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BUSINESS | Page 1

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Syria's parliament to be selected in Sept

Syrian authorities announced yesterday that a new transitional parliament would be selected in September, with local electoral bodies picking two-thirds of the lawmakers and the country's interim president naming the rest. After toppling longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December after nearly 14 years of civil war, Syria's new authorities - led by President Ahmed al-Sharaa - dissolved the country's rubber-stamp legislature and adopted a temporary constitutional declaration to cover a five-year transition period. **Page 6**

US, EU reach trade deal, says Trump

US President Donald Trump yesterday said the United States and the European Union had reached agreement on a trade deal that includes a 15% tariff on EU goods entering the US and significant EU purchases of US energy and military equipment. The deal also calls for \$600bn in investments in the US by the European Union, he told reporters. The announcement came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen travelled for talks with Trump at his golf course in western Scotland to push a hard-fought deal over the line. "I think this is the biggest deal ever made," Trump told reporters after an hour-long meeting with von der Leyen, who said the 15% tariff applied "across the board". **Page 11**

Pogacar wins Tour de France for fourth time

Tadej Pogacar closed out a supreme 21-day performance to win the Tour de France in a rainy Paris yesterday, crushing his rivals to rack up a fourth title. Wout van Aert won the final-day cliffhanger on the cobbled roads of Montmartre, but Pogacar was spared any late challenge when the weather forced organisers to neutralise times to avoid potential accidents. **Sport Page 4**

Four killed in German train accident: police

At least four people were killed when a regional train carrying about 100 passengers derailed in a wooded area in southwestern Germany yesterday, police said. A police spokesperson confirmed that several people were also injured. The official said that at least two carriages had left the tracks near the town of Riedlingen. **Page 11**

Sheikh Joaan meets South Korean Olympic committee president



HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee and Senior Vice-President of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), met yesterday with Seungmin Ryu, President of the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee (KSOC) on the sidelines of the 2025 World Aquatics Championships in Singapore. They discussed ways to enhance sports co-operation between the Qatar Olympic Committee and its counterpart in South Korea. **Sport Page 1**

UN meet on ‘two-state solution’ starts today

QNA
Doha

The ministerial meeting hosted by France and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to support the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will convene at the UN Headquarters in New York today and tomorrow. The meeting is expected to be attended by Prime Minister of Palestine, Mohammad Shtayyeh, alongside several ministers from around the world. Israel and the US will not participate in this meeting. Presided over by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, alongside Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Noel Barrot, the meeting constitutes a joint French-Saudi initiative aimed at revitalising the momentum of the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis. Qatar confirms its full support for the two-state solution and stresses the importance of taking irreversible steps to achieve this solution that ensures the establishment of the independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and

pushes back on any attempt to undertake either demographic or regional change in this state. Ahead of the anticipated meeting in New York, French President Emmanuel Macron declared that he intends to officially recognise Palestinian statehood next September. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah affirmed that his country's joint presidency, alongside France, of the Two-State Solution Implementation Conference, is a reflection of Saudi Arabia's firm and longstanding stance on the Palestinian cause. A Reuters report, quoting the Financial Times, said British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will recall his cabinet from their summer break to discuss the situation in Gaza, amid growing pressure on the Labour government to recognise a Palestinian state. The UK parliament and cabinet are currently in a summer recess until September 1. The recall comes after Starmer said on Friday the British government would recognise a Palestinian state only as part of a negotiated peace deal, disappointing many in his Labour Party who want him to follow France in taking swifter action.

Israel to deport Handala activists

Israel is seeking to deport pro-Palestinian activists who were detained and brought to shore when their Gaza-bound boat was intercepted by the navy. The 21 activists from 10 countries were taken into custody late Saturday when the Handala was boarded in international waters as it attempted to breach an Israeli maritime blockade of the Palestinian territory. The Handala and its crew from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) were brought to the port of Ashdod in Israel. **Page 5**

Israel bows to int'l pressure, allows Gaza aid delivery

● Military operations to be halted for 10 hours every day; new aid corridors opened

Reuters
Jerusalem/Gaza

Israel yesterday announced a halt in military operations for 10 hours a day in parts of Gaza and new aid corridors as Jordan and the United Arab Emirates airdropped supplies into the enclave, where images of starving Palestinians have alarmed the world. Israel has been facing growing international criticism, which the government rejects, over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and indirect ceasefire talks in Doha between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas have broken off with no deal in sight. US President Donald Trump, on a visit to Scotland, said Israel would have to make a decision on its next steps in Gaza, and he did not know what would happen after the collapse of ceasefire and hostage-release negotiations with Hamas. Military activity will stop from 10am to 8pm until further notice in Al-Mawasi, a designated humanitarian area along the coast, in central Deir Al-Balah and in Gaza City, to the north. The military said designated secure routes for convoys delivering food and medicine will also be in place between 6am and 11pm starting from Sunday.



An aircraft drops humanitarian aid over the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher said staff would step up efforts to feed the hungry during the pauses in the fighting. In their first airdrop in months, Jordan and the UAE parachuted 25 tonnes of aid into Gaza yesterday. Palestinian health officials in Gaza City said at least 10 people were injured by falling aid boxes. Work on a UAE project to run a new pipeline that will supply water from a desalination facility in neighbouring Egypt to around 600,000 Gazans along the coast would also begin in a few days, the Israeli military said.

49 trucks with Qatari aid on way to Gaza



As part of Qatar's ongoing humanitarian support for the brotherly Palestinian people, 49 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid have arrived in Egypt and Jordan. The aid was provided by Qatar through the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), in co-operation with Qatar Charity and the Qatar Red Crescent Society. It will be delivered to the World Food Programme (WFP) for distribution to those in need in the Gaza Strip via the Rafah and Zikim crossings. The aid included 4,704 food parcels for 4,704 families for more than 28,224 beneficiaries, 200 tonnes of food baskets targeting approximately 50,000 beneficiaries, 174 tonnes of flour for 43,000 beneficiaries, and 5,000 units of baby formula for the most vulnerable children. This aid comes amid the catastrophic humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip resulting from the ongoing blockade. **(QNA)**

QT marks inaugural Purple Saturday

Qatar Tourism (QT), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family and Ministry of Industry and Commerce, is partnering with its stakeholders to launch the nation's first-ever Purple Saturday initiative. According to QT, this high-impact initiative is dedicated to empowering people with special needs in society and will be held annually on the last Saturday of July. Launched by the Authority of People with Disabilities (APD) in Saudi Arabia in 2021, it is celebrated on the last Saturday of July every year and has now been extended to cover the entire GCC region as a show of solidarity and unity. Purple Saturday in Qatar unites stakeholders from both the pub-



Qatar's first-ever Purple Saturday initiative launched at the Qatar Toy Festival. (Supplied pictures)

lic and private sectors to champion accessibility, raise awareness, and foster greater community participation. As part of this initiative, QT through its promotional arm Visit Qatar, will mark Purple Saturday at the Qatar Toy Festival with a dedi-

cated celebration. People with special needs will enjoy free access to the festival throughout its duration. To support this, 16 different QT stakeholders which include retail stores and hotels are offering exclusive discounts and adapted services.

Qatar takes major steps in AI landscape: QDB

By Peter Alagos
Business Reporter

Qatar, with its massive digitalisation initiatives across various sectors of its economy, is strongly positioning itself as a major player in the realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI), according to a recent report by Qatar Development Bank (QDB). The country is actively integrating AI into several key areas like finance and manufacturing, as well as everyday services, QDB stated in its 'Qatar's Artificial Intelligence Sector' report. The report also stated that the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) region is seeing a big jump in the utilisation of AI. The market for AI in the GCC is expected to grow from about "QR12.4bn" in 2024 to "QR56.3bn" by 2030, reflecting

a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of nearly "28.6%," it further stated. "This surge is driven by increasing AI adoption across sectors like financial services, healthcare, and smart cities, fuelled by strong government initiatives and a focus on digital transformation. The region is positioning itself as a key hub for AI innovation, with countries like Qatar playing a pivotal role in this development," the report stated. The report emphasised that Qatar is at the forefront of this regional movement, playing a key role in developing AI innovation. Qatar, along with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, had already launched its national AI plan even before ChatGPT was released in 2022, the report emphasised. "These national strategies outline strategic objectives designed to

cultivate robust data ecosystems and foster a thriving AI landscape within each country," stated the report. Citing the Oxford Insights 2023 Global AI Readiness Index, the report pointed out that the GCC member states are progressing in their AI readiness. The UAE tops the list with a 70.42 score, followed by Saudi Arabia (67.04), Qatar (63.59), Oman (58.94), Bahrain (56.13), and Kuwait (49.86). Backed by six pillars: education, data access, employment, business, research, and ethics, Qatar's AI strategy seeks to develop AI applications and a supportive business environment while promoting responsible AI use through education, ethical guidelines, and sound laws, according to the report. **To Page 2**



Director general of Public Security meets Turkish counterpart

QNA
Istanbul

HE the Director General of Public Security Maj Gen Mohammed Jassim al-Sulaiti met with Director General of the National Police of Turkiye Mahmut Demi rtas, on the side-lines of the Ministry of Interior delegation's participation in the 17th International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF 2025), hosted in Istanbul from July 22-27.

The meeting discussed ways to enhance bilateral co-operation in security fields and prospects for developing joint security work between the two sides.

The delegation also toured several pavilions of participating countries and international companies, where



they were briefed on the latest advanced defence technologies and systems and key innovations in the military and security industries.

IDEF is considered one of the world's leading events in the de-

fence industry sector, with broad participation from various countries, making it a strategic platform for exchanging expertise and exploring co-operation opportunities.

Qatar takes part in World Artificial Intelligence Conference in China



Qatar participated in the opening ceremony of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-level Meeting on Global Artificial Intelligence Governance, held in Shanghai, in the presence of Premier of the State Council of China Li Qiang, as well as representatives from more than 40 countries and international organisations. The Qatari delegation was headed by Qatar's Consul General in Shanghai Rashid bin Mubarak al-Khater. **(QNA)**

Qatar takes major steps in AI landscape: QDB

From Page 1

"As the sector continues to grow, Qatar's AI strategy is anticipated to be updated to address the increasing demand for AI adoption and ensure alignment with emerging trends and needs.

"Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia aims to create 300 AI-driven startups and attract \$20bn in investment by 2030. And, the UAE's comprehensive AI strategy focuses on eight objectives, including deploying AI in priority sectors, fostering talent, advancing research, strengthening

governance, and building a robust AI ecosystem," the report stated. It also stated, "The GCC region stands to gain significant economic value from AI, with conservative estimates suggesting it could generate up to QR546bn, or approximately 7% of the region's combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP)."

Citing a Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) statement, the report also emphasised that "Qatar aspires to lead the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region in the Global AI Readiness Index."

Amir gets message from SA president



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, inviting him to participate in the G20 Summit that will take place in Johannesburg on Nov 22-23. The message was received by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi during a meeting yesterday with South African ambassador Ghulam Hoosein Asmal. **(QNA)**

Al-Muraikhi bids farewell to Canada's envoy

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with Canadian ambassador Isabelle Marie Catherine Martin, whose tenure in Qatar has ended. Al-Muraikhi expressed his appreciation to the ambassador for her efforts in strengthening bilateral relations and wished her continued success in her future duties. **(QNA)**



OIC Contact Group meets on Somalia

The meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) Contact Group on Somalia kicked off yesterday in Doha. The two-day meeting is being hosted by Qatar.

The preparatory meeting for senior staff was led by Assistant Director of the International Organisations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammed Ahmed al-Hammadi.

During the meeting, al-Hammadi highlighted the importance of collective work to support Somalia in confronting the challenges that the country is facing,



and working on solutions based on a joint process in Somalia in co-operation with partners and stakeholders.

He affirmed Qatar's belief that sustainable solutions and ensuring the completion of develop-

ment projects will break the cycle of needing foreign aid and create an infrastructure that will enable the government to achieve the aspirations of the brotherly Somali people for development, progress, and prosperity. **(QNA)**

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Qatar Charity distributes relief and development assistance in Sri Lanka



Qatar Charity has launched a relief and development aid distribution project in Sri Lanka. Representatives from the Sri Lankan government, the embassy of Qatar in Sri Lanka and civil society, along with several other donors, attended the event. This comes as part of its collaborative efforts to assist in the devastation caused by natural disasters, assist

people with special needs, and empower families in need. The project targets approximately 60,000 people from vulnerable and displaced groups, covering 14 product categories, including grain and spice grinding machines, sewing machines, manual and electric wheelchairs, furniture and desks, blood pressure monitors, and other tools that contribute to improving the daily

lives of sisterly families and joint development efforts.

Mahmoud Abu Khalifa, director of Qatar Charity's office in Sri Lanka, stated that this project falls within the framework of the vision of providing advice and a decent life for all. He explained that distributing products is a strategic step towards economic empowerment and reducing poverty among the needy and displaced families, and even those affected by disasters.

Munir Muzafer, deputy minister, Justice and National Integration, Sri Lanka, thanked Qatar Charity for its great efforts in assisting the Sri Lankan people over the past six years in several areas, including the needs of individuals and families in need and relief for those affected by floods. He also thanked Qatar and the Qatari embassy for their important role in supporting the Sri Lankan people, emphasising the urgent need to provide facilities to ensure the continuity of work.



Qatar Post receives UPU 'Postal Security Group Chairman's Award'

Qatar Post announced its winning of the "Postal Security Group Chairman's Award" for 2025, presented by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in recognition of outstanding contributions to enhancing postal security at both the regional and international levels. This achievement represents a culmination of Qatar Post's ongoing institutional efforts to strengthen the postal supply chain security system by adopting advanced operational practices and implementing effective compliance and control frameworks. These measures have significantly enhanced the readiness of its postal infrastructure in line with UPU standards and international secu-

rity requirements. The award highlights Qatar Post's prominent position within the global postal sector, particularly in the areas of quality, sustainability, and operational security, and reflects the company's strategic vision of achieving regional leadership and enhancing integration with international postal networks. Qatar Post emphasised that this recognition is a continuation of its efforts to embed a culture of quality and compliance across the organisation. It also underscores the vital role of specialised expertise in supporting postal security strategies, helping to strengthen the confidence of international partners and customers, and reinforcing Qatar's standing in global postal forums. (QNA)

HMC offers tips for kids, elderly to reduce summer heat risks

As schools close for the long summer holidays and temperatures continue to rise, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has urged the public to be extra vigilant in safeguarding themselves and their household, especially children from heat-related illnesses, more prevalent during the hotter months. The Hamad Injury Prevention Programme (HIPP) of HMC's Hamad Trauma Center (HTC), a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on Trauma, has issued a list of best practices to keep residents in Qatar safe in the hot weather. Medical experts at HMC emphasise that children are especially vulnerable to high temperatures and humidity. Dr Aisha Abeid, assistant director, HIPP, highlights that children's bodies do not adjust to environmental changes as efficiently as adults do. "It's important for parents to ensure that any outdoor activities take place during cooler parts of the day or in shaded or air-conditioned areas," said Dr Abeid. She noted that children's bodies can heat up five times faster than those of adults, making them more prone to heat stress and related complications. "High temperatures can be dangerous for anyone, but for children, the risk is significantly greater," she added. These risks are not confined to children only. "The elderly or those with co-morbidities or



Dr Aisha Abeid

chronic disease are as vulnerable as young children if they stay outdoors at the heat peak hours between 10am-4pm," said Dr Abeid. Heat-related illnesses can develop quickly and may present symptoms such as elevated body temperature, clammy skin, irritability, excessive thirst or sweating, headaches, dizziness, or weakness. If left untreated, these can progress to more severe conditions such as heat exhaustion or heatstroke. HMC advises that children to be never left unsupervised outdoors and that caregivers adopt practical preventive measures, especially when heading to beaches, parks, or swimming pools. Dr Abeid suggests that children should wear light-coloured, breathable clothing and be kept well hydrated, with access to shade and regular breaks from the heat. Dr Abeid recommends these

proven 'SMART' techniques to reduce family risk of heat-related illness: Stay hydrated; ensure you and your children drink plenty of fluids. Sweating removes much needed salt and minerals from the body. Supervise children as they play outdoors, any signs of heat-related illnesses can be immediately identified and addressed. Monitor local heat and humidity forecasts, using any weather app, to know if there are heat warnings of extreme temperatures, > 40-45C, and/or humidity, >50%. Avoid unshaded areas and surfaces that absorb and reflect heat, like asphalt, concrete, dark coloured and reflective surfaces. Regular breaks for any outdoor activity, every 30 minutes, moving adults and children into air conditioned indoors or shaded spaces and to drink cool liquids, every 15 minutes. Dry their sweat off, provide a cool towel wipe and change clothes, if necessary. Use a phone alarm with lively alarm sounds or songs and make it a game with the children, so they enjoy these breaks. Time outdoor activity time before 10am and after 4pm to reduce dangerous heat exposure. Never leave anyone, especially children, in a parked car. In case children develop any heat related illness symptoms such as sweating, dehydration, confusion, you should take them to a cooler area immediately and call 999 for further guidance.

Rawabi launches 'Mid-Year Mega Rush 10 20 30' offer

Rawabi, has unveiled its "Mid-Year Mega Rush 10 20 30" offer, that promises unbeatable deals across a wide variety of categories. Running from today to August 9, 2025, this two-week event offers over 1,000 products at just QR10, QR20, and QR30, across all Rawabi and Grand stores in Qatar.

This limited-time promotion is designed to redefine the shopping experience for customers by offering unbelievable value on essential and lifestyle products including groceries, fresh food, household items, homeware, toys, electronics, garments, and much more. The star of the campaign is the 10, 20, 30 pricing format, covering a curated selection of 1,000+ high-demand products that fit every budget and lifestyle - whether it is daily essentials, festive gifting, or travel must-haves. Among the featured items are Sadia Griller Chicken 1000gm for QR10, Cadbury



Flake Chocolate 28gm x 12 pcs for QR20, Kellogg's Cornflakes 750gm for QR10, Roza-na Basmati Rice 5kg for QR20, Pantene Shampoo 400ml x 2 pcs for QR20, Romex Men's Casual Shoes for QR25, Men's 2-piece T-Shirt set for QR10, China Carpet 160x230 for QR30, and Aluminium Pressure Cooker 5 litre for QR30 - along with hundreds of other irresistible deals.

In addition to these exciting offers, Rawabi is also featuring a special collection of "Back to School" essentials, perfectly timed with the school reopening season. From school bags, stationery, water bottles, and lunch boxes to uniforms and shoes - everything needed for a confident start for children to the academic year, is available under one roof at amazing prices.

QRCS supports kidney, cancer patients in Yemen

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has completed a humanitarian project to support patients with kidney failure and cancer in Yemen. QRCS covered the costs of 1,044 radiology sessions and provided Al-Shafqa Institution in Amanat Al-Asimah with a whole solar power system, food supplies, and fuel, at a total cost of \$135,665. The project addressed many problems related to the treatment of patients with kidney failure and cancer, including the high cost of medical care; limited resources, equipment, and therapeutic and diagnostic services; lack of medications, medical professionals, and surgeons; and government funding



cuts due to the humanitarian crisis in the country. Abdul-Salam al-Madani, chairman of Cancer Control Fund, said: "I would like to thank QRCS. I hope there will be more support with medications and medical supplies, especially radioactive iodine, which is used in the treatment of some types of cancer, including thyroid cancer. We not only raise awareness about the causes of the disease and ways to prevent it, but also provide chemotherapy, biological drugs, laboratory solutions, and surgeries for free." Wathiq Sultan al-Qurashi, chairman of Al-Shafqa Institution, commented: "The project helped upgrade patient catering services for three months. It also ensured social protection and mental health stability for patients coming from distant governorates to receive treatment at dialysis and cancer treatment centres in Amanat Al-Asimah. The installation of solar panels greatly improved the working environment at the centre." Cancer rates in Yemen are alarmingly rising, with more than 100,000 cases, according to the World Health Organisation. Also, there are over 45,000 people with kidney disease, including 8,500 people with chronic kidney failure.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ IN LOVING MEMORY

We are deeply saddened to announce that
Mr. K.P. Aboobacker Haji Panangayil has passed away
on Saturday, 26th July 2025



K.P. Aboobacker Haji Panangayil
(1940 - 2025)

A long-term resident of Qatar, he was instrumental in the growth and success of MES Indian School and Family Food Centre, contributing greatly to the development of both institutions. His legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

May Allah grant him the highest ranks in Jannah and give strength to all who mourn his loss.



QPC course on media’s role, state protocol

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Press Centre (QPC) has concluded a course on “The Role of the Media in Promoting the Message of State Protocol”, presented by Dr Omar Ghanem.

The course, which was attended by 20 participants, representing ministries and state institutions, addressed the role of the media in strengthening international relations and countering misleading and false news that seeks to undermine these relations.

“The course was attended by workers in both the public and private sectors, as well as media professionals and journalists,” he said.

“Therefore, the academic material took into account the professional diversity of the participants, with the aim of informing them of the practices of state protocol, as a large part of this area is not clear to public opinion.”

“The course focused on the role of the media in promoting the message of state protocol, as it is the authority that can defend national interests with high professional values and raise community awareness in the face of foreign media misinformation campaigns,” Dr Ghanem said.

He discussed the definition of protocol, concluding that protocol is the rules of the state, while etiquette is the rules of society.

Protocol is defined by guidelines, while etiquette is defined by



polite behaviour or courteous conduct.

Therefore, he said, etiquette requires protocol guidelines to ensure it is on the right track.

He addressed the course's topics, saying: “The course covered

four topics, the most important of which was the foundation of protocol from a historical, ethical, and civilisational perspective.”

Dr Ghanem also focused on the Eastern origin of protocol and how Islam contributed to strengthen-

ing this image, drawing on what is stated in the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's biography, as well as the results of the righteous predecessors in shaping the message of state protocol.

Many of the methodologies used in Western presidential palaces are now protocols derived from the East.

The second topic addressed Qatari state protocol and its basic components, and how its five pillars work: the flag, the national anthem, the state emblem, the emir's images, and the state's precedents system.

The third topic addressed how the media contributes to supporting state protocol and confronting foreign media disinformation campaigns, which confuse public

opinion and misinterpret certain actions to undermine community morale.

Positively, Dr Ghanem said, media contribution in support of state protocol reinforces the message of welcoming guests, especially during state visits where the media is a key pillar.

The fourth section addressed skills related to handshaking, appearance, and proper behaviour, with a focus on what is unique to Qatari society, such as majlis hospitality.

At the end of the course, the trainees called for an advanced training course in state protocol to gain a deeper understanding of diplomatic dealings and the mechanisms and rules of effective diplomatic communication.

Fanar launches Friday sermon translation into English

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre (Fanar), affiliated with the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, has launched a service to translate the Friday sermon into English at the Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani Mosque in The Pearl.

This service, according to

an official statement from Ashghal, is part of Fanar's ongoing efforts to expand the scope of its religious outreach services and enhance cultural communication with non-Arabic speakers.

The first translated sermons witnessed a remarkable turnout of non-Arabic-speaking worshippers, who expressed their thanks and appreciation.

It facilitated their understanding of the sermon's content and contributed to deepening their connection to Islamic rituals.

This initiative is part of an integrated system implemented by Fanar in cooperation with the Mosques Administration Department at Awqaf.

The Friday sermon is translated into four major

languages – Urdu, English, Malay, and Bengali.

This translation is provided by certified translators in 60 mosques across the country benefiting tens of thousands of worshippers weekly.

Fanar director Dr Saleh Ali al-Marri said the initiative reflects the centre's commitment to its mission of providing a comprehensive religious environment that supports the values of coexistence and cultural communication, and meets the needs of the communities residing in Qatar.


He said removing the language barrier contributes to communicating the content and objectives of the sermon to wider segments of society.

“Fanar is currently working on developing live translation technologies using modern audio systems to allow worshippers to listen to the translation live via special headphones distributed in mosques,” Dr al-Marri said.

“Specialised personnel are also being trained to ensure accurate and smooth translation, preserving the sanctity of the sermon and achieving its missionary and educational objectives.”

He added that Fanar intends to expand the programme to include new mosques and additional languages in the coming period.





أسفير كاتارا هوسبيتاليتي
ASPIRE KATARAHOSPITALITY

Announces the following tender

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Bond	Tender Fees	Closing Date	Tender Offer
AKH/SS-00562/25	Supply And Delivery of White Eggs on Call-Off Basis for AKH Managed Restaurants	QR 10,000	QR 850	August 18th, 2025	One Envelopes (Technical & Financial)

•Company may register and obtain the Electronic Tender Documents (e-TD) upon submission of Company's copy of the following:

- » Valid Commercial Registration (CR)
- » Computer Card
- » Trade License
- » Stamped receipt as proof of payment for the non-refundable tender fee (QR 850.00) which should be paid to » Dukhan Bank, Account No. 100000107777, IBAN: QA56BRWA00000000100000107777 (Aspire Katara Hospitality).
- » Interested Company may send the scanned copy of these four (4) essential documents to AKH E-mail: info@akh.com.qa
- » These four (4) documents shall be the prerequisite to register as a Tenderer and to obtain the e-TD.
- » **Imperative: Please put the Tender No. and Tender Title as subject in your email**

•AKH shall only accept and send the Electronic Tender Documents (e-TD) via email to interested Companies who are in full compliance with the above prerequisites.

•The period for tender registration and obtaining the e-TD shall be **from July 28th, 2025 up to August 4th, 2025 (working days)**.

•All enquiries and requests related to this tender shall be officially in writing to be addressed and delivered to: **Attn: Tender Committee Chairman, Aspire Katara Hospitality, P.O. Box 10737, Doha, Qatar, Fax No. +974 4449 3901.** Tenderer(s) may also send the scanned copy of its inquiry to AKH E-mails: **info@akh.com.qa and tenders@akh.com.qa**

•The last day for the Tenderer's to raise queries shall be on **August 11th, 2025** any queries after this date will be disregarded.

•Tenders are to be submitted in **duplicate (1 Original + 1 Copy) and 1 Soft Copy (scanned copy of the "Original" in PDF format) along with the Tender Bond of QR 10,000 obtained from a Bank registered in Doha, Qatar**, to be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Tenders Committee Chairman of Aspire Katara Hospitality, endorsed in Arabic and English and to be deposited in the tender box of Aspire Katara Hospitality, 29th Floor, Al-Asmakh Tower, Majlis Al Taawon Street, Dafna, West Bay. (Location: <https://tinyurl.com/x3d8db5s>)

•The closing time will be on or before **12:00 PM**, on the closing date mentioned above, any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.

•Offer must be valid for 180 days from the Tender Closing Date.

•The successful tenderer shall submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the Contract Sum from approved bank with a registered office in Qatar and valid until thirty (30) calendar days after the expiration of contract period.

Awqaf programme aims to strengthen Islamic identity in youngsters

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Dawah and Religious Guidance, launched the summer Dawah programme “Hikaya” devoted to girls and children, which is purposefully directed towards fostering Islamic identity and promoting behavioural and ethical values among youngsters.


The programme primarily intends to reinforce national Islamic identity and affiliation through staging interactive lectures and workshops overseen by female professionals specialising in religious and pedagogical guidance in a catalysing and secure environment, Awqaf said in a statement yesterday.

“Hikaya” is laser-focused on narrating the stories of the Prophets and linking them to the doctrine of monotheism, with the intent of strengthening faith in Allah, the Almighty, and trust in Him, in addition to inculcating correct behavioural values in youngsters’ hearts to be psychologically ready to navigate the challenges that might potentially arise throughout their forthcoming age periods.

Islamic preacher Sheikh al-Jarboui highlighted that the programme literally aims to connect the female participants with the models inspired from Islamic history to be further put out as a source of inspiration that shores up Islamic values and identity.

The programme is part of Awqaf’s efforts to invest in summer breaks as a key source to promote values and identity and build a conscious generation confident in its religion and touts its identity.

– QNA



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy

The General, Limited Tenders Committees and Supply Chain Department announces the following Tenders:

Important Notice:

Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QatarEnergy via Mushtaryat Portal can "Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document" from QatarEnergy website (Mushtaryat Portal).

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids submitted by a Local company (companies incorporated in Qatar) acting as Tenderer in accordance with this Invitation to Tender, will not be accepted by QatarEnergy without any further notification, if such companies are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (<https://icv.qa/en-US>) by the specified Original Tender Closing Date or Original due date for submission of COMMERCIAL Package in case of two stage Tendering as per ITT. However, any Local company that has been established within last two (2) years is exempt from this mandatory ICV certification requirement.

Sl. No	Tender Number	Tender Sale Period		Tender Closing Date	Tender Bond	Bond Curr.	Tender Fee	Fee Curr.
1	LT25103800	29.07.2025	04.08.2025	25.08.2025	25,000.00	QAR	200.00	QAR
Title of Tender:					REPAIR AND REROUTING OF DAMAGED UNDERGROUND OILY WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM AT ARAB-D GAS RECYCLING PLANT			
Mid-Tender Meeting Location :					To be advised if required			
Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time :					To be advised if required			
2	LT25MT0074	24.07.2025	30.07.2025	25.08.2025	2,000.00	QAR	N/A	
Title of Tender:					SALE & REMOVAL OF FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE, IT, MARINE AND DRILLING ITEMS			
Mid-Tender Meeting Location :					To be advised if required			
Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time :					To be advised if required			

- Tender documents can be purchased and downloaded from QatarEnergy Website-> Supply Management -> Tenders page during the Tender Sale Period mentioned above against each Tender. Request for issuance of Tender after the specified Tender Sale Period will not be entertained.
- Always refer to QatarEnergy Website (www.qatarenergy.qa) -> Supply Management -> Tenders page for up to date information on QatarEnergy Tenders. Subscribe to Tender Alert to receive notification in your email on new Tenders
- Changes to Tender Sale Period and Bid Closing Date will be updated in QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal only.
- Brief Scopes of Work for the above tenders are posted on the QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal.
- Suppliers and Contractors who are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy are instructed to maintain their Company Registration and Communication details upto date and valid via QatarEnergy Mushtaryat Portal on urgent basis.
- No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.
- QatarEnergy invites all prospective Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in QatarEnergy Tenders to register online and obtain a QatarEnergy SAP Vendor Code, a mandatory requirement for the issue of Tender Documents by QatarEnergy.
- Prospective Qatar based Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in future QatarEnergy Tenders shall obtain an ICV score. Relevant information pertaining to ICV, ICV Scorecard, ICV Certification, and ICV Guidelines are available on the ICV Digital Portal - <https://icv.qa/en-US>



قطر ستيل
QATAR STEEL

Qatar Steel Tender Committee is pleased to announce the following tender:


No	Tender Number	Tender Description	Tender Fees (Non-Refundable) (QAR)	Tender Bond (QAR)	Last Date for payment of Tender Fee	Date of Issue Tender Doc.
1.	SC-SU-06-2025 (TC/22)	<p>Transportation of Scrap Material on Call Off Basis from Various Locations to Qatar Steel Co., Mesaieed;</p> <p>Duration: 5 Years, starting tentatively from 01st November 2025</p> <p>Brief Summary: The scope of work requires Contractor to load and transport the steel scrap (ferrous) from designated locations within Qatar to Qatar Steel Plant, Mesaieed. Contractor should have Trailers/Dump Trucks, Forklifts, Cranes etc for this service.</p> <p>Interested Companies would be required at a later stage to provide: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Financial Data•HSE Data	500	500,000	10 th Aug 2025	20 th Aug 2025
Bank Account		A/c No. 240/450008/1/11/0 with Doha Bank, being Qatari Riyal account. [IBAN : QA52DOHB024004500080010011000]				

Interested Companies are requested to:

1. Pay the Tender Fees to our bank Account (mentioned above)
2. Send the following details to our email : servicecontracts@qatarsteel.com.qa
 - Tender Number and Title
 - Proof of payment (bank receipt)
 - Confirm the email to which tender to be issued
 - Copy of Valid ICV certificate (mandatory requirement)

Qatar Steel shall issue Tender Document through email on the “Date of Issue” (mentioned above).

For Queries, you may contact Procurement, Qatar Steel Co., Tel. No. 44778778
www.qatarsteel.com.qa



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy
LNG

QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/A/STK/7028/25, B72 Material Agreement for the Supply of Wire Mesh & Screen without any commitment	27/07/2025 to 03/08/2025	0	25,000	17/08/2025

Scope of Work:

QatarEnergy LNG invites proposal from reputed suppliers for 5-year Call of Agreement for The Supply of Wire Mesh & Screen without any commitment in terms of quantity and value. For other tender terms & conditions, please refer full tender documents.

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for **270** calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.

UN to use ‘humanitarian pauses’ to try to gain access to Gaza’s starving

AFP
Geneva

The United Nations said it would try to reach as many starving people as possible in Gaza after Israel announced it would establish secure land routes in for humanitarian convoys.

The UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) said it had enough food in, or on its way to, the region to feed the 2.1mn people in the Gaza Strip for almost three months.

UN emergency relief co-ordinator Tom Fletcher said on X he welcomed the announcement of “humanitarian pauses”. “In contact with our teams on the ground who will do all we can to reach as many starving people as we can in this window,” he said.

WFP said the pauses and corridors should allow emergency food to be safely delivered. “Food aid is the only real



File photo of UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator Tom Fletcher.

way for most people inside Gaza to eat,” it said in a statement. It said a third of the population had not been eating for days, and 470,000 people in Gaza “are enduring famine-like conditions” that were leading to deaths.

WFP said more than 62,000 tonnes of food assistance was needed monthly to cover the entire Gaza population of two million. The agency noted that, on top

of yesterday’s “pause” announcement, Israel had pledged to allow more trucks to enter Gaza with quicker clearances along with “assurances of no armed forces or shootings near convoys”.

“Together, we hope these measures will allow for a surge in urgently needed food assistance to reach hungry people without further delays,” it said.

UN rights chief Volker Turk said Israel, as the occupying power in Gaza, was obliged to ensure sufficient food was provided to the population.

“Children are starving and dying in front of our eyes. Gaza is a dystopian landscape of deadly attacks and total destruction,” he said in a statement.

He criticised a US and Israel-backed outfit, called the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), that in late May began distributing foodstuffs when UN-organised efforts were blocked.

Turk said the GHF’s “chaotic, militarised distribution sites were “failing utterly to deliver humanitarian aid at the scope and scale needed”.

His office says Israeli forces have killed more than 1,000 Palestinians trying to get food aid in Gaza since the GHF started operations - nearly three-quarters of them in the vicinity of GHF sites. “The starvation of people in Gaza must end now,” UN refugees chief Filippo Grandi said on X.

“Standing with UN and NGO colleagues ready to deliver desperately-needed, lifesaving aid to hundreds of thousands at risk of death,” Fletcher’s UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warned on Friday that conditions on the ground in Gaza were “already catastrophic” and deteriorating.



An airplane drops humanitarian aid over Gaza as seen from northern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

Jordanian, Emirati planes drop 25 tonnes of aid over Gaza

AFP
Amman

Two Jordanian and one Emirati plane dropped 25 tonnes of humanitarian aid over the Gaza Strip yesterday, the

Jordanian army said in a statement.

“The Jordanian Armed Forces yesterday carried out three air drops on the Gaza Strip carrying humanitarian and food aid, one of which was with the United Arab Emirates,” the statement said, adding that they were carrying 25 tonnes of aid.



Palestinian walk carrying sacks of flour near Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip, yesterday, after planes dropped aid into Gaza.

البنك العربي

ARAB BANK



Final Announcement from Arab Bank plc – Qatar

This is to announce that the below list of cheques issued by applicants through our Bank have not been presented to date and remain outstanding for over 10 years.

In case the Bank is not contacted with regards to these cheques within 3 weeks from the date of this announcement, their proceeds shall be transferred to General Authority for Minor Affairs.

Kindly visit our Main Branch located at Grand Hamad Street or contact us at 4438 7878.

S#	Cheque No.	Currency	Amount	Applicant	Beneficiary
1	15924	QAR	362.41	ARAB BANK	YOUSEF MOHAMMAD OTHMAN FAKHROO
2	16011	QAR	130.47	ARAB BANK	SHAIKHA MOHAMMAD AL OTHMAN FAKHROO
3	16012	QAR	130.47	ARAB BANK	MARYAM MOHAMMAD OTHMAN FAKHROO
4	16013	QAR	72.48	ARAB BANK	ABDULLA FAHAD ALI AL ABDULLA AL THANI
5	16014	QAR	18.85	ARAB BANK	RAWDAH MOHAMMAD MAHMOUD SAID
6	16015	QAR	1,522.11	ARAB BANK	AISHA QASSIM DARWISH FAKHROO
7	16016	QAR	3,673.36	ARAB BANK	MARYAM ABDULLA DARWISH FAKHROO
8	16213	QAR	2,300.00	ARAB BANK	MAGI PACKERS AND MOVERS

Activist boat Handala seized off Gaza

AFP
Port of Ashdod

Israeli forces brought the pro-Palestinian activist boat Handala into the port of Ashdod yesterday, after seizing the vessel in international waters and detaining the crew, an AFP journalist saw.

Campaigners from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition had attempted to breach an Israeli naval blockade of the Palestinian territory of Gaza, but were intercepted late Saturday.

The legal rights centre Adalah told AFP its lawyers were in Ashdod and had been allowed to speak to 19 members of the 21-strong international crew, which included two French parliamentarians and two Al Jazeera journalists.

The remaining two of those detained were dual US and Israeli citizens and had been transferred to police custody, Adalah said.

“After 12 hours at sea, following the unlawful interception of the Handala, Israeli authorities confirmed the vessel’s arrival at Ashdod port,” said the group, set up to campaign for the rights of Israel’s Arab population.

“Adalah reiterates that the activists aboard the Handala were part of a peaceful civilian mission to break through Israel’s illegal blockade on Gaza. The vessel was intercepted in international waters and their detention constitutes a clear violation of international law.” Earlier, the Israeli foreign ministry said the navy stopped the Handala to prevent it from entering the coastal waters off the territory of Gaza.

“The vessel is safely making its way to the shores of Israel. All passengers are safe,” it said.

Just before midnight local time on Saturday, video streamed live from the Handala showed Israeli troops boarding the vessel. An online tracker showed the ship in international waters west of Gaza.



QATAR FUND

FOR DEVELOPMENT

صندوق قطر للتنمية

QFFD announces the following Public Tender:

SN	TENDER NO.	TENDER NAME	TENDER FEE (USD)	TENDER BOND (USD)	CLOSING DATE
1	QFFD/RFP-0/PDS/0078/06-2025	Design-Build Qatar Square in Tirana, Albania	\$ 1,500	\$ 240,000	11-September-2025

❖

Tender Document of the above Tender is available for collection via email from 28-07-2025 until Bid closing date.

❖

Interested parties shall first deposit the appropriate Tender Fee (non-refundable) as mentioned above; payable to:

Bank Name: Al-Rayan Bank

Account Name: Qatar Fund for Development

Account Number: 0003-102031-202

IBAN: QA14MAFR000000000003102031202

(Company Name, Tender Name & Tender Number must be mentioned in the deposit slip)

❖

The Tender document will be issued upon receiving a copy of the Commercial Registration, Classification Certificate (if any) and proof of payment via email: overseas.tender@qatarfund.org.qa.

❖

Tender document submitted should be accompanied with a Tender Bond in accordance with the tender document shall be issued by a local Qatari Bank or by an international Bank confirmed and endorsed by any local Qatari Banks valid for 180 days from date of closing date.

❖

The Closing time will be no later than 12:00 noon, on the closing date mentioned above; any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.

❖

Tender document to be submitted at:
SECRETARY, TENDER COMMITTEE
Qatar Fund for Development
L9 Floor, Laffan Tower
P.O. Box 23366
Doha, Qatar



قطر للطاقة

QatarEnergy

LNG

QatarEnergy LNG

Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	SUP/C/EDU/7062/25 ONLINE LEARNING SUBSCRIPTION FOR AL KHOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL	27/07/2025 to 05/08/2025	0	0	11/08/2025

Scope of Work:

Contractor shall provide Online Learning subscription to Al Khor International School (AKIS). The subscription package shall include Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered personalized teaching and learningfor the stated groups. The following curriculum coverage shall be part of subscriptions:

•

English, math and science for Years 2-11.

•

Geography and Theory Physical Education (PE) for KS4.

•

Any other course content as it is developed including BBC Bitesize learning content.

Bid Validity:

Bid Offer should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note:

Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.



Cowboy Day marked in Kenya



Revellers line dance during the International Cowboy Day at Ngong race course in Nairobi. Country music have a loyal fan base in Kenya and the popularity of the music continuing to grow, the event was celebrated by hundreds of attendees with a collective of country artists performing. The headline of the event was Sir Elvis, Kenya's biggest country star.

13 dead, dozens missing in Nigeria boat accident

Reuters
Maiduguri

Thirteen people were confirmed dead with dozens more missing after a boat ferrying around 100 passengers capsized on Saturday in Niger state in north-central Nigeria as they headed to market, authorities said yesterday.

Twenty-six people, mostly women and children, were rescued from the wooden boat, said Yusuf Lemu, an official of the Ni-

ger State Emergency Management Agency.

Local official Isiyaku Akilu said the boat driver, who was among those rescued, could not confirm the number of passengers on the boat. "The exact cause of the accident is yet to be determined, but from all indications, it appears to be due to overloading," said Akilu.

Adamu Ahmad, a member of the boat drivers' union, confirmed that the boat was overloaded. He said it was a large wooden boat and efforts are being made to recover more bodies.

Niger State is also home to Nigeria's three major hydroelectric dams, and boat accidents have become a frequent occurrence. Saturday's accident happened nine months after a boat carrying mostly women and children returning from a religious festival capsized and killed at least 60 people.

Rescue efforts were momentarily paused yesterday to allow the custodian of the river to perform rituals that would ensure a "hitch-free rescue mission", said Akilu.

Questions swell in Eswatini over five men deported from US

AFP
Mbabane

In the small African kingdom of Eswatini, the arrival of five men deported from the United States under Washington's aggressive anti-immigrant measures has sparked a rare wave of public dissent.

The five, nationals of Vietnam, Laos, Yemen, Cuba and Jamaica, were flown to Eswatini's administrative capital of Mbabane on July 16 on a US military plane and incarcerated after US authorities labelled them "criminal illegal aliens".

The US Department of Home-

land Security said the men were convicted of violent crimes "so uniquely barbaric that their home countries refused to take them back". The government of Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland, has confirmed their presence.

But spokesman Thabile Mdluli said they would not stay permanently, and "will be repatriated in due course to their different countries". That assurance, though, has not quelled a tide of questions and concerns that has risen within the kingdom about the operation.

Civic and rights groups are wondering whether further deportees from the United States will arrive, and what rights the five men detained have. Public outrage

at the lack of transparency led to 150 women protesting outside the US embassy in Mbabane on Friday.

The protest, organised by the Eswatini Women's Movement, demanded the prisoners be returned to the United States and queried the legal basis Eswatini relied on to accept them. The five men are being held in the Matsapha Correctional Centre, 30 kilometres south of Mbabane.

The facility, notorious for holding political prisoners and overcrowding, has been undergoing renovations and expansions since 2018, reportedly funded by the United States as part of a programme covering all 14 of the country's penal centres.

At least 35 killed in rebel attack in northeast DR Congo

AFP
Bunia

At least 35 people were killed yesterday in an attack by Allied Democratic Forces rebels in northeastern DR Congo, ending a months-long period of regional calm, local sources told AFP.

The ADF, originally formed from former Ugandan rebels and which pledged allegiance to Islamic State in 2019, raided a Catholic church in the town of Komanda where worshippers were gathered for prayer, residents told AFP by telephone from Bunia, capital of Ituri province.

"Last night around 9pm (1900 GMT), we heard gunfire near the parish church... so far we have seen 35 bodies," Dieudonne Katanabo, an Umoja neighbour-

hood elder, told AFP. "We have at least 31 dead members of the Eucharistic Crusade movement, with six seriously injured... some young people were kidnapped, we have no news of them," Father Aime Lokana Dhego, parish priest of the Blessed Anuarite parish of Komanda, told AFP.

The priest added that seven other bodies had been discovered in the town.

Likewise attributing the attack to "ADF rebels", Christophe Munyanderu, co-ordinator of the local NGO Convention for the Respect of Human Rights, gave a provisional death toll of 38.

Lieutenant Jules Ngongo, army spokesman in Ituri, did not comment on the toll but confirmed the attack to AFP, stating that "the enemy is believed to have been iden-

tified among ADF" rebels. The bloodshed comes after months of calm in the region of Ituri, bordering Uganda. The last major attack by the ADF was in February, leaving 23 dead in Mambasa territory.

The town of Komanda in Irumu territory is a commercial hub linking three other provinces — Tshopo, North Kivu, and Maniema.

The ADF, originally Ugandan rebels, has killed thousands of civilians and ramped up looting and killing in northeastern DRC despite the deployment both of the Ugandan army alongside Congolese armed forces in the area.

At the end of 2021, Kampala and Kinshasa launched a joint military operation against the ADF, dubbed "Shujaa", which has so far been unable to dislodge the group.

Syria sets date for selection of new transitional parliament

AFP
Damascus

Syrian authorities announced yesterday that a new transitional parliament would be selected in September, with local electoral bodies picking two-thirds of the lawmakers and the country's interim president naming the rest.

After toppling longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December after nearly 14 years of civil war, Syria's new

authorities — led by President Ahmed al-Sharaa — dissolved the country's rubber-stamp legislature and adopted a temporary constitutional declaration to cover a five-year transition period. In June, a presidential decree established a 10-member committee to supervise the formation of local electoral bodies to select a new batch of lawmakers.

State news agency SANA reported yesterday that committee head Mohammed Taha al-Ahmad had met with Sharaa to discuss the process, later announcing plans for a new 210-seat parliament.

Iraqi police clash with paramilitary fighters who stormed govt building

Reuters
Baghdad

A gun battle erupted in Iraq's capital yesterday between police and fighters from a state-sanctioned paramilitary force that includes foreign-backed groups, killing at least one police officer and leading to the arrest of 14 fighters, authorities said.

The clash broke out in Baghdad's Karkh district after a group of fighters from the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) stormed

an Agriculture Ministry building as a new director was being sworn in, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The PMF, known in Arabic as Hashd al-Shaabi, is an umbrella group of paramilitary factions that was formally integrated into Iraq's state security forces and includes several groups aligned with another nation.

According to the Interior Ministry, the PMF fighters burst into the building during an administrative meeting, causing panic among staff who alerted police.

Security sources and three

employees at the scene said the fighters had wanted to stop the office's former director from being replaced.

A statement from the Joint Operations Command, which reports directly to Prime Minister Mohammed S al-Sudani, confirmed that the detainees were PMF members and had been referred to the judiciary. At least one police officer was killed and nine others were wounded, police and hospital sources said.

Sudani ordered the formation of a committee to investigate the incident, the command said.

Erdogan hails Macron for decision to recognise Palestinian state

AFP
Istanbul

Turkiye's president yesterday welcomed a move by his French counterpart to recognise Palestinian statehood, in a phone call between the two leaders, the Turkish presidency said.

"During a telephone conversation, President (Recep Tayyip)

Erdogan congratulated French President (Emmanuel) Macron on his decision to recognise Palestine as a state," it said in a statement. "A two-state solution is essential for a durable peace in the region," Erdogan said. Macron said Thursday that his country would formally recognise a Palestinian state during a UN meeting in September, the most powerful European nation to announce such a move. Macron's announcement drew condemnation from Israel, while US President Donald Trump dismissed the decision as pointless.

Outspoken critic of Cameroon president excluded from poll

AFP
Yaounde

A high-profile critic of Cameroon's long-running President Paul Biya has been excluded by electoral authorities from the list of approved candidates able to run in an October 12 presidential vote.

Maurice Kamto was not among the 13 candidates on the provisional list issued Saturday by the national electoral council. Kamto, 71, had officially submitted his candidacy last week, one of 83 names put forward to the electoral council.

The definitive list of candidates will be announced in the coming days after any challenges to the provisional list are considered.

Kamto came second to Biya in the 2018 presidential election. He sought to run as the candidate for the African Movement for New Independence and Democracy (MANIDEM).



File photo of Cameroonian politician Maurice Kamto.

In the 2018 election, Kamto stood for the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC). The 92-year-old Biya has been in power since 1982 and is seeking an eighth term in office.

Among the candidates approved to run in the election are former prime minister Bello Bouba Maigari, an ally of Biya's for nearly 30 years, and Issa Tchiroma Bakary, who resigned as employment minister in early June to submit his candidacy.

Ghana records first Mpox death as cases surge

Ghana has recorded its first death from Mpox, health authorities confirmed yesterday, amid a sharp rise in new infections in the West African country, AFP reported from Accra. Twenty-three new cases have been confirmed in the past week, bringing the total number of infections to 257 since the virus was first detected in Ghana in June 2022. The latest figure marks the highest weekly increase since the outbreak began and the first fatality recorded in the country. Health minister Kwabena Mintah Akandoh told AFP "that the situation is under control." "The key to limiting this outbreak is early detection and responsible behaviour," Akandoh said. Mpox, previously known as Monkeypox, is a viral infection related to smallpox, causing fever, body aches and distinct skin lesions. The disease spreads through close physical contact with infected individuals or contaminated materials.

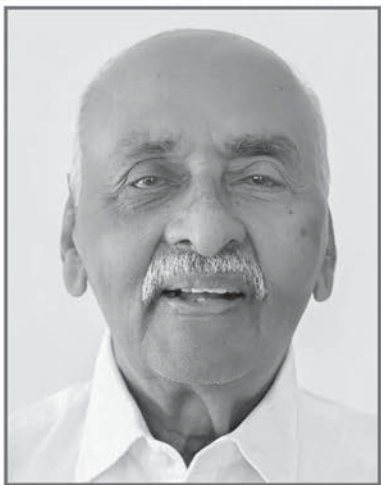


CONDOLENCES

**M.E.S. INDIAN SCHOOL
DOHA-QATAR**



The Governing Body, Principal, Staff and Students of
M.E.S Indian School, Doha – Qatar
extend our heartfelt condolences to the family of



K.P. ABOOBACKER HAJI PANANGAYIL
Founder member M.E.S Indian School, Qatar &
IES Education City, Thrissur, Kerala

on his sad demise
On Saturday, 26th July 2025

May Allah the Almighty give fortitude to the bereaved
members of the family to bear the irreparable loss.

Passengers on US flight forced to evacuate

AFP
Washington

Passengers on a US domestic flight were forced to evacuate onto a runway due to a brake fire just ahead of the plane taking off in Denver, the airline said.

American Airlines Flight 3023 was departing for Miami on Saturday but “experienced a mechanical issue” while accelerating ahead of takeoff at Denver International Airport, the airline told AFP, adding all 173 passengers and six crew “deplaned safely”.

One passenger sustained a minor injury and was taken to a hospital for evaluation, American Airlines said.

Blown tyres and the deceleration of the plane while braking resulted in an isolated brake fire, which was extinguished by city firefighters, according to the airline.

Social media videos published by US media outlets showed passengers frantically evacuating an American Airlines plane via an emergency slide as smoke billowed from beneath the aircraft.

A man held a child as they rushed down the slide, stumbling as he hit the ground.

Boeing's contract offer rejected by union members

Union members who assemble Boeing's fighter jets in the St Louis area have “overwhelmingly voted” to reject the company's contract offer yesterday, with the company now preparing for an imminent strike.

Boeing's proposal, which was sent on Tuesday to more than 3,200 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) District 837, included a 20% general wage increase over four years and a \$5,000 ratification bonus, as well as more vacation time and sick leave.

“The proposal from Boeing Defence fell short of addressing the priorities and sacrifices of the skilled IAM Union workforce,” the IAM union said.

Dan Gillian, Boeing's Air Dominance vice-president, general manager and senior St Louis Site executive, said in an e-mailed statement that it is disappointed Boeing employees voted down

“the richest contract offer we've ever presented to IAM 837 which addressed all their stated priorities”.

“We've activated our contingency plan and are focused on preparing for a strike. No talks are scheduled with the union,” he added.

The current contract expired yesterday following which there is a seven-day cooling off period before a strike would begin, the union added.

Boeing's defence division is expanding manufacturing facilities in the St Louis area for the new US Air Force fighter, the F-47, after it won the contract earlier this year.

The Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) fighter jet programme, initially conceived as a “family of systems” centred around a sixth-generation fighter jet, is meant to replace the F-22 Raptor. - **Reuters**

and descend to comply with the alerts”.

“The flight continued to Las Vegas, where it landed uneventfully,” the airline said, adding that it was “engaged” with the FAA.

No customers were reported to be injured, but two flight attendants were “being treated for injuries”, according to the airline's statement.

The flight was in the same airspace, near Burbank, as a Hawker Hunter Mk 58 fighter jet, according to flight tracking website FlightAware.

US media reported the Hawker Hunter jet was privately owned.

The latest scare adds to growing concerns over aviation safety in the United States after a string of recent accidents and near misses.

In January, a mid-air collision between a commercial aircraft approaching Ronald Reagan Airport near downtown Washington and a military helicopter killed 67 people.

In May, US President Donald Trump's administration announced plans to overhaul its “antiquated” air traffic control system, which suffers from a shortage of controllers in FAA-managed towers.

The government has laid off hundreds of FAA employees as part of its plan to slash the federal workforce.

Godzilla fans fete the monster as it turns 70

By Paula Ramon
AFP

Godzilla has morphed over the years, but one constant is the devotion of its fans, who celebrated the Japanese monster's 70th anniversary at the pop culture convention Comic-Con.

The Japanese studio Toho, which created Godzilla, maintains a calendar of events to celebrate the beast often called the king of monsters, and Comic-Con is on the agenda.

Godzilla was born on November 3, 1954 with the launch of the first movie about it, directed by Ishiro Honda.



A miniature Godzilla is displayed at the Bandai booth during Comic-Con International in San Diego. - **AFP**

“I am a very big fan of Godzilla,” said Angela Hill, a teacher who travelled from Arizona to take part in Comic-Con, which this year featured events and displays celebrating Godzilla.

One of the world's largest celebrations of pop culture, Comic-Con brings together 130,000 people, many of whom come dressed as wizards, princesses or characters from movies, games or TV series.

As the story of Godzilla goes, a prehistoric amphibious beast is awakened and mutated by nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific.

It emerges from the sea and attacks Japan in a rage, symbolising the deadly power of nukes.

“I think because he came from such a historic event – like, a lot of other monsters are just interesting creatures, but they don't hold the grief of a nation,” Hill said, referring to the US nuclear bomb attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II.

At the pop culture watering hole in San Diego, people lined up

to shoot pictures and video with an image of Godzilla, which was also the theme of a panel discussion on Friday that featured Shinji Higuchi, who co-directed a reboot in 2016 called *Shin Godzilla*.

The movie franchise includes nearly 40 films and has spawned hundreds of animated productions about the monster as well as TV series and graphic work.

On Saturday the writers Ed Godziszewski and Steve Ryfle signed autographs of their book *Godzilla: The First 70 Years*, which sold out at Comic-Con.

“It's a rich history,” Ryfle told AFP. “This is the longest running feature film franchise in cinematic history that's focused on a single, continuous character. It's been around longer than James Bond.”

He said the key to its longevity is that Godzilla has evolved over time but stayed faithful to its origins.

“Godzilla has been serious, it's been scary, it's been heroic, it's

been funny. But at the same time this is a movie character that's rooted in something that's very real,” Ryfle said.

“And that's the trauma that Japan experienced, both during World War II, and also the trauma of the aftermath of World War II, the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” he added.

He said that Honda, who directed the first Godzilla movie, was a veteran who used the film to send a message against war and in particular against nuclear weapons.

Michelle Pena, a Godzilla fan who waited in line to get the autograph of the two writers, said part of the monster's charm is how it has changed over the years.

“Good, bad, hero, anti-hero, you know. And I like that,” she said.

“He's not, like, lovable,” she added. “He's a big dinosaur-looking thing, you know. He's scary. But, like, you really, really find yourself rooting for him.”

At least 11 injured at Walmart store attack in Michigan, suspect arrested

AFP
Washington

At least 11 people were injured in a stabbing at a Walmart store in the Midwestern state of Michigan on Saturday, with police saying it appeared to be a random attack.

A 42-year-old male suspect was in custody, Grand Traverse County Sheriff Michael Shea told a press conference.

“Based on the information that we have at this time, it appears they were random acts,” he said of the attack in Traverse City, Michigan.

“The victims were not predetermined,” Shea said, adding that the suspect, a Michigan resident, apparently acted alone and used a “folding knife”.

Six victims were in critical condition late on Saturday, and five were in serious condition, Munson Healthcare said in a statement.

At least three of the victims were undergoing surgery, according to Shea.

The victims were six men and five women.

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer said she was in touch with law enforcement regarding the “horrible news”.

“Our thoughts are with the victims and the community reeling from this brutal act of violence,” she said in an X post.

Eyewitness Julia Martell told the *New York Times* that she heard screaming and saw a man with a knife running through the store's pharmacy section.

Martell said she saw the man

shoving and stabbing people as he moved through the store.

The 30-year-old witness described seeing three people with stab wounds and “blood everywhere”.

Shea said the stabbing spree initially started near the checkout area of the store.

“It is very uncommon for our area,” he said of the violence, adding that citizens in the Walmart “assisted” in apprehending the suspect.

Traverse City is a popular tourist destination located on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Deputy Director Dan Bongino said agents were providing “any necessary support to the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office in their investigation of the attacks at the Walmart”.

Superhero films ignite rivalry among comic fans

By Danielle Broadway and Rollo Ross
Reuters

Comic fans are embracing the latest showdown between Marvel and DC as their superhero films *Fantastic Four* and *Superman* compete for box office dominance, reigniting a rivalry spanning over eight decades.

Whether it's the thrill of seeing the comic book superhero The Thing shout “It's clobbering time!” before throwing a punch or watching Superman and his faithful pup Krypto save the day, fans are heading to movie theatres to support their favourite films.

“Well, clearly I'm a Marvel fan,” said Danielle Stroski, who was dressed as the shapeshifter character Mystique from Marvel's *X-Men* comics, at the San Diego Comic-Con.

“But I have a little white dog at home, so I love me some ‘Superman’ as well. And I know the little white dog is stealing the show for *Superman*, so it's going to be close. But I got to go Marvel,” she added.

The 42-year-old from California predicted *Fantastic Four* would outperform *Superman* at the box office.

DC fan Lito Loza, dressed as Superboy, voiced his support for *Superman*.

“I've already seen *Superman* three times, and I'm very, very happy with what James Gunn did with it. It makes me feel hopeful,” he said, referring to the director.

The filmmakers encourage fans to support both movies.

“I'm a huge Superman fan. I'm a huge James Gunn fan. I'm thrilled that both of us are coming out this month,” director Matt Shakman of *Fantastic Four: First Steps* told Reuters at the London premiere.

“I think we share a lot of similar optimism in our tone and our feeling in the worlds that we're building. And there's room for *Superman*, there's room for *Fantastic Four*. I'm thrilled. Go see both,” he added.

Superman director Gunn, who directed the Marvel movie *Guardians of the Galaxy*, said in an interview in Los Angeles that he grew up reading both Marvel and DC comic books, appreciating their distinct tones.

In theatres on July 11, *Superman* introduced David Corenswet as the Man of Steel. The movie grossed around \$173mn globally and \$264mn domestically for a total of around \$437mn, according to Box Office Mojo.

Warner Bros has heavily invested in *Superman*, aiming to launch a new era at DC Studios under Gunn, who has been named co-chief executive, alongside producer Peter Safran.

Upcoming projects include a *Supergirl* film slated for June 2026 and a film based on the character Swamp Thing, as well as TV shows for HBO Max.

Disney said on Saturday that by the end of Friday, *Fantastic Four*, which stars Pedro Pascal, had earned an estimated \$106.2mn globally: \$57mn domestically and \$49.2mn internationally.

Ecuador deports 603 Colombian inmates

AFP
Bogota

Colombian authorities said on Saturday that Ecuador had deported about 600 Colombian prisoners via a land border crossing, after Bogota protested the action came without prior agreement.

In 2024, Ecuadoran President Daniel Noboa announced his intention to deport Colombian inmates to ease overcrowding in the country's prisons. Small groups

were transferred starting in April.

However, Colombian President Gustavo Petro opposed the move, saying that a joint plan was needed to safeguard the prisoners' rights.

“In the morning, 603 people arrived – 60 women and 543 men – and we completed the reception of them” at the Rumichaca border crossing in Carchi province, Colombia's acting foreign minister Rosa Villavicencio said.

The inmates waited in line to re-enter their home country under the watchful eye of Ecuadoran police and military personnel.

On Friday, the government in Bogota lodged a formal complaint with Quito, saying that such a move without prior agreement was a violation of international law and an “unfriendly gesture”.


Ecuador's foreign ministry said on Saturday that Bogota was told about the plan on July 8.

Drug gangs in Ecuador have turned the country into one of the most violent in Latin America.

The homicide rate has jumped from six per 100,000 people in 2018 to 38 in 2024, among the highest in the region.

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DISASTER

Rain in north China kills two, forces thousands to relocate

Heavy rain around Beijing and across north and northeast China has killed two and forced thousands to relocate as authorities warned of further widespread rain and risks of disasters including landslides and flooding. Two people were dead and two are missing in Hebei province, state broadcaster CCTV reported yesterday morning. Overnight rain dumped a record 5.7 inches per hour on Fuping in the industrial city of Baoding. China's Water Resources Ministry has issued targeted flood warnings to 11 provinces and regions, including Beijing and neighbouring Hebei, for floods from small and midsize rivers and mountain torrents.

PEOPLE

China authorities 'have detained activist-singer'

A young Tibetan singer and activist has been detained by Chinese authorities, the India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) said. Tzunkte, popularly known as Asang, was taken into custody sometime in early July after he sang a song eulogising Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the CTA said in a statement. The CTA, which functions as a government-in-exile but is not officially recognised by any country, said the arrest was "part of Beijing's broader campaign to suppress Tibetan voices, specially Tibetan artists and writers". China considers Tibet an inalienable part of its territory. Chinese authorities did not respond to a request for comment.

SURVEILLANCE

Three drones detected in Japan nuclear plant

Three drones were detected in a Japanese nuclear power plant where two reactors are being decommissioned. The unmanned aerial vehicles were spotted Saturday night by the operator of Genkai Nuclear Power Station in the southwestern Kyushu region, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA) said. Unauthorised drone flights over and near nuclear power plants are prohibited in Japan, the NRA and police said. "No abnormalities were detected after the incident was reported, while drones have not been found inside the premises of the power plant," a spokesman for the NRA said.

VERDICT

Indonesia court jails senior opposition official

An Indonesian court has sentenced a senior politician from the only opposition party in parliament to three-and-a-half years in jail, in a bribery case linked to a parliamentary appointment. Prosecutors had charged Hasto Kristiyanto, secretary-general of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, with bribing an election official with \$44,962 in exchange for a parliamentary seat for a politician he preferred. In last year's presidential election, the PDIP had backed a rival to Prabowo Subianto, who won. Hasto was acquitted of the charge, of obstruction of justice, for helping the favoured politician to escape detention and tampering with evidence.

Thailand, Cambodia to hold peace talks today after more border clashes

AFP
Samraong, Cambodia

Thailand and Cambodia's leaders will meet in Malaysia for peace talks today, as the countries clashed for a fourth day in a deadly border dispute. At least 34 people have been killed and more than 200,000 displaced as the countries, both popular tourist destinations, fight over a smattering of contested border temples. Bangkok announced yesterday that acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet will meet for talks mediated by Malaysian leader Anwar Ibrahim, who chairs the Asean regional bloc of which Thailand and Cambodia are members. Anwar said the expected talks were to focus on an immediate ceasefire between the two fighting neighbours. "They (government representatives of Cambodia and Thailand) have asked me to try and negotiate a peace settlement," the Bernama national news agency quoted Anwar as saying late yesterday. "I'm discussing the parameters, the conditions, but what is important is (an) immediate ceasefire" the Malaysian premier said. Cambodia has not commented on the planned talks, which are due to begin at 3pm (0700 GMT).

US President Donald Trump, who spoke to both leaders late Saturday, said they had agreed to "quickly work out" a ceasefire. Trump has threatened both nations with eye-watering levies in his global tariff blitz unless they agree to independent trade deals. "When all is done, and peace is at hand, I look forward to concluding our trading agreements with both!" he wrote on social media. Fresh artillery clashes erupted yesterday morning near two long-contested ancient temples in the frontier region between northern Cambodia and northeast Thailand which has seen the bulk of the fighting. Cambodian defence ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata said Thai forces began attacking areas around the temples at 4.50am. "We rushed to leave the house this morning," said 61-year-old Thai border resident Maefah, rearranging bin bags of her family's belongings in the back of a truck stopped at a petrol station in Surin province. "All of my neighbours have already left. And we didn't feel safe to stay any longer," she said. The regular thump of artillery rattled windows in the Cambodian town of Samraong, around 20kms from the front line. Thai army deputy spokesman Ritcha Sukswanon said Cambodian forces began firing artillery around 4am as the two sides bat-

tled for control of strategic positions. With the conflict enflaming nationalist sentiments, Thailand issued a warning to its own citizens to "refrain from any kind of violence, whether in speech or action" against Cambodian migrants living in the country. Cambodia's Hun Manet yesterday said his country "agreed with the proposal for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire between the two armed forces". After Trump's call, Phumtham said he had agreed in principle to enter a ceasefire and start talks. But yesterday each side blamed the other again for undermining peace efforts. The Thai foreign ministry accused Cambodian forces of firing shells into civilian homes in Surin province. "Any cessation of hostilities cannot be reached while Cambodia is severely lacking in good faith," the ministry said. Meanwhile Cambodia's defence ministry spokeswoman Maly Socheata denied that its forces fired first and accused Thailand of "de-liberate and co-ordinated acts of aggression". The border dispute erupted into combat on Thursday with jets, tanks and ground troops battling in the rural border region, marked by a ridge of hills surrounded by wild jungle and agricultural land where locals farm rubber and rice.

Protesters seek end to Gaza suffering



Pro-Palestinian supporters bang pots and pans while one carries placards showing an emaciated child as they rally in central Melbourne yesterday calling for an end to hostilities amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas.

Easing of US beef curbs not prompted by Trump: Australia

Reuters
Sydney

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese yesterday said a decision to ease rules on US beef imports was not prompted by US President Donald Trump. Trump last week said the US would sell "so much" beef to Australia after Canberra announced the relaxation of restrictions, potentially smoothing trade talks with Washington. In place since 2003, the curbs

were due to concerns about bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, which can kill cattle as well as people who eat infected beef. When asked yesterday if the easing had anything to do with Trump, Albanese said "No, this has been a process that has been there for 10 years, the review process". "This wasn't a political decision," Albanese said in remarks on Australian Broadcasting Corp television, adding that Trump had not raised the issue with him in a phone call.

The comments come after US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins called the easing a win for Trump. In April, Trump singled out the beef trade disparity with Australia after Australia's beef exports to the US surged last year, reaching A\$4bn amid a slump in US beef production. By contrast, Australia's agriculture minister said the rules were relaxed after a "rigorous science and risk-based assessment" concluded that US measures to monitor and control cattle movement were effectively managing biosecurity risks.

Dhaka orders 25 Boeing jets in bid to ease US tariffs

Bangladesh has ordered 25 aircraft from Boeing and ramped up imports of key American goods in an effort to defuse trade tensions and bring down the steep tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, a senior official said yesterday. The moves are part of a broader strategy to narrow a \$6bn US trade deficit with Bangladesh and avoid a looming 35% tariff hike that has rattled the country's export sector, especially the garments industry which risks losing competitiveness in one of its largest markets. "We need new aircraft urgently, possibly within the next couple of years," commerce secretary Mahbubur Rahman told reporters. "Initially, it was 14 planes - now it's 25," he said, referring to an earlier plan to purchase aircraft from the US-based manufacturer. Alongside the aircraft deal, Bangladesh is boosting imports of wheat, soybean oil and cotton from the US.

Court's decision on Duterte slammed



Protesters display placards and hold a banner as they gather during a demonstration to condemn the Supreme Court's decision declaring the impeachment case against Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte as unconstitutional, in Quezon City, metro Manila. The Philippines' top court blocked the impending senate impeachment trial of Vice-President Sara Duterte on July 25, saying it violated a constitutional provision against multiple impeachment proceedings within a single year.

N Korea's Kim vows to win anti-US battle

Reuters
Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said the country would achieve victory in "anti-imperialist, anti-US" battles, as the country marked the anniversary of the Korean War armistice, state media said. Kim "affirmed that our state and its people would surely achieve the great cause of building a rich country with a strong army and become honourable victors in the anti-imperialist, anti-US showdown," KCNA state news agency said, referring to his visit to a war museum on a previous day. North Korea signed an armistice agreement with the US and China on July 27, 1953, ending the fighting in the three-year war. US generals signed the agreement representing the United Nations

forces that had backed South Korea. North Korea calls July 27 "Victory Day" even though the armistice drew a border dividing the Korean peninsula roughly equally in area after the two sides had made major advances back and forth during the war. South Korea does not mark the day with any events. But in a speech read out at a commemoration ceremony honouring Korean War veterans in Washington, DC, South Korea's President Lee Jae-myung pledged to further cement the country's alliance with the US and protect freedom and peace. "Through efforts in various fields including politics, economy, security, and culture, we will further strengthen the noble South Korea-US alliance forged in blood and make even more efforts to firmly protect freedom and peace on the Korean Peninsula," Lee said.

Humanoid robots embodiment of China's AI ambitions

AFP
Shanghai

Serving drinks, playing mah-jong, stacking shelves and boxing, the dozens of humanoid robots at Shanghai's World AI Conference (WAIC) this weekend were embodiments of China's growing AI prowess and ambition. The annual event is primed at showcasing China's progress in the ever-evolving field of artificial intelligence, with the government aiming to position the country as a world leader on both technology and regulation as it snaps at the US' heels. Opening the event on Saturday,

Premier Li Qiang announced China would set up a new organisation for co-operation on AI governance, warning the benefits of development must be balanced with the risks. But in the cavernous expo next door, the mood was more giddy than concerned. "Demand is currently very strong, whether in terms of data, scenarios, model training, or artificial construction. The overall atmosphere in all these areas is very lively," said Yang Yifan, R&D director at Transwarp, a Shanghai-based AI platform provider. This year's WAIC is the first since a breakthrough moment for Chinese AI this January when star-

tup DeepSeek unveiled an AI model that performed as well as top US systems for an apparent fraction of the cost. Organisers said the forum involved more than 800 companies, showcasing over 3,000 products - the undeniable crowd pleasers being the humanoid robots and their raft of slightly surreal party tricks. At one booth, a robot played drums, half a beat out of time, to Queen's We Will Rock You while a man in safety goggles and a security vest hyped up a giggling crowd. Other droids, some dressed in working overalls or baseball caps, manned assembly lines, played curling with human opponents or slop-

pily served soft drinks from a dispenser. While most of the machines on display were still a little jerky, the increasing sophistication year-on-year was clear to see. The Chinese government has poured support into robotics, an area in which some experts think China might already have the upper hand over the US. At Hangzhou-based Unitree's stall, its G1 android - around four feet tall, with a two-hour battery life - kicked, pivoted and punched, keeping its balance with relative fluidity as it shadowboxed around a ring. Ahead of the conference's opening, Unitree announced it would

launch a full-size humanoid, the R1, for under \$6,000. Most high-tech helpers don't need hardware though. At the expo, AI companions - in the form of middle-aged businessmen, scantily clad women and ancient warriors - waved at people from screens, asking how their day was, while other stalls ran demos allowing visitors to create their own digital avatars. Tech giant Baidu announced a new generation of technology for its "digital humans" - AI agents modelled on real people, which it says are "capable of thinking, making decisions, and collaborating". The company recently ran a six-

hour e-commerce broadcast hosted by the "digital human" of a well-known streamer and another avatar. The two agents beat the human streamer's debut sales in some categories, Baidu said. Over 10,000 businesses are using the technology daily already, the department's head Wu Chenxia said. Asked about the impact on jobs - one of the major concerns raised around widespread AI adoption - Wu insisted that AI was a tool that should be used to improve quality and save time and effort, which still required human input. In China, the integration of AI into everyday life is beginning to pick up pace.

India hopeful of concluding US trade deal after ‘fantastic’ progress

Reuters
London

India is making “fantastic” progress in trade talks with the US, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said adding he was very confident that India would get special treatment from President Donald Trump.

Trump threatened a 26% tariff on Indian imports in April but paused implementation to allow for talks. That pause ends on August 1, though India has yet to receive a formal tariff letter, unlike more than 20 other countries. Earlier last week two Indian government sources said the prospects of an interim trade deal before the deadline had dimmed, as

talks remain deadlocked over tariff cuts on key agricultural and dairy products. In an interview during a visit to London, Goyal played down the importance of deadlines in trade talks but struck a bullish tone on how negotiations with the US were going. “We’re making fantastic progress with the US, and I do

hope we’ll be able to conclude a very consequential partnership,” Goyal said. Asked about possible disagreement with Washington over agriculture, Goyal said that “negotiations happen in the negotiation room”, but said India wouldn’t necessarily hold out for a comprehensive deal if smaller sectoral wins were possible.

“All options are on the table, and we will see how it plays out, but what is important is to get preferential market access over our competitors, our peers,” he said. “And I’m very confident that India, having been the first country to start negotiating, will be given a special and preferred treatment.” Last week Trump announced

a deal with Japan which lowers auto tariffs, though medicines and semiconductors will be negotiated separately. While other countries may have secured deals with Trump ahead of India, despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s efforts in February to kickstart trade talks with a White House visit, Goyal played down the significance of deadlines.

India’s private sector sees robust growth despite inflation, job fears

Reuters
Bengaluru

Growth in India’s private sector remained robust in July, supported by strong manufacturing and international demand, but rising inflation and weaker employment generation tempered the expansion, a business survey showed. Moderation in overall growth came alongside a drop in business confidence to an over two-year low. Firms expressed concerns over rising price pressures and heightened competition while uncertainty surrounding trade negotiations with the US also likely weighed on sentiment. July’s HSBC Flash India Composite Purchasing Managers’ Index, compiled by S&P Global, registered 60.7, a slight dip from June’s final reading of 61.0. The figure remained well above the 50-level that separates growth from contraction and marked sustained expansion for the past four years. “The strong performance was bolstered by growth in total sales, export orders and output levels. Indian manufacturers led the way, recording faster rates of expansion than services for all of the three aforementioned metrics,” noted Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC. Manufacturing was the engine of growth this month with its flash PMI climbing to 59.2, the highest reading in over 17 years, from 58.4. In contrast, the services activity index fell to 59.8 from 60.4, indicating

a softer albeit historically sharp rate of expansion. Overall new orders expanded at the fastest pace in a year, bolstered by robust demand from overseas clients in Asia, Europe, and the US. New orders for manufactured goods, in particular, rose to a near five-year high. Bhandari noted that despite the strong performance, there were signs of caution. “Business confidence fell to its lowest mark since March 2023, while employment growth moderated to its weakest pace in 15 months,” she said. A recent Reuters poll of independent economists highlighted growing concerns about joblessness and underemployment in the world’s fastest-growing major economy, which has failed to create enough well-paying jobs for millions of youth entering the workforce each year. According to recently introduced official government data the unemployment rate remained steady at 5.6% in June but the way this is measured is inaccurate, economists say. Meanwhile, inflationary pressures intensified with both input costs and output charges rising in July. Firms reported higher prices for materials such as aluminium, cotton, and foodstuffs and passed these higher expenses on to clients. Retail inflation eased to an over six-year low last month due to lower food prices but any acceleration in inflation could dampen expectations for more interest rate cuts from the Reserve Bank of India.

India pays tributes to fallen war heroes



Indian soldiers pay tribute at the War Memorial to honour those who laid down their lives during the 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan on the occasion of ‘Kargil Vijay Diwas’ in Chennai, India.

Non-military explosives sent to Russia, clarifies Indian firm

Reuters
New Delhi

An Indian firm that shipped \$1.4mn worth of an explosive compound with military uses to Russia in December said it complies with Indian rules and the substance it had shipped was for civilian industrial purposes. The media earlier reported that Ideal Detonators Pvt Ltd shipped the compound, known as HMX or octogen, to two Russian explosives manufacturers despite US threats to impose sanctions on any entity supporting Russia’s Ukraine war effort.

One of the Russian companies listed in Indian customs data as receiving the compound is the explosives manufacturer Promsintez. An official at Ukraine’s SBU security service has said the Russian company has ties to the military and that Ukraine launched a drone attack in April against a Promsintez-owned factory. Promsintez did not respond to a request for comment. Ideal Detonators said in an e-mailed response to Reuters that the material it shipped was not military grade. “The shipment ... is for industrial activity and it’s a civil explosive,” the company said. The US government has identified HMX as “critical for Russia’s war effort” and has

warned financial institutions against facilitating any sales of the substance to Moscow. The US treasury department has the authority to sanction those who sell HMX and similar substances to Russia, sanctions lawyers have said. HMX is widely used in missile and torpedo warheads, rocket motors, exploding projectiles and plastic-bonded explosives for advanced military systems, according to the Pentagon’s Defense Technical Information Center and related defence research programmes. The compound also has some limited civilian applications in mining and other industrial activities.

TCS to cut 12,000 jobs

Indian IT giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said it will cut around two percent of its global workforce, or about 12,000 jobs, as demand contracts. The software services firm - India’s largest by market cap - said the reductions would mainly affect employees in middle and senior roles and would be rolled out over the course of this year. TCS employs 613,000 people worldwide, and the IT services sector is one of India’s biggest employers and revenue earners. The company said the move was part of efforts to become a “future-ready” organisation as it enters new markets and scales up its use of artificial intelligence. “We will also be releasing associates from the organisation whose deployment may not be feasible,” TCS said. It said the restructuring was being carried out with “due care” to avoid disruption to client services. After TCS’s June-quarter revenue fell short of expectations, CEO K Krithivasan said this month that “continued global macro-economic and geopolitical uncertainties caused a demand contraction”.

‘Green Day’ celebrations



Schoolgirls in traditional Punjabi dress sing Giddha songs during ‘Green Day’ also Teej festival celebrations at a school in Amritsar.

Six crushed to death in India stampede

AFP
Haridwar, India

At least six people were crushed to death at a temple in northern India’s Uttarakhand state yesterday, officials said, after a massive crowd surge. The stampede occurred on the stairway leading to the temple in the city of Haridwar, on the banks of the Ganges river, and left many injured. “Six dead and more than 10 injured are admitted to the hospital,” senior city police official Parmendra Dobhal said. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said relief and rescue operations were underway. “I am constantly in touch with the local administration regarding this matter and con-

tinuous monitoring of the situation is being done,” he said in a statement. Narrating the incident, an injured victim from Bihar said a huge crowd had suddenly gathered at the temple, which led to the stampede. As people tried to jostle their way out of the crowd, he fell and fractured his hand. Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended condolences to the victims’ families and wished a speedy recovery to the injured. “Deeply saddened by the loss of lives due to the stampede in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon. The local administration is assisting those affected,” he said. Deadly stampedes and crowd crushes are a common occurrence at Indian religious festivals.

UK fears new summer of unrest, year after Southport riots

AFP
Epping, United Kingdom

Concern is mounting in Britain that recent violent anti-immigrant protests could herald a new summer of unrest, a year after the UK was rocked by its worst riots in decades. Eighteen people have now been arrested since protests flared up a few days ago outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in the town of Epping, northeast of London and seven people have been charged, Essex police said. In one demonstration, eight police officers were injured. The unrest was “not just a trou-

bling one-off,” said the chairwoman of the Police Federation, Tiff Lynch. “It was a signal flare. A reminder of how little it takes for tensions to erupt and how ill-prepared we remain to deal with it,” she wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*. During the demonstrations, protesters shouted “save our children” and “send them home”, while banners called for the expulsion of “foreign criminals”. Cabinet Minister Jonathan Reynolds urged people not to speculate or exaggerate the situation, saying “the government, all the key agencies, the police, they prepare for all situations. “I understand the frustrations people have,” he told Sky News.

The government was trying to fix the problem and the number of hotels occupied by asylum seekers has dropped from 400 to 200, he added. The issue of thousands of irregular migrants arriving in small boats across the Channel, coupled with the UK’s worsening economy, has triggered rising anger among some Britons. Such sentiments have been amplified by inflammatory messaging on social networks, fuelled by far-right activists. Almost exactly a year ago on July 29, 2024, three young girls were stabbed to death in a frenzied attack in northwestern Southport. The shocking killings stoked days of riots across the country after

false reports that the killer - a UK-born teenager whose family came to the country from Rwanda after the 1994 genocide - was a migrant. Nearly 24,000 migrants have made the perilous journey across the Channel so far in 2025, the highest-ever tally at this point in a year. The issue has become politically perilous, putting pressure on Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer’s centre-left government, as the anti-immigrant, far-right Reform UK party rises in the polls. The Epping protests were stirred after a 38-year-old asylum seeker, who only arrived in Britain in late June, was arrested and charged with three counts of sexual assault.

Images from the protests have gone viral on social networks, mirroring what happened last July. But Epping residents have maintained that the protests are being fuelled by people from outside the community. “These violent scenes... are not Epping, and they are not what we stand for,” the Conservative MP for Epping, Neil Hudson, told parliament. While calm was restored to Epping, a middle-class suburban town with a population of 12,000, tensions remain palpable. “This is the first time something like this has happened,” one local who lives close to the Bell Hotel said.

“The issue is not the hotel, but extremists applying a political ideology,” he added. The UK is “likely to see more racist riots take place this summer,” said Aurelien Mondon, politics professor and expert on far-right and reactionary discourse at Bath University. Anti-immigrant protests have already erupted elsewhere, with demonstrations in the southeastern town of Diss in Norfolk outside a similar hotel. Last month, clashes flared for several days in the town of Ballymena in Northern Ireland after two teenagers with Romanian roots were arrested for the alleged attempted rape of a young girl.

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GULF TIMES

Zelensky’s move against Ukraine’s anti-corruption agencies

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is under pressure at home and abroad for stripping the independence of anti-corruption agencies whose work is seen as essential to Kyiv’s path to join the European Union.

Amendments giving his appointed prosecutor more power over the two investigative bodies have drawn criticism from top EU officials and sparked the country’s largest wartime protests. Here is what it means:

The National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO) were set up after a 2014 revolution toppled a pro-Russian president and set Kyiv on a Western course.

They are responsible for independently weeding out high-level graft, a central requirement for Ukraine to receive billions of dollars in Western aid and join the 27-member EU.

The agencies have stepped up their work during Russia’s full-scale invasion, producing charges against lawmakers, senior government officials and a former deputy head of Zelensky’s administration.

Last month, they accused a deputy prime minister of accepting a \$345,000 kickback.

In a late-night address last Tuesday, Zelensky said the agencies needed to be “cleansed” of Russian influence and their work strengthened and sped up.

A day earlier, Kyiv’s domestic security agency had arrested two NABU officials on suspicion of ties to Russia and conducted sweeping searches into agency employees, a move critics described as excessive.

The new measures, which were fast-tracked in large part by Zelensky’s ruling party, allow the general prosecutor to transfer cases away from the agencies and re-assign prosecutors, several lawmakers said.

Critics, including an anti-corruption campaigner charged this month with fraud and evading military service, have alleged the crackdown was a politically motivated response to their work.

After the vote, the EU’s enlargement commissioner said she was “seriously concerned” about the measures, and last Wednesday Germany’s foreign minister warned Kyiv against hampering its path to the EU.

At home, thousands of Ukrainians rallied in Kyiv just steps away from the site of the 2014 uprising, which itself was sparked by a democratic rollback and threats to Ukraine’s European integration.

Fighting corruption and embracing the West, especially since Moscow’s 2022 invasion, are seen as critical to erasing a legacy of Russian rule.

Ukrainians are furious at signs of corruption and misrule at a time when tens of thousands of troops have been killed on the front fending off Russia.

“My brother didn’t die for this kind of future,” read a placard at the Kyiv protest.

Last Wednesday, Zelensky said he had met with anti-corruption and security officials to hash out a joint plan within two weeks to better combat corruption.

Writing on X, he said the officials would aim to “resolve existing contradictions, and eliminate threats”.

“We all hear what society is saying,” he said. “We see what people expect from state institutions.”

Still, NABU and SAPO said in a joint statement on Wednesday that they wanted their independence restored through legislation.

Meanwhile, lawmakers pledged to challenge the amendments while Ukrainians on social media called for continuing public protests. — Reuters

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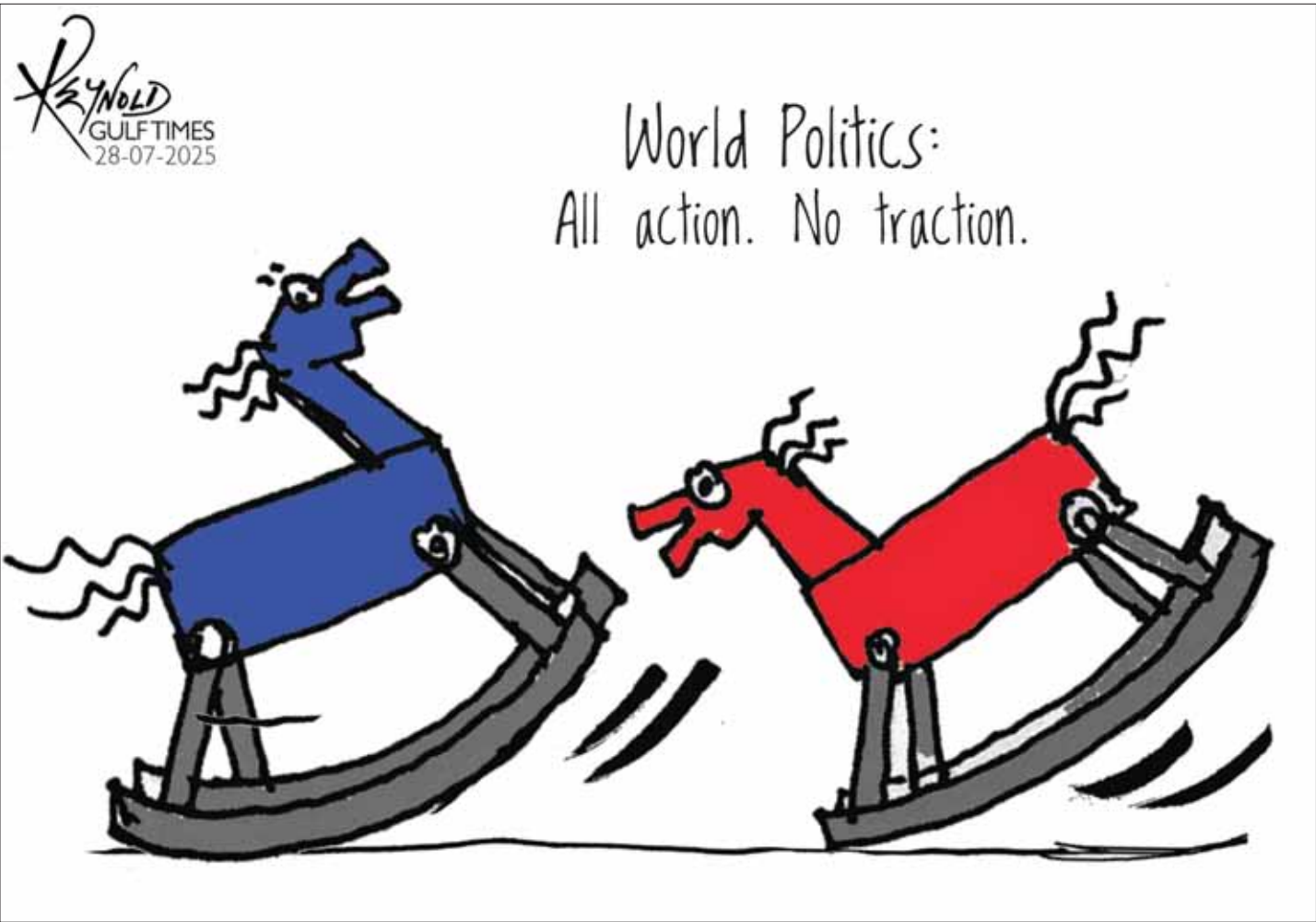
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Peru: 204 years old and looking good

The country celebrates a rich heritage, global cuisine and growing ties with Qatar



Gonzalo Voto Bernales G
Ambassador of Peru

Today, Peru turns 204 as a republic since gaining independence from Spain. Its rich culture is a blend of the ancient Inca civilisation and the Spanish influence, a process of transculturation that gave way to a diverse nation with a common identity.

Peru is a land of opportunities, adventure, gastronomic refinement, historical sites, biodiversity, entertainment, and much more. In fact, its National Day is an occasion to celebrate all of this, and the Embassy of Peru is proud to count Qatar as a friendly host.

With a population exceeding 34mn, Peru is located on the west coast of South America. Its territory is about 111 times the size of Qatar and is divided into 3 clearly distinct regions: Coast, a 3,000-km-long, arid strip that runs along the Pacific Ocean; Highlands, where the Andean mountains reach altitudes upwards of 6,000 metres; and the Jungle, accounting for about 60% of the total area, where the Amazon rainforest harbours a rich and varied flora and fauna, including an estimated 10% of all species on Earth.

The country boasts a stable market-oriented economy, with a 3.3% GDP growth and 1.97% inflation registered last year. It is a leading global producer of several agricultural products, like blueberries, avocados, artichokes, asparagus, coffee, and cocoa, and number one in quinoa. Mining is a cornerstone of Peru’s economy, with a significant production of tin, silver, and gold, and it is the world’s second-largest copper producer. Its thriving foreign trade is strengthened by more than 20 Free Trade Agreements and 32 Bilateral Investment Treaties, which provide preferential access to markets that account for 87% of its exports, and it is looking to expand even more since the Port of Chancay, capable of handling large container ships, was inaugurated last November.

Most people relate Peru with Machu Picchu, one of the New 7 Wonders of the World and World’s Leading Tourist Attraction* It is truly an amazing place that served as a sacred site, located in Cusco, the capital of the Inca empire. But Peru is a lot more. The Nazca Lines, a group of geoglyphs etched into desert sands between 500 BC and 500 AD, are as intriguing as they are mysterious. The Sacred City of Caral is recognised by Unesco as the oldest centre of civilisation in the Americas. Also worth mentioning are the mountain of the seven colours and the impressive, fortified citadel of Kuelap, and the list goes on.

For some time now, Peruvian cuisine has been widely acclaimed, to the extent that in its 2025 edition, The World’s 50 Best Restaurants placed Maido, a Nikkei restaurant in Lima, as the best among all in the globe. In all, 4 Peruvian restaurants made it in this year’s ranking. Peruvian gastronomy’s fame stems from its fusion of indigenous ingredients and techniques with European, African, and Asian culinary influences, creating unique dishes. Chefs like Gastón Acurio, Virgilio Martinez, and “Micha” Tsumura have significantly contributed to this global recognition.

Peru and Qatar established diplomatic relations in 1989 and opened embassies in

Doha and Lima in 2011 and 2012, respectively. High-level political dialogue takes place regularly through the mechanism of political consultations and the official visits by the Heads of State. Taking a step further in the bilateral relation, last April the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru, Ambassador Elmer Schialer, made an official visit to Qatar to promote trade and investment. As a result, both countries are committed to negotiating agreements on the promotion of investments and avoiding double taxation.

The solid and constructive relation that exists between Qatar and Peru is built upon a large number of agreements in various areas, like education, mining, and culture. Moreover, Qatar and Peru are actively pursuing sustainable development strategies, whereas the latter’s development objectives align with the principles contained in Qatar’s National Vision 2030, focused on diversifying its economy, enhancing human capital, and achieving balance between economic growth and social and environmental protection.

Under this scenario, bilateral relations between Qatar and Peru can grow even stronger. For one thing, the prospects for bolstering trade are promising, while there is an even brighter future for investments, mainly in the energy, mining, industrial, agriculture, tourism, and logistics sectors. Above all, Peru welcomes Qatari tourists, businessmen, and investors to visit and explore the country, made easier now thanks to the visa waiver recently approved. Conscious that connectivity is a key factor, it is important that Qatar Airways and its partner airlines benefit from the convenience of using the recently inaugurated new international airport in Lima as a gateway to Latin America.

Whether one wishes to visit the World’s Leading Cultural Destination* for leisure, indulging in its food, or for doing business, Peru should be carefully considered as the next trip destination of all Qataris.

World Travel Awards 2024



Machu Picchu, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Greece wildfires abating as firefighters get in on the act

AFP
Athens

Greece yesterday was still battling wildfires that have ravaged homes and sparked evacuations across the country, but firefighters have brought many out-breaks under control.

According to the Fire Brigade, 55 new fires erupted in the last 24 hours but 50 were immediately controlled.

Firefighters were working on five major fire fronts late yesterday in the Peloponnese area west of Athens, as well as on the islands of Evia, Kythera and Crete.

“Today is expected to be a difficult day with a very high risk of fire, almost throughout the territory,” fire brigade spokesman Vassilis Vathrakogiannis warned lost morning, though he added that the situation was improving.

Forecasters predicted that strong winds that have been fanning the flames would die down yesterday in most areas.

But they warned that Kythera, a popular tourist island with 3,600 inhabitants, which lies off the south-eastern tip of the Peloponnese, continued to face “worrying” conditions.

Giorgos Komninos, deputy mayor of Kythera, told the state-run ERT News channel that half of Kythera had been charred.

“Houses, beehives, olive trees have been burnt,” he said.

ERT reported that a fire was still burning on the island late yesterday, but in smaller fronts and the situation was improving.

Dozens of firefighters supported by three helicopters and two aircraft were battling the Kythera blaze, which erupted Saturday and forced the evacuation of people stranded



Residents stand in front a burnt slaughterhouse following a wildfire near Psachna Village on Evia (Euboea) island, the second-largest Greek island, yesterday. (AFP)

on a popular tourist beach.

Local authorities have requested a state of emergency so that stepped-up assistance can be provided for the island, which was previously stricken by a major fire in 2017.

The Egnatia highway, a key route across the north of the country, was closed in both directions Sunday afternoon near the inland town of Kozani because of a fire fanned by strong winds, ERT said. Traffic was diverted to an old highway.

Six regions of Greece will still face a very high fire risk today, according to officials.

Greece requested help on Saturday and two Italian aircraft were expected to arrive yesterday, the fire brigade said. Units from the Czech

Republic are already at work.

Numerous flare-ups were reported yesterday afternoon on the island of Evia, near Athens, where flames laid waste to swathes of forest and killed thousands of farm animals.

Workers have toiled throughout the day to repair serious damage to Evia's electricity network and some villages were facing water supply disruptions.

On Crete, reports said fires that started Saturday were now largely contained.

In Krynori, north of Athens, police reportedly bolstered security as fears grow that looters could target houses abandoned by residents fleeing a fire that erupted Saturday but which was mostly contained

yesterday. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis wrote on social media that anyone who lost possessions “should know that the state will be by their side”.

He said the struggle to block the flames on Saturday had been “titanic”, but “the picture today looks better and the battle continues with all available resources”.

Greece has endured heatwave conditions for a week, with temperatures surpassing 40C degrees in many areas.

On Saturday, the temperature reached 45.2C in Amfilohia, in western Greece.

Yesterday, the maximum temperature was 42.4C in Thiva, central Greece. The extreme heat was expected to subside from today.

Wildfires rage across Bulgaria, destroying forests and homes

Firefighters battled wildfires at nearly 100 locations across Bulgaria yesterday, with houses burned and residents evacuated, local media reported.

A fire at the foot of the Pirin mountain in southwestern Bulgaria was spreading across thousands of acres of forest, Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) reported.

Another fire in the town of Simitli destroyed several houses as it spread towards the Maleshevo Mountain.

More than 200 firefighters sent to the area on Saturday were pulled out because high winds were putting their lives in danger, authorities said, adding they expected air support from other EU countries.

In western Bulgaria, a fire which broke out on Saturday and quickly spread across the border into Serbia yesterday along the Miloslavka mountain range, almost burned the village Rani Lug to the ground, Nova television reported.

“It's a merciless tragedy,” emergency volunteer Zvezdelin Vlaykov said as huge clouds of smoke rose over the hills. “In all my years of firefighting, I've never seen anything like it.”

Authorities said three villages had been evacuated and the fire had caused significant damage.

In a statement, the Interior Ministry described Bulgaria's wildfire situation as “dynamic and severe”.

Yesterday afternoon, a large fire broke out in the village of Kozarevo in the southeastern province of Yambol, burning several houses, BNR reported.

Countries in southeast Europe have experienced record temperatures over the past week, with many located in an area dubbed “a wildfire hotspot” by scientists.

Wildfire in Sardinia forces dozens to flee beach by boat

Dozens of beachgoers in Sardinia were forced to flee by boat yesterday when a huge wildfire broke out nearby, blocking other escape routes, firefighters on the Italian island said.

Black smoke could be seen rising from the beach in Villasimius in the south of the island.

Strong winds were hindering rescue efforts, firefighters said in a statement, adding that several cars had been burned.

Italy has been sweltering under summer heat-waves, with wildfires particularly affecting arid southern regions.

Urgent need for 'global approach' on AI regulation: UN tech chief

The world urgently needs to find a global approach on regulating artificial intelligence, the United Nations' top tech chief said this week, warning that fragmentation could deepen risks and inequalities.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, head of the UN's International Telecommunications Union (ITU) agency, told AFP she hoped that AI “can actually benefit humanity”.

But as concerns mount over the risks posed by the fast-moving technology — including fears of mass job losses, the spread of deepfakes and disinformation, and society's fabric fraying — she insisted that regulation was key.

“There's an urgency to try to get... the right framework in place,” she said, stressing the need for “a global approach”.

Her comments came after US President Donald Trump this week unveiled an aggressive, low-regulation strategy aimed at ensuring the United States stays ahead of China on AI.

Among more than 90 proposals, Trump's plan calls for sweeping deregulation, with the administration promising to “remove red tape and onerous regulation” that could hinder private sector AI development.

Asked if she had concerns about an approach that urges less, not more, regulation of AI technologies, Bogdan-Martin refrained from commenting, saying she was “still trying to digest” the US plan.

“I think there are different approaches,” she said.

“We have the EU approach. We have the Chinese approach. Now we're seeing the US approach. I think what's needed is for those approaches to dialogue,” she said.

At the same time, she highlighted that “85% of countries don't yet have AI policies or strategies”.

Four dead in train crash in Germany

Four people were killed and others seriously injured when a passenger train derailed in southwestern Germany yesterday, police said in a statement.

There were around 100 people on board, police in the city of Stuttgart said, adding that two carriages had left the tracks between the towns of Riedlingen and Munderkingen.

The train was on a roughly 90km route between Sigmaringen and Ulm, a police spokesperson said earlier yesterday. The cause of the crash was under investigation, the police statement said.

A picture by German news agency DPA showed carriages largely intact but jackknifed into each other and rolled onto their sides.

US, EU clinch deal with broad 15% tariffs on EU goods to avert trade war

Reuters
Turnberry (Scotland)

The United States struck a framework trade deal with the European Union yesterday, imposing a 15% US import tariff on most EU goods, but averting a spiralling battle between two allies which account for almost a third of global trade.

The announcement came after European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen travelled for talks with US President Donald Trump at his golf course in western Scotland to push a hard-fought deal over the line.

“I think this is the biggest deal ever made,” Trump told reporters after an hour-long meeting with von der Leyen, who said the 15% tariff applied “across the board”.

“We have a trade deal between the two largest economies in the world, and it's a big deal. It's a huge deal. It will bring stability. It will bring predictability,” she said.

The deal, that also includes \$600bn of EU investments in the United States and significant EU purchases of US energy and military equipment, will indeed bring clarity for EU companies.

However, the baseline tariff of 15% will be seen by many in Europe as a poor outcome compared to the initial European ambition of a zero-for-zero tariff deal, although it is better than the threatened 30% rate.

The deal mirrors parts of the framework agreement the United States clinched with Japan last week.

“We are agreeing that the tariff... for automobiles and eve-



US President Donald Trump shakes hands with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen after an announcement of a trade deal in Turnberry, Scotland, Britain, yesterday. (Reuters)

rything else will be a straight across tariff of 15%,” Trump said. However, the 15% baseline rate would not apply to steel and aluminium, for which a 50% tariff would remain in place.

Trump, who is seeking to re-order the global economy and reduce decades-old US trade deficits, has so far reeled in agreements with Britain, Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam, although his administration has failed to deliver on a promise of “90 deals in 90 days.”

He has periodically railed against the European Union saying it was formed to hit the Unit-

ed States on trade.

Arriving in Scotland, Trump said the EU wanted “to make a deal very badly” and said, as he met von der Leyen, that Europe had been “very unfair to the United States”.

His main bugbear is the US merchandise trade deficit with the EU, which in 2024 reached \$235bn, according to US Census Bureau data.

The EU points to the US surplus in services, which it says partially redresses the balance.

Trump also talked yesterday about the “hundreds of billions of dollars” that tariffs were

bringing in. On July 12, Trump threatened to apply a 30% tariff on imports from the EU starting on August 1, after weeks of negotiations with the major US trading partners failed to reach a comprehensive trade deal.

The EU had prepared countertariffs on €93bn (\$109bn) of US goods in the event there was no deal and Trump had pressed ahead with 30% tariffs.

Some member states had also pushed for the bloc to use its most powerful trade weapon, the anti-coercion instrument, to target US services in the event of a no-deal.

Von der Leyen: 15% the 'best we could get'

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen defended the trade deal clinched with United States yesterday as “the best we could get” and not to be underestimated given the looming threat of 30% tariffs that had been hanging over the EU.

A baseline tariff rate of 15% on EU goods imported into the United States would apply to most goods including cars, semiconductors and pharmaceutical goods, von der Leyen said.

Meanwhile, a zero-for-zero tariff rate had been agreed for certain strategic products, including aircraft and aircraft parts, certain chemicals, and certain generic drugs.

No decision had been taken on a rate for wine and spirits, she added.

Asked if she considered 15% a good deal for European carmakers, von der Leyen told reporters: “15% is not to be underestimated, but it is the best we could get.”

The European Union committed to purchasing \$750 billion worth US LNG and nuclear fuel over three years. “We still have too much Russian LNG that is coming through the back door,” she said.

The European Commission has proposed phasing out all Russian gas imports by Jan 1, 2028.

“Today's deal creates certainty in uncertain times, delivers stability and predictability,” von der Leyen told reporters before leaving Scotland.

Russia starts monthly direct flights to N Korea

AFP
Moscow

Russia yesterday began direct commercial flights to North Korea, in a further sign of closer ties with its Asian ally helping its offensive in Ukraine.

The first Moscow-Pyongyang flight, operated by Russia's Nordwind Airlines, took off at 1625 GMT, according to the Sheremetyevo airport's website.

It was scheduled to land in the North Korean capital some eight hours later.

But initially, the route will only be serviced once a month, Russia's transport ministry said.

Nordwind Airlines — which used to carry Russians to holiday destinations in Europe before the EU imposed a ban on Russian flights — had tickets priced at 45,000 rubles (\$570).

“This is a historical event, strengthening the ties between our nations,” Oleg, a Nordwind employee managing the flight who did not want to give his full name, told AFP at the airport.

He also declined to say how many passengers were on board.

“For the first time in more than 70 years of diplomatic relations, we are launching direct flights between the capitals of our countries,” Russia's deputy transport minister Vladimir Poteshkin was quoted as saying by the ministry's Telegram account.

Russia's state news agency TASS reported that the first return flight from Pyongyang to Moscow would take place tomorrow.

Russia and North Korea restored train links on June 17 after suspending them in 2020 during the Covid pandemic.

The two countries have been forging closer military bonds in recent years, with Pyongyang supplying troops and weapons for Russia's military operations in Ukraine.

They signed a mutual defence pact last year, when Russian President Vladimir Putin visited North Korea.

North Korea confirmed for the first time in April that it had deployed a contingent of its soldiers to the frontline in Ukraine, alongside Russian troops.

Qatar’s diving scene deep with purpose, community spirit

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Once a niche sport, scuba diving in Qatar is now surging with energy, inclusivity, and environmental purpose, according to veteran PADI instructor Meech del Carmen.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, she said that the country’s diving scene has undergone a sea change in recent years, evolving into a diverse, welcoming community of ocean lovers united by a shared passion for nature and sustainability.

“Over the years, the diving scene in Qatar has become more inclusive, connected, and purpose-driven,” del Carmen said.

“What used to be a small, tight-knit group has blossomed into a diverse and welcoming community,” she added. “People are no longer diving just for leisure, they’re diving with intention and environmental consciousness.”

According to del Carmen, this

Women-led dive cleanup highlights growing environmental awareness and inclusivity underwater

rising tide of interest is not just among seasoned divers.

Curious first-timers, families, women, and visitors are now exploring Qatar’s rich and accessible marine ecosystems, many seeing the underwater world as both a healing escape and a call to action.

“Diving is more than a hobby,” del Carmen said. “It’s healing, grounding, and therapeutic. In today’s fast-paced life, people crave deeper connections – with nature, themselves, and like-minded communities. Diving offers that sanctuary.”

“Once you’ve felt the calm and wonder beneath the surface, it’s hard not to share that joy,” she stressed. “That’s how we continue to pass the scuba diving happiness.”

However, she pointed out that

marine debris and coral stress, among other challenges, threaten Qatar’s underwater ecosystems.

Del Carmen, who has logged hundreds of dives in the region, believes divers have a front-row seat to these challenges and a responsibility to act.

“Once you’ve seen a coral wrapped in fishing line or a turtle swimming beside plastic waste, you carry that image with you,” she said. “That creates a deep sense of responsibility.”

“Qatar’s marine ecosystems may be delicate, but they are not beyond saving especially if we unite with awareness, compassion, and consistent action,” she said.

That sense of responsibility came to life on July 19, when del Carmen, dive master Margaux De Pauw, and 17 certified female



Meech del Carmen at the recently held PADI Women's Dive Day 2025 in Qatar.

divers led a team of more than 50 participants in an underwater and shoreline cleanup drive at Sealine Mesaieed.

Held as part of PADI Women’s Dive Day 2025, the initiative removed over 40kg of waste, much of it difficult-to-recycle debris.

The event drew support from local dive centres, environmental volunteers, and members of the broader community.

“Sustainability was our priority

from start to finish,” del Carmen said.

“We used reusable bottles, reduced single-use plastics, and made it a true community effort,” she continued. “What moved me most was how many women – certified divers and surface supporters alike – came together.”

“It wasn’t just about cleaning the ocean, it was about building a stronger, values-led community,” del Carmen said.

She believes that every dive can be a cleanup dive and urges divers to adopt simple but effective habits: mastering buoyancy control, avoiding disturbing the seabed, not touching marine life, and supporting eco-conscious dive operations.

“The ocean gives us so much peace, clarity, and connection,” she said. “The least we can do is protect it in return. Take only memories, leave only happy bubbles.”

Campaign targets buildings under construction and roads



The General Control Section of Al Shamal Municipality’s Municipal Control Department has launched a public cleaning campaign targeting buildings and roads under construction, aiming to address the causes of visual pollution and improving the city’s urban appearance.

The campaign included inspection tours to ensure that buildings under construction comply with the set safety and cleanliness standards, in addition to raising awareness among property owners about the importance of preserving the environment and maintaining the city’s overall appearance.

Arab Book Award hosts virtual talk with Saudi writer critic Dr Albazei

As part of its commitment to fostering intellectual dialogue and celebrating Arab creative excellence, the Arab Book Award, based in Doha, hosted a virtual discussion featuring Saudi literary critic and intellectual Dr Saad Albazei, an honoree of the award’s inaugural edition.



Dr Saad Albazei

Moderated by Jordanian media figure Dr Amer al-Samadi, the session served as a dynamic forum where Dr Albazei shared his insights on contemporary Arab cultural landscape, reflecting on his decades-long career in literary criticism and research.

He offered thoughtful commentary and practical advice to emerging scholars in the region.

Dr Albazei praised the Arab Book Award for its role in supporting Arab intellectuals and creatives, noting that such initiatives drive growth of the cultural and literary sectors.

He stated that awards are a vital cultural force, as they shape literary taste by recognising excellence and motivating researchers toward originality and distinction.

Throughout the discussion, he addressed the challenges facing scholars in today’s fast-evolving world, emphasising the need for intellectual depth and authenticity in the face of growing superficiality.

He stressed the responsibility of Arab literary scholars and intellectuals to help shape societal awareness and preserve cultural identity.

Reflecting on his own academic and literary journey, Dr Albazei spoke about his early influences, key critical projects, and ongoing work in comparative literature, cultural criticism, and translation.

He expressed optimism about the growing attention given to translation in the Arab world, citing regional initiatives such as Qatar’s Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding, the UAE’s Kalima Project, and Saudi Arabia’s Literature, Publishing, and Translation Commission.

In his reading of the current Arab cultural landscape and its ongoing transformations, Dr Albazei offered an analysis of the challenges facing the creative scene – particularly in light of rapid social and epistemological changes, the impact of globalisation, and the digital technology revolution.

He emphasised the need to develop new critical tools to understand and engage with these shifts thoughtfully and constructively, while reaffirming the intellectual’s role in shaping collective awareness, noting that they must be the voice and conscience of their nation.

Dr Albazei added that fulfilling this role requires intellectuals to be deeply rooted in their nation’s history and heritage, while remaining informed by the tools of modernity.

They must be critically aware of their cultural context, he stated, especially when confronting the multifaceted forces of hegemony – be it intellectual, linguistic, or economic.

Addressing broader questions of civilisational tension, Dr Albazei noted that all civilisations are surrounded by crises.

He stressed the importance of understanding Western civilisation from within, while preserving Arab identity and asserting the Arab world’s rightful place globally.

He said that Arabs must make their identity and culture visible to the world.

The session also provided space for direct and open engagement with the audience.

Dr Albazei answered questions from readers and participants, touching on topics such as literature, criticism, culture, identity, translation, and more – contributing to the depth and richness of the discussion.

Drawing from his experience in high-level academic and cultural roles, he shared valuable advice with young researchers, encouraging them to cultivate patience and perseverance, adopt rigorous scientific methodology, and remain open to diverse schools of thought – while always anchoring their work in a conscious and discerning critical approach.

The Arab Book Award, based in Doha, is an annual prize granted to works written in Arabic across the fields of social sciences and the humanities.

With a total value of \$1mn, the award aims to enrich the Arab library by encouraging individuals and institutions to produce outstanding scholarly work, recognise and promote serious academic studies, and support leading publishers in elevating the form and substance of Arabic books.

It is divided into two main categories: Single Book and Lifetime Achievement. – QNA



Abandoned fishing gear and nets near Umm Al-Far Island removed

The Marine Protection Department at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has removed abandoned fishing gear on the eastern side of Umm Al-Far Island.

This action is part of the ministry’s ongoing efforts to protect the marine environment and biodiversity, as abandoned fishing tools such as nets and traps pose a direct threat to marine life and the local ecosystem.

Accordingly, the ministry has urged fishermen to ensure that all fishing equipment is removed after use to avoid any potential negative impacts on marine life.

It also stressed that it will continue its inspection and awareness campaigns to ensure the sustainability of marine resources and their natural environment.



Technology changing young people’s reading habits

Are public libraries becoming obsolete? Has the digital age remained a real necessity?

Many questions are being raised about the use of the Internet and the changing reading habits of young people, along with the shift in their interest to screens and smart devices.

Public libraries in Doha are seeking to address such issues through summer programmes, seeking to attract students during the vacation period.

In this context, a number of librarians have confirmed that the libraries’ role remains important.

Libraries and experts in the digital and educational cultural field are renewing their role, emphasising the importance of investing in summer activities that combine learning and enjoyment, and reconnecting the new generation with book knowledge.

They said that libraries can present workshops and cultural and recreational activities that enhance skills and develop awareness, calling for developing methods.



A librarian reading a story to children.