shay Levinson were recovered from the Gaza Strip yesterday," the military said in a statement. **(QNA)**



PM launches MSDF's 2025-2030 strategy

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani launched yesterday the National Strategy 2025-2030 of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, under the theme "From Care to Empowerment." The launch ceremony was attended by a number of ministers, senior officials, and representatives of government bodies and civil society institutions.

On this occasion, HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi said that the launch of the strategy represents a qualitative leap from a traditional care model to a more comprehensive, empowering, and sustainable approach based on a realistic understanding of the needs and challenges facing Qatari society.

She noted that the strategy was the result of a collaborative effort involving various government entities, civil society institutions, and research centres.

The strategy is built on five main pillars. The first focuses on strengthening the cohesion of Qatari families by developing preventive policies, parental education programmes, and mental health initiatives to create a stable and



adaptable family environment.

The second pillar centres on empowering Qatari women and enhancing their participation across various sectors, particularly in leadership and decision-making positions.

The strategy also prioritises supporting vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities, the elderly, widows, divorcees, and orphans by providing comprehensive social protection and services that foster their independence and integration into society.

Another key focus is promoting a spirit of participation and solidarity by supporting civil society organisations, encouraging volunteerism, and ensuring the sustainability of charitable initiatives.

The final pillar aims to improve the

standard of living for individuals and families through economic empowerment, support for productive families, development of social services via digital transformation, and the enhancement of institutional capabilities and national partnerships. (QNA)

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NHRC for independent OIC rights commission

HE the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah, has reaffirmed her unwavering commitment to promoting and supporting human rights, and also emphasised support for the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) and the importance of strengthening its credibility and presence, as well as its role in ensuring the effective implementation of human rights across all OIC member states.

In a statement issued yesterday on the occasion of her election as a member of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the OIC, HE al-Attiyah



renewed commitment to working with professionalism, credibility, dedication, independence, and integrity. Drawing on experience leading one of the world's most prominent and transparent national human rights institutions, HE al-Attiyah emphasised a dedi-

cation to upholding the principles of transparency and independence, and to carrying out responsibilities independent from any external influence.

HE al-Attiyah was elected as a member of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the OIC, in elections held on the sidelines of the 51st Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Istanbul, Türkiye.

Her election stands as a testament to the prestigious position of Qatar in advancing and protecting human rights. It further reflects the country's active and constructive role in international forums, as well as the global recognition of Qatari expertise and national competencies in this vital field. (QNA)

MoECC says no abnormal radiation levels in Qatar

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), through the National Radiation Monitoring and Early Warning Network, confirmed that no abnormal radiation levels have been recorded in the air or territorial waters of Qatar.

In a statement yesterday, the MoECC said that the National Radiation Monitoring and Early Warning Network includes land and marine stations distributed across the country, and that these



stations continuously monitor radiation levels and issue immediate alerts via the associated early warning system to ensure a rapid response in the event of any abnormal increase in radiation.

The MoECC added that it continues to co-ordinate and follow

up with the International Atomic Energy Agency's Incident and Emergency Center to keep abreast of any relevant developments at the regional level.

The ministry urged citizens and residents to obtain information from official sources. (QNA) **Page 8**

Qatar condemns attack on church in Damascus

Qatar voiced its strong condemnation of the attack that targeted Mar Elias Church in Damascus, the capital of Syria, which resulted in deaths and injuries.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm stance in rejecting violence, terrorism, and criminal acts, regardless of their motives or causes. It emphasised its absolute rejection of targeting places of worship and terrorising innocent civilians. It also affirmed its full solidarity with the Syrian government in all measures it may take to maintain security and stability.

The ministry offered Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims and to the government and people of Syria, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. (QNA)

Qatar calls for real measures to support peaceful settlement of Palestinian cause

Qatar has called for real measures to support the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian cause in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and the principle of the two-state solution, and ensuring the establishment of a Palestinian state, while affirming the right of Palestine to full membership in the UN.

Qatar also expressed aspiration for the resumption of the High-Level International Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, chaired by Saudi Arabia and France, which represents an opportunity to take collective steps towards supporting this solution and achieving sustainable security and peace regionally and internationally.

This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif

al-Thani (**pictured**) before the resumed tenth emergency special session of the UN General Assembly on Palestine, at the UN headquarters in New York.

HE Sheikhha Alya stressed that the need to resume the session stems from the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip, which requires the General Assembly to assume its responsibilities in accordance with the UN Charter regarding the Palestinian cause.

She pointed out that the Israeli occupation has resumed its aggression despite the ceasefire agreement reached through the efforts of Qatar, Egypt, and the US in January.

HE Sheikhha Alya noted Qatar's commitment to intensifying mediation efforts to overcome obstacles facing the negotiations, with the aim of reaching a permanent ceasefire agreement that would allow for an end to the humanitarian crisis, the opening of crossings, and the entry of aid,



ultimately ending the war and beginning reconstruction.

She expressed Qatar's categorical rejection of the ongoing Israeli attacks on civilian facilities, including hospitals, schools, and populated centres, as well as the use of food as a weapon of war and the starvation of civilians, reiterating the call on the international community to compel Israel to ensure the safe, sustainable, and unhin-

dered entry of humanitarian aid.

Qatar stresses, she said, that the displacement of Palestinians, in any form, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, adding that the expansion of settlements also constitutes a flagrant violation of international legitimacy resolutions, and Qatar strongly condemns the occupation authorities' approval of the construction of new settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Qatar also condemns the repeated attempts to undermine the religious and historical status of Al Aqsa Mosque.

HE Sheikhha Alya also reiterated Qatar's categorical rejection of Israeli moves aimed at ending the role of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and affirmed Qatar's support for the agency and its implementation of the mandate granted to it by the General Assembly.

Qatar has repeatedly warned, she con-

tinued, of the consequences of the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip for the region, and that the Israeli occupation's escalatory policy will inevitably lead to an expansion of violence and chaos in the region.

HE Sheikhha Alya also expressed Qatar's strong condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli attack targeting Iranian territory, considering it a flagrant violation of Iran's sovereignty and security, and a clear breach of the rules and principles of international law.

She also expressed deep concern over the dangerous escalation, which threatens the security and stability of the region and hinders efforts to de-escalate and reach diplomatic solutions.

In this regard, HE Sheikhha Alya clarified Qatar's firm position, rejecting all forms of violence, and calling for restraint and avoiding escalation that would expand the scope of the conflict and undermine security and stability in the region. - **QNA**

UNSC meets on Iran as Russia, China push for a ceasefire

The UN Security Council met yesterday to discuss US strikes on Iran's nuclear sites as Russia, China and Pakistan proposed that the 15-member body adopt a resolution calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Middle East.

"The bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities by the US marks a perilous turn," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council yesterday. "We must act - immediately and decisively - to halt the fighting and return to serious, sustained negotiations on the Iran nuclear programme."

The world awaited Iran's response yesterday after President Donald Trump said the US had "obliterated" Tehran's key nuclear sites, joining Israel in the biggest Western military action against the Islamic Republic since its 1979 revolution.

Russia and China condemned the US strikes.

"Peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved by the use of force. Dialogue and negotiation are the fundamental way out at present, said China's UN ambassador Fu Cong. "Diplomatic means to address the Iranian nuclear issue haven't been exhausted, and there's still hope for a peaceful solution."

However, acting US ambassador to the UN Dorothy Shea told the council that the time had come for Washington to act decisively, urging the Security Council to call upon Iran to end its effort to eradicate Israel and terminate its drive for nuclear weapons.

"Iran long obfuscated its nuclear weapons programme and stonewalled our good-faith efforts in recent negotiations," she said. "The Iranian regime cannot have a nuclear weapon."

Russia's UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia recalled former US secretary of state Colin Powell making the



case at the UN Security Council in 2003 that Iraqi president Saddam Hussain constituted an imminent danger to the world because of the country's stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons.

"Again we're being asked to believe the US's fairy tales, to once again inflict suffering on millions of people living in the Middle East," he said. "This cements our conviction that history has taught our US colleagues nothing."

Iran requested the UN Security Council meeting, calling on it "to address this blatant and unlawful act of aggression, to condemn it in the strongest possible terms".



Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani (left). Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, speaks during a United Nations Security Council meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. - **AFP**

It was not immediately clear when the council could vote on the draft resolution.

Russia, China and Pakistan have asked council members to share their comments by evening today.

A resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the US, France, Britain, Russia or China to pass.

The US is likely to oppose the draft resolution, seen by Reuters, which also condemns attacks on Iran's nuclear sites and facilities.

The text does not name the US or Israel.

UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi said that

while craters were visible at Iran's enrichment site buried into a mountain at Fordow, "no one - including the IAEA - is in a position to assess the underground damage."

He told the Security Council that entrances to tunnels used for the storage of enriched material appear to have been hit at Iran's sprawling Isfahan nuclear complex, while the fuel enrichment plant at Natanz has been struck again.

"Iran has informed the IAEA there has been no increase in off-site radiation levels at all three sites," said Grossi, who heads the International Atomic Energy Agency ((AEA). - **Reuters**

Houbara bustard conservation



Houbara bustards bred in captivity at the Rawdat Al Faras Centre undergo a meticulous rehabilitation programme in preparation for their release into their natural environment. This is to support the efforts to conserve this rare bird and ensure the sustainability of wildlife, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change said in an X post. Houbara bustards that are ready for release adopt a defensive posture when they sense danger, spreading their wings to appear large, whether the threat comes from predators or their caretakers.

UDST team comes second at Shell Eco-Marathon Europe and Africa



The Wolves Racing Team from the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has secured second place in the Autonomous Urban Concept category at the Shell Eco-Marathon Europe and Africa 2025 regional competition in Poland.

The event featured 120 student teams from 25 countries across Europe and Africa.

The student-built autonomous electric vehicle, fully designed and developed in-house at the UDST's campus, reflects the university's advanced applied learning model, and showcases the students' exceptional technical expertise in engineering, automation, and sustainable mobility.

The vehicle successfully met and passed stringent European autonomous driving regulations, highlighting a significant milestone that demonstrates the technical sophistication and reliability of the design.

Notably, this year marked the Wolves Racing Team's debut participation in the autonomous vehicle category, competing as the sole non-European team among a highly competitive field of global universities within this category.

The organising and judging teams of this competition expressed their admiration and ap-

preciation for the technology used as well as the technological competitiveness demonstrated by the university students.

"This remarkable accomplishment reflects the strength of the UDST's applied education approach, empowering our students to transform knowledge into real-world innovations," said UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi.

"Designing and building an autonomous electric vehicle from initial concept to participation in international competitions requires advanced technical expertise, innovation, and a commitment to achieving the highest standards of quality and excellence," he said. "The Wolves Racing Team has demonstrated that Qatar's youth are fully capable of competing on the in-

ternational stage, contributing to the advancement of sustainable technologies."

"This accomplishment is the culmination of the learning journey initiated after our students took part in Shell Eco-Marathon in Indonesia and Qatar," said Dr Awni al-Otoom, dean of the UDST's College of Engineering and Technology.

"Throughout this experience, they further developed their competencies and expanded their expertise in the field of vehicle engineering," he said. "We take great pride in their success, which exemplifies the strength of the UDST's engineering curriculum and the faculty's dedication to preparing students for the demands of today's dynamic industrial sector."

"We are incredibly proud to see a Qatari team excel on the international stage," said Shell Companies Qatar managing director Rob Maxwell.

"Wolf Racing's success at Shell Eco-marathon Europe and Africa is a shining example of the innovation and talent emerging from the region," he said. "Following the success of our regional event in Doha earlier this year, it's inspiring to see a local team carry that momentum onto the international stage and deliver such an outstanding performance."

Thailand to highlight circular economy merits in Doha event

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Thailand is set to showcase its advancements in the circular economy, from transforming agricultural waste into high-performance cosmetics to pioneering eco-urban development, at the 5th Recycling Towards Sustainability Conference and Exhibition (RTS) 2025, taking place on June 25-26 at Raffles Doha Hotel.

Organised in partnership with Qatar's Ministry of Municipality, the Thai embassy said that its participation underlines Thailand's vision for circular innovation and strengthens its sustainable collaboration with Qatar.

The initiative, the embassy added, also reflects Thailand's continued commitment to sharing knowledge, reinforcing international partnerships, and supporting Qatar's National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030).

As part of RTS 2025, Thailand will high-



Dr Prakit Sukyai

light its expertise and achievements in circular economy principles through insightful conference sessions delivered by leading Thai experts, complemented by an exhibition of sustainable innovations.

The embassy will also feature a dedicated mini-exhibition, titled "Thailand's

Innovative Upcycling for Everyday Life", displaying eco-friendly consumer products ranging from eco-textiles and biodegradable packaging to sustainable homeware and clean beauty solutions, all crafted from recycled materials and industrial by-products.

Two experts from Thailand's Kasetsart University will present their groundbreaking research and practical applications of circular economy principles across key industry sectors.

Dr Prakit Sukyai, head of the Cellulose for Future Materials and Technologies Special Research Unit at Kasetsart's Faculty of Agro-Industry, will present *Plant-Based Cosmetic Model for Upcycling Agricultural Biomass into Sustainable Nanocellulose and Bioactive Compounds* on June 25.

His session will unveil how agricultural biomass, such as coffee pulp, bacterial cellulose, and mangosteen rind, can be transformed into valuable nanocellulose and bioactive compounds for use in plant-based cosmetics.

This approach explores advanced ma-



Dr Singh Intrachooto

terial science and biotechnology to create skin-friendly products with enhanced efficacy, significantly reducing reliance on synthetic inputs, and connecting rural waste streams with global green markets.

On June 26, Dr Singh Intrachooto, professor of Building Innovation and Sus-

tainability and director of Scrap Lab, will discuss "Real Estate Developments as a Catalyst for Circular Economy Innovation".

His presentation will examine the evolution of circular thinking in urban development, spotlighting The Forestias, Thailand's flagship eco-urban project.

This large-scale development integrates recycled asphalt, upcycled plastics, and low-carbon materials, showcasing how modern living can be redefined through sustainability.

He will also illustrate how such real estate initiatives can act as launchpads for green entrepreneurship, positioning projects like The Forestias as hubs for SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and innovators working on circular supply chains.

The embassy noted that Thailand's presence at RTS 2025 also serves to advance the goals of its national Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model, which promotes inclusive and innovation-driven sustainable growth.



Nissan launches all-new Patrol PRO-4X

The all-new Nissan Patrol PRO-4X all-terrain sub-brand will be available starting July 2025 in Qatar, at the exclusive agent Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Co showrooms, as part of the Middle East debut, a statement said.

“Engineered specifically for exploration, the all-new Patrol PRO-4X combines elevated all-terrain performance with distinctive design and advanced technology,” it was explained.

Exclusive aesthetic elements and functional upgrades elevate its bold character, including signature Lava Red accents and darkened exterior details across the bodywork, and exclusive wheels fitted with all-terrain tyres, amplifying its commanding presence.

Positioned between the Patrol V6T Titanium and V6T Platinum grades, the all-new Patrol PRO-4X distinguishes itself with rugged design cues and purposeful enhancements tailored for off-road exploration.

Powered by a robust 3.5-litre twin-turbo engine, the PRO-4X delivers exceptional performance, complemented by adaptive air suspension, an improved approach angle, and increased ground clearance for enhanced

off-road capability. Thierry Sabbagh, divisional vice-president, president – Middle East, KSA, and CIS – Nissan, Infiniti, commented: “This all-new adventure-ready model blends the legendary comfort and presence of the iconic Patrol with the ruggedness of PRO-4X, offering a distinctive expression of capability tailored for drivers who wish to explore the region’s diverse terrains.”

Nassim Mourani, general manager of the Automotive Group at Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Co, said: “The Patrol has long been a trusted name in Qatar, known for balancing performance, reliability, and comfort. With the introduction of the all-new Patrol PRO-4X, Nissan is offering a model that builds on that legacy while catering to drivers who value off-road capability and distinctive design. We believe the all-new Patrol PRO-4X will resonate strongly with customers here who are looking for a vehicle that can confidently handle Qatar’s diverse driving environments – from city streets to more challenging terrains – without compromising on comfort or technology.”

A new three-slot grille, inspired by Nissan’s Hardbody heritage, signals the PRO-4X’s off-road



pedigree, while exterior black accents, unique badging in Lava Red, and durable skid plates give the SUV a distinct personality that commands attention on every drive.

Quilted leather seats with contrast stitching, embroidered with the PRO-4X emblem, create a space that feels as purposeful as it is premium. Built with NASA-inspired spinal support technology it is designed to promote optimal posture and minimise fatigue.

At the all-new Patrol PRO-4X’s core is a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine producing 425hp and

700Nm of torque, paired with a 9-speed automatic transmission and paddle shifters for added control.

An adaptive air suspension system with e-damper technology enables the vehicle to automatically adjust the ride height and damping based on the terrain, offering a smoother ride when needed, and up to 294mm of ground clearance when tackling obstacles off the beaten path. The system also improves aerodynamic efficiency with easier passenger entry and exit, and more convenient loading.



A 34-degree approach angle, six intuitive drive modes and a 4WD transfer mode interlock system provide unwavering confidence across diverse terrains. Rugged 20-inch alloy wheels wrapped in all-terrain tires underline the SUV’s readiness to explore further and endure more.

Google Built-In transforms the cabin into a digitally connected hub. From intuitive navigation via Google Maps to voice interaction through Google Assistant, the system delivers seamless, personalised access to essential apps and services.

Wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, the 12-speaker Klipsch Premium audio system, the Intelligent 3D Around View Monitor, Invisible Hood View, and Ultra-Wide View cameras, onboard air compressor with dual valves (enabling the inflation or deflation of two tyres simultaneously), and an off-road kit are among the other salient features.

More information is available from Saleh Al Hamad Al Mana Co showrooms on Salwa Road, The Pearl, Bin Omran, Barwa, and Al Khor or from 8000505, the statement added.

Ministry launches pilot projects to recycle ablution water in two mosques



The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Engineering Affairs Department, launched two pilot projects to recycle ablution water in two mosques in Al Wakrah and Lusail.

This project is part of its efforts to promote environmental sustainability and to rationalise water consumption.

The first project included the Qanbar Al Ansari Mosque (No. 1209) in Al Wakrah and was implemented in co-operation with the Qatar General Electricity and Water Corp (Kahramaa) and Al Wakrah Municipality.

The second project included the Al Kaldari Mosque (No. 1368) in Lusail, in co-operation with Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company.

The two projects aim to treat ablution water inside the two mosques and reuse it to irrigate the surrounding green spaces, in addition to using it in flushing boxes in restrooms.

This will contribute to reducing freshwater consumption, limiting waste, and increasing the efficiency of water resources.

The Engineering Affairs Department confirmed that this initiative is part of the ministry’s plan to implement the water recycling experiment in a number of mosques under construction, in preparation for expanding its scope across the country.

This initiative responds to the country’s drive to adopt innovative environmental solutions and to



promote the transition to a green economy. The Department explained that these efforts align with the ministry’s vision to develop mosque infrastructure to meet modern requirements.

They also contribute to achieving sustainable development goals and enhancing environmental awareness, in line with the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly with regard to environmental development and the preservation of vital resources for future generations. (QNA)

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QF’s Mukhayamna summer camp to kick off on July 5

Qatar Foundation (QF) announced the launch of the new edition of Mukhayamna summer camp, which is organised by QF’s Pre-University Education from July 5 to Aug 11.

In a press release, QF said: Students from schools across Qatar are being given the opportunity to learn, explore, create, and have fun across the summer — as the return of Qatar Foundation’s Mukhayamna summer camp takes education beyond the classroom.

The annual camp at Education City will offer young learners the chance to develop their skills in areas ranging from sports and computing to business and leadership, as its wide range of activities and experiences unfold from July 5 to Aug 11.



Mukhayamna’s 2025 edition will also see the introduction of a new programme called ‘Kafo’, which will take place at QF’s Qatar Academy Al Wakra and combine learning opportunities in life skills, sports, and leadership development, all rooted in nurturing Islamic values and positive behaviours.



This year’s programmes include: Leadership Camp (Boys): July 5-10, Leadership Camp (Girls): July 20-24, Sports Camp (Girls and Boys): July 6-17, Quantum Computing

Camp: July 6-10, Cybersecurity Camp: July 13-17, Business Camp: July 20-24, Skills Camp (Boys, 7-13 years): July 27-Aug 11, Skills Camp (Girls, 7-13 years): July 27-Aug 11, Skills Camp (Boys and Girls, 5-6 years): July 27-Aug 11, Kafo Summer Program (Boys): July 5-21 and Kafo Summer Programme (Girls): July 6-22.

Mukhayamna’s sports camp offers activities such as padel, swimming, and spinning, giving students the opportunity to build their physical fitness while also learning about the importance of teamwork through friendly competition; while its quantum computing and cybersecurity programmes teach basic principles as well as providing participants with hands-on exposure to technology

and its role in solving real-world challenges.

Through Mukhayamna’s business camp, students will gain an introduction to entrepreneurship and financial literacy, and work in teams to tackle business challenges and pitch ideas; and its skills camp will focus on sustainability and environmental awareness, including practical recycling workshops, interactive waste reduction challenges, and developing eco-friendly projects, while cultivating skills such as communication, problem-solving, and decision-making.

In 2024, the expanded seven-week Mukhayamna camp brought together almost 600 students from schools within and beyond QF. (QNA)

Lecture highlights history of museums in Arab countries

The Hassan Bin Mohammed Center for Historical Studies yesterday organised a lecture on ‘The history of the establishment of museums in Arab countries’ by Dr Al Sharqi Dahmali, the President of the Arab Organisation for Museums (ICOM Arab) and a member of the advisory board and strategic planning committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

The lecture was moderated by researcher and thinker Mohammed Hammad Fekri, general supervisor of the centre, and attended by a large gathering of those interested in historical studies, the museum sector, and media professionals. Dr Al Sharqi Dahmali presented a comprehensive overview of the history of museums in Arab countries, focusing on the Qatari and Egyptian experiences. Dr Dahmali praised Qatar’s contribution to responding to Unesco’s appeal of March 9, 1960, to save the Nubian monuments in Egypt due to flooding. He explained that Qatar contacted Unesco regarding the Qatar National Museum project in 1967, and that a committee was established for this purpose in 1974, and the Qatar National Museum

was opened in 1975. He also noted that Qatar has been paying attention to the visual identity of museums since that time, and Qatar became a member of ICOM in 1985.

The president of the ICOM Arab emphasised that Qatar’s experience in the museum sector is pioneering globally, as Qatar Museums prioritises museum education and is highly advanced. In a statement to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr Dahmali said Qatar Museums has benefited greatly from international experience in museum management and has become a pioneer in this field, pointing out that the rising generation of young Qataris in the museum sector will further advance museum management in Qatar and export this experience worldwide. He added that Qatar Museums has accumulated experience in museum education that can be considered a distinguished school across various countries around the world.

He also pointed to the private and personal museums’ leadership in Qatar, which are distinguished by their uniqueness and high standard. (QNA)

Global Accreditation Bureau sets new milestone

Qatar-based Global Accreditation Bureau (GAB) has officially become a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signatory of the Asia Pacific Accreditation Co-operation (APAC) for the accreditation of Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) for Greenhouse Gases (GHG).

This achievement positions GAB as a key enabler in the MENA region for climate accountability and sustainability practices aligned with international standards.

Becoming an MRA signatory signifies that GAB’s accreditation processes for GHG VVBs have been rigorously evaluated and deemed equivalent to those of other recognised accreditation bodies within APAC. This is particularly significant given the standing of APAC as a highly respected and influential regional co-operation of accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific region.

This development follows GAB’s earlier success in 2024, when it became an MRA signatory of both the Asia Pacific Accreditation Co-operation (APAC) and the International Accredita-

tion Forum (IAF) for accreditation of Management System Certification Bodies.

GAB’s elevated status not only enhances its international recognition but also uniquely positions it as the first and only Accreditation Body Member in the Mena region to be part of APAC MRA group with a scope of GHG validation and verification.

Speaking about the latest milestone, Dr Yousef Alhorr, Founding Chairman of GAB, said, “By becoming APAC’s MRA Signatory for the accreditation of GHG validation and verification bodies, we are directly addressing the increasing demand for robust and transparent GHG accounting, aligning with international frameworks. By ensuring that VVBs accredited by GAB operate under a rigorous, internationally recognised accreditation framework, GAB is steadily progressing towards its goal of empowering stakeholders in the Mena region and other neighbouring countries.

“To this end, it will assure that GHG validation and verification processes operated under accreditation from GAB are techni-



cally sound and adhere to the international standards, fostering confidence and paving the way for a sustainable, low-carbon future.”

GAB’s extended MRA signatory status will significantly benefit organisations and VVBs operating within the Mena region and neighbouring countries. It will provide them with easier access to internationally recognised accreditation services for GHG validation and verification. GHG reports originating from VVBs accredited by GAB will gain greater acceptance within international markets that acknowledge the APAC MRA.

This will ease trade barriers and enhance market access for organisations relying on these

verified reports. Simplifying their selection process, organisations seeking GHG validation and verification services can now select GAB-accredited bodies with confidence, assured that these VVBs meet rigorous international standards.

Ultimately, GAB’s MRA status will empower organisations to accurately measure, report, and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions which will significantly contribute to broader global sustainability objectives and climate action initiatives within the region.

GAB’s extended MRA signatory status will amplify its existing portfolio and influence within the accreditation landscape. Having already accredited five VVBs—two based in Qatar and three in India—under this expanded scope, GAB is demonstrating its growing capacity to support GHG validation and verification services. With many other applicant bodies currently undergoing rigorous review at various stages of GHG-related accreditation, this momentum suggests a substantial increase in GAB’s accredited partners. (QNA)

Desert Falls launches ‘Splash After Dark’

Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park has announced the official public launch of Splash After Dark, a new experience making its debut on July 3, from 8pm to midnight.

Taking place for the first time in Qatar, the event will be hosted at the award-winning waterpark within Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas, a statement said yesterday.

“Splash After Dark will feature most of Desert Falls’ signature rides and attractions, including the iconic King Cobra, Lenny’s Lagoon, Lazy River and the Wave Pool, all illuminated by neon glowing lights.

“Guests can look forward to an electrifying atmosphere with laser light projections, full LED installations, and rotating lights, transforming the park into a stunning neon wonderland.

“Entertainment highlights include stilt walkers, mirror men, bubble machines, and a live DJ spinning high-energy beats on an LED dance floor, with neon glow accessories handed out.

“Admission to Splash After Dark is priced at QR150 per person for guests (those below 12 need to be accompanied by an adult), with tickets available for purchase via the official Desert Falls website and selected third-party ticketing platforms while in house guest ticket priced at QR100 per person.” “Splash After Dark is more than just an event — it’s a bold new way to experience Desert Falls,” said Adam Du Plooy, general manager at Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park.

More information is available from www.desertfallsqatar.com, desertfallsinfo@hilton.com or +974 4423 6666, the statement added.



Road closures



The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced a temporary closure on part of Zekreet Street, in one direction from its intersection with Izghawa Street to its intersection with Jassim bin Thani bin Jassim Al Thani Street on June 27, from 12midnight to 6pm. The closure in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic is to carry out final asphalt layer works. During the closure, users of Zekreet Street are required to turn towards Wadi Al Mashrab Street, then onto Al Ghafat Street and then use Jassim bin Thani bin Jassim Al Thani Street to reach their destinations. Ashghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and has requested all to abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced a closure on Al-Khor Interchange towards Doha along Al Shamal Road daily for 35 days from June 25 to July 31, from 12midnight to 5am. The closure in co-ordination with the General Directorate of Traffic is to carry out maintenance and improvement works. Ashghal has urged all road users to use nearby alternative roads to reach their destinations, observe the speed limits and follow directional signs for their safety. Ashghal will install road signs advising motorists of the temporary closure and has requested all to abide by the speed limit to ensure safety.



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Ikea garlic press recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Hamad and Mohamad Al-Futtaim/Ikea, has announced the recall of Ikea 365+ VÄRDEFULL garlic press, manufactured in China, production years 2024–2025, due to the risk of small metal pieces detaching during use, and swallowing hazard.

The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that dealers follow up on defects and repairs.

The ministry said it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The ministry urges all consumers to report any violations or breaches by contacting the Consumer Protection and Combating Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: call centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry’s accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry’s Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)

Democrats slam ‘erratic’ Trump over Iran strikes

AFP
Washington

Democrats bristled yesterday over US President Donald Trump’s decision to launch air strikes on Iran without seeking authorisation from Congress, accusing the Republican of violating the constitution and demanding a vote to rein in his war powers.

Members of the Senate and House of Representatives argued that US intelligence had not shown an imminent threat from the Middle Eastern country that justified Trump’s unilateral action.

“President Trump’s actions in bomb-

ing Iran puts the US on the brink of a wider war in the Middle East, all without constitutionally required Congressional approval,” Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin said in a statement.

Democrats were divided between those demanding a vote on a war powers resolution to constrain Trump’s authority to launch further action and a smaller group, who maintained that the strikes were grounds for the Republican leader’s impeachment.

They included Illinois moderate Sean Casten and New York leftist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who accused the president of having “impulsively risked launching a war that may ensnare us for generations”.

Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House respectively, said Trump had “dramatically increased” America’s risk of becoming embroiled in a new Middle Eastern conflagration.

“No president should be allowed to unilaterally march this nation into something as consequential as war with erratic threats and no strategy,” Schumer said.

The Democrats have foreign policy hawks in their ranks and many were quick to point to the threat that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose – while still upbraiding Trump for acting without consulting lawmakers.

“The Constitution makes clear that the

power to authorise war lies with Congress... the American people deserve more than vague rhetoric and unilateral decisions that could set off a wider war,” said Mark Warner, vice-chairman of the Senate intelligence committee.

The loudest Democratic voice in support of the strikes was staunchly pro-Israel Senator John Fetterman, who singled out Trump for praise – something even party colleagues who support the strikes have avoided.

“As I’ve long maintained, this was the correct move by (Trump),” the Pennsylvania centrist posted on X. “Iran is the world’s leading sponsor of terrorism and cannot have nuclear capabilities.”

Republicans have been lining up since the strikes to praise Trump and endorse his decision to hit three Iranian nuclear facilities – with little dissent among the ranks.

However, Kentucky conservative Thomas Massie accused Trump of escalating the conflict between Israel and Iran.

“When two countries are bombing each other daily in a hot war, and a third country joins the bombing, that’s an act of war,” said Massie, who introduced a bipartisan resolution earlier this month to require any military action to be approved by lawmakers. “I’m amazed at the mental gymnastics being undertaken by neocons in DC (and their social media bots) to say we aren’t at war... so they can make war.”

Tesla launching robotaxis today in Austin: Musk

Reuters/AFP
Austin

After driverless Tesla Model Ys were spotted traversing Austin, Texas streets yesterday morning, chief executive Elon Musk posted on his social platform X that Tesla’s “robotaxi launch” would start this afternoon with rides for a flat fee of \$4.20.

A Reuters witness saw several Tesla “robotaxis” in the morning in a popular area of the Texas capital called South Congress, with no one in the driver’s seat but one person in the passenger seat.

Tesla planned to have front-seat riders acting as “safety monitors”, though it remained unclear how much control they would have over the vehicles.

Videos of driverless Teslas have also been posted on social media but it was not known if the vehicles carried any passengers.

As the date of the planned robotaxi launch approached, Texas lawmakers moved to enact rules on autonomous vehicles in the state.

On Friday Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, signed legislation requiring a state permit to operate self-driving vehicles.

The law does not take effect until September 1, but the governor’s approval of it on Friday signals state officials from both parties want the driverless-vehicle industry to proceed cautiously.

Earlier this week a group of Democratic state lawmakers asked Tesla to delay its planned robotaxi trial because of the legislation.

Tesla did not respond to requests for



A Tesla robotaxi is seen on South Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas. - Reuters

comment. The governor’s office declined to comment.

The law softens the state’s previous anti-regulation stance on autonomous vehicles.

A 2017 Texas law specifically prohibited cities from regulating self-driving cars.

In recent days, Tesla has sent invites to a select group of Tesla online influencers for a small and carefully monitored robotaxi trial, which the company has said would include 10 or 20 Model Y vehicles operated in a limited zone of Austin.

The law requires autonomous-vehicle operators to get approval from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles before operating on public streets without a human driver.

It also gives state authorities the power to revoke permits if they deem a driverless vehicle “endangers the public,” and requires firms to provide information on how police and first responders can deal with their driverless vehicles in emergency situations.

The law’s requirements for getting a state permit to operate an “automated motor vehicle” are not particularly onerous but require a firm to attest it can safely operate within the law.

Compliance remains far easier than in some states, most notably California, which requires extensive submission of vehicle-testing data under state oversight.

The Tesla robotaxi launch, which the company warned might be delayed, comes after more than a decade of Musk’s unfulfilled promises to deliver self-driving Teslas.

Most of Tesla’s sky-high stock value now rests on its ability to deliver robotaxis and humanoid robots, according to many industry analysts.

Tesla is by far the world’s most valuable automaker.

The service in Austin will have other restrictions as well.

Tesla plans to avoid bad weather, difficult intersections, and will not carry any-

one below the age of 18.

Musk has said he is ready to delay the start for safety reasons, if needed.

The planned launch has generated buzz among Tesla fans.

“Wow. We are going to ride in driverless Teslas in just a few days. On public roads,” posted Omar Qazi, who has 635,200 followers on X, writes often about Tesla using the handle @WholeMarsBlog, and received an invite.

Commercialising autonomous vehicles has been risky and expensive.

GM’s Cruise was shut down after a fatal accident and regulators are closely watching Tesla and its rivals, Alphabet’s Waymo, which runs a paid robotaxi service in several US cities, and Amazon’s Zoox.

Tesla is also bucking the young industry’s standard practice of relying on multiple technologies to read the road, using only cameras.

That, Musk says, will be safe and much less expensive than lidar and radar systems added by rivals.

The robotaxi launch comes as Musk refocuses on his business ventures following a controversial stint in Donald Trump’s administration.

The long-awaited launch follows the dramatic meltdown earlier this month in relations between Musk and Trump, which saw a cascade of bitter attacks from both men.

Since then, Musk has publicly expressed regret for some of his statements, while his company’s Texas operation has readied the Austin push – part of a major drive on autonomous technology and artificial intelligence that Tesla bulls believe will yield huge profits.

FedEx founder and ex-chief executive dead

Reuters
Washington

FedEx Corp’s founder and former chief executive Frederick Smith, who started the global delivery conglomerate with more than a dozen planes in the 1970s, has died, the company’s chief executive Raj Subramaniam said in memo to staff posted on its website on Saturday.

Born in 1944, Smith was most recently serving as the firm’s executive chairman and focused on board governance, as well as issues of global importance, including sustainability, innovation and public policy, according to his profile on FedEx’s website.

Smith stepped aside as FedEx’s chief executive in 2022 and was succeeded by Subramaniam, who was then the company’s operations chief.

“Fred was more than just the pioneer of an industry and the founder of our great company. He was a mentor to many and a source of inspiration to all,” Subramaniam said in the memo to staff.

Smith, who served as an officer in the US Marine Corps in Vietnam, officially launched Federal Express in 1973 with 389 team members and 14 small planes that flew 186 packages from Memphis to 25 US cities.

FedEx operations now include over 700 aircraft, more than 200,000 vehicles and about 5,000 operating facilities, according to its website.

More than 500,000 employees worldwide handle approximately 17mn shipments each day at FedEx.

Moscow’s timeless allure beckons tourists from GCC

By Amjad Vanimal

In the ever-growing list of cities that promise to surprise, delight, and inspire, few can match the vibrant spirit and cultural depth of Moscow. For years, the Russian capital held a place on my bucket list – a city of legends, literary echoes, imperial architecture, and modern flair. When the opportunity finally arrived, I stepped onto Russian soil with anticipation high and curiosity wide open.

As the flight touched down at Domodedovo Airport, southeast of the city, a gentle summer rain fell – a welcome contrast to the scorching Gulf heat left behind. Moscow, cloaked in light mist and timeless beauty, greeted us with its cool air and captivating rhythm. From that first moment, the city set a tone of elegance, energy, and enchantment.

The cultural journey began at GES-2 House of Culture, a restored former power station near the Moskva River, now an avant-garde arts

hub. The space brimmed with installations, open studios, and interactive exhibits designed to engage visitors of all ages.

“This is not just an art space,” said Lilia, our insightful guide. “GES-2 is alive. It’s where Moscow expresses its creative soul – constantly evolving, just like the city itself.”

Next came a ride on the Moscow Metro, often described as the most beautiful subway system in the world. Riding the metro felt like journeying through a museum. Its marble columns, chandeliers, mosaics, and stained-glass panels reveal pieces of Soviet grandeur and architectural mastery.

“Each station tells a tale of pride, perseverance, and the Soviet dream,” Lilia remarked as we descended into its labyrinth of stories.

Our journey took us to VDNKh, the sprawling Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy park. Fountains, space pavilions, and historical monuments stand alongside

trendy cafés and science exhibits, making it a place where past and present merge effortlessly.

“This is where ambition met architecture,” Lilia explained. “A symbol of Soviet achievements, and now, a place where locals come to live, learn, and relax.”

No trip to Moscow is complete without exploring the iconic Kremlin, the city’s most historic and symbolic fortress. Inside the red brick walls, centuries of Russian history echo through cathedrals adorned with golden domes, each more majestic than the last. As we walked through Cathedral Square, Lilia shared stories of tsars, coronations, and revolutions that once unfolded here.

“These stones have witnessed empires rise and fall,” she said. “It’s the spiritual and political heart of Russia, layered with stories.”

From there, we made our way through the leafy Alexandrovsky Garden, past the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, toward the awe-inspiring Red Square. Flanked by Saint Basil’s Cathedral, GUM Department Store, and the State Historical Museum, this plaza remains one of the world’s most recognisable and atmospheric public spaces.

“Muscovites say Red Square isn’t just a landmark,” our guide added. “It’s the soul of the nation and everyone who visits becomes part of it.”

Modern Moscow has gone to great lengths to welcome international travellers, especially from the Middle East. The newly opened Tourist Information Centre on Bolshaya Dmitrovka stands as a testament to this. Staffed with multilingual – including Arabic-speaking – professionals, the centre offers everything from cultural guidance to tour bookings, all in a stylish, tech-equipped space reflecting the capital’s forward-thinking ethos. Traditional Russian tea welcomed us upon arrival.

“Moscow is evolving,” said a centre representative. “And we want every guest to feel welcomed, informed, safe, and inspired.”

Visitors can create personalised travel plans and access free multilingual city guides in Russian, English, Chinese, and Arabic. This new facility not only facilitates financial transactions for tourists but enriches their travel experience through comprehensive services in the heart of Moscow.

Another highlight of the visit was the Moscow Estates Festival at the whimsical Izmailovsky Kremlin, a colourful, fairy-tale complex inspired by traditional Russian architecture. It is a treasure trove of folklore, craftsmanship, and nostalgia. Wooden bridges, watchtowers, craft stalls, and museums come alive with live music and artisan demonstrations during the festival, offering a delightful dive into Russia’s rustic

past. “This is where Moscow remembers its roots,” said Lilia with a smile, as we sampled handmade sweets and browsed intricate matryoshka dolls.

“This is where stories are sung, not just told,” she added. “The festival brings history to life – not in books, but in hands, voices, and smiles.”

From the scenic banks of the Moskva River, we boarded the Moscow Cable Car, a unique and modern way to cross the city while enjoying breathtaking panoramic views. The cabins, equipped with large glass windows, offered a stunning perspective as we glided from Vorobyovy Gory to Luzhniki. Below us, the river shimmered, and in every direction, the capital’s landmarks unfolded – domes, bridges, tree-lined boulevards, and architectural gems.

“This is not just transportation,” said Lilia. “It’s a chance to float above Moscow and truly take in its grandeur.”

The ride delivered us to the sprawling Luzhniki Stadium, Russia’s largest sports arena and the proud host of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Final. “Luzhniki is where the roar of the people echoes. It’s not just a stadium. It’s pride, performance, and unity,” Lilia said.

There was no better way to end the journey than soaring above the city aboard the Moscow Giant Wheel, one of the tallest observation wheels in Europe. As the gondola slowly ascended, the golden domes, spires, bridges, and boulevards stretched out in all directions.

“From up here, you understand the scale – and the soul,” Lilia whispered. “Moscow is not just vast. It’s layered. It’s alive.”

The charm and comfort of being in the vibrant city of Moscow were further enhanced by our stay at Mövenpick Moscow Taganskaya, which provided the perfect sanctuary. Set in the historic Taganka district, this sleek and serene hotel blends contemporary comfort with thoughtful service. With its relaxing spa, elegant rooms, and welcoming atmosphere, it is a true urban retreat. Whether travelling solo or with family, the hotel offers a harmonious mix of peace and proximity – just a short ride away from all major attractions. It’s the kind of place that feels like home after just one night – the kind of comfort that allows the city’s memories to settle gently.

Moscow, with its majestic past and magnetic present, is not just a city you visit – it’s a city you feel. This summer, it opens its arms wide to the world, offering a luxurious, culturally rich experience that leaves every visitor inspired.

As Lilia perfectly put it, “In Moscow, every corner tells a story, and every traveller becomes part of it.”

Moscow ramps up tourism ties with Qatar, GCC: Kozlov

Moscow is rapidly strengthening its tourism ties with Qatar and the wider GCC region, positioning itself as a premier destination for Middle Eastern travellers. According to **Evgeny Kozlov, Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee**, the Russian capital has seen a sharp increase in interest from the Gulf, especially Qatar.



“Moscow is making significant efforts to attract more visitors from Qatar by actively promoting the city and forging strong industry partnerships,” Kozlov said. Over 20,000 business meetings were conducted as part of international tourism missions in 2024 – with more than 40% held in the Middle East. Qatar hosted key sessions in Doha in February and May 2025, involving over 100 travel professionals from both sides.

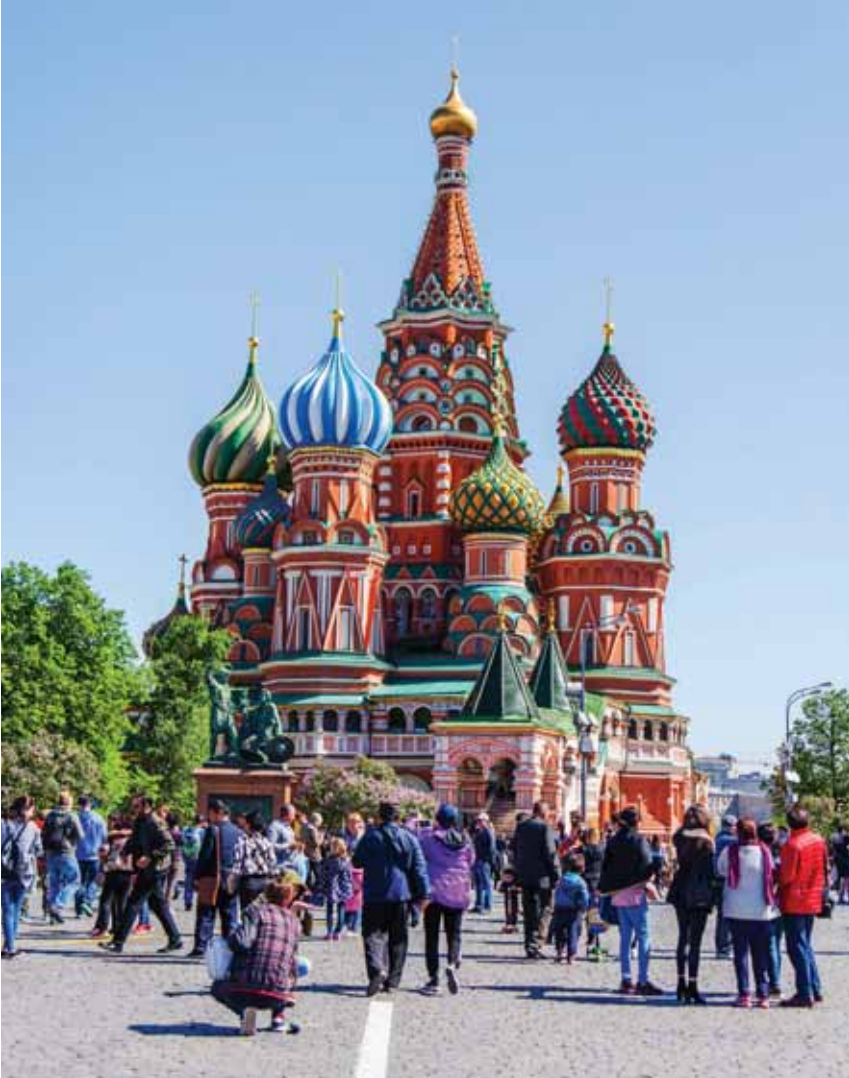
To better serve Middle Eastern visitors, Moscow has launched several initiatives – including five tourist centres offering Arabic support, a Muslim-Friendly Guide introduced in 2024, and tailored services at restaurants and hotels. “We’re combining world-class attractions with warm hospitality and halal-friendly options,” Kozlov noted.

Digital platforms like the Discover Moscow portal and an English-language Snapchat page offer practical information and inspiration. A newly launched Welcome Pack includes exclusive offers across shopping, dining, and attractions to help tourists settle in smoothly.

The impact is clear: tourist arrivals from Qatar tripled in 2024 to 10,800 visitors, with 90% visiting for leisure. Overall, 337,400 visitors from the Middle East arrived in Moscow last year – a 40% increase from 2023.

Kozlov pointed to cultural programming as another major draw: “Events like the Moscow Estates Festival, Gardens and Flowers Festival, and the Theatre Boulevard series showcase the city’s vibrant spirit.”

Looking ahead, Moscow aims to build lasting partnerships with Qatar and the GCC through cultural exchange, strategic collaboration, and a shared vision for sustainable tourism growth. “The vision is clear: a thriving tourism network where Moscow becomes not just a destination, but a cultural bridge connecting East and West,” Kozlov concluded.





Iran says ‘no signs of contamination’ after US strikes

QNA
Tehran

Iran’s National Centre for the Nuclear Safety System affirmed that “no signs of contamination” were detected following the US attack on nuclear sites in Fordo, Natanz, and Isfahan early yesterday morning.

According to Iran’s Mehr News Agency, the centre said that based on the data re-

corded by radiation detection systems, no signs of contamination have been detected, and that residents living near these facilities are not at any risk.

The centre added that it immediately conducted the necessary investigations into the possible release of nuclear contamination around these sites.

This statement comes just hours after US President Donald Trump announced that US forces had carried out a “very successful attack” on three nuclear sites in

Iran, targeting the Fordo, Natanz, and Isfahan facilities.

GCC SECRETARIAT, KUWAIT REVEAL RADIATION STABLE

Meanwhile, the GCC General Secretariat announced that no abnormal radiation levels have been detected in any of the GCC member states so far, and that environmental and radiological indicators remain within safe and permissible limits, QNA reported from Riyadh.

In a statement issued yesterday, the

Secretariat affirmed that it is continuously monitoring the current regional situation and its developments through early warning and monitoring systems, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the member states. It also stated that reports will be published regularly as they are received. The Kuwait National Guard (KNG) announced that radiation levels in the air and water across the country remained stable, confirming that the situation was “normal.” In a statement, the

KNG Directorate of Moral Guidance said that the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Center for Chemical Defence and Radiation Monitoring continued to carry out accurate and continuous radiation level readings through its monitoring networks, which are set out across various regions of the country, according to Kuwait news agency (KUNA). Earlier, the US launched military strikes against nuclear facilities in Iran with President Donald Trump deeming the operation as “successful”.

Arab states urge end to Israel’s ‘aggression’ against Tehran

AFP
Istanbul

Foreign ministers from countries of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) yesterday urged Israel to end its “aggression” towards Iran, without mentioning the US strikes on the Islamic republic’s nuclear sites.

Israel and Iran have been at war since June 13 when Israel, claiming Tehran was on the verge of acquiring a nuclear bomb, launched a wave of devastating air strikes, killing top army commanders and scientists.

Iran immediately retaliated, and the two sides have been trading barrages since.

The ministers “condemn firmly the aggression of Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran, stress the urgent need to stop Israeli attacks and their great concern regarding this dangerous escalation”, said an OIC statement. It was published at the end of a OIC meeting in Istanbul this weekend.

It made no direct reference to the US bombardment of Iran’s key nuclear facilities early yesterday, after President Donald Trump



Iranians lift flags and placards during a rally protesting the US attack on Iran in Enghelab Square in Tehran, yesterday.

decided to join Israel’s strikes on Iran’s nuclear programme.

But the OIC did denounce the “destabilisation policies of Israel in the region and its recent attacks on Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, constituting flagrant (a) violation of sovereignty and security of these countries and international law”.

Attending the OIC meeting, Iran’s top diplomat Abbas Araghchi said yesterday morning that the US and Israel had “breached a

major red line”.

Trump would hit back at the American barrage “by all means necessary”, he added.

Founded in 1969, the 57-member OIC sees its role as protecting the interests of the Muslim world and increasing Muslim solidarity.

Arab countries yesterday strongly condemned the US air strikes on nuclear facilities in Iran, warning of serious repercussions and calling for a return to diplomacy. Saudi Arabia expressed



People attend a protest against the US attack on nuclear sites, amid the Iran-Israel conflict, in Tehran, yesterday.

“great concern” over the attacks, AFP reported from Dubai.

Gulf countries have been engaged in intense diplomatic efforts since Israel launched its air campaign on their neighbour Iran on June 13.

Many of the countries host major US assets and bases, and fear that a spillover from the war could threaten their security and economies.

Qatar said it feared “catastrophic consequences” for the region and the entire world.

Yemen’s Houthi fighters repeated threats to target US vessels and warships in the Red Sea after the overnight strikes, which they described as a “war declaration” on the Iranian people.

On Saturday, the Iran-backed group had threatened to resume attacks on US vessels and warships in the Red Sea, despite a recent truce, should Washington strike Iran. US President Donald

Trump said the attacks destroyed Iran’s main nuclear sites, describing them as a “spectacular military success”. But his allies in the Gulf urged a return to negotiations.

Oman, which was mediating recent nuclear talks between Washington and Tehran, strongly condemned the US strikes, labelling them illegal and calling for de-escalation.

The United Arab Emirates also expressed concern, calling for “an immediate end to the escalation”.

Bahrain told most of its government employees to work from home until further notice, while its foreign ministry also urged a return to talks.

The US Navy’s Fifth Fleet, which covers the region, is based in Bahrain.

Meanwhile, Kuwait activated an emergency plan that includes readying shelters. The Tehran-backed Palestinian Hamas group condemned what it called “blatant

US aggression” against Iran.

Iraq, another country that hosts US bases, expressed “deep concern and strong condemnation”, government spokesperson Basim Alawadi said, calling the attacks “a grave threat to peace and security in the Middle East”.

Fears are growing in Iraq over a possible intervention by foreign-backed armed factions, who have threatened Washington’s interests in the region if it joins Israel in attacking Iran.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, largely seen as close to the US, urged both sides to resume talks to restore stability.

Lebanon has been reeling from a destructive conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah group that ended with a fragile truce last November. Egypt also condemned the escalation, warning of “dangerous repercussions”, while Jordan’s foreign ministry voiced “deep concern”.

At least 20 killed in suicide attack on Damascus church

AFP
Damascus

At least 20 people were killed yesterday in a suicide attack on a church in Damascus, authorities said, with Syria’s interior ministry blaming a member of the Islamic State group.

The United Nations condemned the attack, the first of its kind in the Syrian capital since rebel forces toppled longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December, and the first on a church since the country’s civil war erupted in 2011.

Security remains one of the greatest challenges for Syria’s new authorities, whom the international community has repeatedly urged to protect minorities.

The interior ministry said in a statement that “a suicide attacker

affiliated with the Daesh (IS) terrorist group entered the Saint Elias church in the Dwelaa area of the capital Damascus where he opened fire then blew himself up with an explosive belt”.

AFP correspondents saw first responders transporting people from the site, which was strewn with shattered wood from fittings and pews, with fallen icons and pools of blood seen on the floor. Security forces cordoned off the area. A health ministry statement carried by state news agency SANA said 20 people were killed and 52 wounded, raising an earlier civil defence toll.

United Nations special envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen expressed “outrage at this heinous crime”, calling in a statement for “a full investigation and action by the authorities”.

Trump has started new war on Iran that will strengthen Khamenei: Russian official

Reuters
Moscow

A senior Russian official said yesterday that US President Donald Trump had started a new war by attacking Iran that would only strengthen Tehran’s leaders by consolidating society around Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

The Kremlin, which has a strategic partnership with Iran and also maintains close links to Israel, had repeatedly cautioned Washington that US strikes on Iran would plunge the entire region into the “abyss”.

“Trump, who came in as a peacemaker president, has started a new war for the US”, said Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy chairman of Russia’s Security Council, adding that “with this kind of success, Trump won’t win the Nobel Peace Prize”.

“Iran’s political regime has been preserved, and it is highly



This picture shows a destroyed house at the site of an Iranian strike that hit a residential neighbourhood in the Ramat Aviv area in Tel Aviv, Israel, yesterday.

likely that it has become stronger”, Medvedev said. “The people are consolidating around the spiritual leadership, even those who did not sympathise with it”.

Medvedev also said that Iran’s nuclear infrastructure did not appear to be affected by the US strikes, and that the US was in dan-

ger of being drawn into a ground operation. President Vladimir Putin had repeatedly offered to mediate between the United States and Iran, though the Kremlin chief last week refused to discuss the possibility that Israel and the United States would kill Khamenei.

Putin said that Israel had given

Moscow assurances that Russian specialists helping to build two more reactors at the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran would not be hurt in air strikes. Russia’s foreign ministry strongly condemned the US attacks which it said had undermined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The United Nations Security Council must respond, Moscow said. “It is already obvious that a dangerous escalation has begun, fraught with further undermining of regional and global security”, it said. “The risk of the conflict spreading in the Middle East, which is already gripped by multiple crises, has increased significantly”.

While Moscow has bought weapons from Iran for its war in Ukraine and signed a 20-year strategic partnership deal with Tehran earlier this year, their relationship since the 16th century, when Muscovy officially established relations with the Persian Empire, has at times been troubled.

18 killed in Chad violence

AFP
NDjamena

A new bout of intercommunal violence has left 18 people dead, including women and children, in a southwestern region of Chad, according to a new government toll.

“A deadly clash occurred on June 19, 2025 in the village of Oregomel, Mayo-Kebbi Ouest

province, resulting in 18 deaths including women and children, and 17 injured,” the communications minister and government spokesperson, Gassim Cherif Mahamat, said late Saturday.

On Friday, the general delegate of the provincial government, Abdelmanane Katab, had announced 17 deaths to AFP, including eleven children and six women, in what he attributed to a “vendetta” led by “armed herders with machetes”.

Toll in lynching of Nigeria wedding guests rises to 12

The number of people killed after a mob stormed a bus carrying wedding guests in central Nigeria’s volatile Plateau state has risen to 12, according to the Nigerian presidency, AFP reported from Jos, Nigeria. The dead include the groom’s father and brother, it said.

President Bola Tinubu has condemned the killings, the latest attack to hit the region where tensions are high after a series of bloody attacks in recent days, with ethnic Fulani nomadic herders suspected of killing dozens of people in Plateau’s Mangu local government area. Police, survivors and local organisations said around 30 people on a bus to a wedding lost their way, stopped to ask for directions, and were accosted by an irate mob.

AFP
Abidjan

President Alassane Ouattara said yesterday he would announce in the coming days whether he will run for a fourth term in Ivory Coast’s October election, as tensions rise over the exclusion of opposition candidates.

His response was eagerly awaited yesterday by tens of thousands of supporters during a major rally in the west African country’s largest city Abidjan, a day after his party nominated him as its presidential candidate.

“I will make a decision in the coming days, after careful consideration in my soul and conscience” Ouattara said inside the Ebimpe stadium that bears his name, cheered by supporters who filled all 60,000 seats

and the pitch. “I feel the strength and sincerity of your call, I cannot ignore these appeals, I have heard them well, and I say with emotion, yes I have heard you,” he added.

Ouattara, 83, who has led Ivory Coast since 2011, was officially nominated on Saturday by the ruling Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), but he has yet to confirm whether he will seek a fourth term. His nomination comes after weeks of rising political tensions triggered by the courts’ barring of several opposition politicians from the October 25 election. Critics of Ouattara accuse him of tightening his grip on power and strongly oppose the prospect of him running again.

The opposition has accused the authorities of choosing their opponents by legal means, but the government insists the judiciary acts independently.



Ivory Coast President Alassane Ouattara gestures as he arrives to attend the congress of the ruling party RHDP, ahead of the October presidential election at Alassane Ouattara Olympic Stadium of Ebimpe, in Anyama, yesterday.

On Thursday the country’s two main opposition parties launched a joint campaign to de-

mand the reinstatement of their barred leaders ahead of the October presidential election.

Global trading giants step up India presence, fuelling talent rush

Reuters
Mumbai

Half a dozen global trading giants, from Citadel Securities and IMC Trading to Millennium and Optiver, are ratcheting up their presence in India's booming derivatives markets, fuelling a hiring spree and pushing exchanges to improve technology.

The firms' hiring plans, being reported for the first time, come amid expectations that large domestic consumer and investor bases will help shield India from global turmoil sparked by the trade policies of US President Donald Trump.

The country made up nearly 60% of global equity derivative trading volumes of 7.3bn in April, the Futures Industry Association says, while its regulators say notional turnover of the contracts has grown 48 times since March 2018.

For Western firms, the gold rush is too big to ignore, particularly after US trading firm Jane Street earned \$2.34bn from its India trading strategy last year, some of the firms' executives said.

"We have seen competition increasing both on the trading front, where you see more players going for the same opportunities, and on the job market as well," said Jocelyn Dentand of global high-speed trader IMC Trading. The firm plans to grow its team by more than 50% by the end of 2026 to stand at more than 150, added Dentand, the managing director of its India unit.

Foreign investors turned buyers of Indian stocks in April and May, purchasing a net \$2.8bn, as they abandoned their previous selling stance from October 2024 to March 2025, prompted by high valuations and slower growth in earnings.

Citadel Securities, a market-making firm founded by well-known investor Kenneth Griffin, runs a leaner team of around 10, including a recently hired chief operating officer for India as well as a country head of trading, said a source familiar with the firm's plans, adding that it continued to seek talent. Hedge fund Millennium is expanding its India desk via Dubai and Singapore, said a source with direct knowledge of the matter, who

also sought anonymity on the same grounds.

Netherlands-based Optiver, which launched India operations in 2024, plans to grow its team to 100 by the end of 2025, a spokesperson said, up from 70 now.

"Optiver is investing ambitiously in India, with a view to expanding to 100 FTEs by year-end and scaling further in the years ahead," the spokesperson added.

Amsterdam-based trading firm Da Vinci and London-based Qube Research and Technologies are also recruiting for quantitative trading roles in India, public postings for jobs show.

Global trading firms are also looking to expand in India by recruiting aggressively from top domestic universities and poaching from home-grown competitors.

They have hired about 300 people in India in the last two years across the trading, technology, compliance, risk, and legal functions, Hong Kong-based recruiter Aquis Search estimates.

"We foresee a good run for the next few years," said Annpurna Bist, its head of quant and tech.

Intensifying competition has driven up salaries, with even junior traders paid more than double the figure of three years ago, said Bhautik Ambani, head of AlphaGrep Investment Management, one of India's leading quant trading firms.

India's top engineering schools have become the favoured hunting grounds for talent.

"We almost solely hire our traders and software engineers from Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)," said IMC's Dentand, referring to the country's chain of prestigious engineering schools.

But hiring efforts are now being widened to the universities beyond the IITs, Dentand said.

The influx of global trading firms has opened up opportunities for India's two main exchanges, which are both upgrading their tech infrastructure.

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) plans to add 2,000 co-location racks over the next two years while older stalwart the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) aims to scale up to 500 by the end of fiscal 2026, from none in March 2024.

India arrests two for harbouring Kashmir attackers

AFP
Srinagar, India

New Delhi's counter-terrorism agency yesterday said it has arrested two men in Kashmir for allegedly harbouring gunmen behind a deadly attack on civilians.

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) said the two suspects were from the Pahalgam

area, where gunmen killed 26 people two months ago.

"The two men had provided food, shelter and logistical support to the terrorists."

The agency identified the two men as Parvaiz Ahmad Jothar and Bashir Ahmad Jothar, claiming the duo "have disclosed the identities of the three armed terrorists involved in the attack", and have confirmed they were Pakistani nationals affiliated to the Lashkar-

e-Taiba (LeT) group. New Delhi has accused Pakistan of backing the attack without making public any evidence, and Islamabad has denied the charge.

The April 22 killings triggered a series of tit-for-tat diplomatic measures by the nuclear-armed countries and led to intense exchanges of missile, drone and artillery fire.

The four-day conflict left more than 70 people dead on both sides.

Anti-US protest in India



Social Unity Center of India (SUCI) activists carry placards to condemn US strikes on Iran, during a protest in Kolkata, India. The US struck three nuclear sites in Iran on June 22, joining Israel's bombing campaign after days of speculation over US involvement in the Iran-Israel conflict.

Thai premier claims coalition support after resignation calls

Reuters
Bangkok

Thailand's prime minister, seeking to fend off calls for her resignation, yesterday said all coalition partners have pledged support for her government, which she said would seek to maintain political stability to address threats to national security.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra has faced criticism for her perceived mishandling of a border row with Cambodia, including over a phone call with the country's former leader, Hun Sen, the audio of which was leaked on Wednesday.

After the initial leak, Hun Sen released the full audio, in which Paetongtarn appeared to kowtow before the veteran Cambodian politician and to denigrate a senior Thai military commander – crossing red lines for her critics and some former allies.

A major coalition partner, the Bhumjaithai Party, quit the ruling alliance soon after the leak, overshadowing Paetongtarn's premiership and a parliamentary majority cobbled together by her Pheu Thai party.

"The country must move forward. Thailand must unite and push policies to solve problems for the people," Paetongtarn, the daughter of influential former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, posted on X after a meeting with

coalition partners, including the United Thai Nation party.

Prior to the post, the UTN had looked set to demand her resignation in return for backing the ruling coalition.

The government and the country's influential military share a common position, to back democratic principles and follow the provisions of the constitution, said the 38-year-old leader, a political neophyte who was appointed prime minister last year.

Activists, among them groups with a history of influential rallies against the Shinawatra administration, have scheduled a protest in Bangkok starting on June 28 to demand Paetongtarn's resignation.

Dassault, Reliance Infrastructure to make business jets in India

Reliance Infrastructure has partnered with France's Dassault Aviation to make Falcon 2000 jets in India, the companies said, as New Delhi aims to increase sourcing of locally-made defence equipment.

Dassault said it aims to deliver the first made-in-India jets by 2028 for corporate and military use, and will cater to rising demand in both Indian and international markets.

India, the world's biggest arms importer, has been looking to step up domestic production, with global firms pushed to produce in India – either on their own or in collaboration with domestic partners.

New Delhi also aims to boost defence exports, which jumped 12% in the fiscal year to end-March, to \$2.76bn.

Dassault will make Falcon 2000 jets outside France for the first time, the statement said, as it partners with tycoon Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Aerostructure to set up the final assembly line in the western Indian city of Nagpur.

Teacher candidates seek results' review



Bangladesh's police personnel use a water cannon to disperse demonstrators in Dhaka yesterday, during a protest by candidates of the 18th Non-Government Teachers' Registration Examination demanding a review of their viva results.

Bangladesh party files case on alleged election rigging

AFP
Dhaka

Bangladesh's leading political party yesterday filed against former election commissioners it accuses of rigging past polls to keep now-outcast autocrat Sheikh Hasina in power.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said it had lodged a complaint against 19 people including Hasina, who fled in August following weeks of protest against her rule.

"We have brought allegations of violating the constitution, breaching the electoral code of conduct, assisting a political party to win despite holding government positions, unleashing a reign of terror, and falsely declaring candidates as winners despite their failure to secure enough votes," Salauddin Khan, a senior

BNP leader, told reporters.

The BNP claimed Hasina's election wins in 2014, 2018 and 2024 were achieved through repressive actions against opposition parties. Among those named in its case lodged at a Dhaka police station are three former top election commissioners – Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, KM Nurul Huda, and Kazi Habibul Awal.

Other officials accused by the BNP include more election commissioners, commission secretaries, senior police and intelligence officials, and Hasina's interior minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. All are no longer in office.

The party alleged that despite repeated requests to the election commission, no steps were taken over the years to ensure a level playing field.

Instead, some opposition candidates were killed, subjected to enforced disappearances, or faced various forms of persecution.

Japan's high-tech sunscreens tap into skincare craze

AFP
Tokyo

When YouTuber Hannah Price set out to compare Japanese and Australian sunscreen, she wasn't expecting her deep dive into the subject to rack up over 2mn views.

The huge number of people poring over Price's video shows the growing interest in skincare products from Japan, much like the K-beauty phenomenon from South Korea.

It includes sun protection, increasingly recognised as a daily essential by influencers who want to

shield their skin from ageing and enthuse about the lightweight texture of Japanese brands.

Companies that have perfected their secret formulas want to capitalise on booming demand, including by building factories overseas and selling to Japan's record influx of foreign tourists.

Price, 32, fell into a "year-long rabbit hole" while making her video, learning about everything from SPF science to cultural attitudes to sun exposure.

"I always loved Japanese sunscreen, since I first moved to Japan in 2012," she said at her studio in Tokyo.

"I remember trying it for the first

time and thinking, 'this is so much better than anything I tried in Australia,' her home country where sun cream felt "thick, sticky, greasy".

"I thought that the video would be popular... but I wasn't expecting it to reach as far" as it did, Price said.

The habit of regular sunscreen use is spreading, especially among younger generations, said Takuya Wada, who works in marketing for Japanese chemical and cosmetics firm Kao. "There are no borders when it comes to obtaining information on social media, especially Instagram and TikTok," he said, adding that influencer posts have a "very large" impact on global sunscreen sales. The global skincare

market was worth more than \$115bn in 2024 and is expected to grow to \$194bn by 2032, according to Fortune Business Insights.

A boom in celebrity skincare brands has contributed to the industry's growth – with A-listers like Kylie Jenner using social media to share their beauty routines, including sun protection, with hundreds of millions of followers.

When it comes to sunscreen, country-specific regulations mean no single company dominates the field, as the entry barriers to new markets are higher.

Kao's main sunscreen brand Biore UV is ranked 10th worldwide for sales, and second in Asia – com-

peting with the likes of L'Oreal and Beiersdorf, and Japanese rivals such as Shiseido.

The company wants sales from sun protection to reach 35bn yen (\$240mn) in 2027, up 1.6 times from 2023. It plans to boost overseas production by opening three new sunscreen factories, in Indonesia, Brazil and Germany.

It is technically difficult to develop formulas that block the rays effectively with a smooth texture, as demanded by Japanese consumers, said Takashi Fukui, research and development director for Kao skincare products. But using scientific know-how to strike this tricky balance is what makes Kao "different from

other European or American makers". In Japan, a cultural obsession with light skin dates back to the sixth century and using white powder imported from China later became a status symbol among nobility.

Fair skin indicated a life away from outdoor labour and sun exposure, and an old Japanese proverb says "white skin covers the seven flaws".

In the 1990s, people began using sunscreen or other cosmetics to avoid tanning – a trend dubbed "bihaku", or beautifully white.

These days, Japanese women use sunscreen as everyday protection against sunspots and ageing, caused when UV rays penetrate into the skin, said Fukui.

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TIMES

Swiss alps permafrost hits record warmth, triggers hazards

The alarming rate at which planet earth is warming is playing havoc with the once pristine natural environments such as the Swiss Alps where permafrost is the warmest since records began, as announced by the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) last Tuesday. Permafrost is sub-surface soil that remains at freezing temperature or below for two years or more. When it thaws – something now happening at an increased rate as the planet warms – it can cause rockfalls or landslides. Experts believe this likely played a role in the destruction of Blatten village last month, with rockfalls on top of Switzerland’s Birch glacier increasing the weight load and causing it to collapse down the Lotschental valley.

According to a new study by SCNAT, the permafrost in the Swiss Alps has never been as warm as it was in the hydrological year 2024, which began on October 1, 2023 and ran until September 30. “Over the past 10 years (2014-2025), permafrost temperatures have generally increased at the 23 study sites, with changes exceeding more than 0.8 degrees Celsius at a depth of 10m, leading to new temperature records in 2024,” SCNAT said. The increase in permafrost temperatures was reinforced in 2024 by early snowfall at high altitudes in autumn 2023, with the early snow cover trapping heat in the ground.

In Switzerland, permafrost is found under about 5% of the total surface area, generally in scree and rock above 2,500m. The hydrological years 2022, 2023, and 2024 are among the five warmest years recorded in Switzerland since measurements began in 1864, with air temperatures 1.4C to 1.9C higher than the 1991-2020 average. Switzerland is particularly affected by global warming. The current average near-ground air temperature is already about 2.9C higher than the 1871-1900 pre-industrial average – compared to a global average of 1.3C, according to MeteoSwiss, the Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology.

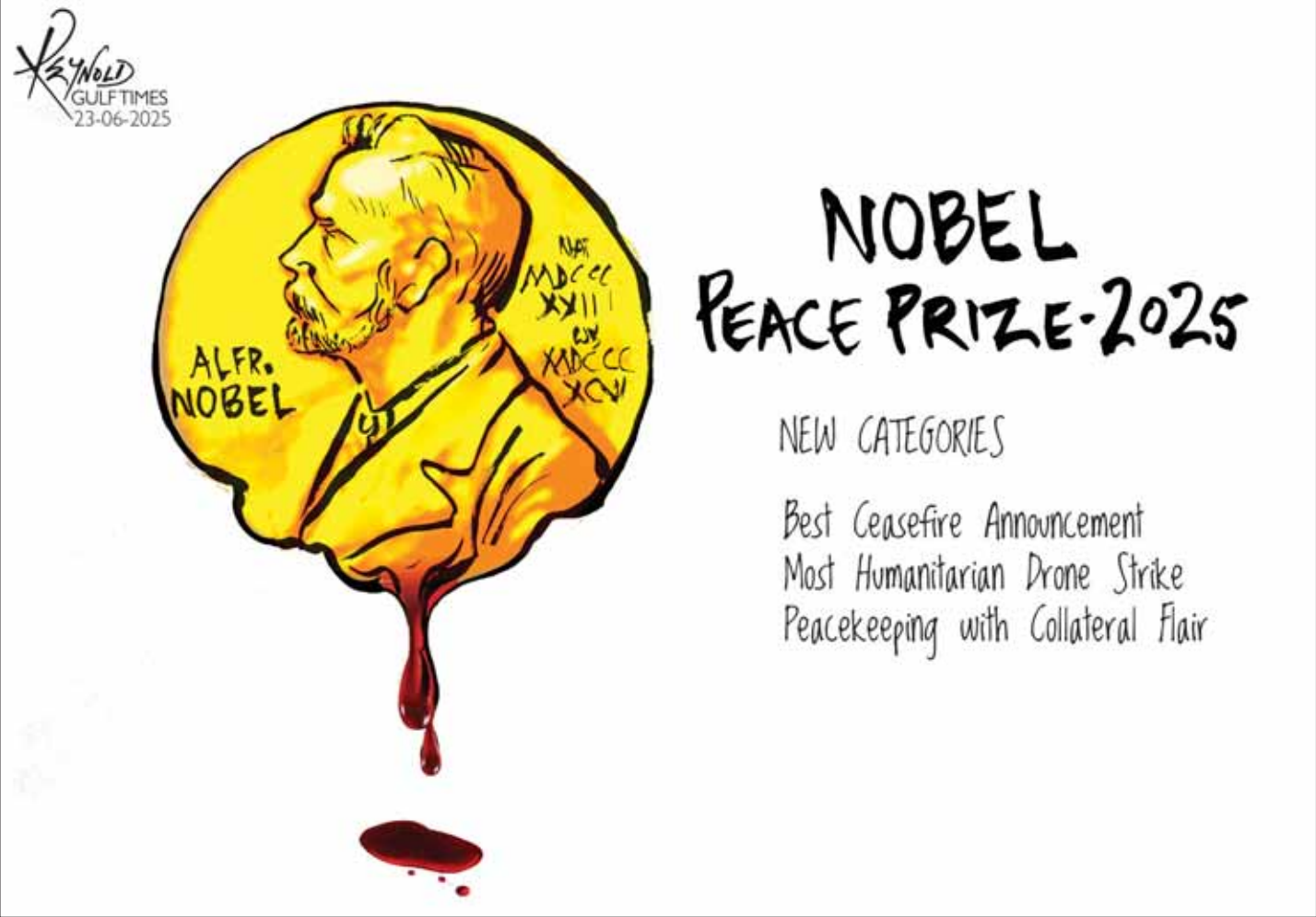
The results from 25 years of co-ordinated monitoring in the Swiss Alps show that permafrost has warmed significantly, while ground ice content has decreased

while ground ice content has decreased. “These changes will continue in the coming years and decades. The warming of permafrost observed in the top 10m will penetrate further to greater depths,” said SCNAT.

At all observed sites, the depth of the active layer – the surface layer of soil that thaws in summer and refreezes in winter – has increased by up to several metres over the past two decades, reaching unprecedented levels in 2024. The most significant changes were observed at Schilthorn in the Bernese Alps, where the active layer increased from less than 5m in 2000 to more than 13m in 2023 – and ultimately failed to refreeze during the winter of 2024. Permafrost warming is hugely important for planning mountain infrastructure and villages, and for monitoring natural hazards. More than a third of the Swiss Alpine Club’s mountain huts could be unstable in the future due to thawing permafrost, according to a study published last year.

The extent of permafrost can vary as the climate changes. Today, a considerable area of the Arctic is covered by permafrost (including discontinuous permafrost). Overlying permafrost is a thin active layer that seasonally thaws during the summer. Plant life can be supported only within the active layer since growth can occur only in soil that is fully thawed for some part of the year. Permafrost can also store carbon, both as peat and as methane. The most recent work investigating the permafrost carbon pool size estimates that 1400-1700Gt of carbon is stored in permafrost soils worldwide. This large carbon pool represents more carbon than currently exists in all living things and twice as much carbon as exists in the atmosphere.

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Beijing's magnet grip: bureacracy and power in rare earth showdown

By Laurie Chen and Lewis Jackson
Beijing

In a hulking grey building just east of Tiananmen square in Beijing, a small team in China’s Ministry of Commerce is deciding the fate of the global auto industry, one rare earth magnet export permit at a time.

China holds a near-monopoly on rare earth magnets – a crucial component in electric vehicle motors – and it added them to an export control list in April as part of its trade war with the United States, forcing all exporters to apply to Beijing for licenses.

It falls to the Bureau of Industrial Security and Import and Export Control – which is part of China’s Ministry of Commerce – to review export permits for the rare earth magnets, which are vital for car motors, wind turbines and even US F-35 fighter jets.

While dozens of licences have been issued since late April, executives, lobbyists and diplomats say they are only a small fraction of the applications that have flooded in from automakers, semiconductor companies and aerospace firms around the world since the tougher export controls were introduced.

Washington says delays in issuing export licences show China is renegeing on commitments made during trade talks in Geneva last month and it has retaliated with export curbs on plane engine parts and other equipment.

US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks by phone recently as the escalating dispute over China’s rare earth stranglehold

threatened to derail the fragile trade truce agreed between the two superpowers.

When the new rare earth magnet measures came in, the export control bureau had a total of just 30 staff, though this has since been doubled to around 60, according to two sources who were briefed on a meeting between the ministry and Chinese and European semiconductor firms last week.

“We appreciate that MOFCOM has increased its resources to address demand and they’re working hard and long hours on these issues,” said Adam Dunnett, Secretary-General of the European Chamber of Commerce in China, referring to the ministry.

“But the reality is this is having a huge impact on a wide variety of sectors. It’s something that could have been better planned and rolled out,” he said.

According to personnel records posted to the Ministry of Commerce’s website in June 2024, there are only three senior officials within the bureau who can approve the export permits. The ministry’s website lists the export licence bureau’s office hours as: Weekdays, 8:30-11:30am, 2-5pm.

Reuters was unable to determine current staffing levels or whether more officials are now able to approve applications.

The Ministry of Commerce did not respond to questions from Reuters on this subject.

The global alarm over shortages underscores the enormous leverage China has acquired through its near-monopoly on rare earth production. It also reveals a complex bureaucratic process that has gone from checkpoint to chokepoint.

“The process for our suppliers to apply for export licences for various rare earths ... since April,

is complex and time-consuming, partly due to the need to collect and provide a lot of information,” a spokesperson for Bosch, the German engineering and technology multinational, said last month.

A Chinese-language guide to the process published by the Ministry in late March runs to almost 14,000 Mandarin characters.

European auto suppliers alone have filed hundreds of requests since early April, with only about a quarter granted. These applications can range from dozens to hundreds of pages, according to sources who have either filed requests or been briefed about them.

Public Ministry of Commerce guidelines require information including technical product descriptions, signed contracts. Descriptions of production facilities and photos of products are also encouraged.

China’s stated aim is to ensure dual-use items don’t end up in military equipment, but officials are often overly cautious even though many applications clearly state commercial use, Dunnett said.

“Another concern we have heard from some companies is that they are being asked for sensitive and excessive information that is part of their intellectual property which has led to delays in their applications,” Dunnett added.

While applications are meant to be processed in 45 working days, the ministry says applications related to national security will take longer, without defining how long.

Cory Combs, head of critical mineral and supply chain research at Trivium China, a policy research group, said it was not clear whether the delays were

due to bureaucratic inertia or intentional weaponisation.

“We do expect these applications to US end-users to be reviewed on par with other countries and approved whenever they’re not for military use,” he said. “The issue here is that, is it quick enough for the Trump administration to believe that Beijing has not reneged on the Geneva agreement?”

Some US industry figures believe that the bureaucratic backlog is a “strategic excuse”. “China can staff up as fast as they want, if they wanted to,” said a source from the US rare earths industry who declined to be named for sensitivity reasons.

In public, Chinese officials have said the export controls apply to all countries, the implication being that they do not count as a US-specific countermeasure under the Geneva agreement.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on May 30 that the rare earth export controls are “non-discriminatory and not targeted at any specific country”.

During the Geneva talks, however, China privately admitted that the rare earth export controls qualified as non-tariff countermeasures, according to a source briefed on the talks.

Rare earths remain a core part of ongoing US-China discussions, the person said.

China’s foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for clarification.

Chinese scholars openly admit that the rare earth export controls are retaliation for US chip curbs.

“It’s a short-term form of leverage which doesn’t hurt China, as the rare earths in question have relatively low monetary value,” said Zhu Junwei, an international relations scholar at the Grandview Institution, a Chinese think-tank. — Reuters



Pakistan condemns US bombing of Iran

■ Islamabad, Beijing, Moscow in joint UNSC move for ceasefire resolution

Reuters
Islamabad,

Pakistan condemned yesterday the strikes ordered on its neighbour Iran by Donald Trump, a day after Islamabad had said it would nominate the US President for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Pakistan yesterday said Trump's decision to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities violated international law and that diplomacy was the only way to resolve the Iran crisis.

"The unprecedented escalation of tension and violence, owing to ongoing aggression against Iran is deeply disturbing. Any further escalation of tensions will have severely damaging implications for the region and beyond," Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Also yesterday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif telephoned Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and "conveyed Pakistan's condemnation of the US attacks," a statement from the Pakistani leader said.

Pakistan's information minister and the foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment on the apparent contradiction in the country's positions over the week-end. In Pakistan's biggest city, Karachi, thousands marched in protest against the US and Israeli strikes on Iran. A large American flag with a picture of Trump on it was placed



A screenshot of the official note.



Protesters holding portraits of Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to condemn US and Israel's attacks on Iran in Karachi yesterday. (AFP)

on the road for demonstrators to walk over.

The protesters shouted out chants against America, Israel and Pakistan's regional enemy India. Pakistan on Saturday said it was nominating Trump as "a genuine peacemaker" for his role in bringing a four-day conflict with India to an end last month. It said he had "demonstrated great strategic foresight and stellar statesmanship".

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council met yesterday to discuss US strikes on Iran's nuclear sites as Russia, China and Pakistan proposed the 15-member body adopt a resolution calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Middle East.

It was not immediately clear when it could be put to a vote. The three countries circulated the draft text, said diplomats, and asked

members to share their comments by today evening. A resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the United States, France, Britain, Russia or China to pass.

The US is likely to oppose the draft resolution, seen by Reuters, which also condemns attacks on Iran's nuclear sites and facilities. The text does not name the United States or Israel.

Ukraine army chief vows to expand strikes on Russia

AFP
Kyiv

Ukraine's top military commander vowed to increase the "scale and depth" of strikes on Russia in remarks made public yesterday, saying Kyiv would not sit idly by while Moscow prolonged its three-year invasion.

Diplomatic efforts to end the war have stalled in recent weeks.

The last direct meeting between the two sides was almost three weeks ago and no follow-up talks have been scheduled.

Russian attacks on Ukraine have killed dozens of people during the interim, including in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, according to officials.

"We will not just sit in defence. Because this brings nothing and eventually leads to the fact that we still retreat, lose people and territories," Ukrainian commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky told reporters including AFP.

Syrsky said Ukraine would continue its strikes on Russian military targets, which he said had proved "effective".

"Of course, we will continue. We will increase the scale and depth," he said. Ukraine has launched retaliatory strikes on Russia throughout the war, targeting energy and military infrastructure sometimes hundreds of kilometres from the front line.

Kyiv says the strikes are a fair response to deadly Russian attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and civilians.

At least four people were killed in an overnight Russian strike on an apartment building in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, while a strike on a Ukrainian army training ground later in the day killed three others, officials said. In wide-ranging remarks,

Syrsky conceded that Russia had some



Ukraine's top military commander Oleksandr Syrsky. (AFP)

advantages in drone warfare, particularly in making fibre-optic drones that are tethered and difficult to jam. "Here, unfortunately, they have an advantage in both the number and range of their use," he said. He also claimed that Ukraine still held 90sq km of territory in Russia's Kursk region, where Kyiv launched an audacious cross-border incursion last August.

"These are our pre-emptive actions in response to a possible enemy offensive," he said.

Russia said in April that it had gained full control of the Kursk region and denies that Kyiv has a presence there.

Moscow occupies around a fifth of Ukraine and claims to have annexed four Ukrainian regions as its own since launching its invasion in 2022 — in addition to Crimea, which it captured in 2014.

Kyiv has accused Moscow of deliberately sabotaging a peace deal to prolong its full-scale offensive on the country and to seize more territory.

The Russian army said yesterday that it had captured the village of Petrivske in Ukraine's northeast Kharkiv region.

Russian forces also fired at least 47 drones and three missiles at Ukraine between late Saturday and early yesterday, the Ukrainian air force said.

Freed Belarus dissident urges Trump to help free others

AFP
Vilnius

Belarus opposition figure Sergei Tikhanovsky, who was released following an appeal from the White House, said yesterday that US President Donald Trump could secure the freedom of all Belarusian political prisoners.

A tearful and emaciated Tikhanovsky spoke to reporters in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius a day after he was released from several years of prison with more than a dozen others.

"President Trump now has the power and opportunity to free all political prisoners in Belarus with a single word, and I ask him to do so, to say that word," Tikhanovsky said.

The eastern European country still holds more than 1,000 political prisoners in its jails, according to Belarusian human rights group Viasna.

Tikhanovsky said he hoped to return to Belarus "but when, I don't know yet".

"You have to understand, I spent more than five years alone in a solitary cell," he said. "I was completely isolated. I have very little information and now I need to find out a lot of things."

Tikhanovsky was joined at the news conference by his wife Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who took the mantle of the opposition movement after he was jailed. "The leader of the opposition is Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, my wife. And I am not going to challenge that," Tikhanovsky said.

The prisoner release on Saturday came just hours after US special envoy Keith Kellogg met Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk, the highest-profile US visit in years.

Tikhanovsky, 46, had been imprisoned for more than five years.

The popular YouTuber had planned to run against Lukashenko in the August 2020 presidential election, but was arrested and detained weeks before the vote. A charismatic activist, Tikhanovsky drew the ire of authorities for his campaign slogan, "Stop the cockroach", a reference to Lukashenko.



Teary eyed exiled Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya (right) and her husband Sergei Tikhanovsky, Belarusian opposition activist, released from a Belarusian prison, during a press conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, yesterday. (AFP)

He was sentenced in 2021 to 18 years in prison for "organising riots" and "inciting hatred", then to another 18 months for "insubordination".

Tikhanovskaya — a political novice at the time of her husband's arrest — ran against Lukashenko in his place but lost after what the opposition described as widespread falsification. She later fled Belarus. Lukashenko claimed a record seventh term in elections earlier this year that observers dismissed as a farce.

Tikhanovskaya, who has been living in exile in Lithuania, said yesterday "it was incredibly emotional for me to see finally my husband after long five years".

"He is alive and we together again and remain committed to our fight," she told reporters, before thanking Trump and his administration for their "tireless efforts".

Lithuania shelters tens of thousands of Belarusians, many of whom moved there as Minsk clamped down on dissent in the 2020 presidential vote's aftermath.

The Baltic state is also a hub for some Russian opposition figures, including Leonid Volkov, an ally of the late Alexei Navalny. Among the 13 others freed Saturday were

Radio Liberty journalist Igor Karnei, arrested in 2023 and jailed for participating in an "extremist" organisation.

Lithuania said the released prisoners were now receiving "proper care" in the Baltic state. Though none needed emergency medical assistance, "one of them needed emergency medical attention" as "they were imprisoned in difficult conditions", Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys said.

The Council of Europe rights watchdog called yesterday for the release of the remaining political prisoners, saying some have been "incommunicado for several years".

"They should all be released immediately and unconditionally. Their place was never in prison," said the statement by rapporteurs of the group's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE).

Belarus, ruled by Lukashenko since 1994, has outlawed all genuine opposition parties. It is the only European country to retain the death penalty as a punishment.

Lukashenko's spokeswoman said the Belarusian leader had ordered the release of the prisoners on Trump's "request", Russian state media reported.

Utopia and fragile democracy at Art Basel fair

This year's Art Basel, the world's top contemporary art fair, painted a portrait of a troubled planet, with works embodying the relentless pursuit of happiness and the fragility of democracies. The four-day event in the northern Swiss border city of Basel, which closed yesterday, featured more than 280 galleries presenting works by around 4,000 artists.

The monumental works section features an 85-metre-long installation entitled "The Voyage — A March To Utopia". Created by the studio of Dutch artist Joep van Lieshout, it featured 80 large sculptures forming a procession of absurd objects, where "everybody walks in the same direction... on their way to a happy place", the artist told AFP. The journey begins with a team of oxen, followed by all means of getting to that

better world, including a walking stick, a cart, a toilet on wheels, a wheelchair and a mobile surgical theatre for those struggling to keep up.

Next came objects representing everything the convoy carried, followed by sculptures of ghosts symbolising those who didn't make it to the end. It ended with machines set to destroy the road behind them, so that "there's no going back", the artist explained.

A stone's throw away, Spanish artist Jaume Plensa presented a work composed of 21 aluminium doors engraved with the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

Entitled "Forgotten Dreams", it invited viewers to contemplate collective aspirations and not forget the horrors of the past.

Vietnam-born Danish artist Danh Vo installed a huge US flag made from hundreds of logs and 13 steel stars, referencing the first version of the flag from 1777.

Reconstructed at Art Basel, "In God We Trust" was first created in 2020, during the presidential election campaign between Donald Trump and Joe Biden. The logs were removed one by one and burned in fireplaces, gradually causing the flag to disappear.

The work serves as an allegory of the fragility of US democracy. Art Basel is above all a commercial event, where artists and galleries come to meet wealthy collectors.

But the fair is also very popular with art lovers who come for the simple pleasure of browsing the works on show. Its "Unlimited" section brought together monumental pieces

intended for museums and major collections.

It included recent as well as older works, including a performance created in 1991 by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, a US artist from Cuba who died of AIDS in 1996.

Called "Untitled" (Go-Go Dancing Platform), it featured a man dressed in silver shorts dancing on a podium for a few minutes, twice a day.

"It was an interesting moment to revisit it," said the "Unlimited" section's curator, Giovanni Carminé, recalling that the artist created the performance shortly after the death of his friend from AIDS, "in a context that was also very reactionary".

Gonzalez-Torres responded with "a very political gesture" with a performance that is "a celebration of life". Japanese artist Izumi Kato brought a touch of poetry with his stone structures, painted



An Art Basel visitor has a close look at part of 'The Voyage — A March To Utopia', by Atelier Van Lieshout. (AFP)

with enigmatic faces, drawing on the Japanese tradition that each stone contains a spirit. US artist Arlene Shechet played on contrasts, with a heavy orange abstract sculpture designed to

give an impression of lightness despite its weight. "The current political situation is dark and so bringing light and colour and joy and spirit and art is very meaningful," she told AFP.



Minister lays foundation stone for Voltaire Library and Museum

HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, and HE the Chairman of the Board of the Qatari-French School Voltaire Dr Ali bin Fetais al-Marri, yesterday laid the foundation stone for the Voltaire Library and Museum in Doha.

The inauguration ceremony was held at the Voltaire School's Al Waab branch, in the presence of several cultural and diplomatic figures.

In a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi affirmed the ministry's commitment to educational diversity, noting the presence of several French and other international schools in the country.

He emphasised that the creation of the Voltaire Library and Museum will transform the site into a global hub for French culture in Qatar, benefiting students, researchers, and the broader public.

Dr al-Nuaimi added that this project represents a modern and innovative model that connects culture with education across all academic levels, contributing to the intellectual development of students and preparing them to be knowledgeable future citizens.

The official also noted the ministry's support for all schools in Qatar, including Voltaire School, and the State's broader interest in launching significant cultural initiatives like this one – expressing hope that similar projects

will be replicated in other schools.

Spanning an area of 8,000sq m within the school campus, the Voltaire Library and Museum is considered a pioneering cultural initiative aimed at preserving the legacy of the French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire and promoting intellectual dialogue and cross-cultural exchange.

The project will feature a specialised library, reading and research spaces, and a theatre equipped with state-of-the-art sound technology.

The museum will also house personal belongings and letters of Voltaire, offering visitors an opportunity to explore various facets of his life and intellectual contributions. – QNA



HMC's Tobacco Control Centre honoured by WHO

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has recognised Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC)'s Tobacco Control Centre with the 2025 World No Tobacco Day Award.

The award recognises the centre's significant efforts in reducing tobacco use and helping the public in Qatar and the Eastern Mediterranean region to quit all forms of tobacco use.

The Tobacco Control Centre, a WHO Collaborating Centre since 2017, was selected as one of the award recipients in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

This marks the second time the centre has received the award, having first been honoured in 2021.

The award was presented by Dr Rayana Bou Haka, the WHO representative in Qatar, in the presence of Dr Ahmed al-Mohammed, the HMC's deputy chief medical officer for Medical Services and chairman of the Department of Medicine.



Tobacco Control Centre director Dr Ahmad Mohamed al-Mulla expressed his pride in the centre receiving the award for the second time.

He praised the dedication of the cen-

tre's team and the achievements in tobacco control in Qatar and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

"The HMC's Tobacco Control Centre has played a pioneering role in helping

members of the public quit all forms of tobacco," Dr al-Mulla said. "This recognition by the WHO reflects the positive outcomes of the hard work carried out by the centre's team and its impact on many

tobacco users in our community."

Dr Haka commended the centre's local and regional activities and said that the award was well-deserved.

She thanked the centre's staff for their continued efforts in tobacco control in Qatar and the region and emphasised the importance of continued collaboration between the Centre and WHO, given the significant value of its tobacco control programmes.

The Tobacco Control Centre organises educational and awareness initiatives targeting school and university students, as well as employees in ministries and public institutions.

The Centre also delivers training programmes for healthcare professionals and community organisations in Qatar and across the Eastern Mediterranean.

In addition, it provides smoking cessation services and conducts research in the field of tobacco cessation.



Indian Mango Festival draws 114,400 visitors

WHILE reflecting success both in terms of public participation and commercial growth, the second edition of Indian Mango Festival (Al Hamba Exhibition) marked sales of more than 130,100kg.

The 10-day festival, according to a statement from the Private Engineering Office (PEO), received 114,400 visitors.

Held at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif, the event was organised in co-operation

with the Indian embassy.

"The event witnessed a large public turnout and a joyful festive atmosphere, with the participation of families, citizens, residents and visitors of various nationalities," it was explained.

All the mango varieties on display were imported specifically for the event via direct air freight from India on a daily basis, ensuring the availability of fresh fruit.

"This success is a major incentive to plan

for the third edition of the exhibition next year, promising the public an improved and distinguished edition that will build on the successes achieved in the previous two editions," said the event's general supervisor Khalid Saif al-Suwaidi.

The second edition witnessed a large turnout that exceeded expectations to surpass last year's figures, he noted, while lauding the excellent organising by the Souq Waqif management and the working team.

The festival featured 55 mango varieties along with cakes, sweets, ice creams and juices.

Most famous Indian mango varieties, including Rajapuri, Malgova, Neelam, Alphonso, Kesar, Badami, Mallika, Imam Pasand, Kalapadi, Totapuri, Chakkarakutti and Sindoor, were on sale in the expo that featured 38 Indian companies.

Al-Suwaidi recalled that one of the most notable features of the exhibition this year was the presence of a laboratory affiliated with the Ministry of Public Health.

The lab tested random samples of the mangoes on display daily to ensure their safety and quality embodying the organising committee's commitment to the health of visitors and the safety of products.

"The exhibition featured new items being displayed for the first time in the local market, in addition to a variety of mango-based food products, such as sweets, pickles, juices and side dishes," he added.

