



Qatar Insurance

Financial Results (Q3 2025)

Gross Written Premiums (GWP)

9%▲

QAR 7.9B

Net Profit
Before the impact of
Pillar Two Taxes

23%▲

QAR 645M

Net Profit

12%▲

QAR 588M

Earnings Per Share:

14%▲

QAR 0.135

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Sudanese women, mainly students, take part in an organised protest against violations committed by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces to the people of El-Fasher, in Gedaref city, eastern Sudan.

Turkiye discovers 92.4bcm of natural gas

Turkiye announced yesterday that it has discovered 92.4bn cubic metre (bcm) of natural gas this year, with a market value of \$37bn.

Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar stated during a press conference regarding the presentation of his ministry and its affiliated bodies' 2026 budgets to the Planning and Budget Committee of the Turkish Parliament that 75bcm were discovered in the Goktepe-3 well last May.

He said that Turkiye aims to conduct 300 drilling operations in 2026, 282 of which will be onshore and 18 offshore.

He affirmed that the country has reached its highest oil and gas production levels in its history, noting that its daily oil production is 180,000 barrels, enough to fuel about 7mn vehicles daily.

He noted that oil production at Mount Gabar in Şırnak province in southeastern Türkiye has increased from 57,000 barrels to 81,000 barrels per day, contributing to a reduction in the trade deficit of approximately \$2bn annually. He said that the ministry has established the fourth largest exploration and production fleet in the world over the past 10 years, comprising six drilling vessels and two seismic survey ships. He announced that gas production will reach 20mn cubic metre per day in 2026, thanks to the new floating platform "Osman Gazi" in the Sakarya gas field in the Black Sea, and will reach 45mn cubic metre per day in the third phase by 2028. **(QNA)**

COP30: nations target jet set with luxury tax

France, Spain and Kenya are among a group of countries spearheading a drive at the COP30 climate summit for a new tax on luxury air travel, a source close to the matter told AFP. Rooted in the idea that a small elite of premium flyers should pay more for their outsized contribution to global warming, the proposal will likely pit them against the powerful aviation industry. Diplomats from the coalition of more than 10 countries are pushing for more to come aboard. **(AFP)**

UN warns of new fighting in Sudan's Kordofan

QNA
Geneva

The UN warned yesterday of "clear preparations" for renewed fighting in Sudan, specifically in Kordofan, the strategic region located between the capital, Khartoum, controlled by the army, and the Darfur region, controlled by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in the centre of the country.

"There is no indication of de-escalation," said Volker Turk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a statement. "On the contrary, the evolving situation on the ground clearly

points to preparations for intensifying military operations, with all the repercussions this will have on the already suffering population." The International Criminal Court (ICC) announced last Monday that it had begun taking immediate steps to collect evidence related to the horrific crimes recently committed in El-Fasher, Darfur, for use in prosecutions.

According to UN estimates, some 36,000 civilians have fled El-Fasher since last Sunday due to fighting between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese army, heading to the city of Tawila, which already sheltered some 650,000 displaced people.

Gaza faces winter crisis amid tent ban

QNA
Gaza

The Government Media Office in Gaza has warned of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe as winter approaches, amid the continued Israeli occupation's ban on the entry of tents, tarpaulins, and cooking gas into the Gaza Strip, despite the widespread destruction of civilian homes and shelter centres.

Director of the Office Ismail al-Thawabta stated that this ban exacerbates the suffering of more than one and a half million displaced people living in the open or in dilapidated tents that offer no protection from cold or rain.

He affirmed that preventing the entry of shelter materials, fuel, and cooking gas constitutes a compounded crime that violates basic human rights and contradicts international law and the Geneva Conventions, which obligate the occupying power to provide civilians with essential needs.

He noted that these measures fall within the framework of collective punishment policies pursued by the occupation against Gaza's residents, and represent a continuation of the war of starvation, displacement, and slow extermination inflicted on the Palestinian people since the onset of aggression.

Al-Thawabta stressed that the occupation bears full legal and moral responsibility for the continued prevention of essential humanitarian supplies, particularly tents, shelter materials, cooking gas, fuel, and other necessities.

He called on the UN, international organisations, and Arab and Islamic countries to take immediate and urgent action to pressure the occupation to halt its violations and allow the unrestricted entry of all humanitarian needs.

A Palestinian prepares food as she sits near the rubble of destroyed buildings in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip.

Two Palestinian children martyred by Israelis

Two Palestinian children were shot and martyred by Israeli occupation forces in the town of Al Judeira, northwest of occupied Jerusalem. According to a statement by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the two children were martyred on Thursday night after Israeli forces opened heavy live fire at them, near the separation wall. Their bodies were then seized by the occupying forces. Cities, towns, and refugee camps across the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem continue to witness daily raids and incursions by Israeli forces, often accompanied by confrontations, arrests, and the use of live and rubber bullets, as well as toxic tear gas against Palestinian youth. **(QNA)**

The Government Media Office indicated that the total amount of aid that has entered the Strip since the ceasefire agreement took effect does not exceed 28% of the quantities stipulated in the ceasefire arrangements and accompanying humanitarian understandings.

It clarified that only 4,453 trucks have entered out of the 15,600 that were supposed to arrive by the end of last Wednesday, noting that this falls far short of meeting the urgent food, medical, and living needs of Gaza's population.

The UN had previously called for accelerating and expanding

the entry of shelter materials into Gaza before the onset of winter, in light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the continued Israeli restrictions on aid delivery.

●Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has stated that the Palestinian side has demonstrated a constructive approach in advancing the peace process in Gaza, while Israel is failing to fulfil its obligations and does not believe in the fundamental objectives of the ceasefire. This came during a joint press conference yesterday with his Romanian counterpart, Iona Toiu, in Ankara.

'Oshar' exhibition spotlights Qatari women's contributions to nation's cultural landscape

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

The Oshar Art Gallery at the Qatar Boat Show 2025 celebrates the nation's rich seafaring heritage while spotlighting the role Qatari women play in shaping the country's cultural landscape, according to its curator, Munina Mohammed.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the show, Mohammed said the exhibition features a majority of female artists and presents a collection of maritime-themed artworks that seek to re-define Qatar's collective memory of the sea.

"A Qatari woman has a really huge impact of the spaces that she interacts with, especially in art and culture," she said, citing the extraordinary work, influence, and achievements of Qatar Museums (QM) Chairperson, HE

Maritime-themed artworks inspired by Qatar's seafaring legacy on display at Oshar Art Gallery at the Qatar Boat Show 2025. **PICTURE:** Joey Aguilar

Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Mohammed said HE Sheikha Al Mayassa is leading the nation's cultural institutions and exhibitions, noting that many of her directors are women – actively shaping Qatar's art scene through research, curation, and innovative projects.

She pointed out that 'Osha' touches on more than just the boats and the waves. It also incorporates literature and spirituality with one of the sculptures reflecting the traditional prayers of the sailors who ventured out to the sea.

The curator said she aims to address the often-overlooked female perspective within the nation's maritime history. While men went diving for pearls, Mohammed highlights the contributions of women left behind: "What about females who were waiting near to the sea and was actually praying for him? That's also a part that I

wanted to actually address"

"I wanted to focus on not just keeping the exhibition to be about the sea but also talking about the colours, the human elements, the words that they used..." she said.

The gallery, which transforms the marina's shoreline into a space for creativity and reflection, showcases original, purchasable pieces by a diverse group of Qatari and Qatar-based artists, including Yousif Ahmed, Salman al-Malik, Maryam al-Attiya, Ali Ghaddaf, Nawal al-Mannai, Hind al-Obaidli, Maryam Mohammed Abdulla, Lina al-Aali, Hayan Maani, Salem Mathkour, Najla al-Khalifa and Shuaa Ali.

Mohammed, who balances her role as a communications manager with her passion for art – collecting, working with, and writing about paintings – explained the intentional concept behind the gallery's name and vision. **To Page 12**



Minister of Labour meets ministers and international officials



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met with ministers and international officials on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development, which concluded in Doha. HE the minister met with Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Arsen Torosyan, Minister in charge of Labour, Employment, Social Protection and Vocational Training in the Central African Republic Michelle Mouanga, and Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations Nada al-Nashif. He also met with Minister of Labour and Employment of Lesotho Tseliso Mokhosi, Minister of Youth Promotion, Professional Integration, and Service of Cote d'Ivoire Mamadou Toure, and Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation Anton Kotyakov. During the meetings, discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries in the field of labour and ways to support and develop them. **(QNA)**

'Social protection strategic investment in people'

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri participated in a high-level session on poverty eradication and the promotion of healthy, inclusive, and equitable societies through comprehensive social protection, held during the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha.

Convened by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Commission, and the Government of Qatar, the session explored strategies to achieve universal social protection and health coverage as complementary approaches to eradicate poverty. It showcased innovative national experiences in integrating social and health protection systems, despite financial constraints and climate-related challenges.

HE Dr al-Marri noted that the session took place amid growing global development challenges, including widening economic and social gaps, climate impacts,

and health and financial crises. These circumstances underscore the critical role of comprehensive social protection in fostering sustainable human development, strengthening social cohesion, and enhancing societal resilience.

HE the minister emphasised that social protection is far more than a mechanism to mitigate poverty or manage social risks; it is a strategic investment in people and the long-term prosperity of societies, supporting economic and health security, inclusive growth, and equal opportunities for all.

Highlighting Qatar's approach, HE the minister stressed the country's commitment to developing integrated and sustainable social protection systems, capable of responding to crises and reinforcing societal resilience, in full alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030, which places human well-being at the centre of development. Qatar has established a comprehensive framework of social and economic policies that balances economic growth with social justice. The country has advanced social protection programmes guarantee-

ing decent income and equitable access to healthcare, in practical pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 8, which promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, decent work for all, and productive participation in the economy.

HE the minister outlined the Ministry of Labour's national strategy to promote decent work and broaden social protection coverage across all segments of the workforce. This includes legislative reforms aligned with international standards, enhanced inspection and monitoring mechanisms, advanced digital systems ensuring transparency and wage protection, and initiatives aimed at improving workplace environments, productivity, and national workforce development.

In line with Qatar's commitment to international partnership and human solidarity, HE the Minister of Labour announced the country's recent accession to the Global Coalition for Social Justice, launched by the ILO. This reflects Qatar's belief that social justice is a cornerstone for global peace and sustainable develop-



ment and underscores its active contribution to international efforts aimed at reducing social and economic disparities, and building more inclusive, sustainable, and well-funded protec-

tion systems based on equality, solidarity, and shared responsibility. Concluding his remarks, HE Dr al-Marri emphasised that multilateral co-operation rooted in dialogue and solidarity is the

most effective path to creating resilient, inclusive, and equitable societies, and reiterated Qatar's call to place comprehensive social justice at the heart of global development policies.

Assistant undersecretary for Social Development Affairs meets UN officials

Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development Affairs at the Ministry of Social Developments and Family, Fahd bin Mohammed al-Khayarin, yesterday met with Under-Secretary-General of the UN, and Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Diene Keita. Al-Khayarin also met separately with Representative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Rania Hedeya. Held on the margin of the Second World Summit for Social Development, the two meetings discussed cooperation between Qatar and the UN agencies and international organisations, in the fields of social development and population. The meetings also discussed the participation in the World



Urban Forum, scheduled to be held in Azerbaijan in May 2026, as well as the preparations for the 42nd session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Housing and Reconstruction, slated for Dec 14-16 in Doha. Discussions also focused on ways to cooperate in developing social programs and building institutional capacities, strengthening the partnership between the Fund

and Qatar on population and social issues, and keeping pace with demographic shifts in the region and the world. Al-Khayarin reiterated Qatar's firm commitment to strengthening international partnerships and exchanging expertise, which contributes to achieving social development goals and empowering individuals, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. **(QNA)**

'Qatar support for UN is leading example of international action'

QNA
Doha

P resident of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Annalena Baerbock stressed that Qatar's support for the the United Nations is a leading example, praising the country's role as an international mediator in conflict resolution and its active contribution to social development.

In statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Baerbock explained that the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha underscores the need to move from promises to implementation through concrete action in areas such as education, employment, and social justice, thus contributing to achieving social benefits and healthcare for all people.

She highlighted the importance of promoting social development and achieving global justice, noting significant progress in certain economic and social indicators despite ongoing challenges in other parts of the world. President of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly said that the unemployment rate in Qatar stands at around 1%, while in some other countries it reaches 30%, reflecting the persistent gap among nations in benefiting from the fruits of social development.

She stressed that failure to address crises such as hunger exacerbates displacement and migration, emphasising the need to break this



Annalena Baerbock speaking to QNA.

vicious cycle by working on the three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, social development, and human rights.

Baerbock added that the summit aims to accelerate progress toward achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), noting that all goals are interconnected and cannot be achieved in isolation, especially amid global climate challenges that affect food security.

She also pointed to the importance of linking the Doha Summit with the Climate Change Conference to be held in the Amazonian city of Belem, Brazil, and the role of nationally determined commitments in reducing carbon emissions. She affirmed that investment in renewable energy benefits strong economies and enhances

their competitiveness. The president of the UN General Assembly emphasised the importance of international co-operation to achieve social justice, explaining that global challenges know no borders, and that the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the necessity of international collaboration in providing vaccines and addressing health crises. In conclusion, the President of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Annalena Baerbock told QNA that supporting UN agencies, including the World Food Programme, is vital to preventing hunger and human suffering in countries such as Sudan, stressing that immediate funding and support are essential to ensuring a dignified life for people around the world.

Qatari ambassador presents credentials

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in charge of Regional Affairs of the Republic of Uganda John Mulimba received a copy of the credentials of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to the Republic of Uganda Ahmed Mohammed Abdulrahman al-Zuwaidi. **(QNA)**



Lusail International Circuit joins QSW 2025

As part of its ongoing commitment to environmental responsibility, Lusail International Circuit (LIC) joined the 10th edition of Qatar Sustainability Week (QSW) being held until today (Saturday).

The national campaign led by Earthna Center for a Sustainable Future aims to amplify sustainability efforts across Qatar. LIC continues to host a number of key sustainability initiatives, designed to minimise environmental impact and inspire responsible practices across the motorsport community.

Among the recent engagement activities, the LIC team has par-

ticipated in a mangrove planting activity in Al Thakhira to support Qatar's coastal ecosystem and enhance biodiversity.

LIC also continues to implement ongoing measures including waste reduction policy, recycled water bottles, food redistribution, low carbon fan transport, recycled paper use, on site recycling and composting, digital ticketing, and single use plastic policy.

In line with LIC's waste reduction policy, event banners from the 2024 motorsport season have been repurposed into 200 reusable tote bags. Following the 2025 events, additional banners will also be up-

cycled into new merchandise, giving materials a second life.

All plastic bottles used for water distribution are made from 100% recycled plastic, reducing emissions by approximately 79% in a closed loop recycling system. All safe, non perishable food remaining from events is donated through local charities. In 2024 alone, more than 20 tonnes of food were redistributed.

LIC promotes sustainable mobility by ensuring that all ticketed fans attending international events have access to free, low carbon public transport options. LIC will use 100% recycled paper for all



The LIC team recently participated in a mangrove planting activity in Al Thakhira to support Qatar's coastal ecosystem and enhance biodiversity.

printing requirements during the event. Dedicated recycle stations, segregation yards, and BioBins are installed across the venue to en-

sure waste is sorted and food waste is transformed into agricultural compost. More than 90% of event tickets are issued digitally, reduc-

ing paper use. LIC also enforces strict avoidance of all unnecessary single use plastics across its operations, a statement added.

Al-Misnad meets minister, officials on sidelines of Social Development Summit



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met with Minister of Local Government of the Republic of Rwanda Dominique Habimana, on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of topics of common interest.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met with Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Co-ordinator at the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Joyce Msuya, on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the State of Qatar and the United Nations, along with ways to support and strengthen them, in addition to a number of topics of common interest.



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met with Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Diene Keita on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha. The meeting reviewed co-operation between the State of Qatar and UNFPA, exploring ways to support and strengthen it, while also discussing several issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

QNV 2030 places family at the heart of national development

QNA
Doha

HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi has said that family represents the nucleus of society, the cornerstone of its stability, and the foundation of its progress, emphasising the necessity of implementing family policies globally to ensure that family protection and well-being are at the heart of social development plans and strategies, given the family's role as the primary incubator of human values and the authentic source of social solidarity.

This came during her participation in the high-level session organised by the Ministry of Social Solidarity of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as part of the activities of the Second World Summit for Social Development, which concluded in Doha.

HE the minister said that the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action marked a pivotal moment in the history of social development, placing human beings at the centre of development and calling for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion.

Adhering to these principles and building upon them is the path to comprehensive and equitable development, she said, adding that the well-being of families and the cohesion of societies are among the most prominent indicators of genuine development.

Qatar, she added, places the family at the heart of its national strategy. Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030 enshrines the family as the fundamental unit of society, while the ministry's Social Development Strategy 2025-2030 translates this vision into practical programmes and policies aimed at expanding social protection, enhancing community participa-



tion, and supporting families at all stages of life.

In her speech, she outlined Qatar's efforts to empower women and enhance their participation in national development, noting the issuance of Human Resources Law No 25 of 2025, which grants Qatari women additional privileges that promote work-life balance.

These include extended maternity, breastfeeding, accompanying, study, and training leave, in addition to social and financial incentives that support family and social stability. In closing, HE the Minister expressed her thanks and appreciation to Minister of Social Solidarity of the Arab Republic of Egypt Dr Maya Mursi for

organising this important forum, which embodies Arab solidarity in supporting family issues and enhancing its role in comprehensive development, expressing her hope that these discussions will contribute to formulating practical visions that will push the family file to the forefront of the global agenda.

UN OCHA, Qatar Airways launch humanitarian partnership

QNA
Doha

Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Emergency Relief Co-ordinator Joyce Msuya has said that Qatar has emerged as a powerful force in humanitarian diplomacy, building bridges, offering support, and proving that global solidarity remains alive in an era of division.

Her remarks came during the launch ceremony of a new partnership between the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Qatar Airways, aimed at sharing humanitarian stories with millions of travellers worldwide. She added that they are doing this through a new in-flight video that highlights the power of global solidarity and invites every passenger to be part of the solution.

Speaking on the final day of the Second World Summit for Social Development, Msuya praised the summit's spirit of solidarity and international cooperation, echoing the words of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, earlier this week.

She noted that solidarity has enabled the world, in the three decades since the Copenhagen Summit, to lift over a billion people out of extreme poverty. Thanks to global solidarity, people are living longer, and more girls are attending school than ever before.

She emphasised that solidarity will be key to transforming the vision of the Doha Declaration into reality, a vision rooted in human dignity, equality, and peace. "True development," she quoted the Secretary-General, "is not about prosperity for the few but opportunities for the many."

Msuya reiterated OCHA's pride in partnering with Qatar Airways to share humanitarian stories with millions of passengers. She stressed that this is more than a partnership, it's a meeting of minds.

She added that they share a commitment to supporting the world's most vulnerable, bringing people together, and promoting values of solidarity and compassion. She highlighted the significance of this partnership, which unites three essential forces: governments, the private sector, and the United Nations.

When these forces collaborate, she explained, they can truly ensure no one is left behind, and that matters now more than ever. Addressing the global challenges of inequality, conflict, and climate shocks affecting the poorest communities, Msuya pointed out that over 300mn people worldwide are trapped in emergencies not of their making. They need hope and help, today, not tomorrow.

Beyond the video campaign, OCHA and Qatar Airways are expanding their cooperation to include emergency air transport, cargo delivery, public engagement, and fundraising. Together, she said, they can move faster, reach more people, and turn compassion into action. She concluded by emphasising that social development is not just about policy, it's about people.

She added that it's about inclusion, opportunity, and the belief that no one should be neglected because of where they were born or the crisis they face. She said that this is what Qatar has championed through this summit. It's what Qatar Airways and OCHA are putting into practice, adding that it's what we must all commit to, especially in a time when solidarity feels increasingly scarce.

Sustainability quiz held



The Department of Public Relations and Communication at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change organised the 'Sustainability Quiz Round' event at Doha Festival City, with wide participation from visitors, as part of its ongoing awareness initiatives during Qatar Sustainability Week. The event encouraged visitors to adopt sustainable behaviours that contribute to reducing waste and conserving natural resources.

Assistant undersecretary for Family Affairs meets Arab-European Center top official

HE Assistant Undersecretary for Family Affairs at the Ministry of Social Development and Family Sheikhha Shaikha bint Jassim al-Thani met with President of the Arab-European Center for Human Rights and International Law Aihan Fatah Jaff, on the sidelines of the Second World Summit for Social Development. During the meeting, they explored areas of joint co-operation in promoting social rights, empowering vulnerable groups, and supporting initiatives aimed at achieving justice, equality, and a dignified life for all. HE the Assistant Undersecretary affirmed Qatar's commitment to strengthening



its partnerships with regional and international organisations concerned with human rights and social development, in a way that contributes to

enhancing national efforts to attain comprehensive development and empower individuals in accordance with QNV 2030. **(QNA)**

Awqaf: Cochlear implant support committee performs surgeries for children in Kyrgyzstan

QNA
Bishkek

THE Cochlear Implant Support Committee, affiliated with the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, held its medical mission in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, during a visit that extended until yesterday. The committee performed cochlear implant surgeries for hearing-impaired children, within the framework of co-operation between the General Directorate of Endowments (Awqaf) and the Ministry of Public Health, and with support from the Cochlear Implant Endowment through the Healthcare Endowment Fund.

Engineer Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Meer, Assistant Director General of the General Directorate of Endowments (Awqaf) and Head of the Cochlear Implant Support Committee, said that the Qatari medical team performed surgeries after completing the examination

of 69 cases to ensure their readiness for cochlear implantation.

He added that the visit includes a thorough evaluation phase, encompassing advanced hearing tests and speech assessments, to determine each child's suitability for the surgery and ensure a high success rate. He affirmed that the committee is working according to a plan aimed at performing more than 50 cochlear implant surgeries, in addition to implementing rehabilitation and speech therapy programs for children who underwent surgery in previous years.

He noted that the team conducts daily reviews of cases following the surgeries performed earlier this week to ensure the stability of the success indicators and the children's auditory and linguistic responses.

He said that the Qatari embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic provided comprehensive support to the Qatari team's work, including coordination with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health and co-operating hospitals,



facilitating the entry of medical equipment and supplies, and providing logistical and administrative support to the delegation, thus ensuring the smooth operation and integration of field efforts.

It is worth noting that the Cochlear Implant Support Committee is the result of fruitful co-operation

between the General Directorate of Endowments at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs and the Ministry of Public Health. It oversees the implementation of joint programs aimed at treating hearing-impaired children both within and outside Qatar, through specialised Qatari

medical personnel, with support from the Cochlear Implant Endowment, which is one of the most prominent initiatives of the Waqf Bank for Healthcare.

The Cochlear Implant Endowment embodies the leading role of the State of Qatar in supporting humanitarian values and sustainable health development. The committee's continued successes in Kyrgyzstan and other countries reflect the integration of Qatari endowment and medical efforts, and underscore the General Directorate of Endowments' mission to serve humanity and achieve development that leaves a lasting, noble charitable impact.

The Cochlear Implant Endowment is dedicated to supporting the costs of surgeries, medical devices, and auditory rehabilitation programmes both within and outside Qatar, in line with the endowments' mission to promote health initiatives that preserve the gift of hearing and enable children to integrate into society.

Creativity showcased at QU fine arts expo



Qatar University (QU)'s College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), in collaboration with College of Education, organised the first art exhibition showcasing the works of students from the Fine Arts Programme.

The exhibition aimed to introduce the newly established academic programme, launched in Summer 2022 under the Department of Humanities at the CAS.

The exhibition highlighted the programme's outcomes through a curated selection of student artworks produced under the supervision of faculty members from the programme and in collaboration with the Art Education Department at the College of Education. The displayed works represent the outcomes of the students' studio-based courses and span a wide range of artistic

disciplines and styles, including painting, fine and photographic art, visual and digital arts, print-making and design engraving, sculpture, and ceramics.

The exhibition served as a space for artistic creativity, recognising art as a fundamental driver of social progress and a means to preserve cultural heritage and strengthen national identity. Beyond presenting artistic techniques and skills,

the works reflect each student's personal experience and individual perspective — exploring the interplay between reality and imagination and engaging with symbols of memory and human emotion.

Dr Mehdi Jerad, acting head of the Department of Humanities at the CAS, stated: "This exhibition provided an opportunity to promote the Fine Arts Programme, which will celebrate its first graduating

class in spring 2026. It features the creative works of our students, and we hope it will become an annual event to showcase their artistic talents and enhance the academic presence of the programme within the university and the wider community."

Dr Nizar Mouakhar, assistant professor in the Fine Arts Programme, said the works were developed under joint supervision by

faculty from the Fine Arts and Art Education programmes, reflecting fruitful collaboration between the two departments through shared courses. "We also invited several cultural institutions in Qatar, such as Qatar Museums, the Qatar Fine Arts Association, and Katara, to participate in this significant artistic event, which marks the beginning of our students' artistic journeys."



QU PhD student excels in Mena thesis contest

Ikram Mustapha Zoukh, a PhD student in Health Sciences, at Qatar University (QU), won the second place in the First Mena Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, hosted by Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

The competition brought together 17 doctoral participants representing 16 countries across the Mena region, including Qatar, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the UAE, and Yemen.

The event was organised by HBKU in collaboration with The University of Queensland, the founder of the global 3MT initiative.

Representing Qatar as the national 3MT winner, Ikram presented her research titled "The Missing Link: The Pharmacist's Role in Tackling Therapeutic In-

ertia". Reflecting on her achievement, Ikram said: "This achievement is a testament to the quality of education and research training I've received at QU. I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support and guidance of Prof Ahmed Awaisu, Dr Yaw Owusu and Dr Muhammad Abdul Hadi throughout this journey. I am grateful to have contributed to showcasing Qatar's academic excellence on such a prestigious platform."

Commenting on this achievement, Dr Feras Alali, director of QU's Research and Graduate Studies, said: "Ikram's ability to translate complex scientific research into an inspiring message for a broad audience reflects the heart of what the Health Sector stands for — advancing research that improves lives and strengthens the health of our communities."

IEI Qatar organises seminar on additive manufacturing

The Institution of Engineers (India) Qatar Chapter (IEI QC), organised a seminar on 'Additive Manufacturing: Shaping the Future of Industry and Smart Cities' and formed the IEI NextGEN Engineers Forum.

IEI QC honorary chairman Abdul Sathar presided.

The IEI NextGEN Engineers Forum aims to create a dynamic platform for young and emerging engineers to connect, learn, and lead in the evolving fields of

science, technology, and engineering. Chief guest Dr Rafal al-Mufti, dean of College of Engineering, Oryx University, inaugurated the event.

He lauded IEI's contributions to various engineering disciplines and the bilateral relations between India and Qatar as well. Dr Nooruddin Ansari, Professor, Oryx University, in his keynote address, explained various technological developments in additive manufacturing. Guest of



honour and Qatar Energy senior engineer Khalid Fakhroo stated that the intersection of AI with human thought is revolutionising

every sector and pushing humanity forward to a new level. The event provided a platform for networking and knowledge exchange,

fostering collaboration among professionals, academics, and industry stakeholders.

Honorary secretary Ab-

dul Zameer Saab welcomed the gathering and honorary treasurer Ashik K proposed a vote of thanks.

QU graduate paving way for future healthcare leaders

Qatar University (QU) Health Sector celebrated the inspiring journey of Lolwa al-Baker, a Qatari graduate from the Physiotherapy Programme whose passion and perseverance exemplify the next generation of national health leaders.

Her transformation from an uncertain first-year student to a confident future professional reflects the strength of QU's academic environment in empowering students to reach their full potential, a statement said.

Lolwa's path to physiotherapy

was one of discovery. Initially enrolled in biomedical sciences, she found her true calling late in her first year. "Something in my mind shifted towards becoming a physiotherapist," she recalled. Drawn to patient care, rehabilitation, and the science of movement, she joined the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences with enthusiasm and purpose.

During her studies, Lolwa gained extensive hands-on experience through clinical placements at institutions including Aspetar, Hamad Medical Corporation, and Sidra Medicine. "These place-

ments are helping me map out my future and decide which areas I am keen to explore further," she said. The experience strengthened her professional skills and affirmed her ambition to contribute meaningfully to Qatar's healthcare sector.

Her academic journey was not without challenges. Like many students, she faced uncertainty during her early university years, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic. With the support of faculty, peers, and family, she learned to adapt and thrive. "Those early challenges helped me

grow as a person and as a student," she reflected.

Initially, her family knew little about the physiotherapy profession, but her success helped increase awareness and understanding of its importance. "Their encouragement and belief in my abilities have been invaluable," she added, emphasising the role of family support in her development.

Lolwa values the diverse learning opportunities offered at QU Health, including Interprofessional Education (IPE) and collaborative activities that promote

teamwork and holistic care. "Engaging with passionate peers and dedicated faculty has kept me inspired and motivated," she said.

Looking ahead, Lolwa aspires to specialise further — potentially in sports rehabilitation or paediatrics — and aims to create new opportunities for Qatari physiotherapists through professional associations and community initiatives. "I am dedicated to not only meeting but exceeding the expectations of the Qatari healthcare system," she stated.

Her story reflects QU's mission to prepare skilled graduates who



Lolwa al-Baker

contribute to national development. Lolwa al-Baker stands as a role model for perseverance, purpose, and professional excellence, inspiring future generations of healthcare leaders in Qatar, the statement added.

MES tops inter-school cultural competition



MES won the overall championship with 1,610 points at Kalanjali 2025, an inter-school cultural competition for Indian schools in Qatar, organised by Media Pen and held at Ideal Indian School from October 25-31.

The event witnessed participation from 29 schools. From MES, 1,046 students took part in over 200 events across dance,

music, fine arts, and literary competitions and secured prizes in more than 120 events.

Darshanth Krishna (Grade III) was conferred the 'Kalaprabhitha' title in the sub-junior category for his outstanding all-round performance in multiple art forms.

The championship trophy was presented by Indian ambassador Vipul to the MES team, led by

principal Dr Hameeda Kadar and accompanied by the school's event co-ordinators and teachers.

The school's participation was co-ordinated by Anver, Sumitha Nassar, and Harshan, supported by a team of teachers across several departments. The principal, management, and governing board of the school congratulated the team for their outstanding achievement.

RPS excels in youth festival



Rajagiri Public School (RPS) Doha emerged as the first runners-up at Kalanjali 2025, the Qatar School Youth Festival, showcasing exceptional talent across music, dance, art, and literary categories.

RPS bagged 961 points and won 109 prizes across individual and group events.

The school's triumph was highlighted by three titles: Devapriya Patteri Thazha (Grade V)

won 'Kalathilakam' for best performer girl in the junior category, while Ken Kenneth (Grade IX) and Gurshaan Singh (Grade XI) claimed 'Kalaprabhitha' for best performer boy in the intermediate and senior categories, respectively.

A contingent of 535 students represented RPS in the competition. The achievement reflects the dedicated efforts of the faculty, particularly the Departments

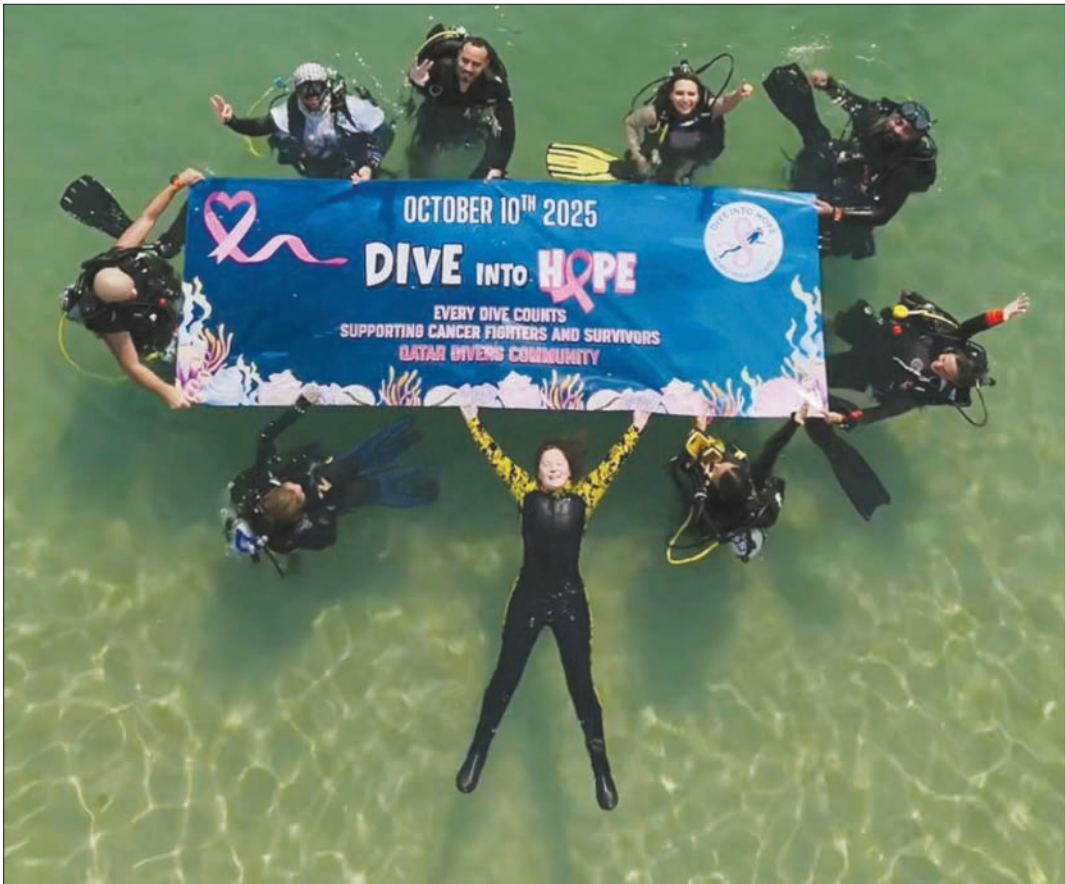
of Music, Dance, Art, English, Malayalam, Hindi, and Arabic, who played instrumental roles in preparing the students.

Principal Joshy Abraham congratulated the students, teaching staff, and parents whose support contributed to the remarkable accomplishment. The principal and management extended special appreciation to programme co-ordinator Davis Paul and CCA co-ordinator Susan Binu.

Kayaking race organised



Qatar Incas Pathanamthitta District Committee organised Kayaking Racing 2025 at Thakshira Mangroves - Purple Island, Al Khor, featuring 25 teams in an atmosphere that blended sport with nature and camaraderie. The winners: Melpadom Soji and team - champions, Vinod Xavier and team (Incas, Ernakulam) - first runners-up, Team Tulukoota (Hot Adventure - Mohd Hairul and team) and Sharath and team (Incas, Kollam) - second runners-up. A photo booth was set up along the scenic shores of the Thakshira Mangroves where spectators, families, community leaders, and participants gathered to capture joyful moments.



Experienced divers plunged into the Gulf waters to create a "Message of Hope".

'Dive into Hope' empowers cancer survivors in Qatar



By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

This collective dive was both a physical act of solidarity and a potent visual representation of courage, healing, and community support for those battling cancer

The 'Dive into Hope' initiative brought together Qatar's diving community, families, and supporters in a two-day event that culminated in a tribute to cancer survivors and raised funds for the Qatar Cancer Society (QCS).

Held over two weekends at the 4x4 Beach Resort, Sealine, the event was organised by Deep Blue Diving Centre in collaboration with the Qatar diving community.

Initiated by diving instructors Zaina Fadel and Mohammed Hamamdeh, the movement began on October 10 when 50 experienced divers plunged into the Gulf waters to create a "Message of Hope".

This collective dive was both a physical act of solidarity and a potent visual representation of courage, healing, and community support for those battling cancer.

A week later, on the main event day, October 17, the message was unveiled to more than 400 attendees.

The centrepiece was the screening of an underwater video, capturing the divers' formation and unity. Shared on a large screen, the footage reinforced the theme that hope can rise from the depths to reach every heart.

A highlight of the day was the

attendance of cancer survivors, who shared their inspiring personal journeys with the crowd. In a moving gesture, three women survivors were invited to experience scuba diving for the first time through a specialised Discover Scuba Diving session.

As the women surfaced from the water, safe and exhilarated, the crowd erupted in cheers and applause across the beach. Their courage served as a powerful symbol, reminding everyone that hope is not just a feeling, but a strength that carries people forward.

The emotional drive behind the event was shared by one of the key organisers, Zaina Fadel.

"This event means a lot to me personally. After losing my mother to cancer, I wanted to give back in a way that carries her spirit forward. 'Dive into Hope' was born from that feeling, from the desire to turn pain into purpose.

"I worked on this event from my heart, day and night, be-

cause I wanted to see it come to life and deliver a message that truly touches people, a message of unity, compassion, and hope," Fadel said in a statement. The family-friendly event also featured interactive spaces, sponsor booths, and activities designed to encourage connection, awareness, and giving back.

The event, supported by Al Wakra Municipality and the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association, strengthened collaboration across the local community. Proceeds generated from the initiative are being donated directly to QCS, reflecting the organising team's commitment to supporting patients and raising awareness.

Organisers have confirmed that due to the overwhelming success and impact, plans are already underway to expand 'Dive into Hope' into an annual initiative, using diving not just as a sport, but to spread awareness and bring hope to others through action, unity, and compassion.





A Palestinian man looks through garbage near a landfill site in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip.

Piles of garbage and seeping sewage pollute devastated Gaza

●Two million tonnes untreated waste across Gaza: UNDP
●Rubbish piled in dumps near tent camps
●Health crisis with skin and gastric ailments

Reuters
Khan Younis

Stinking mounds of fly-covered garbage lie strewn throughout Gaza amid the rubble from Israel’s devastating military campaign, spilling out along roadsides and between the tents where most of the shattered enclave’s people live.

Government services such as rubbish collection ceased as soon as the war began and although they are partially returning since the truce last month, the massive extent of destruction means any more thorough cleanup lies far in the future. “I don’t smell any fresh air. I smell a foul odour in my tent. I can’t sleep. My children wake up in the morning coughing,” said Mahmoud Abu Reida, gesturing at the dumpster by the tent he shares with his wife and four children in Khan Younis.

Rotting garbage, sewage-filled pools, hazardous waste from bomb sites and noxious smoke from burning cloth and plastic have birthed a fetid environment for Gazans.

“The scale of the waste problem in Gaza is huge,” said Alessandro Mrakic, head of the Gaza office of the UN development agency UNDP.

Waste landfill sites were already full before the start of the war and



A rainwater collection pond is filled with sewage water in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip.

three major dump sites were located along the border with Israel in areas that are now off limits to Palestinians, he said. “We’re talking about 2mn tons of waste - untreated - all across Gaza,” Mrakic said, adding that the risks to the environment, to the aquifer that much of Gaza’s water comes from, and to the population’s health were “immense”.

Many people complain of gastric diseases and skin complaints from diarrhoea to rashes, sores, lice and scabies, and doctors in the tiny, crowded Palestinian territory say pollution is to blame.

“Skin diseases have spread a lot because of overcrowding in tents and the tents are next to garbage dumps,” said Sami Abu Taha, a dermatologist at the Kuwaiti field hospital in Khan Younis, lamenting the lack of medicine to treat such ailments.

One of Abu Reida’s children has been repeatedly to the hospital, he said, where doctors had told him the boy was suffering from a bacterial infection that likely came from the rubbish container by

the tent. In another part of Khan Younis, Mahmoud Helles was sitting in his tent with his children - a sewage-filled pond standing nearby.

“We find nowhere to stay but in such places,” he said, showing a rash of red spots on his arm and hand.

“This place is very, very difficult - it is full of diseases and epidemics because of war remnants, piles of garbage, and the lack of sewage treatment,” he said.

Much of Gaza’s wastewater and sewage infrastructure was badly damaged by Israel’s bombardment and ground operations, leaving people to use open latrines that flood when it rains.

The United Nations is developing plans to deal with the waste problem, including considering options for processing plants that can generate electricity from waste, Mrakic said.

“Immediate action is needed, mainly through access of machinery, equipment, that will allow us to properly perform the job on the ground,” he added.

Turkiye issues genocide arrest warrant against Netanyahu

AFP
Istanbul

Turkiye announced yesterday that it had issued arrest warrants for genocide against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and senior officials within his government.

Among 37 suspects listed are Israeli Defence Minister Israel

Katz, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir, said a statement from the Istanbul prosecutor’s office, which did not publish the complete list.

Turkiye has accused the officials of “genocide and crimes against humanity” that Israel has “perpetrated systematically” in Gaza. The statement also refers to the “Turkish-Palestinian

Friendship Hospital”, built by Turkiye in the Gaza Strip and bombed by Israel in March.

Turkiye last year joined South Africa’s case accusing Israel of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). A fragile ceasefire has been in force in the devastated Palestinian territory since October 10 as part of US President Donald Trump’s regional peace plan.

Iran’s Pezeshkian says Tehran seeks peace, but will not bow to coercion

Reuters
Dubai

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said yesterday that Iran sought peace, but would not be coerced into abandoning its nuclear and missile programmes, state media reported.

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that Iran had been asking if US sanctions against the country could be lifted.

“We are willing to hold talks under international frameworks, but not if they say you can’t have a (nuclear) science, or the right to defend yourself (with missiles) or else we will bomb you,” Pezeshkian said.

Iran has repeatedly dismissed the possibility of negotiations over its defensive capabilities, includ-

ing its missile programme, and the idea of abandoning all enrichment of uranium on its soil.

“We want to live in this world in peace and security, but not be humiliated, and it is not acceptable that they impose upon us whatever they want and we just serve them,” Pezeshkian said. “They supply arms to Israel while they tell us not to have missiles for defence, then they bomb us whenever they want.” Tehran and Washington held five rounds of nuclear talks prior to a 12-day war between Iran and Israel in June, when US and Israeli forces bombed Iranian missile sites.

Israel sees Iran as an existential threat. But Iran says its ballistic missiles, with a range of up to 2,000km, are an important deterrent and retaliatory force against the United States, Israel and other potential regional adversaries. It denies seeking nuclear weapons.

US and Britain remove sanctions on Syria’s president

Reuters
London/Washington

The US and Britain removed sanctions on Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa yesterday, a day after the UN Security Council did the same ahead of his meeting with US President Donald Trump next week, with the European Union confirming it would follow suit.

Washington and London also lifted sanctions on Syria’s interior minister Anas Khattab, according to notices on their websites.

Both men had formerly been subject to financial sanctions targeted at Islamic State and Al Qaeda, with the US designating them Specially Designated Global Fighters. A European Union spokesperson said yesterday the UN decision would be reflected in EU measures.

Britain lifted some sanctions on Syria in April, while the bloc

lifted its economic sanctions in May, but restrictions related to arms and security remain in place.

“We remain committed to supporting a peaceful and inclusive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition to help build a better future for all Syrians,” a European Commission spokesperson said. Washington has been urging the 15-member Security Council for months to ease Syria sanctions. Trump announced a major US policy shift in May when he said he would lift US sanctions on Syria. The Republican president is due to meet al-Sharaa at the White House on Monday, the first such visit by a Syrian head of state.

Trump has sought good relations with al-Sharaa. In June he revoked most US sanctions against Syria, and Trump met with the Syrian leader when he visited Saudi Arabia last May. Since seizing power from

Bashar al-Assad last December, al-Sharaa has made a series of foreign trips as his transitional government seeks to re-establish Syria’s ties with world powers that had shunned Damascus during Assad’s rule.

Al-Sharaa, formerly known as Abu Mohammad al-Julani, became Syria’s president in January after forces led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham ousted Assad in a lightning offensive.

Al-Sharaa, once a senior figure in HTS and previously affiliated with Al Qaeda, was sanctioned by the US in 2013 and the UN and Britain in 2014, which included a travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo. The UN Security Council lifted those measures on Thursday, citing a lack of active ties between HTS and Al Qaeda.

The Syrian government did not immediately respond to a request for comment yesterday, which is not a working day in Syria.

TENSION Suffocated by militants, Mali is on the brink

A sluggish economy, daily attacks on fuel convoys and a loss of territorial control: Mali’s ruling junta is facing an existential crisis as a fuel blockade gradually strangles the capital Bamako and other regions, AFP reported from Dakar. For weeks, militants from JNIM, the Al Qaeda-linked Group, have imposed the blockade, which has paralysed the landlocked Sahelian country’s economy. It has forced the government to close schools, prevented harvesting in several regions and limited access to electricity.

On Monday, President Assimi Goita called on citizens to do their part, particularly by reducing unnecessary travel, while promising to “do everything possible to deliver fuel”. For Alioune Tine, formerly the UN’s independent expert on the human rights situation in Mali, the leader’s statement was a “terrible admission of failure”.

Protest against illegal immigration in SA



Protesters hold placards during an anti-illegal-immigration march as they head to deliver a memorandum calling for tighter border controls and the deportation of undocumented migrants in Durban, South Africa, yesterday.

Former British soldier arrested over alleged Kenyan murder

Reuters
London

A former British soldier wanted by Kenyan authorities has appeared in a London court after being arrested in connection with the alleged murder of a woman near a UK army training camp in the East African country more than a dozen years ago.

In September Kenya issued an arrest warrant and requested the extradition of a British citizen over the murder of 21-year-old Agnes Wanjiru near a UK army training camp in 2012, a case which has strained relations between the two countries. Wanjiru was found in

a septic tank at the Lion’s Court Hotel in the Kenyan town of Nan-yuki in 2012, having last been seen at the hotel with a group of British soldiers.

A Kenyan magistrate concluded in an inquest in 2019 that she had been murdered by the soldiers, and in September Kenya made a formal request to extradite a suspect. Britain’s National Crime Agency (NCA) said the suspect was a former soldier who was arrested on Thursday by specialist officers after the warrant was issued. “Robert James Purkiss, 38, appeared at Westminster Magistrates’ Court today for extradition proceedings to begin,” the NCA said.

Tanzania charges more than 100 with treason over election protests

AFP
Nairobi

A Tanzanian court charged more than 100 people with treason yesterday following election protests that turned violent, as rights groups condemned what they said was the killing of civilians.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan won the October 29 poll with 98% of the vote, according to the electoral commission,

but the opposition, which was barred from participating, has branded the election a “sham”.

Violent protests broke out across the east African country on election day, with sources indicating hundreds - if not thousands - may have been killed. At the same time, a six-day internet shutdown hampered the release of verified information. Yesterday, hundreds of people appeared in court in the economic capital Dar es Salaam.

According to one judicial source, the

court had charged 138 people, while another source reported that more than 100 people were being prosecuted.

A charge sheet seen by AFP accused them of having “the intention to obstruct” the election and intimidate the executive by causing serious damage to government property.

“Some of them they have been beaten, they are sick, they have not received any medical treatment,” Paul Kisabo, a lawyer with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition, said after seeing the accused

in court. He said that because treason was a non-bailable offence, they would remain in detention until their next hearing.

Opposition party Chadema has said that at least 800 people were killed in election violence. Diplomatic and security sources backed that estimate, adding there were reports the numbers could reach thousands.

The authorities have so far declined to release any toll for dead or injured.

In a joint statement with six other NGOs yesterday, the Legal and Human

Rights Centre (LHRC) said there was “excessive use of force against unarmed demonstrators, including reprisal killings of civilians, some in their own homes.”

“Families have been left traumatised, and children have witnessed violence against their parents,” it added.

Young people in particular had been targeted, “often caught unaware”, said the statement.

Hundreds of people had been arrested and some were still being held without bail, it added.



DECISION

US snubs UN meeting on its human rights record

The US yesterday became only the second country to ever boycott a United Nations review of its human rights record, as President Donald Trump's administration faced criticism over mounting abuses. US seats were left empty at the world body's European headquarters in Geneva for the so-called Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which all 193 UN member states have to undergo every four to five years. As the review was set to begin, UN Human Rights Council president Jurg Lauber looked at the empty seats behind the US nameplate and said: "I note that the delegation of the US is not present in the room."

SCARE

Several people ill at US military base after suspicious package

Several people fell ill after a suspicious package was opened at a US military base in Maryland, though they were evaluated and released, the US military said yesterday. The incident took place on Thursday at Joint Base Andrews, outside Washington, DC. Authorities at the base said the package did not contain any white powder, a warning sign that can alert people of danger. The base, roughly 24km southeast of the White House in Washington, DC, is used by the president, vice-president, and cabinet leaders to travel around the country and world. The base said the individuals who felt sick were in stable condition.

POLITICS

Trump ally Stefanik launches bid for New York governor

Republican US Representative Elise Stefanik, a staunch ally of President Donald Trump, will run for governor of New York in 2026, taking on incumbent Democrat Kathy Hochul. Stefanik, in a social media post, labeled Hochul "the worst governor in America" and New York "the most unaffordable state in the nation", and said she was running to make New York "affordable and safe FOR ALL." She also sought to tie Hochul to New York City mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, a democratic socialist who won the city's election, part of a broader Republican push to portray Mamdani as the new face of the Democratic Party.

CRIME

Washington Post among victims of cyber breach

The *Washington Post* said it is among victims of a sweeping cyber breach tied to Oracle software. In a statement, the newspaper said it was one of those impacted "by the breach of the Oracle E-Business Suite platform". The paper did not provide further detail, but its statement comes after CLOP, the notorious ransomware group, said on its website that the *Washington Post* was among its victims. Oracle pointed to a pair of security advisories issued last month. Ransom-seeking hackers typically publicise their victims in an effort to shame them into making extortion payments, and CLOP are among the world's most prolific.

US 'sold sniper rifles to Brazil police unit tied to deadly raid'

Reuters
Washington

The US government approved a sale of sniper rifles to a deadly police unit in Brazil last year, overriding concerns from the US ambassador and other diplomats that the arms could be used in extra-judicial killings, according to three current and former US officials and documents seen by Reuters.

The Rio de Janeiro police unit that purchased the guns, known as BOPE, played a central role in a raid last week that left 121 people dead, including four police officers. That action drew condemnation from human rights advocates and United Nations experts, who have alleged that some of the killings may have been unlawful.

BOPE purchased 20 sniper rifles produced by Georgia-based Daniel Defense LLC in an unannounced deal in May 2023, during the administration of former US president Joe Biden, according to internal Rio police documents. The weapons were not received until 2024, amid debate within the state department about the sale's appropriateness, according to internal Rio police and US state department documents.

Under US law, gun exports typically need to be approved by the government. While the commerce department often issues the final licence, the state department plays a key role in the process.

Elizabeth Bagley, then the US ambassador to Brazil, objected to the deal, as did some diplomats working on human rights and law enforcement issues, according to a January

2024 state department memo. That memo describes BOPE as "among the most notorious police units in Brazil in regard to killings of civilians."

Rio police - of which BOPE is the most notorious unit - were responsible for 703 killings last year, according to official data consolidated by the Brazilian Public Safety Forum. BOPE also purchased accompanying suppressors for the rifles, which were produced by Wisconsin-based Griffin Armament, but the suppressor shipment was initially blocked by the US government, according to the documents and sources. In a statement, the state department said none of the equipment would have been denied or delayed under the current administration. In April, US President Donald Trump rescinded 2023 guidance issued by Biden which put stricter human rights-related restrictions on gun exports.

"The previous administration's disastrous foreign policies aided and abetted our hemisphere's most violent gangs," a state department spokesperson said. "Last year, Biden's state department denied critical defensive equipment to trusted security partners in Brazil while asking them to protect President Biden during his 2024 trip to Rio. In the interest of a safer hemisphere, we remain committed to ensuring that our partners have what they need to fight vicious criminals." Biden visited Brazil in late 2024 to attend that year's G20 summit.

The roughly \$150,000 purchase was not the first of its kind by BOPE. The unit had successfully imported at least 800 US-made rifles in the

past, according to state department documents. But a series of deadly raids involving the unit in recent years had changed some diplomats' calculus, according to the officials and documents.

Among the transaction's most ardent supporters was Ricardo Pita, then the top Latin America policy staffer on the Republican-controlled House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, according to two US officials, who requested anonymity to describe internal deliberations.

Pita is now a senior adviser for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the state department. In that capacity, the Venezuelan-born Pita met in May with now-imprisoned former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a prominent Trump ally who has been an outspoken defender of BOPE's work. Daniel Defense, Griffin Armament, the Rio police and the Rio state government did not respond to requests for comment, nor did the commerce department.

In mid-2024, Pita, who did not respond to a request for comment, visited a BOPE facility in Rio as part of a congressional staff delegation, the officials said. The visit rankled some diplomats as the state department has often cited the Rio police in public documents for alleged human rights abuses. Later that year, Pita pushed diplomats to clear the sale of the suppressors that accompanied the rifles, the officials added. The officials said they were surprised at how persistently Pita pushed for the sale, given that it represented a small part of his portfolio, which in theory stretched from the US-Mexico border to Patagonia.

Mamdani prays at San Juan mosque



New York City mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani prays as he visits a mosque in San Juan, Puerto Rico, yesterday.

Hundreds of US flights cut after FAA directive

Reuters
Washington

US airlines yesterday scrambled to cut 4% of flights at 40 major airports after the government imposed an unprecedented cut to air travel citing air traffic control safety concerns because of a record-setting government shutdown.

The cuts, which began at 6am ET (1100 GMT), include about 700 flights from the four largest carriers - American Airlines,

Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines - and are set to rise to 6% on Tuesday and then 10% by November 14 if the shutdown does not end. The cuts don't apply to international flights.

American Airlines CEO Robert Isom does not expect significant disruption for customers from initial government-ordered flight reductions, he said yesterday, warning that increased cuts would be "problematic."

"This level of cancellation is going to grow over time and that's something that is going

to be problematic," Isom told CNBC.

American told Reuters its 220 flight cancellations yesterday impacted 12,000 passengers and within a few hours re-accommodated a majority of them.

Cuts will be smaller over the weekend as scheduled flight volumes decline.

United Airlines said half of its impacted customers were able to be rebooked within four hours of their original departure time. United, which cancelled 184 flights yesterday, will cut 168 today and 158 tomorrow.

Three killed in new US strike on alleged drug boat, toll at 70

US forces have struck another alleged drug trafficking boat in the Caribbean, killing three people, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said, bringing the death toll from Washington's controversial anti-narcotics campaign to at least 70. The US began carrying out such strikes - which experts say amount to extrajudicial killings even if they target known traffickers - in early September, taking aim at vessels in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

The US strikes have destroyed at least 18 vessels so far - 17 boats and a semi-submersible - but Washington has yet to make public any concrete evidence that its targets were smuggling narcotics or posed a threat to the US. Hegseth released aerial footage on X of the latest strike, which he said took place in international waters like the previous strikes and targeted "a vessel operated by a Designated Terrorist Organisation."

Trump urges EU to respect Orban



US President Donald Trump greets Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban outside the West Wing of the White House in Washington, DC yesterday. Trump later said European Union leaders should show more respect to Orban, who has thumbed his nose at them over migration. "I think they should respect Hungary and respect this leader very, very strongly because he's been right on immigration," Trump added.

Court starts hearing Bolsonaro appeal

AFF
Brasília

Brazil's Supreme Court yesterday began weighing former president Jair Bolsonaro's appeal against a 27-year prison sentence for plotting a coup after his 2022 election loss.

The far-right firebrand was found guilty by the same court in September of attempting to prevent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from taking power.

Prosecutors said the plan failed only due to a lack of support from military top brass.

The court last week said it will consider Bolsonaro's appeal in a virtual session from November 7-14.

Bolsonaro's lawyers have alleged "ambiguities, omissions, contradictions and obscuri-

ties" in his conviction. Bolsonaro has been under house arrest since August. Under Brazilian law, he will not be sent to prison until all legal avenues are exhausted.

His lawyers are trying to get his sentence reduced, claiming they faced obstacles in mounting a defence during the trial.

If this is rejected, they could file another appeal, but the court could refuse to hear it.

In this case, 70-year-old Bolsonaro could go to prison.

Because of health problems stemming from a stabbing attack in 2018, Bolsonaro could ask to serve his sentence under house arrest.

In May, another former president, Fernando Collor de Mello, was given permission to serve his nearly nine-year sentence for corruption at home, on grounds of ill health.

US army to buy 1mn drones, in major acquisition ramp-up

Reuters
Washington

The US army aims to buy at least a million drones in the next two to three years and could acquire anywhere from a half million drones to millions of them annually in the years that follow, US army secretary Daniel Driscoll said.

Driscoll detailed the major ramp-up in the army's drone acquisition plan in an interview, acknowledging the challenges given that the biggest branch of the US military acquires only about 50,000 drones annually today.

"It is a big lift. But it is a lift we're very capable of doing," Driscoll said.

He spoke by phone during a visit to Picatinny Arsenal, where he described learning about experimentation with "net rounds," defences that capture a drone in nets, as well as new explosives and electromagnetic tools synced into weapon systems.

Driscoll and Picatinny's top commander, major general John Reim, spoke about how the US was taking lessons from Russia's war in Ukraine, which has been characterised by drone deployments on an unprecedented scale.

Tiny, inexpensive drones have

proven to be one of the most potent weapons in the Russia-Ukraine war, where conventional warplanes are relatively rare because of a dense concentration of anti-aircraft systems near front lines.

Ukraine and Russia each produce roughly 4mn drones a year, but China is probably able to produce more than double that number, Driscoll said.

Driscoll said his priority is getting the US into a position where it can produce enough drones for any future war, stimulating domestic production of everything from brushless motors and sensors to batteries and circuit boards.

Much of that manufacturing is

dominated by China today.

"We expect to purchase at least a million drones within the next two to three years," Driscoll said.

"And we expect that at the end of one or two years from today, we will know that in a moment of conflict, we will be able to activate a supply chain that is robust enough and deep enough that we could activate to manufacture however many drones we would need."

Driscoll said he fundamentally wanted to change how the Army saw drones - more like expendable ammunition rather than an "exquisite" piece of equipment.

The Pentagon is trying to overcome a mixed track record on ac-

quiring drones. In 2023, Pentagon leaders announced the Replicator initiative, a department-wide effort to acquire and field thousands of autonomous drones by August 2025.

However, it has not provided an update on the current status of the programme.

In July, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth signed a memo in which he said he was "rescinding restrictive policies" that had impacted drone production.

Pentagon's DOGE unit is leading efforts to overhaul the US military drone programme, including acquiring tens of thousands of cheap drones in the coming months.

US lawmakers have introduced legislation that would direct the Pentagon to create a facility in Texas that could build up to 1mn drones a year.

But Driscoll said his aim was to spread funding and not rely on a single production facility.

Instead of partnering with larger defence companies, he said the army wanted to work with companies that were producing drones that could have commercial applications as well.

"We want to partner with other drone manufacturers who are using them for Amazon deliveries and all the different use cases," he said.



N Korea fires unidentified ballistic missile: Seoul military

AFP
Seoul

North Korea fired a ballistic missile yesterday, Seoul's military said, around a week after US President Donald Trump approved South Korea's plan to build a nuclear-powered submarine. An-

alysts have said Seoul's plan to construct one of the atomic-driven vessels would likely draw an aggressive response from Pyongyang.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea fired an unidentified ballistic missile towards the East Sea, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. The missile landed in the sea

outside Japan's economic waters and no damage or injuries had been reported, said Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi.

But the Kremlin defended North Korea's latest launch, saying Pyongyang - a key ally for Russia during its Ukraine campaign - had the "legitimate right" to do so.

"We are respectful of the le-

gitimate right of our friends in the DPRK (North Korea) to ensure their security and take measures for it," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Washington's security ally Tokyo, meanwhile, said North Korea's ballistic missile launches have been "absolutely unforgivable".

As "evidenced" by North Korea's

provocations, "it's never too early to accelerate efforts to revamp our defence capabilities," Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said.

"We will consider what steps are needed to protect our nation's... peace and the lives of our people, without ruling out any options."

The missile launched at 12.35pm (0335 GMT) from an area north of

Pyongyang and flew around 700km, South Korea's military said. North Korea has significantly increased missile testing in recent years, which analysts say is aimed at improving precision strike capabilities, challenging the US as well as South Korea, and testing weapons before potentially exporting them to Russia.

China 'starts work on easing rare earth export rules'

Reuters
Beijing

China has begun designing a new rare earth licensing regime that could speed up shipments, but it is unlikely to amount to a complete rollback of restrictions as hoped by Washington, industry insiders said.

The ministry of commerce told some rare earth exporters they will be able to apply for new streamlined permits in the future and in industry briefings outlined the documents that will be required, two sources familiar with the matter said.

The export curbs have become Beijing's most potent source of leverage in its trade rivalry with Washington, as China produces over 90% of the world's processed rare earths and rare earth magnets, vital in products ranging from cars to missiles.

Following the agreement reached between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, China said last week it would pause for one year the restrictions it imposed in October.

However, China's commerce ministry has said nothing publicly about a broader round of controls introduced in April that rattled global supply chains.

The White House last Saturday said China had agreed to introduce general licences and characterised such permits as the de facto end of China's rare earth export controls.

In private, Chinese officials have said they are working on the licences, three other sources briefed on discussions said, although one said it could take months.

However, other industry insiders said the new licenses do not mean China's wide-ranging rare earth export controls introduced in April have been removed.

China's ministry of commerce did not immediately respond to questions.

The new licences would be valid for a year and probably allow larger export volumes, the first two sources said. Companies are preparing documents, which will require more information from customers, they added.

The sources said they expect more clarity by the end of the year.

Some Chinese rare earth companies said they have not yet been informed of the change.

General licences will likely be harder to acquire for users associated with defence or other sensitive areas, some industry sources said.

All sources spoke on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter.

Introduced in April and expanded in October, Beijing's rare earth rules require exporters to obtain licences for every cargo, an onerous and lengthy process customers complain is holding up exports. The restrictions created shortages in May which brought parts of the auto industry to a halt.



Bomb squad officers stand at the entrance of a school complex in Jakarta yesterday.

Blasts injure dozens at Indonesian mosque

Reuters
Jakarta

Explosions at a mosque in Indonesia's capital Jakarta that injured dozens of people during Friday prayers could have been an attack, officials indicated, with a 17-year-old student the suspected perpetrator.

Police said 55 people were in hospitals with a range of minor to serious injuries, including burns, after the blasts at the mosque inside a school complex in the Kelapa Gading area.

"We were so surprised by the sound, it was massive. Our hearts were beating fast, we couldn't breathe, and we ran outside," said Luciana, 43, who was working at the school

canteen at the time. She described multiple blasts, broken windows and panic as dozens fled the complex. "I thought it was an electrical wiring problem, or the sound system exploded, but we didn't know exactly what it was because we ran out just as a white smoke billowed from the mosque."

Deputy house speaker Sufmi Dasco Ahmad, speaking to media after visiting a hospital, said the young male suspect was undergoing surgery, without giving more details or possible motive.

Indonesia's national police chief Listyo Sigit Prabowo said the suspect was a student at the adjacent school, and an investigation was underway into his background and motive.

"We have identified the suspected perpetrator, and we are currently investigating the

perpetrator's identity, his environment, including his home and other things," he said.

Police found a "toy weapon" at the scene with some inscriptions on it, Indonesia's presidential palace said, without elaborating.

Police cordoned off the iron-gated compound as a crime scene, with black-clad officers carrying assault rifles while emergency vehicles and armoured vehicles lined up in the street.

The complex is in a crowded area on largely navy-owned land, home to many military personnel and retired officers. At the scene, a line of shoes stood outside the green-painted mosque, while forensics combed through evidence. A damaged alms box and fan lay on the ground but there appeared to be no major structural damage to the exterior.

Japan to temporarily hike fuel subsidies

Japan's industry ministry yesterday said it will temporarily raise gasoline and diesel subsidies from next week in an attempt to smooth the impact of planned tax cuts on the fuels.

The country's ruling and opposition parties agreed this week to scrap the gasoline levy by December 31 and the tax on diesel by April 1 next year to ease the burden on households.

By temporarily raising subsidies on gasoline and diesel, the government hopes consumers will not be tempted to delay purchases before the tax cuts are implemented.

The move should also mean Japan avoids long queues at gas stations if there is a sharp overnight drop in prices. While referred to as provisional, the tax on gasoline and diesel has been in place since the 1970s, when it was introduced as a temporary step to fund road building and maintenance.

The tax currently adds 251 yen (\$0.17) per litre to the base rate of 28.7 yen on gasoline and 171 yen to the base rate of 15.0 yen on diesel.



Sri Lanka's President Anura Kumara Dissanayake (left) presents the 2026 budget to parliament as Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya (second left), Minister of Transport, Highways and Urban Development Bimal Rathnayake (second right) and Minister of Health and Mass Media Nalinda Jayatissa (right) watch in Colombo yesterday.

Sri Lanka vows to overhaul loss-making national airline

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake yesterday vowed to overhaul the country's loss-making national airline after the government failed to find a buyer, in line with commitments under an IMF bailout.

Successive administrations have sought to sell SriLankan Airlines, which has been burdening the state budget, but Dissanayake told parliament there had been "no takers" despite sustained efforts to attract a foreign buyer.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) granted a \$2.9bn bailout loan to Sri Lanka in 2023 and had insisted that loss-making state enterprises, including the carrier, should be restructured or sold to ease the strain on public finances.

The carrier, with accumulated losses nearing \$2bn by the end of March 2025, still has an outstanding \$175mn sovereign-guaranteed

bond awaiting rescheduling.

Dissanayake said the process was expected to be completed by year's end.

"We will also restructure the management of SriLankan Airlines early next year," Dissanayake told parliament while unveiling the 2026 budget for the country, which is emerging from its worst economic meltdown in 2022.

He said the management has been asked to formulate a credible business plan to salvage the carrier.

"Should the taxpayers carry the huge burden of SriLankan Airlines?" he asked, warning that if the reforms failed "alternative action" would follow, without elaborating.

The country defaulted on its \$46bn foreign debt in April 2022 after running out of foreign exchange.

The government was on track to resume repaying its own commercial external debt from 2028, thanks to better-than-expected export earnings and remittances, Dissanayake said.

Deadly typhoon ravages Vietnam, Philippines

AFP
Vietnam

Typhoon Kalmaegi churned across Vietnam yesterday, claiming five more lives after its devastating passage through the Philippines where the death toll rose to 188.

Kalmaegi unleashed record rainfall and flooding in the central Philippines this week - sweeping away cars, trucks and shipping containers before lashing Vietnam.

"The roof of my house was just blown away," said Nguyen Van Tam, a 42-year-old fisherman in Vietnam's Gia Lai province where the

storm made landfall late Thursday.

"We were all safe, (but) the typhoon was really terrible, so many trees fallen," he said, adding that his boat had survived intact.

Vietnamese authorities were still assessing the damage yesterday, but the environment ministry reported five dead, and 57 houses collapsed in Gia Lai and neighbouring Dak Lak.

Nearly 3,000 more had their roofs blown off or were damaged, it said, while 11 boats or ships sank.

Vo Thi Danh, 43, watched from higher ground as Kalmaegi ripped through Nhon Hai fishing village in Gia Lai, splitting boats into kindling and sweeping away the small seaside house where she lived with her fam-

ily. "The waves were so high, swallowing in the whole house," she said in tears as she surveyed the rubble. "The house totally collapsed, nothing left."

It was one of seven homes clustered together in the fishing village that were reduced to chunks of concrete and twisted metal.

In the streets along Gia Lai's Quy Nhon beach, journalists saw rescue workers and soldiers working with residents to clear uprooted trees, remove debris and collect sheet-metal roofs blown away in the night.

The state power company said 1.6mn clients lost electricity as the typhoon smashed the central coast, but service to a third of them had

been restored by yesterday morning.

Vietnam is in one of the most active tropical cyclone regions on Earth and is typically affected by 10 typhoons or storms a year.

Kalmaegi was the 13th of 2025 and hit the country with sustained winds of up to 149kms per hour, according to the environment ministry.

Scientists warn that storms are becoming more powerful due to human-driven climate change. Warmer oceans allow typhoons to strengthen rapidly, and a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture, meaning heavier rainfall.

Fast-moving Kalmaegi had already swept northwest toward Laos by morning with significantly weak-

ened winds, but heavy rain was still forecast for much of Vietnam's central coast, the national weather bureau said.

The storm was next forecast to hit Thailand, which issued a warning yesterday for heavy rainfall and flooding starting in the northeast and spreading to the rest of the country.

Kalmaegi had initially battered the islands of Cebu and Negros in the Philippines before swooping back out to sea.

Floodwaters described as unprecedented rushed through the hardest hit Cebu province's towns and cities, where the hunt for missing people continues.

Philippine authorities raised the death toll to 188, with 135 still missing.

The typhoon hit central Vietnam as it was still reeling from more than a week of flooding and record rains that killed at least 47 people and submerged centuries-old historic sites.

The heavy rains starting in late October had drenched the former imperial capital Hue and the ancient town of Hoi An, both Unesco-listed sites, turning streets into canals and flooding tens of thousands of homes.

Up to 1.7 metres fell over one 24-hour period in a downpour breaking national records.

India signs deal to buy 113 US engines for Tejas jets

Reuters
New Delhi

India yesterday signed a deal to buy 113 engines from General Electric to power an advanced variant of its home-produced Tejas fighter jets, in a sign of warming ties with the US following

months of tariff-induced tensions. The Tejas Mk-1A fighters are crucial for India's efforts to shore up its air force's depleting fighter squadrons and replace ageing jets in the face of neighbouring China's growing military strength and support for New Delhi's arch-rival Pakistan. But the rollout of the fighter has been delayed due to slow deliveries

from GE of 99 engines ordered in 2021, of which only four have arrived so far. GE has blamed supply chain issues following Covid-19. Yesterday's deal is a follow-on order to power more of the fighters, with the engines expected to be delivered over five years from 2027, Indian state-owned warplane maker Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd said

in a statement after the signing. It did not mention the deal value. India's relations with the US had soured after President Donald Trump doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50% in August as punishment for New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, which led New Delhi to pause purchases of US defence equipment. Trump said last month

that he planned to reach a trade deal with India, and on Thursday told reporters in Washington that trade talks were going well, and he could visit India next year. The comment followed a reduction in purchases of Russian oil by Indian refiners after US sanctions last month on Russia's top two producers. Trump was due to visit In-

dia this year for the summit of leaders of the Quad grouping, which comprises Australia, Japan, India and the United States. But Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said last month that the summit would likely be held in the first quarter of 2026, and that Trump "has a busy period" ahead in 2025.

'Systemic racism' hard-wired into London police, states report

AFP
London

Decades of "systemic racism" within London's Metropolitan Police mean discrimination is "embedded" into its systems, leadership and culture, a new review of the force said yesterday - 26 years after another report reached similar conclusions. The independent probe, commissioned after a landmark 2023 study found the Met - Britain's biggest force - "institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic", warned its racism impacts internally and in public-facing policing. It also permeates into other forms of discrimination, the 126-page report concluded. Authored by Shereen Daniels, a leading expert on human resources and addressing systemic racism within complex organisations, it tries to "diagnose" why the force has struggled to reform despite decades of similar warnings. A string of scandals in recent years have rocked confidence in UK policing, in particular the 2021 kidnap, rape and murder of Londoner Sarah Everard by serving Met officer Wayne Couzens. "This is not an account of individual incidents but a diagnosis of the structures that makes racial harm a consistent recurring pattern," Daniels said in a statement

unveiling the report, named "30 Patterns of Harm". "This entire body of work demonstrates how institutional racism operates in practice," she added. "It traces how racial harm becomes built into systems, behaviours and leadership norms that normalise discrimination and protect the organisation from consequence." The Met welcomed the report and said it "recognises the scale of the challenges it sets out". "This is a moment that calls for reflection, and further change," it said in a statement. It comes 26 years after the Macpherson Report found the force institutionally racist in the wake of the 1993 murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, recommending dozens of reforms. More recent scandals have shone a fresh light on enduring racism, homophobia, sexism and misogyny. As well as the Everard case, another officer, David Carrick, was jailed for life in 2023 for dozens of rapes and sexual assaults stretching back two decades. Just last month, the BBC aired footage from seven months of undercover filming at a central London police station that showed officers making sexualised, racist and misogynistic comments. They also expressed anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim views and revelled in the use of force. Following the revelations, five officers were sacked.

Smoggy morning



A man rows his boat in the Yamuna river on a smoggy morning in the old quarters of Delhi, India, yesterday.

Air traffic system glitch at Delhi airport resolved

Reuters
New Delhi

The Indian airports authority late yesterday said a system used to generate flight plans was "up and running", more than a day after a technical glitch led to delays of hundreds of flights at Delhi airport, one of the world's busiest. The malfunction, which had delayed departures and arrivals, had sent shares of IndiGo 2% lower yesterday, while SpiceJet lost 1% after the airlines, along with Air India Group, warned of disruptions, which are expected to spill over into today. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) said it will take some time for the system to resume functioning normally, given the huge backlog.

At least 200 flights were delayed yesterday after the system started malfunctioning at around 6pm the previous day, a source familiar with the matter said. "The issue was detected... in the IP-based Automatic Message Switching System (AMSS)," AAI said in a post on X, without providing details on the cause of the technical issue. The malfunction in the AMSS, used to generate flight plans, forced controllers to develop them manually, leading to delays, the AAI said earlier yesterday. Some airlines, such as Air India Express, deputed their own personnel to air traffic control to generate flight plans manually, a second source familiar with the matter said. The incident follows a ransomware attack that disrupted some of Europe's biggest airports, knocking out automated check-in sys-

tems and affecting flights in September. The glitch in India delayed about 25 flight departures on Thursday and more than 175 yesterday at Delhi airport, the first source said. Delhi airport handles 60-70 aircraft movements per hour. Data from Flightradar24 showed the average departure delay was 60 minutes yesterday evening. The malfunction also hit several international airlines, with an ITA Airways flight to Rome delayed by nearly two hours and a Virgin Atlantic flight to London by more than an hour. Delhi airport handled about 78mn passengers in 2024, making it the ninth busiest airport in the world, according to Airports Council International. The operator of the airport is majority owned by GMR Airports, while air traffic control is managed by the AAI.

India in talks to create bigger banks: minister

India needs more "big banks" and efforts are underway to achieve that goal, including the possibility of consolidating some state-run banks, the finance minister said. India has 12 state-owned banks, which together held assets totalling Rs171tn (\$1.95tn) as of March. The government in 2020 consolidated 27 banks into 12. It is also considering allowing higher foreign investment in state-owned lenders. "India needs a lot of big, world class banks, and for that we will have to talk with the Reserve Bank (of India) and banks, and to see how they want to take it forward," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said. The government will also discuss the idea with the RBI, the minister said. The minister was responding to a question on whether the government is discussing further bank consolidation and higher foreign investment limits for public sector banks.

Woman on Bali death row returns to UK



Security attempt to stop media photographing Lindsay Sandiford, as she is wheeled to waiting transport after landing at Terminal 4 of London Heathrow airport yesterday, as part of a repatriation agreement between Indonesia and the UK. Two British drug convicts including grandmother Lindsay Sandiford, who was on death row, flew home early yesterday, as part of a deal to return them on humanitarian grounds. Lindsay Sandiford, 69, was sentenced to death on the tourist island of Bali in 2013 after she was convicted of trafficking drugs.

India tests digital systems for biggest ever census

AFP
New Delhi

India is trialling mobile software systems as it prepares to conduct the world's largest - and first fully digital - population census in 2027. The upcoming census will be the country's first since 2011 and will, for the first time since independence, register people's castes. A 20-day trial begins November 10 in selected areas of the state of Karnataka. It will test a mobile app-based data collection system and self-enumeration options designed to replace traditional paper-based methods. "The objective is to assess the functioning and efficiency of the digital application across diverse areas - from urban regions to those with limited mo-

bile network connectivity," the ministry of home affairs said in a statement. "This trial marks a significant step towards India's first-ever fully digital census, replacing traditional paper-based schedules." The exercise presents an immense logistical challenge - voting in the 2024 elections was electronic, and polling took place in seven phases over six weeks. But a census must be conducted all at one time to fix a single snapshot of the population - and avoid any double-counting. The main count is scheduled to take place on March 1, 2027. But in high-altitude Himalayan regions - including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Ladakh, and the territory of Jammu and Kashmir - the census will begin earlier on October 1, 2026, before snowfall begins.

Woman found guilty of harassing Madeleine McCann's parents

AFP
London

A UK jury yesterday convicted a Polish woman who had claimed to be Madeleine McCann - one of the world's highest-profile missing persons - of harassing the girl's parents, but acquitted her of stalking them. Madeleine was just three years old when she vanished 18 years ago from the apartment where her family was vacationing on Portugal's Algarve coast, triggering a massive global search to find her. Jurors found Julia Wandelt, 24, from Lubin in Poland, guilty

of harassment but cleared her of the more serious charge of stalking "involving serious alarm and distress" to Kate and Gerry McCann. The McCann parents, both doctors, have borne the brunt of international attention ever since their daughter disappeared in 2007. Nearly two decades on, the case remains unsolved. Standing in the dock at Leicesters Crown Court in central England, Wandelt gasped and put her hands to her face when she heard the verdict. The jury also cleared co-defendant Karen Spragg, from the Welsh capital Cardiff, of the same

counts after she was accused of helping Wandelt show up at the couple's home and contacting them by phone and in messages. She cried on hearing the decision. The unanimous verdicts followed a month-long trial that saw both parents and their other daughter make rare public appearances by testifying in court. Kate McCann spoke of her distress after Wandelt banged on the door of the family home and appeared at a vigil for Madeleine. Meanwhile, the missing girl's younger sister Amelie recounted receiving "creepy" social media messages as Wandelt made repeated ignored requests for the

McCann parents to take a DNA test. But Wandelt's lawyer Tom Price had urged jurors to acquit her, arguing she was confused about her parental background. Giving evidence herself, Wandelt revealed a troubled background, having previously self-harmed and attempted suicide after she was abused as a child by her step-grandfather. She told the court a sketch of a suspect in Madeleine's disappearance looked "quite similar" to her abuser and that the suspect shared his surname. She noted that was a "big factor" in her beginning to believe she was the missing girl.

Wandelt claimed to have limited childhood memories but that they included being with the McCann family, playing ring-a-ring-a-roses and feeding Madeleine's younger brother Sean. She insisted she "tried everything" - including contacting Interpol, police and missing persons charities - before contacting the McCanns. The Polish national insisted she had not made the claims for attention or financial gain but to "fully know who I am". "She wanted answers to the complex questions that may arise from her rather unfortunate background," Price told jurors. However, prosecutors detailed

"unequivocal scientific evidence" from a forensic expert showing she does not match Madeleine's DNA profile and that she has no familial link to the McCanns. In his closing remarks, prosecutor Michael Duck called Wandelt "capable of being extremely manipulative". He accused both defendants of "tormenting" the McCanns and trying to "impose their will" on them despite knowing their "cruel and unforgiving" actions were wrong. Spragg was accused of aiding her by leaving messages for Kate McCann, sending emails and "confronting" the couple on their driveway.



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

Production Editor

Amjad Khan

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✉ editor@gulf-times.com
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GULF TIMES

Why climate finance is not enough

With the UN Climate Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, approaching, it is clear that the world's widely shared commitment to a just energy transition is falling by the wayside. In the year since governments signed on to the agreement at COP29 to scale up climate finance – with a goal of mobilising \$1.3tn annually by 2035 – wealthy countries have been retreating from their financial pledges. Worse, these signs of bad faith are coming just as the costs of climate adaptation and decarbonisation in developing countries are mounting.

If the Global North is no longer willing to meet its funding promises, as now seems certain, it can still demonstrate good faith, nonetheless, through another form of solidarity: sharing the knowledge, technology, and intellectual property that underpin the green transition.

This is not an issue that can be deferred. The shift to a green economy is already reproducing the same asymmetries that have long defined global trade. Instead of fostering inclusive development, climate policy is increasingly being shaped by protectionist measures and IP regimes that entrench technological monopolies in the Global North. For example, the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism may be billed as a safeguard against carbon leakage; but it also illustrates how climate policy can be used to justify protectionist trade measures.

Moreover, China's recent complaint against India for its electric-vehicle and battery subsidies shows how green industrial policies are increasingly becoming grounds for trade disputes. Together, these developments signal a growing tension between climate goals and World Trade Organisation rules. Could measures to address climate change soon become a new impetus for economic exclusion?

The shift to a green economy is already reproducing asymmetries that have long defined global trade

At the heart of this issue lies a stark imbalance: larger powers like China, the US, and the EU are producing high-value green technologies, while most developing countries are stuck exporting low-value green commodities – primarily critical minerals. This mirrors the colonial-era division of labour, whereby the Global South supplied raw materials, and the North supplied innovation, monopolised production, and reaped the largest profits.

Data from the World Intellectual Property

Organisation underscore the depth of this divide. Green patents (relating to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate adaptation) are overwhelmingly concentrated in a handful of countries, such as China, the US, Japan, and Germany. Between 2000 and 2024, the top ten economies accounted for nearly 90% of international patent filings in solar and wind technologies. Brazil, despite ranking sixth globally in installed wind capacity, contributed only 0.4% of global wind patents. For solar, its share was a mere 0.19%.

This technological concentration is not accidental. It is the result of a global IP regime that privileges monopoly profits over public goods. Efforts to foster more global coordination, including through the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, have failed to address the fundamental problem.

Without access to affordable technologies, the Global South cannot fully participate in the climate transition. Worse, the current system risks locking developing countries into a new form of dependency, supplying the minerals for batteries and solar panels but lacking the means to produce them.

Climate finance is not sufficient to break this cycle. Instead, technology transfers and reforms to the global IP regime must be at the centre of climate negotiations. While the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris climate agreement do acknowledge this, little progress has been made.

Fortunately, there is a precedent for the necessary changes. Back in the 2000s, Brazil played a pivotal role in categorising access to HIV/Aids medicines as a public good, rather than as a commodity governed solely by IP rights. This shift was driven by a combination of legal, political, and civil-society actions that challenged the global pharmaceutical patent regime and put public health first.

Brazil's COP30 presidency can rally the Global South behind a vision of TIP that delivers climate justice through innovation. – Project Syndicate

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Europe must find its own way in Ukraine

By Zaki Laidi
Paris

Recent developments in the Donbas confirm that while the Russian army is indeed advancing, its progress is very slow and comes at a phenomenal cost in human lives and limbs. But if Russian President Vladimir Putin can shrug off the deaths of hundreds of thousands of his soldiers, does that mean Ukraine and Europe are destined to live with an endless conflict?

To believe that Russia is on the verge of some kind of economic or political collapse is wishful thinking. Russia commands far more resources than Ukraine does, and Westerners have too often underestimated the Russian army's adaptability. The country still has a massive capacity to produce (and import) attack drones and mobilise military investment at a rate double that of the West in Ukraine. That means it can maintain a manpower and an equipment edge despite its massive losses. The civilian economy may be stagnant, but the military machine is running at full speed.

But even if we are willing to admit that there will be no military solution, because neither Ukraine nor Russia can win the war, we must ask how the bloodletting can be stopped. One way is for the West to increase its support for Ukraine while doing more to break the back of Russia's war economy, namely by doing what it takes to cut off its hydrocarbon exports. This is not a simple matter: the European Union's energy imports from Russia in 2024 exceeded its annual aid to Ukraine.

To force a reckoning that might end the fighting, it would seem that Europe needs US President Donald Trump's help. The US would have to provide Ukraine with the capability to strike targets deep inside Russia, just as Russia has been doing to Ukraine. The US would also need to seize frozen Russian financial assets that are under its jurisdiction and send them to Ukraine. Then, the US and the EU would need to impose secondary sanctions on the main buyers of Russian hydrocarbons: India, China, and Türkiye. Well-designed secondary sanctions have been the best weapons deployed



against Russia's war economy so far, and harsh measures targeting its energy sector could be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

The 50% tariff that Trump slapped on India was not really related to its purchases of Russian oil; rather, it is a ploy to extract concessions from India's government. Once those are obtained, Trump may well drop the 50% levy.

As for China, the uncertainty is even greater. Having just announced a trade armistice with China, Trump is unlikely to risk antagonising it over Ukraine – a country that he cares nothing about. Moreover, if Trump were to ask Chinese President Xi Jinping to intercede with Putin, what would Xi ask for in exchange? He would probably propose an arrangement in which Ukraine is neutralised as a perceived threat to Russia, which would threaten European interests (not to mention Ukrainian sovereignty). Since this would be in line with the spheres-of-influence diplomacy that Xi, Putin, and Trump all embrace, Trump would probably jump at it.

Whereas former US President Joe Biden's foreign policy sought to preserve American primacy in the world, Trump seems more open to co-managing things with the Chinese, even going so far as to refer to the Sino-American relationship as the "G2". But even with all the benefits that would accrue to China in a carved-up world, Xi would not bring Putin on board for free. On the contrary, he would want the US to state openly that Taiwan is not and never will be an independent state.

Since January 2025, Putin has managed to buy time by manipulating the easily manipulated Trump. This approach is now reaching its limits, however, simply because Trump has failed to extract any concession from Putin that would allow him to claim, however implausibly, a formal diplomatic victory. Still, Trump is not seeking Russia's defeat, and though he may finally be putting a little more pressure on Putin, it is not the kind that would ever make Putin buckle. But China can push Putin toward a compromise.

What could this look like? Sadly, European Commission President

Ursula von der Leyen lacks the competence to meet with Xi as an equal; European Council President Antonio Costa is too self-effacing; and the new EU chief diplomat, former Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, appears to be too weak to take the lead. It is therefore up to leading member states – France, Germany, and Poland (given its proximity to Russia and Ukraine) – to act. Dialogue with the Kremlin must happen, too, whether Europeans like it or not. Europe alone cannot reverse the tide unless it bets on a Russian collapse, which is far from certain.

Of course, what is true today will not necessarily be true tomorrow. Everything is a matter of the balance of power, not of clear-cut principles. Europe, which is enduring many hardships, has no interest in an endless war in Ukraine. But it does have interests there, and it cannot afford to agree to a settlement that ignores them. – Project Syndicate

• Zaki Laidi, a former special adviser to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2020–24), is a professor at Sciences Po.

Toward humanist superintelligence

By Mustafa Suleyman
Redmond

For decades, the Turing test was AI researchers' North Star. Today, it's been quietly surpassed. With reasoning models and agentic capabilities emerging, and with the pace of AI infrastructure build increasing, we have crossed an inflection point on the journey to superintelligence: the point at which AI exceeds human-level performance at all tasks.

Indeed, the most consequential question for our time is not whether AI will surpass us, because in some ways it already has (try beating an AI at general knowledge), in many other ways, it will, and in some ways we will always be unique. The real question, then, is whether we can shape AI to advance human flourishing rather than undermine it. That is the most important challenge of our time.

To be sure, everyone is primed by now to roll their eyes at AI hype. I get it. But the stakes could not be higher. Science and technology have always been humanity's greatest engine of progress. Over the last 250 years, that engine has doubled life expectancy, lifted billions of people out of poverty, and given us antibiotics, electricity, and instant global communication. AI is the next chapter in this story. It represents our best shot at accelerating scientific discovery, economic growth, and human well-being. Whenever you hear about AI, this potential is worth keeping in mind.

But harnessing AI's potential will work out right only if we build AI the right way. The costs of getting it wrong are immense. No one yet has reassuring answers about how we contain or align these systems. We are caught at an odd moment, faced with history's most powerful technologies and unsure how they can be controlled or whether they will remain beneficial.

I think we can cut through the noise and understand it like this: AI, like all technology, can be judged by a simple test. Does it improve human life? Is it clearly working in service of people?

As we embark on the next phase of AI, the answer to these questions lies in what I call Humanist Superintelligence (HSI): advanced AI designed to remain controllable, aligned, and firmly in service to humanity. This project is explicitly about avoiding, at all costs, an unbounded entity with total autonomy.

Instead, we must focus on domain-specific superintelligence. Rather than simply making a system that can endlessly improve and run away with itself for whatever purpose it might eventually arrive at, the core purpose is to deliver practical real-world benefits to billions



of people. It must forever remain unequivocally subordinate to humanity. This is the vision of our Superintelligence Team at Microsoft, where our core mission is to keep humanity secure and firmly in control.

Why humanism? Because history has demonstrated the humanist tradition's enduring power to preserve human dignity. AI built in that spirit can unlock extraordinary benefits while avoiding catastrophic risks. We need a vision of AI that supports humanity, amplifies creativity, and protects our fragile environment – not one that sidelines us.

The prize for humanity is enormous: a world of rapid advances in living standards and science, and a time of new art forms, culture, and growth. It is a truly inspiring mission that has motivated me for decades. We should celebrate and accelerate technology as the greatest engine of progress that humanity has ever known. That's why we need much, much more of it.

HSI offers a safer path forward. Remaining grounded in domain-specific breakthroughs with profound societal impact is an example of this. Imagine AI companions that ease the mental load of daily life, enhance productivity, and transform education through adaptive, individualised learning. Imagine medical superintelligence delivering accurate, affordable expert-level diagnostics that could revolutionise global healthcare, capabilities

already previewed by our health team at Microsoft AI. And consider the potential for AI-driven advances in clean energy that will enable abundant, low-cost power generation, storage, and carbon removal to meet soaring demand while protecting the planet.

With HSI, these are not speculative dreams. They are achievable goals that can benefit people around the world, providing concrete improvements to everyday life.

To state the obvious, humans matter more than tech or AI. Superintelligence could be the best invention ever, but only if it sticks to this maxim. That means ensuring accountability and transparency, and a willingness to make safety a top priority. Our goal is not to build a superintelligence at any cost, but to follow a careful path toward one that is contained, value-aligned, and always focused on human well-being.

Everybody needs to ask themselves this: What kind of AI do we actually want? The answer will shape the future of civilisation. For me, that answer is Humanist Superintelligence. – Project Syndicate

• Mustafa Suleyman is the CEO of Microsoft AI and the author of *The Coming Wave: Technology, Power, and the Twenty-First Century's Greatest Dilemma* (Crown, 2023). He previously co-founded *Inflection AI* and *DeepMind*.

Palestinian Authority chief in Rome



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (left) and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas walk as they meet in Palazzo Chigi in Rome yesterday.

EU airlines agree to drop misleading climate claims

AFF
Brussels

European airlines including Lufthansa, Air France and KLM have agreed to stop making misleading environmental claims about offsetting the carbon emissions from air travel, the European Commission said yesterday. The pledge from 21 carriers will oblige them to clarify that the emissions of a specific flight cannot be “neutralised, offset, or directly reduced” by contributing to climate protection projects or alternative fuels - claims the EU says amount to greenwashing. “To avoid misleading consumers, airlines must refrain from using vague environmental language and ensure that any claims about future environmental performance are

substantiated,” the commission said in a statement. The announcement made in the run-up to next week’s COP30 UN climate summit in Brazil stems from a consultation between airlines, the EU executive and consumer protection groups. Airlines also pledged to present carbon emission calculations in a clear and transparent manner and provide robust scientific evidence when claiming environmental improvements. The carriers concerned are Air Baltic, Air Dolomiti, Air France, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings, EasyJet, Finnair, KLM, Lufthansa, Luxair, Norwegian, Ryanair, SAS, SWISS, TAP, Transavia France, Transavia CV, Volotea, Vueling and Wizz Air. The commitments follow a formal complaint lodged with the European Commission in June

2023 by consumer groups, which accused the aviation sector of misleading advertising practices. The industry has begun to shift its messaging after a series of legal setbacks. In March 2024, a Dutch court ruled against KLM in a greenwashing case, saying the airline misled consumers with vague claims about the sustainability of its flights. A year later, a German court barred Lufthansa from advertising carbon offsetting in a way deemed deceptive. Air France no longer offers carbon offsets for flights. Instead, it suggests passengers contribute to the purchase of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). “There is room to change” in the way airlines communicate, said Diane Vitry, who heads up the aviation section of the NGO Transport & Environment.

EU restricts visas for Russian nationals over Ukraine war

AFF
Brussels

The European Union (EU) yesterday said it would deny Russians multi-entry visas as security fears rise nearly four years into the war on Ukraine. The 27-nation bloc is looking to ramp up pressure on Moscow and tighten controls, as air incursions and unexplained drone flights fuel worries the Kremlin is seeking to destabilise Europe. “Starting a war and expecting to move freely in Europe is hard to justify,” EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas wrote on X. “The EU is tightening visa rules for Russian nationals amid continued drone disruptions and sabotage on European soil.” Brussels said that from now on Russian nationals “will have to apply for a new visa each time they plan to travel to the EU, allowing for close and frequent scrutiny of applicants to mitigate any potential security risk”. It said there will

be “exceptions for justified cases such as independent journalists and human rights defenders” under the new rules. “Under the newly adopted provisions, all visa applications submitted by nationals of the Russian Federation will be subject to enhanced verification procedures and elevated levels of scrutiny,” EU internal affairs commissioner Magnus Brunner said. The bloc already tightened controls on travel by Russian diplomats stationed in the EU’s 27 countries last month amid fears the Kremlin was waging a “hybrid war” in the bloc. Hawkish EU countries have long pushed for tougher visa limits on ordinary Russians, arguing they should not be able to travel freely for tourism while the war rages in Ukraine. The EU in 2022 suspended its visa facilitation agreement with Russia and has told member states to “deprioritise” visas for Russians. Brussels says the number of visas issued to Russians fell from more than four million before the war to some 500,000 in 2023.

But EU diplomats said the number of visas granted had begun to tick up again this year. Tourist hotspots France, Spain and Italy are among the countries that issue the most visas. While proponents of tougher measures insist ordinary Russians should feel more impact from the war, the Kremlin’s opponents have urged the bloc not to cut them off from Europe. Opposition figurehead Yulia Navalnaya said in September that broad restrictions would be a “serious mistake” as they would feed the Kremlin’s narrative that Europe is hostile to all Russians. She urged the EU to instead keep targeting the elite close to President Vladimir Putin to try to pressure the Russian leader, who has ruthlessly stamped out any opposition at home. “For the purpose of achieving peace in Europe it is counter-productive to assist Russian authorities in isolating Russian society,” Navalnaya wrote in a letter to Kallas.

Ukraine says more than 1,400 Africans fighting for Russia

More than 1,400 citizens from three dozen African countries are fighting alongside Russian forces in Ukraine, Kyiv’s foreign minister said yesterday. Ukrainian officials say Russia has tried to bolster the force attacking its smaller neighbour by recruiting fighters from a variety of countries, sometimes through subterfuge. Andriy Sybiha said Russia was enticing Africans to sign contracts that he described as “equivalent to... a death sentence”, and urged African governments to warn their citizens. “Foreign citizens in the Russian army have a sad fate,” he wrote on X. “Most of them are immediately sent to the so-called ‘meat assaults’, where they are quickly killed.” South Africa said on Thursday

it would investigate how 17 of its citizens joined mercenary forces after the men sent distress calls for help to return home. And Kenya said last month that some of its citizens had been detained in military camps across Russia after unknowingly getting caught up in the conflict. Sybiha said the total number of African recruits could be higher than the 1,436 identified, originating from 36 countries, and that most foreign mercenaries in Ukrainian custody had been captured during their first combat mission. He said Ukraine would provide more specific information about the countries and regions from which Russia has recruited troops. - Reuters

German military creates rapid teams to counter drone threats

Reuters
Berlin

The German military is setting up rapid response teams to counter acute drone threats, a top German military official said, most recently dispatching these experts to assist in Belgium. “These anti-drone units are being established right now,” Lieutenant General Alexander Sollfrank, who heads Germany’s joint operations command and oversees the country’s defence planning, told Reuters in an interview. The German defence ministry said late on Thursday it was sending counter-drone experts to Belgium after a request from the country, which has been struggling with an increase in drone sightings near military installations and civilian airports. “An

advance party of air force personnel have arrived in Belgium to explore the situation and coordinate a temporary mission involving drone detection and counter-drone capabilities with the Belgian forces,” the ministry said in a statement. “The main party will follow shortly.” Sightings of drones over airports and military bases have become a constant problem in Belgium in recent days and have caused major disruptions across Europe in recent months. They forced the temporary closures of airports in several countries including Sweden on Thursday. Some officials have blamed the incidents on “hybrid warfare” by Russia. Moscow has denied any connection with the incidents. Sollfrank declined to go into detail when talking about the new counter-drone units, citing operational security, but said a team

sent to Copenhagen last month during an EU summit had been equipped with a mix of sensors and effectors. “They have varying systems to spot and counter drones. We have the option, for example, to assume control over a drone and land it at a specific location,” said the general. The counter-drone experts also have drones at their disposal that can eject nets to catch drones and thus take them down, as well as interceptors that ram hostile drones, he added. Belgium’s Liege airport resumed flights after a temporary halt due to a drone sighting yesterday, in the second such incident this week. Drones spotted flying over airports in the capital, Brussels, and in Liege, in the country’s east, forced the diversion of many incoming planes and the grounding of some due to depart on Tuesday.



Relatives, friends and colleagues pay last respect during funeral service of late Ukrainian servicemen Kostiartyn Guzenko, 28, in Saint Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral in Kyiv.

Pokrovsk: Embattled Ukrainian city comes within Russia’s grasp

AFF
Kyiv

More than a year after it first tried to capture Pokrovsk, Russia’s army has launched a renewed push on the Ukrainian city in the eastern Donetsk region. Kyiv has been forced to deploy special forces to the strategically located logistics hub, which could be on the brink of falling to Russia. Here is what we know about the city and its significance to both Kyiv and Moscow:

Strategic location

Pokrovsk, home to 60,000 people before the war, is now a largely deserted wasteland devastated by fighting. But its location makes it a coveted target for Moscow. Capturing Pokrovsk could set Russia’s sights on further penetrating the Donetsk region - towards Ukraine’s “fortress belt” of cities including Kramatorsk, Kostyantynivka and Druzhkivka. Kyiv has so far rejected Moscow’s claims that its forces in Pokrovsk were encircled - but Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has conceded that 314 Russian soldiers have infiltrated the city. “Worsening weather enabled Russian troops to get more men into the city in recent weeks,” military expert Michael Kofman, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said on social media. Ukraine deployed elite special forces in a bid to stem Russia’s advance on the city - “but this may not be enough,” according to Kofman. At a briefing on Friday, Zelensky told reporters, including AFP, that “there were 220 assaults on Pokrovsk in three days”. Lying at the junction of important roads, Pokrovsk has been a key logistics hub for Ukraine through the war, vital for its supplies across the entire Donetsk region. Pokrovsk is also located near a major mine that until earlier this year was Ukraine’s last producer of coking coal - a key pillar for the war-torn economy used in the production of steel.

Military implications

Pokrovsk is one of the major urban settlements in the approximately one-fifth of the Donetsk region still under Ukraine’s control. Were Russia to seize Pokrovsk, it may be able to rede-



Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks as he answers a question during a meeting with the media, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv.

Experts were split on how much the capture of Pokrovsk could accelerate Russia’s so-far grinding advance

ploy forces towards other strategic cities in the region. It could also open the door to advances elsewhere on the front. Russia “may try to increase pressure from east to west through the territory of the Dnipropetrovsk region along the Vovcha River”, Oleksiy Kopytko, a Ukrainian military expert at the Center for Military-Political Investigations NGO, told AFP. “This would allow them to reach the northern part of the Zaporizhzhia region,” Kopytko said. Moscow-based independent military analyst Alexander Khramchikhin told AFP capturing the city could “provide Russia with a breakthrough, at least in this direction”. However, experts were split on how much the capture of Pokrovsk could accelerate Russia’s so-far grinding advance. Khramchikhin said it was plausible that “no fundamental changes will occur, and the same slow, eroding process that has been going on for two years will continue.” Even if the role of Pokrovsk as a gateway to the rest of the region was not clear, Kopytko said capturing the city would provide

other practical benefits for Russia’s army. “It is better to face and endure the winter in a city, even if it is ruined, where there are basements to hide in, rather than in the open field,” he said. Hunkering there would also provide more protection from drones, he added. Aside from its military importance, the capture of Pokrovsk would provide a major propaganda boost for the Kremlin in its nearly four-year invasion. It would be one of Moscow’s most significant territorial gains since the capture of Avdiivka in February 2024 - fuelling the Kremlin’s narrative that its forces are in the ascendant. For Ukraine, its army already outgunned and plagued by manpower shortages, losing Pokrovsk would deal a similarly heavy blow to morale. It could also put Kyiv on the spot with questions about the operation to defend the city. A respected military blogger who also serves in the Ukrainian army, Yury Butusov, recently slammed Kyiv’s landing of special forces in the “semi-encircled” city. “The landing of two detachments of fighters in an open area in a kill zone, in full view of enemy drones, is an illiterate tactical decision,” Butusov said on social media. Questions also loom over how a high-profile military setback could affect Kyiv’s volatile relationship with US President Donald Trump, who has at different times both urged Zelensky to give up the region and encouraged him to completely oust the Russian forces.



The second day of Qatar Boat Show 2025 saw strong VIP presence from government entities including HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, Minister of Transport, accompanied by Dr Sheikh Abdullah bin Ahmed al-Khalifah, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications of the Kingdom of Bahrain and other leading industry figures.

Ministry of Transport attends Qatar Boat Show as strategic partner

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) is taking part in the 2nd edition of the Qatar Boat Show 2025 as the strategic partner of the event. Numerous local and international entities specialised in maritime industries and services are participating in the show, which runs until today at the Old Doha Port.

An MoT booth at the show highlights some of MoT's digital maritime services available via the Darb application, which users can install and use anytime, anywhere, thereby saving them time and effort.



Using the Darb app among other services can be used to register a new small craft, renew your registration, modify craft specifica-



tions, have a replacement of lost or damaged documents issued, and delete a craft. Users can also request their documents be delivered to their doorsteps via Qatar Post.

The booth also featured a mockup of the main station of the water taxi project in Lusail, as well as a visual presentation on its facilities. The project aims to provide modern waterborne public transit systems with cutting-edge ecofriendly technologies. The booth visitors can also participate in some competitions focused on maritime safety awareness.

The MoT booth saw a high turnout, with visitors showing eagerness to learn more about what the Ministry offers, such as digital services and forward-looking transportation and mobility projects in light of its MoT Strategy 2025-2030 and in step with the goals of the QNV 2030.

The MoT continues supporting specialised national events aimed at enhancing Qatar's profile as a pioneering regional hub for maritime transportation and logistics services.

'Oshar' exhibition spotlights Qatari women's contributions to nation's cultural landscape

From Page 1

She said this name serves as a springboard for the exhibition's core theme: the enduring collective memory and identity of the Qatari people.

The exhibition's concept, the curator added, was developed around their shared heritage, centring on their experiences of the sea, fishing, boats, the desert, and other elements that shape their cultural identity.

According to Mohammed, the curation aims to break the traditional barrier of time in art, which includes paintings from the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and new pieces from 2025.

"I wanted to show that the people have the same memory," she said, adding the display demonstrates that despite the nation gaining a better economy, the people's fundamental appreciation for their origins remains strong.



Maritime-themed artworks inspired by Qatar's seafaring legacy on display at Oshar Art Gallery at the Qatar Boat Show 2025. The curator says 'Osha' touches on more than just the boats and the waves, but also incorporates literature and spirituality.

PICTURES: Joey Aguilar



Visit Qatar showcases diverse tourism offerings at WTM London

QNA
London

Visit Qatar has successfully concluded its participation at World Travel Market (WTM) London 2025, held from November 4-6 at ExCeL London.

The international exhibition served as a key platform to highlight Qatar's tourism offering and the country's growing position as a global tourism destination.

Visit Qatar led a delegation of 48 partners, including new corporate participants Qatar Rail, Sidra Medicine, Aspetar, and Qatar Creates, alongside leading hospitality and destination partners.

The pavilion showcased Qatar's diverse tourism offerings through an impressive 700sq m, two-level pavilion, complemented by a 150sq m mezzanine dedicated to trade meetings and business engagements.

It featured immersive cultural activations and a dedicated Qatar Calendar experience, which highlighted the nation's growing line-up of world-class events and festivals.

This year's edition of WTM London saw a series of major milestones for Qatar, including the announcement of a new strategic partnership between Visit Qatar and Experience Oman to promote multi-destination



travel. Visit Qatar also held several key engagements, notably a strategic meeting with Almosafer (part of Seera Group) to advance joint marketing initiatives and develop tailored travel products for the Saudi market, one of Qatar's key source markets.

The Qatar Pavilion also welcomed senior

delegations from the Saudi Tourism Authority and the Jordan Tourism Board, reaffirming shared ambitions to strengthen regional tourism collaboration and boost cross-market travel.

Further strengthening its global partnerships, Qatar Tourism signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Forbes

Travel Guide to enhance hospitality standards through professional development programmes, service benchmarking, and global accreditation initiatives, further reinforcing Qatar's commitment to service excellence.

In addition, Qatar Tourism joined the expanded Cruise Arabia Alliance, marking an important step towards

strengthening the Gulf region's position as a world-class cruise destination.

Visit Qatar's participation at WTM London 2025 underscores the nation's commitment to showcasing its cultural heritage, hospitality, and evolving visitor experiences to global audiences, in line with Qatar's long-term tourism development goals.