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**BUSINESS | Page 1**

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**Amir arrives in Athens**



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani arrived in Athens on a working visit to Greece. Upon his arrival at Athens International Airport, His Highness was welcomed by Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Georgios Gerapetritis, Qatar's ambassador Ali bin Khalfan al-Mansouri and members of the Qatari embassy. His Highness the Amir is accompanied by an official delegation. (QNA)

**Amir, GCC leaders review regional developments**



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday joined Their Majesties and Highnesses the GCC leaders and heads of delegations at a consultative summit held in Jeddah, where discussions focused on regional and international developments. His Highness the Amir was accompanied by senior officials, including HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, along with other members of the official delegation. Following the meeting, His Highness the Amir attended a luncheon hosted by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, in honour of the participating Gulf leaders. Earlier, His Highness the Amir was received upon arrival at

the Royal Terminal at King Abdulaziz International Airport by Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. Secretary-General of GCC, Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi was also present at the reception, alongside Deputy Governor of Makkah Region, Prince Saud bin Mishaal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Qatar's ambassador Bandar bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, and Saudi ambassador to Qatar Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud as well as senior Saudi officials. Later, His Highness the Amir departed Saudi Arabia following his participation in the consultative summit. Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, expressed his gratitude to the GCC leaders for their efforts at the Consultative Gulf Summit hosted by the Kingdom. This summit reflects the kingdom's commitment to strengthening

**تميم بن حمد**  
@TamimBinHamad

"Our Gulf Consultative Summit today in Jeddah embodies the unified Gulf position regarding the current situation, and what it requires in terms of intensifying coordination and consultation, in a way that strengthens the active role of our countries in supporting diplomatic tracks, preserving the security of the region, ensuring the stability of its peoples, and achieving their aspirations for development and prosperity."

communication and consultation, and supporting co-ordination and joint action to achieve regional security and stability, he said. (QNA)

**UAE pulls out of Opec citing 'national interests'**

The United Arab Emirates will withdraw from the Opec and Opec+ oil cartels to focus on "national interests", it announced yesterday, causing fresh shockwaves as energy prices soar over the Middle East war. The UAE, one of the world's top oil producers, which has previously chafed at Opec production quotas, will pull out on Friday, a statement carried by the official WAM news agency said. The UAE has been an Opec member through the emirate of Abu Dhabi since 1967, four years before the former British protectorate became a country. The last Opec member to withdraw from the cartel was Angola in 2024. "This decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy profile," the UAE statement said. "During our time in the organisation, we made significant contributions and even greater sacrifices for the benefit of all," it added. "However, the time has come to focus our efforts on what our national interest dictates." (AFP)

**Qatar rejects Hormuz pressure tactics**

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Qatar has categorically rejected any attempt to weaponise the Strait of Hormuz as a tool of political pressure, warning that its closure has already triggered far-reaching repercussions for global energy, food security and international supply chains. Speaking at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' weekly media briefing, Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari said preventing the passage of ships and tankers through the strategic waterway was "unacceptable under any circumstances", and that keeping it open must remain a priority regardless of political or military considerations. He stressed that the current situation served no party's interests. Al-Ansari said Qatar places the safety of oil tanker crews at the forefront of its priorities and continues to closely monitor developments and negotiations aimed at reopening the waterway, while reiterating warnings against exploiting the strait amid mounting



Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari. PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

global economic and geopolitical tensions. Turning to the consultative Gulf summit held in Jeddah yesterday, the spokesperson reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to the Gulf system, describing the leaders' meeting as a natural step given the continuous consultations, exchanges and visits among GCC leaders since the start of the crisis. The unified Gulf position, he said, is clear: "The resolution to the crisis must be diplomatic and achieved as swiftly as possible." He noted that Gulf states have in recent years demonstrated effective roles in mediation and conflict resolution, emerging as a global hub for dispute settlement and increasingly relied upon by the international community. To Page 2

**Qatar Boat Show 2026 from November 4**

By Shaima Sheriff  
Staff Reporter

Held under the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the 3rd Qatar Boat Show 2026 will take place from November 4-7. The organisers at a press briefing yesterday at Raffles Doha, revealed that major

leading marine brands and industry experts will participate in the event contributing to strengthening Qatar's position as a leading destination in the global maritime sector. The CEO of Old Doha Port and chairman of the Organising Committee for Qatar Boat Show, Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla, said: "The Qatar Boat Show was launched based on a firm belief in the ability of Qatar to add exceptional value to the maritime

sector globally and Old Doha Port is the ideal place to embody this vision." "The campaign slogan, "Crafting Wonderful," embodies the identity and message of the show, in which the rich maritime heritage is shaped, relationships and partnerships are formed, and the finest experiences are created along one of the most important waterfronts in the region," he added. To Page 11

**GU-Q central to Qatar's leadership vision: Dean**

By Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka  
Editor-in-Chief

Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) is shaping the public service leaders of the country with a large number of Qatari graduates getting specialised in the university's public service programmes, noted, Safwan M Masri, dean of the university. He also highlighted the university's growing contribution to Qatar's global positioning, describing the country as a rising hub for diplomacy, education and international engagement. "With the relatively new Executive Masters in Diplomacy and International Affairs that we do with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have graduated 70 Qataris, professionals who represent the

**MILESTONES**

- GU-Q has graduated 70 Qataris equipped for future diplomatic roles, alongside 1,200 foreign service grads
- Admissions acceptance rates have dropped below 9%, with women making up 70% of a student body drawn from 80 nationalities

future leadership in the Ministry and other related entities in Qatar. Through our Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service, we have graduated approximately 1,200 students," said Masri in an exclusive interview with the Gulf Times. Dean Masri underscored the importance of offering programmes such as the Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service and executive degrees in diplomacy, saying that studying geopolitics within the region offers deeper insight than learning from afar. He noted that

applications for admissions to the university have surged many fold in the recent years with acceptance rates dropping below 9%. He reiterated that Qatar's investment in education and global engagement has created a lasting legacy with worldwide impact. "This is not just about education in Qatar. It is about contributing to the world. As Qatar continues to position itself as a centre for dialogue, innovation, and cultural exchange, institutions like Georgetown University in Qatar remain



central to that vision — training future leaders and shaping global conversations," he explained. Discussing a wide range of ideas, dean Masri noted that Qatar's development over the past decades has been very extraordinary pointing to its strategic role as a mediator on the world stage and its investment in education as a cornerstone of national progress.

"What Qatar has done and how it has positioned itself in the world and in the region is nothing short of extraordinary," dean Masri said. "I see a position in Qatar as a mediator, a role of engagement in international affairs." The dean credited Qatar's educational transformation largely to the vision of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of

Qatar Foundation and the creation of a very unique organisation, Qatar Foundation, which recently marked its 30th anniversary. He described the foundation's flagship project, Education City, as a globally unique model for higher education and research. "To establish Qatar Foundation and to think of building Education City around world-class universities is a legacy that is unmatched anywhere in the world," he continued. "Education City hosts leading international institutions alongside local initiatives such as Hamad Bin Khalifa University and the Qatar Science and Technology Park, creating a comprehensive ecosystem spanning education, research, technology, and innovation." Dean Masri also commented about Qatar's initiatives in public diplomacy that encompasses culture, sports and education. To Page 11

## Minister participates in Milipol TechX 2026

On behalf of HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani participated in the opening of the Milipol TechX 2026 Exhibition and Summit, which kicked off yesterday at the Marina Bay Sands Convention and Exhibition Center in the Republic of Singapore.

The event witnessed broad international participation from senior officials and stakeholders in the public security, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and robotics sectors.

The exhibition includes a series of specialised sessions and discussions that review ways to integrate artificial intelligence technologies into security systems, in addition to exploring prospects for enhancing international co-operation in the fields of security and advanced technologies. (QNA)



## Sheikh Abdulaziz meets Singapore's minister

HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani met yesterday with Acting Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs and Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Singapore Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, on the sidelines of the opening of Milipol TechX 2026 Exhibition and Summit.

The meeting discussed the existing co-operation relations between the two countries in the security fields, along with ways to strengthen and develop them, in addition to discussing a number of topics of common interest. (QNA)



## QMC chief meets Tajikistan ambassador

HE CEO of Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani has met the ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Qatar Nurmurod Mahmudali to discuss strengthening media co-operation between the two countries.

During the meeting in Doha yesterday, the two sides reviewed ways to enhance joint collaboration and exchange expertise, with a focus on supporting the development of media work in both nations. The talks highlighted a shared interest in expanding co-operation and fostering closer ties in the media sector between Qatar and Tajikistan. (QNA)



## Amir attends GCC summit in Jeddah



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday joined the GCC leaders and heads of delegations at a consultative summit held in Jeddah, where discussions focused on regional and international developments. Following the meeting, His Highness the Amir attended a luncheon hosted by Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, in honour of the participating Gulf leaders. (QNA)

## Qatar rejects Hormuz pressure tactics

From Page 1

On the broader conflict, al-Ansari said Qatar has consistently advocated negotiated solutions since the war began, and underlined the close coordination under way with Pakistan over its ongoing mediation efforts. Recent diplomatic engagements, including visits by the Pakistani prime minister to several Gulf states, fall within that sustained co-operation, he said.

"There is no need to expand the circle of negotiations at this stage," he added, noting that an active mediator was already engaged constructively, enjoyed full regional support, and should be given the opportunity to complete the task.

The spokesperson confirmed that Qatar has taken all necessary defence measures to safe-

guard its sovereignty, stating that around 98% of incoming missiles targeting the country had been successfully intercepted. He described the ceasefire measures as a positive step that should be built upon, while reaffirming that Qatar is working towards a comprehensive and final settlement that ensures regional stability, alleviates economic and security fallout, and prevents any return to cycles of escalation.

On Qatar's wider mediation portfolio, Dr al-Ansari stressed that halting such initiatives would benefit no party. While acknowledging that mediators may face criticism, he said this did not diminish the importance of pressing ahead. Qatar, he noted, remains actively engaged across multiple regional and international files in close cooperation with partners

including Egypt and Turkiye.

He also expressed appreciation for European partners, citing their reliability and constructive role amid the current crisis.

Regional security, he warned, remains the foremost concern, with threat perceptions evolving significantly among countries in the region. He stressed the importance of reaching comprehensive and sustainable solutions that serve the interests of all peoples, including the Iranian population.

On Lebanon, Dr al-Ansari reiterated Qatar's continued support across multiple fronts, including backing for the Lebanese Armed Forces and co-ordination with international partners within the framework of the Quintet Committee, alongside ongoing communication with all relevant parties.

# Geely Unveils AI-Driven Mobility Future with Robotaxi Debut at Auto China 2026

If there was one clear takeaway from the sprawling halls of Auto China this year, it was this: the future of mobility is no longer theoretical—it is being engineered, tested, and increasingly, experienced.

At the center of that narrative stood Geely Auto Group, making its first direct appearance as an exhibitor at the Beijing Auto Show and delivering a sweeping showcase of what it calls a "full-domain AI" ecosystem. But beyond the technical jargon and ambitious frameworks, it was a single debut that drew the most attention—the unveiling of China's first purpose-built Robotaxi prototype, the EVA Cab.

### A Robotaxi designed from the ground up

Co-developed with AFARI Technology and CaoCao Mobility, the EVA Cab is not a retrofitted vehicle adapted for autonomy. Instead, it is a clean-sheet design built specifically for driverless mobility.

Stepping inside the concept, the difference is immediately apparent. The cabin abandons traditional front-facing seating for a face-to-face layout, accessed through wide electric sliding doors. The design leans heavily into comfort and human-centric detailing, with elements such as a panoramic "Galaxy Skyroof" and ambient interior motifs intended to soften what could otherwise feel like a purely robotic experience.

Yet beneath the aesthetics lies an aggressive technological push. The vehicle integrates what Geely describes as a "quantum-level" electronic and electrical architecture, paired with high-performance computing driven by chips from NVIDIA and Qualcomm. Combined computing power exceeds 3,000 TOPS—well within the range required for Level 4 autonomous driving.

The sensor suite is equally ambitious. A 2,160-line digital LiDAR system delivers long-range detection up to 600 meters, while Geely's proprietary L4-level assisted driving software is designed to enable fully unmanned operations on public roads. The company says pilot Robotaxi programmes have already been running for over a year in cities such as Hangzhou and Suzhou.

Commercial rollout, however, remains a medium-term goal. A customized EVA Cab for CaoCao Mobility is expected to launch in 2027, signalling Geely's intent to move beyond demonstration into scaled deployment.



A bold vision of next-generation mobility took center stage as Geely Auto Group showcased its full technology ecosystem and unveiled its first purpose-built Robotaxi, signalling a decisive shift from traditional car manufacturing to an AI-powered mobility future.

### From cars to an AI-powered ecosystem

The Robotaxi may have been the headline act, but it was only one piece of a much broader technology narrative. Across its stand, Geely presented a tightly integrated ecosystem spanning smart energy, intelligent platforms, and AI-driven mobility services.

Among the highlights were bipedal robots, ultra-fast 12C charging systems, solid-state battery research, and a new 900V high-voltage architecture—technologies that collectively point toward a vertically integrated approach to the automotive future.

Central to this strategy is Geely's "Full-Domain AI 2.0" framework, an evolution of its earlier AI initiatives. Unlike traditional automotive AI applications that focus on isolated functions, Geely's model seeks to embed intelligence across every layer of the vehicle—from cockpit interaction to chassis control.

This is anchored by its "World Action Model" (WAM), a system first introduced earlier this year that acts as a central decision-making brain. Working alongside what Geely calls "Super Eva," a high-level intelligent agent, the system coordinates multiple sub-domain functions, effectively

allowing the vehicle to perceive, reason, and act in a unified manner.

The ambition is clear: to move from assisted driving to what Geely describes as a "mobility bot"—a machine capable not just of navigation, but of contextual understanding and real-time decision-making.

### Scaling intelligence—and safety

Geely's AI push is backed by significant infrastructure. The company's Xingrui Intelligent Computing Center, described as the industry's first integrated cloud-data-AI supercomputing platform, now delivers 23.5 EFLOPS of computing power.

Equally notable is its emphasis on safety. The company recently introduced a "Comprehensive Safety 2.0" framework, expanding the concept of vehicle safety beyond individual users to encompass broader public-domain scenarios. Its safety centre—reportedly the largest of its kind—underscores the scale of investment being directed toward validation and testing.

Geely also claims to be the first global automaker to secure ISO 8800 AI safety certification, a move that signals how regulatory and safety frameworks are evolving alongside technological advancements.

### A glimpse of what's next

Walking through Geely's exhibit, the underlying message was less about a single product and more about a systemic transformation. The company is positioning itself not merely as a car manufacturer, but as a technology-driven mobility provider operating at the intersection of AI, energy, and transportation.

Whether the vision of "zero wait, zero congestion, and zero accidents" becomes reality remains to be seen. But at Auto China 2026, Geely made one thing clear: the race toward that future is already well underway—and increasingly, it is being shaped in China.



## QIB launches limited-time offer on Marriott Bonvoy co-branded cards

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has launched a limited-time offer on its Marriott Bonvoy co-branded credit cards, giving customers the opportunity to earn Marriott Bonvoy welcome bonus points across the Infinite, Signature, and Platinum card tiers. Valid until June 15, 2026, the offer gives new cardholders the opportunity to earn Marriott Bonvoy welcome bonus points across all three card tiers. Customers applying for the Marriott Bonvoy QIB Visa Infinite credit card can earn up to 120,000 Marriott Bonvoy bonus points, including 90,000 points upon meeting the initial eligibility of completing their first PoS/Online transaction, and an additional 30,000 points upon spending QR27,500 within the first three months of card membership. Similarly, customers applying for the Marriott Bonvoy QIB Visa Signature credit card can earn up to 80,000 Marriott Bonvoy bonus points, including 60,000



points upon meeting the initial eligibility of doing first PoS/Online transaction, and an additional 20,000 points upon spending QR18,000 within the first three months of card membership. Marriott Bonvoy QIB Visa Platinum credit

card customers can earn up to 40,000 Marriott Bonvoy bonus points, including 30,000 points upon meeting the initial eligibility of completing their first PoS/Online transaction, and an additional 10,000 points upon spending QR9,000

within the first three months of card membership. The limited-time offer builds on QIB's collaboration with Marriott Bonvoy to bring Qatar's first hospitality co-brand credit cards to market, offering customers more rewarding ways to turn their everyday spending into travel-related benefits and memorable experiences. The Marriott Bonvoy QIB Visa Infinite credit card includes automatic Marriott Bonvoy Gold Elite status, while the Signature and Platinum cards provide automatic Marriott Bonvoy Silver Elite status. Across all three cards, customers can earn Marriott Bonvoy points on domestic and international retail spend as well as on stays at hotels participating in Marriott Bonvoy, with access to a wide range of redemption options including hotel stays, flights and Marriott Bonvoy Moments experiences. Cardholders also benefit from a range of

travel and lifestyle features depending on the card tier, including airport lounge access through Visa Airport Companion, elite night credits, and additional card privileges designed to enhance both leisure and business travel. D Anand, QIB general manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "At QIB, we remain committed to delivering rewarding payment solutions that match our customers' lifestyles and aspirations. Through this limited-time offer on the Marriott Bonvoy co-branded credit cards, we are providing our customers with an enhanced opportunity to maximise the value of their everyday spending while enjoying rewarding travel benefits and exclusive experiences through Marriott Bonvoy." Customers can discover the key features of the Marriott Bonvoy QIB credit cards by visiting [www.qib.com.qa/en-MarriottBonvoy](http://www.qib.com.qa/en-MarriottBonvoy) or the QIB Mobile App, where they can apply for the card directly.

## Nando's Qatar crowns first-ever female national master griller

Nando's Qatar has announced the winner of the Nando's Master Griller Challenge 2026 in Qatar, marking a historic milestone for the brand and its people.

The competition took place at Nando's Tawar Mall, where the country's top Nandocas brought their passion, precision, and fire to the grill. Emerging victorious was Laura Jean from Nando's Tawar Mall Casa, who has made history as the first ever female Master Griller of Nando's Qatar. Her achievement is not only a personal triumph but a defining moment for the Nando's community, celebrating progress, perseverance, and the power of growth from within.

Behind Laura's win are countless hours on the grill, learning, refining her craft, and pushing beyond limits. Her journey reflects what it truly means to be a Nandoca, showing up every day, giving your best, and embracing the spirit of continuous growth.

"This year's competition truly raised the bar," said Balu Subra-



monian, head of operations at Nando's Qatar. "The level of skill, passion, and consistency we witnessed across all finalists was outstanding. Laura's win is historic, but it also reflects the strength of the entire team and the culture of excellence we continue to build."

Vyanktesh Jaiswal, chief operating officer, commented, "This milestone is a proud moment for Nando's Qatar. Seeing our people

grow, break barriers, and make history is what drives us forward. Laura's success represents the spirit of our Casas and the belief that greatness can come from anywhere."

Laura will now go on to represent Qatar on the global stage at the International Master Grillers Challenge 2026 in Perth, Australia, where she will compete against top grillers from around the world.

## Vodafone Qatar receives Industry Excellence Partner Award in Education

Vodafone Qatar has been recognised by Huawei Headquarters with the prestigious 'Industry Excellence Partner Award in Education'.

The award recognises the successful deployment of the latest Wi-Fi 7 wireless network at the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST). The solution delivers enhanced speed capacity and reliability, supporting seamless connectivity across the campus and enabling an advanced digital learning environment.

The project addressed the high capital expenditure (CAPEX) required to deploy the network. Vodafone Qatar introduced a flexible operational expenditure (OPEX) model, under which it owns, manages, and maintains the network on behalf of the university. This approach reduced upfront investment requirements while enabling access to advanced connectivity.

Mohammed Mohsin Alyafei, Enterprise Business Unit director at Vodafone Qatar, said:



Dignitaries from Vodafone Qatar receiving the 'Industry Excellence Partner Award in Education' award bestowed by Huawei Headquarters.

"This recognition marks a significant milestone in Vodafone Qatar's role in supporting digital transformation across the education sector. The deployment highlights how flexible commercial models can remove traditional investment barriers and

enable academic institutions to adopt advanced connectivity solutions, supporting more connected and resilient learning environments."

For more on Vodafone Qatar and its connectivity solutions, visit [www.vodafone.qa/en/](http://www.vodafone.qa/en/)

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# Qatar affirms freedom of navigation is basic right in international law

**QNA**  
New York

Qatar has affirmed that freedom of navigation in international waterways is a fundamental principle of international law, stressing that serious dialogue, adherence to international legal principles, and good neighbourliness are the cornerstones for resolving crises and avoiding their serious repercussions.

This came in a statement delivered by HE the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the UN, Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, during the UN Security Council High-Level Open Debate titled, "The safety and protection of waterways in the maritime domain".

HE Sheikhha Alya stated that the meeting is held at a critical time. Threats to the safety of international waterways and freedom of navigation are escalating beyond traditional challenges, posing a threat to international peace, security, and economy, particularly in vital maritime corridors such as the Strait of Hormuz.

She pointed out that freedom of navigation is a core principle of international law as stipulated in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. She also underscored the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 552 of 1984, which highlighted the Gulf region's significance for international peace and security and its vital role in global economic stability. The resolution called on all



HE Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani

states to respect freedom of navigation in international waters and sea lanes for vessels bound to and from ports and facilities of coastal states not party to hostilities, as well as to respect the territorial

integrity of those states.

Regarding developments in the Strait of Hormuz, Sheikhha Alya pointed to the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2817, submitted by the Kingdom of Bahrain on behalf of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states and Jordan. The resolution condemned attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran on the territories of Qatar, GCC countries, and Jordan, describing them as violations of international law and serious threats to international peace and security. It also reaffirmed support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of GCC states and Jordan, and condemned any acts or threats aimed at closing the Strait of Hormuz or disrupting

international navigation, stressing that any attempt to impede lawful transit passage or freedom of navigation in such waterways constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security.

Sheikhha Alya further highlighted the importance of ensuring the security of maritime routes, freedom of navigation, and international trade in accordance with international law to preserve regional stability and global supply chains. The permanent representative also welcomed the ongoing mediation efforts led by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, along with all parties engaged in mediation and good offices that contributed to reaching a ceasefire between the US of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran,

stressing the importance of full adherence to the ceasefire announcement to create conditions conducive to dialogue, including guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

HE Sheikhha Alya reiterated Qatar's firm support for all diplomatic efforts and peaceful initiatives, emphasising that serious dialogue and commitment to international law and good neighbourliness remain the foundation for resolving crises and preventing their dangerous consequences, strengthening efforts to maintain international peace and security and the safety and protection of maritime waterways, in accordance with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. (QNA)

## Qatar participates in preparatory meeting for 6th Arab-European ministerial meeting

The State of Qatar participated yesterday in the Arab co-ordination meeting at the level of permanent delegates to the Arab League, which was held at the General Secretariat's headquarters in Cairo to discuss and follow up on the preparations underway for holding the 6th Arab-European ministerial meeting, scheduled to be held Amman, Jordan on Jun 22-23.

The delegation of the State of Qatar was led by HE the ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Arab Republic of Egypt and Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States Sheikh Jassim bin Abdul Rahman bin Mohammad al-Thani.

The meeting discussed the latest arrangements for the 6th Arab-European ministerial meeting, as well as the draft declaration to be adopted during the



meeting, within the framework of joint Arab co-ordination, to ensure the meeting produces results that reflect a convergence of positions and enhance the prospects for Arab-European co-operation.

The 6th Arab-European min-

isterial meeting, scheduled to be held in Amman, falls within the framework of the Arab and European sides' keenness to maintain dialogue and strengthen mechanisms for joint cooperation between Arab countries and the European Union. (QNA)

## Qatar attends 21st meeting of GCC Security Media Committee

The State of Qatar has participated in the 21st meeting of the Security Media Committee of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) States, which was held via video conference.

The Ministry of Interior's delegation to the meeting was headed by Director of the Public Relations Department Major General Abdullah Khalifa al-Muftah. The meeting discussed several topics on the meeting's agenda, and adopted appropriate recommendations regarding them. (QNA)



## Al-Jasra Club highlights educational psychology

The Al-Jasra Cultural and Social Club, affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, organised an awareness lecture titled "The masks of the psyche. When the mind protects us to persevere". The lecture was presented by Prof Abeer al-Jibawi, a psychologist and trainer specialising in behavioural intervention, psychological support, and educational training. Prof al-Jibawi holds a master's degree in educational psychology from Damascus University in Syria.

The lecture was attended by a number of people interested in psychological and cultural matters.

Prof al-Jibawi began her lecture by posing a question inspired by the saying of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may God be pleased with him): "Whoever says that Muhammad has died, I will strike off his head." She questioned whether this statement reflected his true character, known for its justice and mercy, or whether it was an exceptional psychological response imposed by the shock of the event. Through this example, she illustrated how a person can behave contrary to their nature under the influence of intense psychological pressure.

She emphasised that individu-

als face numerous daily struggles in their pursuit of a more stable and peaceful life. She noted that accumulated pressures and painful traumas can sometimes exceed an individual's capacity to cope, leading to a state of psychological and physical tension manifested as physical pain, rapid heartbeat, and difficulty in breathing, as well as mental confusion, poor concentration, and a persistent feeling of anxiety, fear, and exhaustion.

She explained that when an individual reaches a point beyond their capacity to endure, they may unconsciously resort to

primitive response patterns such as fight or flight, or even freezing.

However, social and moral constraints often prevent the direct expression of these emotions, prompting the mind to devise defence mechanisms to protect itself from psychological collapse.

She clarified that these mechanisms are known in psychology as unconscious psychological defence mechanisms, which allow repressed emotions to emerge indirectly and in a more socially acceptable manner. She pointed out that these mechanisms vary in their maturity and the benefits they provide to the individual.



Hanan Badii (left) in charge of Al-Jasra Cultural and Social Club and speaker Abeer al-Jibawi.

## MoEHE marks 51st Arab Deaf Week

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has marked the 51st Arab Deaf Week, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and its dedication to supporting their rights in education and community participation.

The initiative aligns with the state's vision of achieving educational justice and equal opportunities for all students. Through specialised schools and the Hearing Education Complex (boys and girls), the ministry, provides an integrated range of educational and rehabilitative services for students with hearing disabilities. These services include education based on national curricula, individualised special education plans, development of sign language skills, speech and language therapy sessions, hearing assessment services, and the

provision of assistive hearing devices. These efforts aim to support students' academic achievement and enhance their integration into the school environment.

The number of students enrolled in the Hearing Education Complex has reached 87 male and female students. This reflects the ministry's ongoing efforts to academically and socially empower them, while ensuring a supportive and stimulating learning environment that nurtures their abilities.

Accordingly, the Audio Education Complex hosted a variety of events designed to highlight students' capabilities and talents in the fields of arts, technology, sports, and culture. The activities also aimed to strengthen their self-confidence and encourage their active participation in society.

In addition, the ministry organised a workshop on sign language titled "Let's Communicate by

Sign", which focused on promoting supportive communication for people with hearing disabilities in the workplace. The workshop aimed to raise awareness of sign language as a fundamental means of communication, reinforcing the idea that communication is a right for everyone and that diversity in expression contributes to building a more inclusive and understanding society.

In the meantime, the ministry stressed that caring for students who are deaf or suffering from hearing weakness remains a priority. It continues to provide inclusive and stimulating educational environments, alongside the specialised educational programmes and services tailored to their academic and communication needs, in order to develop their abilities and enable them to successfully continue their educational journey.

## QFFD, QRCS enhance resilience of affected people in Lebanon



As part of the emergency response to support internally displaced people in Lebanon, with funding from Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has begun distributing emergency relief aid to displaced and war-affected families in Beirut, to help meet the essential needs of the most vulnerable groups and alleviate their suffering during this critical time.

In co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross and Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs, QRCS's representation office in Lebanon is distributing food and nonfood items to a total of 20,700 beneficiaries. This coordinated humanitarian response is aimed at strengthening the resilience of affected communities and ensuring timely delivery of relief aid to those most in need.

The Qatari aid distributions include 4,140 food parcels containing essential food staples for the recipient families, as well as 3,741 hygiene kits that enable the beneficiaries to fulfil personal cleaning/care requirements, up to the highest emergency humanitarian aid standards.

The project's team will continue to coordinate with local partners on the ground to keep updated about the humanitarian situation and identify urgent needs.

More than one million people have been forced to leave their homes and move to public shelters or private housing, amid difficult living conditions. Having lost their sources of income, the displaced families find increasing difficulty securing their basic needs, particularly food and hygiene supplies.

This humanitarian initiative embodies Qatar's solidarity with the people of Lebanon and all disaster-affected and war-torn countries.

## Latest judicial auctions generate over QR36mn

The Supreme Judicial Council's Department of Evictions and Judicial Auctions conducted a number of online auctions on April 2, generating total proceeds amounting to QR36,019,685, allocated to settle 1,115 cases. The processes received a total of 4,127 bids throughout these auctions. The real estate auction offered 30 units for bidding with only three sold out at a total price of QR30,402,135, used to settle three related cases. The vehicle auction offered 54 vehicles with 53 of them sold out at a total sum of QR1,857,300 used to settle 319 related cases. The equipment auction offered 54 pieces of equipment and only 48 of them sold out at a total sum of QR3,714,750 used for the benefit of 787 related cases. The vintage and classical vehicles auction offered two vehicles, which were sold out for a total price of QR45,500 used for the benefit of six related cases.

## VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION ANNOUNCEMENT


The Liquidator / Roopesh Neduthody Announces the Liquidation of ORTHO SMART MEDICAL SERVICES A Limited Liability Company Commercial Registration No. 195819

Accordingly, any creditors having claims against the company are requested to submit their claim / claims supported by relevant documents of a court / curator via registered mail or to the following email address:

roopesh@myauditor.net  
Or contact via telephone: +974 55832400

Within a maximum period of seventy-five (75) days from the date of publication of this announcement.

Date of Publication: April 29, 2026

**Qatar Foundation** 

### INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QNL-RFQ-59	QNL Unified Discovery Solution	500.00	N/a	May 21, 2026, 2:00 PM
PUE-RFQ-317	Provision for the Supply of Soft Pack Items and Perishable Goods to QF-PUE on Call-Off Agreement Basis for Three (3) Years with an option to extend for one (1) more year	1,000.00	100,000.00	May 28, 2026, 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-468	Supply of Master and Slave Inverter Modules for Central Battery System	500.00	N/a	June 1, 2026, 2:00 PM

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

- Supplier Registration It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

Tender Fee: Interested bidders can sign in by visiting this link <https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract> and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferable tender fee online.

All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 29th April to 6th May 2026.

- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
  - The commercial bid must be valid for 180 days from Bid Closing Date.
  - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 180 days from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
  - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
  - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>



شركة الشرق للصرافة ذ.م.م.  
Eastern Exchange Co. W.L.L.

The following individuals are requested to visit the head office of Eastern Exchange Company and submit the necessary identification documents in order to claim the transfer amounts that have not been received by their beneficiaries, within one month from the date of publication of this announcement. In case no claim is made, the amounts will be transferred to the General Authority for Minors Affairs in accordance with the instructions of the Qatar Central Bank.

S.No.	CUSTOMER NAME	S.No.	CUSTOMER NAME	S.No.	CUSTOMER NAME	S.No.	CUSTOMER NAME	S.No.	CUSTOMER NAME		
1.	MOHD TARA MIAH	177.	EDWIN FERNANDES	354.	MR ARUN NADKARNI	530.	HARI D	704.	JASAR V M	878.	MUHAMMAD KUNHI PEEDIKAYIL
2.	NAZRUL ISLAM	178.	ABDUL RAHMAN	355.	K JABARULLA	531.	P P MUHAMMAD ALI	705.	KK BALAN	879.	SETHU RAMAN NAGA RAJAN
3.	NOOR ISLAM	179.	MURUGANANDHAM S/O AMBALAM	356.	MONINDRA SHILL	532.	ABRAHAM V	706.	MOHAMMAD FIROZ AHEMAD	880.	NIDHIN K A
4.	MOTAHAR	180.	S B KANDY	357.	MUTIUR RAHMAN	533.	ALAM ALI	707.	MOIDU CHEMBOTTU	881.	BENCY ABRAHAM
5.	MASHUK MIAH	181.	J M FERNANDEZ	358.	K JANAGARAJ	534.	MOHD ALI	708.	M R GEORGE	882.	AMJAD ALI SYED
6.	ROHAN PANDEY	182.	MAQSOOD AHMED	359.	PREM SHANKER VIMAL	535.	ABUL HOSSAIN	709.	MAMAN R GEORGE	883.	FAISAL ALI N AL ATHBA
7.	MOHAMED SAAFEEL MOHAMED ISHAM	183.	SALMA BEGUM	360.	ABDUL MALIK	536.	MOHD DULAL MIAH	710.	IRSHAD ALI	884.	ARVIN C BARLOLONG
8.	ABU TAHER	184.	SHAHABUDDIN SHAMSHUDEEN	361.	THIAGARAJAN A	537.	MEHBUB NABI	711.	SUDIPTO M	885.	NASRELDEIN IBRAHIM
9.	MOHD ANOWAR	185.	JASBIR SINGH	362.	K KUNHIPPU	538.	NESAR AHMAD	712.	DHANEESH P	886.	SALMAN DEBIAN
10.	HOSSAIN AHMED	186.	MOHD JAMAL	363.	MOHD SHADAB	539.	RIAS VADAKKAN CHALLI	713.	RENJITH KUMAR V	887.	ABDUL RAFAEEK
11.	ABDUS SOHID	187.	SURESH KUMAR	364.	BIKI TOM JOHN C/O K J JOHN	540.	SHAIKAT ALI	714.	RATNESH KUMAR MISHRA	888.	SALMAN DEBIAN
12.	SUHAIL AHMED	188.	FRANCIS	365.	J B M MIRANDA	541.	MUHAMMED SIRAJ K K	715.	HABIBUL RAHMAN A	889.	MUHAMMAD SALIM KEEZHATT
13.	INDRAJITH HT	189.	JOHARA BEE	366.	MR SURESH KUMAR	542.	RAJEEVGANDHI	716.	TAUKIR ALAM	890.	SHAKUL HAMEED
14.	ABDUL HANNAN	190.	MR BADAR	367.	MOHAN	543.	SABEER P K	717.	MANTOSH KUMAR SINGH	891.	MUSTAFA ATHIYOTTUMMAL
15.	MUTIUR RAHMAN	191.	RADO	368.	ROXANNE VANESSA DIAS	544.	SHANOOB MOODAPURAKAL ABDUL KHADER	718.	NARENDRA GANGWAL	892.	QARI MOHAMMAD SALMAN QARI
16.	MOHAMED IQBAL SAMDIN	192.	RAJESH KUMAR	369.	SABU S NAIR	545.	ABDUL KHADER MEKOYIKKAL	719.	K SOOPY	893.	RISHAD PERUMBILAYI
17.	MUBARAK HOSSAIN	193.	MAMUN ALI	370.	HUSSAIN KHAN	546.	ASLAM KUTTIYIL	720.	DHARM NATH RAM	894.	RAJESH MADHAVAN V T
18.	FAZLUL HOQUE	194.	RAVI KODUKANDY	371.	MOHD NESHAR AHMED	547.	P SEN	721.	JAHAGIR HUSSAIN	895.	FAISAL ALI N AL ATHBA
19.	S KRISHNAMOORTHY	195.	VIJAY	372.	K K JOSEPH	548.	J MAIDEEN	722.	JITENDRA KUMAR	896.	SHANAVAS PANIKKAVEETIL
20.	THEVERASA GNANARASA	196.	SANJEEV PILLAI	373.	RAM LAL	549.	JAFAR V	723.	RAJESH PRASAD	897.	TUAN KAMOOOR MUBARACK
21.	RAFU UDDIN	197.	ASHRAF M K	374.	MOHAN MANON	550.	VARGHESE PUTHENKUTY LEO	724.	K SOOPY	898.	ARUL PONNAH
22.	AZIZUL HOASRI	198.	RATAN DAS	375.	KRISHNA KUMAR	551.	SHAFIK AHMED PANNALI	725.	RAJMOHAN M RAI	899.	PALITHA SAMANSIRI
23.	M P DHARMASRI	199.	VAHID	376.	MOHAMMAD RAJA	552.	JAVEED AHMED MOHAMMAD AKHTAR	726.	RAJMOHAN M RAI	900.	RAVINDRA SINGH BALBIR SINGH
24.	MALINDA P BANDARA	200.	P K ABOOBACKER	377.	RAJKUMAR SINGH	553.	MOHAMMAD MAHTAB	727.	M ALI URINIAN	901.	JOBY ABRAHAM PAZHUKKALIYIL A
25.	SANA MIAH	201.	FRANCIS	378.	NAZIM	554.	GURPREET SINGH	728.	AMEER ALI M K	902.	MOHAMED SIDDIQUE MEERA SAHIBU
26.	SELLIAH SELLADURAI	202.	IRSHAD A RAUF HALDE	379.	WALTER	555.	SANTHOSH KOTTARON	729.	CHANDRA BHAN PRAJAPATHI	903.	HARIS PACHYATHI
27.	ABDUL KHALIQU	203.	VARGHESE K V	380.	C M JOSEPH	556.	SHYNOJ ELANCHERI	730.	BAKHTIYAR ALAM	904.	MOHAMMED HAMD J A ALDAJRAN
28.	LUTHFUR RAHMAN	204.	I CHINNI	381.	JALIL	557.	SATEESH KARI	731.	BOSE MUNIASAMY	905.	MOHAMMAD EJAZ AHMED
29.	SUMITH CHANDRA	205.	P M ALI KUNHI	382.	MATEUS JOAO	558.	C L ABDUL JALEEL	732.	S THOMAS	906.	LIJI KARAKUNNUMMAL
30.	KHORSHID ALAM	206.	BADUSHA H	383.	MOHD SALIM KHAN	559.	AHAHID HUSSAIN	733.	ABDUL FAZAL	907.	MOHAMMED SHABAN
31.	M HADI ALI	207.	PRVEEN KOTIYA	384.	G PZHANI KUMAR	560.	ABDUL GAFOOR	734.	CHANNAKESHAVA	908.	ROSHINI KHAN
32.	MISRIYA	208.	THOMAS	385.	IMRAN KHAN	561.	MOHAMMED JALALUDDIN AHMED	735.	ANSHUL SABUI	909.	MOHAMMAD ISLAM
33.	TT BHUMIDAS	209.	A JALIL	386.	RAMESH LAL	562.	ROBI CHANDRA SHIL	736.	THIRUPATHI K	910.	VAIRAVEL RAJAMOORTHY
34.	AK AZAD	210.	QATAR ATMIZHAR SANGAM	387.	HELAL	563.	GURUSAMY KANNAN	737.	MM SAINUDIN	911.	AMEER N PUTHIYAPURATHIL
35.	KAMAL HOSSAIN	211.	C BHATNAGAR	388.	PUSHPARAJ DURAIRAJ	564.	MOHAMMAD FARIED ANSARI	738.	SHEIK ABDUL NAWAZ	912.	SHIBU PARAKKOTTU
36.	MOHD SHALIM	212.	MOIDEEN P	389.	MOHAMMED TAMIZUDDIN	565.	BIKASH BISWAS	739.	ANIL JOHN-	913.	GAVALA CHINNANNA
37.	ABUL HOSSAIN	213.	S SADASIVAN	390.	MOHD MOSSARAF HOSSAIN	566.	MICHAEL SOOSAINAYAGAM JUDE	740.	MOHD ASLAM	914.	PRAVEEN MENON
38.	CHAMINDA DIAS	214.	K C ABOOBACKER	391.	MOHD SALIM AKHTAR	567.	ANWAR	741.	V PONNAMBALAM	915.	SURESHBABU PONNARAUTHUMMAL
39.	M P MUHTHAR	215.	HIRALAL SAH	392.	MUDASHIR ALI	568.	ANWAR	742.	SUNI LOPEZ	916.	KHALID A RAZAQ H AL MARZOOQI
40.	Z ABDUL WAHAB	216.	NIZAMUDDIN	393.	SREEKUMAR LEKSHMANAN	569.	ANWAR	743.	RAM PRATAP	917.	DEVENDRA KUMAR KUSHWAHA I BHAGAT
41.	ASHAR	217.	SALIM	394.	KAYSAR ALI	570.	ZURABATH ABDUL KADER	744.	STANLY S	918.	MARLEN D BANAGUA
42.	IMRAN	218.	SALIM	395.	AUGUSTINE	571.	K M NAZAR	745.	GUDDU GUPTA	919.	ANWAR SUNEER KOMATH
43.	T YOGANATHAN	219.	ANAPPARAMBIL MOIDUNNY SHEJER	396.	SHEELA GANESAN	572.	KASTURI RAI	746.	NOUSHAD KIZHAKKAYIL	920.	ANJANI KUMAR
44.	MOHD SHAHJAHAN	220.	MAYA MIAH	397.	MANOJ NARAYAN THAKARKAR	573.	MOHD SHARF ALAM	747.	SHAFI AHAMAD	921.	IMTIYAZ MIRZA ABDUL RAHEEM
45.	IDRIS ALI	221.	SAVIO CONCEPTION	398.	MOHD HAROON	574.	ACHAMMA ABRAHAM AND AJEET ABRAHAM	748.	AASH MOHAMMAD	922.	SIDDEEK MEERASAIBO
46.	M GANGAWATHIE	222.	T RAKUNANANTHAN	399.	RAMESH LAL SHARMA	575.	ATTHAKUMARI SOMAN	749.	MOHAMMAD JAFAR IMAM	923.	SIDDEEK MEERASAIBO
47.	MRS PADMA	223.	FIDEL RODRIGUES	400.	SHYAM THUKARAM KOTHARKAR	576.	GOVIND MANGAL SING BANDGAR	750.	SHAMSAZ ALAM	924.	MOHAMMED SOIROTUDDIN MAHMUD ALI
48.	BUDDHIKA	224.	MOHAMMAD HASNAIN	401.	ARIFUL RAHMAN	577.	MOHAMMAD IFTKHAR ALAM	751.	IMRAJ AHMED A PUNEKAR	925.	MURUGESU SATHASIVAM SENTHAN
49.	B SUTHAKARAN	225.	MOHD ZAHID HUSSAIN	402.	PRASAD	578.	MOHAMMAD IFTKHAR ALAM	752.	M RAJASHEKHER	926.	ARIB THANGAL K F
50.	SENADEERA G N	226.	MOHD ZAHID HUSSAIN	403.	MR VENKATA RAO	579.	R DINESH KUMAR	753.	SUNIL KUMAR M S	927.	THIYAGARAJAN RAJA
51.	SAGIR	227.	MR VENKATA RAO	404.	SIRAJUL HUDA	580.	VINEETH S	754.	CHAND PASHA	928.	FAZIL MAKKATTU
52.	ROHAN PANDY	228.	RAMA CHANDRA RAO	405.	MUHAMMAD SARFRAZ	581.	MUSTHAFA NALAKATH PALLATH GAFOOR	755.	RAHEEMA	929.	BAL BAHADUR GURUNG
53.	JASPAL SINGH	229.	NIYAS	406.	MOHD JANAB ALI	582.	WAHIDUL ALAM	756.	CHANDRA BOSE	930.	JPMU SARAJ
54.	MOHD GUFRAN	230.	K.A.M.MOHAMMED IBRAHIM GHANI	407.	TOFAIL AHMED	583.	K G RAJ MOHAN	757.	BINOD KUSHWAHA	931.	MOHAMED
55.	MOHD ANOWAR	231.	ARJUN MOHAN KASHALKAR	408.	ESHWAR CHANDRA PANDEY	584.	S SARALA	758.	S HASEEB	932.	GIRISH KUMAR A
56.	SWAMINATHAN	232.	MOHAMMAD NEZAMUDDIN	409.	MOHD NUR E ALAM	585.	T N OWFEL	759.	K K KUNHAMMAD	933.	PALASUNTHARAM KASINATHAN
57.	S ALAM	233.	NARSHING	410.	T V PADMANABHAN	586.	JOHN ALBERT D'SOUZA	760.	SALIM O K	934.	NAVEEN MURALEEDHARAN
58.	SIRAJUDDIN	234.	T A MOHAMED ASHARAF	411.	VIJAY KUMAR	587.	HARI D	761.	SUKHJIT SINGH	935.	SATYANARANA JAGARAPU
59.	MOHAMMED	235.	JAHANGIR ALAM	412.	ARAKOTA SRINIVASA RAO	588.	S K MARIMUTHU	762.	SURESHBHAI BABUBHAI PATEL	936.	NIKAMUDHEEN PALLIMANHALIL
60.	MOHAMMED NASIM	236.	MOHD TOFAL	413.	BALAKRISHNAN	589.	A YABRAKASH	763.	MOHAMMED ALI M O AL MARRI	937.	SANATH KUNHIMARAKKAR
61.	RAHMAN	237.	ALAMGIR KHAN	414.	GORLE CHIRANJEVI	590.	MOHD DELWAR HUSSAIN	764.	SHANFUR KUNHIMARAKKAR	938.	NIKAMUDHEEN PALLIMANHALIL
62.	K A ABDULLA	238.	ABDUL HANNAN	415.	HAZI MD USTAR MIAH	591.	PUTHIVADATH KUNHI MOHAMMED	765.	ABDULRASAK	939.	JAHIR KHATRI
63.	YASUDHAN	239.	ABUS SATTAR	416.	YADHANA KRISHNAN	592.	ANOWAR	766.	T V VELAYUTHAN	940.	RAJTHEEP GOPALAKRISHNA PILLAI
64.	MOHD AJMOL	240.	ANUP D COSTA	417.	MOHAMMAD ASHRAF	593.	VARGHESE	767.	MADHVEN	941.	ABDUL LATHEEF
65.	RUWAN BANDARA	241.	ROBERT JEGADHEESH	418.	BELVIN KAKKUNNIL VARGHESE	594.	MOHAMMAD RAIHAN AHMAD	768.	HAFSA K	942.	KUNHABDULLA KIZHAKKE
66.	NAVEEN KUMAR	242.	P ABDUL SAMAD	419.	SIND	595.	MOHAMMAD FAREED ANSARI	769.	K MUTHUMANICKAM	943.	MOHAMMED SOIROTUDDIN MAHMUD ALI
67.	RAJESHWARI W R	243.	SHAFIK TE	420.	HANEFA	596.	BIKASH BISWAS	770.	P NARAYANAN-26135606182	944.	MOHAMED SATHASIVAM SENTHAN
68.	AMEEN	244.	MUZAFFAR KHAN	421.	MOHAMMAD RAIHAN AHMAD	597.	MICHAEL SOOSAINAYAGAM JUDE	771.	IMRAN KHAN	945.	SANAL KAKKAT HARIDASAN
69.	P CHANDRAN	245.	IBRAHIM	422.	SYED KHALIM	598.	ANWAR	772.	MUHAMMED ALI K	946.	MOHAMMED SADIQ HOSSAIN M SARDAR
70.	Z ABDULA QUDDUS	246.	IBRAHIM	423.	SYED KHALIM	599.	T M JANARTHANAN	773.	SINI RAMANCHERIYIL THANKAPPAN	947.	KRISHNAN JAYA KUMAR
71.	AMIR HOSSAIN	247.	BHAGABAN PRADHAN N	424.	BINOD KUMAR PASWAN	600.	ASHWINI KUMAR OJHA	774.	KARTHIKEYAN PITTAI P	948.	SUNESH KOTTE KULAM
72.	KAMARUDDIN	248.	ASALU V A	425.	P V SATYANARAYANA MURTHY	601.	SHAMAMUDDIN KHAN	775.	ANSAR U HAMZA	949.	SAFIYA BEGUM GALAL KHAN
73.	J BAHARUDEEN	249.	K M KURIAN	426.	SULTANA	602.	MUHAMMED MUSTHAFA	776.	RENIJ K T	950.	NAJIM KADAVATH PEEDIKAYIL
74.	SULAMAN	250.	P K KUMARAN	427.	KHALIL	603.	SINGARAJ KARUPPAIAH	777.	PICHA MUTHU KALIDASON	951.	RAM BAHADUR ADHIKARI
75.	AZEEZ	251.	SUBRAMANIAN SUNDARAMURTHY	428.	MINTU KUMAR SINGH	604.	MADAPPA BALAKRISHNAN	778.	NIJESH BHUSARI	952.	ANWAR ALI CHHIPA-
76.	MADHU T K	252.	MUMTHAS HUSSAIN	429.	M N RAJAN	605.	JAMALDEEN ABDUL SUBAHAN	779.	PICHA MUTHU KALIDASON	953.	FAIZE EROTH
77.	SRINIVASAN RAJA	253.	ABDUL RASHEED K K	430.	MANDEEP MOHAMMAD	606.	JOHN THOMAS	780.	J MAIDEEN	954.	SALIM
78.	LALCHAND CAHUHAN	254.	EBRAHIM	431.	ABDULLAH AMER A S ALKATHIRI	607.	M V A SALAM	781.	S SHAIK MEERA	955.	PONNUSAMY
79.	T R ANEESH	255.	JAFAR SHAREEF VEERAN VAVATT	432.	SYED AQEEL SAYEED	608.	MUSTHAFA M P	782.	ANWAR ALI CHHIPA-	956.	SREEKUMAR PUNNAPPLILY
80.	V SEKAR	256.	YOGENDRA SINGH	433.	G KARTHIKEYAN	609.	SHAILESH TAGGARE	783.	FAIZE EROTH	957.	SIVAKUMAR
81.	SHIVADAS	257.	BABUL	434.	P SURESH	610.	NIZAR THEVALAM NILATHKUNI	784.	SALIM	958.	K F KABIR JAMAL
82.	MUBARAK ANSARI	258.	DELOWAR HOSSAIN	435.	SALEM AL MANSOORI	611.	AQEEL NAZIM ALTAF	785.	PONNUSAMY	959.	HIDAYAT AG DALVI
83.	MD FAZLUL HAQUE	259.	MR MOHAMMED YOUSUF M V	436.	SALEM ALI	612.	SHIBUMON P C	786.	SREEKUMAR PUNNAPPLILY	960.	YASODARAN A
84.	D GHOUSE	260.	JOJI	437.	MOHAMMED	613.	REGHUNATHAN	787.	SIVAKUMAR	961.	RAJ K PHILIP
85.	ABOOTY	261.	DOMNIC SQUEIRA	438.	VINOD YADAV	614.	LICY	788.	K F KABIR JAMAL	962.	MOHAMED YASIN A KHAN
86.	SALAS P NAIR	262.	MOHD JAFFAR	439.	KHALIL	615.	BIBI JAN	789.	HIDAYAT AG DALVI	963.	K K SUREEKUMAR
87.	MRS SAROJINI	263.	KALIDAS K K	440.	BARRE SATYAVATHI	616.	KRISHNAN JAYAPRAKASHAN	790.	YASODARAN A	964.	PALRAJ SUNDARAM
88.	SAMEER ADAMA MOIDIN	264.	JANARDHAN	441.	WASEEM KHURSHIED	617.	JAGANNATH SHETTY	791.	RAJ K PHILIP	965.	A K SAJAHAN
89.	IRSHAD AHMED AMANULLA	265.	P PREETHISH	442.	JANAK LAL SINGH	618.	MOHAMED RAJI KALI	792.	MOHAMED YASIN A KHAN	966.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
90.	P C AYYAPPAN	266.	SYED ABUTAHHER AZMI	443.	MANSOOR	619.	ABRAHAM V	793.	JAYAKRISHNAN V P	967.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
91.	P V MOHANDAS	267.	SANDOSH P A	444.	AJIDHAN M B	620.	AMRAN KAYES	794.	MOHMED YASIN A KHAN	968.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
92.	SHAH JAI KISHORE	268.	MAHIPAL REDDY	445.	RADHAKRISHNAN M M	621.	KAMILSHWAR PANDEY	795.	K K SUREEKUMAR	969.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
93.	V G PATHROSE	269.	MOHD AZIMUDDIN	446.	SAMEER	622.	MOHD RASHEED MOMIN	796.	PALRAJ SUNDARAM	970.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
94.	MOHD MURTAZA	270.	UPENDER KUMAR MISHRA	447.	ABDUL LATHEEF	623.	AYUB	797.	ANWAR KHAN	971.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
95.	FRANCIS C PEREIRA	271.	UPENDER KUMAR MISHRA	448.	D HARI	624.	MOHD AYUB	798.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	972.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
96.	I K SUTRAR	272.	MOIDEEN	449.	KOTTATI DAMODHARAN VIJAYAN	625.	ENAYATHULLAH SYED BASHA	799.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	973.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
97.	ABDUL RAZAK	273.	NOKUL CHANDRA NATH	450.	SUNDARAM RANGANATHAN CHARI	626.	ENAYATHULLAH SYED BASHA	800.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	974.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
98.	ABDUL GAFOOR	274.	ALAM	451.	GANAPATHY CHANDRAKAS	627.	K SOOPY	801.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	975.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
99.	HADIF	275.	A RAHMAN	452.	MOHD HALIM	628.	FRANCIS VADAKKAN LUIS	802.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	976.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
100.	MAHENDRARAJAH	276.	MOHD MAHMOOD ALAM	453.	BARRE SATYAVATHI	629.	RAHUMATHULLA	803.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	977.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
101.	V SUKUMARAN	277.	LALAN RAM	454.	J MALAN	630.	SARATH KATTANA	804.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A	978.	MUHAMMAD SHAFEEQ A
102.	INDULEKHA RAGHURAMAN</										



# Palestinians use Gaza rubble to restore streets

Reuters  
Gaza

Palestinians are using war rubble to repave streets destroyed during Israel's two-year assault on Gaza, crushing concrete and metal into pavement under a UN-run project they hope will mark a first step toward rehabilitating their damaged cities.

The project run by the United Nations Development Programme comes as progress stalls in US President Donald Trump's Gaza plan, meant to build on an October Israel-Hamas ceasefire by surging aid and rebuilding the enclave from scratch.

It marks a bid by the UN and Palestinians to use locally available machinery to clear mountains of rubble that officials say

is blocking access to water wells and hospitals and making it difficult to get the economy going again. Alessandro Mkracik, head of UNDP's Gaza office, said the territory faces one of the largest post-war clearance challenges in memory with an estimated 61 million tons of rubble.

"Beyond the collection (of rubble), we have started sorting, we have started crushing, and, as such, reusing it," Mkracik said. "We have used almost the same amount that we have collected."

Mkracik said UNDP teams, staffed by Palestinian workers, were using the rubble "to rehabilitate roads and pave areas for shelter and community kitchens."

In Khan Younis in southern Gaza, Palestinians were operating heavy machinery to tear through mountains of destroyed concrete, sending plumes of dust



A Palestinian worker breaks up concrete while working on rubble in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip. (Reuters)

into the air as workers picked through the twisted steel and rubble of damaged buildings.

Progress is being slowed by dangers hidden beneath the debris, officials say. Before rubble

can be removed, sites must be checked for unexploded ordnance, in coordination with the UN's mine service.

For Palestinian workers, the risks are tangible.

"I can't find any other source of income, that is why I do this work. (You) could get hurt," said Ibrahim al-Sarsawi, 32.

He said the work site's location near the Israel-Hamas armistice line meant he could be exposed to stray Israeli fire.

Gaza rubble clearance could take seven years to complete, UNDP says, assuming accelerated, unimpeded access for heavy machinery and consistent fuel supplies, which are generally scarce in Gaza under Israeli restrictions.

Israel cites security concerns for its restrictions in Gaza, where it launched its assault follow-

ing Hamas' storming of Israel in 2023.

UNDP has so far removed about 287,000 tons of rubble - but that is just the "tip of the iceberg", according to Mkracik.

Recovery and reconstruction in the tiny territory will require \$71.4 billion over the next decade, according to a final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment released this month by the European Union, United Nations, and World Bank.

"The war is over, but (this) is the beginning of a new war," said Sobhi Dawoud, 60, a displaced Palestinian living in a tent encampment in Khan Younis.

This "new war", he added, is one "of reconstruction, the beginning of removing the rubble, and (fixing) infrastructure, electricity, water, sewage, schools, and streets."

# Hezbollah, president Aoun clash over talks

AFP  
Beirut

With Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun pushing for direct talks with Israel while Hezbollah rejects them, the country is once again at an impasse after a verbal spat between its leader and the Iran-backed movement. Lebanon has officially been at war with Israel since 1948, making direct negotiations taboo until recently when two wars between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah exhausted the country.

A Lebanese official source told AFP yesterday that Aoun "is proceeding with the option of negotiations... there is no going back". The president on April 17, the day a truce in the war went into force, said all Lebanese were "on the same boat" and that no one should commit the "crime" of sinking it. The president on Monday stated that direct negotiations aimed at stopping the war, securing an Israeli withdrawal from the south, demarcating the border and reaching an end to the "state of hostility" with Israel.

In a jab at Hezbollah, which accused the government of "surrender", Aoun rejected criticism of the



Israeli soldiers watch as smoke rises following explosions in southern Lebanon as seen from northern Israel, yesterday. (Reuters)

talks saying that those who drew Lebanon into the conflict were the ones committing "treason". "The president saying Hezbollah is committing treason is certainly unprecedented language," Heiko Wimmen, researcher at the International Crisis Group told AFP.

US President Donald Trump said he hoped to host a "historic" meeting between Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House. Beirut committed to disarming Hezbollah last year. Wimmen said that while Aoun and

the government can negotiate with Israel, they "cannot make commitments in these negotiations that (they) can deliver".

There are also concerns over the army's lack of capabilities to disarm the group. The truce terms state that "with international support", Lebanon "will take meaningful steps to prevent Hezbollah... from carrying out any attacks... against Israeli targets", without specifying the type of support.

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem warned on Monday that direct talks

may lead to a "spiral of instability", adding that his group will deal with them "as if they do not exist... and they do not concern us in the slightest". The group also refuses to disarm, openly challenging the Lebanese government with officials and supporters leading a campaign against Aoun. Before a damaging 2024 war with Israel, Hezbollah was a dominant political power in Lebanon.

"Hezbollah has become more than ever isolated on the political scene," researcher and Hezbollah expert Joseph Daher said.

Former Hezbollah lawmaker Nawaf Moussawi in a recent interview reminded Aoun of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who was assassinated in 1981 over "treason" for signing a peace treaty with Israel.

With both sides entrenched in their positions, Nicholas Blanford, an analyst at the Atlantic Council, told AFP there are "two polar opposite visions of where the country needs to go". "I don't think either side really has the capability of imposing their vision on the other," he added.

"Hezbollah is not as influential and politically strong as it was before, but the state is still fundamentally fairly weak."

# Israeli strikes kill Hamas commander, others in Gaza



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a vehicle in Gaza City, yesterday. (Reuters)

Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed five people on Tuesday, including a Hamas commander and a nine-year-old boy, Palestinian sources said.

Despite an October ceasefire, the Palestinian territory remains gripped by daily violence as Israeli strikes continue, with both the military and Hamas accusing one another of breaking the truce.

Gaza's civil defence agency said four people were killed and six others injured when a drone fired two missiles at a car in Gaza City's western Al-Rimal neighbourhood.

A Gazan security source identified two of the victims as Hamas commander Iyad al-Shanbari and his son Salah. He did not mention the other two people, and there was no immediate reaction from Hamas. The Israeli army briefly

confirmed they "did strike a terrorist there", saying they would provide further details later.

In a separate incident, the civil defence agency said nine-year-old Adel al-Najjar was killed "when an Israeli drone strike took place alongside artillery shelling east of Khan Yunis". The army said "a suspect in the area of the Yellow Line approached troops, posing an immediate threat" and entered a building, which was then hit by the air force. But following a review, a spokesman said it became clear that "an uninvolved individual entered the structure and was likely injured as a result".

On Monday, Gaza medics said they received the body of 15-year-old Ayham al-Omari, who was shot dead in the northern town of Beit Lahiya. (AFP)

# Iraqi president nominates Ali al-Zaidi as PM-designate

Iraq's newly elected president nominated businessman Ali al-Zaidi as the country's prime minister-designate on Monday, after the country's leaders yielded to US pressure not to support the bid of a former premier close to Iran. The Iraqi leadership with varying links to Iran, had initially backed powerbroker Nouri al-Maliki to become the country's next premier, but an ultimatum by US President Donald Trump left them looking

elsewhere. For weeks, they were locked in intense discussions to settle the question and avoid punitive measures after Trump threatened in January to cut all support for Iraq if two-time ex-premier Maliki, who has close ties to Iran, returned to power. "President Nizar Amede has tasked Ali al-Zaidi, the candidate of the largest parliamentary bloc, with forming the new government," the presidency said in a statement.

Zaidi will now have 30 days to

form a government - a daunting task in a country where constitutional deadlines are rarely respected. The announcement came shortly after the Coordination Framework endorsed Zaidi as its candidate. The alliance also praised "the historic and responsible stance" of Maliki and caretaker Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani "for withdrawing" their candidacies. Yasser al-Maliki, the head of Maliki's parliamentary bloc, congratulated the

PM-designate and pledged support in forming a government.

Since the 2003 invasion of US, the country's leaders have struggled to balance relations between Washington and Tehran. Seen as a compromise figure, Zaidi is little known in political circles. He is a businessman, banker and owner of a television channel, and has never held a government post. If he succeeds, Zaidi will become Iraq's youngest PM at the age of 40. (AFP)

# Art for peace's sake



A man holds an artwork in the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, where Palestinians are displaying their works. (Reuters)

# How does the Iran war threaten subsea cables?

Reuters  
Dubai

Iran warned last week that submarine cables in the Strait of Hormuz were a vulnerable point for the region's digital economy, raising concerns about potential attacks on critical infrastructure. The narrow waterway, already a chokepoint for global oil shipments, is equally vital for the digital world. Several fibre-optic cables snake across the seabed of the strait, connecting countries from India and Southeast Asia to Europe via the Gulf states and Egypt.

Subsea cables are fibre-optic or electrical cables laid on the sea floor to transmit data and power. They carry around 99% of the world's internet traffic, according to the ITU, the United Nations specialised agency for digital technologies.

They also carry telecommunications and electricity between countries, and are essential for cloud services and online communications.

"Damaged cables mean the in-

ternet slowing down or outages, e-commerce disruptions, delayed financial transactions ... and economic fallout from all of these disruptions," said geopolitical and energy analyst Masha Kotkin. Gulf countries, particularly the UAE and Saudi Arabia, have been investing billions of dollars in artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure to diversify their economies away from oil. Both nations have established national AI companies serving customers across the region - all reliant on undersea cables to move data at lightning speed.

Major cables through the Strait of Hormuz include the Asia-Africa-Europe 1 (AAE-1), connecting Southeast Asia to Europe via Egypt, with landing points in the UAE, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia; the FALCON network, connecting India and Sri Lanka to Gulf countries, Sudan, and Egypt; and the Gulf Bridge International Cable System, linking all Gulf countries including Iran. Additional networks are under construction, including a system led by Qatar's Ooredoo.

While the total length of submarine cables has grown considerably



A woman walks past a giant billboard reading "The Strait of Hormuz remains closed" at the Revolution Square in Tehran. (AFP)

between 2014 and 2025, faults have remained stable at around 150-200 incidents per year, according to the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC). State-sponsored sabotage remains a risk, but 70-80% of faults are caused by accidental human activities - primarily fishing and ship anchors, according to the ICPC and experts. Other risks include undersea

currents, earthquakes, subsea volcanoes, and typhoons, said Alan Mauldin, research director at telecom research firm TeleGeography. The industry addresses these by burying cables, armouring them, and selecting safe routes, he said. The Iran war, nearing the two-month mark, has brought unprecedented disruption to global energy supply and regional infra-

structure, including hits to Amazon Web Services data centers in Bahrain and the UAE. Subsea cables have been spared so far.

However, an indirect risk exists from damaged vessels inadvertently hitting cables by dragging anchors.

"In a situation of active military operations, the risk of unintentional damage increases, and the longer this conflict lasts, the higher the likelihood of unintentional damage," Kotkin said. A similar incident occurred in 2024, when a commercial vessel attacked by Iran-aligned Houthis drifted in the Red Sea and severed cables with its anchor.

The degree to which damage to the cables might impact connectivity in Gulf countries depends largely on how much individual network operators rely on them and what alternatives they have, according to TeleGeography.

Repairing damaged cables in conflict zones poses a separate challenge to securing them. While the physical repair itself is not overly complicated, decisions by repair vessel owners and insurers may also be impacted by the risk of

damage from fighting or the presence of mines, experts say.

Permits to access territorial waters add another layer of difficulty. "Often one of the biggest problems with doing repairs is you have to get permits into the waters where the damage is. That can take a long time sometimes and can be the biggest source (of problems)," Mauldin said.

Once the conflict ends, industry players will also face the challenge of re-surveying the sea floor to determine safe cable positions and avoid ships or objects that may have sunk during hostilities, he said.

While potential damage to subsea cables would not cause a complete connectivity loss - due to land-based links - experts agree that satellite systems are not a feasible replacement, as they cannot handle the same volume of traffic and are more expensive.

"It's not as though you could just switch to satellite. That's not an alternative," Mauldin said, noting that satellites rely on connections to land-based networks and are better suited for things in motion, like airplanes and ships.



# Israel using water access as 'weapon' in Gaza: MSF

AFP  
Geneva

Israeli authorities are systematically depriving people in Gaza of the water they need to live, Doctors Without Borders warned yesterday, decrying a campaign of "collective punishment" against Palestinians.

The extensive destruction of civilian water infrastructure in Gaza coupled with obstruction of access constitutes "an integral part of Israel's genocide", said the medical charity, which goes by its French acronym MSF.

In a report entitled "Water as a Weapon", MSF said the "engineered scarcity" was occurring alongside "direct killing of civilians, the devastation of health facilities, (and) the destruction of homes".

Together, this amounted to "the deliberate infliction of destructive and inhumane conditions of life on the Palestinian population

in Gaza", warned the report, based on testimonies and data MSF collected in 2024 and 2025.

"Israeli authorities know that without water, life ends," MSF emergency manager Claire San Filippo said in a statement.

"Yet they have deliberately and systematically obliterated water infrastructure in Gaza, whilst consistently blocking water-related supplies from entering."

Despite an October ceasefire that largely halted the Gaza war that began after Hamas's 2023 attack on Israel, the territory remains gripped by daily violence as Israeli strikes continue and both the Israeli military and Hamas accuse each other of breaking the truce.

## 'Engineered' scarcity

The MSF report, which was slammed by Israel, pointed to data from the United Nations, European Union and World Bank indicating that Israel had destroyed or damaged nearly 90% of water and



A child looks through damaged wall at an open-air art exhibition at the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip yesterday. (AFP)

sanitation infrastructure in Gaza.

"Desalination plants, boreholes, pipelines and sewage systems have been rendered inoperable or inaccessible," it said.

The charity documented several incidents where its clearly identi-

fied water trucks and boreholes had been shot at or destroyed.

"Palestinians have been injured and killed simply trying to access water," San Filippo said.

The charity said that besides the local authorities, it was the largest

producer and main distributor of drinking water in Gaza.

Last month, it provided more than 5.3 million litres of water each day, which meets the minimum needs of more than 407,000 people, or a fifth of Gaza's population.

However, throughout the war, "Israeli military displacement orders have locked our teams out of areas where we had provided water to hundreds of thousands of people," the MSF statement said.

## 'Perfect storm'

MSF said a third of its requests to bring in critical water and sanitation supplies, including water desalination units, pumps, water tanks, insect repellent, chlorine and other chemicals to treat water, had "been rejected or left unanswered".

San Filippo also cautioned that the deprivation of water, "combined with dire living conditions, extreme overcrowding, and a collapsed health system, create a per-

fect storm for the spread of diseases".

MSF called on Israel to "immediately restore water for people at the required levels in Gaza".

It urged Israel's allies to "use their leverage to pressure Israel to stop impeding humanitarian access". COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body in charge of Palestinian civilian affairs, harshly criticised "the baseless claims" presented in the report.

It maintained in a statement that "water supply in Gaza consistently exceeds humanitarian thresholds", insisting that "far from 'preventing' access, Israel facilitates and provides water from its own sources". MSF's "operational delays" were a result of the organisation's "refusal to follow standard registration protocols and their history of employing individuals linked to terror", COGAT charged.

Contacted by AFP, MSF did not wish to react to Israel's accusations.

# Mali's ruling junta in 'difficult' situation after rebel attacks

AFP  
Bamako

Militants and Tuareg separatists were advancing in northern Mali yesterday, three days after launching unprecedented attacks against the ruling junta, in what the government's Russian allies said remained a "difficult" situation.

The attacks were the largest in nearly 15 years and saw two former foes — insurgents and Tuareg separatists — join forces against the military junta and its Russian paramilitary backers, analysts say.

Defence Minister Sadio Camara — seen as the mastermind behind the junta's pivot to Russia — was killed in two days of fierce fighting between the army and Tuareg rebels of the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) allied with the Al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM).

Russia's defence ministry said yesterday that the rebels, who have captured a key town in the mostly desert north, were "regrouping" and the situation "remains difficult".

The fighting saw "attempts made to seize key facilities in the capital, Bamako — first and foremost, the presidential palace", the ministry said.

It confirmed that mercenaries from Russia's Africa Corps, controlled by the government in Moscow and sent to back up the Malian junta, had been forced to withdraw from the northern town of Kidal, now un-



A refugee walks past goats at M'berra refugee camp, which hosts 120,000 refugees fleeing violence and instability in Mali, in the Hodh Ech Chargui region of Mauritania. (AFP)

der the armed groups' control.

The Kremlin, separately, said it urgently wanted peace and stability in Mali, which has battled more than a decade of violence and other conflict.

## Abandoned and withdrawn

The large-scale attacks at the weekend raise questions about the junta's ability to tackle the armed groups, despite its insistence that its strategy, foreign partnerships and increased military efforts have stemmed the threat.

The notable absence of Goita, who seized power in 2020 pledging to combat the militants, has prompted uncertainty about the future of the country's military leaders.

A Malian security source told AFP that Goita was not taking any risks for "security reasons".

"The military leadership is currently drawing lessons from the prevailing situation," an elected official in Bamako said on condition of anonymity.

In a sign of the high tensions in the west African nation, the army has abandoned several positions in the northern Gao region, local sources told AFP yesterday.

Gao is the army's second-largest military stronghold after Kati, a garrison town near Bamako which is home to several senior junta officials and was targeted in the weekend attacks.

"The military have abandoned their position in Labbezanga, near



Tuareg rebels of the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) coalition ride on the back of a pickup truck in Kidal, on Sunday. (AFP)

the Niger border. They have withdrawn to Ansogo," a local politician told AFP on condition of anonymity.

As well as Kati, the simultaneous weekend attacks targeted the towns of Kidal and Gao in the north, and Sere in the centre.

Two loud blasts were heard late on Monday near the airport on the outskirts of Bamako, an AFP journalist said.

The cause of the blasts could not immediately be identified.

"It wasn't an exchange of gunfire and the explosions were coming from the area of Base 101 at the airport," a resident told AFP.

## Diversion?

The attacks near the centres of Malian power have been seen by some analysts as a diversion to seize Kidal.

Kidal, a pro-independence stronghold, was controlled by Tuareg rebel groups for years before being retaken in November 2023 in an army offensive, supported by

Russian mercenaries from Africa Corps' predecessor, the Wagner Group.

Central Mali, where Mopti is located, was also targeted and the security situation remained unclear yesterday.

The attacks are reminiscent of a crisis that rocked Mali in 2012, when Tuareg rebels joined forces with jihadists to capture strategic hubs in the vast, remote north.

That offensive was repelled by forces from former colonial ruler France, who have since left the Sahel country.

The alliance between the militants and Tuareg rebels eventually unravelled when they turned on each other and the jihadists drove the Tuareg separatists out.

The latest attacks are the result of a new alliance forged a year ago.

Although the two groups have different goals, according to experts, they are united against a common enemy — the military junta that has ruled since 2020 and its Russian paramilitary backers.

## Three more die in ethnic clashes over water in Chad

A fresh bout of fighting linked to tensions over access to water between two ethnic communities has killed three people in eastern Chad, a local official told AFP yesterday.

Monday's clashes come after fighting erupted on Saturday between the Tama and Zaghawa peoples over the use of a well near the border with war-torn Sudan, leaving 42 dead. "Sadly, three people have died and 10 been wounded in new armed clashes between the two communities," Brahimi Issa Galmaye, the state's representative in the border province of Wadi Fira, told AFP.

The latest fighting took place in the same Guereda sub-prefecture as Saturday's clashes, though in a different part of the rural area, Issa Galmaye explained. Several ministers, senior local officials and the army's chief of general staff were dispatched to the area on Sunday after the Tama-Zaghawa clashes broke out.

President Mahamat Idriss Deby has Zaghawa ancestry through his father, who himself served as the country's leader until his death at the hands of rebels in 2021.

Chad is frequently the scene of violent confrontations between its various ethnic communities, especially in several rural areas where disagreements over land, livestock and water sometimes turn fatal. Many of these pit sedentary Indigenous farmers against nomadic Arab herders, especially in the desert country's east, across the long and porous border with Sudan.

According to estimates from the International Crisis Group, herder-farmer conflicts have killed more than 1,000 Chadians and wounded more than 2,000 between 2021 and 2024. (AFP)

## GCC leaders vow collective defence at Jeddah summit

GT Report  
Jeddah

GCC leaders convened their 19th consultative summit in Jeddah yesterday, issuing a united condemnation of Iranian attacks on member states and Jordan, while affirming the bloc's right to collective self-defence and rejecting Tehran's moves against the Strait of Hormuz.

The summit, held at the invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, was chaired by Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

GCC Secretary General Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi said leaders discussed the regional escalation, the Iranian strikes on Council states and Jordan, and pathways to a diplomatic settlement that addresses long-term security concerns.

In a statement issued after the meeting, leaders strongly condemned the Iranian attacks, which targeted civilian facilities and infrastructure, caused loss of life and property, and constituted a grave violation of state sovereignty, the UN Charter, international law and the principles of good neighbourliness.

The strikes, they said, had sharply eroded trust in Tehran,

which must now take the initiative to rebuild it.

Leaders affirmed the right of member states to defend themselves individually or collectively under Article 51 of the UN Charter, declaring that GCC security is indivisible and that any attack on one member is an attack on all, in line with the Joint Defence Agreement.

They commended the courage and professionalism of GCC armed forces in repelling missile and drone attacks.

The summit also praised the rapid rehabilitation of damaged energy facilities, which preserved supply continuity, and noted enhanced cooperation in logistics and aviation to manage supply chain disruptions.

Leaders categorically rejected Iran's illegal measures to close the Strait of Hormuz, obstruct navigation, or impose transit fees on shipping, demanding a return to pre-February 28, 2026 conditions.

The summit directed the General Secretariat to fast-track joint GCC projects, including the railway, electricity interconnection, oil and gas pipeline, water interconnection, and a strategic reserve study.

Leaders also stressed deeper military integration and accelerated completion of the ballistic missile early warning system.

## New group of Gaza children in Jordan for medical care



A child looks on as wounded children evacuated from Gaza for medical treatment arrive at the King Hussein Bridge in Jordan. (Reuters)

AFP  
Amman

A new group of wounded or ill Palestinian children from Gaza have arrived in Jordan to receive medical care, the kingdom's army said yesterday.

They are the 26th group of children transported to Jordan since the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023.

The 81 children, accompanied by 108 family members, arrived through the King Hussein, or Al-Ileby, border crossing between the occupied West Bank and Jordan, the army said in a statement.

It is part of the "Jordanian medical corridor" initiative that King Abdullah II agreed to following a

meeting with US President Donald Trump in February 2025.

Under the initiative, around 2,000 children will be transported to Jordan to receive medical care.

Since March last year, more than 716 children have been transferred in co-operation with the World Health Organisation, the majority of them suffering from fractures, major wounds or cancer.

"The children will be treated in a number of Jordanian hospitals, as part of the kingdom's ongoing medical and humanitarian efforts to provide healthcare and medical support to our brothers and sisters in the Gaza Strip," the army said.

A ceasefire has largely held in Gaza since last October, but some violence has persisted.

## Two-thirds of South Sudan faces acute hunger: officials



Nearly two-thirds of South Sudan's population — some 7.9 million people — face acute hunger, authorities said Tuesday, amid a resurgence of fighting between government and opposition forces.

The violence is particularly intense in Jonglei State where government troops under President Salva Kiir have been battling militias allied to his longtime rival Riek Machar since December.

Hundreds of thousands have been displaced in a country that was already among the poorest and the most corrupt in the world.

"An estimated 7.9 million people will face high levels of acute food insecurity... Additional resources are urgently required," said acting agriculture minister Lily Albino Akol at a press conference to release the latest food security report compiled by the government, the United Nations and NGOs.

Four counties in Jonglei and Upper Nile states were at risk of famine, the UN said, with 2.2 million children under five projected to be acutely malnourished.

The crisis was worsening despite billions of dollars in oil revenue and foreign assistance, said US embassy senior assistance coordinator Charles Vetter.

"The transitional government continues to wage conflict throughout this country that is displacing people (and) continues to refuse to invest national resources in delivering public services," Vetter said. "The continued obstruction, interference, theft and denial of access is limiting the effectiveness of anybody trying to help," he added.

The findings were "a warning and a roadmap," said UN acting Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator Noala Skinner.

"We must save lives now," she said, calling on the government to urgently invest in agriculture, livelihoods and resilience. (AFP)



## S Korea court increases ex-first lady's graft sentence

AFP  
Seoul

A South Korean appeals court increased the corruption sentence for former first lady Kim Keon-hee yesterday to four years in jail after finding her guilty of stock manipulation and bribery.

Kim, the wife of jailed ex-president Yoon Suk-yeol, was handed 20 months in jail for bribery at an initial trial in January, but was acquitted of acting to rig stock prices and other charges.

She appealed the verdict in the hope of clearing her name, while prosecutors also did so arguing that the sentence was too lenient and the acquittals were wrongful.

Yesterday, the Seoul High Court overturned her acquittal for stock price fraud and maintained her

initial graft conviction, resulting in a much heavier penalty.

"The court sentences the defendant to four years in prison and imposes a 50 mn won (\$34,000) fine," the court said in a televised verdict.

It found Kim guilty of manipulating the share price of Deutsch Motors, a South Korean car dealer, which it ruled a "collusive... trading act constituting market manipulation".

"The defendant appears to have participated in such conduct," the court said as it overturned her acquittal.

Kim, who appeared in court wearing a white face mask, kept her head lowered as the verdict was announced.

The court said the 53-year-old had "failed to acknowledge her culpability and has instead con-

sistently resorted to excuses".

As a result of her accepting bribes, "public trust in the transparency of state affairs and the fair execution of national policy was undermined", it added.

The court said it had taken Kim's lack of a prior criminal record into account in its sentencing.

Lawyers for Kim told AFP they would appeal the verdict to the Supreme Court.

Kim, a self-proclaimed animal lover known for her campaigns to ban the dog-meat trade in South Korea, was at the centre of several scandals that often eclipsed her husband's tenure in office.

In 2023, covertly filmed footage emerged that appeared to show her accepting a luxury Dior handbag, in an episode that further eroded Yoon's already low approval ratings.

The furore fed into a defeat for Yoon's party in the April 2024 general elections, when it failed to regain a parliamentary majority.

Yoon subsequently vetoed three opposition-backed bills seeking investigations into allegations surrounding Kim, including the Dior bag case, with the final veto cast in November 2024.

A week later, he declared martial law – but failed, leading to his impeachment, removal from office and sentencing in February this year to life imprisonment for insurrection.

He has appealed against the conviction, insisting his martial law declaration was "solely for the sake of the nation".

The verdict in another appeal, against his five-year sentence for obstructing justice and other crimes linked to the declaration, is expected on Wednesday.



Supporters of South Korea's former president Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife Kim Keon-hee react as they watch a live stream of the trial of the former first lady on a street near the Seoul High Court in Seoul yesterday. (AFP)

Kim's bribery case has also implicated Han Hak-ja, leader of the cult-like Unification Church, which claims 10mn followers worldwide and runs a vast business empire.

The 83-year-old is standing trial on bribery and other charges while in custody, although she has been temporarily released to hospital for medical treatment.

Kim was found to have accepted two Chanel handbags and a Graff necklace from the church, with the court ruling on Tuesday that all three items were bribes.

In the lower court ruling, one of the handbags was not recognised as a bribe because it had been gifted to Kim before her husband's presidential inauguration.

## China tightens border inspections for fertiliser exports, sources say

China is stepping up customs inspections to enforce its new fertiliser export controls as gaps widen between domestic and international prices that have surged after disruptions linked to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Exports of ammonium sulphate – one of China's largest fertiliser exports by volume, which was excluded from restrictions introduced in March – are now subject to customs inspections, three fertiliser traders said, speaking on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter.

The crackdown started after customs officers in the eastern port city of Qingdao identified cases of exporters falsely declaring urea and potash fertilisers – whose export is restricted – as ammonium sulphate, two said.

"Our ammonium sulphate exports have recently seen a very high inspection rate because of this," said a trader whose company is involved in the sector.

Qingdao's General Administration could not be reached outside business hours and China's General Administration of Customs in Beijing did not reply to faxed questions also sent after business hours. China is one of

the world's top fertiliser exporters, shipping more than \$13bn last year, but tightly regulates exports to protect farmers. Last month Beijing restricted most fertiliser exports ahead of the spring planting season, with only a limited range of products – most notably ammonium sulphate – excluded.

Those bans have contributed to soaring international fertiliser prices triggered by the Iran war, which has disrupted flows through the Strait of Hormuz – through which roughly a third of globally traded urea is shipped.

China's domestic urea prices remain well below global levels, supported by export restrictions and a coal-based production system, creating a wide price gap that would make urea exports highly profitable if they were permitted.

Urea exports are controlled by a quota system. Beijing typically waits to see if there is a surplus in May before assessing how much can be shipped abroad.

Last year, China exported 4.9mn tonnes of urea, somewhat below historical norms of 5-5.5mn tonnes which would typically account for around 10% of global exports, according to StoneX. (Reuters)

## Indonesia train crash kills 15

Reuters  
Jakarta

The death toll from a train collision near the Indonesian capital Jakarta has risen to 15 with another 88 injured, a senior minister said yesterday, as emergency teams completed work to rescue passengers trapped in the wreckage. The collision between a commuter train and a long-distance train happened late on Monday in Bekasi, just outside Jakarta, with a carriage reserved for women bearing the brunt of the crash.

Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, Indonesia's senior minister for infrastructure, told reporters the death toll had risen to 15. Mohammad Syaifi, the head of Indonesia's search and rescue agency, said all the victims were women and most of them had been pinned inside by crushed metal. It had been a delicate process to extricate them from the mangled carriages, he added, but the evacuation had been completed. "We needed to involve personnel with certain skills to perform a measured extrication," he said, adding that rescuers were continuing to comb through the wreckage and would take action if they found any body parts.

Before disengaging the trains, rescuers were seen using angle grinders to cut through the metal of the compartments and reach the survivors.



Technicians work after a deadly train collision in Bekasi, Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday. (Reuters)

Transport Minister Dudy Purwagandhi said the crash took place after a taxi stopped on a crossing near the Bekasi Timur station, state news agency Antara reported. The commuter train was held on the platform where it was then hit by the long-distance train, the report said.

Taxi operator Green SM Indonesia said on Instagram that the taxi was part of its fleet. It said it had sent information to authorities to assist in the investigation.

Green SM Indonesia is the Indonesian branch of Vietnamese electric-vehicle taxi operator Green and Smart Mobility JSC, an affiliate of Vingroup.

After visiting one of the Bekasi hospitals treating the injured, Pres-

ident Prabowo Subianto said he had agreed to build a flyover near the railway tracks and that authorities would investigate the collision. He said large parts of the train network were not well-maintained.

Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) is investigating the crash. On Tuesday, people rushed to the station with some looking for relatives. Heriyati, a passenger, said she had initially intended to use the women's only carriage but opted for the one behind it instead. She had been on a call with her husband asking him to pick her up from the station when the crash happened.

"I haven't even finished with the call and the trains collided," she said. Commuter line trains are some



Rescuers carry the body of a victim at the site yesterday. (Reuters)

of the busiest in Jakarta, the world's most populous city. Yesterday, state railway company PT KAI said several commuter train trips were cut short due to the crash.

Adriansyah Yasin Sulaeman, an executive director of the think-tank Forum Transport for Jakarta, said the government needed to improve the ageing railway network, including separating tracks for express long-distance trains and commuter trains.

"These commuter trains are a symbol for the working class," he said. "It's a big alarm for the government to seriously improve it." Land transport accidents are common in Indonesia. A train collision in West Java province in 2024 killed four people and injured dozens.

## Thailand projects lower growth



A worker pulls a cart loaded with flowers at a market in Bangkok early yesterday. (AFP)

Thailand's economic growth and tourist arrivals are forecast to drop this year as the Middle East war roils global energy prices, the finance ministry said yesterday. The country's GDP growth is projected to dip to 1.6%, the ministry said in a statement, down from 2.4% in 2025.

Growth in the southeast Asian nation is anaemic, with the tourism sector vital but arrivals yet to return to their pre-Covid highs. The government said in February that this year's growth forecast was between 1.5-2.5%.

Thailand expects about 33.5mn foreign tourists this year, about 2mn fewer than previously estimated, the ministry said yesterday. Tourists from Europe and the Middle East have declined as a result of the US-Israeli war against Iran, which began two months ago and has driven up fuel prices, the ministry added. Visitors from the Middle East fell by a third in March compared to the same month last year, and European arrivals dropped around 4%, while tourists from other Asian nations rose 6%, according to Thai tourism ministry figures. Thailand received nearly 33mn foreign visitors in total last year. The country's core inflation was forecast to hit three percent this year, up from an earlier estimate of 0.3%. (AFP)

## Indonesian police charge 13 in daycare abuse scandal

AFP  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Indonesian police have arrested 13 people after shocking images of alleged abuse against small children at a daycare centre went viral, sparking outrage across the nation, officials said on Monday.

Police last Friday raided Little Aresha, a daycare centre in Yogyakarta on Java island, following a report from a former employee.

CCTV footage circulating on social media showed children, most under the age of two, lying on the floor wearing only diapers, their hands and feet bound with rags. The police have confirmed that the footage is authentic.

Police said they also found 20 kids crammed into a room just 3x3m (under 100sq ft).

"So far, 13 people have been named suspects" and arrested in the case, city police chief Eva

Guna Pandia told reporters in Yogyakarta on Monday.

Those in custody include 11 child carers, as well as the headmaster and the head of the foundation that ran the centre.

They will face a rash of charges including child neglect. Other charges may be added as the investigation unfolds.

Pandia said the suspects told police they had tied up some of the kids to prevent them disturbing others.

They claimed the centre was understaffed, with not enough personnel to bathe and dress the children, said Yogyakarta detective Riski Adrian.

The daycare centre accommodated about 100 children, more than half of whom are believed to have been maltreated, according to police.

Parent Noorman Windarto told AFP he was shocked when he received a phone call from a fellow parent last Friday, urging him to pick up his two-year-old son.

He later learnt from police that the boy, who had been attending the centre since he was three months old, was among those to have been tied up.

"My heart was shattered," the 42-year-old civil servant said.

"My wife cried. Most of them (caregivers) were women, and their body language was so tender, so soft-spoken."

Noorman paid about 1.1mn rupiah (about \$64) – half the minimum wage in Yogyakarta – for each of his two children to attend the centre, since shuttered.

His oldest child, a daughter now aged six, stopped going recently.

She sometimes came home with bruises which the daycare centre said she must have gotten elsewhere, playing, recalled Noorman.

His son had been repeatedly hospitalised with pneumonia, which the father now suspects may have had something to do with him being made to sleep on



Arifah Choiri Fauzi, Indonesia's minister of women's empowerment and child protection, speaks during a press conference on a child abuse probe at a daycare centre in Yogyakarta, on Monday. (AFP)

a cold floor without clothes. "I am very angry, furious," Noorman said. "They must be punished as severely as possible."

Under Indonesia's child protection law, the suspects risk up to five years' imprisonment and a 100mn rupiah fine.

## 'Philippines not concerned Iran war will distract US from region'

Reuters  
Manila

The Philippines is not worried about any reduction in US deterrence capabilities in the Indo-Pacific due to the war in the Middle East, its defence secretary said yesterday, although he warned China could try and seize any perceived opening.

Gilberto Teodoro's comments came in an interview with

Reuters amid annual joint military drills with the US that have drawn the largest ever number of participating countries, including Japanese combat troops for the first time.

China's recent actions in the

South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait were "not surprising", Teodoro added, saying Beijing looked to take advantage when it thought rival powers were preoccupied elsewhere.

China has recently increased its naval presence around Taiwan, including the transit of an aircraft carrier through the strait. It also installed a barrier this month at the mouth of the Scarborough shoal in the South China Sea, according to satellite images reviewed by Reuters.

Manila and Beijing have been locked in a series of maritime confrontations in the South China Sea in recent years, which China claims almost entirely as its own despite a 2016 arbitral ruling that

invalidated those claims.

"It is not surprising that any opportunity they see, perceived opportunity, or with a perceived weakness or a perceived opening, they will take advantage," Teodoro said.

Teodoro said he had full confidence in the Mutual Defence Treaty, the long-standing security pact between Manila and Washington, and was not worried by concerns that the Iran war could weaken US strategic bandwidth in Asia.

"I'm not concerned at all about reduced deterrence," he said, pointing to the Balikatan military exercises as a sign of Washington's commitment.

China has previously criticised the joint military exercises con-



Philippine Defence Minister Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (Reuters/ File Photo)

ducted by the Philippines and its allies, saying they raise regional tensions. Its embassy in Manila did not

immediately respond to a request for comment on Teodoro's remarks.

Teodoro said the expanded participation in Balikatan reflects Manila's broader push to build defence resilience through a network of like-minded partners, in the face of China's increasingly assertive stance in the region.

The Philippines and Japan are discussing a potential acquisition of frigates at both the secretary and ministerial levels, Teodoro said, adding that could be raised during upcoming talks with Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, who is due to visit next week to observe the ongoing exercises.

Teodoro said the Philippines will take advantage of Japan's decision to scrap long-standing

restrictions on arms exports, a policy shift that broadens Manila's access to defence equipment at a time of mounting security challenges in the region.

"The Japanese have a track record of affordable, high-quality equipment, which I do not see why they cannot extend to the defence space," Teodoro said. "Since this space is opening up, we're very excited."

Japan has scrapped restrictions on overseas arms sales, opening the way for exports of warships, missiles and other weapon. The move has been welcomed by several US allies as President Donald Trump wavers on security commitments to allies and the wars in Iran and Ukraine strain US weapons supplies.

## UK decision to ban Palestine Action unlawful, court rules

Reuters  
London

Britain yesterday sought to uphold a ban on pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action, which it has designated a terrorist organisation, after a court ruling that the move unlawfully interfered with freedom of expression.

Palestine Action, which had increasingly targeted Israel-linked defence companies in Britain with a particular focus on Israel's largest defence firm Elbit Systems, was proscribed under terrorism laws last year.

London's High Court ruled in February that

the ban was unlawful, although it remains in force pending the outcome of the government's appeal, which began yesterday.

Lawyers for Britain's interior minister, Shabana Mahmood, told the Court of Appeal that the finding that the ban had a significant impact on freedom of expression was "overstated and wrong".

Huda Ammori, who co-founded Palestine Action in 2020 and brought the successful challenge, argues proscription has imposed "severe restrictions on the fundamental free speech and assembly rights of vast numbers of people".

Palestine Action was banned shortly after a June break-in at the Royal Air Force's Brize Norton air base, in which activists damaged two military planes.

More than 2,700 people have since been arrested for holding signs in support of Palestine Action, though charges could be dropped if the High Court's ruling is upheld.

After February's decision, London's Metropolitan Police said it would pause arrests while reviewing its position, but resumed enforcement earlier this month, arresting over 500 people.

The High Court's decision was announced shortly after six people charged over the 2024 raid on Elbit were all acquitted of aggravated burglary.

## Northern Irish police arrest man over suspected car bombing

Reuters  
Belfast

Northern Irish police arrested a man yesterday and stepped up patrols after the militant group New IRA claimed responsibility for a car bomb attack on a Belfast police station and warned it would target officers at their homes.

The New IRA is one of a small number of active militant groups opposed to a 1998 peace deal that largely ended sectarian violence in the region. It has been behind many of the attacks on police, in-

cluding a similar attempted car bombing at a police station outside Belfast last month.

The targeting of police officers at their homes would be an escalation of those attacks. The last officer to be killed in Northern Ireland, Constable Ronan Kerr, died when a bomb exploded under his car outside his home 15 years ago.

The dissident group rejects the political compromises at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement that Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom unless a majority of the region votes by referendum to unite with Ireland.

Detectives investigating the at-

tack on Dunmurry police station at the weekend arrested a 66-year-old man under terrorism laws, the Police Service of Northern Ireland said.

The New IRA claimed responsibility for hijacking a delivery vehicle and forcing the driver to take it to the police station on Saturday, the *Irish News* quoted the nationalist militant group as saying yesterday.

The organisation said in a statement, which the *Irish News* said it received and included a codeword to confirm its veracity, it had intended to kill police coming out of the station after the driver was told

to shout that there was a bomb in the car as they left.

"It is our intention, if they keep harassing the republican people, to bomb them (police officers) in their own houses, with no warning," the statement added.

The New IRA, a far smaller organisation than the Irish Republican Army, which disarmed after the peace accord, typically claims responsibility for any attacks in coded statements to local newspapers.

Senior police officials announced a high-visibility policing operation across Northern Ireland in response to what they described as an ongoing dissident threat.

## Britain lowers population growth estimate as immigration slows

Reuters  
London

The United Kingdom's population is likely to grow to 71.0mn by mid-2034, below a previous projection of 72.2mn due to lower immigration assumptions, the country's statistics office said yesterday.

Net migration looks set to add 2.2mn people to the UK's population of 69.3mn between mid-2024 and mid-2034, while there would be a drag of 450,000 from deaths exceeding births, the Office for National Statistics said.

Net migration was likely to remain the only source of expected population growth, the ONS said.

The lower expected population growth could add to the fiscal headwinds that will face finance minister Rachel Reeves in her autumn budget.

However, the agency said the projections should not be treated as a definitive forecast as they are largely based on an extrapolation of recent trends and do not attempt to predict future changes in government policy or other factors driving migration, fertility or mortality.

Yesterday's projection showed the extent to which Britain's population is ageing. The number of pensioners is expected to rise by 15% to

14.2mn between 2024 and 2034, while the number of children aged under 16 will fall by 13%.

The ONS also trimmed its assumption for fertility to 1.42 children per woman from 1.45 in its last projections made two years ago.

There was a more substantial cut to the ONS' assumption for future rates of net immigration to 230,000 a year from 340,000 in the 2024 report.

"This reflects the sharp decrease in net migration since it peaked in 2023, as well as expert advice," it said.

**"This reflects the sharp decrease in net migration since it peaked in 2023, as well as expert advice"**

Britain saw immigration surge after the Covid-19 pandemic, reflecting pent-up demand as well as a decision by former prime minister Boris Johnson's government to relax rules particularly for low-paid care workers and their families.

After net immigration approached 1mn in the 12 months to June 2023, rules were tightened and it fell to 204,000 in the 12 months to June 2025.

The population of England is expected to grow faster than elsewhere in the UK. England's population is projected to rise by 2.9% by mid-2034, compared to growth of 1.0% in Wales, 0.6% in Northern Ireland and 0.3% in Scotland.

## Titan arum in bloom at Kew Gardens



Members of the public take photographs of the flowering titan arum in bloom at the Princess of Wales Conservatory at Kew Gardens in south-west London yesterday. Titan arum - the smelliest plant in the world - takes several years to produce a flower that can grow up to three metres (9.8ft.) in height, and is then in bloom for less than 48 hours. (AFP)

## Climbers open Everest route past dangerous ice block

AFP  
Kathmandu

Nepali guides yesterday opened the route past the icefall on Mount Everest, which was blocked for two weeks by a large chunk of dangerous ice.

A team of highly skilled mountaineers, known in Nepal as "icefall doctors", began fixing ropes and ladders on Everest last month, to prepare for the spring climbing season.

But a serac - a block of glacial ice - above the already treacherous Khumbu icefall disrupted their work, sparking fears of delays in the limited summit season on the world's highest peak.

"A team of 21, including eight icefall doctors, went up this morning, opening the route up to Camp 1," Lakpa Sherpa of 8K Expeditions, who co-ordinated the effort, told AFP. "The serac is still there so the risk persists... We expect it will melt soon."

Sherpa said teams would work to set the route up to the summit to ensure there are no more delays.

The government has issued more than 900 climbing permits for various Himalayan mountains this season, including 425 for Everest.

A sea of tents to host more than 1,000 people - foreign climbers and support staff - has built up at the foot of Everest, readying to scale the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) summit.

Climbers at the base camp have been anxiously watching the developments on the route. They must cross the icefall, a constantly shifting maze of crevasses and ice blocks, to reach higher on Everest.

"We are not yet sending people up," said Lukas Furtenbach of Furtenbach Adventures, saying he would await a decision from the committee which mobilises the icefall doctors.

Nepal is home to eight of the

world's 10 highest peaks and attracts hundreds of climbers each spring, when temperatures are warmer and winds calmer.

A climbing boom has made mountaineering a lucrative business since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa made the first ascent in 1953.

Around 700 people reached Everest's summit last year from the Nepali side, according to the tourism department, with another 100 climbers believed to have reached the peak from the northern side, via China.

In 2023, three Nepali guides were killed when a falling block of glacial ice swept them into a deep crevasse as they were crossing the Khumbu icefall with supplies.

Autumn summits on Everest in 2019 were also thwarted by a serac.

In 2014, an immense tumbling wall of snow, ice and rock killed 16 Nepali guides on the icefall, one of the deadliest accidents in the Himalayas.

## Billionaire's son offers home for Escobar's hippos

An Indian billionaire's son offered yesterday to take hippos descended from those introduced to Colombia by drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, rather than have the animals killed.

Anant Ambani, the son of tycoon Mukesh Ambani, said he had formally requested the Colombian government to stay a decision to kill the animals, which have wreaked havoc on rivers in the South American nation.

Instead, he has asked to allow the "safe, scientifically-led translocation that would bring the 80 animals to a permanent home" at his Vantara animal centre. The vast zoo in India's western state of Gujarat bills itself as the "one of the world's largest wildlife rescue, care and conservation centres". Vantara is already home to hundreds

of elephants, as well as 50 bears, 160 tigers, 200 lions, 250 leopards and 900 crocodiles, among other animals, according to India's Central Zoo Authority.

Experts have repeatedly sounded the alarm on Vantara's massive animal intake, including the import of critically endangered and rare species.

Escobar brought hippos - which are native only to Africa and can weigh up to several tonnes - to Colombia in the 1980s. After Escobar's death, hippos from his private zoo made a new life in the lush river banks of the Colombia's Magdalena River - where they have attacked fishermen, prompting moves to cull them.

Anant Ambani, son of the billionaire head of the multinational conglomerate Reliance Industries,

said he had submitted a detailed plan to give the animals a new home at Vantara. The animal centre is sited alongside the Reliance Jamnagar Refinery Complex, which the conglomerate says is the world's largest crude oil refinery.

Summers there can get extremely hot, with temperatures soaring above 40C. Ambani's proposal sets out a veterinary-led capture and transport, as well as the creation of a "purpose-designed naturalistic setting" for the hippos, according to a statement.

"Vantara has the expertise, infrastructure and resolve to support this effort, entirely on Colombia's terms," the statement said.

"These 80 hippos did not choose where they were born, nor did they create the circumstances they now face," Ambani added. (AFP)

## Fuel loading begins for Bangladesh's first nuclear plant

Reuters  
Moscow/Dhaka

Russian nuclear energy corporation Rosatom has begun loading nuclear fuel into the first reactor at the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh, it said yesterday.

This first step in the reactor's start-up phase is followed by an increase to its minimum controlled power level, with power then increased gradually to supply electricity to a Bangladesh grid that comes under strain every summer as rising temperatures drive up demand.

Officials say generation will start at low levels with full output not expected until 2027. That leaves the country still facing

an energy crunch this year because of the war in the Middle East. Bangladesh relies heavily on imported oil and gas, much of it from the Middle East, where shipments through the Strait of Hormuz have been disrupted since fighting began in late February.

The Rooppur nuclear plant, with planned power generation capacity of 2,400 megawatts across two reactors, will add Bangladesh to the list of more than 30 nations that have operating reactors.

The estimated project cost is about \$13 billion, with Russia providing a state loan covering 90% of that.

Rosatom head Alexei Likhachev said that Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman had con-

firmed the government's commissioning of the first unit and its approval to complete the rest of the plant in talks yesterday.

Rosatom plans to commission the first unit by July 2026 and the second unit in 2027.

Bangladesh's Science and Technology Minister Fakir Mahbub Anam said the plant's first reactor is expected to begin commercial operation in August, with officials estimating an initial supply of about 300 megawatts following fuel loading and safety tests.

He said that about 1,100 megawatts from the 1,200MW Unit 1 are expected to be fed into the national grid by the first week of January next year, with the unit reaching full capacity later that month.

## Bangladesh's tigers stalk uncertain future in Sundarbans

AFP  
Satkhira

Tigers are so feared in Bangladesh's vast Sundarban mangroves that locals invoke spirits to protect against them. But experts say it is the big cats themselves that need defending.

Abdul Goni Gazi was among the first to raise the alarm for the creatures struggling to grow their numbers under pressure from habitat loss, poaching and climate change.

Known locally as "Goni Tiger", the 45-year-old devoted his life to promoting coexistence between the big cats and the people living on the forest's edge.

Despite the danger, this activist

claims to have saved 36 Bengal tigers from guns or traps - and 106 local residents from the animals' jaws.

He has pulled furious villagers back from the brink of killing tigers - and, in some cases, dragged home the dismembered bodies of others.

"If we want the Sundarbans and the thousands of people dependent on it to survive, we need the Bengal tigers," he said.

Stretching 10,000 square kilometres (3,900 square miles) across sprawling mangrove forests and tidal rivers, the Unesco-listed World Heritage site straddles both Bangladesh and India.

Tigers eat grazing animals in the forest, which has the knock-on ef-

fect of allowing mangroves to grow and thus help protect coastlines from erosion and storms.

"If a tiger is killed in the Sundarbans, it creates a turmoil in the ecosystem," said Mohammad Abdul Aziz, a zoology expert at Bangladesh's Jahangirnagar University.

The creatures' power is also deeply embedded in people's culture, prompting them to seek the blessings of dozens of spirits before entering the forest.

"If someone chants the name of Mother Bonbibi, she will save his life from tigers, snakes, and crocodiles," said villager Ashutosh Mandal, 63, referring to a deity whose idol is worshipped at temples.

A blend of Islamic and Hindu beliefs has long served as a con-

servation code, with supernatural guardians believed to punish anyone who plunders the forest for greed. "If the Sundarbans had 400-500 tigers, they themselves would safeguard the ecosystem - without the need for human intervention," Goni told AFP.

The South Asian nation of 170mn people pledged in 2010 to double its tiger population, then placed at 414.

But a more rigorous camera-trap census in 2015 revised the population down to 106, followed by counts of 114 in 2018, and 125 in 2024 - a rise of roughly two tigers per year.

The slow growth has drawn scrutiny over the effectiveness of the nation's conservation efforts, including the latest \$4.2mn tiger project.



This photograph shows an aerial view of a river winding through the Sundarbans at Dacope in Bangladesh's Khulna district. (AFP)



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# Dollar dominance in global trade on the rise amid Mideast conflict

In times of turmoil, investors often seek the stability of the US dollar because of its reserve currency status and liquidity, as well as the perceived credit strength of the US. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East is solidifying the dollar's dominant role in global trade, according to one measure of activity in the interbank foreign-exchange markets.

The greenback's portion of international transactions rose to a record 51.1% in March, up from 49.2% a month earlier, according to the latest data compiled by global financial messaging service Swift, or the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication. That's the highest share since 2023.

Large global banks use Swift to communicate with each other and facilitate interbank currency deals. The world's primary reserve currency was followed by the euro, which carried about a 21% share via Swift, then the pound, yen, Chinese yuan and Canadian dollar. "Dollar weakness seen last year has not translated into any clear decline in the dollar's role as a reserve or base currency for capital markets," a JPMorgan research team led by Joyce Chang said in an April 21 note.

In 2025, a gauge of the greenback fell by 8% to its lowest level in four years. Since the start of the war in late February, it has risen about 0.9%. Trading in the currency markets was exceptionally choppy last month following the launch of US and Israeli strikes against Iran, driving a global selloff in risky assets, a surge in oil prices and demand for the haven dollar.

**The greenback's portion of international transactions rose to a record 51.1% in March, up from 49.2% a month earlier, according to the latest data compiled by global financial messaging service, Swift**

Oil across global markets is mostly priced in dollars. Therefore, as energy prices rise, so too can demand to transact via the greenback.

A gauge of the greenback's expected volatility over the next month surged to a 10-month high in March, although gyrations have quieted since as investors focus on the outlook of ceasefire negotiations between the US and Iran. The dollar is now down about 1.4% in April.

Investors have a keen eye on the international usage of the greenback — and the appeal of US assets

more broadly — since President Donald Trump unveiled a sweeping programme of tariffs early last year. "We see a broader trend toward diversification rather than outright de-dollarisation, and the data fail to demonstrate broad-based de-dollarisation," JPMorgan's Chang and team said.

Swift's data doesn't encompass the entire \$9.5tn-per-day currency markets. In 2022, for example, it began excluding several major Russian banks from the service following the invasion of Ukraine. And while it measures trading activity by currency, the figures don't reveal the underlying direction of the flows between banks.

But Deutsche Bank and Wells Fargo & Co say the dollar's war-driven haven rally is likely over, as the US-Iran ceasefire pushes investors back into riskier assets. Analysts are now arguing it's time to embrace bets against the greenback, and global investors seem to be doing just that. With the haven aura fading, investors are once again focusing on the headwinds that drove the dollar down 8% last year — its worst performance since 2017 — including the prospect of the Federal Reserve interest-rate cuts.

Trump's attacks on the Fed are seen also fuelling mistrust in American institutions and a flight from US assets and the dollar. Despite warnings about the long-term headwinds for the dollar, here's the undeniable reality: Dollar is the king, still. The US currency is on one side of almost 90% of foreign-exchange transactions, accounts for two-thirds of international debt, 57% of currency reserves, 54% of export invoicing, and 51% of interbank FX deals, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

To be clear, no one would bet that the dollar's trajectory will be a straight line as Trump's tariffs policy continues heighten tensions across the world and the threat of geopolitical risks foster demand for havens.

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## Standing tall



A man looks at the Taipei 101 building standing among residential and commercial buildings in Taipei yesterday. (AFP)

# Blocking of Meta's AI startup buy raises risk for China tech deals



• Chinese state media says deal could harm industrial security  
• Says Manus' move to Singapore biggest point of contention

By Kane Wu, Laurie Chen and Eduardo Baptista  
Reuters

China's blocking of Meta's acquisition of AI startup Manus will heighten the risk for global investors looking to invest in advanced tech firms with ties to the country amid Beijing's expansion of jurisdictional reach to safeguard strategic assets.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), in a rare case, ordered on Monday that the \$2-bn-plus acquisition by Meta be unwound under Beijing's national security review mechanism of foreign investments that came into effect in 2021.

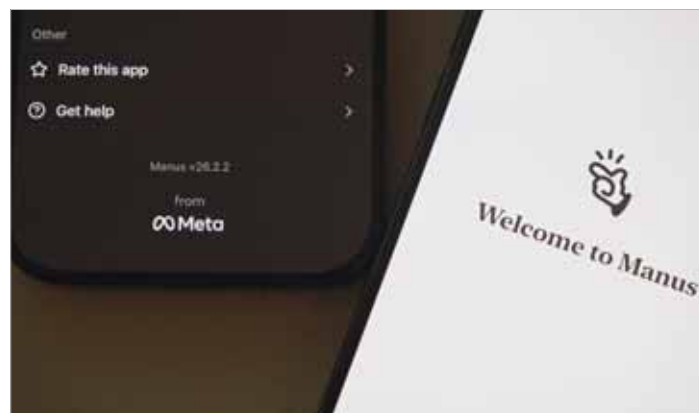
The powerful state planner's move to block a China-founded and Singapore-headquartered company's takeover will discourage stake or asset transfers by homegrown companies to foreign investors without Beijing's approval, lawyers and analysts said.

"Beijing effectively drew a bright red line that Chinese AI talent and technology are not for sale to American companies, full stop," said Han Shen Lin, Shanghai-based China country director at US consultancy firm The Asia Group.

It was not immediately clear how Meta would unwind the completed acquisition of Manus, but the *Wall Street Journal* said on Tuesday, citing people familiar with the matter that the California-based tech giant was preparing to do so.

Meta and the NDRC did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

On the NDRC decision, China's state-backed 'Global Times' said on Tuesday the issue was not the location of Manus' incorporation or management team but rather "the extent of its connections to China in terms of technology, talent, and data", as well as whether the



transaction could jeopardise China's industrial security and development interests.

The biggest point of contention was that Manus, an AI company built on the work of Chinese engineers and the Chinese infrastructure environment, abruptly "cut ties" with China after receiving US investment, the report added.

Manus, an agent tool built atop Western and local AI models that can autonomously execute complex tasks, was hailed last year by state media as a paragon of China's AI innovation alongside large language model-builder DeepSeek.

A year after Manus' launch, its co-founders, CEO Xiao Hong and chief scientist Ji Yichao, have been barred from leaving China after being summoned to Beijing for talks with regulators in March, sources have said. The NDRC move comes weeks before a planned mid-May summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

**CHINA ROOTS**

Manus could become a cautionary tale for Chinese AI entrepreneurs whose ambitions chafed against the Communist Party's red lines, and whose business ultimately could not survive the shifting faultlines

of US-China tech competition. Although Manus did not develop its own artificial intelligence models, Beijing views AI as a sensitive sector critical to national security and has made efforts to control outbound flows of technology, IP and talent.

"This is perhaps a warning shot that having a Singapore set-up is not entirely a silver bullet. If the business still has deep China roots, Beijing may treat it as effectively domestic for sensitive transactions," said Lam Zhen Guang, a lawyer at Clyde & Co.

Investors in a China-founded business will demand real operational separation, such as IP assignment, R&D relocation, governance, and clean ownership disclosures, rather than a paper relocation, Lam said. "For founders and VCs, the takeaway is deal certainty risk. Cross-border exits, especially to US buyers, may now carry a higher China regulatory discount unless approvals and China touchpoints are solved early," Lam added.

Meta conducted only a few weeks of due diligence to complete the acquisition in December, while neither Meta nor Manus sought Chinese regulatory approval for the deal or its relocation to Singapore, said five sources with knowledge of the matter.

At that time, Meta was in a

frantic search globally for AI targets, as it aimed to compete with industry peers which had gone ahead with in-house models, said a former investor in Manus.

The Singapore relocation for Manus was necessary, the founders believed, amid heightened US-China geopolitical tensions and increased regulatory scrutiny of tech investments, said a separate person with knowledge of the thinking of Manus.

Those moves angered senior Chinese officials, whose subsequent investigation had a chilling effect on other Chinese tech startups and investors, said the sources who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter. After the acquisition was announced in December, Manus became part of Meta and all its previous investors, including US-based Benchmark Capital, China's HSG, ZhenFund and Tencent Holdings, exited the company, sources said. Tencent declined to comment. The investment firms did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

**'UNSCRAMBLING THE EGGS'**

The unwinding of the Manus acquisition will be complex and may involve reversing equity transfers, returning funds and requiring the deletion of transferred code, data and other intellectual property, as well as withdrawing personnel, said Andy Han, a partner at AllBright Law Offices in Qingdao.

"Fully reversing such transactions is often difficult in reality, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors, as information already absorbed by engineers or transferred during due diligence cannot easily be undone," Han said. Meta said on Monday the transaction complied fully with applicable law and that it would anticipate an appropriate resolution to the inquiry.

"Unscrambling the eggs is always an issue when a deal is blocked by a regulator, unless the acquirer has kept the target separate, which does not appear to have been the case here," said Jeremie Jourdan, a Brussels-based partner at European law firm Geradin Partners.

"The fact that Manus moved to Singapore will make it harder for the Chinese authority to enforce their ruling, but they may have other means to force Meta to comply by going after their assets in China," Jourdan said.

China's latest regulatory move comes at a time when global investors were increasing their wagers on Chinese artificial intelligence companies, betting on the next DeepSeek and seeking to diversify their holdings.

"Any US technology company considering acquiring a Chinese-founded AI startup must now treat NDRC foreign investment security review as a genuine deal risk, regardless of where that company is incorporated," said Asia Group's Lin.



The Manus AI agent app is displayed on a mobile phone near the logo of tech giant Meta. (Reuters)

# GU-Q central to Qatar's leadership vision: Dean

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"Diplomacy is not only political diplomacy. It manifests itself through culture, through education, through sports," he said. "It is the kind of things that Qatar has done in a spectacular way that not everybody understands."

Speaking about his long academic career in the United States and his move to Qatar Masri said "Coming here is coming home. It is contributing to the advancement of education for the young people of this nation."

He highlighted that a significant aspect of Qatar's educational progress is its strong emphasis on women's empowerment and pointed out that women make up about 70% of the student body in GU-Q that represents around 80 nationalities, with many international students choosing to remain in Qatar after graduation.

He emphasised the role of HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, Vice-Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, for advancing cultural diplomacy and promoting global understanding.

"To have such women leaders in positions of influence and investing in society through education, culture, and sports is not only important to dispel myths, but to secure the future of this country," he underlined.

The dean noted that since he assumed the deanship of the university, there has been remarkable growth in the university's faculty, increasing its size by 50%.

"We look for great scholarship and

how translatable that research is, so that it has an impact in the real world. Our faculty members are actively engaged in public discourse, contributing to regional and international media outlets. Many of our professors regularly provide analysis on global issues, reinforcing the institution's role as a thought leader."

According to dean Masri, one of his key focuses has been strengthening the ties between the Qatar campus and Georgetown's main campus in Washington, DC. "For much of the last 20 years, people in Washington, DC didn't have much idea about the Qatar campus," he said. "Through increased exchanges, visits, and collaborative programmes, the university has worked to bridge that gap."

The dean also spoke about the efforts to integrate the university more deeply into the Qatari society. "It was very important to embed ourselves in Qatari society," he said. One initiative is the 'Hiwaraat' dialogue series, which brings together academics, policymakers, and the public to discuss pressing global issues. The events have attracted large audiences and addressed topics ranging from the Iraq War to contemporary debates on Palestine."

He highlighted the institution's legacy in three areas: Developing human capital, supporting Qatar's role as a mediator and convener, and helping position the country as a global education hub.

"Qatar is where you want to come for education and for a lot of other things. It is a country of opportunities and dialogue in a turbulent region," he concluded.

# Qatar Boat Show 2026 from November 4

From Page 1

According to him, the previous edition of the exhibition attracted more than 27,000 visitors from 105 countries, and witnessed the participation of 65 boats and marine vessels, with a total value of QR880mn.

Mohamed al-Atwaan, chief operating officer of Old Doha Port and the show director, emphasised the event has evolved rapidly to become a recognised name internationally.

"Qatar Boat Show has moved beyond establishing itself," he said. "We became a platform, a well-known, well-positioned platform in the region and even globally."

According to al-Atwaan, the show's success is underpinned by growing confidence from international exhibitors and visitors. "They believe in Qatar Boat Show as a platform to display their latest technologies in



terms of the yachting industry, fishing boats and fishing equipment," he noted, highlighting the diversity of offerings.

"The strong response to the 2024 and 2025 editions has played a key role in shaping this year's ambitions. The positive feedback that we got is reflected now on our preparations for 2026," he said, adding that organisers aim to build on this momentum.

Al-Atwaan stressed that the show has quickly positioned it-

self among leading regional and global events. "In two years or two editions, we became one of the well-known platforms with the trust of international companies continuously participating," he remarked.

Central to the 2026 edition is its newly unveiled campaign theme, "Crafting Wonderful", which reflects a broader vision for the event. "This is reflected in whatever we do for the boat show," al-Atwaan explained, citing organisation, yacht de-

sign, networking opportunities and industry agreements as key elements.

Beyond the industry focus, the show is also set to expand its engagement with the wider community. He pointed to "side activities and activations that we are offering for all the community," underlining efforts to make the event more accessible and interactive.

"We are looking for a unique edition that would be better than the last two editions," al-Atwaan added.

The campaign theme embodies the essence of the Qatar Boat Show, an event that fosters creative ideas and contributes to their development and realisation. The campaign draws its meaning from the concept of "craftsmanship" in the maritime sector, symbolising a commitment to the highest standards evident in every aspect of the show.

# Magyar proposes meeting with Zelensky on minority rights

Reuters  
Budapest

**H**ungarian election winner Peter Magyar has proposed a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in western Ukraine to discuss minority rights of ethnic Hungarians in the region, Magyar said in a Facebook post yesterday.

Centre-right leader Magyar ousted nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban after 16 years in power at an April 12 election, winning a constitutional majority that will allow him to roll back Orban's contested rule-of-law reforms.

While Magyar does not share Orban's overt hostility towards Ukraine, he also opposes

fast-track European Union accession for Kyiv and says its treatment of ethnic Hungarians in western Ukraine will be key to rebuilding ties.

"The goal of the meeting is to help the situation of Hungarians in Transcarpathia so that they can stay in their homeland," Magyar said after talks with Zoltan Babjak, the mayor of Berehove, a Ukrainian town near the border with Hungary where ethnic Hungarians constitute a majority.

Under Orban, Budapest has repeatedly clashed with Kyiv over what it says are curbs on the rights of roughly 150,000 ethnic Hungarians to use their native tongue.

Magyar said it was time for Kyiv to restore all cultural, linguistic, administrative and higher-education rights to ethnic Hungarians, which he said could also ensure that

many who have fled since Russia's 2022 invasion return when the war ends.

"If we can resolve these issues, that would certainly open a new chapter in Ukrainian-Hungarian bilateral relations," said Magyar, who plans to take the oath of office as prime minister at the inaugural session of parliament on May 9. "The concessions announced by the Ukrainian government in education in 2025 are a step forward, but not sufficient," he said, encouraging Ukraine's leaders to take what he called a large step towards European values and genuine freedom.

Ukrainian officials have reacted with cautious optimism to the Hungarian election result. Zelensky has congratulated Magyar on his victory, saying Kyiv was ready for "meetings and joint constructive work".

# Trump hails British 'friends' as king visits

AFP  
Washington

**P**resident Donald Trump said yesterday that the US has no closer friend than Britain, as he welcomed King Charles III to the White House on a state visit shadowed by tensions over the Iran war.

Speaking after a pomp-filled welcome on the South Lawn featuring a 21-gun salute, Trump's tone was a world away from his recent jibes at British Prime Minister Keir Starmer for failing to join in against Tehran.

"In the centuries since we won our independence, Americans have had no closer friends than the British," said Trump, referring to the fact that the royal visit marks the 250th anniversary of the US colonies declaring their freedom from British rule.

Using a phrase prized by British governments since Winston Churchill first used it after World War II, Trump said that the two countries had a "special relationship, and we hope it will always remain that way."



US President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump, Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla wave during an arrival ceremony at the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. **PICTURES:** Reuters

Trump also praised the British military, saying that "nobody fought better together" with the US — despite recently deriding Britain's two aircraft carriers as "toys."

Afterward, four US jets roared over the White House in a noisy flypast as Trump, Charles, Queen Camilla and First Lady Melania

Trump watched.

On the second day of the four-day royal visit, Charles will later address the US Congress and is expected to call in his speech for "reconciliation and renewal" amid the recent strains in ties.

Republican Trump has repeatedly lambasted Britain's Starmer over his Iran war opposition,

alongside the country's immigration and energy policies.

But Trump — a long-term fan of the British royals who received his own state visit last year — appeared in a jovial mood on a rainy Washington morning as quipped: "What a beautiful British day this is."

The 79-year-old president even joked about how his late mother, who was born in Scotland, "had a crush on Charles," who is now 77.

Cannons rang out while a military band played the British and US national anthems, before Charles shook hands with top Trump administration officials and inspected troops on the lawn with the president.

A band of soldiers dressed in uniforms from the US Revolutionary War then marched past, playing fife and drums.

Trump then held talks with Charles in the Oval Office. But the meeting was held behind closed doors — an unusual step for the usually garrulous US president, reflecting the sensitivity of the visit.

"It was a really good meeting. He's a fantastic person. They're incredible people and it's a real



honour," Trump told reporters afterward.

In the evening the royal couple will return to the White House for a grand state dinner.

Security has been tight for the trip, which comes just days after an alleged assassination attempt against Trump at a Washington press gala. Countersniper teams could be seen on the roof of the White House.

Melania Trump told reporters she was "very well" when asked how she was doing after the shooting. The first day of the trip featured a more informal welcome, with the Trumps treating Charles and Camilla to tea and cakes before showing them the White House beehives.

But the second day will feature

Charles's most public-facing moment, when he becomes the first British monarch to address Congress since his mother, late queen Elizabeth, in 1991.

With tensions still high over Iran, Charles is expected to appeal to Trump in guarded terms, saying that defending common democratic ideals is "crucial for liberty and equality."

"Time and again, our two countries have always found ways to come together," he is expected to say.

But in an unwelcome distraction, Britain's new ambassador to Washington, Christian Turner, was quoted by the *Financial Times* as telling students during a recent visit that America's special relationship is "probably Israel."

# Trucks build up at border as Afghans wait to cross

AFP  
Landi Kotal

**H**undreds of trucks loaded with beds, cabinets and even household firewood lined the road from Pakistan's mostly closed main border gateway into Afghanistan yesterday as Afghans pushed out of Pakistan prepared to cross.

Islamabad launched a deportation drive in recent years that has sent back hundreds of thousands of undocumented Afghan citizens, many of whom had made Pakistan home through decades of war.

Fraught relations that spiralled into armed conflict between the neighbours led to the crucial Torkham trade gateway being mostly closed since October. Officials told AFP that it re-opened for Afghans returns last month.

Many said as they waited to cross yesterday that they hoped differences could be resolved peacefully to end a conflict that has killed hundreds and hampered deep eco-



Afghan refugee trucks are parked along the Landi Kotal highway near the Torkham border in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as they await deportation to Afghanistan yesterday. **(AFP)**

nomie and cultural ties shared by communities on both sides.

"If fighting starts on the border, it will become difficult for us and we will go back, and then we will face more difficulties," Fida, a 28-year-old Afghan national near the crossing, told AFP.

Fighting has largely abated in recent weeks after China held mediation talks, but the UN recorded dozens of civilian casualties, including deaths, from strikes in

eastern Afghanistan on Monday.

The Taliban government blamed the attacks on Pakistan, which denied the accusation.

Afghan families, including children, clutched documents at the mountainous border crossing and carried household essentials, such as thermoses and rice cookers, as they lined up for immigration checks.

However, the pace of processing their trucks, normally used to

transport commercial goods but now laden with the rest of their belongings, struggled to keep up.

Around 1,000 of the brightly coloured, ornately decorated trucks queued up along the roadside, with drivers resting under their vehicles to shelter during the long wait.

A Pakistani official posted at the border told AFP on condition of anonymity that around 4,000-6,000 Afghan returnees had been crossing each day since March.

"During this period, only their trucks carrying their belongings are allowed to pass into Afghanistan, while the trade route remains fully closed," he said.

Businesses and locals on both sides of the border have expressed alarm at mounting financial losses due to stalled exports.

"It would be good if Pakistan and Afghanistan resolve the issue through talks with each other and pave the way for trade," said Mat-tullah, an Afghan living in Pakistan who was waiting to cross.

"This would be better for both neighbouring countries."

# Russian 'shadow fleet' undeterred as ships cross British waters

Reuters  
London

**P**remier Minister Keir Starmer's decision last month to let the British military board ships of Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" has had no clear impact on the number passing through UK waters, a Reuters analysis shows. In the month after Starmer's March 25 threat, at least 98 Russian vessels subject to UK sanctions transited its waters, about the same as each of the last three months. There has been no announcement of any boarding or detention of the ships, which typically have an opaque ownership structure and can transport oil, grains and arms, often in support of Russia's war in Ukraine. LSEG tracking data shows that 63 ships passed within 12 nautical miles of the coastline in the English Channel, the most direct route between the Baltic Sea and southern Europe. Another 35 travelled through Britain's Exclusive Economic Zone, which extends up to 200 nauti-

cal miles from the coast, mainly around north Scotland.

"You have to quickly follow up with boardings or otherwise those vessels will conclude that it was an empty threat — and that is the regrettable situation we are in now," said Elisabeth Braw, a maritime security expert at the Washington-based Atlantic Council. Other European countries including France, Belgium and Sweden have in recent months boarded and detained Russian "shadow fleet" vessels. Britain's Ministry of Defence did not respond to a request for comment on its relative inaction. Once a fabled sea power, Britain's navy is the smallest it has been since the 17th century, yet its military is facing requests from allies to support operations in eastern Europe, the Arctic and the Middle East. London has 544 vessels linked to Russia's "shadow fleet" on its sanctions list. The data suggested that at least 10 ships passing through had engaged in "spoofing" — turning off or manipulating their tracking systems — when crossing British waters.



## QF celebrates new generation of global minded graduates

Qatar Foundation has positioned itself as a powerful hub for education diplomacy, where international students are not just learners but active participants in a global exchange of ideas, cultures, and perspectives. With 59% of its Class of 2026 made up of international students, representing nearly 80 nationalities, Qatar Foundation's (QF) ecosystem offers a rare environment in which cross-cultural engagement is embedded into everyday academic life – an opportunity inaccessible to many students worldwide.

QF's unique model brings together branch campuses of leading international universities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and exposing students to different educational philosophies, cultural norms, and problem-solving approaches. This unique ecosystem enables students from diverse backgrounds to interact meaningfully, challenging assumptions and broadening worldviews through shared experiences – skills that are increasingly vital in an interconnected world.



Malika Assanseitova

fully, challenging assumptions and broadening worldviews through shared experiences – skills that are increasingly vital in an interconnected world.

Nada Tamer Mohamed Reda Abdo, from Egypt, is graduating in Interior Design from QF international partner university Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar. She



Musab Masri Hamid

said: "While I am an Interior Design student, I was able to collaborate across institutions, take film courses at Northwestern University in Qatar (also a QF international partner university), participate in international workshops, and travel abroad for academic programs. "That interdisciplinary freedom allowed me to grow in ways that a single-discipline education may



Nada Tamer Mohamed Reda Abdo

not have offered." Education City provides a unique environment where global perspectives exist within a local context, and she explained that her exposure to visiting designers, international festivals, cross-campus collaboration, and cultural institutions strengthened both her academic development and personal confidence.

Musab Masri Hamid, from Su-

dan, is an Audiovisual Translation graduate from QF member Hamad bin Khalifa University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

He explains that, during his time at QF, he valued the uniquely diverse environment that brought together students, scholars, and institutions from around the world, creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue and cultural exchange.

He also served as a mediator between students and the Dean's office, advocating for clearer communication, improved support systems, and greater inclusivity – particularly for international students. Hamid says his involvement in campus events and university-wide initiatives reinforced his belief that leadership is most effective when grounded in service and collaboration, and that he hopes to take these values with him. "As I move

forward, I carry with me the lessons learned here – the importance of collaboration, inclusion, and responsible global citizenship," he said.

Malika Assanseitova, from Kazakhstan, is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Communication at Northwestern University in Qatar. "I'd never heard of Qatar until I was accepted," she said. "But studying in Qatar has changed my life in ways I couldn't have imagined. I've built a home and a community here.

"The friends I've met in Qatar have helped me discover new cultures and new ways of thinking, and my professors have supported me both academically and professionally. As I graduate, I'm thinking about global citizenship less as a label and more as a responsibility, one that shows up in the choices I make, the work I contribute to, and the way I treat the communities I'm part of."

### QF graduate dedicates her achievements to Palestine

As another cohort of graduates don their caps and gowns to walk through the 'Door to the Future' at Qatar Foundation (QF) Convocation, they are filled with reflection, pride, and the weight of journeys that were anything but ordinary. This year, Safaa Jaber, a 27-year-old international student from Gaza, is graduating with a Doctor of Juridical Science degree, the most advanced academic degree at the College of Law at QF's Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

As convocation draws nearer, Jaber reflects on the difficulties she faced in her journey. The genocide in Gaza, which started in her second year into the program, took its toll on her.

"I felt helpless a lot of the time, living in a sort of survival mode," she says. "At QF, we had spaces to share our stories and come together. It was a space to be heard, a space to tell others about the realities in Gaza before the genocide started."

Jaber's greatest challenge was her final year. With her family far away, she had to remain steadfast in order to write her dissertation and graduate. "It was hard to disconnect from the news long enough to write, but my family wanted me to finish this degree and graduate," she says. "I had to push through and write my dissertation – it was the only thing I could do at the time."

The achievement of the degree is not lost on Jaber as she reflects on what graduation means to her. "I feel a responsibility to utilise this degree; to be a voice of reason and justice. I am proud of my achievement because my family are proud of me, and I pray I utilise it well."

As she looks ahead, Jaber is looking forward to graduating, but finds this moment to be bittersweet due to the absence of



her family. "I look forward to celebrating with them," she says. "They were always pushing me to keep going, and I took inspiration from them to finish this degree. That is why I dedicate my dissertation to all of Palestine."

Jaber first came to HBKU as a student in the College of Law's LLM in International Law and Foreign Affairs program, where she chose the legal status of the Gaza Strip as her academic focus. "After I finished my LLM, I still had academic aspirations in the field of law, so I decided to pursue the Doctor of Juridical Science degree," she says. "The program's scholarship enabled me to pursue further studies, and HBKU also provided us with opportunities to network internationally and attend conferences abroad."

While at HBKU, Jaber also took part in Qatar Foundation's Mehtaty and Al Meydan programmes – work-study initiatives that allow students to gain professional experience within the QF ecosystem while pursuing their degrees at QF universities. She looks back at her time with these programs fondly, having worked as a Community Development Advisor in QF's female student housing.

"It was a wonderful experience," she added. "I was able to gain leadership experience and also build relations with over 90 students. In 2025, I also won the best Community Development Advisor award."

## UDST unveils strategy for carbon neutrality by 2030

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has embarked on an ambitious programme to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 in partnership with Mannai Energy, probably making the university the first campus in Qatar to achieve the feat.

Dr Salem al-Naemi, president of UDST announced the strategy yesterday at a press conference along with Khalid Ahmad al-Mannai, vice-chairman, Executive Committee, Mannai Corporation. The event was attended by a number of dignitaries and representatives from UDST and Mannai Corporation.

As part of the strategy, the university signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Mannai Energy to support efforts in improving energy efficiency and developing sustainable infrastructure. Dr al-Naemi said: "Achieving carbon neutrality is one of our key strategic priorities. We are committed to integrating sustainability principles across all our academic and operational activities, reflecting our role as a leading applied university preparing a generation capable of developing sustainable solutions. Collaborating with industry partners such as Mannai Energy is essential to accelerating this transition, enabling us to translate our ambitions into tangible, real-world impact."

The collaboration includes establishing a clear roadmap toward carbon neutrality, with defined timelines and measurable performance indicators, in addition to assessing campus energy consumption and emissions, developing environmental performance metrics, exploring photovoltaic solar energy opportunities, enhancing building and facility efficiency, and supporting the transition toward sustainable mobility solutions, including electric vehicle charging infrastruc-



Officials of UDST and Mannai Corporation at the signing ceremony. PICTURE: Thajudheen

ture and the evaluation of fleet electrification.

"Mannai Energy is proud to support UDST on its Net Zero journey. This collaboration aligns with our focus on enabling low-carbon energy solutions and supporting institutions in developing practical, future-ready decarbonisation strategies. Together, we aim to contribute to Qatar's broader sustainability and energy transition goals," al-Mannai noted.

Driven by this strategic objective, UDST adopts an integrated approach focused on enhancing energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy sources, and developing innovative sustainable mobility solutions, while promoting environmental awareness among students, faculty, and staff.

It also aims to strengthen its position as a living applied platform for sustainability by transforming its campus into a holistic model for clean energy, bridging applied education with real-world practices. This is in line with UDST's commitment to supporting national

priorities in environmental protection and sustainable development. As the first applied university in Qatar, UDST is reinforcing its leadership role in adopting energy sustainability practices through a comprehensive institutional approach that extends beyond individual initiatives.

"We are under 100% ownership of the Mannai Corporation. We are working with UDST in terms of developing a net zero carbon journey. As part of that, we start with the solar energy. Then we go into EV. When it comes to EV, it is both EV vehicles as well as EV charging infrastructure," Abhay Rajan, general manager of the Mannai Energy Group told 'Gulf Times'.

The university also places strong emphasis on promoting a culture of sustainability within its academic and administrative community through awareness programs, workshops, and educational initiatives aimed at empowering students, faculty, and staff to actively contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Ministry observes World Intellectual Property Day

QNA  
Doha

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) organized a ceremony marking World Intellectual Property Day held at the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum.

The event aimed to raise awareness on the importance of intellectual property and its impact on development in the sports sector. The event also aimed to build a legal environment that supports innovators and investors.

In his opening remarks, Assistant Undersecretary for Commerce Affairs at the Ministry Saleh Abdullah al-Mannai emphasised that the modern sports ecosystem was no longer limited to competition alone, but was now based on an integrated framework for protecting intellectual property.

He noted that high-quality investments in modern sports technologies reflected a clear integration between scientific research and practical application, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to developing legislation and providing technical support to innovators in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

For his part, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization Daren Tang high-

lighted what he described as the invisible side of the sports world. In a recorded speech, he highlighted that patents and design rights were the driving force of technological and aesthetic innovations in stadiums, and copyright ensured that content reached billions of fans worldwide. He stressed that such developments required firm management of these intellectual assets.

In the same context, the Regional Counselor of Intellectual Property in France Dr Jinane Kabbara said in a recorded address that all forms of intellectual property rights enable creators to turn their ideas into a tangible reality, ensuring the continued global development of the sports sector.

The event featured performances by Al Wakrah SC, along with a showcase of innovations, including Qatar's stadium cooling technology as a leading example of protected innovation. The celebration concluded with a panel discussion involving a group of specialists, addressing the complex legal challenges posed by digital transformation, particularly regarding exclusive broadcasting rights, trademark protection during major tournaments, and how to align local laws with international standards to combat piracy and safeguard the rights of partners and investors.

QNA  
Doha

The Qatar Foundation for Social Work, in co-operation with the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, organised a roundtable discussion on the United Nations human rights system at the UN House in Lusail City.

The event was attended by the foundation's leadership and executive directors of its affiliated centers, as well as representatives from several UN agencies operating in Qatar.

This roundtable discussion is part of the ongoing partnership between the foundation and the centre, aimed at enhancing the practical knowledge of the leadership at the affiliated centers and enabling them to engage with the United Nations human rights system and its mechanisms.

In this context, the CEO of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work Rashid al-Naimi stressed that this initiative represents a significant milestone in the development of institutional social work, pointing out that engaging with the United Nations human rights system is no longer a supplementary option, but rather a natural extension of their developmental role and national responsibility.

He added that they are working to build a conscious and capable institutional framework that translates international commitments into tangible practices that have a real impact on the lives of beneficiaries. Through these strategic partnerships, they seek to establish a leading Qatari model for social work, based on knowledge and strengthening the international presence of the Foundation and its centers as active partners in developing solutions to contemporary social challenges, he explained.

He noted that the foundation focuses on empowering its affiliated centres to contribute effectively to national reports and international monitoring mechanisms, reflecting the reality of social work in Qatar and enhancing



the integration of national efforts with international frameworks.

In the same vein, Director of UN Training and Documentation Center for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region Dr Abeer al-Khraisha emphasized the importance of organizing this workshop to strengthen the ongoing co-operation between the centre and the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, which began several years ago to enhance the capacities and competencies of the foundation's affiliated centers, thereby strengthening the interaction of its staff, leaders, and affiliated centers with the United Nations human rights system and the core international treaty bodies relevant to their work. This, in turn, supports Qatar's efforts to implement its international human rights obligations.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Technical Representative in Doha Biplove Choudhary affirmed that the programme values this dialogue with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work as an important step towards strengthening the co-ordination of efforts within the United Nations system and supporting institutional capacities to contribute to achieving sustainable development priorities.

The roundtable included a comprehensive review of the general framework of the United Nations human rights system, including the

mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the role of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It also highlighted the foundation's consultative status with the council and the opportunities it offers to enhance its international presence, as well as its contribution to social development and human rights issues.

The sessions also covered the core international human rights conventions relevant to the work of social centers, with a focus on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They also reviewed mechanisms for preparing national and shadow reports, and ways to engage with treaty bodies.

In the same context, the roles of several UN agencies in Qatar were reviewed, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The roundtable emphasized the importance of strengthening co-ordination and co-operation between the Foundation and its international partners, which supports Qatar's efforts to fulfill its international commitments and reinforces an integrated approach to social work based on knowledge and effective partnerships.