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SPORT | Page 1

Al Duhail sign Cameroon defender Castelletto

### Amir extends condolences to President Putin

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to Russian President Vladimir Putin on the victims of the civilian plane crash in the Tynda region in eastern Russia. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani also sent a cable of condolences to President Putin. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin on the victims of the plane crash. **(QNA)**

### Russia plane crash kills all 48 on board



An Antonov An-24 passenger plane carrying 48 people crashed in Russia's far east yesterday as it was preparing to land, killing everyone on board. The burning fuselage of the plane, which was made in 1976, was spotted by a search helicopter after it disappeared from radar screens. It had been attempting to land for a second time after failing to touch down on its first approach. **Page 8**

### Israeli Knesset's step condemned

Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the Arab League, and the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation condemned, in the strongest terms, the Israeli Knesset's approval of the declaration calling for imposing the so-called "Israeli sovereignty" over the occupied West Bank. **Page 2**

### No issue with Boeing 787 fuel control unit

The head of the Federal Aviation Administration said yesterday the fatal crash of an Air India Boeing 787 does not appear to be caused by a mechanical issue or inadvertent movement of the fuel control unit. "We can say with a high level of confidence it doesn't appear to be a mechanical issue with the Boeing fuel control unit," FAA Administrator Bryan Bedford told reporters, adding FAA employees have taken the units out, tested them and had inspectors get on aircraft and review them.

## Interior minister attends graduation ceremony

**QNA**  
Doha

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Police Academy Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani attended the graduation ceremony of the first batch of the Master's in Law and Master's in Security Studies programmes at the College of Graduate Studies, comprising 17 graduates. The event also marked the graduation of the 10th mandatory qualification course for male university graduates at the Police College, with 76 graduates, and the 3rd mandatory course for female university graduates at the Women's Police Institute, with 17 graduates. The honouring ceremony was attended by HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani, HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani, HE the Adviser to His Highness the Amir for Defence Affairs Hamad bin Ali al-Attiyah, in addition to a number of ministers, senior officials, and families of the graduates. Following the official ceremony,



HE the Minister of Interior attended the graduation of the fourth group of the "Tomorrow's Police" programme in its sixth edition (Summer 2025), which included 400 participants. The Master's programmes in Law and Security Studies aim to develop specialised legal and security competencies and enhance participants' research and analytical capabilities, keeping pace with contemporary legal and security challenges and serving the needs of state institutions. The mandatory qualification course for university graduates

is a fundamental step in preparing qualified national cadres to work in a professional security environment through military training, specialised legal education, and the development of leadership skills and institutional discipline. The ceremony honoured outstanding students in various programmes. Cadet officer Khalifa Rashid Abdullah al-Kuwari won first place in the mandatory qualifying course for males, while cadet officer Maha Hassan al-Nuaimi won first place in the course for female university graduates.

The graduation ceremony for the sixth edition of the "Tomorrow's Police" programme also included a visual film reflecting some of the programme's content, security presentations, and scenarios executed by programme participants, and self-confidence boosting skill demonstrations that reflected the high level of training and the qualitative benefits gained from the programme. The programme aims to instil national identity and a sense of loyalty and belonging in young people, promote noble values and responsibility, and contrib-

ute to community service and instil authentic Islamic and Arab principles through a variety of activities that develop leadership skills and enhance confidence among participating students. It also includes practical training to enhance capabilities in sports and military skills, as well as various educational and awareness-raising sessions. The programme's activities included numerous military and sport exercises and training, including infantry, shooting, swimming, self-defence, and various educational lectures. **Page 12**

## Israel, US recall teams from Gaza truce talks in Doha

- UK PM to hold urgent talks with French, German leaders
- Conditions in Gaza deteriorating, hunger widespread

**Reuters**  
Cairo/Jerusalem

Israel and the United States recalled their delegations from Gaza ceasefire talks for consultations yesterday, with US envoy Steve Witkoff accusing the Palestinian resistance group Hamas of failing to act in good faith in the talks.

It marked the latest setback in efforts to secure a deal that would bring a ceasefire to Gaza, secure the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas, and bring respite to Palestinians suffering a sharply worsening humanitarian crisis.

Witkoff said mediators had



US Rep Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), joined by Palestinian rights activists, speaks at a press conference outside the US Capitol yesterday.

made a great effort but "Hamas does not appear to be coordinated or acting in good faith". "We will now consider alternative options to bring the hostages home and try to create a more stable environment for the people of Gaza," he wrote on X.

There was no immediate reaction from Hamas.

Both Israel and Hamas are facing pressure at home and abroad to reach a deal following almost two years of war, with the humanitarian situation inside Gaza deteriorating and Israelis worried about

the conditions in which hostages are being held.

Dozens of people have starved to death in Gaza the last few weeks as a wave of hunger crashes on the enclave, according to local health authorities.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the suffering and starvation in Gaza was an "unspeakable and indefensible" humanitarian catastrophe and called on Israel to urgently let in aid.

"While the situation has been grave for some time, it has reached new depths and continues to worsen. We are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe," Starmer said in a statement.

He will hold an emergency call with French and German partners on Friday to discuss what could be done to "stop the killing and get people the food they desperately need," he said.

The Gaza health ministry said two more people had died of malnutrition.

### Syria, Saudi sign 47 deals worth \$6bn

**QNA**  
Damascus

Syria and Saudi Arabia yesterday signed 47 investment agreements with a total value exceeding \$6bn, marking the conclusion of the Syrian-Saudi Investment Forum, held under the patronage and in the presence of Syrian President Ahmad al-Shar'a. The agreements covered a wide range of sectors, most notably industry, tourism, finance, housing, telecommunications, and logistics services. Major projects announced include the establishment of three new cement factories and the development of commercial and residential buildings in Damascus and Homs. Syrian Minister of Economy and Industry Mohammad Nidal al-Shaar stated in his speech at the forum that the launch of this co-operation with Saudi Arabia after decades of hiatus represents a great opportunity to build a new Syria, noting that the country is witnessing genuine progress toward growth and prosperity. For his part, Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid bin Abdulaziz al-Falih praised the bold steps taken by the Syrian government to improve the investment climate, affirming the kingdom's keenness to foster economic relations with Syria. He noted the participation of more than 20 government entities and 100 private sector companies from Saudi Arabia at the forum, calling on Syrian investors to take advantage of the wide investment opportunities available in the kingdom. **Page 4**

## Local Dates Festival opens with participation of over 100 farms

The 10th Local Dates Festival was opened at Souq Waqif yesterday with the participation of over 100 farms in Qatar.

The festival displays several types of dates and products along with locally grown fruits. Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Municipality and Souq Waqif Management, the festival is taking place at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif.

The opening ceremony was attended by dignitaries including Fahad Mohamed al-Qantani, Assistant Undersecretary, Agriculture and Food Security Affairs at the Ministry of Municipality and Abdulrahman Mohammed al-Naama, representative of the Private Engineering Office (PEO), Yousef Khalid al-Khulaifi, director of the Agricultural Affairs Department at the Ministry of Municipality and Mohammed Abdullah al-Salem, director of Souq Waqif and general supervisor of the festival.



Al-Khulaifi said the festival is recording increasing participation from the farmers. "When the festival was launched in 2016, only 19 farms participated. The latest edition has 116 farms," he said. This, according to al-Khulaifi,

reflects the growing interest in local dates. "The increasing turnout of visitors has contributed to the success of the festival," he said.

Al-Salem said the site at Souq Waqif is fully equipped to provide an ideal spot for the festival. "The festival is held to support the local farming sector. The last edition of the festival recorded sales exceeding 240 tonnes of dates," he said exuding his confidence in securing better turnout this year.

The annual dates festival features all Qatari varieties including Al Khalas, Al Khenaizi, Al Shishi, Al Barhi, Al Saqai, Al Razizi, Nabt Saif and Al Lulu. The festival also sells locally grown fruits including fig and papaya. Also, date products including cakes, shakes and icecreams are on sale.

To run until August 7, the festival is open from 4pm to 9pm except on Fridays and Saturdays when it is open from 4pm to 10pm. **Page 12**



Fahad Mohamed al-Qantani, Assistant Undersecretary for Agriculture and Food Security Affairs at the Ministry of Municipality opening the Local Dates Festival at Souq Waqif. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



## Qatar condemns Knesset's approval of 'Israeli sovereignty' over West Bank

Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, the State of Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, the United Arab Emirates, the Arab League, and the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) condemn, in the strongest terms, the Israeli Knesset's approval of the declaration calling for imposing the so-called "Israeli sovereignty" over the occupied West Bank.

They consider the move a flagrant and unacceptable violation of international law and a flagrant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, most notably resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 2334 (2016), which all affirm the invalidity of all measures and decisions aimed at legitimising the occupation, including settlement activities in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

The mentioned parties reiterate that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory and affirm that this unilateral Israeli action has no legal effect and cannot change the legal status of the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly East Jerusalem, which remains an integral part of that territory.

They also emphasise that such Israeli measures will only fuel the growing tension in the region, exacerbated by the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe.

These parties call on the international community, including the Security Council and all concerned parties, to assume their legal and moral responsibilities and take urgent action to halt illegal Israeli policies aimed at imposing a "fait accompli" by force, undermining the chances of achieving a just and lasting peace, and eliminating the prospects for a two-state solution.

The parties also renew their commitment to the two-state solution based on international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, and the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967, lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital. - **QNA**

## Amir sends condolences to Bangladesh president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Bangladeshi President Mohammad Shahabuddin on the victims of a military plane crash in the capital, Dhaka, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of condolences to Prime Minister Dr Muhammad Yunus. - **QNA**

## Qatar students win bronze at International Chemistry Olympiad held in Dubai

A team of students from Qatar won the bronze medal at the 57th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO 2025), held in Dubai, with the participation of 90 countries from around the world.

In a statement, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) said that four high school students represented Qatar in the competition: Youssef Mohamed Elshahat and Benjamin Allen Conde Danky from Qatar International School, Salem Faisal al-Marri from Doha Secondary School, and Moaz Sharif from Ahmed Bin Hanbal Secondary School.

The delegation from Qatar's efforts resulted in Elshahat winning the bronze medal, while Danky was awarded an honorary certificate in recognition of his outstanding performance - an achievement that reflects the growing strength of students in Qatar's specialised sciences and their ability to excel on the global stage.

The Olympiad featured several hours of rigorous scientific exams, covering advanced theoretical and practical topics in chemistry.

Each country was represented by a four-student team.

The Qatari team underwent an intensive training programme led by chemistry supervisors from the Science Department at the MoEHE's Educational Guidance Directorate.

The programme included both in-person and remote lectures and training sessions, conducted by highly qualified local and international trainers.

The preparation involved collaboration with academic institutions in Qatar, including Qatar University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (member of Qatar Foundation), particularly for the practical components of the training.

Qatar's participation in the 57th International Chemistry Olympiad aligns with the ministry's commitment to encouraging student involvement in international competitions and fostering an educational environment that supports academic excellence - advancing the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 to build a knowledge-based society and empower national talent for global leadership. - **QNA**

## NPC chief reaffirms Qatar's commitment to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Qatar has reaffirmed its strong commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, highlighting its integration within Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030).

The strategy reflects Qatar's determination to transform global commitments into tangible national progress.

This came in Qatar's statement delivered by HE the Secretary-General of the National Planning Council (NPC) Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa at the ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The NPC said in a post on its X platform yesterday that HE Dr Abdulaziz participated in a panel discussion on the sidelines of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The panel discussion focused on demographic resilience and sustainable development.

The National Planning Council added that Qatar's approach is based on robust data that aligns with the Qatar National Vision 2030, noting that it has already begun to achieve tangible results in the areas of labour force participation, education planning, and sustainable development. - **QNA**



HE Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa.

## Qatar presents VNR 2025 at key forum in New York

HE Dr Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa, secretary-general of the National Planning Council (NPC), presented Qatar's 2025 Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Wednesday.

Through a comprehensive presentation, HE Dr al-Khalifa outlined the key elements of Qatar's VNR 2025, highlighting the country's progress in implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in alignment with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy.

He addressed national priorities and examined the challenges faced in advancing sustainable development.

By integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national strategies, Qatar has successfully laid the foundations for innovation, inclusion and future foresight, driving strategic investments in education, healthcare, workforce development and a green economy," said HE Dr al-Khalifa.

"This alignment is further enabled by Qatar's leading role as a global convenor of sustainability dialogue, exemplified by its hosting of internationally recognised forums such as the Qatar Economic Forum, the Doha Forum and the Web Summit."

"Qatar's fourth Voluntary National Review encompassed a whole-of-society approach, involving a wide spectrum of stakeholders across non-profit organisations, civil society, academia, the public and private sectors, as well as international and regional organisations," he continued.

"Through three national workshops, the NPC facilitated a participatory process that incorporated interactive tools, open forums and collaborative drafting sessions."

Commenting on youth engagement in VNR preparation, HE Dr al-Khalifa added: "Youth participation was a central feature, with young people actively engaged in thematic sessions and brainstorming sessions to assess the progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."



## Papers signed between Qatar and Mauritania

The minutes of the exchange of ratification instruments for an agreement on co-operation in the field of environment and sustainable development, and an agreement on co-operation in the field of Islamic affairs and endowments, were signed on Tuesday in Nouakchott between the governments of Qatar and Mauritania. The minutes of exchange of documents were signed on behalf of Qatar by ambassador to Mauritania Shaheen bin Ali al-Kaabi, and on behalf of the Mauritanian government by the director of Legal Affairs and Treaties at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Co-operation and Mauritians Abroad Salek Mohamed Moussa. - **QNA**



## Closure on Hayyar Al Ghaleel Street

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced the temporary full traffic closure on Hayyar Al Ghaleel Street from 12 midnight today until 5am on July 27. The closure that will be implemented in coordination with the General Directorate of Traffic has been announced to carry out road maintenance works.

## Labour ministry undersecretary holds meeting with Philippine official

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour Sheikh Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani met on Tuesday with visiting Philippine Undersecretary for Foreign Employment and Welfare Service for Middle East and African Affairs Jainal T Rasul Jr. The meeting dealt with bilateral relations in the field of labour and the means to enhance them. - **QNA**

## Al Wakra Municipality destroys 115kg of stale food



Al Wakra Municipality has caught four violations during its periodic checks on food establishments.

According to an official statement from the Ministry of Municipality, notices were issued against the violators.

During the checks, 115kg of stale food products that were found to be unfit for human consumption were destroyed.

The checks were carried out by the Health Control Department of the municipality from July 14-20 to check various food establishments within its administrative boundaries.

A total of 1,589 checks were initiated to inspect food retail and trading establishments to ensure their compliance with approved health requirements.

Some 8,000kg was inspected at Al Wakra Fish Market to check their safety and compliance with health requirements.

## Ministry honours outgoing ILO Doha director

HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour Sheikh Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani met the director of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Office in Doha Max Tunon, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in Qatar. During the meeting, HE Sheikh Najwa presented Tunon with a commemorative shield in recognition of his distinguished service and enduring contributions. Throughout his tenure, Tunon played a pivotal role in advancing technical co-operation between Qatar and the ILO, strengthening joint programmes in labour and workers' rights, and promoting the exchange of expertise and innovative practices at both regional and global levels. - **QNA**



## Al-Ansari participates in discussion panel at UK's Cambridge University

Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari participated in a panel discussion during the opening session of the Gulf Research Meeting, organised by the Gulf Research Centre at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

During his remarks, Dr al-Ansari emphasised that the region is facing unprecedented challenges resulting from irresponsible behaviour that has extended beyond the borders of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states for the first time.

This, he said, requires a unified stance and effective co-operation to protect the region's security.

Dr al-Ansari indicated that the only way to address these challenges is to adhere to inter-

national law as a constant reference, noting that the GCC states are working in an integrated manner to ensure regional stability and support international efforts to achieve security in the region.

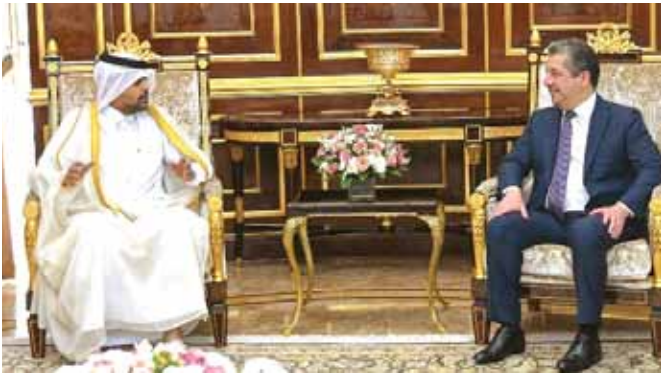
He highlighted the role played by Qatar in mediation and conflict resolution around the world, pointing in this regard to the successes of Qatari diplomacy in recent days on a number of international issues.

Qatar succeeded in reuniting a new batch of Ukrainian and Russian children with their families, and facilitating the return of a second group of Afghan citizens from Germany to their country, in addition to Qatar's communication with all parties to reach a broader and more comprehensive nuclear agreement between Iran and the US.

Regarding the Palestinian cause, Dr al-An-



sari stressed the importance of supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as a fundamental pillar of any lasting peace in the region. - **QNA**



## Prime minister of Iraq's Kurdistan region meets Qatar's consul-general

The prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, Masrour Barzani, met on Tuesday with Qatar's Consul-General in Erbil Hussein bin Ali al-Fadala, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. During their meeting, Barzani praised the consul's role in strengthening relations, wishing him success in his future assignments and wishing the relations further development and prosperity. - **QNA**

# Qatari cultural icons feature in Alaraby 2's *Eshroun* series

By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

Qatar has made an impression in the programme *Eshroun* (Arabic for 20), broadcast on Alaraby 2, with notable participation that goes beyond the involvement of Qatari artistic and cultural figures in commentary and voting across the episodes.

Several Qatari cultural landmarks and personalities were also selected among the best in the Arab world in categories including visual arts, theatre, libraries, and archaeology.

The Qatar National Library (QNL) stood out in the episode dedicated to the best Arab libraries, recognised as one of the region's leading knowledge institutions due to its unique collection of books and manuscripts, and its pivotal role in promoting knowledge and supporting scientific research in Qatar and beyond.

Additionally, the Al Zubarah archaeological site was included among the top Arab heritage landmarks, in recognition of its historical and cultural significance and its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the visual arts episode, artists Yousef Ahmad and Hassan al-Mulla were named among the top 20 Arab visual artists for their contributions that reflect Qatari identity and have enriched the Arab art scene.



Theatre critic Hassan Rashid.

In the episode focused on theatre, the play *Umm al-Zein* was featured for its relevance to the social transformations taking place in Qatar at the time of its performance.

Alongside these recognitions, Qatari intellectuals and artists offered commentary during the episodes, including theatre critic Hassan Rashid, artist and critic Jamila al-Shereem, visual artist Hanadi al-Darwish, and writer and novelist Huda al-Nuaimi.

A number of Qatari cultural and artistic figures participated in the voting for nominated

works and individuals.

These included Mohammed Yaqoub al-Yousef, Ibtisam al-Saffar, Abdullah al-Mulla, Moza al-Ishaq, and Mohammed al-Shahwani.

The programme *Eshroun* presents a list of the top 20 Arab icons in the fields of culture and the arts in each episode, based on votes from a select group of Arab critics and professionals.

Hosted by media personality Maya El Hajj, the show airs every Sunday at 8pm on Alaraby 2, with all episodes available on demand through the "Alaraby Plus" app.



Artist and critic Jamila al-Shereem.



Visual artist Hanadi al-Darwish.



Novelist Huda al-Nuaimi.



## Kosovo president meets Qatar's ambassador

Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani has met non-resident ambassador of Qatar to Kosovo Jabor bin Ali al-Dosari. During their meeting, they discussed co-operation and relations between the two countries. - **QNA**



## Cote d'Ivoire minister meets Qatar's envoy

Cote d'Ivoire Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Ivorians Abroad Kakou Houadja Leon met Qatar's ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire Mubarak bin Hussein al-Marri. Their meeting dealt with discussing bilateral co-operation between the two countries. - **QNA**

## QCDC showcases national expertise at NCDA Global Career Conference



The Qatar Career Development Centre (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation (QF), participated in the prestigious National Career Development Association (NCDA) 2025 Global Career Development Conference in Atlanta, US.

Representing the QCDC was Career Programmes and Services head Mohammed Ali al-Yafei, who delivered a presentation highlighting the QCDC's pioneering efforts to promote experiential learning through job-shadowing and hands-on training programmes.

Among the initiatives featured were "Little Employee", "Career Village",

and "My Career - My Future", innovative programmes designed to immerse students in real-world work environments and bridge the gap between academic learning and career readiness.

Al-Yafei also outlined the QCDC's integral national role in building Qatar's career development ecosystem, stressing the centre's commitment to aligning key stakeholders across the education, labour, and policy sectors to develop a unified, future-ready framework for career guidance.

He noted that the QCDC's participation reflects the centre's broader strategy to foster knowledge-based development and promote lifelong

learning in alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030.

By advancing human capital development and empowering youth to navigate a dynamic labour market, al-Yafei said, the QCDC directly supports the national goal of achieving a diversified and sustainable economy.

"Participating in international forums like the NCDA enables us to exchange insights, build strategic partnerships, and position Qatar as a hub for forward-thinking career development," he added. "By sharing our programmes and vision, we contribute to the global dialogue on preparing youth for tomorrow's world of work." - **QNA**

## 35.8% increase in trainees in 'Learn Arabic' programme for non-Arabic speakers

During the first half of this year, interactive "Learn Arabic" programme of Al Jazeera Media Institute held 12 courses, attracting 114 students from 23 nationalities, which reflects a 35.8% jump in the number of trainees compared to 84 participants in the same period last year.

The courses of this year attracted trainees from new nationalities from East and Southeast Asian countries such as China and Singapore, from Africa such as Nigeria, in addition to various nationalities such as Bangladesh, Spain, the US, Canada, Italy, Kazakhstan, India, Pakistan, France, Britain and Türkiye.

According to the team overseeing these courses, the participants' age ranged from 16-56.

The programme consists of various levels ranging from primary, intermediate and advanced courses, as well as specialised courses on language of journalism and media.

Seven learners joined the "journalism and media course" course: five media professionals and two persons interested in the field and Middle East issues.

This course relies heavily on analysing and discussing production of Al Jazeera from media reports and documentaries, where students are trained to understand the most common phrases the different uses of language in journalism, especially when dealing with comparisons.

The course also sheds light on popular journalistic vocabulary and focuses on frequently used terms, such as: "genocide", "war crimes", "individual attacks", and other terms that form an essential part of the language of contemporary media.

This year the programme also trained medical staff at a medical institution in Qatar, enabling them to communicate in Arabic with patients, with the focus on the most

common terminology and practical situations.

The team responsible said that the programme qualification is based on practical assessment of trainees at the end of each semester, where each student is asked to prepare an illustrated graduation project reflecting the language and communication skills acquired during the course.

In addition, each student must give a presentation to his classmates in order to practice presentation and public speaking skills in Arabic.

The evaluation process adopted by the Institute for "Learn Arabic" programme adheres to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which is adopted in most European countries for teaching second languages, and to the American "Active" standards, which were developed by specialised bodies in the United States and are widely applied globally.



An interactive Arabic class in progress.



## OPCW holds session on Israeli attacks in Syria

The Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) convened a special session on Wednesday, at the invitation of the director-general, to consider a request submitted by Qatar – in its capacity as the representative of the interests of Syria before the OPCW – regarding Israeli attacks on Syria and their obstruction of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and efforts to dismantle the chemical weapons programme of Syria’s former regime.

The Qatar delegation to the session was led by HE Dr Mutlaq bin Majid al-Qahtani, Qatar’s ambassador to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW.

In Qatar’s statement delivered during the session, HE Dr al-Qahtani strongly condemned Israel’s grave policies and violations, including its repeated military attacks on the territory of Syria.

He described these actions as a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, and a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter, particularly Article 2, which prohibits the use of force or the threat of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

HE Dr al-Qahtani pointed out that while Israel has not ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, it remains a signatory and is therefore obligated to refrain from any actions that would defeat the

object and purpose of the Convention, in accordance with Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

HE Dr al-Qahtani further noted that Israeli attacks on potential chemical sites in Syria – whether declared or undeclared – undermine disarmament efforts, jeopardise the safety of OPCW missions, and damage the credibility of the international chemical weapons prohibition regime.

He called for a clear and unequivocal condemnation of such actions and urged the international community to take all necessary steps to end these violations, safeguard the sovereignty of Syria, and uphold the integrity of the ongoing verification and dismantlement processes under the Convention.

Additionally, HE Dr al-Qahtani called on the Executive Council to explore the possibility of dispatching a technical field mission to assess the affected sites, document the damage, evaluate the impact on the organisation’s operations and the safety of its personnel, and provide a factual basis for accountability in line with international law.

He reaffirmed that the international community must not tolerate any conduct that violates the Chemical Weapons Convention, compromises the neutrality and credibility of the OPCW, or undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member states. – **QNA**

## GCC chief slams Israel’s annexation policy

Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) secretary-general Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi has expressed his strong condemnation and denunciation of the Israeli occupation forces’ Knesset proposal to impose Israeli sovereignty by force over the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

He stated that this proposal, with the intention of imposing sovereignty by force, confirms the dangerous annexation policies of the Israeli occupation forces, which now threaten the security of the region and constitute a flagrant violation of international and UN resolutions. – **QNA**

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# Qatar reaffirms rejection of the weaponisation of hunger

Qatar has reiterated its rejection of the use of food and the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war, calling on the international community to compel Israel to allow the safe, sustained, and unobstructed entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, to be distributed by international humanitarian organisations.

This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani during the UN Security Council’s quarterly open debate on “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” (MEPQ), held at UN headquarters in New York.

She emphasised that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is beyond description, amid widespread famine, the collapse of infrastructure and the healthcare system, the spread of disease, and a death toll surpassing 58,000, including nearly 18,000 children.

HE Sheikha Alya affirmed Qatar’s strong condemnation of Israel’s ongoing attacks on civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, and residential areas, stressing that the forced displacement of Palestinians in any form constitutes a blatant violation of international humanitarian law.

She also stated that Qatar has made sincere efforts, in co-ordination with Egypt and the United States, to reach a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

She noted that past diplomatic efforts had yielded tangible results through previously reached agreements, and that current mediation efforts are ongoing to bridge the gap between the parties and secure an urgent agreement.

HE Sheikha Alya further condemned the statements made by Israel’s minister of justice regarding the annexation of the West Bank, describing them as a continuation of illegal settlement policies and a flagrant violation of international law and UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

She also denounced the approval of new settlement construction and the attacks carried out by settlers as part of an ongoing series of crimes against the unarmed Palestinian population.



HE Sheikha Alya conveying Qatar’s stance during the UN Security Council’s quarterly open debate on ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question’, held at United Nations headquarters in New York

HE Sheikha Alya called for urgent international action to protect civilians and to ensure accountability for those responsible.

She conveyed Qatar’s condemnation of attempts by the Israeli occupation to alter the religious and historical status of holy sites, including the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli officials and settlers, the closure of the Jerusalem Fund, and the transfer of authority over Al Ibrahim Mosque to a Jewish religious council.

She said that Qatar has warned of the risks of regional spillover due to the conflict and condemned Israel’s attacks on Syria, reaffirming its support for the Syrian Arab Republic’s sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, and the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for stability and development.

HE Sheikha Alya also reaffirmed Qatar’s principled and unwavering support for Lebanon, its unity and territorial integrity, and called for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from all Lebanese territory, urging all parties to uphold the ceasefire agreement.

She expressed Qatar’s welcome of the upcoming United Nations High-Level International Conference on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Imple-

### WHO warns of deadly hunger crisis in Gaza

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has sounded the alarm over a potentially deadly hunger crisis unfolding in the Gaza Strip, where famine has become another killer threatening civilians amid harrowing conditions in the coastal enclave.

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated in Geneva that the 2.1mn people trapped in the war zone in Gaza are facing another killer on top of bombs and bullets: hunger.

He added that the WHO is witnessing a daily increase in deaths linked to malnutrition. Dr Tedros noted that since July 17, acute malnutrition treatment centres have been overwhelmed and lack sufficient supplies for emergency nutrition.

He reported that the WHO has documented the deaths of 21 children under the age of five due to malnutrition this year.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), around one in three people in Gaza go several days without eating.

More than 100 humanitarian and rights organisations have issued a joint appeal demanding unrestricted access to those suffering from hunger in Gaza. – **QNA**

mentation of the Two-State Solution to be co-chaired next week by Saudi Arabia and France.

Qatar hopes the conference will yield tangible results and clear international commitments, serving as a foundational step toward full United Nations membership for the State of Palestine.

HE Sheikha Alya concluded by reaffirming Qatar’s principled and consistent stance in support of a just and sustainable solution to the Palestinian issue, based on international legitimacy and ensuring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. – **QNA**

## Syria, Saudi Arabia sign 47 deals worth \$6bn



Syrian and Saudi dignitaries who took part in the Syrian-Saudi Investment Forum.

## CGB, GTA hold recruitment campaign for ‘Kawader’ candidates

As part of joint efforts to empower national talent and enhance workforce localisation in the government sector, the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau (CGB), in co-ordination with the General Tax Authority (GTA), organised a rapid recruitment campaign targeting candidates registered on the national employment co-ordination platform “Kawader” who applied for positions at the authority.

The campaign included on-the-spot interviews for more than 50 candidates seeking to join the GTA.

The initiative reflects ongoing co-operation among government entities to develop the public sector, support national initiatives, and build a sustainable pool of qualified Qatari human resources committed to institutional excellence. – **QNA**

## Ashghal, QSC conclude ‘Engineer of the Future’ programme

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal), in collaboration with the Qatar Scientific Club (QSC), concluded yesterday the fourth edition of the “Engineer of the Future” programme, which ran for two weeks with the participation of 36 high school students.

During the first week, students took part in field visits to several departments within the authority.

These visits featured interactive tours and hands-on workshops to familiarise the students with real engineering work in these sectors.

In the second week, participants moved to the QSC headquarters, where they engaged in technical workshops and practical training sessions in working groups.

They developed prototype models of applied engineering projects that addressed real-life needs, helping bridge theoretical learning with practical skills and fostering teamwork.

The final day featured a project showcase before a jury comprising engineers and experts, who evaluated the models based on creativity, feasibility, and execution potential. – **QNA**



## Ooredoo engages students at ‘Cyber Security Youth Summer Camp 2025’

Ooredoo has supported 200 students aged 13-17 from public and private schools across the country, as part of its participation in the “2025 Cyber Security Youth Summer Camp”.

The initiative is co-organised with the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Now in its second edition, the

camp stands as one of the key national initiatives under the NCSA and is aimed at equipping students with essential cybersecurity knowledge through a dynamic programme of interactive lectures, technical workshops, and field visits led by certified experts.

Ooredoo recently concluded its participation in the camp, during which 200 students participated in dedicated sessions that offered

a firsthand look at the company’s cybersecurity operations and its role in safeguarding Qatar’s critical digital infrastructure through advanced technologies, proactive threat detection, and continuous innovation.

“Empowering young minds with the skills and knowledge to protect our digital future is a responsibility we proudly embrace,” said Ooredoo Qatar senior marketing and communications director Sabah Rabbiah al-Kuwari. “Our participation in the Cyber Security Youth Summer Camp reflects Ooredoo’s commitment to strengthening national digital resilience and nurturing local talent.”

## Al Rayyan Municipality holds training for health inspectors



Al Rayyan Municipality, represented by the Health Inspection Section of the Municipal Control Department, organised field training for the section’s inspectors. The training addressed topics including improving inspection skills, methods for dealing with violations, mechanisms for effectively implementing health regulations and the exchange of successful field experiences. The importance of co-operation and co-ordination among team members was also emphasised to ensure the highest standards of public health and food safety.



# Tariff rate talks with US ‘not finished’: Manila

**AFP**  
Manila

Negotiations over the Philippines’ new 19% US tariff rate are “not finished”, a key government economic adviser said yesterday, tamping down fears over the deal’s potential impact on

the agriculture sector. President Ferdinand Marcos flew back to the country late Wednesday after a three-day trip to Washington that saw him emerge from a meeting with Donald Trump having shaved a single point off a 20% levy on Filipino goods.

What might “seem like a very small concession” was in fact a “significant achievement”, Marcos told reporters who questioned if the Philippines – a longtime US treaty ally – was getting the short end of the stick.

The US president, meanwhile, touted “zero tariffs” on American goods headed to the archipelago nation of 115mn.

But Marcos economic adviser

Frederick Go said yesterday that tariffs would not be dropped in every category.

“The negotiations are not yet finished. Our technical working groups will continue to work with their counterparts from America to finalise the details of this arrangement,” he told reporters in Manila.

“There are still many things to be discussed.” Since the Trump meeting, the Marcos administration has downplayed the potential effects of the tariffs, noting just 16% of the country’s exports go to the US, with about two-thirds being electronic components not subject to levies.

Go yesterday said that while tariffs would disappear for certain

agricultural products like soy and wheat, key areas such as sugar, corn, rice and fish would remain protected for Filipino farmers.

“I can guarantee to you we studied our biggest industries in the country where we are a significant market producer. We didn’t include those in our arrangements with the US,” he said.

# Xi calls for ‘proper handling of frictions’ at tense summit with EU officials

**Reuters**  
Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday urged top European Union officials to “properly handle differences and frictions” as he criticised Brussels’ recent trade actions against Beijing at a tense summit dominated by concerns on trade and the Ukraine war.

Expectations were low for the summit in the Chinese capital marking 50 years of diplomatic ties after weeks of escalating tension and wrangling that led to the duration being abruptly halved to a single day at Beijing’s request.

“The current challenges facing Europe do not come from China,” Xi told visiting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa, state news agency Xinhua said.

He urged the EU to “adhere to open co-operation and properly handle differences and frictions” after von der Leyen earlier called for a rebalancing of trade ties with the world’s second largest economy, saying relations were at an “inflection point”.

“Improving competitiveness cannot rely on ‘building walls and

fortresses,” Xi added, according to Xinhua. “Decoupling and breaking chains” will only result in isolation.”

“It is hoped that the European side will keep the trade and investment market open and refrain from using restrictive economic and trade tools,” Xi said.

EU trade actions in the past year have targeted Chinese exports of electric vehicles among other goods, and its officials have repeatedly complained about Chinese industrial overcapacity.

Xi also warned EU leaders to “make correct strategic choices”, in a further veiled criticism of Brussels’ recent hawkish stance on China.

“As our co-operation has deepened, so have imbalances,” von der Leyen told Xi during their meeting in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, according to a pool report.

“We have reached an inflection point,” she added, urging China to “come forward with real solutions”.

She was referring to the EU’s trade deficit with China, which ballooned to a historic 305.8bn euros (\$360bn) last year.

“We think increasing market access for European companies in China, limiting the external impact of involution, and reducing export controls are important steps forward,” von der Leyen told Premier

Li Qiang later, according to a pool report.

She described her meeting with Xi as “excellent”.

The two sides also issued a joint statement on climate, reiterating their commitment to new climate action plans across the whole economy.

They will boost co-operation in areas such as energy transition, adaptation, methane emissions management and control, carbon markets and green and low-carbon technologies, the joint statement said.

At the start of US President Donald Trump’s second term, both sides had more of a consensus in working together to tackle trade challenges from the US, said Cui Hongjian, a foreign policy professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

“Recently the situation has changed,” Cui said. “The EU has continued to compromise with the US, which means that there is currently a lack of impetus for EU-China ties to become closer.”

After intense negotiations, the EU is likely to seal a trade deal with the US for a broad tariff of 15% on its exports, down from 30% threatened by President Donald Trump.

Costa yesterday said the EU officials discussed “at length” their expectations for China to discourage Russia in its war against Ukraine.



Residents wade through a flooded street after heavy rains in Dagupan City, Pangasinan province, north of Manila, yesterday.

# Philippines shuts schools and cancels flights as storm nears

**AFP**  
Manila

The Philippines shut down schools and cancelled flights yesterday as typhoon-driven rains pounded the northern island of Luzon, a situation President Ferdinand Marcos called “the new normal”.

Typhoon Co-May, upgraded from a tropical storm overnight, follows days of monsoon rains that have killed at least 19 people and left another 11 missing across the archipelago since July 18, according to the national disaster agency.

With maximum sustained winds of 120kms per hour, the

typhoon was expected to make landfall on the west coast in either La Union or Ilocos Sur province by today morning, the country’s weather service said.

Marcos yesterday said that climate change meant Filipinos needed to be thinking about how to adapt to a “new normal”.

“This is not an extraordinary situation anymore... This will be our lives no matter what we do,” he told a televised cabinet briefing, adding the country should plan for the long-term in addressing natural disasters.

“This is the way it’s going to be as far as we know for... many decades to come, so let’s just prepare,” he said. “We have to understand

that the climate has changed, the rain patterns have changed,” he added, pointing to recent devastating flooding in the US state of Texas. Around 70 domestic and international flights in the Philippines were cancelled yesterday due to the storms, the civil aviation authority said.

The government later announced that classes across Luzon would remain suspended through today.

Tens of thousands were evacuated across Manila earlier this week by floodwaters that swamped some neighbourhoods in waist-deep water and left residents of nearby provinces stranded and in need of rescue by boat.

**North Korea’s Kim urges troops to prepare ‘for real war’**

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has urged his military to be ready “for real war” as he observed a firing contest of artillery units, Pyongyang state media said yesterday. Kim’s remarks follow the North’s deployment of troops and weapons to help Russia during its more than three-year long offensive in Ukraine.

Video footage aired by state-run Korea Central Television yesterday showed soldiers from artillery units firing shells towards the sea. Kim is seen looking through binoculars at an observation post, flanked by two military officials, but the location was not disclosed. He urged the soldiers to be ready “for real war” at “anytime” and be capable of “destroying the enemy in every battle”, the Korean Central News Agency reported.

South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have reported Pyongyang sent more than 10,000 soldiers to Russia, along with artillery shells, missiles and rocket systems.

# Indonesia jails five drug smugglers



British national Elliot James Shaw (left) and Argentinian national Eleonora Gracia (right) walk to a court room in Denpasar on Indonesia’s resort island of Bali yesterday. An Indonesian court on July 24 sentenced an Argentine woman and four British nationals to prison in two cases, after they were found guilty of smuggling cocaine into the popular resort island of Bali.

# Shipowner ordered to pay \$1bn for Lanka disaster

**AFP**  
Colombo

Sri Lanka’s highest court yesterday ordered a Singaporean shipping firm to pay \$1bn in damages for causing the island’s worst marine pollution when its vessel sank four years ago.

The Supreme Court directed Express Feeders, the owners of the MV X-Press Pearl which sank off Colombo Port in June 2021 after a fire that raged for nearly two weeks, to pay the money within a year.

“The X-Press Pearl... shall make further compensation payments as may be directed by this court,” the 361-page judgement read.

Environmentalists had brought the case to court, alleging that both government

authorities and firm owners had failed to prevent the fire from becoming an unprecedented ecological disaster.

The shipping firm initially apologised and paid \$7.85mn for the immediate cleanup and as compensation for fishermen who were deprived of their livelihoods following the catastrophic incident.

They then obtained an order from London’s admiralty court in July 2023, limiting their liability to a maximum of £19mn (\$25mn). Sri Lanka has appealed that decision.

The Sri Lankan government also filed a lawsuit against the ship’s owners in the Singapore International Commercial Court, claiming unspecified damages.

That case has been put on hold pending a decision from the admiralty court in London.

# US-S Korea trade talks postponed over Bessent schedule

**Reuters**  
Seoul

Talks between top South Korean and US officials to negotiate over US President Donald Trump’s tariffs have been postponed due to a scheduling conflict for US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, South Korea’s finance ministry said yesterday.

The two sides will reschedule the so-called 2+2 meeting between Bessent and South Korean Finance Minister Koo Yun-cheol, as well as the top trade envoys of both countries, as soon as possible, the ministry said.

Koo was set to board a flight for Washington yesterday to attend the meeting today in the hope of hammering out a deal that would spare Asia’s fourth-largest economy from Trump’s punishing 25% tariffs set to take effect on August 1.

The sudden announcement by the finance ministry an hour before Koo’s departure cast fresh doubts about whether Seoul would be able to pull off an agreement to avert US import duties that could hit some of its major exporting industries.

“It might be difficult to reschedule 2+2 again before August 1st, so the best we can do is for the trade chief Yeo to request an extension

of the tariff exemption,” said Heo Yoon, international trade professor at Sogang University, referring to Minister for Trade Yeo Han-koo.

The benchmark Kospi stock index trimmed early gains to close up 0.2%, as auto and auto parts makers fell on news of the postponed talks, with Hyundai Motor dropping 2%.

Washington gave no further details on the postponement of today’s meeting, the finance ministry said, though US officials are embroiled in a flurry of different negotiations on trade, including with China and the European Union.

Top South Korean officials flew to Washington this week amid a

push to reach a deal by August 1.

Wi Sung-lac, South Korea’s top senior adviser, said he spoke to senior US officials on a range of topics from security to the economy.

In a statement, Wi denied a media report that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio refused to meet him, saying they had spoken by telephone after Rubio was called away to speak to Trump.

“Negotiations on pending issues between South Korea and the US are in a critical final phase,” Wi told reporters at the airport after returning to South Korea yesterday.

Trade Minister Yeo and Industry Minister Kim Jung-kwan, who are also in Washington, have

held meetings with US officials as scheduled, the South Korean government said.

Yeo will also meet US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, the industry ministry said.

Pressure on South Korea heightened this week after Japan clinched a deal with the US, which Trump said would see Tokyo allowing greater market access for American products including autos and some agricultural products.

The agreement includes a commitment by Japan for a \$550bn package of US-bound investment and loans.

The two major Asian security allies of the US compete in areas

such as autos and steel, and Japan’s deal was seen by investors as a benchmark for the type of agreement Seoul should target in negotiations, analysts have said.

The involvement of a range of ministerial-level officials in talks with US officials in recent days suggested the countries were working on a trade package that could involve a range of sectors, including South Korea’s sensitive farm markets.

South Korean officials have said access to US markets is key to industrial cooperation between the allies that would help rebuild American manufacturing industries, including shipbuilding.

# Australia eases curbs on US beef imports that angered Trump

Reuters  
Canberra/Sydney

Australia will ease restrictions on beef imports from the US, the country's agriculture ministry said yesterday, potentially smoothing trade talks with US President Donald Trump, who had attacked its rules.

Still, the decision, which US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins called a win for Trump, is unlikely to significantly boost US shipments because beef prices are much lower in Australia, analysts said.

Australia Agriculture Minister Julie Collins said in a statement a "rigorous science and risk-based assessment" had concluded that US measures to monitor and control the movement of cattle meant biosecurity risks were being effectively managed.

The government "will never compromise on biosecurity", she said, adding: "Australia stands for open and fair trade – our cattle industry has significantly benefited from this."

Canberra has restricted US beef imports since 2003 due to concerns about bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease.

Meat from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the US has been allowed into Australia since 2019. But few suppliers were able to prove their animals had been only in the US, because cattle frequently moved between the US, Canada and Mexico without being adequately tracked.

The US has been improving its ability to monitor animals' movements to limit the spread of avian influenza and the New World screwworm, a parasite that eats cattle alive.

Recognising those improvements, Australia will now also accept beef sourced from cattle born in Canada or Mexico and legally imported and slaughtered in the US, the agriculture ministry said.

Australian firms will be able to apply for import permits from July 28, it added.

"Gone are the days of putting American farmers on the sidelines,"

US agriculture secretary Rollins said in a statement crediting Trump with opening Australia's market.

"It's absurd that non-scientific trade barriers prevented our beef from being sold to consumers in Australia for the last 20 years," she said.

News of Australia changing its policy was first reported by the Australian Financial Review. The report said Australia will use the easing of rules to argue its case for the US to wind back 50% tariffs on steel and aluminium and Trump's threat to impose a 200% tariff on pharmaceuticals. Collins said the decision was a purely scientific one.

Trump in April singled out the beef trade disparity with Australia after Australia's beef exports to the US surged last year, reaching A\$4bn (\$2.64bn) amid a slump in US beef production.

Australia's biosecurity regimen aims to keep its cattle disease-free and help it preserve access to lucrative markets such as Japan and South Korea.

Industry body Cattle Australia and the shadow agriculture minister said there should be an independent review of the decision before it goes into effect.

"There is simply too much at stake," said Will Evans, Cattle Australia's CEO. "The highest level of caution must be exercised to protect Australia's beef industry."

US beef shipments to Australia restarted last year after a hiatus.

But exports remained tiny. Last year's shipment of 269 tonnes of beef to Australia was the most for any year, beating out the 263 tonnes sent in 1995, Australian customs data show.

Australia has shipped between around 150,000 tonnes and 400,000 tonnes of beef every year to the US since 1990, with US fast-food chains prizing Australian product for its lower fat content and competitive prices.

Cattle prices in the US are almost always higher than in Australia and are currently double Australian levels, said Matt Dagleish, a meat and livestock analyst at consultants Epi-sode 3.



People in Buriram province, Thailand, rest at a shelter yesterday, following recent clashes along the disputed border with Cambodia.

# Thai jet bombs Cambodian targets as border row grows

Reuters  
Bangkok/Phnom Penh

Thailand yesterday scrambled an F-16 fighter jet to bomb targets in Cambodia after artillery volleys from both sides killed at least 11 civilians, as border tension boiled over into rare armed conflict between the southeast Asian countries.

Both blamed each other for starting a morning clash at a disputed area of the border, which quickly escalated from small arms fire to heavy shelling in at least six locations 209kms apart along a frontier where sovereignty has been disputed for more than a century.

Thailand positioned six F-16 fighter jets in an uncommon combat deployment, one of which was mobilised to strike a Cambodian military target, among measures Cambodia's foreign ministry called "reckless and brutal military aggression".

Thailand's military said the use of air power was to strike with precision.

The worst fighting between the countries in 13 years came after Thailand on Wednesday recalled its ambassador to Phnom Penh and expelled Cambodia's envoy, in response to a second Thai soldier losing a limb to a landmine that Bangkok alleged had been laid recently by rival troops.

The two countries have been braced for conflict since the killing of a Cambodian soldier late in May during a brief skirmish, with troops reinforced on both sides of the border amid a full-blown diplomatic crisis that brought Thailand's fragile coalition government to the brink of collapse.

Thailand said there were 12 fatalities in three Thai provinces, 11 of them civilians including an eight-year-old boy. Authorities said 31 people



Cambodian soldiers reload the BM-21 multiple rocket launcher in Preah Vihear province yesterday.

were injured yesterday. The number of Cambodian casualties was unclear.

"We condemn this – using heavy weapons without a clear target, outside of conflict zones... the use of force and did not adhere to international law," Thailand's acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai told reporters. "We remain committed to peaceful means and there should be discussions, but what happened was a provocation and we had to defend ourselves."

Thailand's Health Minister Somsak Thepsuthin told reporters a hospital was hit by shelling in Surin province, an attack he said should be considered "a war crime".

Cambodian government, defence and foreign ministry officials at a press conference gave no indication of fatalities sustained or any estimate of the number of people evacuated.

In a letter to Pakistan, the current president of the United Nations Security Council, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet, urged the body to convene a meeting to stop what he

called "unprovoked and premeditated military aggression" by Thailand in violation of international law.

As clashes spread to different border areas, Thai villagers including children and the elderly fled to concrete shelters fortified with sandbags and car tyres.

"How many rounds have been fired? It's countless," an unidentified woman in Surin province told the Thai Public Broadcasting Service while hiding in the shelter as gunfire and explosions were heard in the background.

Video footage showed a plume of thick black smoke rising from a gas station in the neighbouring Sisaket province, as firefighters rushed to extinguish the blaze.

Thailand has evacuated more than 40,000 people from border areas, moving many to temporary shelters, where elderly people and small children gathered on floor mats as authorities prepared meals and unloaded food and bottled water from trucks.

"I'm worried about my children," said Suphap Wongwai, an evacuee in Surin province. "My children are scared and crying."

Thailand and Cambodia have bickered for decades over jurisdiction of various undemarcated points along their 817km land border, with ownership of the ancient Hindu temples Ta Moan Thom and the 11th century Preah Vihear central to the disputes.

Preah Vihear was awarded to Cambodia by the International Court of Justice in 1962 but tension escalated in 2008 after Cambodia attempted to list it as a Unesco World Heritage site. That led to skirmishes over several years and at least a dozen deaths.

Cambodia in June said it had asked the ICJ to resolve its disputes with Thailand, which says it has never recognised the court's jurisdiction and prefers a bilateral approach.

## Ex-Labour leader Corbyn launches new UK party

Former leftist Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn announced he was forming a new political party alongside another ex-member of Britain's ruling party. Corbyn, who lost two elections as Labour leader in 2017 and 2019, and fellow independent MP Sarah Sultana said the new outfit would be called Your Party. "It's time for a new kind of political party. One that is rooted in our communities, trade unions and social movements," they said. They called for a "mass redistribution of wealth and power" and said they would "keep demanding an end to all arms sales to Israel". They also committed to a "free and independent Palestine". Prime Minister Keir Starmer faces growing calls within Labour to recognise a Palestinian state. Corbyn, 76, stepped down as Labour leader after overseeing its worst result in decades, when it was trounced in the 2019 election by the Conservatives.

## New Carbon Garden in Britain



A woman looks up at a fungi-inspired pavilion as part of the new Carbon Garden, a permanent installation highlighting the role of plants and fungi in tackling climate change, at Kew Gardens in London, Britain, yesterday.

## Myanmar junta retakes gold mining hub

AFP  
Yangon

Myanmar's junta yesterday claimed to have ousted anti-coup rebels from a gold mining hub after a year-long battle, its second declared recapture of a key town in a week.

A civil war has consumed Myanmar since a 2021 coup deposed the civilian government, with the military battling a myriad of pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic armed organisations.

Scattered anti-coup forces initially struggled to make headway, but won a string of stunning victories – mostly in the north – when many banded together for a co-ordinated offensive starting late 2023.

This year, the junta's China- and Russia-backed forces

have clawed back ground on the northern front, and state media said its soldiers managed "to fully retake" the town of Thabeikkyin on Wednesday.

One resident, Ye Dinn, said people had fled fighting to shelter in the forest or nearby schools and monasteries.

"People have nothing to eat and no place to flee to," the 65-year-old said.

Thabeikkyin, located about 100kms north of the second most populous city of Mandalay, is a lucrative hive of gold mining sitting on the banks of the Irrawaddy River bisecting Myanmar.

State mouthpiece the *Global New Light of Myanmar* said an anti-coup alliance attacked Thabeikkyin with "overwhelming strength" last August, but its counteroffensive retook the town after 17 major battles.

# Scotland awaits famous son as Trump visits mother's homeland

AFP  
London

Donald Trump will fly into Scotland today for a private visit to the land where his mother was born and spent her childhood on the remote Isle of Lewis.

"It's great to be home, this was the home of my mother," he said when he arrived on his last visit in 2023.

Born Mary Anne MacLeod, Trump's mum emigrated to the US when she was 18. She then met and married Fred Trump, kickstarting the family's meteoric rise that has

led their son, Donald, all the way to the White House.

During his visit the current US president, who is six months into his second term, plans to officially open his latest golf course in northeastern Aberdeen – making him the owner of three such links in Scotland.

Although Donald Trump has talked openly about his father Fred – a self-made millionaire and property developer whose own father emigrated from Germany – he remains more discreet about his mother, who died in 2000 at the age of 88.

She was born in 1912 on Lewis, the largest island in the Outer

Hebrides in northwest Scotland, and grew up in the small town of Tong.

Trump visited the humble family home in 2008, pausing for a photo in front of the two-storey house. He has cousins who still live in the house, which has been modernised since Mary Anne MacLeod's time but remains modest, standing just around 650 feet from the sea.

Its slate roof and grey walls are a world away from Trump's luxury Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, or his gold-adorned apartment in Trump Tower, New York.

According to the British press, which based its reports on local documents, Trump's grandfa-

ther was a fisherman. MacLeod was the 10th and last child of the family, and her first language was Gaelic before she learnt English at school.

Life was tough on Lewis after World War I, which claimed the lives of many of the island's young men. Following in the footsteps of her older sister, and so many other Scots over the decades, she decided to emigrate to the US.

MacLeod boarded the SS Transylvania from Glasgow in 1930, bound for New York.

On her immigration papers she wrote she was a "domestic" when asked about her profession. One of Trump's sisters recalled that Ma-

cLeod had worked as a nanny in a wealthy family.

But a few years later her life turned around when she reportedly met Fred Trump at an evening dance. They were married in 1936 in Manhattan's wealthy Upper East Side, and MacLeod became a US citizen in 1942.

As Fred Trump built and expanded his property empire in the city by constructing middle-class homes in districts such as Queens and Brooklyn, Mary Anne devoted herself to charitable works.

"Even in old age, rich and respected and with her hair arranged in a dynamic orange swirl, she would drive a rose-coloured Rolls-

Royce to collect coins from laundry machines in apartment blocks that belonged to the Trumps," the *Times* wrote this month.

Photos of her hobnobbing with New York high society show her with her blonde hair swept up in a bun, reminiscent of her son's distinctive side-swept coiffure.

She was "a great beauty," Donald Trump has gushed in one of his rare comments about his mother, adding she was also "one of the most honest and charitable people I have ever known".

In 2018 then-British prime minister Theresa May presented Trump with his family tree tracing his Scottish ancestors.

# India resists EU’s oversight proposal on capital flows

Reuters  
New Delhi

India has pushed back against a proposal by the European Union as part of free trade agreement talks which would give the 27-nation bloc a say in decisions related to capital flows, two Indian govern-

ment sources said. The proposal, unusual in most free trade agreements, has raised concerns in New Delhi over limiting its ability to act unilaterally during crises, as both sides aim to conclude the deal by the end of 2025.

India has in the past imposed restrictions on outflows, including during a currency crisis in 2013.

In its proposal to India, the EU has suggested an oversight committee on trade in services and investment policies which would review policy actions, including those taken during financial or balance of payments crises.

“India fears such oversight could allow the committee to question or reverse crisis-time policy measures

taken by it, which compromises a sovereign’s decision-making powers,” one of the sources said.

India, which trades \$190bn in goods annually with the EU, has also sought clarity on whether decisions taken during emergencies, such as restrictions on capital flows, could be overturned if the committee finds them inappropriate.

While trying to limit India’s control over capital account decisions, the EU proposes it would have the right to impose temporary restrictions on capital outflows during serious economic difficulties.

India argues this creates an imbalance in safeguard powers and deviates from the EU’s own practice in FTAs with Vietnam, Singapore,

and South Korea, where both sides can apply such measures in exceptional circumstances, the source said. Both sources declined to be identified.

E-mails sent to the Reserve Bank of India, ministries of finance and commerce and to the prime minister’s office requesting comment did not receive a response.

# Anil Ambani’s group companies ‘under probe for bank loan fraud’

Reuters  
Mumbai

India’s financial crime-fighting agency searched 35 locations linked to Reliance Anil Ambani Group as part of an investigation into alleged money laundering and siphoning of public funds, a government source said yesterday.

The enforcement directorate alleges the group orchestrated a “well-planned” scheme to siphon off Rs30bn (\$350mn) in loans from YES Bank to many shell companies between 2017 and 2019, the source said on condition of anonymity, as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

Anil Ambani’s Reliance group entities are accused of paying bribes to YES Bank officials before loans were disbursed, the source said, adding that loan approvals violated the bank’s processes.

The probe also found gross violations in YES Bank’s loan approval process, such as lending to companies with weak financials, backdating credit memos, “evergreening” loans – issuing fresh loans to avoid labelling assets as nonperforming – and misrepresenting financials.

Representatives for Reliance group and YES Bank did not respond to requests for comment.

Several group firms of Anil Ambani, the younger brother of billionaire Mukesh Ambani, have gone into bankruptcy since 2017.

YES Bank, from which Anil Ambani group firms had borrowed heavily, was declared insolvent in 2020 and rescued by a group of Indian lenders in a plan approved by the central bank.

Japan’s Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation is seeking a 20% stake in a deal that has yet to get regulatory approval.

The bank’s former promoter, Rana Kapoor, was charged with bank fraud by the financial crime agency in 2020 and later arrested. He pleaded not guilty and was granted bail in 2024 by a special court in India’s financial capital of Mumbai, according to local media reports.

The financial crime agency can now seize or attach assets of Anil Ambani entities as the “proceeds of crime,” said Debopriyo Moulik, a lawyer at India’s Supreme Court. However, the group companies can challenge the agency’s findings in court, he said.

Anil Ambani’s group entities have been subject to several regulatory actions in recent years. In August 2024, the markets regulator Sebi (Securities and Exchange Board of India) barred Anil Ambani and 24 others from securities markets for five years, citing fund diversion from Reliance Home Finance.

The markets regulator has shared findings of its investigation on Reliance Home Finance with the financial crime agency, which is likely to probe a sharp rise in corporate loans granted by the finance company, the source said.



Britain’s Prime Minister Keir Starmer (second right) and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi (second left) shake hands next to Britain’s Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Secretary Jonathan Reynolds (left) and India’s Minister of Industry and Supply Piyush Goyal (right) holding the Free Trade Agreement newly signed during a meeting, at Chequers, in Aylesbury, England, yesterday.

# Britain and India sign free trade pact during Modi visit

Reuters  
London/New Delhi

Britain and India yesterday signed a free trade agreement during a visit by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sealing a deal to cut tariffs on goods from textiles to alcohol and cars and allow more market access for businesses.

The two countries concluded talks on the trade pact in May after three years of stop-start negotiations, with both sides hastening efforts to clinch a deal in the shadow of tariff turmoil unleashed by US President Donald Trump.

The agreement between the world’s fifth and sixth largest economies aims to increase bilateral trade by a further £25.5bn (\$34bn) by 2040.

It is Britain’s biggest trade deal since it left the European Union in 2020, although its impact will be a fraction of the effect of leaving

the orbit of its closest trading partner.

For India, it represents its biggest strategic partnership with an advanced economy, and one which could provide a template for a long mooted deal with the EU as well as talks with other regions.

It will take effect after a ratification process, likely within a year.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the deal would bring “huge benefits” for both countries, making trade cheaper, quicker and easier.

“We’ve entered a new global era, and that is one that requires us to step up, not to stand aside... by building deeper partnerships and alliances,” Starmer said.

Modi said the agreement was “a blueprint for our shared prosperity,” highlighting how Indian goods from textiles to jewellery and seafood would get better market access.

They also agreed a partnership covering ar-

eas such as defence and climate, and said they would strengthen co-operation on tackling crime.

Under the trade agreement, India will cut duties on cars to 10% within five years from current levels of up to 110% under a quota system that will be gradually liberalised.

In return, Indian manufacturers will gain access to the UK market for electric and hybrid vehicles, also under a quota system.

The ministry has said 99% of Indian exports to Britain would benefit from zero duties under the deal, including textiles, while Britain will see reductions on 90% of its tariff lines, with the average tariff UK firms face dropping to 3% from 15%.

While it is Britain’s biggest deal since Brexit, the projected boost to British economic output, of £4.8bn a year by 2040, is small compared to the country’s gross domestic product of £2.6tn pounds in 2024.

## Tanker with Russian oil for Nayara Energy diverts to another port

An oil tanker carrying Russian Urals crude has been diverted away from the EU-sanctioned Nayara Energy’s Vadinar port in India to unload its cargo at the port of Mundra, according to shipping data and four sources yesterday. Two tankers have also skipped loading refined products from Vadinar port since Friday when Nayara, 49%-owned by oil producer Rosneft, was among companies targeted in a fresh package of sanctions imposed by the European Union on Russia.

The Omni tanker, carrying about 700,000 barrels of Urals, arrived at Vadinar port on July 18 and is now anchored off Mundra port, according to data from LSEG and Kpler and the sources yesterday. Its destination was changed from Vadinar to Mundra on Wednesday, the data showed. The cargo has now been bought by a refinery operated by HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, a joint venture between Hindustan Petroleum and Mittal Energy Investments.

## River Ganges water levels rise



People rest on boats in the flooded Manikarnika Ghat after a rise in water level of the river Ganges in Varanasi yesterday.

# Dr Reddy’s set to launch obesity drugs in 87 nations

Reuters  
Hyderabad

Dr Reddy’s Laboratories plans to launch a cheaper copycat version of Novo Nordisk’s blockbuster weight-loss drug Wegovy in 87 countries next year, the Indian drugmaker’s CEO, Erez Israeli, said.

Drugmakers are racing to get a share of the global obesity drug market, expected to generate around \$150bn in sales by the early 2030s, after Denmark-based Novo and its US rival Eli Lilly saw extraordinary demand for their medicines.

Dr Reddy’s initially plans to launch the generic version of semaglutide – the active ingredient of Novo’s Wegovy and diabetes medicine Ozempic – in Canada, India, Brazil, Türkiye

and other emerging markets, subject to patent expiry, Israeli said.

“US and Europe will open later... (and) all the other western markets will be open between 2029 to 2033,” Israeli said a press conference to discuss the company’s earnings.

He expects the generic drug to generate ‘hundreds of millions of dollars’ in sales for the company.

Semaglutide’s patent is expected to expire in several countries next year, including in India in March.

Novo Nordisk had sued Dr Reddy’s in May alleging patent infringement of semaglutide, according to documents.

Dr Reddy’s has filed relevant regulatory applications in all the countries it is planning to launch the generic version in, Israeli said.

# Air India warned over lapses in fatigue management, training

Reuters  
New Delhi

Air India has been warned by India’s aviation regulator that it could face enforcement action for breaching safety standards related to crew fatigue management and training, government notices to the airline showed.

The airline self-reported the problems, which occurred this year and last year, to the directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) last month, just days after one of its Boeing 787 Dreamliners crashed in Ahmedabad city, killing 260 people.

Four government notices, dated July 23, criticised Air India for repeated failures in safety compliance and follow many other warnings in the past. Potential regulatory action could include fines or ordering that executives be removed from their jobs.

They cite a combined 29 violations, including pilots not being given mandatory rest, poor compliance with simulator training requirements, lack of training for a high-altitude airport and flying on international routes with insufficient cabin crew.

“Despite repeated warning and enforcement action of non-compliance in the past, systemic issues

related to compliance monitoring, crew planning, and training governance remain unresolved,” said one of the notices.

“The recurrence of such violations suggests a failure to establish and enforce effective control mechanisms,” it said.

Air India said in a statement that the notices related to voluntary disclosures made over the past year, and it will respond to the regulator.

“We remain committed to the safety of our crew and passengers,” it added.

The DGCA did not respond to a request for comment.

Air India has come under intense

scrutiny since the Ahmedabad crash, which was the world’s worst aviation disaster in a decade.

A preliminary report found that the fuel control switches were flipped almost simultaneously after takeoff and there was pilot confusion in the cockpit. One pilot asked the other why he cut off the fuel and the other responded that he hadn’t done so, the report said.

Separately, the EU’s aviation agency said this month it will investigate Air India Express, the airline’s budget service, after the media reported the carrier did not change the engine parts of an Airbus A320 in a timely manner.

India’s watchdog also found in

May that Air India flew three Airbus planes even though they were overdue for checks on emergency equipment.

The crash and the warning notices have increased challenges for Indian conglomerate Tata, which took over the airline from the government in 2022 with the aim of turning it into a world-class airline.

This week’s government notices were addressed to senior executives, including the airline’s director of flight operations, Pankul Mathur, and its director of training, Amar Bhatia.

One of the notices said there had been “weekly rest violations” de-

tected for two pilots in June 2024 and one in June 2025, though it did not say how many extra hours the pilots flew.

Another notice said that last year, two pilots took simulator training but did not start flying within the prescribed time limit, a lapse that requires them to undergo training again.

In April this year, a pilot flew from Kathmandu without the mandatory special simulator training required for the airport, the notice added. Kathmandu has mountainous terrain and a high-altitude table-top runway. Table-top runways have steep drops at one or both ends.



# 48 killed in Soviet-era passenger plane crash

Reuters  
Moscow

An Antonov An-24 passenger plane carrying 48 people crashed in Russia's far east yesterday as it was preparing to land, killing everyone on board in an incident that spotlighted the continued use of old, Soviet-era aircraft.

The burning fuselage of the plane, which was made in 1976, was spotted by a search helicopter after it disappeared from radar screens. It had been attempting to land for a second time after failing to touch down on its first approach, the Far Eastern Transport Prosecutor's Office said in a statement.

Operated by the privately owned Siberian regional airline Angara, it had been en route from the city of Blagoveshchensk near the Chinese border to Tynda, an important railway junction in the Amur region. It was carrying 42 passengers, including five children, and six crew.

The regional governor and federal investigators confirmed that everyone on board had been killed. Investigators said they had opened a criminal case into the

suspected violation of air traffic and air transport rules, resulting in the death of more than two people through negligence. The plane had recently passed a technical safety inspection, Russian news agencies reported, and had been involved in four apparently minor incidents since 2018.

The crash is likely to raise new questions about the viability of continuing to fly such old planes in far-flung corners of Russia at a time when Western sanctions have crimped Moscow's ability to access investment and spare parts.

It may also prompt other countries that operate the aircraft to review their fleets. North Korea, Kazakhstan, Laos, Cuba, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Zimbabwe operate the An-24, according to the authoritative RussianPlanes web-portal.

Video shot from a helicopter showed pale smoke rising from the crash site in a densely forested hilly area around 15km from Tynda. There were no roads to the site and a rescue team had to use heavy machinery to cut a path there.

President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences to the families of those killed and held a minute's silence at the start of a



The debris of an Angara Airlines An-24 passenger aircraft at the crash site near Tynda in the Amur Region yesterday in this still image taken from video. (Reuters)

government meeting.

At least one Chinese citizen was reported to have been on board and Chinese President Xi Jinping sent his condolences to Putin.

Moscow said it had set up a commission to deal with the aftermath in addition to the criminal and air safety investigations. A

representative of Angara said they could not offer any more details.

Angara is based in the Siberian city of Irkutsk and serves airports in Siberia and Russia's far east. Before yesterday's crash, it operated 10 An-24s built between 1972 and 1976, according to RussianPlanes.

It was one of two Siberian airlines that last year asked the Russian government to extend the service life of the Antonov aircraft, as Russian planemakers scramble to plug the gap left by an exodus of foreign manufacturers.

Nicknamed "flying tractors" by some, the propeller-driven

An-24s are regarded as reliable workhorses inside Russia and are well-suited to Siberia as they are able to operate in sub-zero conditions and don't have to land on runways.

But airline executives, pilots and industry experts say the cost of maintaining the Antonovs — which make up a fraction of Russia's fleet of over 1,000 passenger planes — has increased after Western sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine hit investment and access to parts.

Almost 1,340 An-24 planes were built in the Soviet Union. Eighty-eight have now been lost because of crashes and 65 because of serious incidents without casualties, and 75 are currently in operation, according to data from the RussianPlanes web-portal and Reuters analysis.

Their age has long been of concern. Dmitry Medvedev, then president, proposed grounding Russia's An-24 fleet in 2011 after one of them crashed in Siberia, killing seven people.

Many of the planes are due to be retired from service in the coming years, but mass production of the new Ladoga aircraft, the same class as the An-24, is not due to begin until 2027 at the earliest.

## ICC convicts pair over Central Africa war crimes

AFP  
The Hague

The International Criminal Court yesterday convicted a former top Central African Republic football official and a militiaman nicknamed Rambo for war crimes committed during the country's civil war in 2013 and 2014.

Ex-sports minister Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona was a senior leader of mainly Christian militias as the country slid into civil war, while Alfred Yekatom, a former MP, commanded them on the ground.

The ICC sentenced Yekatom to 15 years behind bars for 20 war crimes and crimes against humanity including murder and torture. Ngaissona received 12 years for 28 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Their militia, known as anti-Balaka or "anti-machete", were formed as vigilante self-defence groups after mainly Muslim rebels called the Seleka stormed the capital Bangui and removed then-president Francois Bozize, a Christian.

Presiding judge Bertram Schmitt read harrowing details of the violence committed by the militia against suspected Seleka Muslims.

Yekatom's men tortured one suspect by cutting off his fingers, toes, and one ear. This man's body was never found. Others were killed and then mutilated.

Yekatom listened impassively as the judge read out the verdict, while Ngaissona nodded as his sentence was delivered. The court found Yekatom not guilty of conspiring child soldiers and acquitted Ngaissona of the charge of rape.

Both men had pleaded not guilty to all charges. Yekatom was extradited to The Hague in late 2018, after being arrested in CAR for firing his gun in parliament.

Ngaissona was arrested in France in December 2018 and extradited to The Hague. At the time he was head of the CAR football association and a board member of the Confederation of African Football.

The ICC prosecutor's office said the judgment "vindicates" the fundamental rights of the victims and "stresses" the importance of the distinction between civilians and combatants in armed conflict.

"Today's judgment is a vital recognition of the extensive harm and suffering of the victims and the affected communities of the Central African Republic," deputy prosecutor Mame Mandiaye Niang said in a statement.

## Trump wants Musk and his companies to thrive in US

President Donald Trump said yesterday he would not destroy Elon Musk's companies by taking away federal subsidies and that he wants the billionaire tech-entrepreneur's businesses to thrive. "Everyone is stating that I will destroy Elon's companies by taking away some, if not all, of the large scale subsidies he receives from the US Government. This is not so," Trump said in a social media post. "I want Elon, and all businesses within our Country, to THRIVE." Trump's statement follows a public clash with his former close ally on June 5 over his tax bill. In July, the space and automotive billionaire announced the formation of a new political party, saying Trump's "big,

beautiful" tax bill would bankrupt America. The president's social media post came on the heels of Musk warning Tesla investors on Wednesday that US government cuts in support for electric vehicle makers could lead to a "few rough quarters" for the company. Though Musk has often said government subsidies should be eliminated, Tesla has historically benefited from billions of dollars in tax credits and other policy benefits because of its business in clean transportation and renewable energy. Sweeping tax and budget legislation approved by Congress, and signed by Trump, will halt \$7,500 tax credits for buying or leasing new electric vehicles on September 30, as well as a \$4,000

used EV credit, that have helped juice green vehicle sales in recent years. Before the relationship soured, Musk had spent more than a quarter of a billion dollars to help Trump win November's presidential election and led the Department of Government Efficiency's chaotic effort to slash the budget and cut the federal workforce. The Tesla CEO left the administration in late May to refocus on his tech empire. Trump and Musk fell out shortly afterward when Musk openly denounced the Republican president's tax-cut and spending bill, leading to threats by Trump to cancel billions of dollars worth of federal government contracts with

Musk's companies. A week after the spat in June, Reuters reported the White House had directed the Defence Department and Nasa to gather details on billions of dollars in SpaceX contracts to ready possible retaliation against the businessman and his companies. Musk's SpaceX had been considered a frontrunner to build out Trump's \$175bn Golden Dome missile defence shield and remains a natural choice for key elements of the project. But sources familiar with the matter told Reuters earlier this week that the administration is expanding its search for partners to build Golden Dome as tensions with Musk threaten SpaceX's dominance in the programme.

## Pakistani spy agency targets black market dollar trade to curb rupee slide

Reuters  
Karachi

Ad deputy chief of Pakistan's spy agency met with currency exchange firms this week amid a sharp slide in the rupee, leading to a crackdown on black market dollar trade, the head of the country's forex association told Reuters yesterday. The move, a demonstration of the military's growing role in managing the economy, marks the second such intervention, following a 2023 army clamp down that halted an earlier sharp plunge in the currency, helping stabilise the exchange rate until this month.

Currency dealers say the rupee is again under pressure as a result of dollar hoarding, cross-border smuggling, and banking restrictions that have driven demand to unregulated dealers offering quicker or

better rates.

Faisal Naseer, a major general heading the internal security arm of the military's Inter-Services Intelligence, met with exchange firms this week, according to Malik Muhammad Bostan, chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan.

Following the meeting, security forces, including the Federal Investigation Agency — a civilian security agency — began targeting illegal currency dealers, many of whom subsequently went underground, he said.

The open market dollar rate was down one rupee following the intervention, said Bostan, who credited the enforcement drive and a resulting improvement in the supply of dollars to the market.

A spokesperson for the military's media wing did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Border controls with Iran and Afghanistan were tightened during tensions with India earlier this year, curbing illicit currency flows. But with checks now eased and the central bank buying dollars to build reserves, formal supply is under strain, Bostan said.

Under Pakistan's \$7bn programme with the International Monetary Fund, authorities have pledged to keep the gap between the interbank and open market rates within 1.25% to prevent remittances — crucial to maintaining foreign exchange levels — from shifting to informal channels and eroding reserves.

Despite this week's crackdown, dollars are still not available in up-scale areas of the commercial hub Karachi, pushing buyers to the grey market, where rates remain about 5% above interbank, said Adnan Sheikh of Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company.

### Greece battles severe wildfires

Greek firefighters were battling a series of blazes yesterday in the southwestern Peloponnese region, where authorities evacuated villages as a severe drought raised fears the damage could spread.

Emergency officials said they had deployed hundreds of firefighters, backed by 30 planes and helicopters, to the municipality of Corinth, where four active fires were raging.

The fires, which started Tuesday, have burned 1,145 hectares (2,830 acres), the equivalent of about 1,600 football pitches, according to European monitoring service Copernicus.

That included parkland in the Natura programme, a network of protected areas covering Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

"Four hectares of built-up areas may be affected," Copernicus said on X.

Several houses have already been damaged by the flames, according to local media reports.

## Hulk Hogan, who helped turn pro wrestling into billion-dollar spectacle, dies at 71

Hulk Hogan, the American sports and entertainment star who made professional wrestling a global phenomenon and loudly supported Donald Trump for president, has died at the age of 71, World Wrestling Entertainment said yesterday. "WWE is saddened to learn WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan has passed away. One of pop culture's most recognisable figures, Hogan helped WWE achieve global recognition in the 1980s," WWE said in a statement. Police in Clearwater, Florida, said authorities had responded to a medical call for a cardiac arrest at Hogan's residence yesterday morning. Hogan was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead, they said. The bleach-blond, mahogany-tanned behemoth became the face of professional wrestling in the 1980s, helping transform the mock combat from a seedy spectacle into family-friendly entertainment worth billions of dollars.

A key moment in that evolution came at the WrestleMania III extravaganza in 1987, when Hogan hoisted fellow wrestler André the Giant before a sold-out Pontiac Silverdome in Michigan for a thunderous body slam of the Frenchman. Hogan parlayed his wrestling fame into a less successful career in Hollywood, starring in films like



US pro-wrestler Hulk Hogan speaks during the last day of the 2024 Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 18, 2024. (AFP)

*Rocky III* and *Santa With Muscles*, but kept returning to the ring as long as his body would allow. In 2024, he appeared at the Republican National Convention to endorse the presidential bid of Trump, who in the 1980s had played host to Hulk-headlined WrestleManias. Hogan said he made the decision to support the Republican candidate after seeing his combative, fist-pumping reaction to an attempted

assassination on the campaign trail. "Let Trumpamania run wild, brother!" Hogan bellowed to a cheering crowd, ripping off his shirt to reveal a Trump tank top. "Let Trumpamania rule again!" Born Terry Gene Bollea in Augusta, Georgia, on Aug. 11, 1953, the future Hulk and his family soon moved to the Tampa, Florida area. After high school, he played bass guitar for area rock bands, but felt a pull to the red-hot wrestling scene

in Florida in the 1970s. Many of the details of his career were showbusiness exaggerations, representative of the blurred lines between fact and fiction in wrestling. His first trainer reportedly broke Hogan's leg to dissuade him from entering the business, but he kept at wrestling, weight training, and — he later admitted — anabolic steroids. He gained in notoriety as his biceps turned into what he dubbed the "24-inch pythons." The "Hulk" moniker came from comparisons to the comic-book hero portrayed on TV at the time. He would end up paying royalties to Marvel Comics for years. "Hogan" was the invention of promoter Vincent J. McMahon, the owner of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), who wanted Irish representation among his stable of stars. His appearance as wrestler Thunderlips in *Rocky III*, where he dwarfed leading man Sylvester Stallone, rocketed Hogan to the mainstream. Upon a return to the WWF, now controlled by McMahon's son Vincent K, he defeated the Iron Sheik in 1984 to claim the world championship, a belt he would hold for four years. Hogan became a household name, appearing on the cover of magazine *Sports Illustrated* and performing alongside pop culture stars like Mr. T. The WWF came to dominate wrestling, anchored by its annual WrestleMania

pay-per-view events. Later, he joined competitor World Championship Wrestling, swapping his trademark yellow tights for black and taking on a persona as the villainous "Hollywood" Hogan, the head of a gang of rulebreakers known as the New World Order. The gimmick reinvigorated his career. Hogan eventually returned to the WWF, now known as WWE, and faced Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson at WrestleMania in 2002. "I'm in better shape than him," Hogan told Reuters at the time, five months shy of his 50th birthday. "I'll stand next to The Rock and pose down with him if he wants to." The Rock ultimately won the match. Hogan was inducted twice into the WWE Hall of Fame, and referred to himself as the "Babe Ruth" of wrestling — after the New York Yankees' famed baseball player. But Hogan's support of Trump in 2024 did not go down well with all wrestling fans, and he also faced other controversies. In 2015, he was suspended by the WWE after another surreptitious recording revealed that Hogan had used a racial slur. He was reinstated in 2018. He was married three times and had two children, who starred alongside him and first wife Linda in a 2005-2007 reality TV show, *Hogan Knows Best*.

# Calling to Islam – the duty of every Muslim

While all the messengers appointed by Allah were charged by Him with the responsibility to disseminate the revealed guidance with which they were entrusted, their respective nations too, were called upon to share in the fulfilment of Allah's orders. Allah reminds us in the Qur'an (what means): [And [mention, O Muhammad], when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture, [saying]: 'You must make it clear [i.e., explain it] to the people and not conceal it?...'] [Qur'an: 3:187]

The position of the Muslim Ummah (Nation), in this respect, is clear in the Qur'an, where Allah states (what means): {You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong...} [Qur'an: 3:110]

Thus, Allah Almighty has honoured this Muslim Ummah by appointing it to share in the noble cause of its Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), by inviting people to follow the straight path. Allah the Almighty Says (what means): {The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong...} [Qur'an: 9:71] meanwhile regarding the hypocrites Allah Says: {The hypocrite men and hypocrite women are of one another. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right...} [Qur'an: 9:67]

Hence, the truth emerges clearly that to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong constitutes a fundamental difference between a believer and a hypocrite, who pretends to be a believer when he is quite the reverse. Consequently, all members of the Muslim Ummah, men and women alike, are individually responsible to further the cause of Islam with the zeal, determination and sense of sacrifice of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his companions may Allah be pleased with them.



That the companions did their utmost, individually and collectively, to convey the light of Islam to all people, even outside the Arabian Peninsula, is demonstrated by the lengthy and dangerous journeys they took, reaching the Atlantic Ocean in the west and the Great Wall of China in the East. Countless distinguished companions breathed their last in faraway and foreign lands preaching Islam, for which their sacrifices knew no bounds.

At this point some commonplace misconceptions ought to be cleared. To call all peoples of the world to Allah is the duty of every responsible and conscientious Muslim. Since there is no priesthood in Islam or sacerdotal class among Muslims, the duty of the call to Allah (*Da'awah*) cannot be transferred to an ill-conceived and imaginary group called the "men of religion." In Islam everyone is a man of religion and every man will be accountable to Allah as to whether he fulfilled his obligations sincerely and to the best of his abilities or not. The following verse of the Qur'an should be very enlightening in this respect; Allah Says (what means): "Say: 'This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allah; and I am not of those who associate others with Him.'"} [Qur'an: 12:108]

Thus, anyone who rightly claims to be a follower of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, cannot evade his duty to call people to Allah.

The following prophetic traditions amply elucidate this point: "Let those who witness inform those who are absent." [Al-Bukhari] The word "witness" here is taken to mean anyone who possesses some Islamic knowledge. The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, is also reported to have said: "Preach on my behalf, even with just one verse (i.e. verse of the Qur'an)."

Therefore, one need not be a profound scholar or a great jurist to call others to Islam. No doubt a person well-versed in Islamic sci-

ences would be able to speak more authoritatively and would be talented to explain matters of religion to the minute details. However, a high level of scholarship is not a prerequisite to call others to Islam. Everyone's effort has a definite gap to fill. A Muslim scholar will address his counterpart with a refined style and scholarly content, while a Muslim layman will have to reason with his equals in practical terms, each having a role complementary to the others.

Every individual of the Muslim Ummah is obliged to be actively engaged in whatever way he can to guide people to the right path and support, morally as well as materially, those who labour to discharge this responsibility. A common misconception that found appeal even among earlier Muslim generations and which still lingers on to this day stems from failure to comprehend the meaning of the following Qur'anic verse in the proper context. In this verse Allah Says (what means): {O you who have believed! Upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...} [Qur'an: 5:105]

In all honesty and fairness, the above verse does not connote, by any stretch of imagination, that a so-called pious or saintly person may absolve himself of the responsibility to call mankind to truth simply by thinking that evil would not knock at his door, on account of his being pure and peaceful. Regardless of how pious one may appear to be, he can never equal the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, or excel his companions may Allah be pleased with them in their moral perfection, sincerity of worship and religious devotion.

None of the Prophet's companions may Allah be pleased with them ever dreamt of resigning from the noble task of inviting the nations of the east and the west to eternal bliss and salvation offered by Allah through Islam. It was precisely to correct this wrong notion about

the aforementioned verse that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, issued the following warning: "O people! Indeed you read this exalted verse and put it in a place other than its own. Whereas I heard the Apostle of Allah, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, saying: "Indeed, if people see a cruel person and they do not restrain him, Allah may punish all of them.""

The Ansar (People of Madinah those who believed and supported Prophet) had gone through great material sacrifices in support of the Islamic cause. When Allah granted victory to the Muslims after their long struggles against the polytheists and they conquered Makkah, some of the Ansar felt satisfied. Now that Allah had bestowed His favour upon the believers and had crowned their noble efforts with a glorious and decisive victory over their opponents, they thought it justified for themselves to return to their much neglected trades and palm groves. Thereupon, Allah the Most High, revealed the following verse (which means): {...And do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction...} [Qur'an 2:195]

Which clearly meant that a believer would be exposed to the gravest danger if he were to abandon the struggle in the way of Allah and confine himself to routine Islamic duties such as Salaat (the five-time scheduled prayers of every day), Sawm (fasting), Zakat (alms-giving), and the Haj (pilgrimage to Makkah). Abu Ayyoob al-Ansari, may Allah be pleased with him, was among the distinguished Companions. According to some sources, he was 110 years old when he participated in the first Muslim siege of Constantinople (Istanbul) where he died a martyr. Considering his old age, his younger friends would sometimes recommend him to rest for a while, to which he would reply: "Are you telling me to throw myself into destruction?"

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

## Despite obstacles, Islam spreads

Since the advent of Islam, as the final and all-compassing Message to mankind up to the moment, its adversaries left no opportunity to thwart it and curb its followers. Right from day one, they did their level best to kill it in the bud using different ways.

Due to the fact that this new religion holds all people equal in terms of rights, duties, human value, etc, regardless of their ethnic, social or economic backgrounds, the rich and leading figures in Makkah, fearing lest they would lose their prestige and wealth, stood adamantly in the face of the then nascent Message. They tried to put different kinds of obstacles to hinder the spread of Islam, in feverish attempts to maintain their positions and prevent any sort of threat to their interests.

In their war against Islam, they tried many kinds of weapons: bodily torture, economic sanctions, false propaganda, and financial seduction, none of which was of any fruit.

With the Help of Allah, the Most Exalted, then the will, patience and perseverance of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), and his faithful companions, may Allah be pleased with them, Islam could successfully pass all those hard tests. It survived all the hardships and expanded its span to include not only the Arabian Peninsula, rather spacious lands outside it.

By the 10th century, Islam became the main religion, or at least, the religion of the majority of nations in an area covering more than half of the civilised world stretching over three continents from the Pyrenees and Siberia in West and North Europe to the farthest end of Asia, up to China and New Guinea in the East; from Morocco in North Africa to the southern tip of Africa, covering two-thirds of the African continent.

It is one of the most striking facts of human history that the spread of Islam over such a vast area took place within three centuries. Most striking of all, within half a century after the *Hijrah* (Prophet Muhammad's migration from Makkah to Al-Madinah), Islam had already conquered the whole of North Africa from Egypt to Morocco, all the Middle Eastern lands from Yemen to Caucasia and from Egypt to the lands beyond Transoxiana (portion of Central Asia corresponding approximately with modern-day Uzbekistan and southwest Kazakhstan).

### What makes Islam spread?

There are many reasons why nations have been, from past to the present, so ready to embrace Islam, what is pointed out by Muhammad Asad, a Jewish revert to Islam, probably being the foremost:

"Islam appears to me like a perfect work of architecture. All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and

support each other, nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure. Everything in the teaching and postulate of Islam is in its proper place." [Islam at the Crossroads, p.5]

Most of Western writers, especially those under the influence of the Church, have never failed to accuse Islam of spreading by the sword. The causes of this prejudice lie mainly in the fact that the spread of Islam has often occurred at the expense of Christianity. While Islam has, for centuries, obtained numerous conversions from Christianity without much effort or organised missionary activities, Christianity has almost never been able to achieve conversions from Islam in spite of sophisticated means and well-organised missionary activities, and it has always been at a disadvantage in its competition with Islam for fourteen centuries.

This has caused its missionaries and most of the orientalists to develop a complex within themselves by depicting Islam and introducing it as a regressive, vulgar religion of savage people.

If history is to be read with an objective eye, such allegations will easily be debunked.

In addition to many other reasons which are responsible for the spread of Islam, it is the exemplary life-style and unceasing efforts of individual Muslims to transmit the message of Islam throughout the world which lie at the root of the conquest of the hearts by Islam. Islamic universalism is closely associated with the principle of "enjoining the good" for Islam is to be spread by Muslims by means of this principle. This principle seeks to convey the message of Islam to all human beings in the world and to establish a model Islamic community on a world-wide basis.

Among every four humans in the world, one of them is Muslim. Muslims have increased by over 235% in the last 50 years up to nearly 1.6bn. By comparison, Christians have increased by only 47 %... Islam is the second largest religious group in France, Great Britain and USA.

In spite of all the feverish attempts on the part of the adversaries of Islam, old and new, Islam is still sweeping the globe easily and peacefully, thus conquering and illuminating the minds and hearts, no matter how hard and intricate their conspiracies are. Allah, the Most Glorious, Says in the Qur'an (what means): "It is He (Allah) Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allah dislike it." [Qur'an 9: 33]

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



## Advise with sincerity and kindness

The one who invites others to Allah is from the closest people to Allah our Lord. In addition, Muslims collectively agree on the importance of propagating Islam and inviting people to Allah, and many talk about it being mandatory upon Muslims, and we agree with them, that it is an obligation, to enjoy that which is good and forbid that which is evil and to spread chastity and fight immorality and educate people and remind them and advise them.

Therefore, there is no doubt that one who invites to Allah is a chosen one, and form the best of his creatures. He loved Allah, responded to Him and invited to Him so in return Allah loved him. That is why Allah Says in a short statement and made it very clear (what means): "And who is better in speech then he who invites to Allah, meaning, Islamic monotheism and does righteous deeds and says; 'I am one of the Muslims'" [Qur'an 41:33].

Al-Hasan al-Basari, may Allah have mercy upon him, said after he has recited the abovementioned verse: "This is the beloved one to Allah, this is the *Wali* of Allah, meaning supported and loved by Allah. This is the chosen one by Allah, this is the best of preachers to Allah this is the most dear from the dwellers of earth to Allah. He responded to Allah and called people to Allah and acted righteously whilst responding and calling and said 'I am from the Muslims'"

To attain the level of this rank, it is necessary for the Muslim missionary or propagator who is seeking the reward from Allah to be mindful of the following issues in order for the mission to be fruitful:

**1) Being sincere in the objective and intention:** Sincerity is the foremost of all deeds and certainly the most important of them all; it is the foundation for all other deeds; it is the essence of Islam and the one of the principal matters that the prophets called their people to. Allah Says (what means): "And they [i.e. the People of the Scripture] were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give Zakah. And that is the correct religion." [Qur'an 98:5]

Sincerity is the essence of worship; Imaam Ibn Hazm, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The relationship between sincerity and deeds is like that between the soul and the body."

Sincerity is the basis upon which deeds are either accepted or rejected, and thus it is the cause of one's ultimate success or failure. Sincerity is the way leading to Hell for those who do not fulfil it and the path to Paradise for those who can attain it.

Those who fulfil Islamic monotheism are also referred to as the sincere, and its Islamic definition is as Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "...To have only (the pleasure of) Allah in one's intention whilst performing acts of obedience."

The Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* (may Allah exalt his mention), said: "Deeds are but with intentions" This is one of the most important prophetic narrations from amongst all that the Prophet taught us.

On the other hand, those who perform deeds in order to be seen by others are dispraised by Allah and are promised punishment, as Allah Says (what means): "Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments – We fully repay them for their deeds therein, and they therein will not be deprived. Those are the ones for whom there is not in the Hereafter but the Fire." [Qur'an 11:15-16]

Therefore, the Muslim propagator or missionary does not call to gain a personal benefit for himself, his people, his tribe or group. Otherwise he will have no reward.

**2) Being kind whilst calling people:** Using the proper means leading to the achievement of the objective is achieved by one following the way of the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Allah addresses the Prophet Saying (what means): "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching and argue with them in a way that is better." [Qur'an 16:125]. Some of the people who are invited to the way of Allah are good in nature, if they recognise the truth they stick to it. They are thirsty and eager, and as soon as one shows them the truth, they hasten to it. Such a person is to be invited with wisdom.

Regarding the method of calling people, Allah Says in the above verse (which means): "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best..." [Qur'an 16:125] Thus, one should not be aggressive and harsh in the way he calls people to Islam; rather he should use words that would soften their hearts, so that they would yield to his instructions and pay heed to his words. Allah commands us to be this way, even with the disbelievers, when He says (what means): "And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them..." [Qur'an 29: 46]

**Sincerity is the basis upon which deeds are either accepted or rejected, and thus it is the cause of one's ultimate success or failure. Sincerity is the way leading to Hell for those who do not fulfil it and the path to Paradise for those who can attain it**

In our era, such wisdom, soft words and kindness when calling to the path of Allah are especially important. This is of course required in all situations, but in a period in which ignorance and submitting to desires has overwhelmed the masses, it becomes all the more essential. Once, a scholar entered into the presence of an 'Abbaasi caliph and said: "I am going to admonish you in a harsh manner, so listen." Upon hearing this, the caliph said: "O brother! Be gentle, for I am not worse than Pharaoh, and you are not better than Moosaa whom Allah addressed along with his brother, Haaroona, Saying (what means): "And speak to him [i.e., Pharaoh] with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].'" [Qur'an 20: 44]

Furthermore, the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "He who is deprived of gentleness and forbearance is deprived from a great deal of goodness." 'Aa'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet, *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, said: "Whenever forbearance is added to something, it adorns it; and whenever it is withdrawn from something, it leaves it defective." [Muslim].

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GULF TIMES

China’s neighbours fret over its new mega-dam project

China has broken ground on what it says will be the world’s largest hydropower project, a \$170bn feat capable of generating enough electricity each year to power Britain.

The scheme dwarfs the mighty Three Gorges Dam, currently the world’s largest, and Chinese construction and engineering stocks surged after Premier Li Qiang unveiled it on the weekend.

For Beijing, the project promises clean power, jobs and a jolt of stimulus for a slowing economy. For neighbours downstream, it stirs old anxieties about water security: the Yarlung Zangbo becomes the Brahmaputra in India and Bangladesh, a lifeline for millions.

The plan involves five dams along a 50-km stretch where the river plunges 2,000 metres off the Tibetan Plateau. First power is expected to be generated in the early-to-mid 2030s, but beyond that and the price tag, China has published little information about how it intends to build the project.

That lack of information is compounding fears about water security in India and Bangladesh, which rely on the Brahmaputra for irrigation, hydropower and drinking water.

The chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China, said earlier this year that the dam could dry out 80% of the river passing through the Indian state while potentially inundating downstream areas such as neighbouring Assam state. In addition to water, the dam will also mean less sediment flowing downstream, according to Michael Steckler, a professor at Columbia University. That sediment carries nutrients essential for agriculture on floodplains downstream.

India and China fought a border war in this region in the 1960s, and the lack of transparency from Beijing has helped fuel speculation it might use the dam to cut off water in another conflict, according to Sayanangshu Modak, an expert on the India-China water relationship at the University of Arizona.

“The construction of the Yarlung Zangbo hydropower project is a matter within the scope of China’s sovereign affairs,” Beijing’s foreign ministry said on Tuesday, adding the dam would provide clean energy and prevent flooding.

“China has also conducted necessary communication with downstream countries regarding hydrological information, flood control, and disaster mitigation co-operation related to the Yarlung Zangbo project,” the ministry said.

India’s foreign and water ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

But the impact of the dam on downstream flows has been overstated, in part because the bulk of the water that enters the Brahmaputra is from monsoon rainfall south of the Himalayas, and not from China, said Modak.

He added that China’s plans are for a “run of the river” hydropower project, which means the water will flow normally along the usual course of the Brahmaputra.

India itself has proposed two dams on the Siang river, its name for the Yarlung Zangbo. One, an 11.5-gigawatt project in Arunachal Pradesh, will be India’s largest if it goes ahead. Those have been proposed, in part, to assert India’s claims on the river and bolster its case should China ever seek to divert the water, Modak added.

“If India can show that it has been using the waters, then China cannot unilaterally divert,” he said.

Quarrels over dams and water security are not new. Pakistan has accused India of weaponising shared water supplies in the disputed Kashmir region after New Delhi suspended its participation in the Indus Waters Treaty, which regulates water sharing between the neighbours. In Egypt, a senior politician was once caught on camera proposing to bomb a controversial Nile river dam planned by Ethiopia during a long-running dispute over the project.

The dam will be built in an earthquake zone also prone to landslides, glacial-lake floods and storms. A spree of dam building in the area sparked concerns from experts about safety following a devastating earthquake in Tibet earlier this year. A much smaller hydropower project on a nearby tributary has been limited to four-month construction windows because of engineering challenges in high altitudes and vicious winters. — Reuters

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How schools are being built for extreme heat – without aircon

By Emma Batha  
London

When prize-winning architect Francis Kere was growing up in Burkina Faso he spent his schooldays in a gloomy classroom that was so stifling he says it would have been better suited to making bread than educating children.

Years later, while studying abroad, Kere returned to his home village to build a light and airy school where children could learn in comfort despite temperatures that can hit 45 degrees Celsius (113 F).

But the Berlin-based architect did not use aircon. Instead he incorporated a host of cooling features into Gando Primary School that he has since applied to projects across Africa.

Kere, who won architecture’s highest honour of the Pritzker Prize in 2022, is among architects pioneering sustainable school designs for a warming planet.

“My own school was so hot it was hard to concentrate,” he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “So I wanted to build a school that would be comfortable and inspiring for children.”

Studies from Brazil to Vietnam show heat significantly impacts learning. In a report last year, the World Bank warned that climate change was threatening educational attainment, creating an “economic time-bomb”.

Experts say classrooms should be no hotter than 26C.

In Gando, villagers were initially shocked when Kere announced he would build the school from clay, but the material is a natural temperature regulator, absorbing heat during the day and releasing it at night.

Concrete and plate-glass may look contemporary, but Kere said they make buildings hot, necessitating air conditioners.

This creates a vicious circle. Energy-intensive air conditioners,

- Heat threatens children’s education
- Aircon fuels global warming
- Architects turn to passive cooling

which expel hot air outdoors, contribute to global warming, which then fuels demand for more aircon.

Instead, Kere uses passive cooling techniques.

Gando’s classrooms have openings at both ends, generating cross-ventilation. An overhanging roof elevated above a perforated lower roof improves air circulation and shades the facade.

In Kenya, Kere’s design for a college campus was inspired by termite mounds, which use natural ventilation to regulate interior temperatures. Low openings on the buildings suck in fresh air while terracotta-coloured towers let hot air escape.

**Social change**

Some 8,000km away in northwest India’s Thar desert, temperatures reached 48C this year. Vegetation is sparse, and sandstorms are common.

The Rajkumari Ratnavati Girls School, a large oval sandstone edifice rising from the Rajasthan desert, was designed by New York architect Diana Kellogg.

The building’s orientation and shape allow prevailing winds to flow around the school, while lime plaster on the interior walls has an additional cooling effect.

Lattice walls, inspired by traditional Indian jali screens, accelerate airflow due to a phenomenon called the Venturi effect. The school also runs off solar power and harvests enough rainwater for its needs.

Temperatures inside are up to 10C cooler than outside, contributing to high attendance, Kellogg said.

Like Kere, she believes good architecture can encourage social change.

Rajasthan has the lowest female literacy rate in India, but Kellogg

said the school’s monumental scale sends a strong message about the value of girls.

“It has enhanced their standing in the community,” she said. “The girls take pride in attending and call it ‘The College.’ When I visit, the boys say, ‘Build one for us!’”

**Greening schools**

Even temperate countries are looking at how to cool schools as climate change brings more frequent heatwaves.

Britain has said new school buildings should be future-proofed for a 4C temperature rise.

Its draughty Victorian-era schools with big windows and high ceilings are better suited to heatwaves than newer schools designed to keep heat in.

But education does not just happen indoors. Playgrounds are also important for children’s development, and many cities are trying to make them greener.

Urban areas can be 4C to 6C warmer than rural areas, but planting trees reduces temperatures through shading and the release of water vapour.

Paris aims to convert all asphalted schoolyards to green oases by 2050.

Another solution involves cool paint. While countries like Greece have long painted building roofs white, scientists are now working on high-tech coatings that could potentially outperform air conditioners.

**Building with clay**

From geothermal cooling technology to smart glass, engineers are developing increasingly sophisticated systems and products to control temperatures.

But German architect Anna Heringer said sustainable architecture means working with

local materials.

Heringer, who has designed schools from Bangladesh to Ghana, is known for building with mud – “a low-tech material with high-tech performance.”

“If you ask farmers, they will tell you a mud house is cool in summer,” Heringer said, adding that clay balances humidity, which exacerbates physical discomfort in extreme heat and cold.

“Architects often try to be way too technical, but sometimes the solutions are in front of us.”

In Tanzania, villagers told her they built concrete homes for status, but went to mud huts to sleep at night.

Contrary to popular perception, clay walls do not dissolve in the rain, Heringer said. There are simple techniques to prevent erosion, and a natural crystallisation process strengthens the walls over time.

“Clay has been branded as a weak material, but in every culture and climate we have mud buildings that are hundreds of years old,” Heringer said, adding that schools she built 20 years ago have required little maintenance.

Some classrooms in her schools have solar-powered fans, but there is no aircon. Not only does it consume energy, but constantly switching between heat and cold can harm children’s health, she said.

Kere – whose international commissions include Benin’s new parliament building and the upcoming Las Vegas Museum of Art – said his studio gets many inquiries about building with clay and passive cooling.

“There’s a big shift,” he said. “This would never have happened just a few years ago.” — Thomson Reuters Foundation



Students use fans to cool down during a class at a school in Phnom Penh in May last year. (Reuters)

# Spy cockroaches and AI robots: Germany plots the future of warfare

By Supantha Mukherjee, Sarah Marsh and Christoph Steitz  
Munich/Berlin/Frankfurt

For Gundbert Scherf — the co-founder of Germany's Helsing, Europe's most valuable defence start-up — Russia's invasion of Ukraine changed everything. Scherf had to fight hard to attract investment after starting his company — which produces military strike drones and battlefield AI — four years ago. Now, that's the least of his problems. The Munich-based company more than doubled its valuation to \$12bn at a fundraising last month. "Europe this year, for the first time in decades, is spending more on defence technology acquisition than the US," said Scherf. The former partner at McKinsey & Company says Europe may be on the cusp of a transformation in defence innovation akin to the Manhattan Project — the scientific push that saw the US rapidly develop nuclear weapons during World War Two. "Europe is now coming to terms with defence."

Reuters spoke to two dozens executives, investors and policymakers to examine how Germany — Europe's largest economy — aims to play a central role in the rearming the continent. Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government views AI and start-up technology as key to its defence plans and is slashing bureaucracy to connect startups directly to the upper echelons of its military, the sources told Reuters. Shaped by the trauma of Nazi militarism and a strong postwar pacifist ethos, Germany long maintained a relatively small and cautious defence sector, sheltered by US security guarantees.

Germany's business model, shaped by a deep aversion to risk, has also favoured incremental improvements over disruptive innovation. No more. With US military support now more uncertain, Germany — one of the biggest backers of Ukraine — plans to nearly triple its regular defence budget to around €162bn (\$175bn) per year by 2029. Much of that money will go into reinventing the nature of warfare, the sources said. Helsing is part of a wave of German defence start-ups developing cutting-edge technology, from tank-like AI robots and unmanned mini-submarines to battle-ready spy cockroaches.

"We want to help give Europe its spine back," said Scherf. Some of these smaller firms are now advising the government alongside established firms — so-called primes such as Rheinmetall and Hensoldt — that have less incentive to focus primarily on innovation, given their long backlogs for conventional systems, one of the sources said. A new draft procurement law, approved by Merz's cabinet on Wednesday, aims to reduce hurdles for cash-strapped start-ups to join tenders by enabling advance



A digital illustration released by Swarm Biotactics shows what they describe as cyborg cockroaches equipped with specialised backpacks that enable real-time data collection via cameras. (Reuters)

payment to these firms. The law would also entitle authorities to limit tenders to bidders inside the European Union. Marc Wietfeld, CEO and founder of autonomous robots maker ARX Robotics, said a recent meeting with German defence minister Boris Pistorius hammered home how deep the rethink in Berlin goes. "He told me: 'Money is no longer an excuse — it's there now'. That was a turning point," he said.

**Germany in the lead** Since Donald Trump's return to the political stage and his renewed questioning of America's commitment to Nato, Germany has committed to meet the alliance's new target of 3.5% of GDP on defence spending by 2029 — faster than most European allies. Officials in Berlin have emphasised the need to foster a European defence industry rather than rely on US companies. But the hurdles towards scaling up industry champions in Germany — and Europe more broadly — are considerable. Unlike in the United States, the market is fragmented in Europe. Each country has its own set of procurement standards to fulfil contracts. The United States, the world's top military spender, already has an established stable of defence giants, like Lockheed Martin and RTX, and an advantage in key areas, including satellite technology, fighter jets and precise-guided munitions. Washington also began boosting defence tech startups in 2015 — including Shield AI, drone maker Anduril and software company Palantir — by awarding them parts of military contracts.

European startups until recently languished with little government support. But an analysis by Aviation Week in May showed Europe's 19 top defence spenders — including Turkiye and Ukraine — were projected to spend \$180.1bn this year on military procurement compared, to \$175.6bn for the United States. Washington's overall military spending will remain higher. Hans Christoph Atzpodien, head of Germany's security and defence sector association BDSV, said one challenge was that the military's procurement system was geared toward established suppliers and not well suited to the fast pace that new technologies require. Germany's defence ministry said in a statement it was taking steps to accelerate procurement and to better integrate startups in order to make new technologies quickly available to the Bundeswehr. Annette Lehnigk-Emden, head of the armed forces' powerful procurement agency, highlighted drones and AI as emerging fields that Germany needs to develop. "The changes they're bringing to the battlefield are as revolutionary as the introduction of the machine gun, tank, or airplane," she told Reuters.

**Spy cockroaches** Sven Weizenegger, who heads up the Cyber Innovation hub, the Bundeswehr's innovation accelerator, said the war in Ukraine was also changing social attitudes, removing a stigma towards working in the defence sector. "Germany has developed a whole new openness towards the issue of security since the invasion," he said. Weizenegger said he was receiving 20-

30 LinkedIn requests a day, compared to maybe 2-3 weekly back in 2020, with ideas for defence technology to develop. Some of the ideas under development feel akin to science fiction — like Swarm Biotactics' cyborg cockroaches that are equipped with specialised miniature backpacks that enable real-time data collection via cameras for example. Electrical stimuli should allow humans to control the insects' movements remotely. The aim is for them to provide surveillance information in hostile environments — for example information about enemy positions. "Our bio-robots — based on living insects — are equipped with neural stimulation, sensors, and secure communication modules," said CEO Stefan Wilhelm. "They can be steered individually or operate autonomously in swarms. In the first half of the 20th century, German scientists pioneered many military technologies that became global standards, from ballistic missiles to jet aircraft and guided weapons. But following its defeat in World War II, Germany was demilitarised and its scientific talent was dispersed. Wernher von Braun, who invented the first ballistic missile for the Nazis, was one of hundreds of German scientists and engineers transported to the United States in the wake of World War II, where he later worked at Nasa and developed the rocket that took Apollo spacecraft to the Moon. In recent decades, defence innovation has been a powerful driver of economic progress. Tech like the internet, GPS, semiconductors and jet engines originated in military research programs before transforming civilian life. Hit by high energy prices, a slowdown in demand for its exports and competition

from China, Germany's \$4.75tn economy contracted over the last two years. Expanding military research could provide an economic fillip. "We just need to get to this mindset: a strong defence industrial base means a strong economy and innovation on steroids," said Markus Federle, managing partner at defence-focused investment firm Tholus Capital.

**Escaping 'The Valley of Death'** Risk aversion among European investors had in the past disadvantaged startups, which struggled to get the capital they need to survive the 'valley of death' — the critical early stage when costs are high and sales low. But a boost in defence spending by European governments following Russia's invasion of Ukraine has investors looking for opportunities. Europe now boasts three start-ups with a unicorn valuation of more than \$1bn: Helsing, German drone maker Quantum Systems, and Portugal's Tekever, which also manufactures drones. "There's a lot of pressure now on Germany being the lead nation of the European defence," said Sven Kruck, Quantum's chief strategy officer. Germany has become Ukraine's second-biggest military backer after the United States. Orders that might once have taken years to approve now take months and European startups have had the opportunity to test their products quickly in the field, several sources said.

Venture capital funding of European defence tech hit \$1bn in 2024, up from a modest \$373mn in 2022, and is expected to surge even more this year. "Society has recognised that we have to defend our democracies," said Christian Saller, general partner at HV Capital, an investor in both ARX and Quantum Systems. Venture capital funding has grown faster in Germany than elsewhere, according to a data analysis by Dealroom for Reuters. German defence startups have received \$1.4bn in the last five years from investors, followed by UK, the data shows. Jack Wang, partner at venture capital firm Project A, said many German defence startups — rooted in the country's engineering prowess — are good at integrating established components into scalable systems. "Quality of talent in Europe is extremely high, but as a whole, there's no better country, no better talent that we've seen other than in Germany," he said. Weakness in Germany's automotive industry means there is production capacity to spare, including in the Mittelstand: the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that form the backbone of Germany's economy. Stefan Thumann, CEO of Bavarian startup Donau Stahl, which produces loitering munitions, said he receives 3 to 5 applications daily from workers at automotive companies. "The startups just need the brains to do the engineering and prototyping," he said. "And the German Mittelstand will be their muscles." — Reuters

# US sanctions could cause chaos on Latam farms run on Russian fertilisers

By Ana Mano and Cassandra Garrison  
Sao Paulo/Mexico City

Latin American farmers are in for a rough ride if the US slaps secondary sanctions on buyers of Russian exports, such as the fertilisers essential for cash crops from Mexican avocados to Brazilian soybeans and corn. For farm powerhouse Brazil, which covered about a third of its fertiliser demand with \$3.7bn of imports from Russia last year, there is virtually no alternative to fill the gap if those flows are halted, experts and industry players said. The 2022 outbreak of war in Ukraine triggered stockpiling of Russian fertiliser in the region. Prices soared briefly, but trade has now normalised. Plans to boost domestic fertiliser production in Mexico and Brazil have made slow progress in the face of relatively cheap Russian imports. Shipments to Brazil, the world's largest producer of soybeans, sugar and coffee, rose nearly 30% in the first half of this year, the Russian Fertiliser Producers Association said. Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte singled out Brazil among a handful of countries that could be hit "very hard" by sanctions for doing business with Russia as part of US President Donald Trump's renewed push to end the war in Ukraine. Fresh sanctions targeting Russian fertiliser imports could "render soybean and corn production inviable," said Lucas



An agricultural worker drives a tractor spreading fertiliser in a soybean field, near Brasilia. (Reuters)

Beber, vice-president of Brazilian grain farming group Aprosoja. Mexico also imported more than \$580mn of fertilisers last year from Russia, its largest supplier according to government data. Potential US sanctions would pose a big problem for farmers there. "It would affect Mexico's purchases from Russia of different fertilisers,

particularly urea, which is the most widely used in crops such as corn, sorghum, wheat, and even avocado," said Raul Urteaga. A former director of international affairs for Mexico's agriculture ministry, Urteaga warned of a drop-off in the quality of fertilisers available if Russian imports disappear. That could weaken avocado production

and send prices higher for US consumers. The US accounts for more than 80% of Mexico's total avocado exports, a market worth more than \$3bn last year, according to US government data. "The price of avocados would increase if producers have to use other alternatives or find fertilisers that are imported from sources other than Russia," Urteaga said. Russia is also top fertiliser supplier for Colombia, another key producer of fruits, flowers and coffee to the US. Russia provides about a quarter of Colombia's fertiliser imports, government data shows. The World Bank has identified fertiliser costs as a driver of food inflation in Central America, contributing to a cost-of-living crisis that has stoked northward migration.

**Sales delayed** Even fertiliser companies that have already cut ties with Russian suppliers, like US-based Mosaic, expressed fears that further trade disruptions with one of the world's top three fertiliser producers could feed volatility. "Potential discussions involving retaliation against countries that operate with Russia ... only end up further aggravating the situation in terms of pricing," said Eduardo Monteiro, Mosaic's country manager in Brazil, which contributes 40% of the company's global revenue. He said geopolitical tensions delayed sales to Brazilian farmers for the next crop cycle, which could compromise timely

fertiliser deliveries for major crops such as soybeans, which farmers plant from September. Big privately held fertiliser makers Eurochem and Fertipar, which supply their Brazilian processing plants with imports from Russia according to trade data, declined or did not reply to questions about potential sanctions. Brazil has touted plans to nearly halve its reliance on foreign fertilisers. Mexico aims to boost domestic production from 33% to 80% of local demand. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Mexico's Claudia Sheinbaum have both prodded state oil companies Petrobras and Pemex to ramp up fertiliser production. They have made slow progress, however. In Brazil's case, efforts were hampered by factors including lack of funding, potentially costly mineral resources and expensive natural gas, which is key to producing nitrogen fertilisers. The problem could be partly mitigated after Brazil Potash Corp starts to mine for potash in the Brazilian Amazon, which should happen once the infrastructure and permitting are in place. In Mexico, debt-laden Pemex has struggled over the years to make fertilisers a profitable business. Unfazed by local competition, US sanctions or European bans, Russian fertiliser producers say they expect to raise their global market share to 25% by 2030, relying largely on sales to developing Brics nations including Brazil, India and China. — Reuters

# Interior minister attends graduation ceremony



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Police Academy Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani attended the graduation ceremony of the first batch of the Master's in Law and Master's in Security Studies programmes at the College of Graduate Studies, comprising 17 graduates. The event also marked the graduation of the 10th mandatory qualification course for male university graduates at the Police College, with 76 graduates, and the 3rd mandatory course for female university graduates at the Women's Police Institute, with 17 graduates.



# 10th Local Dates Festival opens at Souq Waqif

The 10th Local Dates Festival opened at Souq Waqif today. The festival features more than 100 date farms from across Qatar, offering a variety of local date types. It also includes the sale of locally grown fruits and date-based products. Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Municipality and Souq Waqif Management, the festival takes place at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif. Running until August 7, the festival is open from 4pm to 9pm, except on Fridays and Saturdays when it remains open until 10pm.

PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



The event continues to attract large crowds.

# Qatar Toy Festival 2025 continues to draw crowds

The third edition of the Qatar Toy Festival continues to attract a huge number of visitors, particularly on weekends, at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre, it is learnt. The event, running until August 4, has become a go-to destination for families and children seeking a mix of entertainment, education, and interactive experiences in a lively atmosphere. From its opening on July 6, organisers noted that the festival has offered an expansive programme catering to diverse interests. Visitors are treated to engaging stage shows, lively musical performances, and fascinating science and educational demonstrations. It also features meet-and-greets with popular characters, alongside a variety of family-friendly activities designed to create lasting memories. A standout attraction, particularly for younger attendees, are the daily summer camps (excluding Fridays) for children aged 4-12. These popular camps, powered by Science Street and other partners, provide a creative outlet through engaging workshops. The festival, sponsored by Ooredoo, boasts an impressive lineup of more than 40 international toy brands. Attendees can explore interactive zones brought to life by beloved characters and dive into five distinct immersive zones thoughtfully curated for different age groups and preferences. According to the organisers, a special celebration for people with disabilities is scheduled for tomorrow, Saturday, at 7pm. The festival's final week will embrace a "back-to-school" theme, anticipated to attract a surge of young visitors preparing for the academic year.



Qatar Toy Festival features stage shows.

# 3-2-1 Qatar and Lausanne Olympic Museum in Olympic Heritage | Artists-in-Residence launch



Fire Station: Artists in Residence

The Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum and the Olympic Museum in Lausanne have launched the 2025 Olympic Heritage | Artists-In-Residence programme, aimed at supporting artists in creating new, innovative works celebrating sports culture and the Olympic Games. The artists' final works will also be included in the Cultural Olympiad at the Summer Olympic Games LA28. Rayvenn D'Clark, selected for QOSM by the international jury, has been granted a two-month residency with studio space at the Doha Fire Station. Alioune Thiam will similarly take part in a two-month programme at the Olympic Museum with studio space at La Becque Artist Residence. Both artists will receive mentorship opportunities from members of the esteemed international jury, and will have a unique opportunity to explore the museums' collections, archives and storylines relating to sports culture and the Olympic Games. "These residencies bring together the creative power of digital art with the Olympic Games' historic and cultural significance. We invite artists to be part of future open calls for this remarkable programme, which will be offered annually until the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles," QOSM director Abdulla Yousuf al-Mulla said in a press statement. The residency, which marks the first year of a partnership between QOSM and the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, will run from October 1 to December 1. The artists' work will be exhibited at the Summer Olympic Games LA28 as part of the Cultural Olympiad and enter the respective museum's permanent collection. "Since its creation, the Olympic

Museum has strived to preserve and share the rich legacy of the Olympic Movement while embracing innovation to keep that heritage alive and relevant," Olympic Museum associate director and chair of the Jury Yasmin Meichtry said. Twenty-nine year-old D'Clark is a digital sculptor from London. Her practice explores race, representation, and digital hybridity in contemporary art. Her work blends digital with sculptural methods, focusing on nuanced representations of Black anatomy. A Forbes 30 Under 30 honouree (2024), her recent work includes a major public commission for the Equal Justice Initiative, Mont-



Alioune Thiam



3-2-1 QOSM



La Becque Artist Residence.

gomery, Alabama. Thirty-two year-old video artist Thiam is from Senegal and specialises in projection mapping and interactive installations. His work explores the impact of digital technology on Senegalese and African culture through

immersive audio-visual creations. In 2022 he became the first Senegalese artist in residence at Les Dominicains de Haute Alsace Cultural Centre in France with his project 'ARTIST 2.0 The Creative Scope of Digital Technology'. D'Clark and Thiam were selected by an international jury from a pool of applicants representing 20 nations across six continents.



Rayvenn D'Clark