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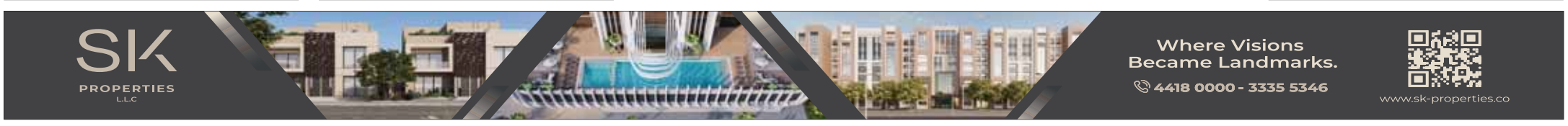












Thousands perform Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque

Tens of thousands of Palestinians attended Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, defying heavy security measures imposed by Israeli occupation forces. WAFA news agency reported intensified checkpoints and ID inspections near Al Asbat and Al Amoud Gates, as Israeli forces restricted access to the Old City. Israeli troops assaulted an elderly man and a young worshipper near Al Asbat Gate, barring their entry to Al-Aqsa Mosque. Authorities continue to restrict thousands of West Bank Palestinians from reaching Jerusalem, requiring special permits to cross military checkpoints. **(QNA) Page 6**

Zelensky meets Trump, pushes for Tomahawks

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Donald Trump at the White House yesterday to push the US leader for long-range Tomahawk missiles that can strike deep inside Russia. Trump suggested it would be premature to give Ukraine Tomahawk missiles, saying that he hoped to secure peace with Russia first. "Hopefully they won't need it. Hopefully we'll be able to get the war over with without thinking about Tomahawks," he told reporters. The meeting comes a day after Trump announced a fresh summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Ukraine has been lobbying Washington for Tomahawks for weeks, arguing that they could help put pressure on Russia to end its brutal three-and-a-half year invasion. **(AFP) Page 9**

Prince Andrew says giving up royal title

The UK's Prince Andrew yesterday renounced his title of Duke of York and other honours after being increasingly embroiled in scandals around his ties to Jeffrey Epstein. "I will... no longer use my title or the honours which have been conferred upon me," Andrew said in a statement, adding while he denied all allegations "the continued accusations about me distract from the work of His Majesty and the Royal Family". **(AFP)**

COMMUNITY
See Pages 4 & 5



Truck carrying aid provided by the World Food Programme wait at the Kissufim crossing, located east of Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, before entering the Palestinian enclave yesterday.

UN: aid convoys face challenges in reaching Gaza famine-hit areas

● WFP says 'moving swiftly to scale up food assistance'

Reuters
Geneva

The UN said yesterday aid convoys were struggling to reach famine-hit areas of north Gaza due to war-damaged roads and the continued closure of key routes into the enclave's north despite a ceasefire.

Around 560 tonnes of food had entered the Gaza Strip per day on average since the US-brokered halt to two years of devastating war, but this was still well below the scale of need, according to the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

With famine conditions in the Gaza City region, UN humanitarian affairs chief Tom Fletcher said this week thousands of aid vehicles would have to enter weekly to tackle widespread malnutrition, homelessness and a collapse of infrastructure.

Fletcher travelled to Gaza yesterday, a UN spokesperson said, and was meeting with humanitarian workers and UN agencies.

"I'm in Gaza, supporting our teams as they deliver our 60 day plan to massively scale up life-saving work. The challenges ahead are immense, but we are determined to deliver on the humanitarian possibilities created by President Trump's peace deal," Fletcher posted on X.

In Geneva, WFP spokesperson Abeer Etefa told a press briefing: "We're still below what we need, but we're getting there... The ceasefire has opened a narrow window of opportunity, and WFP is moving very quickly and swiftly to scale up food assistance." The WFP said it had not begun distributions in Gaza City, pointing to the continued closure of two border crossings with Israel in the north of the enclave — Zikim and Erez — where the humanitarian debacle is most acute.

"Access to Gaza City and northern Gaza is extremely challenging," Etefa said, adding that the movement of convoys of wheat flour and ready-to-eat food parcels from the south of the territory was being hampered by broken or blocked roads.

"It is very important to have these openings in the north, this is where the famine took hold. To turn the tide on this famine... it is very important to get these openings."

Global medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) said many relief agencies had not fully returned to the north, where hospitals are barely functioning, leaving many Gaza civilians still unable to access regular care.

Jacob Granger, MSF emergency co-ordinator in Gaza, described the case of a Gaza City woman with a shrapnel wound suffered during the war who was unable to get to a medical facility to change her dressings for five days earlier this month. When she managed to see an MSF nurse and her dressing was unfolded, the wound was infected with worms and maggots, Granger said.

Though small amounts of nutrition products have reached the north — the area of heaviest and most devastating fighting between Israel and Hamas — relief convoys were still unable to move significant quantities of food there.

Qatar stresses importance of the Gulf role in regional stability

QNA
Naples, Italy

Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs HE Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari has participated in a session titled "Beyond Sharm El-Sheikh: The Gulf Amidst Conflicts in the Middle East", as part of the Mediterranean Dialogues 2025 Forum, held in Naples, Italy.

Dr al-Ansari addressed the most prominent political and security challenges facing the region in the wake of recent developments, stressing the importance of the Gulf role in consolidating regional stability and promoting dialogue and diplomacy.

He said that the Israeli attack on Doha last September marked a turning point in the GCC states' approach to collective security, prompting a reassessment of regional and international partnership priorities and enhanced security co-ordination in the face of growing threats.

Regarding the situation in the Gaza Strip, following the signing of the ceasefire agreement during the Sharm El-Sheikh Summit, Dr al-Ansari stressed that any future political or security arrangements must be based on international legitimacy and reflect the will of the Palestinian people, within the framework of a comprehensive vision for a two-state solution as the only path toward a just and comprehensive peace.



HE Dr Majed bin Mohammed al-Ansari

He said that Qatar, despite security challenges, continues to uphold its role as a peacemaking force and effective mediator in the region, placing at the top of its priorities the promotion of political dialogue and support for the humanitarian response, particularly in the Palestinian issue.

He highlighted the importance of Qatari-Gulf, American, and European partnerships in enhancing regional security, noting that the current phase requires multilateral co-operation to confront crises and prevent their escalation, in a manner that maintains regional stability and serves the interests of the people.

Palestinian FM: No alternative to two-state solution

Palestinian Foreign Minister Fareseen Shaheen has stressed the need to maintain the unity of the Palestinian territories and that there is no alternative to the two-state solution to ensure stability and security in the region.

The Palestinian News Agency (WAFA) quoted Shaheen as saying during a special session on Palestine, on the sidelines of the Mediterranean Dialogue Conference held in Naples, Italy, that the priority today is to end the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, in preparation for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

She noted the need to unify efforts under one state, one constitution, one law, and one weapon, highlighting the efforts being made to achieve internal reform within the Palestinian Authority. **(QNA)**

Qatar advances in Oct FIFA rankings

The Qatari national football team has advanced to 52nd globally and 5th among both Arab and Asian teams, accumulating 1,461.6 points in the FIFA World Rankings for October. Meanwhile, Spain maintained its position at the top of the global rankings, while Argentina became second.

Qatar, the reigning AFC Asian Cup champion for the past two editions, booked its place in the 2026 World Cup finals in the US, Canada, and Mexico, after topping Group A in the Asian qualifying playoffs with four points as they defeated the UAE team 2-1 and drew 0-0 with Oman.

At the top of the FIFA World Rankings, Spain retained first place with 1,880.76 points, while Argentina moved up one spot to second with 1,872.43 points. France became third with 1,862.71 points, followed by England in fourth place with 1,824.3 points, while Portugal ranked fifth with 1,778 points. The Netherlands, Brazil, Belgium, Italy, and Germany completed the top ten.

Among Arab teams, Morocco remained the highest-ranked, sitting 12th globally with 1,710.11 points and leading African teams ahead of Senegal, which ranked 18th globally with 1,650.61 points. Egypt followed at 32nd globally (2nd among Arab teams and 3rd in Africa), while Algeria ranked 35th, Tunisia 43rd, Iraq 57th, and Saudi Arabia 58th.



In Asia, Japan retained its top spot, ranking 19th globally with 1,645.34 points. Iran followed in 21st, South Korea in 22nd, and Australia in 25th. **(QNA)**

Qatar, Bhutan establish diplomatic ties

Qatar and Bhutan have signed a joint communiqué establishing diplomatic relations.

The communiqué was signed at the Qatar's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York by HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN, and Bhutan's Permanent Representative Pema Lektup Dorji.

Following the signing ceremony, the two sides affirmed their desire to strengthen and develop friendly and cooperative relations between both countries. They emphasised the importance of being guided by the principles of the Charter of the UN and international law, respecting and promoting international peace and security, equality among states, and due respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. **(QNA)**



QATAR

Labour minister meets ministers, officials on sidelines of Islamic labour conference



HE Minister of Labour, Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri, met with a number of ministers participating in the Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers, held in Doha. HE the minister met with Azar Bayramov, Director-General of the OIC Labour Center; Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development of Pakistan; Joseph Hamilton, Presidential Adviser of Guyana; and Fassoun Coulibaly, Minister of Labour, Civil Service and Social Dialogue of Mali. HE Dr al-Marri also met with Dr Khalid Mahmoud al-Bakkar, Minister of Labour of Jordan; Mohamed Gebran, Minister of Labour of Egypt; Ali Ahmed Haidar, Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development of Maldives; Engineer Ali al-Abed al-Rida, Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation of Libya; and Soleha Kholmahmadzoda, Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan. In the meetings, the parties discussed various aspects of joint co-operation in the labour sector, and ways to strengthen and develop them. Discussions also addressed mechanisms to tackle the challenges facing labour markets amid rapid global changes, and to enhance collective efforts during the ministerial session to support nationalisation programs and initiatives, develop national competencies, promote social protection, ensure fair employment, keep pace with technological advancements, and foster economic empowerment across the member states. **(QNA)**

Al-Hammadi meets state secretary of Federal Foreign Office of Germany





HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, met in Berlin with State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Geza Andreas von Geyr. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them, in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by ambassador of the State of Qatar to Germany Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Hamar and the accompanying delegation. **(QNA)**

Official

Amir sends cables of condolences to president of Kenya

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Kenyan President Dr William Ruto on the passing of Raila Odinga, former prime minister of Kenya. **(QNA)**

Doha seminar looks at pivotal role of Global South in future of health

Staff Reporter
Doha





HE Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad, Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has participated in the high-level seminar held as part of the Second Annual Conference of the Doha Initiative on Health Policy in the Global South.

The event was organised by the Middle East Council on Global Affairs in co-operation with the Gates Foundation under the title 'Rethinking Global Health Financing: Priorities and Integration in the Global South'. The seminar took place in Doha, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

In her remarks, HE the minister emphasised that "this platform holds special significance for Qatar, as it embodies its vision of co-operation, innovation, and collective responsibility in advancing global health. When Qatar supported the launch of this initiative, it did so out of a firm belief that countries of the Global South should not remain mere recipients of policies, but active partners in shaping them — proactive in crafting their own solutions and having a strong voice in the global dialogue about the future of health."

The participants at the seminar included Sheikha Haya bint Abdulrahman al-Thani, director of Strategic Partnerships at the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD); Dr Muyi Aina, director-general of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency in Nigeria; and Magdalena Robert, deputy director of Advocacy and Communications at the Gates Foundation. The discussion was moderated by Dr Theresa Madubuko, director of the Doha Initiative on Health Policy in the Global South.

The session was also attended by several experts and stakeholders in the fields of health and education, including officials and members of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

During the discussion, the speakers explored changes in the landscape of global health financing and offered practical insights. Magdalena Robert noted that the Gates Foundation is rethinking its approach to health financing in light of declining development aid, stressing the importance of cost-effectiveness and country-led sustainable financing models.

She highlighted that the health and education sectors are interconnected and must advance together. She added that philanthropic organisations often take on high-risk investments, particularly in research and development areas that others may avoid, to build local capacities and strengthen national ownership rather than foster dependency.

Meanwhile, Dr Muyi Aina discussed Nigeria's efforts to sustain health and education programmes, noting that "health is the foundation of education, and education is the foundation of health; good education builds a healthy society".

He explained that schools in Nigeria have contributed to vaccine distribution for students using databases that track attendance, revealing that students lacking quality education often live in poor health conditions.

He emphasised the importance of training and empowering girls for the workforce and achieving a balance between health and education. From the donors' perspective, Sheikha Haya reaffirmed the Qatar Fund for Development's commitment to providing urgent humanitarian aid while pursuing long-term sustainable development that strengthens health systems.

She noted that children's health issues are often addressed through schools, a vital linkage that helps save students' lives, and emphasised that schools bear responsibility for identifying health challenges facing girls and children. She also pointed to the growing role of Gulf donors in leading scalable and innovative financing models that go beyond traditional aid frameworks and are rooted in national priorities and local ownership.

QFFD joins ACG's 50th anniversary event in Washington

QNA
Washington

The Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) took part at the Arab Co-ordination Group (ACG)'s 50th anniversary celebration in Washington, DC. A QFFD statement said the engagement was a chance to look back on the ACG's five decades of highly impactful work in supporting sustainable development worldwide while also sharing its vision for the future.

Organised under the theme "ACG at 50: United in Collaboration, Transforming Development for a Sustainable Future", the event featured high-level discussions, insightful presentations, and visual content that reflected the group's shared vision for a more sustainable and prosperous world, grounded in its core values and strong commitment to global partnership.

On this occasion, QFFD Director-General Fahad Hamad al-Sulaiti stated: "For five decades, the Arab Coordination Group has demonstrated the enduring power of unity and shared purpose in advancing sustainable development.

"At Qatar Fund for Development, we are proud to be part of this collective journey, one that continues to translate solidarity and innovation into meaningful impact across the world. Together, we remain committed to building a more equitable, just, and prosperous future for all."

On behalf of ACG members, Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank Group, Dr Muhammad Sulaiman al-Jasser, said: "This 50th anniversary is more than a milestone; it is a turning point. As the global development architecture evolves, the world is calling on development institutions to be bigger, better, and bolder.

The Arab Coordination Group is answering that call. We are forging a shared vision to guide our collective action for decades ahead."

QMIC's 'Smart Parking Management System' to support upcoming events in Qatar

Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre (QMIC), a national innovation centre established by Qatar University (QU) and based at the Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), announced that its Smart Parking Management System, which has been successfully deployed in several major national and international events over the past few years, will once again play a key role in supporting parking operations during Qatar's upcoming large-scale events, including the Arab Cup tournament.

First implemented in 2021, the Smart Parking Management System proved its effectiveness in optimising parking operations and improving the visitor experience. Its success during that initial deployment paved the way for its integration into subsequent large-scale events, most notably during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, where it provided real-time insights and operational support that helped organisers manage traffic flow and parking availability seamlessly across multiple venues.

Building on this proven track record, the system is now set to continue its impact in the upcoming Arab Cup, ensuring smooth and intelligent mobility for thousands of attendees. Developed entirely in Qatar, QMIC's Smart Parking Management System leverages artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision technologies to monitor parking lot occupancy, assess capacity in real-time, and provide organisers with live dashboards and predictive analytics.



Omar al-Jaber

These tools enable data-driven decision-making, allowing event organisers to optimise parking utilisation, reduce congestion, and make proactive operational adjustments to improve the visitor journey and overall efficiency. Beyond its technical achievements, the system exemplifies QMIC's commitment to solving real-world challenges through locally developed, globally relevant innovations.





It reflects the centre's broader model of transforming research and development (R&D) into practical solutions that empower entities in Qatar to operate more intelligently and sustainably. "Our Smart Parking Management System is a great example of how locally developed technologies can deliver world-class performance," said Omar al-Jaber, Director of Strategic Partnerships & Outreach at QMIC.

"Its successful deployment since 2021, including during the FIFA World Cup, underscores the value of building technologies that are both homegrown and globally competitive. Through solutions like this, we continue to serve local entities in Qatar to make smarter, data-driven decisions that enhance operations, efficiency, and enables success."

‘Women’s Executive Roundtable’ champions workplace wellness in Qatar

The Qatar British Business Forum (QBBF) recently held the inaugural ‘Women’s Executive Leadership Roundtable 2025’ in Doha. Organised and hosted by Amanda Shaw, head of Office; and Charlotte Chambers, head of Marketing and Events; in partnership with practitioner Sharon Desouza, the event brought together female corporate leaders, senior executives, and business professionals from across Qatar to explore the vital role of workplace wellness as a core component of corporate culture.

The discussions focused on how leadership engagement can help create a more balanced, resilient, and productive workforce. As a certified practitioner in emotional freedom and stress management, Desouza guided participants through her ‘Be Empowered’ programme – a corporate well-being initiative designed to help professionals manage stress, regulate the nervous system, and cultivate healthier daily habits.

“The primary aim of this roundtable is to empower working professionals to achieve a better work–life balance and to enhance their overall well-being. Creating a happier and healthier workforce ultimately benefits both individuals and the organisations they represent,” said Desouza.

The event also featured a panel discussion moderated by Emma Higham, QBBF Committee board member and partner at Clyde & Co, with speakers Kate Jackson, principal of King’s College Doha, and Emma Igelstrom, general manager at Artemex and former World Olympic swimmer.

“It was an inspiring and empowering session emphasising balance, purpose, and self-care in leadership. Sharon’s authentic approach resonated deeply with us, strengthening both our professional network and collective well-being,” Jackson stated.

The attendees concluded the event by outlining actionable goals and strategies for integrating wellness practices into their organisations, reinforcing the message that leadership commitment is the single strongest predictor of a successful wellness culture. The inaugural roundtable marks the beginning of what QBBF hopes will become an annual forum, a dedicated platform for corporate leaders to convene, share best practices, and continue advancing workplace wellness in Qatar and beyond.



Participants of the inaugural ‘Women’s Executive Leadership Roundtable 2025’, organised recently in Doha by the Qatar British Business Forum.

NMoQ to present Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight — exploring life cycles, habitat of Qatar’s sea turtles

QNA
Doha

The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) is to present Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight, an immersive exhibition exploring the vital role sea turtles play in Qatar’s vibrant and diverse marine ecosystems. A sea turtle in Qatar is commonly referred to as ‘Lehmesa’. The exhibition focuses on the endangered Hawksbill turtle, the only sea turtle species that nests on Qatar’s beaches, and reflects the nation’s natural endowment.

The exhibition, on view from October 27-February 7, 2026, marks NMoQ’s 50th anniversary, a moment that invites reflection on five decades of preserving and sharing the nation’s heritage. In keeping with the mission of the museum and honouring its anniversary, Lehmesa demonstrates how the environment has shaped the nation’s development and the importance of preserving its natural history and ecosystems.

HE Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani, Director of the National Museum of Qatar, said: “At the National Museum of Qatar, we see it as our responsibility not only to preserve and share the nation’s cultural heritage, but also to safeguard and celebrate the natural heritage that surrounds and sustains us. Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight reflects this dual responsibility by honouring Qatar’s ecological treasures and reminding our public of the remarkable resilience of a species facing increasing threats.

“In this milestone year for both Qatar Museums and NMoQ, this exhibition exemplifies our commitment to creating awareness, action, and stewardship for generations to come.”

Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight traces the journey of the Hawksbill turtle, from land to sea, exploring its evolutionary history, life cycle, habitat, and interactions with the environment. Visitors will move through an engaging, sensory-rich space designed to replicate the landscapes of Qatar’s coasts, ranging from sandy nesting grounds to vibrant coral reefs. Blending scientific insight with interactive displays, the exhibition encourages visitors to see themselves not as bystanders but as part of the environment the turtles depend on to survive.

While the Hawksbill turtle’s nesting in Qatar is well documented, the migration routes of other sea turtle species visiting Qatari waters remain largely unknown. Understanding these routes is crucial for identifying key foraging areas, which are as important to protect as nesting beaches. To address this, NMoQ is calling for the first regional GCC Forum on Sea Turtles, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, bringing together experts from across the Gulf to share insights and advance conservation efforts.

The conference will explore themes including threats and protection - such as nesting site conservation, bycatch and marine debris, climate change impacts, turtle mortality causes, and community education - as well as management and sustainability, covering marine protected areas, policy and legal frameworks, rescue and rehabilitation programmes, and the integration of education and eco-tourism in conservation.

Rare glimpse

Qatar’s marine life is home to four species of sea turtles: the Green Turtle, the Olive Ridley, the Loggerhead, and the Hawksbill. While all have been sighted in Qatar’s waters, the Hawksbill is the only one that returns to its shores to nest. Fossils from Qatar’s Miocene formations reveal that turtles have been part of the region’s marine ecosystems for over 23mn years, offering a rare glimpse into the nation’s ancient natural ecosystem. The exhibition explores this deep history while also addressing modern threats, from light pollution and plastic waste to climate change and habitat destruction.

Unfolding over six sections, the exhibition begins by highlighting the importance of sea turtles to Qatar’s ecology and cultural heritage, setting the foundation for the experience that follows. Renowned London-based artist Josh Gluckstein, known for his intricate works crafted from recycled materials depicting coral and marine flora and fauna, will contribute several pieces to this section, including two striking “coral islands”.

The second section, Turtles Through Space & Time, delves into the cultural significance and evolutionary history of turtles, from ancient fossil records to their symbolic role in human mythologies across cultures.

This section will also feature a display of Proganochelys quenstedti, the first stem turtle with a fully developed shell that lived over 200mn years ago.

Sea Turtles in Qatar introduces the turtles found in Qatari waters and highlights the Hawksbill as the only one to nest locally, inviting comparisons across species and habitats. The fourth section, Hawksbill on the Land, focuses on nesting behaviours, egg incubation, and the challenges hatchlings face on their journey from sand to sea. It details how Qatar’s beaches support the first half of the turtle’s life cycle and illustrates threats such as habitat loss, predation, and the effects of climate change on nesting success.


Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight traces the journey of the Hawksbill turtle, from land to sea, exploring its evolutionary history, life cycle, habitat, and interactions with the environment. Visitors will move through an engaging, sensory-rich space designed to replicate the landscapes of Qatar’s coasts, ranging from sandy nesting grounds to vibrant coral reefs. Blending scientific insight with interactive displays, the exhibition encourages visitors to see themselves not as bystanders but as part of the environment the turtles depend on to survive

Hawksbill in the Sea

In Hawksbill in the Sea section, visitors will encounter coral reefs that will showcase the turtle’s feeding behaviours, daily patterns, and ecological role in maintaining reef health. The final section presents Qatar’s conservation initiatives and encourages reflection on sustainable practices, public responsibility, and ongoing efforts to protect these vital ecosystems.

A series of public events, workshops, and educational activities will be held in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) and Qatar University to deepen public understanding of marine biodiversity and sustainability. These programmes will engage families, school students, and communities in hands-on learning and advocacy, reinforcing the Museum’s role as a hub for environmental awareness and cultural learning.

Jassim Abdulla al-Khayat, Professor of Marine Biology and Ecology at Qatar University and Manager of Janan, a QU research vessel, said: “This exhibition, endorsed by the National Museum of Qatar, emphasises the ecological significance of sea turtles by urging citizens and visitors to investigate diverse scientific concepts and methodologies for their monitoring and protection, thereby enhancing wildlife awareness and promoting genuine environmental collaboration.”

As part of its public engagement around the exhibition, NMoQ collaborated with MoECC from July 12-15 to organise a Turtle Hatching Programme at Fuwairet Beach. The event offered members of the public and local students a rare opportunity to witness the early-life stage of Hawksbill turtles in their natural habitat. The programme also served to raise awareness of ongoing conservation efforts and inspired dialogue about the importance of protecting Qatar’s coastal ecosystems.

Dr Ibrahim al-Maslamani, Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change stated: “We are delighted to witness the opening of the exhibition Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight. The choice of the name Lehmesa, drawn from our rich maritime heritage, reflects how science, when intertwined with collective memory, becomes more relatable and capable of engaging the community in protecting our environment. This highlights the importance of using traditional terminology to foster environmental awareness and promote community engagement, ensuring the sustainability of our resources for generations to come.

Threatened Species

The exhibition presents the story of the four sea turtle species that inhabit Qatar, with a focus on the Hawksbill turtle, listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It offers an educational experience that combines environmental knowledge with interactive displays, films, and learning activities for all members of society. The exhibition also highlights the pioneering role of the Sea Turtle Protection Project as a model of collaboration between government institutions and the academic and industrial sectors.

“We also extend our gratitude to Qatar Museums for their efforts in showcasing the harmony between science and cultural heritage, and for promoting community engagement in preserving biodiversity, aligning with the goals of MoECC and Qatar National Vision 2030. We remain committed to supporting such initiatives.”

Lehmesa: Return by Moonlight is presented as part of Evolution Nation, an 18-month campaign honouring Qatar’s cultural journey over the past 50 years, since the founding of the National Museum of Qatar. Curated by Qatar Creates, the national movement positioning Qatar as a global hub for art, culture, and creativity, Evolution Nation highlights both the nation’s cultural milestones and its aspirations for the future.

The exhibition explores the turtle within the context of Qatar’s identity, aligning with the Years of Culture initiative, which shares Qatar’s cultural heritage with partner nations.

Qatar’s Years of Culture strengthens partnerships in Chile

A delegation from Qatar’s Years of Culture initiative, led by adviser on Latin American Affairs Mohammed al-Kuwari, completed a successful mission to Chile from Sept 25–30, deepening co-operation across the cultural, governmental, and creative sectors.

The visit followed the delegation’s engagements in Argentina and aimed to solidify Chile’s participation in the Years of Culture programme. The delegation’s itinerary included high-level meetings with Chile’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DIRAC), Undersecretary of International Economic Relations Claudia Sanhueza, Undersecretary of Tourism Verónica Pardo, and director of the National Cultural Heritage Service Nélida Pozo.

Talks centred on cultural diplomacy, tourism promotion, and heritage co-operation. DIRAC director Mauricio Hurtado affirmed Chile’s strong commitment to establishing a lasting cultural partnership with Qatar under the Years of Culture framework. The delegation visited leading cultural institutions, including the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Centro Cultural La Moneda (CCLM), Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral (GAM), and the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino.

At the Museo de la Memoria, executive director Francisca Peró introduced the museum’s work on human rights education and memory preservation. The delegation also viewed the Palestine exhibition, which resonated with Qatar’s cultural values of empathy and intercultural understanding, and was identified as a potential exhibition for Doha. At GAM, the delegation attended the inauguration of the Bienal de Arquitectura, alongside Minister of Housing and Urbanism Carlos Montes and GAM Director Felipe Mella, celebrating architectural innovation and sustainable urban design. Meetings at CCLM with executive director Regina Rodríguez and programming director Felipe Bascuñán explored the potential of future exchanges and museum collaborations, while discussions at the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino with Executive Director Cecilia Puga focused on future exhibition and curatorial exchanges following the acclaimed Hats of Atacama show.

The delegation also met Chile’s creative community at Vestidor Santiago, engaging with designers Guido Vera and the Munay Sisters, and at Il Posto Gallery, where Director María José Benvenuto discussed opportunities for collector and gallery collaborations. Reflecting Qatar’s commitment to cultural dialogue through sport, the delegation visited Club Deportivo Palestino, welcomed by President Jorge Uauy, to explore community programmes and cultural outreach within Chile’s Palestinian diaspora.

Heritage co-operation was also a key theme, culminating in an agreement to hold a Heritage Workshop in Valparaíso on Nov 26, focusing on conservation and technical exchange between Qatari and Chilean experts. “This mission strengthened our shared vision for culture as a driver of understanding and sustainable growth. Chile’s openness to collaboration will help ensure that the legacy of this Year of Culture extends well beyond 2025,” said al-Kuwari.



The visit followed the delegation’s engagements in Argentina and aimed to solidify Chile’s participation in the Years of Culture programme.

COMMUNITY

PISQ students showcase creativity at science expo









Pakistan International School, Qatar (PISQ) organised the intra-wing science exhibition and inter-house competition 2025 across all wings.

The event served as a platform for students to display their creativity, research skills, and scientific knowledge while reaffirming PISQ's strong commitment to nurturing inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and innovation.

In the Kindergarten Wing, twelve students presented four projects, while in the Primary Wing, 1,330 students participated with 160 projects, reflecting remarkable curiosity and teamwork.

The Girls' Wing showcased 120 projects by 198 students, the Boys' Wing presented 65 projects by 100 students, and the Cambridge Wing displayed 17 projects by 30 students, demonstrating a rich blend of research and experimentation. A detailed briefing session was led by events manager Azmina Saheef. Cross-wing judging panels were formed. Principal Ch Muhammad Afzal, accompanied by vice-principals Taqaddus Ali (Kindergarten), Nida Shahid (Primary), Summaya Hameed (Girls), Alia Ejaz (Cambridge), and Rashid Lateef (Boys) visited each wing, appreciating the students' efforts and encouraging them.



Doha College pupils demonstrated exceptional innovation, teamwork, and business acumen at the finals of the PwC 'Grow Your Money' competition.

Doha College young entrepreneurs showcase acumen at PwC contest

Doha College pupils demonstrated exceptional innovation, teamwork, and business acumen at the finals of the PwC 'Grow Your Money' competition, transforming startup funding into successful ventures that impressed industry professionals and raised QR5,669 for 'Education Above All'.

The finals took place at the PwC offices in Tornado Tower, West Bay, marking the exciting conclusion of the first-of-its-kind entrepreneurial challenge.

The event celebrated the culmination of a journey that began as a Doha College co-curricular activity (CCA) spearheaded by Teresa Menton, Head of Key Stage 4 English, where 10 'Year 10' teams each received a QR500 startup fund to turn into profitable business ventures.

Over an intensive eight-week period, pupils developed complete business models, crafted marketing strategies, and managed real operations. The programme was designed to nurture entrepreneurial thinking, financial literacy, collaboration, and presentation skills, key competencies that will serve pupils well in their future careers.

After a series of initial pitches, four standout teams advanced to the finals: Ignite (A creative candle-making business); Threads for Hope (A custom-designed t-shirt enterprise supporting global causes); Once Upon a Box (A mystery box business filled with handpicked surprises);

Custom Craze (A vibrant business offering customised t-shirts and bracelets).

These finalist teams presented their business journeys and results to a panel of PwC business partners. Each group impressed the judges with their professionalism, creativity, and ability to deliver profitable outcomes.

After much deliberation, the judges named Once Upon a Box as the overall winner.

The team stood out for their innovative concept, engaging presentation, and effective business management, earning high praise from PwC partners for their entrepreneurial flair and teamwork.

Beyond fostering innovation and leadership, the competition also made a tangible social impact. In total, the initiative raised QR5,669, which will be donated to Education Above All, supporting the organisation's mission to provide access to quality education for children worldwide.

The competition not only showcased pupils' business acumen but also underscored the value of real-world learning in cultivating life-long skills.

The 'Grow Your Money' initiative has undoubtedly sparked a passion for entrepreneurship in the next generation of Doha College pupils.

'Diwali Bazaar' organised



Indian Women's Association conducted a 'Diwali Bazaar' at Indian Cultural Centre (ICC). The bazaar, featuring a variety of handmade goods, clothes and festive items was inaugurated by ICC president A P Manikantan, Dr Manisha Tandale and Garima Panday.

Doha College pupils shine at DofE awards ceremony



A highlight of this year's programme was the Silver Award Expedition to Nepal — Doha College's first international DofE expedition to the Himalayas since 2019.

Doha College celebrated the achievements of its pupils at the annual Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) International Award presentation evening.

The event brought together pupils, parents, and staff to honour the remarkable accomplishments of those who completed their Bronze and Silver Awards this year.

With 121 bronze and 45 silver awardees, the DofE programme at Doha College remains one of the largest and most active of its kind in the region.

Offered as part of the school's Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) programme, the Award provides pupils with a unique opportunity to challenge themselves, develop essential life skills, and embrace the values of perseverance, teamwork, and service.

Over the past ten months, participants immersed themselves in the three core sections of the DofE Award — voluntary service, physical recreation, and skills.

Collectively, Doha College pupils contributed an impressive 14,200 hours across these areas, a testament to their dedication, compassion, and commitment to personal growth.

From mentoring younger pupils, volunteering in animal shelters, and supporting school departments, to developing skills in sports, music, drama, and global diplomacy through Model United Nations, pupils demonstrated initiative, leadership, and creativity at every stage of the programme.

The physical recreation component alone saw pupils dedicate more than 5,200 hours to activities such as football, swimming, netball, and water polo. This was supported by the school's Physical Education Department and Evolution Sports Qatar, whose collaboration fostered a lasting culture of fitness and teamwork.

In the Skills section, pupils refined their abilities in music, performance, cooking, and diplomacy, enhancing creativity and critical thinking. Meanwhile, over 4,600 hours were devoted to Voluntary Service, reflecting the spirit of empathy and community that lies at the heart of the DofE Award.

A highlight of this year's programme was the Silver Award Expedition to Nepal — Doha College's first international DofE expedition to the Himalayas since 2019.

Fifty-six pupils trekked through the Annapurna region, navigating rugged terrain and immersing themselves in Nepal's breathtaking landscapes.

From awe-inspiring views of Annapurna VII to shared campfire reflections beneath the stars, pupils experienced profound personal growth and team spirit in a truly transformative setting. Their creativity shone through photography projects, video journals, and written reflections, capturing both the beauty of the region and the depth of their journey.

Reflecting on the achievements of Doha College pupils, Nadeem Faisal, DofE co-ordinator at Doha College, said: "Every pupil who takes part in the DofE programme demonstrates incredible resilience, creativity, and teamwork. What makes the DofE International Award so special is not just the physical or skill-based challenges, but the personal growth that comes with them. Watching our pupils push boundaries, help others, and discover their potential is what makes the DofE journey truly inspiring.

"As educators, it is deeply rewarding to see how these young people evolve through the process — from hesitant beginners to capable, reflective individuals ready to make a difference. Their achievements embody the spirit of Doha College and its commitment to creating outstanding futures."

Special needs education centre achieves ISO 21001 certification

HOPE Qatar Centre for Persons with Disabilities has become the first special needs educational centre in the country to be awarded the ISO 21001 Certification for Educational Organisations Management System, a statement said.

HOPE Qatar, providing educational and therapeutic services to children and youth with disabilities over 19 years, had implemented ISO 9001 for its Quality Management Systems for over five years. This year the organisation also developed an Integrated Management System expanding the scope to cover ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Systems, ISO 45001 – Health and Safety Management Systems, and ISO 21001 for Educational Organisations Management Systems.

This makes HOPE Qatar the only educational institution in the country to have all the four international certifications, it was explained. The ceremony was graced by Ministry of Education and Higher Education officials Fahad al-Sharshani (expert, Educational and Training Centres), Dr Ali Hamade (specialist, Education and Training of People with Disabilities), Dr Hassan Bani Atta (language specialist), together with Expert Consultancy Services CEO Ahmed Gouider and sales manager Hassan Melliti.

HOPE Qatar founder and chief mentor Dr Rajeev Thomas extended a special appreciation to document controller and management representative Sachin Chacko Koshy and partnership officer Rizwanah Adeebh.



ICC organises 'Grand Festival Bazaar'



Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) organised a Grand Festival Bazaar 2025 over two days as part of the upcoming festive season.

The event was inaugurated by Indian embassy counsellor Vaibhav A Tandale and Dr Manisha Tandale.

The Festival Bazaar featured more than 60 stalls showcasing handicrafts, leather products, imitation jewellery, Indian traditional wear, and Indian food.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, the event also included live henna (mehndi) stations.

During the event, ICC handed over the affiliation certificate to the newly affiliated associate organisation, Amrit Uttar Pradesh Navrang Sanskritik Mandal Qatar.

A dedicated counter for Government Social Welfare Schemes was also inaugurated by Dr Tandale, and Norka Roots director C V Rappai. The counter provides information and assistance on various welfare schemes, including Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Norka Care Insurance, Norka ID, ICBF Life Insurance, and other welfare initiatives of the Government of India and State Governments.

MES evening batch hosts Innovex expo





The MES Indian School Evening Shift hosted its first-ever exhibition, Innovex-2025, a celebration of innovation, creativity, and student talent. The event featured participation from about 500 students who showcased projects in Science, Social Science, Mathematics, ICT, Languages, Qatar History, and Islamic Studies. The exhibition was inaugurated by Ahamed Isham, director of co-curricular and cultural activities, MES Governing Board, in the presence of other management members, principal Dr Hameeda Kadar, senior vice-principal Shihabudeen Pulath, and other officials.

BPS students excel in SOF exams



A group of students from Birla Public School (BPS)'s Primary II campus excelled in the Science Olympiad Foundation (SOF) Second Level Examinations. Out of the 16 achievers, four were awarded the certificate of zonal excellence, eight earned gold, silver and bronze medals, while two received cash prizes for their exceptional performance. The school management, principal and staff congratulated the students.



MES students win young farmer prizes

MES Indian School students Tameem Ahmed (Grade VII-I) won the first place, and Jiya Maria Jitto (Grade VII-S) the second place in the Nammude Adukkala Thottam (NAD) Young Farmer Contest 25, conducted to raise awareness about organic farming. NAD distributed free vegetable saplings (four varieties) to all contestants, along with guidance on cultivation. Students from various schools in Qatar participated, including 14 from Grades III-X of MES. Principal Hameeda Kadar lauded the students. The competition was co-ordinated by Campus Care Force teachers Jency George, Pushyami Racherla, Radhika Rajan, Pradnya Pandey, and Bitty Varghese, along with administrative staff Ramla K.

MES evening batch attends Engineers' Day events



A group of students from MES Indian School (Evening Shift) participated in the TechQuest and TalkFest competitions organised by the Institution of Engineers (India) – Qatar chapter (Women's Wing) as part of the 58th Engineers' Day Celebrations. Ozair Ahmed Sharif (Grade VII-A) won the special person award in TalkFest. Anwita (Grade VIII-A), Farhan (Grade VII-C), and Aarush (Grade VII-B) were the other participants.

IIS hosts Islamic awareness competition



Ideal Indian School (IIS) recently hosted the 9th Annual Inter-School Uswa-e-Rasool Elocution and Recitation Competition.

There were two topics for elocution. Juniors: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a Role Model for Our Daily Life; Seniors: Justice and Equality in the Life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Among the ten participating schools, IIS won the overall championship trophy.

In the senior category, Khalid Soban (Grade XII) from IIS was first in Qur'an recitation, while in the junior category, Mohamed Shaban Naji Eid (Grade VII) came second. In elocution, Fatima Khairi (Grade XII) was second in the senior category, and Farah Naaz (Grade IX) first in the junior category.

The event's convener and Boys' section vice-principal Azam Khan conveyed the message of principal Shaikh Shamim Saheb, who congratulated the winners, participants, and teachers. Khan also appreciated Dr Ehtesham, head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and his team for their efforts, and the heads of sections.

The elocution jury comprised Mueen, Sheikh Alqama Rajpura, and Noryn Shaukat Ali, while the Qur'an recitation jury had Shaikh Tahir Ibraheem Ali al-Ahdall, Qari Abdul Aziz, and Qari Mohammad Siddique.

Engineers' summit and technology forum held



The Qatar Engineers' Summit & Technology Forum (Qest 2025), hosted by the Qatar Chapter of the Government Engineering College Thrissur Alumni Association (Qget), brought together over 300 delegates.

The event was inaugurated by Indian embassy deputy chief of mission Sandeep Kumar. He also unveiled Eidos, the official Qest 2025 booklet. Qget president and Qest 2025 chairman Tomy Varkey welcomed the gathering and programme chairman Mohammed Faizal introduced the speakers.

The summit's theme, 'Artificial Intelligence in Project Management and Engineering', was explored through a two-part programme that combined interactive workshops led by Dr Saurabh Mishra, CEO of Taiyo.AI (US) and Hesham Elkouha, senior cloud architect at Microsoft.

The technical summit featured Susanth Kurnuthil, CEO of Info Parks & Cyberparks, Kerala, India; Shijaz Abdulla, regional director at Microsoft for the Middle East and Africa; and Nagi Reddy Bommareddy, IT & ERP Program Manager, Q-Ceramics, Qatar. A Q&A session was moderated by John E J. The closing remarks were given by Gopu Rajasekhar.

ARAB WORLD/AFRICA

Israeli forces kill 11-year-old Palestinian in West Bank

AFP
Ramallah

Israeli forces shot dead an 11-year-old boy in the occupied West Bank, his family and health officials said yesterday, while the army said its troops opened fire at rock throwers.

The Palestinian health ministry said that Mohammad Hallaq was shot dead on Thursday by Israeli soldiers "in the town of Al-Rihiya, south of Hebron. The bullet penetrated his pelvis." Hallaq's uncle, also named Mohammad Hallaq, told AFP the child was sitting in front of his house when an army patrol passed by during a confrontation with a group of older youths. "(The soldiers) fired directly at (the older boys), and he was killed," the uncle said, adding the child was sitting away from the youths.

The Israeli military told AFP that soldiers had shot and struck people during an altercation while deployed in Al-Rihiya.

"Soldiers responded with fire toward the suspects in the rock-hurling. Hits were identified," it said, using the language it generally uses to say troops shot and hit someone. Ayed Abu Eqtaish, an official for Defence for Children International Palestine, a rights organisation, said the incident took place around 5:00pm (1400 GMT), after which Hallaq was transported to a nearby hospital and pronounced dead.

The number of children and teenagers shot dead by Israeli forces in the West Bank after being suspected of throwing rocks dramatically increased in 2025.

A Palestinian teenager who held US citizenship was shot dead by the army in April, followed by a 14-year-old in June in the town of Sinjil in June, and a 15-year-old in July.

On each occasion, the military said the youths had thrown rocks at its troops.

The Palestinian health ministry also reported on Thursday evening that an adult, 20-year-old Mahdi Kamil, was killed by Israeli forces in the northern West Bank town of Qabatiya.

The Israeli military told AFP that its troops killed a Palestinian fighter in Qabatiya on Thursday after he threw "an explosive device" towards soldiers deployed in the area. "The soldiers responded with fire and eliminated the fighter," it said.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 where violence has surged since the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023.

Since then, Israeli troops and settlers have killed at least 986 Palestinians in the West Bank, including many fighters, according to health ministry figures.



Palestinian worshippers attend Friday prayers amidst the rubble of the destroyed Albaani Mosque in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

Gazans return to damaged mosques for first post-truce prayers

AFP
Gaza City

Thousands of worshippers returned yesterday to the Gaza Strip's few intact and many damaged mosques, where for the first time in months loudspeakers blared the Islamic call to prayer.

"God is the greatest, glory to God, Lord of worlds," echoed through mosques at roughly the same time yesterday, one week after a ceasefire took place in the devoutly Muslim coastal Palestinian territory.

To be united for prayer again "is an indescribable feeling after two years of privation", Ghalid al-Nimra said at Gaza City's Sayed Hachem mosque.

Sayed Hachem, one of the oldest mosques in Gaza's largest city, was miraculously mostly spared during two years of air strikes and fighting between Israel and Hamas.

As he watched the hundreds of worshippers, Nimra was moved to see "such a large crowd gathered here" for the first time since Hamas' October 2023 storming of Israel sparked the war.

As the prayer rang out at 12:30pm (0930 GMT), many hastened as they crossed the building's Ottoman-era door.

Old and young, many of their faces solemn, prayed together inside, where even the minbar, the imam's raised platform, seemed intact.

Out of Gaza's 1,244 mosques, 1,160 were partly or wholly destroyed, according to Hamas's media office in the Palestinian territory.

Several worshippers expressed a state of spiritual confusion.

"I feel like my soul is getting lost amid all this destruction," Abu Mahmud Salha said.

The 52-year-old from northern Gaza still lives in a camp for the displaced in Al-Mawasi, on the other end of the Gaza Strip.

"We pray inside the tent, I miss group prayer and the imam's voice," he said.

"When I hear the prayer call echoing on loudspeakers from recordings, I feel like a part of our lives was broken."

The mosque in his neighbourhood, Al-Falluja, was destroyed, forcing him to pray on the street.

Yesterday, most residents stuck to the habits they developed over the past few months. Some unfurled prayer mats on the road, on rubble, or in mosques with collapsed walls.

Others bowed near rows of tents housing thousands of displaced Palestinians across Gaza, in living conditions that remain difficult.

"Every Friday, we try to gather on a small patch of land under the sky, to pray," Moataz Abu Sharbi said.

"Sometimes we pray on sand or on pieces of cardboard, which is very difficult psychologically," the 27-year-old added.

"The mosque was a pillar of life in our neighbourhoods and a precious part of our religious traditions," said Abu Sharbi, who was displaced to the central Gaza city of Deir Al-Balah.

"Losing both one's home and one's spiritual refuge - that's the hardest part," Abu Sharbi added.

"We used to find shelter for our worries in the mosque."

Speaking from Gaza City's Al-Shati camp, Abu Mohammad al-Hattabn said "the mosque near my home was our refuge, not only for prayer, but also to find peace and remember God".

"When it was destroyed, it felt like a piece of my heart flew away," the 54-year-old said.

Hundreds of Palestinians also gathered in a destroyed mosque in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis, an AFP photographer reported.

As an imam led prayers through a loudspeaker, the worshippers seemed absorbed in devotion, despite the mosque's gaping walls and exposed frame.

"We hope that everything will be rebuilt in Gaza, including the mosques," 22-year-old Salim al-Farra said.

Turkish experts await nod to help recover bodies in Gaza

AFP
Ankara

A team of Turkish disaster response specialists is stationed at the Egyptian border, awaiting Israeli authorisation to enter Gaza and help in search and recovery operations, a Turkish official said yesterday.

The 81-member team from Turkiye's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) is equipped with specialised search-and-rescue tools, including life-detection devices and trained search dogs.

They "are currently waiting at the border on the Egyptian side," the official said.

The group is prepared to locate and recover bodies trapped under rubble. "It remains unclear when Israel will allow the Turkish team to enter Gaza," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"Initially, Israel preferred to work with a Gulf state team, but we are hopeful that our delegation will be granted access soon."

A Hamas source said the Turkish delegation is expected to enter Gaza by tomorrow.

AFAD personnel are experienced in operating under extreme conditions, having responded to numerous natural disasters, including the devastating earthquake in southeastern Turkiye in February 2023 which claimed over 53,000 lives. The Turkish official noted that the Turkish team's mission includes locating both Palestinian and Israeli bodies, including hostages believed to be buried or hidden in collapsed structures.

However, the task is complicated because some Israeli hostages may have been disguised in local clothing to evade detection by Israeli drones during transfers. "This situation is expected to complicate search operations and delay progress," the official said, adding that Hamas is expected to provide location data related to hostages.

Concerns have been raised by some observers over the potential misuse of the Turkish team's heavy equipment, with fears that it could be repurposed by Hamas to access underground tunnels.

Lebanese judge orders Hannibal Gaddafi's release on $11mn bail

AFP
Beirut

A judge yesterday ordered the release on bail of Hannibal Gaddafi, son of deposed Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi, after nearly a decade of pre-trial detention in Lebanon, a judicial official said.

Lebanese authorities arrested Gaddafi in 2015 and accused him of withholding information about the disappearance of Lebanese cleric Mussa Sadr in Libya in 1978.

Gaddafi, now 49 according to his lawyer, was around two years old at the time of Sadr's disappearance. After questioning Gaddafi yesterday, the judge ordered his release "on $11mn bail and banned him from travel", the judicial official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

Lawyer Laurent Bayon told AFP that "release on bail is totally unacceptable in a case of arbitrary detention. We will challenge the bail." He noted that his client "is under international sanctions" and could not pay such a sum, adding: "Where do you want him to find $11mn?"

Sadr — the founder of the Amal movement, now an ally of Hezbollah group — went missing during an official visit to Libya, along with an aide and a journalist.

Beirut blamed the disappearances on Muammar Gaddafi, who was overthrown and killed decades later in a 2011 uprising.

Married to Lebanese model Aline Skaf, Hannibal Gaddafi fled to Syria after the start of the Libyan uprising. He was kidnapped in December 2015 by armed men who took him to Lebanon, where authorities released him from the kidnappers and later detained him.

He has never faced trial. After the judge's decision, the Sadr family published a statement reiterating their rejection of Gaddafi's release and expressing their "surprise" at yesterday's order.

Chad reinstates ties with Prince Harry's charity

Reuters
N'Djamena

Chad has reinstated management agreements with African Parks, the conservation group whose board includes Britain's Prince Harry, and begun talks on new deals for joint management of ongoing projects, the environment ministry and the charity said yesterday.

The move reverses last week's decision by the Central African country to break ties with the organisation.

The two parties said they had engaged "in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation" and restored the agreements "with full effect" while both sides negotiate new partnership agreements for Zakouma National Park, the Ennedi Natural and Cultural Reserve, and the planned Aouk project. African Parks will continue to finance and co-manage protected areas in Zakouma and Ennedi and keep advancing the Aouk project until new agreements are signed, the statement said.

Chad announced last week that it was ending the organisation's mandates, citing a resurgence of poaching, underinvestment, and alleged breaches of contract. African Parks said at the time it was seeking discussions with the government.

Army colonel sworn in as Madagascar president



Newly sworn in President of Madagascar Michael Randrianirina speaks during his swearing in ceremony in Antananarivo, yesterday.

Army colonel Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as Madagascar's president yesterday vowing sweeping reforms, just days after the military took power following weeks of anti-government protests that sent ex-president Andry Rajoelina fleeing, AFP reported from Antananarivo.
Randrianirina led the Capsat army unit, which mutinied and joined the anti-government protesters before announcing Tuesday that the military had taken power, after Rajoelina was impeached for desertion of duty.
"Today marks a historic turning point for our country," Randrianirina said after his swearing-in ceremony, where the 51-year-old colonel swapped his army uniform for a suit.
He promised change in the poverty-stricken island nation, where anger over chronic power cuts sparked protests last month that swiftly escalated into a mass movement.
"We will work hand in hand with all the driving forces of the nation to draft a fine constitution... and to agree on new electoral laws for the organisation of elections and referendums," Randrianirina said.

Two dead, many injured at stampede at funeral for Kenyan opposition leader Odinga

Reuters
Nairobi

Two people were killed and more than 160 others were injured in a stampede at the state funeral of Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga in Nairobi yesterday, aid group Doctors Without Borders said.

The funeral for Odinga, who commanded a passionate following in the East African nation, drew huge crowds to Nairobi's Nyayo National Stadium and heavy security was in place. During the ceremony, some members of the crowd surged forward to view Odinga's body, crushing mourners, Kenyan broadcaster NTV reported, without providing further details.

"Our teams are there helping to provide treatment and evacuate the injured," a Kenya Red Cross spokesperson told Reuters, adding that further details were not immediately available. The police did not immediately answer calls. In a statement, Doctors Without Borders said two people were killed in the melee and more than 160 others were injured. It was not immediately clear if all the injuries — which included blunt trauma and fractures — were linked to the stampede.



Mourners attend a requiem for former Kenyan prime minister Raila Odinga, inside the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi, yesterday.

The fatalities followed three deaths on Thursday when security forces fired shots at mourners who breached a gate at Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi during a public viewing of Odinga's body. The former political prisoner was a major figure for decades in Kenyan politics and ran unsuccessfully for president five times. He died aged 80 on Wednesday in India, where he had been receiving medical treatment.

At yesterday's service, thousands of mourners waved white handkerchiefs and danced under large banners with Odinga's portrait.

DISASTER

Magnitude 6.1 quake hits southern Philippines

A magnitude 6.1 earthquake jolted southern Philippines yesterday, the US Geological Survey said, a week after two powerful quakes hit the country. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, provincial rescuer Ralph Cadalena said. "We felt a sudden strong shake, but it was only for a very short time," Cadalena said. The tremor struck near Dapa municipality in Surigao del Norte province at a depth of around 69km USGS reported. It came a week after two quakes of 7.4- and 6.7-magnitude shook the eastern section of the main Mindanao island, killing at least eight people.

COMMENT

Asean must 'push for change' in Myanmar: top EU rights official

The European Union will not send observers to Myanmar's upcoming election, its top human rights official said yesterday, dismissing the vote as neither free nor fair and urging southeast Asian nations to "push for change". "We're calling upon all neighbouring countries, including the Asean countries, to really firmly push for a change of course," EU commissioner Kajsa Ollongren said. Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing has touted the December 28 elections as a path to reconciliation in the civil war he sparked by snatching power in a 2021 coup. But international monitors have dismissed the vote as a ploy to legitimise continuing military rule.

OBITUARY

Japan's former premier Murayama dies aged 101

Japan's former prime minister Tomiichi Murayama, best known for making a statement apologising over World War II, died yesterday aged 101, officials said. Murayama issued the 1995 proclamation on the 50th anniversary of Japan's surrender, expressing "deep remorse" over the country's atrocities in Asia. The statement became a benchmark for Tokyo's subsequent apologies over World War II. "Tomiichi Murayama, the father of Japanese politics, passed away yesterday at 11.28am at a hospital in Oita City at the age of 101," Mizuho Fukushima, head of the Social Democratic Party, seen as the successor to Murayama's now-defunct Socialist Party, said on X.

CRIME

Two men deny conspiring to set fires linked to UK PM Starmer

Two Ukrainian men yesterday pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to carry out arson attacks on houses and a vehicle in London connected to British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, acts which prosecutors said were not being treated as terrorism. Ukrainians Roman Lavrynovych, 21, and Petro Pochynok, 35, appeared at London's Old Bailey court where they denied a charge of conspiring to damage property by fire with intent to endanger life. Prosecutors said at previous hearings that the case involved a car Starmer used to own, an apartment in which he used to live, and a property he owns.

China expels two top military leaders from Communist Party in anti-corruption purge

Reuters
Beijing

Two top Chinese military leaders have been expelled from the ruling Communist Party and the military on corruption charges, the country's defence ministry said yesterday, the most senior officers to be purged in an anti-graft drive that began in 2023.

He Weidong, China's number two general, and navy admiral Miao Hua, the Chinese military's former top political officer, are the latest senior military officials to be targeted in a campaign against corruption in the People's Liberation Army.

He's removal is the first of a sitting general on the Central Military Commission since the 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution. He has not been seen in public since March, but the investigation of his activities had not previously been disclosed by Chinese authorities.

He, Miao and seven other senior military officials named in the announcement "seriously violated party discipline and are suspected of serious duty-related crimes involving an extremely large amount of money", defence ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang said.

Their offences were "of a grave nature, with extremely detrimental consequences", the statement added, calling it a "significant achievement in the party and military's anti-corruption campaign."

The expulsion of He, 68, has implications beyond the military, as he also sat on the 24-member Politburo, the ruling Communist Party's second-highest echelon of power.

One of two vice-chairmen of the commission, the general is the third-most powerful commander of the People's Liberation Army and has been considered a close associate of President Xi Jinping, the army's commander-in-chief.

The announcement came just days before the Communist Party's Central Committee, an elite body of 200-plus senior officials, is due to hold its Fourth Plenum in Beijing.

More personnel decisions, such as the expulsion and replacement of Central Committee members, are expected to be formalised at the meeting. "Xi is cleaning house for sure. The formal removal of He and Miao means he will get to appoint new members of the Central Military Commission - which has been virtually half empty since March - at the Plenum," said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub.

Miao was previously removed from the Central Military Commission in June after being put under investigation for "serious violations of discipline" last November.

The other officials named include He Hongjun, a former senior official at the PLA political work department, Wang Xiubin of the central military commission's joint operations command centre, former Eastern Theatre Command commander Lin Xiangyang, and two former political commissars of the PLA Army and Navy. Observers have noted that many of these officials were missing from public view for several months.

Former People's Armed Police commander Wang Chunning, also named in the statement, was removed from the national legislature last month, along with three other PLA generals.

The purge of He implicates a man with extensive operational experience and long ties to Xi.

His ties to the president go back to their overlapping service in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces in the late 1990s. Xi was deputy party secretary and governor of the province between 1995 and 2002.

He joined the military commission after commanding the PLA's Eastern Theatre in Fujian province, which faces Taiwan and would be the key region in any conflict over the island that Beijing claims as its own territory.

In 2022, He was promoted directly to vice-chair of the military commission, skipping the usual step of serving on the 205-member Central Committee. The Pentagon has said He played a key role in planning live-fire drills around Taiwan after Nancy Pelosi, then the speaker of the US House of Representatives, angered China by visiting Taipei in August 2022. The exercises were the most aggressive moves Beijing has made against the island in recent years.



Muhammad Yunus (front centre), chief adviser of Bangladesh's interim government and head of the National Consensus Commission, signs the July National Charter as representatives of various political parties look on at the South Plaza of the National Parliament in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh parties sign landmark reform charter

AFP
Dhaka

Bangladesh's most powerful political parties signed a charter yesterday aimed at ensuring democratic reform after next year's elections, following a mass uprising that toppled the previous government.

However, celebrations of the government led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus were muted after one party refused to sign, with police also firing tear gas to quash rock-throwing protesters ahead of the ceremony.

Yunus, 85, has championed the document as his legacy, saying he inherited a "completely broken down" system and that reforms are needed to prevent a return to authoritarian rule.

"This is the moment we are ushering in a new Bangladesh," Yunus told the ceremony, held in front of parliament in Dhaka. "We have been reborn."

The nation of 170mn people has been in political turmoil since Sheikh Hasina was ousted as prime minister by a student-led revolt in August 2024.

The document, dubbed the "July Charter" after last year's uprising, has sparked intense arguments between parties jostling for power ahead of polls slated for February. Yunus, who has pledged to step down after elections, says it will strengthen checks and balances between the executive, judicial and legislative branches.

It includes proposals for a two-term limit for prime ministers and expanded presidential powers.

It also aims to enshrine the recognition of Bangladesh as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), seen as among the election front-runners, as well as Jamaat-e-Islami, the Muslim-majority nation's largest Islamist party, signed the charter.

However, the National Citizen Party (NCP), made up of many students who spearheaded the uprising that ended Hasina's rule, boycotted the ceremony.

Ahead of the ceremony, police and protesters clashed, including those who took part in demonstrations last year, demanding compensation for those who were injured.

Manchester bomber's brother denies bid to kill prison guards

The brother of a man who detonated a suicide bomb after an Ariana Grande concert in Britain in 2017 yesterday denied attempting to murder three prison guards in jail where he is serving a life sentence.
Prosecutors say Hashem Abedi, whose brother Salman Abedi killed 22 people at the Manchester Arena in northern England in 2017, attacked four prison officers with hot cooking oil and makeshift knives.
The incident happened in April at Frankland prison in northern England, where Abedi is serving a 55-year prison sentence having been jailed in 2020 for helping his brother plan the attack, which injured more than 200.
Abedi, 28, appeared at London's Old Bailey court by videolink from Belmarsh prison surrounded by five guards, and pleaded not guilty to three counts of attempted murder, one count of assault and one count of unauthorised possession of a weapon in a prison.

Anti-corruption protest in Manila



Students raise their clenched fists as they shout slogans during an anti-corruption protest near Malacanang Palace, Metro Manila, Philippines, yesterday.

Indie singer Sam Fender wins UK Mercury Prize

AFP
London

Indie singer Sam Fender has won the UK's prestigious Mercury Prize with his chart-topping album "People Watching", as the award ceremony moved out of London for the first time.

The crowd in the northeastern city of Newcastle erupted in joy as Fender, from nearby North Shields, accepted the award in the Utilita Arena.

The judges said Fender's third album "felt like a classic album, one that will take pride of place in record collections for years to come". It had stood out for its "cohesion, character and ambition".

Fender, 31, who was nominated in 2022 for a Mercury Prize, dedicated the award to his late friend and mentor UK actress Annie Orwin, for whom he wrote the song "People Watching" after her death. Twelve acts were nominated for the 2025 award, which rewards the best British or Irish album of the past 12 months.

Hot favourite had been breakout Irish singer CMAT, who was nominated alongside relative newcomer PinkPantheress and Britpop veterans Pulp.

CMAT, 29, whose real name is Ciara Mary?Alice Thompson, attended the ceremony but did not perform after being treated for an infected wisdom tooth which forced her to cancel tour dates earlier this month.

She was nominated for her third album, "Euro-Country", featuring the Irish language and tongue-in-cheek lyrics.

Nominated alongside fellow Irish band Fontaines DC, CMAT said Ireland's recent music success came from a "generation of traumatised people".

China's Hanwha sanctions threaten S Korea-US shipbuilding ties

Reuters
Seoul

China's sanctions on US-linked units of shipbuilder Hanwha Ocean threaten to impact ambitious plans for shipbuilding co-operation between Seoul and Washington by disrupting supplies of Chinese equipment and materials, officials in Seoul said yesterday.

Beijing announced the sanctions on Tuesday as the US and China began charging additional port fees on each other's vessels, in the latest exchange in a protracted trade war ahead of a planned meeting of the two countries' leaders.

South Korea has vowed to "Make America Shipbuilding Great Again" with a pledge of $150bn of investment in the sector to help US President Donald Trump's push to revitalise American shipbuilding to catch up with China's.

The decline of the US shipbuilding sector and the industries needed to support it were such that it would be impossible to supply materials and parts from within the US, officials in Seoul said.

"There is bound to be an impact," South Korea's Minister of Defence Procurement Programme Administration Seok Jong-gun said.

"I don't see how we can make all the materials and supplies for Philly Shipyard within the US," Seok said in a parliamentary hearing yesterday.

"So if you're going to get a lot of things to the US from South Korea, and you have sanctions and all kinds of obstacles to doing that, I'd say there's going to be an impact on MASGA eventually."

Hanwha also runs a shipyard in China's eastern province of Shandong that builds modules of ship components, a company filing showed. It supplies the modules to its shipyard in South Korea for the final assembly, according to the firm.

While analysts said the Chinese sanctions would not have an immediate impact, they added it may be a harbinger of tougher Chinese actions that could hit South Korean shipbuilders cooperating with the US.

South Korean lawmaker Yu Yong-weon estimated the Chinese sanctions would cost Philly Shipyard $60mn over the next two years.

Yu did not give a breakdown of the estimate but cited likely disruptions of supplies to the shipyard and delayed delivery of vessels.

"This is not simply a trade issue but a grave matter that affects our economic security and industrial supremacy," said Yu, adding he visited the shipyard last month.

Philly Shipyard, in Philadelphia, was bought by Hanwha last year and is one of five subsidiaries in the US hit by the new Chinese sanctions.

Hanwha's South Korean competitors, HD Hyundai and Samsung Heavy Industries, are eyeing projects envisioned for rebuilding US maritime capabilities including work to build and maintain navy vessels.

Earlier yesterday, the US state department lambasted the Chinese sanctions as an "irresponsible" act that interferes with a private company's operations and undermines South Korea-US co-operation on revitalising US shipbuilding and manufacturing.

"China's actions... are the latest example in a long pattern of China's attempts to coerce (South) Korea," a spokesperson said in a statement.

Hanwha Ocean declined to comment on the lawmaker's claim on losses.

China's commerce ministry banned transactions and cooperation with Hanwha Ocean's US-linked units, citing security risks stemming from what it said was their involvement in the US government's "relevant investigative activities".

WORLD

India to force drugmakers to upgrade plants after fatal cough syrup crisis

Reuters
Chhindwara/New Delhi

India has refused drugmakers' requests to extend a year-end deadline for them to upgrade their manufacturing facilities to international standards, four sources said, amid public anger over the recent deaths of at least 24 children who consumed locally-produced cough syrup.

New Delhi had in late 2023 ordered pharmaceutical companies to ensure their plants meet World Health Organisation-recommended standards, which would require them to invest in protocols to prevent cross-contamination and enable batch-testing of samples, among other measures.

The mandate was established after India-made cough syrups were linked to the deaths of over 140 children in Africa and Central Asia, severely denting India's image as a "pharmacy of the world."

While major pharmaceutical companies met a June 2024 deadline, smaller firms were granted a 12-month reprieve on their separate December 2024 target.

Some in India's pharmaceutical lobby have, however, been pushing for more time, warning that businesses would be forced into bankruptcy by the costs.

But news that Sresan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer - which made the Coldrif syrup that was linked to the latest deaths - had not upgraded its facilities was a key factor in convincing government officials to ignore those appeals, said three of the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss non-public deliberations.

The decision was made in October after tests confirmed a high level of toxicity in some Coldrif syrups, according to two of the people.

Drugmakers were informed of the decision at a conference on Thursday, one of them said. Once the upgrades are completed, India plans to phase out a controversial rule introduced in 2023 that mandates additional testing of cough syrups at government-designated laboratories before export, one of the people said.

That requirement does not apply to medication meant for domestic use.

The recent deaths have reignited a public debate in India about selective enforcement of safety standards. The health ministry and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), the federal pharmaceuticals regulator, did not return requests for comment. Representatives for Sresan did not respond to repeated phone calls.

If India had adhered to its original deadline, the latest deaths could have been avoided, said Udaya Bhaskar of the All India Drugs Control Officers' Confederation, which represents pharmaceutical regulators. All the recent deaths were linked to a batch of Coldrif syrup made in May.

Bhaskar said he supported scrapping additional testing for exports once all labs were certified to WHO standards: "It's not the government's job to test every batch. That responsibility lies with the manufacturer. The government's duty is to ensure compliance."

Government tests found the syrup manufactured by Sresan contained 48.6% diethylene glycol (DEG), or nearly 500 times the limit set by India and the WHO.

DEG is sometimes "fraudulently or unintentionally" used in place of pricier pharmaceutical-grade solvents like glycerine and propylene glycol, according to an October 13 presentation on medical contamination by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), which sets national drug standards.

The commission in October started requiring manufacturers to test oral liquids for the presence of DEG and another comparable substance, ethylene glycol, before sale. A Reuters investigation in 2023 had exposed regulatory and legal gaps that allowed unscrupulous manufacturers to substitute DEG for pharmaceutical-grade propylene glycol. Despite the earlier deaths abroad, there is no record of anyone getting jailed in India.

"Contamination may occur through deliberate adulteration to cut costs or accidental mix-ups and mislabelling, especially in shared processing facilities," according to the October presentation.

While IPC did not name specific companies, the CDSCO said in October that recent inspections revealed some firms failed to test every batch of medicinal ingredients as required by law. Authorities have since revoked Sresan's manufacturing licence, banned its products, and arrested its founder S Ranganathan on suspicion of manslaughter. Sresan's corporate office in a residential building in the southern city of Chennai and its manufacturing site - which is based in a ramshackle shed-like structure - were both closed.

"There were numerous critical violations of even existing standards. That unit is unfit for manufacturing," said one of the people, who was briefed on the preliminary investigation.

The closure of Sresan's facilities, however, comes too late for Mayank Suryavanshi. The three-and-a-half-year-old from the Parasia region of Madhya Pradesh state had developed a fever on September 22, for which a local doctor prescribed Coldrif.

Mayank took doses manufactured by Sresan, but his condition deteriorated. He died of acute kidney failure in the early hours of October 9.

"We never imagined a simple medicine could turn life-threatening," said his father, Nilesh Suryavanshi, who works as a day labourer.

"My child should be the last," he said. "The government must ensure no other parent suffers like this."

India's $50bn pharmaceutical industry is composed of some 3,000 companies that operate over 10,000 factories.

About two dozen firms are responsible for the majority of drugs manufactured in the country, government data show. Much of the remaining 40% is produced by small- and medium-size enterprises, many of which fear the costs of upgrading their facilities will render them economically unviable.

Jagdeep Singh, secretary of the SME Pharma Industries Confederation, has warned that nearly half of the manufacturing units in the pharmaceutical hub state of Himachal Pradesh would shut if an extension was not forthcoming.

"I can guarantee there will be shortages, unemployment, and massive national losses," he said, adding that some firms have already discontinued products as customers refuse to bear the upgrade costs.

But regulators no longer seem convinced by that argument, one of the sources said.

The deadline "cannot be extended again and again - people are dying," the person said, adding that major drugmakers which have already upgraded their facilities could meet any shortfall.

Festive shopping



A woman shops for home decorative items at a market ahead of Diwali, the festival of lights, in Ahmedabad, India.

No sign of fall in India's Russia oil imports despite US claims

Reuters
Washington/New Delhi

India has halved its purchases of Russian oil, a White House official said, but Indian sources said no immediate reduction had been seen, as President Donald Trump's administration presses New Delhi and other nations to buy less Russian crude.

Russian oil is a main irritant for Trump in prolonged trade talks with India - half of his 50% tariffs on Indian goods are in retaliation for those purchases. His administration says Moscow is using petroleum revenue to fund its war in Ukraine.

The White House official said on Thursday that talks with an Indian delegation in Washington this week have been productive and that Indian refiners were already cutting Russian oil imports by 50%.

But Indian industry sources said yesterday New Delhi had not informed refiners of any request to cut Russian imports.

Refiners have already placed orders for November loading, including some cargoes for December arrival, so any cut could be visible in December or January import numbers, said the sources, who asked not to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Indeed, India's imports of Russian oil are set to rise about 20% this month to 1.9mn barrels per day, according to estimates from commodities data firm Kpler, as Russia ramps up exports after Ukrainian drones hit its refineries.

The Indian oil ministry and refiners that buy Russian oil did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured him on Wednesday that India would stop buying Russian oil. India's foreign ministry did not respond to Trump's assertion except to say it was not aware of any telephone conversation between the two leaders that day.

Still, India's oil minister on Thursday sought data on Russian oil imports from all the refiners, including their loadings and arrivals tied up for November and December.

Oil prices fell yesterday, with Brent crude futures down 48 cents, or 0.79%, to $60.58 a barrel at 0720 GMT, amid uncertainty over global supply as Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin prepared to discuss ending the war.

India has become the biggest buyer of seaborne Russian oil sold at a discount after Western nations shunned purchases and imposed sanctions on Moscow for its 2022 invasion of its neighbour.

New Delhi initially hoped to secure a quick trade deal with the US due to Modi's warm relationship with Trump, but the talks have floundered and the president has slapped some of the highest levies in his global tariff regime on India's products.

When Modi visited Trump in February, India pledged to more than double its annual US energy purchases to $25bn, with both nations targeting $500bn in bilateral trade by 2030.

US negotiators have said curbing India's Russian crude purchases would be crucial to reducing its tariff rate and sealing a trade deal. Indian refiners are looking to buy at least 10% of their liquefied petroleum gas needs from the US to help narrow India's bilateral trade surplus, sources said this week.

Russia accounted for 36% of India's oil imports, some 1.75mn barrels per day, in the six months through September, trade data shows.

Moscow said on Thursday it was confident its energy partnership with India would continue. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia could supply oil more cheaply to countries that Trump is trying to persuade to stop buying Russian oil.

Air India in talks for up to 300 new jets

Air India is in talks with Airbus and Boeing to add more wide-body jets as it expands planned purchases to up to 300 aircraft, people familiar with the matter said, marking an acceleration of its turnaround under the Tata Group.

The negotiations now include as many as 80-100 wide-body jets, the sources said, on top of previously reported talks for 200 narrow-body jets and 25-30 wide-body aircraft.

Airbus said it does "not comment on confidential discussions, which may or may not be happening with customers."

Air India and Boeing did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In June, media reported that Air India was in talks with Airbus and Boeing for a major new aircraft order including some 200 extra narrow-body planes, topping up a mammoth deal in 2023.

That came on top of earlier discussions involving 25-30 wide-body jets, which the media reported in March.



A man walks past a poster of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd's Tejas Mark 1A, a light combat aircraft (LCA) ahead of its maiden flight at HAL in Nashik, India, yesterday.

India to spend $7.4bn on fighter jet engines: official

Reuters
New Delhi

India expects to spend about Rs-654bn ($7.44bn) to buy engines for fighter aircraft that are under development until 2035, according to estimates shared yesterday by a defence official who leads the efforts to build a home-grown engine.

The country will require about 1,100 engines for a variety of fighter jet programmes that are progressing through various stages, said S V Ramana Murthy, director of India's Gas Turbine Research Establishment, a state-run defence laboratory. India's decades-old programme to power its light combat Tejas jets with home-grown Kaveri engine has yet to take off due to technical shortcomings.

"There is a need to work on mission mode to create an ecosystem for indigenous fighter engine," Murthy said at an event in New Delhi, adding that the country needed infrastructure such as a high-altitude testing facility, along with an industrial base. He also said that a derivative of the Kaveri engine can be used for a home-grown unmanned combat aerial vehicle.

Murthy is heading the efforts to co-develop an engine with an international partner to power India's first 5th generation stealth fighter aircraft, for which France's Safran, Britain's Rolls-Royce and US General Electric have shown interest.

A prototype of the fighter, known as the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, is expected to roll out in 2028. It is the first fighter aircraft for which bids would also be open to private firms, the government has said, in order to reduce pressure on Indian state-owned warplane maker Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, which makes most of India's military aircraft.

Modi's party faces tough Bihar state election

Reuters
Patna, India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's national alliance faces a tough regional election in the state of Bihar next month, due to youth unemployment and distrust over voter rolls, which could pose risks to his coalition that relies on regional partners.

Bihar, in eastern India, is one of the country's poorest states and its third most populous, with over 130mn people.

Its Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has previously sided with both Modi and the opposition, but is currently a key partner in Modi's National Democratic Alliance.

The state is part of a politically crucial heartland region and any cracks within the NDA in November's assembly vote in Bihar could threaten Modi's coalition, with elections to follow within months in the states of Assam, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu. Modi's national alliance, which has 293 out of 543 seats in the Parliament, has a strong voter base only in Assam.

The Vote Vibe agency said its opinion poll in Bihar showed the NDA had a marginal 1.6 percentage point lead over the opposition alliance, led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Congress party as of October 8. "This election could swing either way," the agency said in its outlook, noting that the NDA's slight edge was due to its recent programmes, such as money transfers to 12.1mn women under a self-employment subsidy that totalled more than Rs-121bn ($1.37bn).

Nivedita Jha, an activist based in Bihar's state capital Patna, said women will form a strong voting bloc in the poll because men usually leave Bihar in search of jobs in economic hubs like Mumbai and New Delhi and not all return to vote.

"Women take the decisions because the men are not here," she said. "They talk about the opposition which has promised more money if they come to power, and my understanding is that they trust the opposition more".

Some Bihar voters are also angry about the revision of the state voter list. In one case, 85-year-old Jitni Devi said she was removed from the list and can no longer vote or access her pension. "They have declared me dead," she said. "People in my village tease me as a dead woman, and bank officials shoo me away when I go there to withdraw my money."

The state election commission did not respond to queries about Devi's case. The federal election body has previously said that all complaints are investigated thoroughly.

Anxiety among young voters in Bihar over employment is another election issue, despite a falling unemployment rate. Government data showed that 9.9% of people aged 15-29 were unemployed in Bihar in the fiscal year 2023-24, a significant drop from 30.9% in 2018-19, but concerns persist.

"For me, I have seen my father going out of Bihar for work, so the issue of jobs matters the most," said Babloo Kumar, 25, who plans to vote for the first time in November.

A new political party, Jan Suraaj - founded by Prashant Kishor, Modi's former poll manager - said it aims to reset the political agenda in Bihar.

"Joblessness, migration, increasing debts, loss in agriculture revenue are the issues in Bihar," said the party's national president Uday Singh. "There is a big dip in Modi's popularity here".

The opposition has promised a law guaranteeing at least one government job per family, if desired.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, however, said it remains confident of victory. "The NDA alliance is in a very solid position," said Guru Prakash Paswan, a BJP spokesperson. "People have strong faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision".

Voting will be held on November 6 and 11 for 243 state assembly seats, and results will be declared on November 14.

Venezuela deploys troops amid reports of new US boat strike

AFP
San Cristobal

Venezuela deployed thousands of troops near the Colombian border on Thursday in response to the US military buildup in the Caribbean, where US media reported a new strike on an alleged drug-smuggling boat.

The United States has sent several military vessels to the Caribbean Sea and launched a series of deadly naval strikes on boats in recent weeks, a campaign that experts say is illegal.

At least 27 people have been killed in the US strikes so far, with the military buildup sparking fears in Caracas that the ultimate goal is a change of government in Venezuela.

Caracas has launched military drills, including the deployment of 17,000 troops in Tachira state, which borders Colombia, according to the commander there, General Michell Valladares.

While President Donald Trump weighs whether to expand US military action from the sea onto land, the admiral overseeing the naval strikes announced he will step down.

The latest boat attack on Thursday left survivors among those on board, media outlets including CBS, CNN and NBC reported, citing unidentified US officials.

The Pentagon did not respond immediately to an AFP request for information about the number of survivors or their condition.

In a significant escalation, Trump indicated on Wednesday that he had authorised covert Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) action against Venezuela and was considering further action against the alleged drug cartels.

"We are certainly looking at land now, because we've got the sea very well under control," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

A day later, Admiral Alvin Holsey announced he would leave his position as head of US forces operating in Central and South America.

The head of US Southern Command gave no reason for retiring just a year into his tenure, which follows multiple top US military officers being dismissed in recent months.

Venezuela's leftist leader Nicolas Maduro has decried any attempt by Washington at "regime change" and criticised "coups d'etat orchestrated by the CIA".

Its vice-president, Delcy Rodriguez, also denied a report that she had negotiated with the United States to oust Maduro.

Under Maduro's direction, the Venezuelan military carried out exercises in the country's biggest shantytowns this week after another US strike.

AFP journalists saw troops deployed on Thursday in Tachira, where the three main bridges connecting Venezuela with Colombia are located.

Venezuelan forces were also stationed in southern Amazonas state, which borders Colombia and Brazil, and multiple coastal areas.

Trinidad and Tobago, located off the coast of Venezuela, is investigating whether two of those killed in US strikes at sea were its citizens, officials said on Wednesday.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro recently called on the United Nations to open a "criminal process" against Trump for the attacks, which he believes have also killed Colombians.

Washington has not released evidence to support its assertion that the targets of its strikes are drug smugglers, and experts say the summary killings are illegal even if they hit confirmed narcotics traffickers.

Zelensky at White House to ask Trump for Tomahawks

Reuters
Washington



Zelensky at the meeting with Trump over lunch in the Cabinet Room at the White House in Washington, DC. – ***Reuters***

Volodymyr Zelensky visited the White House yesterday to plead to Donald Trump for Tomahawk missiles, but the US president's focus on his next meeting with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Budapest raised the possibility the Ukrainian leader may head home empty-handed.

Upon greeting Zelensky outside the White House, Trump nodded when asked by a reporter if he thought he could convince Putin to end the war in Ukraine.

Prior to the private lunch meeting with Zelensky, Trump said the two leaders would discuss his call the previous day with Putin.

"Things are coming along pretty well," Trump told reporters.

Zelensky noted how difficult it has been to try and secure a ceasefire.

"We want this. Putin doesn't want (it)," he said.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Vice-President J D Vance, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, and Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, sat on the president's side of the table.

Zelensky said that Ukraine has thousands of drones, but needs missiles. "We don't have Tomahawks, that's why we need Tomahawks."

Trump responded: "We're going to be talking about Tomahawks. We'd much rather have them not need Tomahawks."

He portrayed himself as a mediator and reiterated his belief that both sides seek a peace deal.

"I think President Zelensky wants it done, and I think President Putin wants it done. Now all they have to do is get along a little bit," Trump said.

Trump announced the summit with Putin on Thursday after a more than two-hour phone conversation with the Russian leader about Russia's war in Ukraine, which he said was productive.

It was unclear what Putin had told Trump that prompted him to agree to the meeting, as their August summit in Alaska ended early with no major breakthrough.

The Kremlin said much needed to be decided and that the summit might take place "a little later" than within the two-week period mentioned by Trump.

Trump's conciliatory tone after the call with Putin raised questions over the near-term likelihood of assistance to Ukraine and reignited European fears of a deal that suits Moscow.

A spokesperson for the European Union said it welcomed the talks if they could help bring peace to Ukraine.

However, the president also expressed affection for Zelensky, at one point praising him for sporting a dark suit jacket after he was knocked earlier this year for visiting the White House without one.

"I think he looks beautiful in his jacket," Trump said. "I hope people notice... it's actually very stylish. I like it."

The US president, who has campaigned for the Nobel Peace Prize, is eager to add to the list of conflicts he says he has been instrumental in ending.

More than three and a half years after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has ground out some territorial gains this year, but Ukraine's top military commander Oleksandr Syrskyi said on Thursday that the Russian offensive had failed.

Putin this month said his forces had taken almost 5,000sq km (1,930sq miles) of land in Ukraine in 2025 – equivalent to adding 1% of Ukraine's territory to the nearly 20% already held.

Both sides have also escalated attacks on each other's energy systems, and Russian drones and jets have strayed into North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) countries.

The White House had seemed in recent days to be increasingly frustrated with Putin and leaning toward granting Zelensky fresh support, including the Tomahawk missiles that Ukrainians say would help them inflict more damage to Russia's war machine.

Zelensky, who has had an up-and-down relationship with Trump, said Putin, who pressed ahead with assaults on Ukraine after meeting with Trump in Alaska, was again playing for time.

"We can already see that Moscow is rushing to resume dialogue as soon as it hears about Tomahawks," he wrote on X.

Ukrainians held out little hope for Zelensky's talks with Trump.

"We have already gone through this, and we have not seen any tangible results," said Olena Puchilo, 54, a social worker from Mykolaiv, adding that there was still room for miracles.

Putin's move was meant to make the US transfer of such weapons less likely, said Max Bergmann, a Russia expert at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

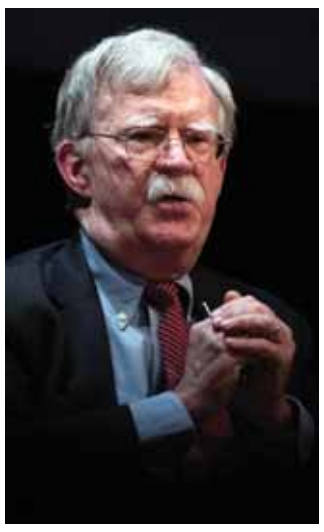
"It does seem that Putin's outreach is perhaps designed to thwart the potential transfer of Tomahawks to Ukraine, so Putin is wanting to put that back in the box," Bergmann said. "It strikes me as sort of a stalling tactic."

Mykola Bielieskov, a senior analyst at Come Back Alive, a Ukrainian non-governmental organisation that is a major procurer of military equipment for the Ukrainian armed forces, said Tomahawk missiles would level a playing field that is tipped toward Russia, but that they would not be a silver bullet.

"We don't expect Russia to crumble after one, two or three successful strikes," Bielieskov said. "But it's about pressure, constant pressure. It's about disrupting the military-industrial complex."

Since taking office in January, Trump has regularly threatened action against Russia, only to delay those steps after talks with Putin.

Bolton pleads not guilty to mishandling classified info



John Bolton (***pictured***), the national security hawk and former adviser to Donald Trump who has become one of the US president's biggest critics, pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges of mishandling classified information.

Bolton, who was indicted on Thursday, is the third of Trump's prominent critics to face prosecution in recent weeks, as the US president dispenses with decades-long norms designed to insulate federal law enforcement from political pressures.

Bolton, wearing a dark blue suit and maroon tie, did not speak with reporters as he arrived at the courthouse in Greenbelt, Maryland, to surrender.

"Not guilty, your honour," Bolton, 76, said in court.

He was released on his own recognisance and a hearing in the case is scheduled for November 21.

Bolton did not speak to reporters at the courthouse yesterday but he rejected the charges in a statement on Thursday, saying that he had "become the latest target in weaponising the Justice Department".

The indictment alleges that Bolton shared sensitive information with two of his relatives for possible use in a book he was writing, including notes on intelligence briefings and meetings with senior government officials and foreign leaders.

Bolton's lawyer, Abbe Lowell, said Bolton did not unlawfully share or store any information.

Trump, a Republican who campaigned for the presidency on a vow of retribution after facing a slew of legal woes once his first term in the White House ended in 2021, has actively pressured his attorney-general, Pam Bondi, to bring charges against his perceived adversaries.

That included pushing the Justice Department to bring charges against former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director James Comey and New York Attorney-General Letitia James, even driving out a prosecutor he deemed to be moving too slowly in doing so.

Bolton served as White House national security adviser during Trump's first term, before emerging as one of the president's most vocal critics.

Bolton, also a former US ambassador to the United Nations, described Trump as unfit to be president in a memoir he released last year.

The investigation of Bolton was opened in 2022, predating the Trump administration.

Inside the Justice Department, the case is viewed as stronger than the prosecutions of Comey and James, according to a person familiar with the matter.

James, 66, was indicted in Virginia on October 9 on charges of bank fraud and making false statements related to a property she purchased in 2020 in Norfolk, Virginia.

James, who successfully prosecuted Trump for financial fraud, has rejected the charges as "baseless" and "political retribution".

Comey, 64, pleaded not guilty on October 8 to charges of making false statements to Congress and obstructing a congressional proceeding.

His lawyer has said he will seek to have the case thrown out on the grounds it is a vindictive and selective prosecution.

The indictment of Bolton, filed in federal court in Maryland, charges him with eight counts of transmission of national defence information and 10 counts of retention of national defence information, all in violation of the Espionage Act.

Each count is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, but any sentence would be determined by a judge based on a range of factors.

Asked by reporters at the White House about the Bolton indictment on Thursday, Trump said: "He's a bad guy." – ***AFP/Reuters***

Most US nuke workers to be sent home as shutdown bites

The US agency in charge of nuclear weapons is putting most of its workforce on unpaid leave, a top Republican lawmaker warned yesterday, as a prolonged government shutdown bit further into already crippled public services.

With the standoff in Congress over federal spending in its 17th day and no breakthrough in sight, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers told reporters the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) was about to run out of money.

"They will have to lay off 80% of their employees. These are not employees that you want to go home," he told reporters. "They're managing and handling a very important strategic asset for us. They need to be at work and being paid."

Rogers's committee later clarified that the employees would be furloughed – or placed on forced unpaid leave – rather than fired permanently.

The United States has a stockpile of 5,177 nuclear warheads, with about 1,770 deployed, according to the global security nonprofit Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

The NNSA is responsible for designing, manufacturing, servicing and securing the weapons.

It has fewer than 2,000 federal employees who oversee some 60,000 contractors.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright told *USA Today* in an interview on Thursday touching on the effects of the shutdown on the NNSA that "starting next week, we're going to have to let go tens of thousands... of workers that are critical to our national security".

Senators headed to their home states on Thursday after a 10th failed vote to end the shutdown that started on October 1 when the federal government ran out of Congress-approved funding.

If the standoff remains unresolved by the end of Tuesday next week it will have lasted 22 days – making it the second-longest in history.

The record of 35 days came during a fight over border wall funding in President Donald Trump's first term in the White House.

Democrats have been urging Trump to get more involved in the current gridlock, asserting that only the president will be able to move Republicans in Congress from their policy of refusing to negotiate until the government has reopened.

Republicans leaders have been privately discouraging Trump's involvement, fearful that he will strike an unpalatable deal on expiring health care subsidies that is at the heart of Democratic demands.

The president is seeking to push through massive cuts to the federal bureaucracy during the shutdown.

White House budget chief Russ Vought said in an interview he wants to see "north of 10,000" jobs cut – although a federal judge temporarily blocked shutdown-related layoffs, ruling that they were politically motivated and unlawful.

With 1.4mn federal workers either sent home without pay or working for nothing, Trump intervened to ensure military personnel received their checks on Wednesday, although doubts remain over future disbursements.

Republican Senate Majority Leader John Thune told MSNBC in an interview that aired on Thursday that he would guarantee Democrats a vote on extending healthcare subsidies in exchange for reopening the government.

"I've said, if you need a vote, we can guarantee you get a vote by a date certain," he said. "At some point Democrats have to take yes for an answer." – ***AFP***

US courts set to run out of money

The US federal court system will begin curtailing non-essential functions and furloughing some employees starting on Monday after exhausting what funds it had left to sustain paid operations during the US government shutdown.

The announcement, in a Thursday internal memo reviewed by Reuters, means the federal judiciary will for the first time in nearly three decades be forced to send some of its over 33,000 employees home and require others to work without a paycheque after Congress failed to pass legislation keeping the courts and the rest of the government funded.

The shutdown has already caused widespread delays in civil lawsuits involving federal agencies, as many of their employees have been furloughed.

However, judges overseeing numerous legal challenges to Republican President Donald Trump's policies have frequently denied government requests to pause those cases.

Unlike executive branch agencies operating under Trump's purview, the judiciary had after the government shutdown that began on October 1 been able to sustain its paid operations for a few weeks by using fees and other funds not dependent on Congress authorising new spending.

However, tight budgets in recent years meant the judiciary entered the shutdown with less cash available than it had during a 2019 shutdown in Trump's first term in office, during which the courts sustained paid operations for the full five weeks. Funding was, as a result, projected to be exhausted on Friday.

Courts will remain open, and judges and Supreme Court justices will still get paid, thanks to a bar in the US Constitution against a diminution in their pay.

Officials in various district courts said they had been informed they could continue paying jurors, at least for now.

However, Judge Robert Conrad, the director of the Administrative Office of the US Courts, in Thursday's memo told judges and others that the courts had done what they could to maintain operations by deferring planned spending and would enter into a new phase of the shutdown starting at midnight on Monday.

Furlough notices will be distributed that morning, and "orderly shutdown activities will commence", Conrad wrote.

The last time such furloughs occurred within the judiciary was during government shutdowns that occurred during Democratic president Bill Clinton's tenure in 1995-1996.

Exactly how many court employees will be furloughed is not clear.

Officials in various trial courts said most if not all of their staff would be deemed exempt under the Antideficiency Act as they provide essential services that help them fulfil their core duties under the Constitution of resolving cases and facilitating criminal defendants' right to a speedy trial.

However, probation officers, judicial clerks and administrative staff still on the job are set to receive their last paycheques on October 24, a possibility that "is extremely stressful to our employees", said Chief US District Judge Randy Crane of the Southern District of Texas, which covers Houston.

Federal public defenders, who represent indigent defendants who have a right to a lawyer, working in offices that are part of the judiciary likewise will not get paid, nor will private lawyers who do the same under the Criminal Justice Act.

Those private lawyers' pay has already been delayed since July after funding for them ran out, a development the courts deem a "crisis".

Trump administration freezes another $11bn in infrastructure spending

White House budget director Russell Vought said yesterday that the Trump administration will freeze another $11bn worth of infrastructure projects in Democratic states due to the ongoing government shutdown.

Vought said on social media the US Army Corps of Engineers will pause work on "low priority" projects in cities such as New York, San Francisco, Boston and Baltimore.

He said the projects could eventually be cancelled.

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said that President Donald Trump "wants to reorient how the federal government prioritises Army Corps projects".

The Trump administration has already frozen at least $28bn for transportation and energy projects in Democratic-controlled cities and states, as the president pressures his opponents in Congress to end the shutdown, which began October 1. – ***Reuters***

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Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka
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GULF TIMES

Japan's fractured politics could ensnarl Takaichi's economic plans

After a wild week, Sanae Takaichi may have found the political support she needs to become Japan's next prime minister — but the new cross-party alliances come with risks that her economic plans get mired in an increasingly fragmented legislature.

Japan's lower house of parliament is set to select a prime minister to replace Shigeru Ishiba on Oct 21, and Takaichi is likely to win amid a lack of any strong alternative bids.

Takaichi won the race to become leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) earlier this month, ordinarily guaranteeing her the premiership in Japan, but faced a major setback when the party's junior coalition partner withdrew its support for her.

That has forced her to seek support from alternative parties, namely the right-leaning Japan Innovation Party, known as Ishin, which advocates drastic social security reform.

On the one hand, such an alliance could give Takaichi the green light to loosen the fiscal spigot through big spending and even tax cuts, given her focus on revitalising growth over restoring fiscal discipline.

"If the LDP and Ishin form an alliance, it won't immediately lead to big fiscal spending..."

However, a much less cohesive political consensus and the LDP's weakened minority government also risk stalling legislation needed to address Japan's chronic labour shortages, a rapidly ageing population and acute supply constraints.

"No matter who leads, there's a high chance of expansive economic packages being passed — as such they are easier for opposition parties to support," said Keiji Kanda, senior economist at Daiwa Institute of Research.

"But there are other policy priorities Japan needs to push forward to deal with supply constraints, which likely won't make much headway given the political situation," he said.

The political instability adds to uncertainty for companies scrambling for clarity on the impact of US tariffs and could weigh on an already fragile economic recovery.

Takaichi may also face constraints on the scale of spending given her weak standing within the ruling party and the presence of veteran lawmakers with more conservative views on policy. Among them is former premier and finance minister Taro Aso, who was appointed party vice president. He has pushed to keep heavily indebted Japan's fiscal house in order and avoid over-reliance on loose monetary policy to reflate growth.

"The reflationist-minded fans of former premier Shinzo Abe's stimulus policies have lost power within the party," said Noriatsu Tanji, chief bond strategist at Mizuho Securities.

"That means Takaichi must negotiate with lawmakers from other factions. It would be hard for her to go big on reflationist policies," he said.

The potential alliance partner Ishin has focused more on deregulation than big spending, in contrast to Takaichi's preference for government-driven industrial policy.

"If the LDP and Ishin form an alliance, it won't immediately lead to big fiscal spending. The key policies Ishin proposes don't require significant debt issuance," analysts at Daiwa Securities wrote in a research note.

In the end, it may be markets that could serve as a constraint against calls for big, blanket spending. Japanese government bond (JGB) yields have crept up, particularly at the long end of the curve, as markets price in the chance of more debt issuance to fund spending plans. The rise in yields would increase the cost of servicing Japan's huge debt pile. The International Monetary Fund urged Japan to avoid cutting the consumption tax rate or resorting to blanket subsidies.

"We acknowledge that there may be parts of the economy that need support, especially low-income households that are constrained and facing high food prices. But we believe any support would need to be targeted to those who need it, and be temporary," Nada Choueiri, deputy director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, told Reuters in Washington. — Reuters

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Financial investors can't profit from complacency forever

By Sebnem Kalemli-Ozcan
Providence


A trader works on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York City, US, on Thursday. (**Reuters**)

While many Americans and US allies recoil at the accelerating regime change under President Donald Trump, financial markets remain curiously calm. Equity indices continue to hover near record highs, and serenity prevails in the bond market – traditionally the stern disciplinarian of fiscal and political excess.

This mood contrasts starkly with the response following Trump's tariff announcements in April, when yields on US Treasury bonds spiked, forcing the administration to backtrack. At the time, bond investors appeared willing to serve as a check on bad economic policies. Yet now, despite the systematic erosion of the country's long-term capacity to create wealth – which stems from its world-class universities, scientific leadership, openness to foreign talent, and the rule of law – bond markets (and investors generally) seem to have fallen asleep at the wheel.

What changed? The prevailing explanation is that markets simply do not believe that Trump's most disruptive policies will endure. Bond traders may assume that institutions will constrain executive overreach, that the courts will intervene, or that a political backlash will eventually soften the most extreme measures.

But this complacency raises a deeper puzzle. Why should sophisticated, forward-looking bond investors – arguably the world's best risk managers – take such chances? Hedging for the possibility that bad economic policies will stick would seem to be the rational thing to do, because the long-term costs of being wrong could be enormous. These would include not only higher risk premia, owing to higher inflation and currency instability, but also weakened confidence in US Treasuries as the global safe asset.

Yet bond investors appear content to keep funding the US government at historically low yields, while using this cheap leverage to chase equity gains. Of course, the strategy makes sense in the short run, because equities continue to benefit from tax cuts, deregulation, and an administration eager to prop up risky asset prices. As long as Treasury yields remain subdued, leveraged strategies will flourish. By borrowing cheaply in bond markets and ploughing funds into equities, you can deliver stellar returns.

In other words, complacency is not a misperception but a preference. Bond markets may understand the risks perfectly well, but they are choosing to ignore them, because the payoff structure rewards short-term momentum over long-term prudence. This dynamic is reminiscent of the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis, when mortgage risks were acknowledged but brushed aside as long as securitisation kept delivering profits (never mind that it was all backed by toxic housing assets).

Moreover, bond markets do get things right in general. When everyone was debating the reasons for the 2021 inflation and critiquing the US Federal Reserve, bond markets always understood that inflation was due to a combination of pandemic-led demand and supply shocks that would prove transitory. That is why long-run inflation expectations never moved. Now, the same bond markets are predicting accelerating inflation over the next two years, with the two-year breakeven rate exceeding 3% (the current rate of CPI inflation).

In other words, bond markets are predicting some risk in the short run and ignoring long-run risk. It is business as usual: maximise profit and try to navigate policy risk.

Even before the last election, in August 2024, Citi's global head of FX quantitative investor solutions, Kristjan Kasikov, pointed out that risks linked to monetary policy in Japan could fuel risk appetite. Hedge funds had begun to favour the dollar over the yen as their funding currency for placing bets on everything from Brazilian assets to Nvidia shares. So, we should not be surprised when investors behave in a similar manner in response to US policy risk.

Besides, Trump's economic adviser Stephen Miran, who now sits on the Fed board, has said that even though tariffs will cause the dollar to appreciate, the US can offset this effect. Under the circumstances, investors are not irrational to assume that this policy environment will remain profitable as long as they raise funds in the riskless US bond market and invest in risky assets.

The problem, of course, is that the US bond market will be riskless only until it isn't. The trillion-dollar question is who will be first to demand higher risk premia to hold US bonds. While many foreign central banks and sovereign funds continue to hold large Treasury portfolios, they also have started diversifying into gold, the euro, or other safe assets.

America's ability to fund its deficits cheaply is not a birthright; it is earned through trust in its institutions, and that trust is fraying. After that first bondholder demands a higher premium to hold Treasuries, the situation could change fast. What will the US do when a critical mass of bondholders decide that the profits from investing in risky assets are no longer enough to justify refraining from demanding higher risk premia?

Viewed in these terms, the bond market's silence is not reassuring; it is alarming. The implication is that investors are whistling past the graveyard, betting that someone else will move first. But by the time the alarm bells ring, it will be too late for an orderly adjustment.

Financial-market participants pride themselves on being forward-looking. Yet today, as America's institutional foundations wobble, and as the administration pursues one bad policy after another, bond investors appear dangerously myopic. They prefer to ignore the risk because complacency pays. And it will continue to pay – until it doesn't. – Project Syndicate

• *Sebnem Kalemli-Ozcan, Professor of Economics at Brown University and Director of the Global Linkages Lab, is a former senior policy adviser at the International Monetary Fund and former lead economist for the Middle East and North Africa at the World Bank.*

'Power play' in windmill wars

By Daniel Gros
Milan


An offshore wind farm stands in the water near the windswept Danish island of Samso. (**Reuters/File photo**)

The decarbonisation of energy systems depends largely on the embrace of wind and solar energy. Fortunately, the costs of solar power are falling fast and, combined with the low-cost batteries that are now available, solar has become a competitive and reliable energy source in sunny locations. But while wind power provides more energy than solar, its usage is expanding more slowly, owing partly to opposition from politicians and local communities.

US President Donald Trump summed up the politicians' case against wind in 2020: "It's extremely expensive. Kills all the birds. It's very intermittent." But, while none of these assertions is entirely unfounded, all are vastly overstated. On cost, the International Energy Agency reports that, in areas with steady strong onshore winds, wind farms offer the lowest levelised costs of electricity generation – lower than even fossil fuels. And while wind power is intermittent, it is most consistent in winter, making it a useful complement to solar, which is strongest in summer.

As for the birds, many may well die as a result of collisions with wind-turbine blades – an estimated 250,000 per year in the US. But one major research project found that seabirds actively avoid offshore turbines: in two years of monitoring an offshore wind farm adjacent to Trump's golf course in Scotland, not a single bird collided with a rotor blade. In any case, if Trump and others, like Germany's far-right Alternative für Deutschland, are truly concerned about birds, they should be up in arms about power lines, which kill an estimated 12-64mn birds in the US each year. And they should be truly horrified by tall buildings, which cause 988mn bird deaths each year, and wandering house cats, which kill up to 4bn.

Local communities' grievances appear more legitimate: a 350ft tower with massive whirring turbine blades may well constitute a genuine nuisance for those living nearby. But opposition often remains strong even when wind farms are required to be a certain distance from inhabited areas, as is the case in many countries, with communities citing concerns like noise and lower local property values. Some dismiss these complaints as reflective of a self-centred NIMBY ("not in my backyard") mentality, pointing out, for example, that higher-income communities are especially likely to oppose wind projects. But such accusations do nothing to resolve the fundamental conflict between the demands of local property owners and the collective interest in expanding the supply of renewable energy.

Instead, projects are often held up by protracted (and expensive) legal proceedings, which can drag on for years, as they move through various courts and await costly technical and environmental appraisals. According to one US survey, community opposition causes 14-month delays, on average, for wind projects. In many cases, just to obtain construction permits takes years – as many as nine in some European Union member states.

In 2023, the EU established guidelines to accelerate approvals of renewable projects. But the real game changer on this front has been the classification of such projects as being in the "overriding public interest." By changing the basis for court rulings, this designation shortens legal proceedings and makes approvals more likely. But accelerated approvals might turn out to be a Pyrrhic victory, if they leave local communities feeling bulldozed or cheated.

Ultimately, litigation is an inefficient and potentially polarising means of addressing the conflicting interests of local communities and the wider public. A quicker, cheaper (in the long run), and less divisive approach, already being used across Germany, would be to compensate local land- or homeowners for the nuisance a new wind farm represents, such as by providing them with discounted energy or giving them a share of the profits.

Legend has it that, in the late 18th century, King Frederick II of Prussia was disturbed by the clatter of a windmill near his Sanssouci palace, and demanded that it be removed. But the miller, Johann William Grävenitz, refused, threatening to take the case to the Supreme Court in Berlin. The monarch relented, in what is viewed as a triumph for the rule of law.

But that is not what happened. According to the historical record, Grävenitz complained that the newly constructed palace blocked wind from reaching his windmill, and petitioned the king for compensation. Frederick II agreed, approving and financing the construction of a new mill in the area. The real lesson of the historic mill of Sanssouci is thus not that the courts should arbitrate every clash of interests, but rather that fair compensation can lead to consent.

If Europe wants more wind, it must heed this lesson. Fast-track permits and the public-interest test may clear legal barriers to the expansion of wind-power capacity, but the best way to secure durable buy-in from local communities may well be to offer them immediate and tangible benefits – not just lofty promises of climate gains. – Project Syndicate

• *Daniel Gros is Director of the Institute for European Policymaking at Bocconi University.*

US sinks global deal on decarbonising ships

AFP/Reuters
London

An international vote to formally approve cutting maritime emissions was delayed yesterday by a year, in a victory for the United States which opposes the carbon-cutting plan.

The London-based International Maritime Organisation (IMO), a United Nations body that governs shipping, voted in April for a global pricing system to help curb greenhouse gases.

However, a vote due yesterday on whether to formally approve the deal was delayed until next year after US President Donald Trump threatened sanctions against countries backing the plan.

Increased divisions, notably between oil producing nations and non-oil producers, emerged this week at meetings leading up to yesterday's vote.

Delegates instead voted on a hastily-arranged resolution to postpone proceedings, which passed by 57 votes to 49.

Trump said on Thursday that the proposed global carbon tax on shipping was a "scam" after the United States withdrew from IMO negotiations in April.

A Russian delegate described proceedings as "chaos" as he addressed the plenary yesterday after talks had lasted into the early hours.

Russia joined major oil producers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in voting against the carbon-reduction measure in April, arguing that it would harm the economy and food security.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, representing 176 member states, pleaded yesterday that he hoped there would be no repeat of how the week's discussions had gone.

"It doesn't help your organisation, it doesn't help yourself," he told delegates.

A European Union source told AFP that "many countries have changed their minds under pressure from the US".

The International Chamber of Shipping, representing more than 80% of the world's fleet, expressed disappointment.

"Industry needs clarity to be able to make the investments needed to decarbonise the maritime sector," its secretary-general Thomas Kazakos said in a statement.

Since returning to power in January, Trump has reversed Washington's course on climate change and encouraged fossil fuel use by deregulation.


A worker looks on near a cargo ship carrying containers at the Yantian port in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, China. – ***Reuters***

"I am outraged that the International Maritime Organisation is voting in London this week to pass a global Carbon Tax," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Thursday.

"The United States will NOT stand for this Global Green New Scam Tax on Shipping," he added, urging countries to vote against it.

Washington threatened to impose sanctions, visa restrictions and port levies on those supporting the Net Zero Framework (NZF), the first global carbon-pricing system.

Liberia and Saudi Arabia called for yesterday's vote to be postponed.

"We agree with the United States that it's important that these conversations are brought to light," a Saudi representative said.

Ahead of this week's London gathering, a majority 63 IMO members that in April voted for the plan had been expected to maintain their support and to be joined by others to formally approve the NZF.

Argentina, which in April abstained from the vote, now opposes the deal.

Leading up to yesterday's decision – China, the EU, Brazil, Britain and several other members of the IMO – reaffirmed their support.

The NZF requires ships to progressively reduce carbon emissions from 2028, or face financial penalties.

Shipping accounts for nearly 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the IMO, while the CO_2 pricing plan should encourage the sector to use less polluting fuels.

The Philippines, which provides the most seafarers of any country, and Caribbean islands focused on the cruise industry, would be particularly impacted by visa restrictions and sanctions.

The plan would charge ships for emissions exceeding a certain threshold, with proceeds used to reward low-emission vessels and support countries vulnerable to climate change.

Pacific Island states, which abstained in the initial vote over concerns the proposal was not ambitious enough, had been expected to support it this time around.

If the global emissions pricing system was adopted, it would become difficult to evade, even for the United States.

IMO conventions allow signatories to inspect foreign ships during stopovers and even detain non-compliant vessels.

The maritime sector had been expecting a regulatory framework to de-risk and unlock investment in alternative fuels and modern ships.

Danish shipping company Maersk said the IMO's decision was a loss of momentum for the industry's efforts to decarbonise, adding that it will wait to see how the organisation intends to continue the work on the framework.

"The delay leaves the shipping sector drifting in uncertainty," said Faig Abbasov, director of shipping with environmental group Transport & Environment.

The IMO is responsible for regulating the safety and security of international shipping and preventing pollution.

About 90% of the world's trade is conducted by sea, and emissions are set to soar without an agreed mechanism.

Italy plans to raise by 50% 'flat' tax on ultra rich to €300,000, officials say

Reuters
Rome

Italy plans to raise by 50% the rate of a "flat" tax designed to attract wealthy individuals, as part of measures to fund its 2026-28 budget plan, two officials close to the matter told Reuters.

The government intends to increase the annual levy to €300,000 from €200,000 on foreign-sourced income earned by individuals who transfer their tax residence to Italy, the officials said.

The move, included in the draft 2026 budget law, marks the second hike in two years.

First introduced in 2017 by prime minister Matteo Renzi's centre-left government to lure wealthy foreigners, the levy was doubled to €200,000 in 2024 by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's conservative administration, with no retroactive effect.

Despite doubling its flat tax, Italy retained its tax shelter appeal for the ultra-rich due to its very favourable inheritance tax set-up, tax experts told Reuters at the time.

Contributing to inflows into Italy, Britain has scrapped its long-standing tax regime for wealthy foreign residents, which had allowed them to avoid UK tax on overseas income.

Nearly 1,500 individuals took advantage of Italy's flat tax regime in 2023, according to June data from the Court of Auditors.

The measure generated €315mn in revenue for the state between 2020 and 2023.

Milan has emerged as a top relocation hub, heating up its housing market and exacerbating a cost-of-living squeeze in Italy's financial capital.

Similar tax incentives exist across Europe.

Greece levies a flat €100,000 annual tax on overseas income for qualifying foreign residents, provided they invest at least €500,000 in the country.

Portugal offers a 20% flat tax on Portuguese-sourced income and exemptions on certain foreign income for highly qualified professionals in science, innovation, education.

By contrast, has Spain introduced a temporary "solidarity tax on large fortunes", targeting net wealth above €3mn with progressive rates up to 3.5%.

In September, then-French prime minister François Bayrou accused Italy of engaging in "fiscal dumping" through its flat tax regime, a claim Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni dismissed as "utterly baseless".

Bucharest housing block explosion kills three

An explosion, likely caused by a gas leak, ripped through several floors of a block of flats in Bucharest yesterday, killing three people, with Romania's president calling it a "shocking tragedy that should never have happened".

The explosion severely damaged two floors of the eight-storey block, putting the building at risk of collapse and forcing the evacuations of residents as well as pupils and teachers in a nearby high school.

Rescue services said they found one of the victims, a woman they believe to have been pregnant, trapped under rubble on the sixth floor.

It is highly likely that the block "will have to be demolished", Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan told public radio.

"I thought we were being bombed," one witness told local media, while others said they thought an earthquake was happening.

Two of more than 12 people hospitalised are in serious condition, according to authorities.

Police are investigating the cause.

Residents had complained the day before about smelling gas in the building.

The distribution company said it had cut off the service, but it was notified on Friday that a seal placed on the valve had been broken.

President Nicusor Dan on X demanded that "all those involved take responsibility, whether we are talking about public institutions or private companies".

"It is outrageous and unacceptable that, in Romania in 2025, citizens' safety is being jeopardised due to negligence or irresponsible decisions," he said.

The explosion also damaged windows at the nearby school that was evacuated.

Some pupils suffered minor injuries, the Bucharest school inspectorate said. – ***AFP***

France bans cattle exports, bullfighting as lumpy skin virus spreads

France imposed a ban on cattle exports and events such as bullfighting, the agriculture ministry said yesterday as it tries to contain the highly contagious lumpy skin disease sweeping through farms in the country for the first time.

Lumpy skin disease is a virus spread by insects that affects cattle and buffalo, causing blisters and reducing milk production.

It does not pose a risk to humans but often leads to trade restrictions and severe economic losses.

The measures will take effect on October 18 and be valid until November 4.

They will be lifted on November 5, if the health situation allows, the ministry said.

After waning this summer, outbreaks of lumpy skin disease picked up in France this month, spreading from the Alps to the Jura and Ain regions in eastern France.

Three outbreaks of the disease have been found near the Spanish border this week.

"The very recent emergence of several isolated outbreaks (one in Ain, three in Jura, and three in Occitanie) is a cause for concern and is probably the result of animal movements, some of which were illegal," the ministry said.

During a visit to Jura, French Agriculture Minister Annie Genevard said that the future of French livestock farming was at stake.

"We are at a critical moment. It is essential we keep up our efforts to protect the French cattle herd," she said. "Let's rise to the challenge together, as we have since last June."

The virus is historically present in Africa and the Middle East but had been absent from Western Europe until last June, when a first outbreak occurred on Italy's Sardinia island, followed by France.

Spain reported a first case last week.

Cases have been found this week in three communes of the Pyrenees-Orientales in south-western France – La Bastide, Oms, and Valmanya – prompting a mandatory vaccination campaign in the surrounding area, the farm ministry said in a statement. – ***Reuters***

Frenchman in missing-body case jailed for murdering wife

AFP
Albi, France

A Frenchman whose wife disappeared during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and whose body was never found was sentenced to 30 years in prison yesterday for murdering her, in a case that has gripped France.

Cedric Jubillar, a 38-year-old painter and plasterer, had said he had done "absolutely nothing" to his wife, Delphine, whose body has never been found since she went missing in rural southern France in December 2020.

The sentence matched the prosecutors' request for the man, who has been in detention since 2021.

Jubillar's lawyers said he would appeal.

As the verdict was announced, Delphine's family and loved ones embraced. Some started crying and one of her uncles collapsed.

"We're all in shock after four years of legal proceedings," said lawyer Philippe Pressecq.

"The jurors rose to the occasion over these four weeks," he added. "It's because they followed the case closely and understood it well that they reached a decision that cannot be disputed."


Agents of the French Penitentiary administration escort Cedric Jubillar (face obscured), after he was found guilty of the murder of his wife Delphine, at the Tarn Assize Court in Albi, southwestern France. – ***AFP***


Alexandre Martin (left) and Emmanuelle Franck, lawyers for Cedric Jubillar, react after the verdict of their client's trial, who was sentenced to 30 years in prison for the murder of his wife Delphine. – ***AFP***

A jury in the southern town of Albi, after six hours' deliberation, found Jubillar guilty of murdering his wife after she asked for a divorce while having an affair with another man.

Investigating magistrates concluded that a pair of Delphine's broken glasses, along with testimony from the couple's son and screams heard by neighbours, indicate that an argument led to her death.

Jubillar, who watched impassively as the court president announced the verdict while tightly gripping the defendant's box, denied the claims.

His lawyer Alexandre Martin said he was a "broken man" and while they were "disappointed" in the verdict, the defence was preparing the appeal, with a new trial expected to take place in 2026.

Last week, Jubillar's mother and two ex-girlfriends gave damaging testimony.

Nadine Jubillar, 54, said her son had threatened to kill his wife and hide her body where "no one will ever find her" just weeks before she disappeared, words that at the time she dismissed as said in anger.

Jennifer, an ex-girlfriend, said that when she had visited Cedric Jubillar in prison he had confessed to strangling Delphine in the couple's home.

Severine, another of Jubillar's former partners, said he had told her he buried his wife's body in a burned-down farm.

Jubillar passed that off as a joke.

A sniffer dog handler told the trial last month his investigation showed Delphine, a nurse, had left the house then returned before her disappearance, but had not stepped out again afterwards.

A body has no odour an hour after a person's death, the handler added, implying someone might have moved her remains after that time.

For Laurent Boguet, lawyer for the Jubillar couple's two young children, the "severe sentence is due to both the actions he was accused of and his attitude throughout the investigation and during the trial".

Malika Chmani, who also represents the children, aged six and eleven, explained that she would tell them in "simple words" that "there are judges and jurors who believed they had enough evidence to say that daddy was guilty of mommy's murder".

In 2023, 96 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in France, according to official figures. That is equivalent to a woman murdered every 3.8 days.

Georgian police raid homes of senior former officials

Reuters/AFP
Tbilisi

Georgian police conducted searches yesterday at the homes of three former senior officials as authorities clamp down on figures accused of trying to overthrow the government.

Anti-corruption prosecutors and security agents carried out the raids simultaneously at 22 locations, Chief Prosecutor Giorgi Gvarakidze told reporters at a briefing in Tbilisi.

"A large amount of cash, documents, and various electronic devices had been seized," he added.

He said the move was part of several ongoing criminal investigations but did not disclose the nature of the alleged offences or whether any arrests had been made.

In a statement, the prosecutor-general said law enforcement had raided the homes of Irakli Garibashvili, a two-time former prime minister; Grigol Liluashvili, a former internal security chief; and Otar Partskhaladze, an ex-prosecutor-general.

All have been close allies of Bidzina Ivanishvili, a billionaire former prime minister and founder of the ruling Georgian Dream party, widely seen as the de facto leader of the South Caucasus country.

Electronic devices, documents and a large amount of cash were seized, the Interpress news agency cited the prosecutor general as saying.

The authorities have alleged that a plot to overthrow the government lies behind a series of opposition rallies that began a year ago when Georgian Dream won a parliamentary election that its critics say was fraudulent.

A total of 62 people have been arrested since a large rally two weeks ago, authorities said yesterday.

Partskhaladze, who is a dual Georgian-Russian citizen, was sanctioned by Britain last month for links to Moscow.

Garibashvili, who last served as prime minister from 2021-2024, largely spearheaded Tbilisi's anti-Western turn since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine.

In a speech in Bratislava in May 2023, Garibashvili said that the enlargement of the transatlantic North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) alliance was to blame for Russia's invasion.

Georgia, which fought a brief war with Russia in 2008, had previously been one of the most pro-Western countries to emerge from the ashes of the Soviet Union, with aspirations to join the European Union.

In the lead-up to a municipal election this month, Georgian Dream accused the EU ambassador of expressing support for an attempt to seize power.

Brussels accused Tbilisi of disinformation.

Two die, 80 injured in Serbia bus crash

At least two people died and 80 people were injured when a bus carrying factory workers in northwestern Serbia left the road and rolled, the government said.

The accident occurred on a road linking the town of Sremska Mitrovica to the village of Jarak, some 60km west of the capital Belgrade.

The interior ministry said it was not yet known what caused the bus to drive off the road. Images released by police showed the bus lying on its roof in a ditch.

The 80 injured were taken to hospital. Their conditions were not given.

Some local media reported a third fatality. – ***AFP***

QATAR





Katara Festival for Arabic Novel discusses 'The Novel and the Aesthetics of Translation'





The 11th edition of the Katara Festival for Arabic Novel continued yesterday.

The festival will continue until tomorrow, featuring seminars, discussion panels, and the launch of new publications.

A seminar titled "The Novel and the Aesthetics of Translation" was held yesterday, discussing the relationship between narrative creativity and linguistic and cultural context, and translation as a bridge between languages.

Speaking at the seminar were novelist Mohamed Suleiman al-Shazly, translator Sameh Kroum, and translator Kholoud Amr, and it was moderated by Dr Hanaa al-Bawab.

A dialogue session was held with writer Abdel Aziz al-Sayed about his novel *The Carnation Seller*, moderated by journalist Mohamed Dahou.

A seminar was also held on "The Novel: From Text to Reader: Marketing Mechanisms and the Horizon of Dissemination".

Speakers were novelist Jalal Barjas, sales and marketing specialist Aya al-Zein, and digital marketing specialist Jibril Kahlout.

The seminar addressed the writers' relationship with their audience via social media, the role of literary awards in disseminating Arabic books, and the concept of digital marketing.

Another seminar highlighted "The Novel and Television Drama in the Gulf: From Written Narration to Spoken Image".

Speakers were writer Dr Marzouq Bashir, media personality Mirza al-Khuwailidi, director Rashid Malhas, and writer Mohammed al-Nashmi.

The seminar was moderated by Dr Fahd al-Hindal.

Meanwhile, the Katara Book Fair, held as part of the 11th Katara Novel Festival, witnessed the launch of the latest publications from some of the participating publishing houses.

Katara Publishing House launched the book *Financial Oversight During Crises: A Reading of Lessons Learned from the Coronavirus Crisis* by Dr Salwa Hamed al-Mulla.

The book addresses the impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the challenges it has posed to the economy and productivity.

Dar Rosa launched several of its recent publications, including *Coffee with a Little Fascism* by Sheikh Nawaf bin Mubarak al-Thani, a book on digital photography by Abdullah al-Jassim, and *Fresh Thoughts* by Jassim Abdulrahman al-Khouri. – ***QNA***

Fire Station celebrates local talent with two exhibitions



In 'Threads of Memory', Haifa al-Khuzaie's artistic practice focuses on reinterpreting Qatari heritage through contemporary forms.











By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Two exhibitions, on view until October 25 at Fire Station: Artists in Residence, provide an opportunity for Qatar residents and visitors to explore Qatari talent and contemporary innovation.

The opening of "Threads of Memory" by Haifa al-Khuzaie and "Between Rust and Art" by Ahmed al-Hamar on September 24 mark the completion of Fire Station's 2024 Al Ruwad Residency.

This programme supports and fosters dialogue between Qatar-based established and emerging artists.

The Al Ruwad Residency, launched in 2021, strengthens Fire Station's role as a hub for artistic exchange.

By providing up to two years of time, space, and resources, it connects local artists with mentorship and ensures the institution remains a platform for creativity.

In "Threads of Memory", al-Khuzaie's artistic practice focuses on reinterpreting Qatari heritage through contemporary forms, examining how traditional motifs carry deep memory and identity.

In the featured works, she presents new mixed media pieces, including handmade ceramics, drawing inspiration directly from patterns and ornamentation found in local fashion, jewellery, and textiles.

During al-Khuzaie's residency, she explored the intricacies of embroidery, engraving, and decorative detail in women's clothing, allowing their richness of colour and design to inform her compositions.

Her practice translates traditional elements into sculptural forms that embody both continuity and transformation.

By merging these traditional forms with contemporary aesthetics, al-Khuzaie creates a dialogue between past and present that honours cultural heritage while imagining its future possibilities.

Also opened on September 24 at Gallery 4, al-Hamar's "Between Rust and Art" exhibition shifts the focus to materiality, texture, and layering.

Al-Hamar works with elements drawn from daily life, reinterpreting mediums such as natural dyes, organic matter, and found objects into minimal artistic compositions.

His recurring fascination lies in transformation and process.

During his residency, al-Hamar focused on deep experimentation, often revisiting the same techniques and materials to uncover new outcomes.

His exhibition explores cultural motifs by deliberately inducing rust on iron sheets, a natural process that is subsequently interrupted and reshaped by his intervention.





Ahmed al-Hamar's 'Between Rust and Art' exhibition shifts the focus to materiality, texture, and layering. **PICTURES:** Joey Aguilar









