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SCAN TO SHOP

Kazakhstan eyes Iran N-stockpile

Kazakhstan has offered to take Iran's uranium stockpile if the United States and Iran reach an accord on Tehran's contested nuclear programme, UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi told the *Financial Times* yesterday. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency met with Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in Astana this week.

Trump postpones final decision on Iran deal

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday he would soon decide on a proposed deal to extend the ceasefire with Iran, though the two countries still appeared to differ on significant issues that have been central to the conflict.

Trump said last morning that he would meet in a secure White House room to make a "final determination" on the proposal, which would extend an early-

April truce for another 60 days, giving negotiators time to forge a permanent end to the war.

Several hours later, the White House said the meeting had concluded but did not provide any more information. *The New York Times* reported the decision had been postponed after a two-hour meeting.

A senior Iranian source likewise told Reuters an agreement was close but had not yet been approved.

However Trump also said Iran would have to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and dis-

mantle its capacity to make a nuclear weapon - two conditions that Tehran has not agreed to.

"Iran must agree that they will never have a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb. The Hormuz Strait must be immediately open, no tolls, for unrestricted shipping traffic, in both directions," Trump said, adding that nuclear material would be "unearthed" by the US.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency, citing sources, said Trump's comments were an "attempt to portray a fabricated victory." **To Page 23**

Deputy PM meets Hegseth



HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani meets US Secretary of Defence Peter Hegseth at the ministerial reception ceremony for the opening of Shangri-La Dialogue 2026. **Page 23**

Doha hits 47°C

Doha sweltered under one of its hottest days of the year yesterday as temperatures climbed to 47°C, underscoring forecasts of an intensifying heat spell across Qatar. Meteorological data showed temperatures rising steadily through the morning before peaking during the afternoon, pushing conditions well above the seasonal average for late May. The reading came amid forecast that much of the country would experience a hotter-than-usual weekend, with inland and southern areas likely to register even higher temperatures.

Qatar bids farewell to a proud son

Citizens turned out in large numbers to bid farewell to HE Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah as he was laid to rest in Al Kharaitiyat Cemetery, northern Doha. He passed away on Wednesday in London, after a distinguished public service career spanning more than five decades, leaving behind a legacy widely recognised for shaping Qatar's modern energy sector and its international diplomatic standing. Born in Qatar on December 5, 1952, al-Attiyah began his professional journey in 1972 at the Ministry of Finance and Petroleum. Early in his career, he served from 1973 to 1986 as Head of International and Public Relations at the ministry, building foundational experience



HE Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah

in international energy relations and government administration. Between 1986 and 1989, he served as Director of the Office of the Ministry of Interior, before becoming Acting Minister of Finance and Petroleum from 1989 to 1992. **To Page 23**



Citizens gather to offer funeral prayer at the Al Kharaitiyat Cemetery yesterday.

CONDOLENCES

QatarEnergy

extends its heartfelt condolences to the family of

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and give grace and fortitude to the bereaved family.



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي ﴾

صدق الله العظيم

CONDOLENCES

Qatar Gas Transport Company Ltd. (Nakilat)

extends its heartfelt condolences to the family of

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and
give grace and fortitude to the bereaved family

﴿ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴾



Qatar Gas Transport Co. Ltd.
شركة قطر لنقل الغاز المحدودة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
((يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي))
صدق الله العظيم

All Staff of QAPCO (Q.P.J.S.C),
Qatofin (Q.P.J.S.C)
& QVC (Q.P.J.S.C)
express their heartfelt condolences
to the family of

H.E Abdulla Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy & Industry

May God rest his soul in peace
and give fortitude
to the bereaved family
to bear this great loss

((إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ))



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

((يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي ﴿٣٠﴾))

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ



condolences

Qatar Fertiliser Company (QAFCO)

mourns the loss of

His Excellency

Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

**Former Deputy Prime Minister and
Former Minister of Energy and Industry**

May God have mercy on him and grant him Paradise, and may He grant his family patience and solace.

To God we belong and to Him we shall return.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
صَلَاةُ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ قَرَّبِي إِلَى رَبِّي وَأَصْبِرِي فِي غَدَائِكِ بِعِيَادِي وَالْأَيْمَانِ عِنْدِي

Gulf Helicopters Company

And All Staff

express their heartfelt condolences

to the family of

His Excellency

Abdulla Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy & Industry

May God rest his soul in peace

and give fortitude

to the bereaved family

to bear this great loss

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



هليكوبتر الخليج
GULF HELICOPTERS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمَطْمَئِنَّةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكَ رَبِّكِ فَانصَبِي فِي عِبَادَةِ رَبِّكِ وَأَجْنَبِي

We extend our heartfelt condolences and
deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased,

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late, by God's will,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry,
Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum, and
member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiyah Foundation.

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a
place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and
beloved ones patience and solace.

"إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ"





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَالرَّبُّ الْعَظِيمُ إِنَّكَ رَأْسٌ مِمَّنْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَنْزَلَ فِيهِمْ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased,

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

and to all members of the respected

Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Minister of Energy and Industry

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



QP - SASOL joint venture

أوريكس لتحويل الغاز إلى سوائل المحدودة
ORYX GTL Limited

**Chairman, Board Members,
and all employees of
Oryx Gas-to-Liquids Company**



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالرُّوحُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالْجَنَّةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالْأَرْضُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالْمَاءُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالشَّجَرُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالرَّيْحُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالنَّارُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالسَّمَاءُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالْأَرْضُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالْمَاءُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالشَّجَرُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالرَّيْحُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالنَّارُ الطَّيِّبَةُ وَالسَّمَاءُ الطَّيِّبَةُ

صدق الله العظيم

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased,

**Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiyah family,**

on the passing of their father the late, by God's will,

HE Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Former Minister of Energy and Industry, Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum, and member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiyah Foundation.

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



مسيعة للطاقة
M POWER

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي)
صدق الله العظيم

Condolences

The Board of Trustees and Staff of the
Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah International Foundation
for Energy and Sustainable Development mourn
the passing of its Founder and Patron,

His Excellency

Mr. Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah



former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry,
and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Al-Attiyah Foundation.

A visionary leader, distinguished statesman, and trusted mentor, H.E. Al-Attiyah played a pivotal role in shaping Qatar's energy sector and leading the historic transformation that established Qatar as the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas.

Through his exceptional leadership, foresight, and unwavering dedication, he elevated Qatar's standing on the global stage and inspired generations of leaders and professionals. Beyond his remarkable achievements, H.E. Al-Attiyah will be remembered for his generosity, integrity, and steadfast commitment to serving his nation and empowering others.

His enduring legacy will live on through the institutions he helped build, the countless lives he touched, and the future he helped shape.

As the Foundation mourns the loss of its Founder, it extends its deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to his sons **Hamad, Saud, Abdulaziz, and Nasser, as well as to the esteemed Al-Attiyah family,** his loved ones, colleagues, and all those who had the privilege of knowing and working alongside him.



يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتُ إِنَّا نُنَادِيكُمْ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمَةِ
وَبِأَنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْعَظِيمَةِ

صَلَاةُ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمَةِ

**All Staff of
Qatar Aluminium Limited**

express their heartfelt condolences
to the family of

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Former Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Energy & Industry

May God rest his soul in peace
and give fortitude
to the bereaved family
to bear this great loss

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



الكويتيون قطر
Qatalum



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَالرَّبُّ الْعَظِيمُ إِنَّكَ رَأْسٌ مِمَّنْ تَعْلَمُونَ مِنْ عِبَادِي وَالرَّبُّ الْعَظِيمُ

صدق الله العظيم

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased,

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Former Minister of Energy and Industry

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

ام الحول للطاقة
UMM AL HOUL POWER



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ الْعِظَمَاءُ الرَّحْمَةُ عَلَى آلِهِمْ وَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهِمْ وَاقِفِينَ
صدق الله العظيم

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies
to the sons of the deceased.

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

and to all members of the respected Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and grant him
a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family
and beloved ones patience and solace.

DOLPHIN ENERGY **دولفين للطاقة**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الشَّيْخُ الْوَلِيُّ وَالْمُرْتَضَى الْأَبِي زَيْدِ الرَّضِيِّ الْفَخْرِيِّ الْخَيْرِيِّ الْحَيَّ وَالْقَائِمِ الْمُنْتَهَى
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

**The Chairman, Board of Directors, CEO
and all Employees of
QatarEnergy LNG**

extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to:

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

and to all members of the respected Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and grant him
a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family
and beloved ones patience and solace.



قطر للطاقة
QatarEnergy
LNG

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ الْعِظَمَاءُ الرَّحْمَةُ عَلَى آلِهِمْ وَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ
صدق الله العظيم

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies
to the sons of the deceased.

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

and to all members of the respected Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and grant him
a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family
and beloved ones patience and solace.

Ras Laffan Power Company Limited (RLPC)



Safe, Clean And Reliable
Power & Water

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْحَيَّةَ وَالْحَيَّاتِ وَالْأَسْرِمِينَ وَالْأَسْرِمَاتِ وَالرِّجَالِ الْقَائِمِينَ وَالرِّجَالَ الْقَائِمَاتِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْحَيَّةَ وَالْحَيَّاتِ وَالْأَسْرِمِينَ وَالْأَسْرِمَاتِ وَالرِّجَالِ الْقَائِمِينَ وَالرِّجَالَ الْقَائِمَاتِ

صدق الله العظيم

Qatar Fuel Company (WOQOD)
extends its heartfelt condolences
to the family of

His Excellency

Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry,

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and give
grace and fortitude to the bereaved family.

"إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ"





يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ رَجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ الرَّحِيمِ فَتُغْفَرُ لَكُمْ خَلْقُكُمْ عِبَادِي وَالْإِيمَانُ بِمَنْزِلِكُمْ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased,

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of their father the late, by God's will,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry,
Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum, and
member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiyah Foundation.

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a
place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and
beloved ones patience and solace.

"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we shall return."

PATRON AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Birla Public School
مدرسة بيرلا الشعيبة
ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَالرَّبُّ الْعَظِيمُ إِنَّكَ رَأْسٌ مِمَّنْ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ عِبَادِي وَإِنِّي مَخْتَارٌ

صدق الله العظيم

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased.

Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
 and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiyah family,

on the passing of the late, by God's will,

HE Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Former Minister of Energy and Industry, Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum, and member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiyah Foundation.

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ رَاجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ الرَّحِيمِ فَتُغْفَرُ لِي وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيْهِمَا جَنَّتِي

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

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HE Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

**Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry,
Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum, and
member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiyah Foundation.**

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we shall return."

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّصِيبُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ الرَّحِيمُ
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His Excellency
Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry

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إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



ConocoPhillips

Deputy PM holds high-level talks at Shangri-La Dialogue



HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani at the meeting with Singapore's Minister for Defence Chan Chun Sing.



HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani at the meeting with Malaysia's Minister of Defence Mohamed Khaled Nordin.



HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani at the meeting with Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs K Shanmugam.



HE Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani at the meeting with Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan.

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani held a series of high-level talks with Singaporean and Malaysian officials on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2026 in Singapore.

HE Sheikh Saud met separately yesterday with Singapore's Co-ordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, and Co-ordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Home Affairs K Shanmugam.

HE Sheikh Saud also met with Malaysia's Minister of Defence Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

The discussions focused on regional security developments, military co-operation and joint co-ordination efforts amid current regional challenges.

The meetings were attended by Qatar's ambassador to Singapore Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Almaliki al-Jehani along with senior officials and military officers from both sides. - QNA

Amir and Deputy Amir send cables of condolences to Xi

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to China's President Xi Jinping over the victims of the coal mine explosion in northern China, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani likewise sent a cable of condolences to Xi.

Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to China's Prime Minister Li Qiang. - QNA

Amir condoles with leadership of Yemen over ex-president's death

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of condolences to the chairman of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, Dr Rashad Mohammed al-Alimi, on the passing of former Yemeni president Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani also sent a similar cable of condolences to al-Alimi.

Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to Yemen's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr Shaya Mohsin Zindani. - QNA

'BNPL a budgeting tool, not a splurge trigger'

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor



Buy now, pay later (BNPL) has become a practical cash-flow tool for consumers in Qatar rather than a prompt to overspend, PayLater chief executive Dr Devid Jegereson told *Gulf Times*, adding that the Eid season has shaped the company's product strategy around resilience and responsible growth.

Both Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha represent the peak moments when families spend most heavily in clothing, gifts, electronics, travel and the home, Jegereson noted, describing the two holidays as "the heartbeat of Qatar's retail calendar".

"That rhythm has shaped commerce here for generations, and what is new is the payment behaviour now layered on top of it," he said in an exclusive interview.

PayLater, Jegereson noted, prepares for these seasonal peaks by ensuring merchants are ready, systems are resilient and the checkout remains seamless when demand concentrates.

He emphasised that volume alone is never the objective. "Seasonality tells us how to prepare; it is never a reason to relax the discipline that protects our customers," the official said.

Asked whether BNPL drives over-spending, Jegereson said that the product is designed for households that need to make a sensible purchase and then budget for it predictably over a few months.

"Used responsibly, BNPL smooths consumption," he stressed. He pointed to Eid preparations as an example of where this applies.

People still need to prepare for the holiday, replace an appliance or buy a school uniform during uncertain times, Jegereson pointed out, adding that "what they need is a transparent way to manage the timing".

He said the breadth of categories where BNPL is gaining traction in Qatar supports that reading, noting that while electronics and fashion perform strongly, everyday essentials, including groceries and household retail also show healthy adoption.

"That tells me something important: in Qatar, BNPL is not being used only for discretionary splurges," he said. "It is being adopted as a practical, everyday budgeting tool by disciplined consumers managing their cash flow intelligently."

That spread across the whole basket, rather than a concentration in impulse categories, is the kind of adoption PayLater wants to see, Jegereson stated, describing it as evidence of a maturing, financially literate customer base.

"The emphasis, always, is on that word 'responsibly,'" he added. "The value is never in persuading people to spend beyond their means; it is in giving disciplined consumers a clear, fair tool to manage cash flow."

Jegereson: Used responsibly, BNPL smooths consumption.

High praise for organisation and services during Haj season

Qatari pilgrims performing Haj 1447 AH have praised the high level of organisation and services provided throughout this year's pilgrimage, highlighting significant improvements in facilities and support across the holy sites.

Pilgrims said that enhanced services in Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah - including medical, logistical and guidance support available around the clock - allowed them to perform their rituals in comfort and peace of mind.

The Qatar Haj Mission said the season reflected close co-ordination with Saudi authorities and Haj operators.

Pilgrims also expressed appreciation for Saudi efforts in serving worshippers and for the support provided by Qatar's leadership and the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs. - QNA



MoECC highlights efforts to monitor, protect dugongs

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has highlighted its ongoing efforts to monitor and protect dugongs in Qatari waters, marking World Dugong Day observed annually on May 28, while stressing the species' importance in maintaining the balance of coastal and marine ecosystems.

In a statement issued yesterday, the ministry noted that dugongs are classified as vulnerable to extinction on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, underscoring the importance of national and regional efforts aimed at protecting the species and its natural habitats.

The MoECC said that Qatar's territorial waters host significant populations of dugongs, which rely mainly on seagrass for food, adding that their presence is closely linked to the health of marine habitats and the quality of coastal environments.

Assistant Undersecretary for Protection and Nature Reserves Affairs Dr Ibrahim al-Maslamani said that the ministry conducted a scientific and field study between 2023 and 2026 to monitor dugong populations in Qatari waters and explore ways to preserve them.

He said that the study recorded 224 dugongs - 197 adults and 27 calves - providing important data to support the ministry's efforts in monitoring the

species and identifying environmentally significant areas for its protection.

Dr al-Maslamani added that the ministry's scientific team studied the structure of dugong populations in the northwestern waters of the country, with a focus on monitoring mothers and calves using advanced aerial survey technologies, in addition to drones used to track dugong movements across seagrass meadows along Qatar's coastal waters.

He added that the study found dugongs often move in large herds led by adults, while calves remain in the center of the group for protection.

Researchers were also able, through drone imagery, to identify certain dugongs based on distinctive markings on their bodies, providing valuable long-term data on their numbers, health conditions, and movement patterns.

The official said that repeated observations reinforce the importance of Qatar's northwestern and eastern waters as vital nursery grounds for dugongs, while scientific indicators also support the existence of a clear breeding season for the species in Qatar's waters.

Dr al-Maslamani stressed the importance of continuing environmental monitoring programmes to protect dugong habitats, especially during breeding seasons. - QNA



Environment ministry sends inspection team to Al Ashat Island

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) intensified its efforts to protect Qatar's marine ecosystems and environmentally sensitive islands during the Eid holidays by conducting a field inspection visit to Al Ashat Island, one of the islands within the marine boundaries of the Khor Al Adaid nature reserve.

The visit was organised by the ministry's Natural Reserves Department, in co-operation with the Marine Protection Department,



as part of ongoing initiatives to regulate visitor access to protected natural areas while preserving the ecological integrity of

Qatar's coastal and marine environments.

During the field tour, inspection team members monitored visitor movement and supervised entry and exit procedures to ensure compliance with environmental regulations governing access to the island.

Officials also reviewed the implementation of precautionary measures to safeguard the island's fragile ecosystem and prevent harmful practices that could harm its natural habitats and biodiversity.

Trump postpones final decision on Iran deal

From Page 1

The senior Iranian source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the potential deal does not include any nuclear-related issues, while Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on state TV that the management of the strait must be decided by Iran and Oman.

The semi-official Fars news agency, citing sources, said the strait would be reopened under Tehran's conditions after the US lifts its blockade on Iranian ships.

The news agency said that there was agreement to release \$12bn of Iran's frozen assets.

Trump said that no money would be exchanged "until further notice" - a possible reference to Iran's demands for toll payments in the strait, war damage reparations or a release of frozen Iranian assets.

Oil prices fell and stocks rose yesterday on news of the potential deal.

Trump is under pressure to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and get US gasoline prices down ahead of the November congressional elections, as voters

show increasing frustration over rising prices.

At the same time, he faces a potential backlash from Iran hawks in his own party over any concessions to Tehran.

The war launched by the US and Israel on February 28 has killed thousands of people, mainly in Iran and Lebanon, and caused global economic pain by pushing up energy prices due to Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

In his post on Truth Social, Trump said that mines would be removed from the strait and ships trapped there may start to go home: "Say HELLO to your wives, husbands, parents, and families from me, your favourite President!"

Earlier, Iran's parliament speaker, who led its delegation at peace talks with the US in Pakistan last month, said that Tehran had gained leverage not "through talks, but through missiles", and was sceptical of US promises.

"We place no trust in guarantees or words; only actions matter," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf wrote on X.

Ali, a resident of the city of Tonek-

abon north of Tehran, said that whatever the deal was, there would likely be more strife to come.

"Both sides are speaking in a way that keeps their supporters satisfied. It's not clear who is telling the truth," the 49-year-old said. "If a deal is reached, the internal power networks will likely start a fight against each other and against opponents more than before."

Hopes of an agreement had risen on Thursday after US officials were positive about the direction of diplomacy, with Vance telling reporters "a lot of progress" had been made.

Washington and Tehran have accused each other of violating the truce in and around the strait as recently as this week, with US strikes on the southern Iranian port of Bandar Abbas countered by retaliatory Iranian fire.

Iranian state TV said yesterday that 24 ships had transited the strait in the past 24 hours, in co-ordination with the Revolutionary Guards and the foreign ministry.

However, it warned that "ships from hostile countries face a severe response" from Iran's military.

Qatar bids farewell to a proud son

From Page 1

In 1992, he was appointed minister of energy and industry, as well as chief executive and managing director of Qatar Petroleum, marking a pivotal stage in his leadership of Qatar's energy development.

His influence extended far beyond national borders.

In 1993, he served as Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) president, contributing to key decisions on oil production co-ordination among member states.

He also held membership in Opec's production quota compliance committee. Throughout his career, he played a central role in advancing Qatar's position within global energy markets.

Al-Attiyah's international leadership continued with his election in 2006 as president of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

In 2012, he chaired the 18th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP18) in Doha, a landmark event that produced the "Doha Gateway" outcomes, including the extension of the Kyoto Protocol and important commitments on climate finance and support for developing countries.

The conference also helped establish a

roadmap toward the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015. In 2009, he was elected president of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), where he contributed to strengthening the organisation and securing Doha as its permanent headquarters.

He also served as acting secretary-general of the forum during its transitional period. Domestically, he was appointed deputy prime minister in 2003 and later deputy prime minister in 2007.

In 2011, he became president of the Amiri Diwan, and subsequently held key positions including head of the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority and chairman of the State Planning Committee.

His final role was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Al Attiyah Foundation.

Over the course of his career, al-Attiyah received numerous honours, including Qatar's Independence Collar awarded by the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the Order of Orange-Nassau from The Netherlands, and Japan's Order of the Rising Sun.

He also received honorary doctorates from Texas A&M University and the University of Tor Vergata in Italy, in recognition of his contributions to governance, transparency, and global energy policy.



Climate change is gradually shrinking the times of year when the annual Haj pilgrimage can take place in safe weather conditions, according to a new study published yesterday.

The Haj in western Saudi Arabia, one of the most arid areas on the planet, is one of the world's largest religious gatherings, when hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are exposed to extreme heat.

This year's gathering was again held in temperatures exceeding 40° Celsius.

According to the study by the Britain-based group World Weather Attribution, temperatures recorded in May in Makkah

Climate change making Haj hotter: study

"are now typical of summer in the 1980s as climate change shrinks the safe window" for the Haj.

The Haj's timing is governed by the Islamic lunar calendar, and it moves back by about 11 days each year in the Gregorian calendar.

After taking place for several years during the hot season, this year's was at the end of May, and in 2027 it is expected to take place in mid-May.

The timing will move gradually closer to winter, offering a temporary respite, but

one of the five pillars of Islam, is held over several days in and around the holy city of Makkah.

After the 2024 pilgrimage that saw significant casualties due to searing temperatures of above 50C, the Saudi authorities strengthened anti-heat measures, mainly through the massive use of air conditioning.

A study published in 2019 in the US journal *Geophysical Research Letters* said that heat stress during the Haj could once again exceed the "extreme danger threshold" between 2047 and 2052, and then between 2079 and 2086.

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Data: Bigger proportion of non-Iran ships crossing Hormuz strait

The proportion of vessels not linked to Iranian ownership that are transiting the key Strait of Hormuz has risen, according to data from maritime firm Lloyd's List Intelligence shared on Thursday.

This despite Iran blockading the waterway since the start of the Middle East war on February 28, preventing a large share of Gulf countries' hydrocarbon exports, in turn harming the global economy.

"The last week we saw ships flagged with Singapore, UAE, (Republic of) Korea, and also a Norway flagged-vessel going through the Gulf, specifically exiting," said Bridget Diakun, an analyst at Lloyd's List Intelligence.

Crossings by very large crude carriers not tied to Iran appear in particular to be picking up again.

Of the 27 recorded by analytics firm Kpler since the start of the conflict, more than half took place in May.

Five of these huge oil tankers meanwhile left the Gulf through the strait between May 20 and May 26.

Three of them – the Eagle Veracruz sailing under the Singaporean flag, as well as the Eagle Verona and the Yuan Gui Yang each flying the Chinese flag – have declared China as their destination.

Another ship, the Universal Winner, is heading to Korea, whose flag it flies, while the Nissos Keros, flying the flag of the Marshall Islands, is headed for India.

China, Korea, India and Japan have co-ordinated with the Iranian government to ensure safe passage, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.

On May 18, Iran formalised the creation of the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) to manage navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and collect transit fees.

The US strongly opposes the new body, with the US Treasury on Wednesday announcing sanctions against the PGSA, while threatening similar action against anyone paying the fees.

Such retaliation risks reducing the number of ships exiting the strait in co-ordination with Iran. – **AFP**

DR Congo reports first Ebola recovery

AFP/Reuters
Kinshasa/Geneva

UN health chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) yesterday, where authorities are struggling to contain the spread of a deadly Ebola outbreak.

Uganda confirmed two new cases but, in some rare good news, a patient in the DR Congo was confirmed to have recovered – a first since the outbreak was detected in mid-May.

World Health Organisation (WHO) head Tedros, who arrived in Kinshasa late on Thursday, had been due to travel yesterday to Ituri, the remote northeastern province at the epicentre of the country's 17th outbreak of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever, but the trip has been pushed back by a day.

There have been at least 1,077 suspected cases of Ebola since the outbreak was declared on May 15, including 246 deaths, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said on Thursday.

However, the true reach of the outbreak, which is thought to have been circulating before it was detected, is likely to be much wider, the WHO has warned.

The DR Congo, impoverished and wracked by three decades of conflict in the east, has limited capacity to conduct laboratory



tests to confirm cases.

The virus is already present in three provinces and in neighbouring Uganda, where nine confirmed infections, including one death, have been recorded.

Uganda's health ministry said yesterday that two new cases were detected in Congolese nationals.

One had been isolated with Ebola symptoms, while the other was a contact of a previously confirmed case.

"All contacts of this new confirmed case have been identified and are under close follow up," the ministry said.

Uganda closed its border with the DR Congo this week and ordered a 21-day quarantine for anyone arriving from that country.

"That thing can be stopped," Tedros said of the Ebola outbreak on his arrival on Thursday after assuring the Congolese people in a message on X: "I want you to

know that you are not alone."

Yesterday the WHO announced that a patient had recovered on Wednesday, left hospital and was discharged into the community after two negative tests.

The WHO's Anais Legand told reporters in Geneva that it marked the "first" among patients who had been confirmed Ebola carriers in the current outbreak.

The WHO said that testing capacity is being improved and that it was hopeful that most of the backlog of test samples from suspected cases will be processed in the coming days.

The number of suspected cases is likely to go up, Legand said, but added it was a sign that surveillance is working.

"As for whether the peak has passed, investigations are still ongoing. I don't think we can say that at this stage," she said.

Ebola, which is passed on



WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is seen upon arrival late on Thursday at N'djili International Airport in Kinshasa. – **Reuters**

through close contact and bodily fluids, has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years.

The deadliest outbreak in the DR Congo claimed nearly 2,300 lives out of 3,500 cases between 2018 and 2020.

Congolese Health Minister Samuel Roger Kamba said on Thursday that 105 people were in treatment centres.

"We need to put the alarmist outcries into perspective," he told reporters in Bunia, the Ituri provincial capital.

"We're not in the situation that people think we are in internationally," he said, adding: "We cannot be told that the epidemic is out of control."

State services are largely lacking in Ituri province, where access is hindered by insecurity due to the presence of Islamic State-affiliated ADF militants and other

militias that regularly kill civilians.

The nearby North and South Kivu and South Kivu provinces, that have also seen Ebola cases in the outbreak, have been plagued by near continuous violence for three decades.

Swathes of the regions are controlled by the Rwanda-backed armed group M23 which has been battling government forces.

Millions of people have fled the fighting and are living in displacement camps with poor hygiene conditions.

Nearly a million of those displaced are in Ituri province, where the prospect of the epidemic spreading throughout the camps has sparked alarm.

"If Ebola comes, we'll be wiped out as we're packed like sardines," Dorcas Mapeenzi said at the Kinshasa camp on the outskirts of Bunia.

Israel's military forces cross key Lebanon river

Reuters/AFP
Jerusalem/Beirut

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that his country's forces had pushed deeper inside Lebanon, even as Israeli and Lebanese military delegations were holding landmark security talks in Washington.

Israel also kept up its heavy bombardment of south Lebanon, with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun emphasising in a call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio "the need to exert all efforts to reach a ceasefire" as an essential first step, his office said.

A ceasefire in Lebanon to halt fighting between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah group was supposed to have taken effect on April 17, but has never been observed.

Both sides accuse each other of violating it and justify their attacks by the other's alleged breaches.

Israel and Lebanon, officially at war for decades, began direct talks in April, with a fourth round expected next week in Washington following yesterday's meeting at the Pentagon.

The Israeli military said this week that it had expanded ground operations beyond a security zone its troops have occupied since April 16.

During a visit to the Israel-Lebanon border yesterday, Netanyahu said troops had pushed even fur-

ther, past the Litani River that cuts east-west around 30km (19 miles) into southern Lebanon.

"Our forces have crossed the Litani and advanced to controlling positions," Netanyahu said in remarks to military personnel, according to excerpts released by his office. "We are operating in Beirut, in the Bekaa (Valley), across the entire width of the front, and are dealing Hezbollah a crushing blow."

The Israeli conflict in Lebanon has been the most deadly spillover of the Iran war, with more than 1.2mn Lebanese displaced by Israeli strikes and evacuation orders since March 2, when Hezbollah fired at Israel in support of ally Tehran.

Since then, Israeli strikes have pummeled Lebanon's south, east and its capital Beirut, killing more than 3,200 people, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

Israel says 23 of its soldiers and four civilians have been killed over the same period.

Early in the fighting, Israel ordered people south of the Litani River to flee.

On Thursday, the military ordered people south of the Zaharani River – which lies around 10km north of the Litani – to flee as well, declaring the area a combat zone.

Commenting on advances by Israeli ground forces, Lebanese security sources said Israeli troops had crossed the Litani near the village of Zawtar al-Sharqiyyah



This picture taken on Thursday shows a fireball erupting from a building following an Israeli strike in Tyre, southern Lebanon. – **AFP**

on Thursday but retreated to the southern bank of the river later in the day.

Ground forces crossed back over the Litani again yesterday, the sources said, saying that it was not a major advance and that it took place at an eastern point on the Litani that sits close to the Israeli border.

Speaking with troops in Israel's northern command yesterday, Israeli military chief Eyal Zamir said troops would continue pursuing what he described as Hezbollah "launch squads" and their operators and commanders at every level.

"Wherever we identify a threat, we will strike it," he said, according to remarks released by the military.

In Washington, Israeli and Lebanese military officials were meeting at the Pentagon to discuss implementation of the ceasefire, which the two sides agreed on May 15 to extend by 45 days.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported yesterday that Israeli airstrikes on more than 20 locations in the south, both before and after Israel's military issued evacuation warnings for eight towns, sparking a wave of displacement as people fled.

Hundreds of people have recently fled to the usually touristic old city of Tyre, which has been spared recent Israeli army evacuation orders for swathes of the rest of the city and its surroundings.

With shelters full, some are sleeping in their cars or tents, an AFP correspondent said.

Karam Amin, 43, and seven family members have been sleeping in his clothing shop.

"I sorted out a shower... and we put mattresses on the floor," said Amin. "The situation is very difficult. Tyre is a peaceful, touristic city. We never imagined going through this."

Journalists in Gaza to receive the 2026 'Golden Pen' award

Professional photo and video journalists working in Gaza are to receive an annual press freedom award on Monday for risking their lives to report on the war, an association of publishers has said.

The 2026 Golden Pen of Freedom will be handed to representatives of global news agencies still operating in Gaza – Agence France-Presse (AFP), The Associated Press (AP) and Reuters – "whose local journalists continue to provide consistent, professional coverage under extremely challenging conditions", said the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).

"For over two and a half years, journalists in Gaza have recorded death, destruction, and human suffering in unparalleled terms," reads the citation of the award. "They are as much victims of the conflict as they are chroniclers of a war that erupted – and continues – around them."

War broke out in Gaza after the events of October 7, 2023, triggering an Israeli military campaign.

Media rights group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) says Israeli forces have killed more than 220 journalists, at least 70 of whom were killed in the context of their professional duties.

The Israeli army says it never deliberately targets journalists. However, since October 2023, it has claimed to have killed a number of people who it says were Palestinian militant "terrorists" working under the guise of being media professionals.

The award "acknowledges the sacrifice and endurance of local Palestinian media professionals living and working in a war zone", said WAN-IFRA, which holds its 2026 World News Media Congress from Monday to Wednesday.

Israel has barred foreign journalists from independently entering the blockaded territory since the war began. – **AFP**

Cape Verde main opposition party wins absolute parliament majority

Cape Verde's main opposition party won the island nation's parliamentary elections earlier this month with an absolute majority, final results published yesterday showed.

The national electoral commission said the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) secured 37 of the 72 seats in the National Assembly in the election on May 17, with 48% of the vote.

PAICV leader Francisco Carvalho will become prime minister as leader of the largest party in parliament.

Cape Verde, an archipelago of 520,000 inhabitants in the Atlantic Ocean, lies some 600km (380 miles) off the coast of Senegal. – **AFP**

More than 7mn in South Sudan urgently need food aid, says WFP

AFP
Geneva

More than 7mn people in conflict-torn South Sudan – around half the population – are in dire need of food aid, the United Nations warned yesterday.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) denounced the "alarming situation" in the world's youngest sovereign state, saying that the organisation was in "a tight race against time" to scale up its response.

"We are talking about 7.2mn people who are in urgent need of food assistance," Mutinta Chimuka, WFP's country director for South Sudan, told reporters in Geneva, speaking by video link from the city of Bor in South Sudan's Jonglei state. "The situation is critical and demands immediate attention to save lives of people who desperately need assistance."

The UN's humanitarian aid chief Tom Fletcher warned last month that the east African country risked slipping into "full-scale famine and collapse".

South Sudan gained independence from

Sudan in 2011 but soon descended into civil war and remains mired in extreme poverty, corruption and insecurity.

A 2018 power-sharing deal between President Salva Kiir and his long-time rival, Riek Machar, has been unraveling since last year, with clashes in recent months bringing the country back to the brink of all-out civil war.

The WFP said it had in particular scaled up its emergency response in Akobo, a hotspot of recent fighting in Jonglei state.

It warned yesterday that hundreds of thousands of people in Jonglei were facing

"catastrophic hunger and malnutrition".

Some 12,000 of them were currently considered to be in the most serious phase of food insecurity, which Chimuka stressed was "extremely critical".

Since the WFP launched its emergency response in Akobo three weeks ago, it has reached over 60,000 people with aid, Chimuka said.

The UN agency and its partners have also conducted nutrition screening for 15,000 children and admitted 3,000 for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, she said.

However, she warned that the looming arrival of the rainy season was challenging humanitarian logistics, as was insecurity and the risk of renewed fighting.

A 33-truck convoy was due to deliver some 200 metric tonnes of food assistance, nutritional supplies and 100 metric tonnes of relief items this week, after spending around two weeks on a route that usually takes three days to drive, Chimuka said.

The agency said it urgently needed \$266mn to continue providing its life-saving assistance.



Diplomats XI clinch dramatic victory in community cricket

The inaugural Toastmasters vs Diplomats Cricket Cup 2026 concluded recently with a thrilling contest as Diplomats XI secured a narrow two-wicket victory over Toastmasters XI at the Kreeq Sports Grounds in Al Wakrah, Qatar. The high-scoring 20-over friendly match brought together members of the diplomatic and Toastmasters communities in a celebration of cricket, friendship, and sportsmanship.

Organised by the Professional Toastmasters Club Qatar, the event reflected strong teamwork and competitive spirit from both sides. The organising committee featured Toastmaster Ashraf Siddiqui, Division "D" District 116 director Sam-path Samarasekara, Rauf Shahzad, DTM, Shahzad Hassan Khan, Haroon Rasheed Qureshi, Rana Anwar Ali, and Asim Bukhari.

Diplomats XI was captained by Sarfraaz Ahmad Shahdood, ambassador of Guyana, alongside notable participants including Ambassador Vipul of India and Australian ambassador Shane Flanagan, among other distinguished diplomats and officials. Toastmasters Club Qatar XI was led by Rauf Ahmad Shahzad, DTM.

The event also attracted several distinguished guests and dignitaries, including Abdullah Abdulma-

jeed Siddiqui representing Qatar Cricket Association CEO Khaled al-Suwaidi; Pakistan Business Council Qatar chairman Fawad Rana; Simon Alexander, general manager of Lulu Hypermarket; Hussain Rafeeq, general manager of Hadico Contracting; and senior Toastmasters leaders Naila Rizwan and Ajaya Togiye, among others. The match was widely appreciated for promoting community harmony and cultural engagement through sport.

The inaugural Toastmasters Diplomats Cricket Cup 2026 produced a thrilling contest between Toastmasters XI and Diplomats XI at the Kreeq Sports Ground in Al Wakrah, Qatar. The friendly 20-over match reflected the spirit of sportsmanship, unity, and healthy competition, keeping spectators entertained until the final over.

After winning the toss, Diplomats XI elected to field first. Toastmasters XI responded with an impressive batting performance, posting a challenging total of 193 runs in their allotted 20 overs. The innings was anchored by Shehzad Hassan Khan, who remained unbeaten on 34 off 22 balls with an aggressive yet composed display.

Muhib Haodiqi added a valuable 30 runs, while Saif contributed a quick 29. Jahangir and Rafaqat also played important supporting roles,

scoring 22 and 17 runs, respectively. Toastmasters maintained an excellent scoring rate throughout the innings, especially during the middle overs.

For Diplomats XI, Waqar delivered an outstanding bowling spell, taking 2 wickets for 22 runs, while Holder and Jakirul Islam chipped in with one wicket each. Sharp fielding and disciplined catching efforts helped Diplomats remain competitive despite the demanding target.

In reply, Diplomats XI produced a dramatic chase, successfully reaching the target in 19.4 overs to secure a memorable two-wicket victory.

Waqar Abbasi emerged as the standout performer of the match with a sensational 54 off just 25 balls. Holder contributed an important 25 runs, while Nazmul and Sarfraaz added useful contributions. Despite



regular wickets falling, Diplomats XI held their composure under pressure and completed the chase in thrilling fashion. Toastmasters XI fought hard with the ball. Adeel impressed with three wickets, while Rauf claimed two crucial break-

throughs. Gohar, Rafaqat, and Shehzad also contributed effectively with the ball.

Waqar Abbasi was named Man of the Match for his all-round performance, while Adeel received the Best Bowler award, and Holder

was recognised as Best Fielder. The event was widely appreciated as a celebration of cricket, camaraderie, and community harmony in Qatar, leaving behind a strong foundation for future editions of the tournament.

Chief coordinator Ashraf Siddiqui paid his gratitude to the prestigious sponsors for their generous support in organising the unique event, including Pakistan Business Council Qatar, Lulu Hypermarket, Hadico Contracting Company, Epitome Real Estate, AlKawther Pharmacy, Baladna and Punjab Restaurant.

Businessman Imran Rafiq of Brighto Paint presented a cricket bat to ambassador Sarfraaz Ahmad Shahdood, Captain of Diplomats Team and a ball signed by cricketer Shahid Afridi to Best Bowler Adeel.



ICBF organises 55th edition of Free Medical Camp for workers

Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) successfully organised the 55th edition of its Free Medical Camp for blue-collar workers from the Indian diaspora in Qatar, reaffirming its commitment to supporting underprivileged expatriate communities. Held on May 22 at American Hospital on C Ring Road, the camp provided free medical check-ups, specialist consultations, diagnostic tests, and medicines to hundreds of deserving workers.

Medical consultations were offered in General Medicine, Urology, Cardiology, General Surgery, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Dermatology, and Dental care. Free medicines were distributed to needy patients, while basic blood tests, including Total Cholesterol, HDL, and Uric Acid screenings, were conducted free of charge.

More than 500 patients from various labour camps in and around Doha benefited from the initiative, which ran from 7am to 2pm. Organisers noted that people began queuing from as early as 6am, reflecting the high demand for such community healthcare



programmes. Although registrations had closed a day earlier due to overwhelming response, many walk-in patients were also accommodated.

Sandeep Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in Qatar, inaugurated the camp as chief guest. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by ICBF president Shanavas Bava. General secretary Deepak Shetty welcomed the guests, while Mini Siby, MC member and in charge of the

Medical Wing, delivered the vote of thanks.

ICBF vice-president Rasheed Ahemed, secretary Jafar Thayyil, and MC members Mani Bharathi, Irfan Ansari, Amar Singh, Shankar Goud, Khaja Nizamudeen, and Neelambari S led the programme. American Hospital CEO Iqbal presented a bouquet to the chief guest during the event.

Among those present were Advisory Board chairman K S Prasad, AC member Satheesh V, In-

dian Cultural Centre president A P Manikandan, general secretary Abraham Joseph, ICC Advisory Board chairman P N Baburajan, Indian Business and Professionals Council vice president Abdul Sathar, Indian Sports Centre vice-president Sithenthupal, general secretary Hamsa Yousaf, Apex Body MC members, senior community leaders, and representatives of organisations associated with ICBF.



BPS team wins silver at Destination Imagination

The students of Birla Public School (BPS) brought laurels to the school by securing the silver medal in the Improvisational Challenge at the prestigious Destination Imagination 2025-26 competition. Destination Imagination is an educational programme organised by the Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The programme aims to foster creativity, innovation, teamwork, and community partnership among students through hands-on and collaborative learning experiences. The challenges

presented to students include technical, scientific, fine arts, improvisation, and early learning categories, encouraging participants to become lifelong problem solvers and innovative thinkers.

This academic year, eight teams from BPS, ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 9, participated enthusiastically in the competition. The school's Middle School team excelled in the Improvisational Challenge and secured silver medal at the competition held on February 6 at Qatar University.

The closing ceremony of Destination Imagination was held on 21 May 2026 at Qatar National Convention Centre, where the

winning teams were honoured for their outstanding achievements.

The winners from BPS are Joachim Sanish, Nehara Vinod Nair, Mukund Anuj Kumar, Aaron Joy Miracle, Hanaa Hussain Syed, Chaitanya Mishra, and Saanvi Tsaliiki. Their remarkable achievement reflects the school's commitment to nurturing creativity, collaboration, and innovation among students.

The school management and the senior leadership team congratulate the students and mentors for their dedication and commendable performance and wish them continued success in future endeavours.

QTS felicitates CBSE toppers

In a grand celebration of academic excellence, Qatar Tamizhar Sangam (QTS) organised a prestigious felicitation ceremony on May 22 at Kanjani Hall, IICC, to honour outstanding Tamil students who excelled in the CBSE Class 10 and Class 12 examinations across Qatar.

The event brought together around 50 students, parents, educators, and distinguished guests to recognise the remarkable accomplishments of the young achievers who secured top ranks in the CBSE examinations this academic year.

The programme commenced with a warm welcome address by QTS general secretary Narayanan, who congratulated the toppers for their dedication, perseverance, and hard work. He also appreciated the unwavering support of parents and teachers in shaping the students' success.

In his presidential address, QTS president Muniyappan highlighted QTS's longstanding tradition of honouring Tamil CBSE toppers every year. He reiterated the organisation's continued commitment to encouraging educational excellence and motivating students to pursue higher goals.

The event was graced by special guests Baburajan, Advisory Council chairman of the ICC; Rasheed Ahemed, vice-president of the ICBF; Gopi Varadhan, vice-president of the DPS Modern Indian School; and Krishna Kumar, president of Outreach Qatar. The ceremony was also attended by QTS sponsors Karthi Thangai of Teyseer Motors and Prasad of Black Tulip.

The dignitaries lauded the students for bringing laurels to their schools and to the Indian community in Qatar. They emphasised the importance of discipline, consistency, and balanced learning in achieving academic success.

During the ceremony, the toppers were honoured with trophies and certificates amid loud applause from the audience. Parents expressed their gratitude to QTS for organising such an inspiring initiative that celebrates student achievement and motivates the younger generation.

The ceremony concluded on a celebratory note with group photographs and a vote of thanks, making it a memorable occasion for all attendees.





SciSpark 2026 showcases innovation and creativity at MES Indian School

The Evening Shift of MES Indian School successfully organised SciSpark 2026, an inspiring exhibition by students of Grades 4 to 9, on May 23. The event was inaugurated by the chief guest, Sajeeb Bin Abutty, director, MES Governing Board, in the presence of other management members, principal Dr Hameeda Kadar, senior vice-principal Shihabudeen Pulath, and headmistress Sameena Ashfaq. Nearly 500 students participated in the exhibition, presenting creative and innovative exhibits in Science, Mathematics, Social Science, Languages, Qatar History, Art & Craft, and other subjects. The dedicated efforts and support of the faculty members, scouts and guides, and other staff ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the programme. The event reflected the school's strong commitment to experiential learning, creativity, and holistic development. Through such initiatives, the school continues to uphold its vision of nurturing confident, responsible, and innovative learners equipped to face the challenges of the future.



MES celebrates Mother's Day

MES Indian School recently observed Mother's Day with profound affection, gratitude, and enthusiasm through a special programme. The programme was thoughtfully designed to instil in students a deep sense of appreciation for their mothers. As part of the observance, students created vibrant and imaginative greeting cards, each reflecting heartfelt emotions and the cherished bond they share with their mothers.

Adding intellectual depth to the occasion, Shan Sheffy of Class 10 D expressed sincere gratitude and admiration for the selfless contributions of mothers. A special highlight of the event was the 'Wall of Love', a visually captivating display adorned with messages, wishes, and expressions of gratitude from students.

This initiative added a deeply emotional and personal dimension to the celebration, resonating with warmth and sincerity. Enhancing the festive spirit, teachers adhered to a coordinated dress code, lending colour, vibrancy, and a sense of unity to the programme. To honour and celebrate the unconditional love, care, and selfless sacrifices



of mothers, the Guides Unit of the Girls' Section thoughtfully designed and presented special badges to the principal and the teachers, as a heartfelt gesture of gratitude and profound respect.

Addressing the gathering, principal Dr Hameeda Kadar lauded the invaluable role of mothers in nurturing values, shaping character, and laying the foundation for a progressive society. At the K G Section, the Mother's Day celebration featured "Jolly Jive," a lively seg-

ment in which mothers enthusiastically showcased their talents.

A beautifully designed reflection board, showcasing cherished words and messages shared by mothers in moving expressions. Creative activities such as the Edible Art - Fruit Carving competition and Mother's Masterpiece - Craft competition highlighted the artistic skills of the participating mothers. All participants were presented with certificates of appreciation, making the occasion both memorable and meaningful.



The event was coordinated under the able guidance of the coordinators and in-charge teachers of the event: Anwar K, Anu Manoj, Namitha Pradeep, Thomas Mathew, Jency George, Rajesh K S, Skylab Rani, Blessy Peter, and

Mary Diana. Their concerted efforts ensured the seamless execution of the programme.

The celebration stood as a tribute to the immeasurable sacrifices, unwavering dedication, and unconditional love of mothers, who

remain the cornerstone of every family and the guiding force in shaping compassionate individuals and a harmonious society.



Young innovators present creative ideas at SIS Stream Intra-School Expo

Shantiniketan Indian School hosted the SIS Stream Intra-School Expo 2026 on May 21 under the theme 'Ecovision 2030: Young Minds, Bold Solutions', highlighting innovative scientific, sustainable, and creative ideas through exhibitions, stall evaluations, and competitions.

The Valedictory Ceremony was graced by chief guest Harish Pandey, First Secretary (Education & Culture), Embassy of India in Qatar, who, in his speech, encouraged the students to pursue excellence with confidence, uphold strong values, and embrace innovation and lifelong learning as they prepare to become responsible global citizens.

A beautifully crafted portrait drawn by master Nemsith Nim-

pura Hectorge was presented to the guest on the occasion in recognition of his esteemed presence and inspiring address. The programme began with an invocation by Muhammed Uzair Ibrahim, in the presence of president Rasheed Ahmed, principal Rafeeq Rahim, vice-principal Sujith Kumar, senior head master Rafeeqe Ahammed, senior operations manager Abdul Hameed, academic supervisors and coordinators.

The principal addressed the gathering, while 18 external judges were felicitated by the leadership team and SIS APT Convenor Shanawas Majeed. The expo was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the MPH.

Winners included Sameeha Shaikh, Ariba Khan, Juveria Ab-

dul Nafay, Kezia Morris Muppidi, Mansha Thahsin, Aysha Lujail, Fadi Rahman, Ahmed, Farzan Faisal, Lizam Al Ajal, Mohammed Zidan, Sinan Bin Faisal, Fadi Bin Sameer, Zahraa Suroor, Aysha Abdul Shukoor, Amal Abdulla, Ishfa Firdos, Samia Ghani, Yahvi Udayakumar, Aibel Leo, Adhvath Josh and Rishi.

Forenoon Best Departments: English, Mathematics, and Science. Afternoon Best Pavilions: Grade 2 ABC, Grade 4, and Grade 8. KG exhibits were judged under Best Exhibit, Best Theme Interpretation, Young Innovator, and Star Exhibit categories.

Special appreciation to Nihal, Thanveera Nasrin, staff, parents, and students for making the event a grand success.



China leaders skip defence summit headlined by US

AFP
Singapore

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth is the headline speaker at Asia's premier defence summit, which began yesterday with top Chinese officials notably absent despite weighty questions over Taiwan and the war in Iran.

Beijing's defence minister is skipping the three-day Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore for the second year running, which analysts viewed as a sign of China's rising power.

The forum brings together top officials from around 45 nations and has historically provided a setting for debate as well as both quiet and high-profile diplomacy.

But the absence of China's Dong Jun means no meeting with Hegseth, even as Beijing tests American commitment to Taiwan and Washington seeks an end to the Middle East war.

Vietnamese leader To Lam called on countries to make such talks "truly effective instruments of risk reduction", adding in a keynote address yesterday evening that the Shangri-La Dialogue should not become a platform for merely "restating positions".

He urged "responsible commitment" from influential nations "both within and beyond the region", without mentioning the US or China by name.

"Competition must be bounded by law, guided by transparency and exercised with restraint," Lam said.

He also said Vietnam's position



China's Major General Meng Xiangqing of the National Defence University, the head of the Chinese delegation, attends the 23rd Shangri-La Dialogue summit in Singapore yesterday. (AFP)

on the South China Sea, where it has a territorial dispute with Beijing, remained "clear, consistent and principled".

Recently elected president and Communist Party leader – a dual role evoking China's Xi Jinping – Lam is Vietnam's most powerful leader in decades.

Hegseth's second trip to the forum comes after US President Donald Trump's visit to China this month. Trump said the countries struck "fantastic" trade deals, although details have been vague, and he has suggested Washington could use arms sales as a bargaining chip with Beijing.

Hegseth's speech today is expected to be "quite strong against China, but mainly for internal (US) consumption", said Oh Eui Sun, senior fellow at the Singa-

pore Institute of International Affairs. China sent Dong to the dialogue as recently as 2024, when he and then Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin met for their first substantive face-to-face talks in 18 months. But Dong was absent last year, and China said on Thursday it would send experts and scholars from its army's academic institutions this time.

Major General Meng Xiangqing of the National Defence University is leading a delegation that also includes scholars from the Academy of Military Sciences and the Navy.

"China has truly arrived as a major power in the region, so it does not really need to send its defence minister to brave a fusillade of questions," said William Choong, principal fellow at

the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute think tank. Two other former defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu, previously spoke at Shangri-La. Both have since been handed suspended death sentences on graft charges.

"It's kind of a poisoned chalice for any Chinese defence minister to speak out publicly," said Jennifer Parker, adjunct professor at the University of Western Australia's Defence and Security Institute.

But Beijing also risks not having a senior leader present if two of the most pertinent global security issues – Taiwan and the opening of the Strait of Hormuz – do come up.

The defence ministers of the US, Britain and Australia – the members of the AUKUS security alliance – are also due to convene.

AUKUS's stated goal is to ensure a free and open Asia-Pacific region, although it is widely seen as a bulwark against a rising China and is strongly opposed by Beijing.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said yesterday that Canberra was seeking "the maintenance of the global rules-based order" in the region.

"We've seen China engage in a very significant military build-up... and it has not happened with the kind of strategic reassurance which (we) would expect," he told journalists.

Australian media outlets have reported, citing unidentified sources, that the AUKUS nations are expected to announce a major project, perhaps involving uncrewed underwater vehicles.

Japan-Philippines maritime border talks 'illegal': China

AFP
Beijing

China expressed strong opposition yesterday to a decision by Japan and the Philippines to start maritime border negotiations, calling the talks "illegal" and claiming exclusive control over the waters concerned.

The two island nations announced on Thursday they would start formal talks "to delimit the maritime boundary" of an economic zone and continental shelf between them, as Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos met Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on a visit to Tokyo.

But Beijing again asserted yesterday that it has an "exclusive economic zone and continental shelf" in the waters to the east of Taiwan.

"China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to this," foreign ministry spokeswoman

Mao Ning told a regular news conference when asked about the delimitation talks between Tokyo and Manila.

"China solemnly declares that the so-called delimitation negotiations between Japan and the Philippines are entirely illegal and invalid," Mao said.

Beijing has "lodged solemn representations" with both countries, she added.

Manila and Tokyo's shared grievances over Chinese maritime territorial claims have seen them draw increasingly close in recent years.

Japan and China are in territorial and economic disputes in the East China Sea, where coastguard ships from both sides routinely stage dangerous standoffs.

Beijing has meanwhile deployed navy and coast guard vessels in the South China Sea, in a bid to bar the Philippines from strategically important reefs and islands, leading to a string of confrontations.



Vietnamese President To Lam speaks to Reuters on the sidelines of the ISS Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore yesterday. (Reuters)

Rescuers free one of seven men trapped in Laos cave

AFP
Vientiane

A rescue team freed yesterday one of seven men trapped inside a semi-submerged cave in Laos for more than a week, the group working at the site said.

The seven men had been trapped in the cavern in a remote mountainous area of central Xaysomboun province since May 20, when flash floods stranded them as they searched for gold, early state media reports said.

Five of the men were located alive on Wednesday, huddling in a narrow shaft around 300 metres (984 feet) from the cave mouth.

Footage filmed by rescue divers showed them muddy and dehydrated, complaining of chest pains and hunger pangs, while the remaining two of their group remain unaccounted for.

"The first victim has been successfully rescued out of the cave," a Thai rescue group said in a Facebook post late Friday accompanied by a picture of three men guiding another bedraggled and muddy man over unsteady ground.

Rescue efforts had focused on



Rescue workers gather to discuss plans to rescue people trapped in a cave, in Xaisomboun Province, Laos, in this handout image released yesterday. (Reuters)

pumping out the monsoon flood waters which trapped the men.

"One person has got out of the cave safely," Thai rescue team member Kengkard Bonggawong said in a separate Facebook post. "We will assess the other four and we will hunt for the other two tomorrow."

Earlier in the day Thai rescue teams were rehearsing extraction procedures outside the cave with stretchers, ropes and cables, ac-

ording to images shared on social media.

Laos's meteorology office forecast thunderstorms yesterday afternoon and evening, with rainfall expected across 60% of Xaysomboun province.

Meanwhile a new team of specialist divers touched down in Laos yesterday, including members from Thailand, France, Indonesia and Australia, according to Thai rescuers.

The emergency echoes the 2018 case of the Thai youth football team which spent 18 days trapped in a cave in Thailand's north before a daring international rescue saved their lives.

Two divers involved in that retrieval of 12 young footballers and their coach are working with Laotian volunteers after locals requested specialist personnel and equipment.

Finnish diver Mikko Paasi, part of the team that saved the "Wild Boars" football team in Thailand, said on Wednesday that rescuers were "racing against time" inside the cave.

Rain the following day sent more soil and water into the cave, according to a Laotian logistics staffer for a firm supplying vehicles to support the rescue operation.

The man said on Thursday the rescue operation could stretch to "a few more days" if rains continue, speaking on condition of anonymity due to fears of reprisal from his employer.

Laos local media reported several rescue workers had shown signs of exhaustion after spending seven to 10 hours at a time inside the cave system carrying oxygen tanks, rescue equipment and supplies.

Nepal unveils \$13.8bn reform budget after political shift

AFP
Kathmandu

Nepal's government unveiled yesterday its first budget since sweeping to power after a youth-led uprising, promising reforms and a push to revive growth following months of political turmoil.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah, 36, assumed office in March after a landslide victory for his party in the first elections since the deadly 2025 uprising ousted the previous government.

Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle presented a 2.1-trillion-rupee (\$13.8-billion) spending plan focused on boosting infrastructure, technology, health and education, while pledging to stabilise the economy.

"The nation is standing at a decisive crossroad of comprehensive economic reform," Wagle said in parliament.

"The vicious circle of political instability has come to an end."

The budget seeks to spur domestic demand by doubling the income tax exemption threshold and raising salaries for government employees, while also introducing reforms aimed at improving the business environment and attracting investment.

Poor planning and sluggish bureaucracy hampered the country's growth in previous years, with the government routinely failing to spend funds allocated in annual budgets.

"This budget... attempts to redefine the state's role not just as a controller and a regulator but an institution that creates opportunities," Wagle said, promising more jobs and improving living standards.

The nationwide demonstrations in September 2025, initially sparked by anger over a brief government ban on social media, were driven by deeper frustration over eco-



Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle displays the budget for the fiscal year 2026-27 to the media as he leaves the Ministry of Finance before presenting the budget at the parliament, in Kathmandu, yesterday. (Reuters)

nomic hardship and corruption.

Violence during the protests killed at least 76 people.

Rameshore Khanal, who served as finance minister in the interim administration that led the country following the uprising, lauded the budget and said it had steered away from populist agendas.

"This budget focuses on reforms more than ever before... it will be a turning point if implemented effectively," Khanal told AFP.

Business leaders also welcomed the proposals, particularly measures aimed at easing regulatory burdens.

The budget would make "it easier for investors

to navigate the complex legal regime in the country", said Birendra Raj Pandey, president of the Confederation of Nepalese Industries.

On Wednesday, the government's economic survey projected growth of 3.85 percent as Nepal grapples with the impact of global economic pressures.

In April, the World Bank said better political stability and progress in structural reforms could boost investor confidence in the Himalayan nation of 30 million people.

Wagle said that "the economy is expected to grow by seven percent in the coming financial year as a result of the reform programmes, while the inflation rate will remain at six percent."

To Lam warns of three global crises

Reuters
Singapore

The world is beset with multiple risks and uncertainty that countries must confront squarely, To Lam, Vietnam's top leader, said yesterday while inaugurating Asia's premier defence forum, the Shangri-La Dialogue.

He said the challenges facing the world included an erosion of international rules and law, a crisis of development models including slowing growth and climate change, and a crisis of trust among nations.

"The three crises confronting our world today are not inevitable realities that we are bound to accept," Lam said, calling for reinforcing international law, setting up inclusive and sustainable growth drivers, as well as initiating dialogue and transparency.

The free-wheeling Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual event in Singapore which runs until tomorrow, draws a mix of defence

ministers, generals, intelligence chiefs, diplomats, analysts and weapons makers.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and counterparts from Australia, Britain, France, Japan, and other nations were in the audience. A notable absentee was China's Dong Jun, who skipped the event for the second year running. Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said China's low-key presence at the meeting – Beijing has sent only experts and scholars from the People's Liberation Army – was a lost opportunity to engage with countries from around the world.

Lam's keynote speech at the dialogue is one of the most high-profile events from a leader of the usually reticent nation.

Installed as president last month in addition to his role as Communist Party chief, Lam is the most powerful Vietnamese leader in decades and his joint mandate allows him to play a more prominent diplomatic role.

Starmer condemns Russia's violation of Nato airspace

AFP
London

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned yesterday the "serious violation of Nato airspace" after a drone hit a Romanian residential building, saying Britain stands "shoulder to shoulder" with Romania and other European allies.

"Last night a Russian drone entered Romanian airspace and hit a residential building, injuring civilians," Starmer said in a statement condemning the strike in the Nato member country.

The UK leader added Russia's aggression against Ukraine and attacks on the country's civilians and infrastructure "threatens the security of our entire continent".

"The UK unreservedly condemns such strikes," he noted,

accusing Moscow of repeatedly showing "it has no regard for civilian life, for international law, or for the sovereignty of its neighbours".

"That must not be allowed to stand," Starmer said. "We stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine, with Romania, and with all our Nato allies in the face of continued Russian aggression."

His comments came shortly after Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper issued her own rebuke, calling the incident "extremely dangerous and reckless".

Characterising the drone crash as a "grave escalation that puts lives at risk", Cooper said on X that she was in contact with her Romanian counterpart.

"The UK stands united with Romania and all allies to defend every inch of Nato territory," she added.

In China, Lisa Su understated while Nvidia's Huang more razzmatazz

When AMD CEO Lisa Su arrived in China last week just days after Nvidia's CEO left, she kept a much lower profile than Jensen Huang, who drew crowds in the centre of the capital as he posed for photos and ate local delicacies like Beijing-style soybean paste noodles. Their contrasting approaches show two very different forms of corporate diplomacy around the world's most politically sensitive artificial intelligence chip market, where their fortunes have also been diverging. Just a year ago at the annual Computex trade show in Taipei, Huang said Nvidia's market share in China had dropped to 50% from 95% due to US export controls.

Since then, that has effectively fallen to zero, he said this year, amid Beijing's push for self-reliance in advanced AI chips. Huang has previously estimated that China's AI chip market would be worth \$50bn this year. By contrast, AMD commands 4% of China's AI chip market, according to IDC, a research firm, and it has more routes into the country than AI accelerators, which are Nvidia's mainstay. AMD can serve Chinese customers with central processing units (CPUs), consumer graphics processing units (GPUs), AI chipsets and programmable integrated circuits called FPGAs, said Lian Jye Su, chief analyst at Omdia, a tech research firm. That gives AMD access to more types of system

architecture as AI workloads spread beyond training large models into broader enterprise use, he said. With the two US tech CEOs showing up in Taipei before the Computex event, their diverging China playbooks appear more pronounced, as both over the past week unveiled big investment plans in Taiwan, home to the world's largest contract chip manufacturing firm, TSMC. Their contrasting approach to China also carries an unusual personal dimension: both hail from Taiwan and have said publicly that they are distant relatives. AMD's announcement on its Taiwan investment followed a flurry of meetings that Su had in China last week, where she spoke at

an AMD developer event and met customers and partners. She also had a publicly announced meeting with Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, who said Beijing welcomes companies including AMD to "seize the opportunities presented by China's development and deepen mutually beneficial co-operation." Beijing, however, did not have a comparable senior-level meeting for Huang, who was in Beijing around the summit between China's Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump on May 14 and 15. That silence stood out because Huang has been the more vocal of the two executives in arguing that US chip curbs risk handing China's AI market to domestic rivals like Huawei.

An adviser to multinational CEOs with business in China, who declined to be identified so they could discuss specific executives, said Su's lower-profile approach was better suited to the current geopolitical environment. The adviser added that the politicization of US-China commercial ties and volatility in public sentiment had raised reputational risks for global chip CEOs. Su said last week that China accounts for about 20% of AMD's revenue and remains important across PCs, gaming and some data-centre segments. "Frankly, you look at the size of the market and the size of our portfolio, and we'll continue to partner very closely with our Chinese customers," she said.

While Huawei and other domestic chipmakers jump into the void left by Nvidia, AMD's Shanghai developer event on May 19 suggests the Santa Clara, California-based company is also looking to fill the gap. During the event, Su promoted ROCm, AMD's open-source software stack, to Chinese developers at a time when many AI firms are seeking alternatives to Nvidia's CUDA ecosystem because the most advanced Nvidia hardware is hard to obtain. However, there are signs that the opening remains limited for now. AMD's software ecosystem is far less mature than Nvidia's and US export controls also restrict the US firm from selling its most advanced AI chips to China. — Reuters

UN peacekeepers: A humanitarian mission in midst of global risks

QNA Doha

For nearly eight decades, United Nations peacekeeping forces have played a vital role in supporting stability and protecting civilians in conflict zones around the world, helping countries move from violence toward peace. The world marks the International Day of UN Peacekeepers on May 29 each year, commemorating the establishment of the first UN peacekeeping mission in 1948. This year's observance is held under the theme "Invest in Peace". UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said more than 50,000 UN peacekeepers are currently deployed in some of the world's most dangerous regions to protect civilians and support political solutions. He also paid tribute to nearly 4,500 peacekeepers who have lost their lives since 1948.

Commenting on this year's theme, Assistant Professor at the Department of International Affairs at Qatar University Dr Abdullah Bandar al-Otaibi told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the world today faces a difficult balance between military deterrence and investing in peace. He stressed that investing in conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of crises is essential, adding that greater efforts are needed in mediation, development, and tackling poverty, discrimination, inequality, and injustice.

Dr al-Otaibi also highlighted growing divisions within the UN Security Council, warning that political polarisation and the use of the veto have weakened the effectiveness of international peacekeeping efforts and obstructed responses to major crises. He emphasised that despite these challenges, peacekeeping forces remain essential to preventing wider instability and chaos, calling for stronger international co-operation, clearer mandates for peacekeeping missions, and increased support and resources.

On the legal protection of peacekeepers, Dr al-Otaibi noted that around 4,000 peacekeepers have lost their lives since UN peacekeeping operations began. He said the 1994 Convention on the Safety of UN Personnel lacks effective accountability mechanisms, stressing the need for an international court specialized

in crimes committed against peacekeepers. Commenting on the performance of peacekeeping missions in the Middle East amid continued Israeli violations, Dr al-Otaibi expressed regret over what he described as ongoing Israeli violations against the Palestinian people, calling the issue one of the most controversial files within the international security system.

He noted that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has repeatedly come under Israeli attacks without any real deterrent from the United Nations or meaningful action capable of influencing the situation. He added that during the war in Gaza, Israeli military operations in southern Lebanon included attacks on UNIFIL headquarters and injuries to international peacekeepers, despite such actions constituting a serious violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Dr al-Otaibi highlighted growing divisions within the UN Security Council, warning that political polarisation and the use of the veto have weakened the effectiveness of international peacekeeping efforts & obstructed responses to major crises

He added that all have become accustomed in the international system to Israel being above the law, and this represents one of the biggest problems not only for the region but also for the world, because some actors behave as though they are beyond accountability, creating space for what can be described as political recklessness.

For his part, Professor of International Affairs, Security and Defense at Qatar University Dr Ali Bakir said Israel's willingness to target peacekeeping forces and UN institutions in Palestine, Lebanon, and elsewhere can be explained by several factors. Speaking to QNA, he added that the most prominent factor is Israel's entrenched belief that violating or ignoring international law carries no meaningful deterrent cost, even when UN facilities are targeted or international missions

are obstructed, especially given the Western military and security support and the political and diplomatic cover provided to it.

He continued that the erosion of the international system's credibility over recent decades, due to successive wars and growing polarization among major powers, has further encouraged Israel to challenge these institutions. Despite criticism, Dr Bakir stressed, UN peacekeeping missions remain among the world's most important conflict-management tools.

He highlighted their contributions in protecting civilians in conflict zones, supporting ceasefire agreements, facilitating humanitarian aid delivery, and assisting post-conflict elections and institution-building efforts. At the same time, he pointed to several weaknesses, including limited mandates that restrict decisive intervention during escalating violence, insufficient funding and equipment, slow Security Council decision-making due to geopolitical rivalries, and criticism directed at some missions for failing to prevent massacres or adequately protect civilians.

Dr Bakir added that peacekeeping forces today face increasingly complex challenges, including the changing nature of warfare involving cross-border militias, drones, and digital technologies, as well as direct attacks against peacekeepers themselves. He also warned of the growing impact of misinformation campaigns and digital incitement, which undermine trust in UN missions among local populations.

In addition, peacekeepers are now expected to address mass displacement, collapsing services, epidemics, and climate-related crises alongside traditional security responsibilities, while operating under severe psychological and operational pressures. He stressed that international divisions weaken the effectiveness of UN missions because political backing becomes fragmented and inconsistent.

Looking ahead, Dr Bakir said the success of peacekeeping operations in the coming decade requires rethinking the entire philosophy of peacekeeping, not merely improving its tools. He emphasized the need to reform the UN Security Council, arguing that effective peacekeeping depends on unified international political will.

He also called for more flexible and proactive mandates focused on civilian protection, greater investment in technology such as artificial intelligence, data analysis, early warning systems, and cybersecurity, as well as stronger partnerships with local communities. Dr Bakir further stressed the importance of advanced training in human rights, crisis management, cultural mediation, and hybrid warfare, in addition to ensuring sustainable funding and linking peacebuilding efforts to development by addressing poverty, marginalisation, corruption, and the absence of justice.

Ballroom in the works



Construction is seen on the East Wing of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday as part of US President Donald Trump's plans to build a White House ballroom. Trump showed off the site of his huge new White House ballroom on May 26, saying it would feature an underground military hospital and a "drone empire" on the roof. (AFP)

Fears of unfettered hacking spurred by Anthropic's Mythos AI model overstated

By AJ Vican Reuters

Early fears that Anthropic's new AI model, Mythos, could dramatically turbocharge hacking are looking overstated a month after its release. The company warned at launch in April that Mythos had uncovered thousands of software vulnerabilities — including flaws across every major operating system and browser — and said the fallout from its spread could be severe. Governments took notice. Officials in multiple countries huddled with banks to assess risks, and by early May the White House was weighing rules to control how new models are released after safety testing. But inside the cybersecurity world, the reaction has been more measured — with some saying the broader response has been overblown, and that access to a Mythos-level large language model will not immediately enable hacking operations previously out of reach for bad actors.

"I think there's a really big communication gap between practitioners and policymakers," said Isaac Evans, founder and CEO of software security firm Semgrep. The model represents "a real technical advance," he said, but the response "is not substantiated by what we actually know about how those capabilities will translate in the field."

To be sure, experts who have used the model in controlled environments have reported substantial improvement in vulnerability discovery, and banking industry IT staffs are working to fix scores of system weaknesses in large and small bank technology stacks, Reuters reported on May 12. The worry has been heightened further by continued revelations of criminal and state-linked hacking cases involving AI, including Google's announcement on May 11 that it had detected the first-ever case of a major cybercrime group using AI to discover a previously unknown software flaw and planning a mass exploitation event. The gap between the extent of the threat seen by security professionals and that seen by policymakers has fueled a narrative that puts Mythos at the centre of a looming security crisis — even as comparable capabilities have been available for some time. "We've been able to use AI to find more bugs than we know what to do with for months if not years," said one person with extensive vulnerability research experience with early access to Mythos. The challenge is not finding vulnerabilities, they said, but validating, prioritizing and fixing them without breaking systems.

Organisations' ability to process and validate a flood of newly discovered vulnerabilities is generally not where it needs to be, the person said, and that is the bigger challenge introduced by Mythos-level models, even as they acknowledged that the model is an improvement. "It is capable of finding more with a weaker prompt than the models that came before it," the person said, referring to the instructions a



user provides the model to attempt to achieve a goal. Existing models required more detailed and complicated instructions, the person said, meaning the barrier to entry has been lowered.

Anthony Grieco, senior vice-president and chief security and trust officer at Cisco, said one new and helpful aspect of Mythos is its ability not only to identify vulnerabilities, but to scan much faster vast amounts of code for those vulnerabilities and help experienced practitioners lower the rate of false positives. This, he said, allows defenders to focus on the most pressing cyber risks in their contexts. The model also has fewer guardrails than previous models, allowing users to craft more specific instructions that enable activities that previous models would not.

Grieco said to fully maximize the power of Mythos, organizations need both proper computing power as well as a rigorous harness, a term used to describe the computer environment within an organization where a large language model runs with specific instructions and limitations.

"If you have a Formula One car but you've only ever driven a bike, you might be able to get it to go straight," Grieco said. "But you're not going to maximize the track time out of the gate."

Even so, Anthropic's framing — and its decision to invite select firms to test defenses under a program dubbed Project Glasswing — helped push the conversation about the model well beyond typical security circles.

The result: an all-hands-on-deck response that amplified both the perceived threat and the company's stature, even as the Pentagon labeled Anthropic a supply-chain risk while other parts of the government clamored for access. The White House is discussing with AI labs more widespread use of their technology, a White House official told Reuters. An Anthropic spokesperson said the company is working "closely with the US government to quickly advance shared priorities," and working with the government to give more parties access to Mythos. Mythos — and to some extent OpenAI's GPT-5.5 — has dominated national security discussions about AI. But those debates often gloss over a simpler point: vulnerability-hunting AI is not new. The real problem is what comes next.



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Canadian poison seller pleads guilty to aiding suicides

AFP
Newmarket, Canada

The Canadian man who sold packages of poison to distressed people in dozens of countries pleaded guilty yesterday to 14 counts of aiding suicide, but prosecutors said he will not face murder charges.

Kenneth Law, a 60-year-old former chef, ran online forums that offered people advice on how to end their lives and made fatal substances available for purchase.

The details of Law's online operation have caused widespread outrage since his arrest in 2023.

The list of 41 countries where Law sent poison included Aus-

tralia, China, France and Brazil. He sold 330 packages to people in the United Kingdom.

Canadian prosecutors had charged him with 14 counts of murder and 14 counts of aiding suicide. At a court in Newmarket, north of Toronto, prosecutors said they did not believe they had a viable path towards murder convictions. Law stood in a semi-enclosed area reserved for defendants, flanked by his three defense lawyers, and said "I plead guilty" to aiding the suicide of 14 people in Canada.

Sentencing will be determined at a separate hearing, likely in September, when the court will hear victim impact statements.

Legal experts note that aiding

suicide is a serious crime and Law could receive a sentence of 10 to 20 years' imprisonment.

After the guilty pleas were entered, prosecutors began reading an "agreed statement of facts," a roughly 60-page document that detailed how Law shipped material for suicide across Canada and abroad, often for about \$80.

Prosecutors recounted how people, after taking their own lives, were often found by family members with an open package of Law's sodium nitrite near their body.

News that he will not stand trial for murder in Canada came as a disappointment to some families.

David Parfett's son Thomas was 22 when he ended his life in 2021 with materials supplied by Law.

Now an advocate for more rigorous legislation to confront online spaces that guide people toward harm, Parfett told AFP that Canadian authorities were missing an opportunity to establish the gravity of Law's conduct.

"If (Law) hadn't been offering detailed instructions about how to take your own life, then the chances are my son would still be here. So again, for me, it's murder," Parfett said. In the agreed statement of facts, Law took responsibility for 79 deaths in Britain.

Britain's National Crime Agency confirmed in a statement that Law will not face additional prosecution, but that the British deaths will be considered during sentencing in Canada.

A joint statement by the NCA and Britain's prosecution service said the agencies had explained their decision to not prosecute Law "in detail to the victims and their families."

Parfett said in a statement: "I am angry, but I am not surprised."

He reiterated the families' rebuffed calls for a UK public inquiry. "If our own country will not put anyone on trial for these deaths, the very least it can do is hold a proper inquiry into how they were allowed to happen."

Kim Prosser's son Ashtyn took his own life in 2023, weeks before Law's arrest. Law pleaded guilty yesterday to aiding Ashtyn's suicide.

Prosser told AFP of the painful

three years since her son's death on March 30, 2023.

"To be at the courthouse on Friday and to sit there... it's a beginning to another chapter of this process of healing," she said.

A key issue facing prosecutors was whether the alleged conduct would amount to both counseling suicide and murder.

Dalhousie University law professor Robert Currie told AFP that Law's prosecutors were watching a separate case before the Supreme Court, hoping Canada's top judges would offer clarity on the issue.

But the Supreme Court left that question unanswered, and prosecutors doubted they could secure murder convictions against Law, Currie said.

Nato, EU outrage as drone hits apartment block in Romania

AFP
Galati, Romania

A drone smashed into an apartment building in Nato-member Romania early yesterday, wounding two people and drawing condemnation from the Atlantic alliance and the European Union, which blamed Russia and warned against further incursions.

Romania called the incident — the first drone hit on a residential building outside Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 — a "serious and irresponsible escalation" by Moscow.

But Russian President Vladimir Putin said "no one can say" who fired the drone, calling for an investigation to provide "objective data" on its origin.

The drone hit the roof of an apartment building in the centre of the city of Galati, close to the border with Ukraine, sparking a fire and sending a 14-year-old boy and 53-year-old woman to hospital with injuries, officials said.

Drone incursions in Romania have been detected dozens of times since the start of the Ukraine war, but no residential buildings had previously been hit. The Romanian defence ministry said two F-16 fighter jets had been scrambled in response to the drone, which it said had entered Romania's airspace during Russian strikes on Ukraine.

Romanian forces had insufficient time — four minutes — to shoot down the drone, General Gheorghe Maxim from the Joint Forces Command said, adding there were "no realistic opportunities to engage it safely".

Romanian President Nicușor Dan said the decision not to engage was made "because the conditions necessary to destroy it without significantly endangering the safety of the civilian population were not present".

Romania summoned the Russian ambassador, and Dan convened a national defence council meeting to discuss "the most se-



Romanian law enforcement officers work on the site of an explosion in Galati yesterday. (Reuters)

rious incident to have affected our national territory" since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Dan also said Romania would expel the Russian consul general in the Black Sea city of Constanta and close the mission, prompting Russia to say it was preparing "retaliatory measures".

Romania's defence ministry said Bucharest had "requested measures to accelerate the transfer of anti-drone capabilities to Romania".

Dan said that in a conversation with Nato chief Mark Rutte, "I insisted on expediting the process (of getting more air defence equipment), and he fully agreed that this equipment should reach Romania as quickly as possible".

Inhabitants of Galati meanwhile expressed fear, bewilderment and anger.

"Where are the anti-drone systems here? Shouldn't they be somewhere on the border of Romania? Why aren't they? Where is the European Union? Nato?" asked 47-year-old Mihaela, who

only gave her first name.

Later Friday, Dan — whose country is already facing political turmoil, with the prime minister ousted in a no-confidence vote this month — was booted when he visited the site of the crash, with some chanting "resignation".

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said Russia's "war of aggression" had "crossed yet another line", pledging to increase deterrence on the EU's eastern border.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the incident showed Russia's "willingness to escalate", and Britain's Keir Starmer condemned the "serious violation of Nato airspace".

France said it had summoned the Russian ambassador.

The US ambassador to Nato, Matthew Whitaker, also slammed the "reckless incursion", saying: "We stand with our Nato ally".

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said in a post on X that the drone crash "proved once again that Russian aggression poses a real threat to the Black

Sea region and the entire Europe", while President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged his European allies to increase sanctions on Russia.

"Russia's reckless behaviour is a danger to us all," Nato chief Rutte wrote on social media.

"Nato stands ready to defend every inch of Allied territory".

Nato sources said there was no indication whether Romania would call for emergency consultations under the alliance's Article Four.

That move would still be well short of Nato's Article Five mutual defence clause being triggered, which has happened only once in the alliance's 77-year history, after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the US.

Article Four consultations have been called three times during Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine: the first time just after the invasion in 2022, once by Poland after incursions by Russian drones, and once by Estonia after Russian fighter jets violated its airspace.

EU to unlock €16bn for Hungary's new regime

AFP
Brussels

The EU announced yesterday it would unlock more than €16bn (\$19bn) for Hungary, in a big win for new Prime Minister Peter Magyar, provided the country stays on track with a major reform push.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen announced the bloc was ready to release the badly needed money frozen under the divisive rule of former prime minister Viktor Orban and which Magyar made a political priority.

"We can already feel a strong wind of change across Hungary," von der Leyen told a press conference, after talks with Magyar in Brussels.

"In only a few weeks, you have driven forward long overdue reforms," she told the conservative leader. The announcement marks a political victory for Magyar, who defeated longtime nationalist leader Orban in an election in April, running on an anti-corruption ticket, with securing the EU money as a key electoral pledge.

The EU froze around €18bn (\$21bn) in funds earmarked for Budapest because of democratic backsliding, graft concerns and other issues under Orban's rule.

"We fought for every euro cent", Magyar said, celebrating what he described as a "historic day".

The money — which Magyar said adds up to about 13% of Hungary's budget — could help his government revive the country's flagging economy.

It would also generate goodwill as Brussels seeks to push ahead with files previously blocked by Budapest, such as membership talks with Ukraine — although von der Leyen said there was "absolutely no link between the two".

The bulk of the frozen funds — just over €10bn of the total — are from the EU's Covid recovery fund, and Hungary had until the end of August to present a new plan to secure them.

Their release was "subject to the reforms that are being adopted" and the implementation of a series of investments that have been agreed on, von der Leyen said.

She cited a revision of public



PM Peter Magyar (AFP)

We'll bring these funds home to help Hungarians, to help kickstart the economy, to restore public services," Magyar said

procurement laws and a decision to join the anti-graft European Public Prosecutors Office as changes going in the right direction. EU officials said if all steps are completed in time, Budapest could expect the first disbursement before the end of the year.

Another six mn euros is tied to other reforms, including changes aimed at restoring academic freedom and reversing a slew of laws passed under Orban.

The first related payments could arrive next year, the officials said. Hungary is in the meantime expected to continue paying fines it was handed by EU courts for failing to comply with the bloc's laws.

While in power, Orban, a self-described "thorn" in the EU's side who maintained close ties to Moscow, kept the Constitutional Court, Public Prosecutor's Office and Court of Audit on a tight leash.

Magyar, whose party holds a large majority in parliament, has begun initial reforms — with his camp voting Wednesday to drop Orban's plan to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In a similar scenario, the EU had unlocked billions of euros for Poland in 2024 as soon as the government of pro-European Prime Minister Donald Tusk offered assurances that change was afoot.

Canada could double exports to China, says foreign minister

Reuters
Ottawa

China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi said yesterday that Canada could surpass its goal of increasing exports to China by 50% by 2030 during a meeting with Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand.

Wang said he thought Canada's exports to China could increase by 100%, building on momentum between the countries.

Wang is on a three-day visit to Canada, the first visit by a Chinese foreign minister in a decade and the latest step to improve ties.

Canada and China struck an initial trade deal in January to slash tariffs on electric vehicles and canola, when Carney became the first Canadian prime minister to visit China since 2017.

China is Canada's second-largest trading partner, and Carney has sought to reduce his country's overwhelming reliance on the US after US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on Canada.

"Canada is focused on growing our economy and diversifying our



Foreign Minister Wang Yi

trading relationships," Anand said during the meeting, adding: "The Canada-China economic relationship is significant."

The two ministers met after the Canadian warship HMCS Charlottetown completed a routine transit through the Taiwan Strait on May 23. China said yesterday it firmly opposes any attempt by any country to undermine its sovereignty and security "under the pretext of freedom of navigation."

US judge orders Trump's name removal from Kennedy Center

Reuters
Washington

A judge yesterday ordered the removal of President Donald Trump's name from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, ruling that the iconic Washington venue cannot be renamed without an act of Congress.

US District Judge Christopher Cooper in Washington directed the Trump administration to take down all physical signage bearing Trump's name and to eliminate any references to a "Trump Kennedy Center" from official materials within 14 days.

"The Kennedy Center's organic statute makes crystal clear that the Center is to be named for President Kennedy, and it cannot bear any other formal name or public memorial based on the Board's unilateral say-so," Cooper wrote. "Congress gave the Kennedy Center its name, and only Congress can change it."

The judge said his decision "does not purport to dictate how the Center should be run, nor does it prescribe any particular plan for the institution — construction, closure, or otherwise — moving forward."

Cooper ruled in a lawsuit brought by Ohio Democratic US Representative Joyce Beatty, a member of the Kennedy Center's board by virtue of her position in Congress. Beatty in a statement after the ruling said the "Kennedy Center is an institution that belongs to the American people, not to Donald Trump."

Trump's plan to renovate the center is part of a broader push by the Republican leader to



A general view shows the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. (AFP/File Photo)

reshape Washington's monumental core. He also intends to erect a 250-foot (76-meter) arch and to build a 90,000-square-foot ballroom at the site of the demolished East Wing of the White House.

Those efforts also face court challenges. A federal appeals court has allowed the Trump administration to move ahead with building the ballroom as it considers the case.

Cooper's order also stops the Trump administration's planned two-year closure of the building. The judge said his order does not prevent the Kennedy Center from moving forward with planned capital repair work that the record in the lawsuit "demonstrates is sorely needed."

The board could still close the center, Cooper wrote, "should it come to this decision anew after independently balancing its multiple obligations to the Center in a prudent fashion."

Beatty sued the Trump administration in December, calling the renaming of the building "a flagrant violation of the rule of law" that "flies in the face of our constitutional order."

Her lawyers in a statement applauded Cooper's decision. "This is a powerful blow against the Trump administration's corruption," attorneys Norm Eisen and Nathaniel Zelinsky said.

The Kennedy Center opened in 1971 as a living memorial to the late President John F. Kennedy.



Katara Cultural Village concludes Eid festivities

Katara Cultural Village successfully concluded its Eid al-Adha celebrations yesterday after three days of vibrant festivities that transformed the cultural district into one of the country's liveliest holiday destinations.

Since launching on Wednesday, the celebrations attracted thousands of visitors from across Qatar and neighbouring countries, reinforcing Katara's growing status as a leading cultural, tourism, and entertainment hub in the region.

Throughout the Eid holiday, Katara's waterfront promenades, open plazas, and cultural venues came alive with a festive atmosphere that blended entertainment, heritage, art, and family-oriented activities. Visitors experienced a dynamic programme designed to cater to all age groups, turning the cultural village into a vibrant gathering point filled with music, live performances, children's activities, and spectacular visual displays.

Accordingly, Salem al-Marri, director of Public Relations and Communications at Katara, expressed satisfaction with the remarkable public turnout wit-



Nightly fireworks displays became one of the most anticipated highlights of the Eid al-Adha celebrations at Katara. **PICTURE:** Ram Chand

nessed during this year's Eid festivities. He pointed out that the strong attendance reflects the growing confidence visitors place in Katara as a premier cultural and entertainment destination. He stressed that the organising team was keen to present a diverse programme that combines enter-

tainment and culture in a way that meets the expectations of visitors from different backgrounds and age groups, while contributing to the joyful spirit of Eid al-Adha.

From the very first day of Eid, Katara Corniche was packed with crowds as families, children, and tourists gathered to enjoy the fes-

tive atmosphere. The celebrations featured a rich lineup of live musical performances, artistic showcases, and roaming entertainment acts that filled the venue with energy and excitement.

Children receiving traditional Eid gifts added a particularly joyful touch to the atmosphere,

creating memorable family moments across the venue. Katara Beach also emerged as a major attraction during the holiday period, drawing large numbers of visitors seeking a unique seaside Eid experience enhanced by summer activities and waterfront leisure.

One of the standout attractions during the festivities was the immersive 3D space-themed presentations hosted by Al Thuraya Planetarium in Building 41. The astronomy and space shows added an educational and interactive dimension to the celebrations and will continue through Saturday, extending the festive experience beyond the official Eid programme.

Meanwhile, the nightly fireworks displays became one of the most anticipated highlights of the celebrations. Each evening, crowds gathered along the Katara waterfront to watch the dazzling fireworks illuminate the Doha skyline in a breathtaking spectacle of colour and light.

Military performances and ceremonial displays also attracted widespread attention, particularly among children and families who eagerly documented the moments

through photographs and videos.

Katara continued to establish its cultural mission through a series of art exhibitions that remained open throughout the Eid holidays.

The exhibitions enriched the visitor experience by combining artistic expression with the celebratory atmosphere, reflecting the diversity and cultural depth that define Katara's identity.

Restaurants and cafés across the cultural village also experienced significant demand, as visitors chose to spend their evenings enjoying the scenic seaside ambience, outdoor dining, and lively public spaces. Walkways and gathering areas remained crowded late into the evening as families and friends celebrated together in a welcoming, festive environment.

Many visitors lauded the organisation and diversity of the events, noting that the blend of artistic, cultural, and entertainment activities created a comprehensive family-friendly experience suitable for all ages. Guests also commended the vibrant atmosphere and exceptional event management that made Katara one of the preferred destinations for celebrating Eid al-Adha in Qatar.

'Our Joy This Eid' unites families in celebration of culture, community

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

A festive atmosphere filled Centro Mall Qatar as the third edition of "Our Joy This Eid" event brought together families and children from diverse communities for an evening celebrating Qatari culture and togetherness.

Organised by the Hour and Hour Programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family, and Qatar Calendar, the celebration featured heritage performances, cultural activities, interactive children's shows, workshops and family-friendly entertainment designed to reflect the spirit and values of Eid al-Adha.



Tamani al-Yafie.
PICTURES: Shaima Sherif

Children dressed in traditional attire moved between colourful booths and activity corners, while families from different nationalities gathered to experience Qatari customs in a lively outdoor setting.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, Tamani al-Yafie, co-founder of the Hour and Hour Programme, said the event aimed to strengthen social bonds while introducing younger generations to local traditions in an engaging way.

She said the event included a number of segments and witnessed a large public turnout with wide participation from families, children, people with disabilities, and senior citizens in a festive atmosphere that blended traditional arts with entertainment shows and cultural and social activities.

According to al-Yafie, the initiative focused heavily on preserving national identity and passing cultural values to children through interactive experiences.

"We targeted children's entertainment in order to introduce

the younger generations to Qatari customs and traditions associated with holidays and religious and social occasions," she said.

The event featured folk and heritage performances alongside cultural competitions under the slogan "Think and Answer", creating what organisers described as an atmosphere of joy, communication and cultural awareness.

Residents attending the event described the evening as another example of Qatar's growing community-centred celebrations, where people from different backgrounds come together to share traditions and festive moments.

Families could be seen enjoying performances, visiting heritage booths, and participating in workshops, while children played throughout the venue, adding to



the vibrant Eid atmosphere.

Al-Yafie noted that the strong turnout reflected the importance of such initiatives in strengthening community ties.

"This edition succeeded in achieving its social and cultural goals by creating an atmosphere that reflects the spirit of Eid al-Adha and its humanitarian and social values," she said.

"We provided a space that brought together families and

children in an atmosphere of joy, communication and preservation of national identity."

She added that the programme would continue launching future initiatives aimed at reviving local heritage through modern and engaging approaches.

"There is no doubt that this co-operation played a key role in the success of the event and reflected the spirit of community work and national partnership," al-Yafie said.

Inaugural Sneaker Con Doha draws collectors, families, fashion fans

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Rows of rare sneakers, bustling trading booths and live performances drew large crowds to the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) as Qatar Calendar's Sneaker Con Doha made its debut in Qatar yesterday (May 29).

Covering 7,160 sq m, the three-day event runs until tomorrow (May 31) and marks the first time that Sneaker Con, billed by Visit Qatar as "The Greatest Sneaker Show on Earth", has been held in Doha.

Visitors of different age groups explored exhibition halls lined with sneakers, streetwear collections, accessories and collectables from more than 50 international, GCC and Qatar-based brands and resellers. Crowds gathered around trading booths, live performances and interactive attractions, while collectors negotiated deals for rare footwear and limited-edition releases.

The festival combines sneaker culture with a wide range of entertainment and lifestyle experiences across seven themed zones: the Kids Zone, Main Stage, Skate Park, DJ Booth, Graffiti Roam-



Crowds explore rare sneakers, streetwear brands, and interactive attractions at Sneaker Con Doha 2026 at DECC during its opening yesterday. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

ing Area, Basketball Court, and Roaming Shows.

Children participated in games and family-friendly activities, while sports enthusiasts joined basketball and skateboarding activities. Visitors also enjoyed live DJ performances, beatboxing, breakdance and hip-hop shows, BMX demonstrations, live music and roaming mascot parades throughout the venue.

One of the event's main attractions is its trading pit, where visitors can buy, sell and trade sneakers in real time. Sneaker authentication, cleaning, and customisation services are also available, allowing collectors and buyers to verify and personalise their purchases on-site.

Large crowds were also drawn

to the event's streetwear marketplace, which features pop-up showcases, exclusive product drops and lifestyle brands. Oversized sneaker installations, colourful displays and interactive photo opportunities proved popular among visitors looking to capture and share their experience on social media.

Apart from retail and entertainment, Sneaker Con Doha is hosting a series of panel discussions exploring the growing influence of sneaker culture in the region. The opening-day session, titled "The Rise of Middle Eastern Sneaker Culture", examined the growth of sneaker communities across the Middle East and the region's expanding role in the global sneaker and streetwear industry.



Additional discussions scheduled over the weekend will focus on sneaker authentication and identifying counterfeit footwear, as well as opportunities for collectors, resellers and content creators to expand into international markets.

According to Visit Qatar, Sneaker Con Doha brings together collectors, enthusiasts, brands and influencers for a celebration of streetwear, exclusive releases and urban lifestyle, blending commerce, culture and entertainment under one roof.

The event is open via complimentary pre-registration on Platinumlist, while a VIP package priced at QR500 offers access to a dedicated lounge, hospitality services, and a personal shopper experience.



A giant sneaker installation attracts many visitors during the opening day of Sneaker Con Doha 2026 at DECC yesterday.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً
فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي)
صدق الله العظيم

CONDOLENCES

AlKoot Insurance & Reinsurance

extends its heartfelt condolences
to the family of

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah

Former Deputy Prime Minister &
Minister of Energy and Industry

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and
give grace and fortitude to the bereaved family.

((إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون))

AlKoot 

INSURANCE & REINSURANCE
الكوت للتأمين و إعادة التأمين

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَارِكِ أَصِيْبَةَ مُرْصِيْتِ، فَأَدْخِلِي عِيَابَنَا وَأَدْخِلِي جَنَّتِي
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ التَّخْبِيرَ

We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the sons of the deceased.

**Mr. Hamad bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiah
Dr. Saud bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiah
Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiah
Mr. Nasser bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiah
and to all members of the respected
Al-Attiah family,**

on the passing of the late, by God's will,

His Excellency Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiah

Former Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Energy and Industry,
Former Chairman and Managing Director of Qatar Petroleum,
and member of the Board of Directors of Al-Attiah Foundation..

May God have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise, and grant his family and beloved ones patience and solace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

ExxonMobil