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SPORT | Page 1

Wimbledon: Anisimova beats Sabalenka as Swiatek crushes Bencic





US sanctions on Albanese denounced



Human rights defenders rallied yesterday to support the top UN expert on Palestinian rights, after the United States imposed sanctions on her over what it said was unfair criticism of Israel. Italian lawyer **Francesca Albanese** serves as special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Wednesday Albanese would be added to the US sanctions list for work which had prompted what he described as illegitimate prosecutions of Israelis at the International Criminal Court.

Original Birkin bag sells for record $10mn



The original bag custom-made for actress Jane Birkin, which became one of the era-defining designs of the 20th century, was sold in Paris yesterday for a record 8.6mn euros ($10.04mn), auctioneer Sotheby's said.
The first Birkin bag was born when the Franco-British actress and singer sat next to Hermes executive Jean-Louis Dumas on a flight in 1984 and told him she needed a stylish yet functional bag as a young mother. Dumas immediately sketched out the rectangular handbag, with a dedicated space for baby bottles. The design became a hit and has helped fuel the growth of the fashion brand. Regular Birkin bags sell for more than $10,000. The first one was bought by a private Japanese buyer.

Thousands searching for Texas flood victims

Six days after flash floods swept through parts of Texas Hill Country and killed at least 120, authorities say there are still more than 160 people unaccounted for, as thousands of searchers combed through piles of mud-covered debris for survivors yesterday. But that figure may not reflect the true number of missing people, according to disaster response experts.

French teenage cyclist under arrest in Iran

Iran has detained Lennart Monterlos, a Franco-German teenager on a Europe-to-Asia cycle trip who disappeared in the country on June 16, Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said. He said Monterlos "has been arrested for committing an offence". The French foreign ministry said it was in contact with Iranian authorities about the case and was also speaking with the teenager's family.

Note to Readers

**We regret to inform you that the Carrefour advertisement published yesterday contained incorrect information.
The correct version of the advertisement is published in today's edition.
We apologize for any inconvenience caused.**

COMMUNITY
See Page: 6

Hamas opposes large Israeli army presence

● Israel says would negotiate permanent Gaza ceasefire during 60-day truce
● Both sides have been holding indirect talks in Qatar since Sunday

AFP
Jerusalem/Gaza

Palestinian resistance group Hamas yesterday said it opposes any ceasefire deal that includes a large Israeli military presence in Gaza.

The group said late Wednesday that it had agreed to release 10 Israeli captives.

Both sides have been holding indirect talks in Qatar since Sunday to agree a temporary truce and the United States says it is hopeful that a 60-day halt can be secured in the coming days.

But Hamas said disagreements over the free flow of aid into Gaza and Israel's military withdrawal were sticking points, as were its demands for "real guarantees" for a lasting peace.

Senior Hamas official Bassem Naim told AFP yesterday: "We cannot accept the perpetuation of the occupation of our land and the surrender of our people to isolated enclaves under the control of the occupation army (Israel).

Rubio hopeful of ceasefire

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he was "hopeful" about the prospect of a ceasefire in Gaza, telling reporters yesterday that negotiations were "closer" than they had been in some time. "We're hopeful... It appears that generally the terms have been agreed to, but obviously now you need to have talks about how you implement those terms," Rubio said on the sidelines of a meeting of Southeast Asian countries in Malaysia.

"This is what the negotiating delegation is presenting to the occupation so far in the current round of negotiations in Doha."

Hamas was particularly opposed to Israeli control over Rafah, on the border with Egypt, and the so-called Morag Corridor between the southern city and Khan Younis, he added.

Israel announced earlier this year that the army was seizing large areas in Gaza and incorporating them into buffer zones cleared of their inhabitants.

Naim also said the group wanted an end to the current delivery of aid by a US- and Israel-backed group, a system which has seen scores killed while seeking handouts.

Hamas said yesterday it also wants the free flow of aid into the territory to ease a humanitarian crisis, and "real guarantees" for a lasting peace.

Hamas has given no timeline for the release of hostages or indications about the return of the bodies of nine detainees that Israel says have died in captivity.

Its announcement came as Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrapped up a visit to Washington, which included a meeting between Israeli, US and Qatari representatives.

Qatar, with fellow mediators the United States and Egypt, has brokered back-and-forth talks for a truce since the earliest days of the war but indirect talks have failed to bring about a durable end to hostilities.

Netanyahu said yesterday that Israel was ready to negotiate a permanent ceasefire in Gaza during a 60-day truce but only if the Palestinian territory was demilitarised.

US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff has proposed a 60-day ceasefire in exchange for the release of half of the 20 living hostages still in Gaza, Netanyahu said on Wednesday.

"At the beginning of this ceasefire, we will enter negotiations for a permanent end to the war," he said in a video message from Washington yesterday.

He said Israel's "fundamental conditions" were that "Hamas lays down its weapons" and no longer has "governing or military capabilities".



Displaced Palestinians make their way towards Mawasi area as they flee amid an Israeli ground offensive in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Israeli air strike kills 10 children near Gaza clinic



Palestinian mother Samah al-Nouri, whose daughter Sama was killed in an Israeli strike yesterday near a medical centre in Deir Al-Balah, comforts her son, as casualties from the strike are brought into Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, yesterday.

An Israeli air strike hit Palestinians near a medical centre in Gaza yesterday, killing 10 children and six adults, local health authorities said.
Verified video footage from the strike in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip showed the bodies of women and children lying in pools of blood amid dust and screaming. One clip showed several motionless children lying on a donkey cart. Israel's military said it had struck a militant and that the incident was under review.
US-based Project HOPE said the strike had hit right outside its Altayara health clinic. "Horrified and heartbroken cannot properly communicate how we feel anymore," the aid group said in a statement.

'DRC-M23 talks headed in right direction in Doha'

AFP
Doha

Talks between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Rwandan-backed M23 group are "progressing in the right direction", a diplomat told AFP yesterday after their negotiators met in Qatar.

The M23 rebels had called last week for more talks to address problems left out of a peace agreement between Kigali and Kinshasa inked in Washington in June to end fighting that has killed thousands of people in eastern Congo.

Negotiators from the DR Congo government and the M23 were working with Qatari mediators to "resolve the remaining issues", the diplomat said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks.

Mediators were seeking to "alleviate the suffering of the local population, reinforce the ceasefire, and encourage further steps towards reconciliation", the diplomat added.

But the M23, the main armed group fighting Congolese forces, was not present at the Washington talks and called for a separate ceasefire deal with the DRC government.

Preparations to host MWC25 Doha gather pace

QNA
Doha

Under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), continues its preparations to host the inaugural edition of MWC Doha from Nov 25-26, 2025, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC).

The event is organised by the GSMA, the global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem, in partnership with MCIT.

This marks the first time the globally renowned MWC series will be held in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region, positioning Doha as a strategic hub for global dialogue on digital transformation.

MWC25 Doha is expected to attract international participants from around 60 countries, including 40% director level as well as senior executives, technology leaders, investors, policymakers, and innovators. The event will feature cutting-edge exhibitions, dynamic networking spaces, and high-level panels led by hundreds of global speakers.

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai said: "Hosting MWC25 Doha under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs reflects the national leadership's strategic vision to position Qatar at the forefront of global digital innovation. The event aligns with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to build a sustainable, knowledge-based economy driven by innovation and future technologies. MWC25 Doha represents a key opportunity to engage with the world's top innovators, and create meaningful partnerships that drive impact both regionally and globally."



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani

For his part, Director General of GSMA Vivek Badrinath said: "We are excited to bring MWC to Qatar for the first time, as the region strives to advance the next generation of digital societies. MWC25 Doha provides a powerful platform for exhibitions, thought leadership, startups and policymakers to collaborate and drive progress. We look forward to supporting the region's growing role in global tech innovation and investment."

MWC25 Doha brings together innovators, policymakers and business leaders from around the world. Flagship features brought to Doha from Barcelona include 4YFN and the GSMA Ministerial Programme. The 4YFN zone is a key platform for the startup ecosystem, connecting global investors with founders to shape the future of technology innovation.

The dedicated GSMA Ministerial Programme brings together regional and international policymakers to shape the future of the digital ecosystem in the Mena region. The programme will feature policy-focused sessions, closed-door meetings, and curated networking opportunities, fostering dialogue and strategic alignment between governments, industry leaders, and the global development community. It will also serve as a regional platform for continued collaboration on policies that accelerate innovation, investment, and inclusive digital growth.

MWC25 Doha is set to deliver an unmissable experience in the region. Confirmed exhibitors so far include Cisco and Nokia with plenty more to come. In addition, the event has so far confirmed two country pavilions featuring South Korean and Turkish companies. It has also confirmed Ooredoo as a Strategic Partner and Qatar University as the Educational Partner, a first for an MWC event.

To Page 2

QATAR

Five new attorneys take legal oath

The Attorney Admission Committee held a meeting yesterday under the chairmanship of HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi, at its permanent headquarters in the Ministry of Justice building.

During the meeting, the committee discussed the items on its agenda, including the swearing-in of five new attorneys before the committee.

The committee also discussed applications for registration from individuals in equivalent professions seeking to be listed among practicing lawyers.

It approved the applications of three attorneys who completed their training period and agreed to transfer the registration of one lawyer to the list of practicing attorneys before the Court of Appeal.



Additionally, the committee examined several regulatory matters related to the legal profession, including reports from subcommittees, and made appropriate decisions aimed at strengthening the regulatory framework for legal practice.

HE al-Mohannadi, in his capacity as chairman of the Attorney Admission Committee, congratulated the newly admitted attorneys and affirmed the committee's commitment to providing a supportive legal environment that enables them to fulfil their noble duties in serving society, enhancing Qatar's justice system, and upholding the rule of law.

He also welcomed the addition of a new group of national talents to the legal profession and highlighted the advanced training programmes developed by the Legal and Judicial Studies Centre at the Ministry of Justice to enhance their legal skills and prepare them to practice law with competence and quality, in line with the latest standards in the legal sector. – ***QNA***

Amir congratulates governor-general of Bahamas

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Bahamas Governor-General Cynthia Pratt on the occasion of her country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani similarly sent a cable of congratulations to Pratt.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani meanwhile sent a cable of congratulations to Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Edward Davis on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. – ***QNA***

Amir sends cable of condolences to Saudi king

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to his brother the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia, on the death of Princess Bazah bint Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of condolences to King Salman.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a cable of condolences to King Salman. – ***QNA***



Al-Misnad attends meeting with senior Italian official

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met the undersecretary of the Italian ministry of foreign affairs and international co-operation, Maria Tripodi, on the sidelines of the Ukraine Recovery 2025 Conference, currently underway in Rome.

Their meeting dealt with co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them.

The two sides also discussed Qatar's efforts to reunite Ukrainian children with their families, as part of its ongoing mediation aimed at reuniting families separated by the Russian-Ukrainian crisis.

A host of development matters of common interest were also discussed.

During the meeting, HE al-Misnad affirmed Qatar's full support for international efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the Russian-Ukrainian crisis through dialogue and diplomatic means. – ***QNA***



Minister joins reception hosted by Italian PM

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad attended a reception hosted yesterday by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni for heads of delegations participating in the Ukraine Recovery 2025 Conference, currently underway in Rome. – ***QNA***

Al-Muraikhi gets phone call from Nigerian minister

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received a telephone call yesterday from Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Maitama Tuggar. The call addressed the two countries' co-operation and relations, and means to bolster them, in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. – ***QNA***

Qatar Charity, IOFS in partnership agreement

Qatar Charity (QC) and the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), a specialised institution under the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at establishing a comprehensive framework for collaboration in key areas including food security, sustainable agriculture, and humanitarian initiatives across OIC member states.

The MoU was signed by QC global operations chief Nawaf Abdullah al-Hammadi and IOFS director-general Berik Aryn.

This agreement is designed to unify the efforts of both organisations in launching impactful development and humanitarian projects.

These include the establishment of food banks, reducing food loss and waste, supporting livestock development, and promoting the exchange of agricultural expertise and innovative technologies.

Special focus will be directed toward supporting the least developed countries within the OIC.

The MoU also outlines both parties' commitment to knowledge sharing, the development of measurable performance indicators, and the adherence to transparency and compliance with national and international regulations.

It allows for the creation of additional project specific implementation agreements and sets the stage for joint humanitarian and development efforts particularly under the IOFS's Food Security Programme in Afghanistan ensuring the design and execution of targeted solutions to critical food security challenges facing vulnerable communities in Afghanistan and other regions.

Speaking after the signing, al-Hammadi said: "We are proud to partner with the Islamic Organisation for Food Security in this important initiative."



"This agreement marks a significant milestone in our joint mission to fight hunger and promote sustainable agricultural development," he said. "It paves the way for impactful, high-quality projects that address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations."

"This agreement with Qatar Charity marks a significant step forward in advancing co-ordinated responses to the urgent food security challenges facing many OIC Member States," Aryn said. "Through this partnership, we aim to mobilise collective expertise and resources to deliver timely and effective assistance to vulnerable populations, while also contributing to the long-term strengthening of agricultural systems, institutional capacities, and regional resilience."

"The IOFS remains committed to facilitating structured co-operation, food security policy dialogue, and strategic engagement across the OIC region," he added. – ***QNA***

FUGRO

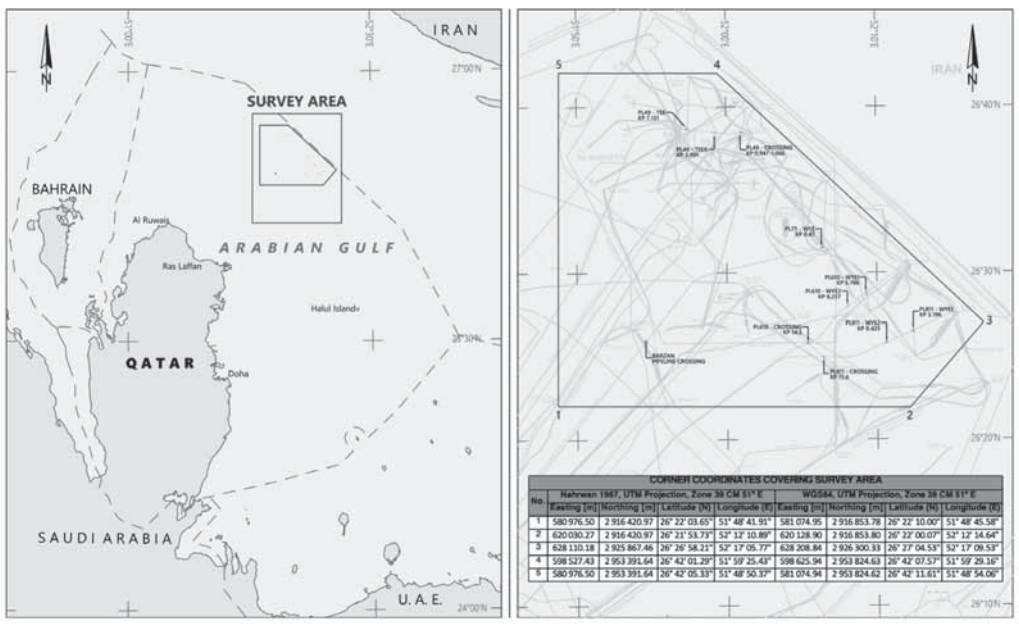
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Public Announcement

To all Ships, Fisherman and Mariners
Subsea Survey Works Offshore in North Field, Qatar
By the Vessel "EDT Kennedy"

Subsea Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 16/07/2025 to 31/08/2025

In pursuant and under directives from the Seafarers Affairs and Registration Department, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners and Fisherman that QatarEnergy LNG intends to undertake subsea survey works by the vessel "EDT Kennedy" in North Field, Qatar, bound by the coordinates and location map shown below.

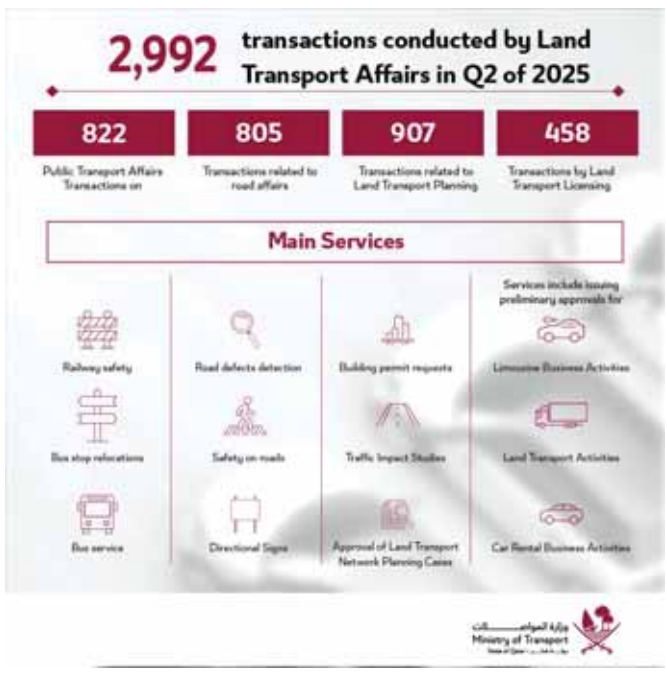


CORNER COORDINATES COVERING SURVEY AREA

No	Bahrean 1967, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				WGS84, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E			
	Easting [m]	Northing [m]	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)	Easting [m]	Northing [m]	Latitude (N)	Longitude (E)
1	580 976.50	2 916 420.97	26° 22' 03.65"	51° 48' 41.91"	581 074.95	2 916 853.78	26° 22' 10.00"	51° 48' 45.58"
2	620 030.27	2 916 420.97	26° 21' 53.73"	52° 12' 10.89"	620 128.90	2 916 853.80	26° 22' 00.07"	52° 12' 14.64"
3	628 110.18	2 925 867.46	26° 26' 58.21"	52° 17' 05.77"	628 208.84	2 926 300.33	26° 27' 04.53"	52° 17' 09.53"
4	598 527.43	2 953 391.64	26° 42' 01.29"	51° 59' 25.43"	598 625.94	2 953 824.63	26° 42' 07.57"	51° 59' 29.16"
5	580 976.50	2 953 391.64	26° 42' 05.33"	51° 48' 50.37"	581 074.94	2 953 824.62	26° 42' 11.61"	51° 48' 54.06"

All Vessels, Mariners and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations. QatarEnergy LNG takes no responsibilities for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operations following publication of this notice.

For more details contact 7048 9890



MoT's land transport sector sees 2,992 transactions in Q2

The Land Transport Sector of the Ministry of Transport (MoT) recorded 2,992 transactions during the second quarter of 2025.

According to figures released by the MoT on social media, a total of 458 were carried out for services related to Land Transport Licensing while 907 services related to Land Transport Planning were completed.

The sector also witnessed 805 transactions related to Road Affairs and 822 transactions related to Public Transport Affairs.

The main services included railway safety, road defects detection, building permit requests, bus stop relocations, bus service, safety on roads, directional signs, traffic impact studies and approval of land transport network planning cases.

Other services are issuing preliminary approvals for limousine business activities, land transport activities and car rental activities.

Preparations to host MWC25 gather pace

From Page 1

The event agenda will explore how emerging technologies are shaping the future of economies and societies worldwide.

Discussions will centre around three overarching themes: AI Nexus, which focuses on the transformative power of artificial intelligence across business, governance, and everyday life; Intelligent Economies, which highlights the evolution of digital infrastructure, data sovereignty, and smart network deployment; and Connected Industries, which examines the integration of frontier technologies across sectors such as mobility, finance, energy, and logistics.

MWC25 Doha will feature a dynamic lineup of thematic tracks (summits) tackling the most pressing themes in digital transformation, from the rise of agentic artificial intelligence (AI) and intelligent telecom networks to the future of fintech, smart mobility, data centres, 5G, IoT (Internet of Things), and satellite connectivity.

Each track will bring together global experts to explore cutting-edge innovations, real-world applications, and the policies shaping tomorrow's connected economy.

The event reflects Qatar's commitment to shaping a sustainable, innovation-driven digital economy in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

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QATAR

Awqaf honours award-winning departments

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Quality, Development, and Innovation, honoured the winning departments of the Institutional Incentive Awards for the first half of 2025, during a ceremony attended by HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem al-Ghanem along with a number of department directors and heads of sections.



The ceremony included the honouring of three winning departments including the Engineering Affairs Department, which received the Innovation Leadership Award; the Waqf Banks Department at the General Directorate of Awqaf, which received the Ehsan Award for Quality; and the Mosques Department, which received the Strategic Excellence Award.

This recognition comes in appreciation of the distinguished institutional efforts made by these departments across various fields, and in reinforcement of a performance culture based on innovation, quality, and strategic excellence.

Director of the Department of Quality, Development, and Innovation, Dr Mohammed Khalifa al-Kubaisi praised during the ceremony the great care and attention that HE the minister dedicates to the institutional development journey of the ministry, as well as his close monitoring of all efforts that enhance a smart and creative work environment, considering it a foundational pillar for achieving institutional leadership at national, regional, and international levels.

He pointed out that the ministry has set out a comprehensive roadmap for institutional excellence through a system of internal and external awards designed in a systematic and integrated manner, supporting one another within sequential cycles. This ensures continuous improvement and development of the ministry's performance and expands its participation in excellence forums locally and internationally, in service of glorifying the rituals of God and serving religion and the nation.

The internal Institutional Incentive Awards of the Ministry of Awqaf represent an advanced step toward consolidating a culture of excellence and development, and constitute an important driver for pushing the ministry to achieve its strategic goals and strengthen its position among leading government institutions. **(QNA)**

Qatar hosts over 80 major events a year: official

More than 80 major international events now take place in Qatar every year, across diplomacy, technology, sports, trade and culture.

This was disclosed by Executive Director to the Permanent Committee for Organising Conferences (PCOC) Mubarak Ajlan Mubarak al-Kuwari, who noted that many events are strategically co-ordinated by the PCOC, aligning global conversations with Qatar's National Vision.



Mubarak Ajlan Mubarak al-Kuwari

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), al-Kuwari said that these events have made Qatar a venue for dialogue and innovative solutions, adding that when people think of Qatar today, they no longer picture just a small desert nation in the Gulf, but see a connectivity hub that brings the world together and a trusted international partner.

He noted that the Doha Forum and Qatar Economic Forum brought together more than 8,500 people from over 160 countries. Almost half of them came from abroad to exchange ideas on everything from global development to humanitarian crises. He added that Web Summit Qatar 2025 saw more than 25,000 participants, 1,520 startups, and hundreds of investors and companies gathered in Doha, transforming the capital into a livewire of innovation and tech energy.

He highlighted Qatar's role as a trusted international partner. From high-level GCC summits to interfaith dialogues and ministerial meetings, Qatar continues to be the place where the region, and increasingly the world, comes to talk, listen, and collaborate.

"In less than a decade, Qatar has evolved into a thriving international hub, and at the heart of this transformation lies a powerful force: events. From cultural festivals to global summits, Qatar's deliberate investment in hosting meaningful, world-class gatherings is reshaping its place on the map, and in the minds of millions," al-Kuwari said.

He added that the past year alone saw over 5mn international visitors arrive in Qatar, marking a 25% jump from 2023. Nearly 10mn hotel room nights were sold, a record that speaks to the country's growing magnetism. And 2025 is already off to a strong start, with 1.5mn international visitors in just the first quarter, with average hotel occupancy hitting 71%. He noted that visitors were arriving from across the Gulf, Europe, Asia and beyond, drawn by the country's relentless rhythm of events.

He said that none of this would be possible without the deep foundation Qatar has built over the years. Starting with Hamad International Airport, repeatedly named one of the world's best, connects Doha to more than 170 cities. Inside the country, the sleek Doha Metro and network of highways make it easy for visitors to get where they need to go, whether it's a business summit at a state-of-the-art convention centre or a cultural gathering in Katara.

Al-Kuwari described all the factors feeding into Qatar's hosting of the events were a winning formula. He pointed to data from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 51% of international visitors in 2025 came by air, 34% by land, and 15% by sea, a testament to the country's multi-access strategy.

He noted that Qatar has built not just connections, but confidence: this year, Doha was ranked the second safest city in the world, giving both event organisers and tourists peace of mind.

He said that none of this momentum came out of nowhere, as Qatar proved its hosting credentials on the world's biggest stage during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, and that legacy continues to ripple outward. The numbers tell a compelling story: Qatar's events industry is expected to grow by over 11% annually, reaching nearly $4.65bn by 2032. The WTTC projects the sector will contribute QR124.2bn to the economy in 2025 alone, supporting 350,000 jobs, and nearly half a million by 2035. International visitor spending is expected to hit QR98.8bn this year, and QR144.7bn within a decade.

Looking ahead, al-Kuwari stressed that Qatar was doubling down. Later this year, it will co-host the Second World Summit for Social Development with the UN, an event that only comes once every 30 years. He said that such a milestone alone would be a defining moment for most countries. But for Qatar, it's part of a packed calendar that also includes the T100 Triathlon World Championship Final (through 2030), the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2025, and the high-energy return of the Visit Qatar E1 Grand Prix of Electric Boats.

"And alongside these headline events, there's a vibrant mix of festivals, exhibitions, and sports tournaments that reflect Qatar's growing identity as a place where cultures meet, and futures are shaped," he added before concluding by saying that in a world searching for authenticity, Qatar is showing what's possible when a country leads with "ambition, hospitality, and heart. The numbers prove it. The people feel it. And the world is watching." **(QNA)**



Qatari artists' performance attracts spectators at Expo 2025 Osaka.

Qatari folk arts event dazzles audiences at Expo 2025 Osaka

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Following the remarkable success of the Qatari Ardah dance event, part of the Ministry of Culture's participation in the Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka in Japan, the audience continued to receive positive feedback, given the diversity and beauty of the Qatari performances.

The "Folk Arts" event dazzled visitors with the rhythms and distinctive performances of the Qatari participants, who presented their heritage in a manner that was well-received and admired by the audience.

Amidst the crowd, distinguished folk arts performances were presented, including the "Fajri" art performed by artist Omar Bou Saqr, along with other folk arts performed by the participating band.

Folk arts attracted significant interest from the Japanese audience at the Qatari Pavilion.

Folk arts are among the oldest arts in the region, characterised by group performance, diversity, and authenticity.

These events are part of the Qatari Ministry of Culture's participation programme, including the Qatari Ardah and musical performances at the Qatar Pavilion at Expo 2020. These events underscore the ability and presence of Qatari arts and heritage to engage people. This reflects the Ministry of Culture's vision of promoting communication, cultural exchange, and preserving heritage.

The performances were met with widespread interaction from visitors, who expressed their admiration for the beauty of the rhythms and the harmony of the performance. Attendees stood in long lines to take photos and record videos of this art form, which carries Qatar's rich heritage to Japan.

This participation is also part of the Ministry of Culture's efforts to promote understanding and cultural exchange, and to present performances and events that express Qatari heritage at international forums.

Expo 2025 Osaka is one of the most prominent global events, attracting wide participation from various countries and serving as an international platform for exchanging knowledge, highlighting diverse cultures, and future initiatives in development, innovation, and the arts.

MoECC launches cleanliness drive

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), represented by the Wildlife Protection Department, has carried out an extensive cleanup campaign in the vicinity of the Abu Nakhla Barn Complex.

This was in response to a complaint received from a citizen about waste in the area.

The campaign, according to an X post by the MoECC, resulted in the removal of solid and plastic waste.

The ministry emphasised the importance of community members' co-operation in reporting environmental violations while urging individuals and companies to adhere to sound environmental practices to ensure the preservation of vegetation cover and the sustainability of natural resources.



Qatar participates in OPCW Executive Council session

QNA
The Hague

Qatar participated in the 109th session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), held in The Hague.

The Qatari delegation was headed by Qatar's ambassador to the Netherlands and its Permanent Representative to the OPCW Dr Mutlaq bin Majid al-Qahtani.

In a statement during the session, the ambassador noted that the meeting is taking place amid serious challenges to international peace and security, foremost among them the war waged by Israel on the Gaza Strip, which has resulted in severe humanitarian tragedies.

He affirmed Qatar's support for the request made by the State of Palestine, as a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, for an immediate investigation into Israel's use of prohibited substances during its military operations in Gaza.



Al-Qahtani stressed that such actions constitute a blatant violation of international law and relevant conventions and require accountability for the perpetrators.

In this context, he condemned Israel's repeated targeting of sites within Syrian territory, which hinders the work of OPCW missions and endangers the lives of its experts, especially as Syria continues its co-operation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat to identify sites containing chemical materials and develop destruction plans.

The ambassador praised the recent positive progress in co-operation between the Syria and the OPCW Technical Secretariat, commending the vital role played by the organisation in this regard and Qatar's support for enhancing this co-operation, calling on the Executive Council to engage positively with this new reality and to take the necessary steps to restore Syria's rights and privileges as an active member of the organisation.

He also reiterated Qatar's position calling for the resolution of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis through dialogue and diplomatic means, and for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.



Uzbekistan ambassador Ashraf Khodjaev at the forum yesterday.



The forum brought together representatives from government agencies, tour operators, airlines, and investment and trade organisations from both nations. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen



Uzbekistan's Tourism Committee chairman Umid Shadiev.

Uzbekistan highlights cultural heritage, tourism sector at forum in Doha

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Uzbekistan showcased its cultural legacy and booming tourism sector during the "Uzbekistan – Qatar International Tourism Forum" in Doha yesterday, unveiling plans to attract millions of Gulf visitors through visa-free travel, direct flights, and strategic partnerships.

The event, organised by Uzbekistan's Tourism Committee with the support of its embassy in Qatar, served as a key platform to deepen bilateral co-operation, showcase Uzbekistan's growing tourism potential, and foster crucial business contacts within the industry.

In his remarks, Uzbekistan ambassador Ashraf Khodjaev described his country as "a place of Islamic heritage and history, warm hospitality and diverse food, quiet beauty and crossroads of cultures".

He cited the timeless allure of iconic cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, noting that "these are not just destinations, they are living legacies... when you visit these cities, you step into the stories themselves becoming a part of the journey that has inspired travellers for centuries".

Khodjaev highlighted the unprecedented accessibility for international visitors, particularly from the Gulf region.

"This rich cultural journey is now more accessible than ever," he said. "Travelling from Qatar to Uzbekistan is now easier than ever. Regular flights by Qatar Airways already take you there with a very-friendly visa regime, almost 100 nationalities can travel to Uzbekistan without visa."

The forum brought together representatives from government agencies, tour operators, airlines, and investment and trade organisations from both nations, signalling a strong commitment to expanding economic partnership.

A presentation titled "Uzbekistan – the Pearl of the Silk Road" outlined Uzbekistan's vast tourism potential, spotlighting its Unesco World Heritage sites, unique tourist routes, and ongoing infrastructure projects.

Special attention was given to niche tourism opportunities such as pilgrimage, medical, gastronomic, and eco-tourism, with a particular focus on creating a comfortable and welcoming environment for tourists from Arab countries.

In his key note address, Uzbekistan's Tourism Committee chairman Umid Shadiev underlined his nation's transformative journey.

"As you know, Uzbekistan has long been an integral part of the vibrant Silk Road and is renowned worldwide for its rich history, diverse culture, gastronomy, natural heritage, as well as amazing hospitality," he said. "Today, our hospitality sector is undergoing major transformation, a true renaissance."

Shadiev detailed the strategic pillars supporting this, including the liberalisation of visa policies, streamlining border procedures, and expanding air routes.

He also highlighted efforts to cultivate a conducive business environment through tax breaks and other incentives, all while upholding principles of inclusivity and sustainability.

The results, he stressed, speak for themselves: "In 2024 alone, more than 10mn tourists visited Uzbekistan, generating $3.5bn in revenue, which is a 1.5-fold increase from the previous year."

Shadiev announced an ambitious target: "Our goal is to reach 50mn annual visitors by 2030."



The forum presented the 'Uzbekistan – the Pearl of the Silk Road', which outlines Uzbekistan's vast tourism potential.

He pointed to the strengthening relationship between Qatar and Uzbekistan, noting active engagement in trade, investment, education, and tourism.

"It is quickly becoming one of the key drivers of this growing partnership," the official added. "We share a common goal, like Uzbekistan, Qatar is focused on diversifying its economy, developing non-resource sectors and placing tourism high on the agenda."

Shadiev echoed the envoy's view, reiterating the ease of travel for Qatari citizens, confirming that a visa-free regime was already established between the two nations.

He said that Qatar had been among the first countries in the region for which Uzbekistan liberalised its visa policy.

The forum held bilateral B2B (business-to-business) and G2B (government-to-business) meetings, which witnessed interest.

These sessions facilitated direct contacts between tourism industry representatives from both sides and led to agreements, including plans to organise promotional tours to Uzbekistan for Qatari tour operators and media representatives.

A promotional photo exhibition showcased Uzbekistan's breathtaking natural and architectural landmarks, alongside displays of traditional handicrafts.

Attendees also had the opportunity to savour traditional Uzbek cuisine.

Ministry, Doha Bank hold introductory session on customer service programme



As part of its continued efforts to support national workforce development and promote sustainable employment opportunities, the Ministry of Labour, represented by the Qualifying and Skills Development Department, in collaboration with Doha Bank, organised an introductory session on the customer service training-to-employment programme.

The session was attended by Qatari jobseekers and children of Qatari women, including university graduates and holders of secondary school qualifications.

It aimed to familiarise participants with the programme's structure, objectives and enrolment process, preparing them for their transition into the banking sector.

It features six months of intensive, hands-on training delivered at Doha Bank, offering real-world exposure to banking operations and client-facing roles. – ***QNA***

Doha Design Biennale launches first Urban Space Design Competition

Design Doha, Qatar Museums' biennial showcase for excellence and innovation in the design community in Qatar and the Menasa (Middle East, North Africa and South Asia) region, announced the launch of the Urban Space Design Competition in partnership with architect Javier Pena Ibanez, founder of the Concentrico Festival.

The competition is part of Design Doha's Public Design Commissions, an ambitious initiative that invites designers to reimagine and enrich Doha's urban spaces through site-specific, community-oriented interventions.

This first-of-its-kind competition is open to architects, designers, artists, and urban-planning professionals from the Menasa region to submit proposals for permanent urban installations in Doha that promote public engagement and enhance the city's unique physical, cultural, and social identity.

The winning designers will each receive awards of QR25,000 and a production budget of up to QR120,000 for the installation of works at key urban locations across Doha as part of Doha Design 2026.

The Urban Space Design competition promotes the reimagination of Doha's public spaces by transforming parks, heritage sites, waterfronts, traditional markets, and metro station exteriors into vibrant, community-oriented areas.

Each installation will be evaluated for cultural relevance, innovation, adaptability, and sustainability, responding to specific site categories.

The competition highlights the intersection of design and local identity, encouraging public interaction through inclusive and accessible urban design.

In support of Qatar's sustainable development goals, designs should incorporate locally sourced materials.



"The Urban Space Design Competition is a unique opportunity for designers from the Menasa region to make innovative, sustainable, and publicly beneficial interventions across Doha," said acting Design Doha director Fahad al-Obaidly. "As part of the Public Design Commissions and a key component of Design Doha 2026, the winning designs will weave into the cultural and social fabric of Qatar."

"We are proud to partner with Javier Pena Ibanez, a visionary architect and founder of Spain's Concentrico Festival, for this exciting new initiative," he added.

"I look forward to working with Design Doha and emerging and established designers from the Middle East and North Africa to create new public art and design for Doha," Concentrico Festival founder Ibanez said. "This is the kind of project designers dream of, and it is my honour to help bring some remarkable projects to this one-of-a-kind cityscape."

Selected proposals will be produced in collaboration with designated production partners.

Participants are encouraged to use eco-friendly and durable materials, explore innovative shading and cooling techniques tailored to the local climate, and integrate modularity and reuse in their proposals. – ***QNA***

Qatar Airways completes installation of Starlink on Boeing 777 fleet

Qatar Airways, recently crowned the World's Best Airline by Skytrax 2025, has announced that it has completed the Starlink installation programme on 54 Boeing 777 aircraft, delivering on its promise to offer the fastest Wi-Fi onboard at a record speed.

This milestone makes Qatar Airways the operator of the largest number of widebody aircraft equipped with Starlink technology, the carrier said in a statement.

It also cements the airline's position as the global leader in Starlink-equipped long-haul and ultra-long-haul connectivity, and the only carrier in the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region offering the service.

Originally scheduled as a two-year programme, the installation was completed in nine months; nearly 50% faster than planned.

By cutting the retrofit time from three days to just 9.5 hours per aircraft, the airline completed the rollout programme without disrupting operations.

"This new milestone demonstrates our strategic investment in redefining our passengers' expectations," said Qatar Airways Group chief executive engineer Badr Mohammed al-Meer. "We promised the fastest, most seamless in-flight connectivity in the industry, and with Starlink we have delivered it faster and at an unmatched scale."

"Having completed our rollout programme for Boeing 777s, we are now fully focused on equipping our Airbus A350 fleet with Starlink, bringing this game-changing experience to even more routes across our global network of over 170 destinations," he said.

Passengers in both Premium and Economy cabins enjoy free, gate-to-gate Wi-Fi speeds of up to 500Mbps per aircraft.

Whether streaming, gaming, or working, they can expect a fast and reliable connection comparable, if not better, to their experience at home.

Since launching the world's first Starlink-equipped Boeing 777 in October 2024, Qatar Airways has operated over 15,000 Starlink-connected flights, continuing to redefine the modern travel experience with world-class services and pioneering innovation. – ***QNA***

Qatar Chess Federation's summer programme activities continue



The Qatar Chess Federation's summer programme is ongoing at its training centre, having kicked off on July 6 and running through to July 31.

Held under the patronage of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the programme hosts 50 boys and girls and takes place daily from 10am to 12.30 noon, targeting children aged 6-12.

In addition to chess training, the programme features educational workshops including digital safety, recycling, handicrafts, and other engaging activities.

These are organised in collaboration with several government entities, such as Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar Scientific Club, Qatar Red Crescent, and Friends of the Environment Centre.

Qatar Chess Federation executive director Hamad al-Tamimi expressed his delight at the strong turnout, emphasising that the summer initiative aims to teach the fundamentals of chess and foster strategic thinking skills.

He noted that the federation seeks to expand participation in the sport, identify new talent, and nurture players' abilities through a structured training plan.

Al-Tamimi added that the summer agenda includes cultural, awareness, and recreational workshops designed to build mental and athletic skills, as well as boost participants' self-confidence.

The federation developed a four-week schedule for the programme throughout July, with the goal of discovering and cultivating young chess talent. – ***QNA***

Aspetar the Premier Partner for 8th AFC Medical Conference

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has announced Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital as the Premier Partner of the 8th AFC Medical Conference, which will be held from July 21-25 in Kuala Lumpur.

First launched in 1995 in Tokyo, the AFC Medical Conference serves as a vital platform for knowledge exchange among medical professionals, researchers, and football stakeholders, the AFC said in a statement yesterday.

The latest iteration of the conference will see as many as 20 experts from the Doha-based institution sharing insights into the latest research, clinical innovations, and best practices in athlete health and performance, underscoring its commitment to advancing sports medicine and athlete care across Asia.

"The AFC is proud to welcome Aspetar as a Premier Partner of the 8th AFC Medical Conference, as we continue our pursuit of the highest standards in football medicine across Asia," said AFC general secretary Windsor John said. "Aspetar has consistently led the way in athlete care, not just within the context of Asia, but also as a respected institution in the global sports medicine community, and on behalf of the AFC, I extend our sincere appreciation for their steadfast support and invaluable expertise through the years." – ***QNA***

COMMUNITY

Vibrant



Despite the harsh summer heat, dust and humidity, Bougainvillea blooms across Qatar, as seen in this picture from a Doha home garden. The vibrant, tropical vine is known for its showy, colourful bracts (modified leaves) that surround its small, inconspicuous flowers. Native to South America, these drought-tolerant, sun-loving plants come in a wide array of shades, including pink, purple, red, orange, yellow, and white.
PICTURE: *Gulf Times* news editor Bonnie James (**Instagram**: the.explorer7).

150 take part in webinar on AI and human thoughts



The Institution of Engineers (India) Qatar Chapter (IEI QC), organised a webinar on the topic 'Intelligent Minds: The intersection of AI and Human Thought.' More than 150 engineers attended.

In his presidential address, chapter honorary chairman Abdul Sathar stressed that the programme reflects the organisation's commitment to the AI journey which is often invoked in discussions that bridge cutting edge technology and timeless human ingenuity.

The chief guest, Indian embassy deputy chief of mission, Sandeep Kumar, who inaugurated the event, lauded IEI's contributions to Qatar's professional community in various engineering disciplines and 51 year's bilateral relation between India and Qatar as well.

Guest of honour Ahmed Jassim al-Jolo, president, Federation of Global Engineers (FGE) emphasised that the intersection of AI with human thought is revolutionising every sector and pushing humanity forward to a new level.

Keynote speaker Yogi Kochhar, AI futurist, co-author of *The Road Ahead 2.0*, delved on the evolving interplay between AI and human thoughts and AI as a cognitive force. He warned against passive influences from AI-driven platforms, especially social media, and urged the use of frameworks — like those from the Yol Happiness Foundation — to set mental guardrails that maintain focus and emotional well-being.

He said his book, *The Road Ahead 2.0*, is a collection of essays and case studies that provide a holistic view of the AI landscape in India. It covers a wide range of topics, including the ethical implications of AI, the impact on employment, and the role of AI in healthcare and education.

The contributors, who include leading experts in the field, offer practical recommendations and innovative solutions to address the challenges identified.

Moon Man of India Dr Mylswamy Annadurai stressed in his speech that the future of AI in India is bright, and with the right investments and strategies, the country can become a leader in this transformative technology. The event provided a platform for networking and knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration among professionals, academics, and industry stakeholders.





Bagless Day at MES Indian School

With the aim of promoting experiential learning and giving students a refreshing break from their academic routines, MES Indian School organised a 'Bagless Day' recently, aligning with India's National Education Policy 2020 and Qatar National Vision 2030.

A variety of activities were designed to support students' holistic development offering opportunities to explore creativity, critical thinking, and life skills through fun and engaging activities, including a Zumba session, fun with Maths, flameless cooking, tambola game, colour splash, collage work, yoga, fun with art, fun with craft, popcorn time, session on AI tools, indoor games, a science session, personality development session, portfolio building, coding workshop, and quality circle time.



Principal Dr Hameeda Kadar lauded the students for their enthusiasm, thanked the parents for their support, and commended the efforts of the teachers, whose dedication and hard work made the event possible.

The teachers in-charge of the programme were Sreejith K N, Anu Manoj, Rassia H, Nazanin S N, Mariam and Kabia.

MES U-14 boys for CBSE national chess

The Under-14 boys' chess team of MES Indian School emerged as champions in the CBSE Qatar Cluster Chess Tournament 2025-2026 held at Noble International School recently and qualified for the nationals in India. The team comprised Johan Jobsy (class VIII-D), Advik Praveen (VI-J), Edwin Edicula Sanju (V-I) and Ain Vaibhav (VII-H).
Principal Dr Hameeda Kadar, congratulated the students and their coach Mohamed Navas, department of physical education.



SEARCH

Australian police seek missing German backpacker

Police yesterday issued a public appeal for help in their search for a 26-year-old German woman missing for over a week while backpacking in Western Australia. Carolina Wilga was last seen on June 29 arriving in a Mitsubishi van at a general store in the small agricultural community of Beacon, northeast of Perth. "Carolina departed that area about five minutes later and has not been seen or heard from since," a homicide squad detective said. A short time later, yesterday afternoon, police found the Mitsubishi van abandoned in bushland in the Karroun Hill area, about two hours' drive from where she was last seen.

PEOPLE

Rescuers find lost Australian surfer on uninhabited island

A teenage Australian surfer feared lost at sea was rescued yesterday after spending the night on an uninhabited island miles offshore, officials and local media said. The man, named in local media as 19-year-old Darcy Deefholts, reportedly went for a surf off a beach in Wooli, a coastal town 480kms north of Sydney. He had left home on Wednesday afternoon. "When he failed to return home, concerned family members contacted officers," New South Wales police said in statement. Police launched a land and water search around Wooli Beach, and the surfer was "located safely" on the small island the following day, they said.

LAW AND ORDER

Teen among four arrested for subversion in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's national security police yesterday said they arrested four people, including a 15-year-old, who were allegedly part of a group seeking to subvert the Chinese state. Beijing imposed a national security law on Hong Kong in 2020. The new law criminalised four categories of offences: secession, subversion, terrorism and foreign collusion. Chief superintendent Steve Li said four males aged between 15 and 47 were arrested on Wednesday for "conspiracy to subvert state power". They played various roles in a group established in Taiwan in November that later called for the overthrow of the Chinese Communist Party, Li said.

TRADE

Lanka welcomes US tariff cut but eyes further relief

Sri Lanka yesterday welcomed a sharp cut in US tariffs on its exports, but said it would seek further reductions as Washington pushes for trade deals. US President Donald Trump sent letters to seven trading partners on Wednesday setting out new tariff rates that would take effect on August 1 in addition to existing duties. Some partners received notably lower rates from those originally threatened, with Sri Lanka seeing the sharpest reduction – down from 44% announced in April to 30%. "We recognise we have made significant progress in the process so far," Lanka's central bank governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said. "But we need to make more progress."

Rubio seeks to counter unease over Trump tariffs on first Asia trip

Reuters
Kuala Lumpur

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met counterparts in Southeast Asia yesterday during his first visit to Asia since taking office, seeking to reassure them the region is a US priority despite President Donald Trump's tariff offensive.

Washington's top diplomat joined foreign ministers of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Kuala Lumpur at a meeting that includes Australia, China, the European Union, Japan, Russia, South Korea and others.

The visit is part of an effort to renew US focus on the Indo-Pacific and look beyond conflicts in the Middle East and Europe that have consumed much of the Trump administration's attention.

"The story of the next 50 years, will largely be written here in this region," Rubio told Asean ministers, describing the Indo-Pacific as a "focal point of US foreign policy". "When I hear ... that perhaps the US or the world might be distracted by events in other parts of the planet, I would say distraction is impossible," Rubio added. However, Trump's global tariff strategy has cast a shadow over the trip after he unveiled steep tariffs from August 1 on eight Asean members, including Malaysia, as well as on close northeast Asian allies Japan and South Korea.

In a sign of the upset, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba told a television news programme Japan needed to wean itself from US dependence in key areas.

"If they think Japan ought to follow what America says as we depend heavily on them, then we need to work to become more self-sufficient in security, energy and food, and less dependent on America," he said.

Analysts said Rubio would look to press the case that the US remains a better partner than China, Washington's main strategic rival.

"Rubio said the right things but has limited ability to reassure considering the underlying dynamics," said Gregory Poling, a Southeast Asia expert at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies. "All of these countries were receiving letters from the White House with their new tariff rates at the same time Rubio was trying to message continuity."

Rubio also held talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, their second in-person meeting, at a time when Trump has grown increasingly frustrated with Russian President Vladimir Putin as the war in Ukraine drags on. Rubio said he had a frank and important discussion and reinforced Trump's disappointment that there has not been more Russian flexibility. Rubio said he may also meet with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi this week. Lavrov met Wang, who said China and Russia should strengthen coordination to promote Middle East peace and push for dialogue on the Iran nuclear issue. "Peace cannot be achieved through force, and applying pressure won't solve problems," Wang said, according to the foreign ministry in Beijing.

Wang separately pledged China's help Asean boost capacity to implement the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, an Asian trade pact Beijing is backing.

In addition to the tariff unease, many doubt the willingness of Trump's "America First" administration to fully engage diplomatically and economically with the region.

Rubio addressed the tariff issue in speaking to reporters. "Of course it's raised," he said. "It's an issue, but I wouldn't say it solely defines our relationship with many of these countries. There are a lot of other issues that we work together on."

He added that a high-level delegation, including US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and deputy secretary of state Christopher Landau, would travel to Japan next week. Export-reliant Asean is collectively the world's fifth-biggest economy. Only Vietnam has secured a deal with Trump to lower its levy to 20% from an initial 46%. Trump has also upset another key Indo-Pacific ally, Australia, which said on Wednesday it was "urgently seeking more detail" on his threat of 200% tariffs on pharmaceutical imports.

At a meeting with Asean, China, Japan and South Korea, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan said Asia was being tested and is facing "the perfect storm".

"Unilateralism and nationalism are on the rise, marginalising multilateralism that is essential for a stable world order," he said.

A draft joint Asean communique, preceding news of the latest tariff rates, shows that Asean foreign ministers, without specifically mentioning the US, will express concern about rising global uncertainties "particularly the unilateral actions relating to tariffs".



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets with Japan's Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya and Philippines' Foreign Secretary Theresa Lazaro at a trilateral meeting during the 58th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Foreign ministers meeting and related meetings at the Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday.

China ready to sign SEA N-weapons-free treaty

Reuters
Kuala Lumpur

China will sign up to a Southeast Asian treaty banning nuclear weapons in the region as soon as all documentation is ready, Malaysia's foreign minister said yesterday.

The Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, or SEANWFZ, has been in force since 1997, limiting the use of nuclear power by members to peaceful purposes, such as power generation.

Asean's objective is for the world's nuclear powers, including China, the US, Britain, Russia and France, to sign the treaty and commit to non-use or movement of nuclear weapons in the region, including countries' exclusive economic zones and continental shelves.

"China made a commitment to ensure that they will sign the treaty without reservation," Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan told reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and partner countries.

China is in communication with Asean countries about the signing of the protocol, its foreign ministry said.

"China has always firmly supported the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia, and has repeatedly expressed its willingness to take the lead in signing the protocol to the treaty," ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told reporters at a regular news briefing.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi is currently in Kuala Lumpur to attend meetings with his Asean counterparts.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said he discussed Washington's trade tariffs with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who he said would consider Malaysia's views.

Anwar said the US wanted to increase co-operation with the Asean region and understood its need to trade with others. He made the remarks in a video released by his office. Rubio is attending a regional meeting of foreign ministers in Malaysia.

Bangladesh ex-top cop pleads guilty to crimes against humanity

Bangladesh's former police chief pleaded guilty to crimes against humanity committed during a crackdown on protests last year, while ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina was formally indicted, prosecutors said after the trial resumed yesterday. Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024, according to the United Nations, when Hasina's government attempted to crush a student-led uprising. Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) is prosecuting former senior figures connected to Hasina's ousted government and her now-banned party, the Awami League. Former inspector general of police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Mamun "pleaded guilty to crimes against humanity," Muhammad Tajul Islam, chief prosecutor at the ICT, told reporters.
Islam said Mamun has agreed to assist the court by acting as a witness, giving "all the knowledge he has regarding the crimes committed during the July-August uprising".

Hippo draws crowds at first birthday bash



Moo Deng (right), a one-year-old female pygmy hippo who became a viral Internet sensation, eats a birthday cake with her mother at Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Chonburi province, yesterday. Thailand pygmy hippo Moo Deng marked her first birthday yesterday, leaving behind the animal infancy which boosted her to worldwide Internet fame for her cute antics.

Foreign spying plots foiled, claims China

AFP
Beijing

China yesterday said it had cracked three spying plots, including one in which a public servant was lured by the "seductive beauty" of a foreign agent, urging government workers to remain vigilant against overseas threats.

Beijing has stepped up espionage warnings in recent years as relations with the US and other Western nations have worsened.

Its ministry of state security (MSS) yesterday said foreign spooks "have been increasingly active in infiltrating and stealing secrets from China" and were targeting public officials.

"Individual officials have caused the damaging effects of leaking secrets due to a lack of belief, a weakened sense of discipline and a loosened awareness of rules... harming national security and interests," the MSS said.

It described a case in which a provincial government employee named Li fell into a "meticulously designed honeytrap" while travelling overseas for work.

"Unable to resist the seductive beauty of the foreign intelligence agent," Li was then blackmailed with "intimate photos" and forced to hand over official documents once back in China.

He was sentenced to five years in prison for espionage, according to the statement.

Another case involved a municipal cadre called Hou, who secretly photographed confidential documents and sold them to foreign spy agencies to recover lost savings from a gambling addiction.

Search for missing cockfighters begins at Philippine lake

AFP
Manila

Search teams began scouring a lake south of the Philippine capital Manila yesterday for dozens of cockfighters allegedly murdered by rogue police.

Just hours later, the department of justice issued a statement saying a plastic bag containing what appeared to be "burned human bones" had been recovered from Lake Taal.

"This discovery could represent a significant breakthrough in the ongoing investigation," the department said, adding a forensic examination and DNA testing were needed before conclusions could be drawn.

Fifteen police officers are under investigation over a spate of mysterious disappearances in 2022 in the country's huge cockfighting industry.

The case erupted back into the public consciousness last month with the televised appearance of a witness claiming to know where bodies had been submerged in Lake Taal.

As many as 100 people were murdered over their alleged involvement in match-fixing, killed by police moonlighting for an online cockfight operator, according to witness Julie "Dondon" Patidongan who spoke to broadcaster GMA.

Justice Secretary Crispin Remulla has since said that "multiple witnesses" could identify the location of those missing in the lake, which spans more than 230 square kilometres.

Department spokesman Dominic Clavano said yesterday the preliminary inspection by the coast guard and police was intended to lay the groundwork for future dives.

But hours after it concluded, the justice department said searchers had found the bag containing what appeared to be human bones. While the initial probe was conducted far from shore, local media reported the bag was discovered within 33 feet from the shoreline.

Filipinos from all walks of life wager millions of dollars on matches every week between roosters who fight to the death with razor-sharp metal spurs tied to their legs.

Charlene Lasco, whose missing brother Ricardo was an agent for livestreamed cockfights, said the priority for victims' families was being able to lay their loved ones to rest.

"We are happy that (the government) is doing their best to locate (the bodies) and solve this case," she said at the national police headquarters in Manila. "We are not the only victims here."

National police chief Nicolas Torre said this week authorities needed to act swiftly. "The typhoon season is coming in," he told journalists on Tuesday.

"We are moving fast to at least try to locate the bodies. We know that it is very, very challenging."

The justice minister said he had requested technical assistance from Japan including help with mapping the lake bed, parts of which are as deep as 172 metres.

Japan's embassy in Manila said it had received the request without providing further details.

But Torre believes the Philippines had the necessary equipment on hand to begin the search.

"We have a very, very robust shipping industry here and in other parts of the Philippines, so we can do it," he said.

Cockfighting, banned in many other countries, survived coronavirus pandemic restrictions by going online, drawing many more gamblers who use their mobile phones to place wagers.

Former president Rodrigo Duterte banned the livestreaming of cockfights shortly before leaving office in 2022, but it has continued due to lax enforcement.

WORLD

Royals' cancer struggles having profound impact: UK charity

Reuters
London

King Charles and his daughter-in-law Kate's public battles with cancer have had a huge impact on fellow sufferers, encouraging them to be open about the difficulties of coping with the illness, a leading cancer support charity says.

The news that both the 76-year-old monarch and Kate, 43, wife of his elder son and heir Prince William, were both undergoing treatment for the disease in early 2024 shocked Britain, but their response has been praised by medical professionals and those who help people with the condition.

While both have returned to official duties, Charles is still receiving treatment and Kate's workload remains closely controlled despite her now being in remission.

Laura Lee, the chief executive of Maggie's which runs support centres based next to hospitals, said the two royals' open discussions of their own personal issues in coping with the illness had a profound impact.

"For the king, talking as a man and talking about living with an ongoing treatment of cancer, that has helped men talk about cancer," she said. "We saw last year a 12% increase of men coming into Maggie's Centres directly as a result of the king being open about his cancer diagnosis.

"I think what Princess Kate has brought to it is a different experience, now she's talking about having finished her treatment but still having to live with the ongoing impacts of that treatment."

Earlier this month, shortly after she pulled out of an engagement, Kate said she had put on a "brave face" during her cancer treatment, describing the experience as being like a "rollercoaster".

"I felt exactly the same as she did," Tracey Bradshaw, 56, who is being monitored after being treated for bladder cancer in 2021, said at a Maggie's Centre in west London.

India electoral roll revision decision sparks fear, fury

AFP
New Delhi

Indian election officials have given voters in Bihar state just weeks to prove their citizenship, requiring documents few possess in a registration revamp set to be applied nationwide, triggering disenfranchisement fears.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the revision of the voter rolls in June ahead of upcoming polls in the eastern state.

It said the exercise will later be replicated across the nation of 1.4bn people. According to the ECI, the "intensive revision" was needed in part to avoid the "inclusion of the names of foreign illegal immigrants".

Members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have long claimed that large numbers of undocumented Muslim migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh have fraudulently entered India's electoral rolls. Critics say the overhaul could render vast numbers of Indian citizens unable to vote.

"You are being asked to produce documents that very few people have," said Asaduddin Owaisi, a prominent Muslim lawmaker. "It will lead to mass disenfranchisement." Opposition lawmakers say it will impact minorities the hardest, including Muslims and Dalit communities, those on the bottom rung of India's rigid caste hierarchy.

All potential voters in Bihar will have to provide proof of citizenship by July 25. Those registered in 2003, the last time scrutiny of the voter list took place in Bihar, can submit a copy of that. The rest – around 30mn people, according to the ECI's estimates – have to provide evidence of their place and date of birth.

And those born after 1987 must also furnish proof of their parents' Indian citizenship.

The requirement affects more than a third of potential voters in Bihar, India's third most populous state and its poorest.

It is also a crucial election battleground as the only state in India's northern Hindi-speaking belt where Modi's BJP has only ever governed in a coalition. Bihar's main opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, has challenged the election commission in the Supreme Court, along with other parties and activists. "It is being used to justify aggressive and opaque revisions of electoral rolls that disproportionately target Muslim, Dalit and poor (Indian) migrant communities," the court petition read. "They are not random patterns but... engineered exclusions."

Unlike many other countries, India does not have a unique national identity card. The widely used biometric-linked "Aadhaar" identity card is not among the documents listed by the ECI as acceptable proof.

Documents that can be used include birth certificates, passports and matriculation records.

Of these, most people are likely to rely on their matriculation certificates. But even those are in short supply in Bihar, where literacy rates are among the lowest in India.

According to an analysis published in *The Indian Express* newspaper, only 35% of people in the state hold such a document.

"In Bihar, where literacy is not very high, many people are not likely to have the kind of documents the ECI has demanded," said Jagdeep Chhokar from the New Delhi-based Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). "The poor, poorly educated, uneducated and minorities will be the most impacted."

Detractors say the drive is unprecedented because "documentary proof has never been demanded" of people to vote in India.

"Only those who especially wanted their name inserted needed to fill a form," said political activist and academic Yogendra Yadav. "For the rest, someone would come to their house and get their names registered." "The onus in India was never on the voter but on the ECI officials," he added. In previous verification drives, modifications were made to the existing rolls, Yadav said.

Now, a list is being drawn from scratch. Yadav said the drive was a "de facto" implementation of an earlier plan to put together a list of Indian citizens. The National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was compiled in the eastern state of Assam in 2019, left out almost 2mn people. Many of them were Muslims. The BJP had said the NRC would be replicated nationwide as it was necessary to detect "foreign infiltrators", but was forced to backtrack after furious protests.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and France's President Emmanuel Macron (R) hold a joint press conference following a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing at a military base at Northwood Headquarters in north-west London, yesterday.

Starmer and Macron unveil migration deal

Reuters
London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron announced tougher migration controls yesterday, ending a state visit with deals on defence, nuclear co-operation and plans to support Ukraine in case of a ceasefire.

After hosting Macron for a three-day visit that included a carriage procession to Windsor Castle with King Charles and a state banquet, Starmer was handed a much-desired boost when Macron said France had agreed to a migrant returns scheme.

Starmer, who has seen his popularity slide since winning an election landslide last year, is working to address high levels of immigration, including asylum seekers arriving by small boats across the Channel from France, to try to stem the rise of the populist Reform UK party, led by Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage.

At a joint press conference, the two leaders said they had agreed a "one in, one out" returns scheme – which would see Britain deporting to France undocumented people arriving in small boats, in return for accepting an equal number of legitimate asylum seekers with British family connections.

"I'm pleased to announce our agreement on a groundbreaking returns pilot. For the very first time, migrants arriving in small boats will be detained and returned to France in short order," Starmer said, standing alongside Macron. "This will show others trying to make the same journey that it will be in vain."

It was unclear, however, whether the agreement would have a big impact. A government source said they were looking at about 50 returns a week, or 2,600 a year, a fraction of the more than 35,000 arrivals reported by the government last year. Another source said the scheme could be scaled up.

More than 21,000 people have arrived on small boats so far in 2025, a record number for this stage of the year.

Fabian Hamilton, a lawmaker in Starmer's Labour Party, said he was "sceptical that this is the answer". The policy, which is similar to a scheme used by the EU and Turkiye, carries risks for Macron from his right-wing political critics who may question why he has agreed to take back migrants wanting to live in Britain.

Macron criticised Britain's decision to leave the European Union, saying "a lot of people in your country explained that Brexit would allow you to fight more efficiently against illegal immigration" but that it resulted in "the exact opposite".

India trade team to visit US soon for more talks

A delegation from India is expected to visit the US soon for trade talks, a government official told reporters, as the two countries look to iron out disagreements over duties for auto components, steel, and farm goods.

India is among the few countries that are still negotiating a trade deal with Washington, as President Donald Trump ramps up his trade war with the threat of sharply higher tariffs from August 1.

A team of Indian officials on an extended visit to the US recently failed to secure a deal as the two countries were unable to overcome some key hurdles.

India is resisting opening up its agriculture and dairy sectors while asking for a favourable tariff for its goods entering the US compared to countries like Vietnam and China. "Indian team will visit the US soon for further talks," said the trade official.

Heavy rains lash Amritsar


Commuters carry umbrellas and navigate through heavy rainfall on the streets of Amritsar, India, yesterday.

Black boxes 'undamaged' in Air India plane crash

Reuters
New Delhi

Indian investigators of the deadly Air India airliner crash that killed 260 last month told a meeting of lawmakers that the plane's black boxes were not damaged, two people familiar with the discussions said.

The revelation about the devices critical to reconstructing the events leading up to an air crash, comes after Indian media said they were damaged when the London-bound Boeing Dreamliner crashed on June 12, to erupt in a massive fireball.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has also been able to extract "good data" from the black boxes, its officials told lawmakers during a parliamentary panel meeting on aviation.

The AAIB and India's aviation ministry did not respond to queries. The plane's cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR), as the black boxes are formally known, were recovered in the days after the crash, one from a rooftop at the site on June 13, and the other from debris on June 16. The preliminary report from investigation into the crash is likely to be made public by today, it was earlier reported.

The crash investigation had narrowed its focus to the movement of the plane's fuel control switches, and also focused, at least partly, on engine thrust issues, the media said.

Air India has faced intense scrutiny since the crash. Its chief executive, Campbell Wilson, appeared before the committee and the airline gave updates on its efforts after the crash, one of the sources said.

Police arrest four over M&S, Harrods cyberattacks

Reuters
London

Four people under 21 have been arrested as part of a police investigation into cyberattacks that disrupted the operations of UK retailers Marks & Spencer, the Co-op and Harrods, Britain's National Crime Agency said yesterday.

April's ransomware attack on M&S, one of the best known names in British business, was the most serious, forcing it to suspend online clothing shopping for nearly seven weeks and costing it about £300mn ($400mn) in operating profit. The NCA said males aged 19, 19 and 17 and a 20-year-old woman had been detained in the English West Midlands and London on suspicion of Computer Misuse Act offences, blackmail, money laundering and participating in organised crime.

All were arrested at home, had their electronic devices seized, and were being questioned by the NCA's National Cyber Crime Unit.

On Tuesday, M&S chairman Archie Norman told lawmakers the retailer had been in contact with the US FBI over the cyberattack.

He said "loosely aligned parties" had worked together under the suspected leadership of a group known as DragonForce.

Norman said British businesses should be legally required to report material cyberattacks, alleging that two recent major attacks on large UK firms had gone unreported.

Giving evidence to lawmakers on parliament's business and trade committee Norman said the group had learnt that "quite a large number" of serious cyberattacks never get reported to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

"In fact we have reason to believe there has been two major cyberattacks on large British companies in the last four months which have gone unreported," he said.

Norman said that meant there was "a big deficit" in knowledge in the cybersecurity space.

"So I don't think it would be regulatory overkill to say if you have a material attack ... for companies of a certain size you are required within a time limit to report those to the NCSC."

Norman declined to say if M&S had paid any ransom but said that subject was "fully shared" with the National Crime Agency and other authorities.

He said "loosely aligned parties" worked together on the M&S cyberattack.

"We believe in this case there was the instigator of the attack and then, believed to be DragonForce, who were a ransomware operation based, we believe, in Asia."

A hacking collective known as Scattered Spider that deploys ransomware from DragonForce has previously been blamed in the media for the attack.

"When this happens you don't know who the attacker is, and in fact they never send you a letter signed Scattered Spider, that doesn't happen," said Norman.

He said M&S didn't hear from the threat actor for about a week after it initially penetrated its systems on April 17 through a "social engineering" operation.

Norman said M&S was fortunate in having doubled its cyberattack insurance cover last year, though its claim could take 18 months to process.

M&S resumed taking online orders for clothing lines on June 10 after a 46-day suspension but is yet to restore click and collect services.

Last week, M&S CEO Stuart Machin told investors the group would be over the worst of the fallout from the attack by August.

Nick Folland, M&S' General Counsel, told the lawmakers a major lesson from the crisis for businesses generally was to make sure they can operate with pen and paper.

Pakistan eyes $1bn valuation in Roosevelt Hotel redevelopment plan

Pakistan is seeking a valuation of at least $1bn for the Roosevelt Hotel it owns in New York and is ready to part with a minority stake in the prime Manhattan property as it scouts for a redevelopment partner, a senior government official said.

Named after former US president Theodore Roosevelt, the century-old property in midtown Manhattan is seen as one of Pakistan's most valuable foreign assets, which it acquired in 2000.

Faced with mounting losses, the over 1,000 room hotel was shut in 2020, and has also operated briefly as a migrant shelter.

As part of the government's $7bn International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed privatisation push, Pakistan's government approved a "transaction structure for the Roosevelt Hotel" on Tuesday, saying that it won't do an outright sale but has decided to adopt a joint venture model to maximise long-term value. It gave no details.

The senior Pakistani official said the government will retain ownership in the project through an equity partnership, but declined to disclose the size of the stake being offered to any potential joint venture partner.



A view of the Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan, New York City. – ***Reuters***

The official declined to be named since the process is confidential.

JLL, or Jones Lang LaSalle, will run the process and the government is eyeing a valuation of over $1bn for the 42,000sq feet property it hopes could be redeveloped for residential-cum-office use, the official said.

"It is among the best pieces of land in NY real estate. The process begins immediately and is expected to be completed in the next six-nine months," said the official.

Pakistan's privatisation ministry and state-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which owns the hotel through its investment arm, did not respond to request for comments, and neither did JLL.

Pakistan this week also approved four parties to bid for a stake in debt-ridden PIA.

The hotel is located near marquee New York destinations such as Grand Central Terminal, Times Square, and Fifth Avenue, placing it in one of Manhattan's most valuable commercial zones.

Pakistan's government is estimating the redevelopment will take 4-5 years, the official said, adding the "interest level is extremely high".

In June, the government said it expects $100mn in the initial payment from the joint-venture partnership by June 2026. – ***Reuters***

Judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship order again

Reuters
Washington

A federal judge has again barred President Donald Trump's administration from denying citizenship to some babies born in the US, making use of an exception to overcome the US Supreme Court's recent ruling that restricted the ability of judges to block that and other policies nationwide.

US District Judge Joseph Laplante ruled at a hearing in Concord, New Hampshire, after immigrant rights advocates implored him to grant class action status to a lawsuit they filed seeking to represent any children whose citizenship status would be threatened by the implementation of Trump's executive order curtailing automatic birthright citizenship.

The ruling is far from the last word in the legal battle over Trump's order, which he signed in January on his first day back in office.

The judge paused his ruling for seven days to give the Trump administration time to appeal, which a Justice Department lawyer at the hearing indicated would certainly happen.

Laplante, an appointee of Republican president George W Bush, agreed the plaintiffs could provisionally proceed as a class, allowing him to issue a fresh judicial order blocking implementation of the Republican president's policy nationally.

Lawyers with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had urged him to do so after the Supreme Court on June 27 issued a 6-3 ruling narrowing three nationwide injunctions issued by judges in separate challenges to Trump's directive.

The Supreme Court's decision meant babies born in some parts of the United States to parents who are not US citizens or lawful permanent residents risked being denied citizenship and becoming subject to deportation.

However, the ruling contained an exception for class action lawsuits that seek relief on behalf of a group of similarly situated people nationwide.

Laplante, who had already in a related case concluded Trump's order was unconstitutional, said the question of whether to issue an injunction was "not a close call", as children could be deprived of citizenship by Trump's order, which was set to take effect on July 27 following the Supreme Court's ruling.

"That's irreparable harm, citizenship alone," he said during the hearing. "It is the greatest privilege that exists in the world."

ACLU attorney Cody Wofsy hailed the decision, telling reporters that the Supreme Court's ruling had sparked "concern, confusion and fear" among migrant families whose babies would be affected by Trump's order.

"This is going to protect every single child throughout the country from this lawless, unconstitutional, cruel executive order," he said.

White House spokesperson Harrison Fields in a statement called the ruling "an obvious and unlawful attempt to circumvent the Supreme Court's clear order against universal relief".

"This judge's decision disregards the rule of law by abusing class action certification procedures," he said. "The Trump administration will be fighting vigorously against the attempts of these rogue district court judges to impede the policies President Trump was elected to implement."

Trump's order directs federal agencies to refuse to recognise the citizenship of US-born children who do not have at least one parent who is an American citizen or lawful permanent resident, also known as a "green card" holder.

More than 150,000 newborns would be denied citizenship annually if Trump's order takes effect nationally, according to the plaintiffs in various cases challenging it.

At the urging of 22 Democratic-led states and immigrant rights advocates, four judges including Laplante earlier in the year issued injunctions blocking its enforcement after finding it likely violates the citizenship clause of the US Constitution's 14th Amendment.

The judges have pointed to the Supreme Court's 1898 ruling in United States v. Wong Kim Ark in which it interpreted that amendment as recognising the right to birthright citizenship regardless of the immigration status of a baby's parents.

Three judges in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington issued injunctions halting Trump's order nationwide.

Laplante in February issued an injunction too, but unlike his counterparts limited it to members of the three immigrant rights nonprofit organisations who pursued the case before him.

Pakistan police arrest 149 in scam centre raid

Pakistan police arrested 149 people – including 71 foreigners, mostly Chinese – in a raid on a scam call centre, the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency said yesterday.

"During the raid, a large call centre was uncovered, which was involved in Ponzi schemes and investment fraud," the agency said in a statement. "Through this fraudulent network, the public was being deceived and vast sums of money were being illegally collected."

The agency said they were acting on a tip-off about the network, operating in the city of Faisalabad, a manufacturing centre in the east of the country.

The agency told AFP that the raid was at the residence of Tasheen Awan, the former head of the city's power grid, who has not been arrested.

All those arrested were in custody, including 78 Pakistanis and 48 Chinese, as well as citizens from Nigeria, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Myanmar.

Some 18 of the 149 were women, it added.

A copy of the police report said victims would initially receive a small return on their first investments, before being persuaded to hand over larger sums of money.

"The charged individuals ran WhatsApp groups where they lured ordinary people by assigning small investment tasks like subscribing to different TikTok and YouTube channels," it said. "Later, they shifted them to Telegram links for further online tasks requiring larger investments." – ***AFP***

Ukrainian spy colonel slain in Kyiv

Reuters
Kyiv

A senior Ukrainian security officer was gunned down in a residential parking lot in Kyiv yesterday before his assailant fled on foot in broad daylight, according to authorities and video footage verified by Reuters.

Kyiv's police force said it was working to identify the shooter and that "measures are being taken to detain him".

The slain agent was a colonel in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), an official told Reuters.

The SBU, a sprawling domestic spy agency which has thousands of staff, said it had opened a criminal investigation into the murder of one of its employees in Kyiv's southern Holosiivskyi district.

They did not identify him.

The agency's remit covers security and counter-intelligence, but since Russia's 2022 invasion it has also played a prominent role in special operations against Moscow, including assassinations and sabotage attacks.

Those include an extraordinary drone operation codenamed Spider's Web that targeted Russian strategic aircraft at bases hundreds of miles from Ukraine, and the assassination of a top Russian general in Moscow using a bomb hidden in a scooter.

Neither the SBU nor the police mentioned possible motives for the killing in Kyiv.

"The Security Service and the National Police are taking a comprehensive set of measures to clarify all the circumstances of the crime and bring the perpetrators to justice," the SBU said in a statement.

Ukrainian media outlet Ukrainska Pravda cited a source saying that the assailant fired five rounds from a pistol. It identified his victim as Ivan Voronych, an SBU colonel.

Some pro-Kremlin military bloggers cheered the death of the colonel.

Alexander Kots, a Russian war correspondent, said he hoped the Russian security services were behind his death. "The enemy must feel afraid on its own territory."

Russian officials have not publicly commented.

CCTV footage circulated on Ukrainian social media showed a man in jeans leaving a residential building and walking to a car park where he was approached by another man, who fired at him repeatedly before running away.

Reuters was able to confirm the location of the video of the purported killing as a neighbourhood in Kyiv, using the guard box, buildings and parking lot layout, which match file and satellite imagery of the area.

The date when the video was recorded was verified using the timestamp on the footage and Reuters reporting of the incident.

Afghan taxi drivers take novel approach to stay cool

Broken air conditioning? Afghan taxi drivers have cobbled together a creative solution to spare them and their passengers from the sweltering heat.

In Kandahar city in southern Afghanistan where temperatures easily exceed 40° Celsius (10° Fahrenheit), blue taxis can be spotted with an air conditioning unit strapped to the roof with an exhaust hose delivering the cool air through the passenger window.

"It started getting extremely hot three or four years ago. These cars' AC systems didn't work, and repairs were too expensive. So I went to a technician, (and) had a custom cooler made," said driver Gul Mohammad.

The 32-year-old spent 3,000 Afghanis ($43) for the system, which he connects to his taxi's battery and regularly refills with water.

"This works better than (built-in) AC. ACs only cool the front – this cooler spreads air throughout," said fellow driver Abdul Bari.

Other devices are connected to solar panels, also mounted on the taxi's roof.


A taxi driver installs a swamp air-cooler system atop his vehicle at a market in Kandahar. – ***AFP***

Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in the world, is also one of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

It is particularly affected by heat waves and is suffering from increased drought.

Murtaza, a 21-year-old technician, said that demand from taxi drivers has been growing over the past two or three years.

"Many cars weren't equipped with air conditioning anyway, which is why we're installing these," he told AFP in his small shop in central Kandahar.

Afghan cities are often saturated with ageing vehicles, which are enjoying a last-ditch life after being transferred from neighbouring countries.

"When there's no cooler, it becomes very difficult," said Norullah, a 19-year-old passenger who did not provide a last name, his face inches from the blast of cold air. "These drivers are helping solve the problem, and that's great." – ***AFP***

Man held for stealing water from Italian royal palace

Italian police said yesterday that they had arrested a man accused of syphoning off water from an aqueduct feeding the fountains and basins of a palace dubbed the "Italian Versailles" near Naples.

The carabinieri police said the 58-year-old had engaged in "continued theft of public water" to the detriment of the 18th-century Royal Palace of Caserta, a Unesco heritage site built by the King of Naples, Charles of Bourbon.

Police said they were alerted after the palace, now a museum, complained about water shortages in the basins and fountains of its lush landscaped gardens.

The suspect allegedly tapped into the Caroline Aqueduct, funnelling the water through an illegal pipeline to transport it 145m (475') to his agricultural property, which police said they seized.

"The pipe reached six different areas of the farmland for irrigation as well as a 1,000-litre cistern for water collection," they said in a statement.

The suspect was identified as the concessionaire of the agricultural property owned by a religious organisation.

The palace, which boasts 123 hectares of gardens, said in a statement it had suffered a "serious water shortage" at its waterfall, fountains and basins. – ***AFP***

Brazil, Trump up the ante in row over Bolsonaro coup trial

Brazil and the United States have escalated their row over President Donald Trump's support for coup-accused ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro, with the American president slapping a 50% tariff on one of its main steel suppliers.

Leftist Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva threatened to reciprocate.

Trump has strongly criticised the prosecution of right-wing ally Bolsonaro, who is on trial for allegedly plotting to cling on to power after losing 2022 elections to Lula.

Brasilia on Wednesday summoned Washington's top envoy to the country to explain an embassy statement describing Bolsonaro as a victim of "political persecution" – echoing Trump's claims of a "witch hunt" against the 70-year-old Brazilian firebrand.

Trump then announced he would slap a 50% tariff on Brazilian imports starting August 1, citing "Brazil's insidious attacks on Free Elections" and warning of escalation if the country retaliates.

In a letter addressed to Lula, Trump criticised the treatment of Bolsonaro as an "international disgrace" and said the trial "should not be taking place".

He added Washington would launch an investigation into Brazil's trade practices.

While Trump has been issuing letters to trading partners – focusing on those his country runs a deficit with – Brazil had until now not been among those threatened with higher duties come August 1.

The South American powerhouse is the second-largest exporter of steel to the United States after Canada, shipping 4mn tonnes of the metal in 2024.

The new 50% tariff was independent of sector-specific levies, with the US recently doubling duties on steel and aluminium imports to 50%.

Lula wrote on X that "any unilateral tariff increases will be addressed in light of the Brazilian Law of Economic Reciprocity".

Trade between the two countries reached $41.7bn between January and June, with $20bn for exports from Brazil and $21.7bn for US products, according to Brazilian government data.

On Monday, Trump angered Lula by urging Brazilian authorities to "LEAVE BOLSONARO ALONE," in a post on social media.

"They have done nothing but come after him, day after day, night after night, month after month, year after year!" the US president wrote.

Lula, who narrowly beat Bolsonaro in a divisive election in 2022, hit back at Trump's "interference", insisting that "no one is above the law".

Bolsonaro denies he was involved in an attempt to wrest power back from Lula as part of an alleged coup plot that prosecutors say failed only for a lack of military backing.

After the plot fizzled, rioting supporters known as "Bolsonaristas" raided government buildings in 2023 as they urged the military to oust Lula. Bolsonaro was abroad at the time.

The case against Bolsonaro carries echoes of Trump's prosecution over the January 6, 2021 attacks by his supporters on the US Capitol to try and reverse his election loss.

Trump pleaded not guilty, and the case was abandoned when he was re-elected president.

Bolsonaro has thanked Trump for his defence of "peace, justice and liberty" in a social media post. – ***AFP***

Gunmen kidnap and kill mayor in northwest Honduras

Armed men kidnapped and killed a Honduran mayor standing for re-election in the violence-wracked Central American nation, police said yesterday.

Francisco Martinez, mayor of the northwestern municipality of San Isidro, was removed from his vehicle by gunmen in the city of Siguatepeque on Wednesday night.

His bullet-riddled body was found near a football field, according to the police.

The 45-year-old mayor was seeking re-election for the right-wing opposition National Party in November 30 presidential, legislative and local elections.

The motive for the mayor's murder was under investigation, police spokesman Miguel Martinez told AFP.

Mayor Martinez was detained in 2015 in connection with the death of a young man believed to be the boyfriend of one of his daughters, but was later acquitted, according to local media.

Honduras is one of the most violent countries in Latin America, mainly due to drug trafficking and gang activity. – ***AFP***

All 31 workers escape uninjured after tunnel collapse in Los Angeles

All 31 workers escaped without injuries from a collapsed industrial tunnel in Los Angeles' Wilmington area, after scrambling over a tall pile of loose underground soil, city officials said late on Wednesday.

The trapped workers were shuttled back to the tunnel's entry point, more than five miles (8km) away from the affected area, after they escaped the collapsed section and met several coworkers in the unaffected part of the tunnel, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) said in a statement.

The tunnel, which had a diameter of 18' (5.5m), trapped 27 individuals, while four workers entered the damaged section to assist with rescue, LA Fire Chief Ronnie Villanueva told reporters in a media briefing.

"The workers had to climb through debris. They had to make themselves out through," before they were assisted out, Villanueva said.

Robert Ferrante, chief engineer and general manager of Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, told the briefing that a section of the already built part of the tunnel experienced squeezing ground conditions and partially collapsed.

"LAFD has just reported that all workers who were trapped in the tunnel in Wilmington are now out and accounted for. I just spoke with many of the workers who were trapped. Thank you to all of our brave first responders who acted immediately," Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said in a post on X.

The collapsed section was a part of the Los Angeles County's Clearwater Project, where the new seven-mile tunnel is being built to upgrade the region's sewer system, officials added. – ***Reuters***

COMMENT

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GULF TIMES

Trump's trade wars mask fragile market foundations

Despite all the policy-induced uncertainty wrought by President Donald Trump's administration, US stock markets seem to be sending a message of normalisation. Major indexes have returned to where they were at the beginning of the year and continued to rise. What is going on? Are these new highs credible?

For starters, despite Trump's recent policy reversals, uncertainty remains high, feeding fears that business and household confidence will suffer, slowing growth over time. Moreover, Trump is far from having completed his attempted trade negotiations and is nowhere closer to his stated goal of balancing the United States' external account.

So large-scale an undertaking would require the world's major powers to adjust their own savings-investment patterns and relationships vis-à-vis the US. Getting that to happen would entail an extraordinarily painful exercise, assuming it is possible at all.

Lastly, the Trump administration's agenda needs to be considered in the deeper context of what the French economist and historian Arnaud Orain calls "finitude capitalism." Orain distinguishes "between an open world carrying a promise of all-round and unlimited enrichment (for states, private companies, or individuals) and an ideology which argues the opposite – that the world is finite, that natural resources and global exports are in limited quantity, which entails that overall enrichment is limited, and even impossible."

When the outside world seems to present fewer opportunities than risks, it becomes necessary to defend one's territory. But if the economic system becomes less optimised and efficient as a result of this, so be it. In any case, faced with continuing uncertainty and the threat of persistent inflationary pressures, all eyes will be on central banks. The US Federal Reserve has adopted a wait-and-see attitude as it monitors the effects of Trump's trade war, and the European Central Bank is already signaling that the new uncertainty will drag down economic growth. With major countries closing in on themselves, the global economy is being reshaped before our eyes. It is reasonable to expect less efficient management and less diverse supplies to push up prices and therefore interest rates.

For US stock markets in particular, high and rising indices are not sustainable

Though attention inevitably will shift from demand to supply, the objective for monetary policy will remain the same: to anchor inflation expectations at a "sufficiently low level," and to adopt a policy for bringing inflation back to the target rate in the medium term. The challenge, then, is twofold: in addition to keeping inflation expectations low, central banks will need to acquire analytical agility and new tools to stay on top of an ever-changing situation. In such an uncertain environment, forward guidance cannot be overly precise. Instead, a multi-scenario approach (a departure from the current practice) will ultimately provide more relevant information to all economic actors.

Another major factor is trade flows, which are changing fast. One clear development, judging by voting patterns at the United Nations, is a reduction in the geopolitical distance of trade. While the US reduces its trade with China, the People's Republic continues to pivot more toward emerging markets and developing countries, becoming the top trade partner for many of them. Have US markets fully accounted for what this means?

Financial globalisation is another major issue. The link between geopolitical tensions and financial stability is clear. There are two interdependent channels to watch here. The first is financial, as reflected in capital restrictions, heightened risk aversion, and other variables that affect liquidity. The second channel is economic and concerns the extent to which new protectionist measures will disrupt value chains. Current trends (in both channels) suggest that geographical diversification in asset allocations could decline over the medium term, with the resulting risk-return balance likely settling at lower levels.

Finally, in a more unstable geopolitical environment, one must factor in risks that are less endogenous to the economic and financial sphere, such as cybersecurity threats and the complex transition to renewable energy sources. In such a global economy, where the logic of abundance through globaliszation is giving way to finitude capitalism, there may be less tolerance for significant current-account imbalances. The more that governments perceive geopolitical and economic risks, the more they could limit trade and financial flows vis-à-vis regions of the world that are considered less friendly. If such insularity becomes too restrictive, we will have foregone the well-known benefits of diversification.

Given the big-picture, medium-term outlook, financial markets can remain unscathed for only so long. For US stock markets in particular, high and rising indices are not sustainable.
– Project Syndicate

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Navigating AI in translation: Why human expertise still matters



By Mazen Alfarhan
Doha

The translation landscape is undergoing a rapid transformation, propelled by the accelerating influence of artificial intelligence (AI). In this evolving environment, institutions like the Translation and Training Center (TTC) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University are uniquely equipped to respond — addressing both the possibilities and pitfalls that AI brings to the field.

AI has undoubtedly enhanced efficiency in translation. Today's tools are faster, more accessible, and increasingly accurate, making them useful for generating draft translations and offering quick multilingual access. They prove especially valuable in time-sensitive or high-volume contexts, such as processing large datasets or facilitating real-time communication. Yet, as with any disruptive technology, these advantages come with significant caveats — particularly when dealing with complex, sensitive, or culturally nuanced content.

One of the most pressing challenges posed by AI translation is its inability to reliably handle nuance, cultural context, and rhetorical intent. Perhaps more troubling is the phenomenon of hallucination, where AI produces content that is factually incorrect or entirely fabricated. These are not mere technical glitches — they strike at the heart of what makes translation trustworthy. Language is not a neutral code; it is a vessel for meaning, shaped by history, identity, tone, and communicative intent. This complexity is even more pronounced in Arabic, a language whose idiomatic richness, syntactic structure, and cultural references diverge significantly from those of most European languages.

This is where TTC's human-centred approach becomes indispensable. At every level — from graduate training to national translation initiatives — TTC places a premium on linguistic judgment, cultural literacy, and contextual precision. Translation, in this view, is as much an art as it is a science. The Center ensures that human insight remains central to the process, even as technology plays an increasingly supportive role.

Another critical consideration is confidentiality. Many AI translation tools are cloud-based, meaning sensitive or classified content may be processed externally without sufficient safeguards. This poses serious risks for institutions dealing with proprietary, legal, diplomatic, or security-related material. TTC adheres to the highest ethical standards, operating in secure environments and ensuring all professionals are bound by confidentiality agreements. Here, discretion is as important as accuracy, and technological use is guided by clear human responsibility.

TTC's role extends well beyond safeguarding translation quality. It is an active contributor to Qatar's broader vision of building "bridges of linguistic and intellectual communication" across cultures. Through professional training programmes and hands-on workshops, TTC trains a new generation of professionals who are not only proficient in language but also equipped to meet the demands of diplomacy, academia, media, and international commerce. This focus on in-house professional development ensures that translators and interpreters working across public institutions stay current with evolving standards, sector-specific terminology, and best practices. The result is public communication that meets the highest standards of clarity, precision, and professionalism.

In keeping with its commitment to innovation, TTC has recently introduced a workshop focused on the strategic use of AI-powered translation tools. This timely initiative reflects the growing need for translators who are both linguistically skilled and technologically fluent. For those ready to embrace these tools, the workshop offers practical guidance — recognising that AI solutions are increasingly essential in managing complex and technical assignments.

What also sets TTC apart is its engagement with both local and global partners. The Center works closely with leading universities, such as King's College London and the London School of Economics, to support the production of Arabic-language academic content — resources actively used by masters students in Qatar and beyond. Nationally, TTC collaborates with a wide range of ministries and public institutions on major translation and training projects. One notable example is its recent partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) to produce Arabic and French versions of the United Nations' E-Government Survey 2024 — a project that earned formal recognition from the UN itself.

At a time when AI is reshaping traditional models of language work, TTC offers a thoughtful and balanced way forward. It embraces innovation without losing sight of the values that define high-quality, human-led translation. As Qatar continues to establish itself as a centre for global dialogue, TTC's voice in this conversation is not only relevant — it is essential.

• *The author is Acting Director of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University's Translation and Training Center.*

(This piece has been submitted by HBKU's Communications Directorate on behalf of its author. The thoughts and views expressed are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect an official University stance.)

About Hamad Bin Khalifa University
Innovating Today, Shaping Tomorrow
Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), is a leading, innovation-centric university committed to advancing education and research to address critical challenges facing Qatar and beyond. HBKU develops multidisciplinary academic programs and national research capabilities that drive collaboration with leading global institutions. The university is dedicated to equipping future leaders with an entrepreneurial mindset and advancing innovative solutions that create a positive global impact.

'Mistral' wind fanning Marseille wildfire

A wildfire threatening the outskirts of Marseille, France's second most populous city, was being fanned on Tuesday by a "Mistral" wind with gusts reaching 70kph.

Firefighters said the blaze had, when at its most ferocious, advanced by more than 1km per minute but was now contained. However, with weather forecasts showing the Mistral set to blow through the evening and part of the night, there remained a risk the front line could once again advance.

What is the Mistral wind?

The Mistral is a strong, cold and dry wind that blows from the north or northwest through the Rhone Valley in southern France towards the Mediterranean Sea.

It is a wind shaped by the geography of the area, particularly the funnel-like Rhone Valley, which accelerates the wind as it moves southward. The name Mistral comes from the word "mistrau" in the local Occitan dialect, meaning "masterly".

The wind is known for blowing clear, dry air in bright blue skies. It has a significant impact on agriculture, architecture and daily life in Provence and surrounding areas.

When does the Mistral wind blow?

The Mistral can occur at any time of year, but it is most frequent in the winter and spring months.

It forms when a high-pressure system over the Atlantic or northern France meets a low-pressure system over the western Mediterranean. This pressure difference drives air southwards, which intensifies as it passes through the Rhone Valley.

The wind can last from a few hours to several days, and sometimes longer.

How powerful is the Mistral wind?

The Mistral is one of Europe's most powerful regional winds. It often reaches 50 to 90kph, but gusts can exceed 100kph, particularly near the coast, and it has been recorded at over 120kph.



A burnt-out area in the "Castelane" northern District of Marseille, southern France on Wednesday, after a wildfire swept through areas close to the centre of the Mediterranean port city. (**AFP**)

It can damage crops, fell trees and affect roads and air traffic. It can also whip up the seas and be hazardous for sailors. Despite its challenges, the Mistral also brings benefits: it dries the vineyards and olive groves that are abundant in southern France, reducing fungal diseases.

Artist Vincent van Gogh captured the region's distinctive weather and light in some of his paintings, including Pine Trees against a Red Sky with Setting Sun. – Reuters

Mistakes that could destroy your marriage

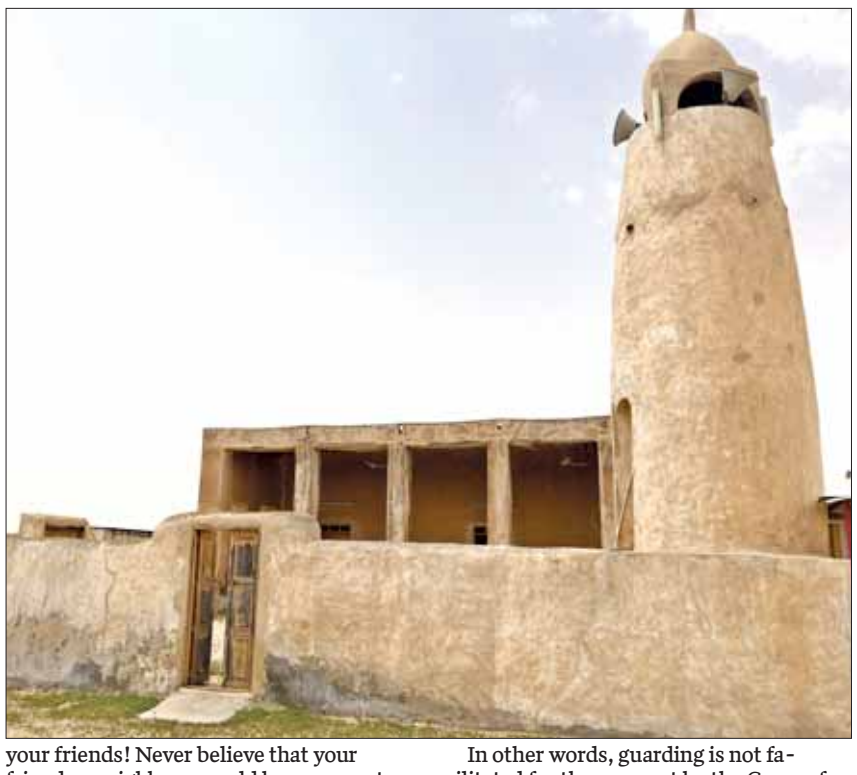
By Dr Khaalid Sa'eed An-Najjaar

In any marriage it is natural to have some intellectual or behavioural differences. However, the relationship may reach the brink of danger if bad behaviour leads to fundamental differences between the spouses. According to specialists, some women adopt patience and forbearance, and they possess mental and emotional skills that enable them to handle life problems in an ideal manner, especially with regard to their husbands. Women of this kind know very well that marital secrets are sacred; therefore, they approach them with a huge sense of responsibility. Other women, in contrast, have no patience, so they tend to make troubles all the time and constantly complain about incompatibilities with their husbands. This escalates marital problems and may end up in separation.

Complaining a lot and grumbling about the husband's livelihood contradict the marital affection and mercy enjoined by Islam. So, the wife should be content with her husband's income and thank him for whatever he brings of food, drink, clothes, or any other thing according to his means. She should avoid discontent as it leads straight to hellfire! The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), highlighted the consequence of such inappropriate conduct of the wife when he mentioned that the majority of the denizens of hellfire will be women. When asked for the reason, he, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Because they are ungrateful to their husbands," i.e., they deny the good their husbands do and oft-complain about them.

So, dear sisters, beware of such conduct, for its consequence is unpleasant in this life and in the Hereafter as well. If your husband falls short in fulfilling some of your rights or if you need something from him, introduce your request with praise and mention of his beautiful traits, then present your request. Beware of denying your husband's favours and his wonderful situations with you, for this is considered ungratefulness which is the major spoiler of affection between spouses.

The secrets of the household are a trust that you must preserve. Failing to do so erodes your husband's trust in you. Let not the secrets of your home be the subject of your gossip or loose talk with your friends! Never believe that your friend or neighbour would keep a secret that you yourself could not bear guarding. In ancient times, Umamah bint al-Harith gave some famous advice to her daughter who was about to get married, saying, "If you reveal his secret, you will not be safe from his revenge." Allah, the Almighty, Says (what means): {So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard.} [Qur'an 4:34]



The wording of this verse is affirmative and descriptive; yet it is meant as a command to the wife to obey her husband and to be loyal to him in his wealth and herself while he is absent. The phrase {righteous women} means that those women who fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, by obeying him and His Messenger, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and the rights of their husbands in terms of obedience, appreciation and respect are {devoutly obedient} to Allah with regard to their husbands. Such women are {guarding in [the husband's] absence} whatever must be guarded of chastity, wealth and homes. {What Allah would have them guard} may mean that had it not been for the Protection of Allah, the Almighty, these women would have failed to do so.

In other words, guarding is not facilitated for them except by the Grace of Allah. It may also mean that Allah guards the rights of women by commanding husbands to fulfil their obligations towards their wives including being fair and kind to them and giving them their due Mahr (bridal money) In this sense, it means that in return for guarding your rights by Allah, you (women) should guard the rights of your husbands as prescribed by Allah. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "The best (of) women is the one who pleases you if you look at her, obeys you if you command her, and preserves your absence in herself and your wealth." [*Saheeh Al-Jami'a*: 3299]

You should always convey to him your feelings of security and confidence and that you wish for a long life together with your children. Keep away from grudges; never belittle what he does or buys or look down on him, his job or his degree. Having any of these attitudes would definitely blow up all the pillars of love and admiration between you.

Beware of making him feel that he is emotionally negligent or cold or that you are annoyed by his lack of emotions. If you do so, his apathy and coldness would increase. Rather, this may make him stubborn and more neglectful of you. Instead, you should exaggerate in praising him and commending him for things he did for you without paying attention to them.

Beware of comparing him, implicitly or explicitly, to movie or TV stars. You should instead make him feel that you are happy to be with a religious husband who protects you and takes care of you, worries about you and fulfils your wishes, and whom you work together with to raise your children and walk the road to Paradise. He should feel that you are mature enough to not be affected by the deception and fake images you watch in the media.

Some women do not obey their husbands except after the husband breathes a sigh of relief because of his wife's arguments with him. Life cannot go on smoothly with such manners since arguing breeds disaccord in the heart; too much of which leads to aversion. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Do not differ among yourselves, otherwise your hearts will differ." [*Saheeh Al-Jami'a*: 7256]

Disputing a lot brings disaccord to the hearts and love ceases to find a way to them. In addition, obedience will be meaningless if the wife obeys her husband only after lengthy discussions and arguments. When the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, was asked about the best of women, he said: "It is she who pleases him (her husband) when he looks at her, and obeys him when he commands her…" Therefore, talk to him in a calm and logical way avoiding any unnecessary repetition of speech. And never supplicate Allah against him or threaten him, for both actions result in nothing but fuelling grudges and problems. Rather, replace arguing and malevolent supplication with trying to reach mutual understanding and giving advice.

Beware of blaming your husband a lot or raising your voice at him during discussions in public or in front of your children. Postpone your blame until the two of you are alone. If you wait until he calms down and then you talk to him in a low voice using touching words and gentle reproof he will then be affected and respond. Know that most men are proud and passionate so the only approach that is suitable with them is that gentle and soft approach. Many women lose their husbands because they are unaware of this fact.

Accept an incorrect situation and treat it cleverly. If your husband comes home late at night, for instance, do not yell at him or make a scene because when he comes home late, he already feels guilty. So, try to make him feel that you were scared of being alone at home or that you missed him while he was gone.

Do not expose his lies! Sometimes, your husband intentionally tells a lie in order to make up with you and not hurt your feelings.

Beware of making your husband uneasy if he wants to have intimate relations with you, or of making feeble excuses to avoid him! There is a serious threat for the wife who rejects her husband's request if he asked her to come to bed. The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "If a husband calls his wife to his bed and she refuses causing him to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning." [Imam Al-Bukhari]

Beware of excessive jealousy! It is the key to divorce. Avoid asking too many suspicious questions! Do not be one of those who search their husband's pockets, eavesdrop on telephone calls or look for slips, especially if you have a cowife or cowives! All of these manners are dispraised and have evil consequences, especially if the wife has irrational jealousy of her mother-in-law, sisters-in-law or of any matter that she has no right to be jealous of.

The righteous wife does not ask her husband for divorce without a valid reason that compels her to do so, even if she is provoked. The Messenger of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Any woman who asks her husband for divorce without a harm [inflicted on her], the scent of Paradise will be forbidden for her." [Reporters of this *Hadith* are Imams Abu Dawood, An-Nasaa'ee At-Tirmithi and Ibn Majah]

So, please delete the word "divorce" from your dictionary. Divorce will not bring you comfort especially if you have children. The husband is often rational and does not respond to such an irresponsible demand from his wife; however, the outcome of asking for divorce is that the children will live in constant anxiety and fear that their parents might divorce one day.

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

islamweb.net English

Husband's responsibilities towards his family

The family is that brick which forms the foundation of a society. It is composed of individuals that have permanent relations established between them. Most importantly, it possesses almost a majority of the different kinds of personal relations. Because of this, there must be certain etiquettes placed in order to control and regulate these relations.

This is such that it can be maintained in the best possible manner, and so that it can generate and produce its proper fruits. Family relations consist of the relationship between the spouses from one perspective, the relationship between the parents and the children from a second perspective, and the relationship between the children themselves from a third perspective.

Etiquette pertaining to the husband

1. It is not from the deficiencies, but rather from good manners, that the husband shares in the responsibility of specified matters, such as the mending of garments or what is similar to that.

2. It is appropriate for a man not to restrict himself from serving himself. This is since the wife takes care of the household affairs. So therefore, it is from good manners that the husband extends a helping hand to his wife in the house, during times of necessity, such as when she is sick, pregnant, has given birth or similar to that.

3. The exemplary husband is he who co-operates with his wife by bearing good relations and showing kind manners (to her), according to the full extent of the meaning contained in these (last) two expressions. Truly, the husbands who are best at working alongside their wives are the best of mankind in the view of Islam.

4. Beware of characterising the relationship between the spouses with over-seriousness! For indeed characterising the family life with a militaristic nature amounts to one of the causes for failure and bad results.

5. From the kind and noble manners of the husband is that he complies and assents to the requests of his wife, so long as they are not forbidden in Islam.

6. The husband should specify a time in which he can play around and pass free time with his wife.

7. The relationship between the spouses must contain one singular and specific nature. And it cannot be this way unless the couple begin demolishing all the obstacles and impediments that stand between them. For example, the husband should not feel timid and restrain himself from drinking out of the same cup that his wife drinks out of.

8. There is no human being that is perfect. So there is no doubt that the husband will see things in his wife that do not comply with his natural disposition and preferences. If these aspects are not in opposition to the fundaments of Islam or to the obedience of the husband and his rights, then at that point, he should not try to change her personality. He should also remember that if there are some characteristics that he doesn't find pleasing in his wife, then indeed she has other characteristics, which are definitely pleasing to him.

9. Do not let Ramadan be a barrier that impedes you from showing affection to your wife. But this is so long as you are able to refrain yourself, since what is forbidden during the days of Ramadan is only intimate relations. Showing affection to one's wife during Ramadan can be done during the night.

10. Do not chase after the small errors of your wife and recount them to her, for too much blaming and reprimanding will worsen the relationship between the two of you, and it will pose a threat to your marital life.

11. If you are able, do not hold back from providing your wife with good clothing and food, and from being generous in spending money on her. This is of course according to the extent of your ability.

12. Do not give little importance to implementing the punishment required for any acts in opposition to the Islam, which your wife has committed, whether it is in the home or outside it. This should be the only reason that causes you to become angry.

13. What has been stated previously does not mean that you should leave matters alone until that result comes to happen. Thus, whenever you realise that a matter is left alone, weigh it with seriousness and determination, without being too harsh or rude about it.

14. Do not attempt to meddle into your wife's housework affairs that do not fall into your area of duties and responsibilities, such as the food and the order of the house because woman like to put their personal touch on the house (her kingdom).

15. Beware of scolding your wife or blaming her for a mistake she committed, in the presence of others, even if they are your own children. For indeed that is an act that goes against correct behaviour and it will lead to raising anger in the hearts of people.

16. If you are forced to place punishment upon your wife after having advised her and she didn't respond, then let it be by staying away from her at bedtime. And do not boycott her except that it is done within the household. And avoid using foul language, insulting her, beating her and describing her with repulsive names.

17. Having jealousy and caring about the bashfulness of your wife is a praiseworthy thing, which shows your love for her. However it is on the condition that you do not go to great extremes in this jealousy. For then at that point, it would turn into something worthy of no praise.

18. Entering the house: Do not alarm your family by entering upon them suddenly. Rather, enter while they are aware of it, and greet them with *Salaam*. And ask about them and how they are doing. And do not forget to remember Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, when you enter the house.

19. Beware of spreading any secrets connected with the intimate encounters you have with your wife, for that is something restricted and forbidden.

20. Constantly maintain the cleaning of your mouth and the freshening of your breath.

21. Guardianship of your wife doesn't mean that you can exploit what Allah has bestowed upon you from taking charge of her, such that you harm and oppress her.

22. Showing respect and kindness to your wife's family is showing respect and kindness to her. This applies on the condition that it is not accompanied by an act forbidden in Islam, such as intermingling of the sexes or being in privacy (with them).

23. Too much joking will lead to (your family having) little fear (of disobeying you) and a lack of respect for you.

24. Be prompt in fulfilling the conditions, which you promised to your wife during the pre-marriage agreement.

25. When you lecture your wife or reprimand her or simply speak to her, choose the kindest and nicest of words and expressions for your speech.

26. It is not proper for you to ask your wife to look for work outside of the house or to spend upon you from her wealth.

27. Do not overburden your wife with acts that she is not able to handle. Consider, with extreme regard, the environment she was raised up in. Rural service is not like urban service, and the service of a strong woman and her preparation for it is not like the service of a weak woman.

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

Responsibilities of parents

Parents' responsibilities for the care and upbringing of their children are mentioned in several verses of the Qur'an, as well as in the *Hadith*.

Allah Almighty Says (what means): "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones…" [Qur'an 66:6]

How do we ward off that fire from our families? We need to show to them the right way and to teach them the difference between right and wrong. An excellent example of this is found in the words of Luqmaan to his son, related in the Qur'an, where he admonishes him:

1. Not to ascribe divine powers to anything other than Allah.

2. To be good and kind to parents.

3. To obey parents unless they command what is wrong.

4. To understand that all our deeds, however minor, are recorded and will be brought to light.

5. To be constant in prayer.

6. To enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.

7. To bear what befalls him with patience.

8. To avoid pride, arrogance and boastfulness.

9. To be modest in manner and speech.

This is a model example of parental responsibility and advice. Luqmaan guides his own son on the path to paradise with simple but memorable words.

Children are a trust given to the parents. Parents will be held accountable for this trust on the Day of Judgment. Parents are essentially responsible for the moral, ethical and the basic and essential religious teachings of their children.

If parents fulfil this responsibility, they will be free of the consequences on the Day of Judgment. The children will become better citizens and a pleasure to the eyes of their parents, first in this life, and in the Hereafter.

This parental responsibility belongs not only to the father. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, is reported to have said: "Take care! Each of you is a shepherd and each of you shall be asked concerning his flock; a leader is a shepherd of his people, and he shall be asked concerning his flock; and a man is a shepherd of the people of his house, and he shall be asked concerning his flock; and a woman is a shepherd of the house of her husband and over their children, and she shall be asked concerning them." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Indeed the mother's role may be even greater: while the children are young they are very close to her and dependent upon her, and they spend more time with her than with anyone else. There is an Arabic saying: "The mother is the first school". She may be a good school, an indifferent or even a bad school. She may even be unaware that she is serving as a role model in her behaviour, and her attitudes. Every mother should be conscious of her role and do her best to make it beneficial for the development of her children as they set out on the journey of life.

The parents' right to respect from their children is dependent upon the children's right to loving care and guidance of their parents.

It is related that a man once came to 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second *Khaleefah* (Caliph) of Islam complaining of his sons' disobedience to him. 'Umar summoned the boy and spoke of his disobedience to his father and his neglect of his rights. The boy replied: "O *Ameer al-Mu'mineen* (Prince of believers)! Hasn't a child rights over his father?"

"Certainly", replied 'Umar.

"What are they, *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*?"

"That he should choose his mother, give him a good name and teach him the Book (the Qur'an)."

"O *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*! My father did nothing of this. My mother was a Magian (fire worshipper). He gave me the name of Julalaan (meaning dung beetle or scarab) and he did not teach me a single letter of the Qur'an."

Turning to the father, 'Umar said: "You have come to me to complain about the disobedience of your son. You have failed in your duty to him before he has failed in his duty to you; you have done wrong to him before he has wronged you."

Education and bringing up in Islam

Allah Almighty Says (what means): "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion…" [Qur'an 5: 3]

Education is the process by which children are nurtured as they grow up to develop the Islamic worldview and the Islamic virtues.

Education means to look after, to nurture, to nourish, to help grow and flourish. It implies certain sensitivity towards the child under your care, his emotional and physical needs and capacities. It implies the ability to inspire confidence. It implies the courage to allow and promote creativity and innovation. It implies the ability to trust and not to stifle, to be firm when needed and even to impose sanctions when necessary. The starting point for education is the example of parents. Small children take their parents as models.

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

QATAR

QCDC celebrates youth empowerment at 'My Career – My Future' closing ceremony

Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation (QF), marked the conclusion of the seventh edition of its flagship job shadowing initiative, My Career – My Future, with a celebratory closing ceremony at Multaqa (Education City Student Center).

The ceremony brought together senior leaders from QF headed by CEO Yousif A al-Naama, alongside representatives from QCDC and 25 partner organisations, who came together to honour the achievements of over 250 high school participants.

Over the course of five days, participants were immersed in real-world work environments across a diverse range of sectors, including medicine, aviation, judiciary, tourism, engineering, and more.

The programme provides high school students with the opportunity to shadow professionals across industries, helping them explore their interests, develop key skills, and align their academic ambitions with meaningful future career paths.

"This initiative reflects our deep belief in the impact of early career exposure and practical experience in shaping informed, confident, and adaptable youth," said Saad Abdulla al-Kharji, executive director of QCDC.

"We are proud to see this programme continue to grow, thanks to the steadfast support of Qatar Foundation and the collaboration of our esteemed partners. Together, we are nurturing a generation empowered to actively contribute to Qatar's sustainable development, in alignment with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 and QF's overarching mission to unlock human potential."

Aligned with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, the programme plays a key role in building a knowledge-based society by preparing youth for meaningful engagement in the labour market.









Participating entities ranged from Hamad Medical Corporation and Al Jazeera Media Network to Qatar Airways, North Oil Company, Ooredoo Qatar, Snoonu Trading and Services, Qatar TV, Qatar Olympic Committee, and the Investment and Trade Court, and various other leading institutions in the public and private sectors.

Diverse sectors contributed to the learning experience, allowing participants to understand workplace dynamics and gain practical insight into careers aligned with Qatar's strategic priorities, a statement added.



Pakistan Mango Fest opens to a sweet welcome

The timing of the exhibition coincides with the peak mango season back home

By Shafeeq Alingal
Staff Reporter

The second edition of the Pakistani Mango Festival (Al Hamba Exhibition) opened yesterday at Souq Waqif, beckoning visitors to relish the sweetness of an array of mangoes along with its products.

Held at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif until July 19, the festival is organised by the Private Engineering Office in co-ordination with the Embassy of Pakistan.

Abdulrahman Mohammed al-Nama, representative of the Private Engineering Office (PEO), inaugurated the festival in the presence of Pakistan ambassador Muhammad Amir and festival general supervisor Khalid Saif al-Suwaidi along with a number of diplomats from various countries.

The exhibition sells Sindhri, Chaunsa, Safed Chaunsa, Anwar Ratol and Duseri along with Pakistani seasonal fruits such as black plum, peach, plum and falsa and peaches – all freshly flown exclusively for the festival.

Also, a number of mango products including juices, ice creams and cakes are on sale.

The exhibition is open daily from 4pm to 9pm except on public holidays when it receives visitors until 10pm.

The Pakistan envoy told *Gulf Times* the festival is all set to lend the visitors a unique experience combining fresh flavours and authentic products. He thanked the PEO for organising the festival and said it will turn out to be an ideal venue to manifest the Pakistani culture and boost the cultural and trade relationships with Qatar. He said the sales will go up this year.



The ambassador with the PEO representative.



A prospective buyer at the festival.

Al-Suwaidi said the second edition has 74 sellers, mostly local, while several companies from Pakistan with a track record of producing high-quality mangoes are part of the festival.

The exhibition also features more than 25 restaurants and shops specialised in the food and hospitality sector to offer Pakistani culinary experience with dishes and a variety of mango products.

Al-Suwaidi noted that conditions for participation were strict and focused on ensuring the quality of the displayed items. The timing of the exhibition was carefully chosen to coincide with the peak mango production season in Pakistan, as all the displayed products are of Pakistani origin.

Al-Suwaidi pointed out that prices were set to be affordable emphasising that the displayed products are unique and not available in local markets.

The exhibition features a suitable environment to preserve the quality of the mango, with the event site equipped with appropriate cooling systems to ensure the best possible visitor experience.

The organising committee has urged the public to visit the exhibition early to ensure they get the finest fresh Pakistani mangoes and to enjoy a unique tasting experience that reflects the diversity and authenticity of Pakistani cuisine.



PEO representative Abdulrahman Mohammed al-Nama inaugurating the festival in the presence of Pakistan ambassador Muhammad Amir and festival general supervisor Khalid Saif al-Suwaidi along with a number of diplomats from various countries. **PICTURES**: Shaji Kayamkulam



Varieties of the king of all fruits on display.

