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Qatar slams persistent Israeli incursions into Lebanon

UNSC emergency 'meeting today'

QNA, AFP
Doha/Beirut

Qatar has strongly condemned the persistent Israeli assaults on Lebanon and the expansion of the scope of ground incursion of the occupation army into the country and the targeting of civilians.

It deemed these actions a dangerous escalation and an egregious violation of the sovereignty of the brotherly Republic of Lebanon and an open breach of international humanitarian rules-based order.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to uphold its responsibilities in obliging the Israeli occupation authorities to halt its repeated attacks on Lebanon, respect the international charters and laws, as well as enforce Security Council Resolution 1701 with its full provisions.

It underscored Qatar's enduring position toward Lebanon, its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, emphasizing that Qatar fully backs all efforts that strengthen Lebanon's stability and prosperity.

French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noel Barrot announced yesterday that France has requested a UN Security Council emergency meeting, following Israeli's capture of the strategic Beaufort Castle (Qalaat Al Shaqif) in southern Lebanon.



Smoke billows from southern Lebanon, following Israeli strikes, as seen from Nabatieh, Lebanon, yesterday. (Reuters)

Nothing justifies the extension of Israeli military operations in Lebanon or its broader occupation of Lebanese territory, he added.

This advance into Lebanese territory not only contradicts Israel's commitments given the ceasefire in place since April 17, but also violates international law, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs said.

Israel has recently intensified its military operations in southern Lebanon by carrying out air strikes and expanding its ground incursions into a number of southern villages and towns, culminating in the capture of the Beaufort Castle, amid warnings of a worsening humanitarian and security situation in the region.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday vowed to push deeper into Lebanon after Beaufort takeover, calling it a "dramatic shift" in the campaign against Hezbollah.

As fighting escalated in Lebanon, diplomatic sources told AFP that the UN Security Council would hold an emergency meeting today over Israel's expansion of its offensive in the country.

A truce to halt the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah began on April 17, but has never been observed. Both sides accuse each other daily of violating the ceasefire and justify their attacks by the other's alleged breaches.

Military delegations from Lebanon and Israel held security talks in Washington on Friday, with more US-brokered negotiations planned next week. **Page 8**

Qatar stakes claim as digital powerhouse

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar has cemented its standing as one of the world's most dynamic digital economies, marrying bold investment with visionary policy to forge a knowledge-driven future. Underpinned by one of the most robust economies in the world, the country is harnessing artificial intelligence, innovation and world-class partnerships to reshape its business landscape and accelerate its leap into the digital age.

According to a recent report by Qatar TV, the Qatar Digital Agenda 2030 has earmarked QR40bn in investments for the non-hydrocarbon economy, a push expected to generate some 26,000 jobs and lay the foundations of a resilient economy anchored in knowledge, technology and innovation. This momentum has been reinforced by strategic alliances with global technology heavyweights, among them Microsoft, Google Cloud, Oracle and Scale AI, each aimed at advancing key national sectors and broadening the reach of AI and digital services across the country. **To Page 3**

PM, Kuwaiti FM mull mediation

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a phone call from Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah. They discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to strengthen it. They also discussed Pakistan's mediation efforts between the US and Iran. The conversation also focused on co-ordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at reducing tensions and enhancing security and stability in the region. (QNA)

LAVERDE

by أريان ARIANE

خطوة نحو المستقبل
A STEP TOWARD THE FUTURE

The phased handover of units at La Verde Project has commenced, with the remaining stages progressing according to plan. A sincerely thank our customers for their trust, patience, and continued support.

لقد بدأ التسليم التدريجي للوحدات في مشروع لافيردي للعملاء. مع استمرار العمل على استكمال المراحل المتبقية وفق الخطة المعتمدة. ونشكر عملائنا على ثقتهم وصبرهم ودعمهم المستمر.

Minister holds telephone call with Lebanon's Deputy PM

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi held a phone call yesterday with Lebanon's Deputy Prime Minister Dr Tarek Mitri.

They discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries, and ways to support and develop them.

They also discussed Lebanon's latest developments. HE Dr al-Khulaifi also voiced Qatar's strong condemnation and denunciation of the continued Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the expansion of the Israeli ground incursion into southern Lebanon, and the targeting of civilians, considering it a blatant violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and a clear breach of international law, and a dangerous escalation that threatens the region's security and stability and efforts to reduce escalation.

He stressed the need to stop the Israeli attacks immediately, and to fully commit to the ceasefire agreement and implement Security Council Resolution No. 1701 in all its provisions.

He urged the international community to assume its responsibilities and take a firm stance to stop the Israeli violations and respect Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi reiterated Qatar's firm and supportive stance toward Lebanon and its continued support for the Lebanese people. - QNA

Al-Khulaifi holds phone call with Mali foreign minister

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi held a telephone conversation yesterday with Mali's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation Abdoulaye Diop.



They discussed avenues for advancing bilateral co-operation between the two nations as well as developments in the African Sahel.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi reiterated that Qatar stands in full solidarity with Mali and supports it in all measures it undertakes to safeguard its security, stability, and the safety of its citizens. - QNA

PHCC serves more than 18,700 patients across Eid

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

THE primary healthcare network logged more than 18,700 patient visits over the Eid al-Adha holiday, as the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) kept 21 health centres running on rotation to ensure uninterrupted access to care across the country.

Family medicine clinics at the 21 centres bore the bulk of the load, attending to approximately 7,255 patients, while urgent care units at

15 health centres handled 8,566 cases. General dental clinics received 888 patients.

Specialist services also remained available throughout the holiday period. Ophthalmology clinics saw 235 patients, dermatology 224, and ENT 216. The optometry clinic received 166 patients, physiotherapy 191, mental health and integrated mental health clinics 24, and the premarital screening clinic 23.

Beyond in-person care, PHCC's Community Call Centre fielded approximately 1,032 virtual consultations – both video and voice

– through the 16000 hotline, serving patients who required medical attention without prior appointments. The service allows specialists to assess urgent cases and prescribe medications remotely with minimal delay.

Pharmacy, radiology, and laboratory services were also maintained across centres during the break.

PHCC reaffirmed its commitment to delivering healthcare without interruption during public holidays and seasonal breaks, and to meeting the full range of patient needs.



Deputy prime minister tours Singapore's ST Engineering

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani visited the Singapore's ST Engineering group yesterday.

During his visit on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue 2026, HE Sheikh Saud met with ST Engineering chairman Teo Ming Kian.

He was also briefed ST Engineering's armoured infantry vehicle factory 8x8.

Qatar's ambassador to Singapore Abdulaziz bin Ahmed al-Malki al-Jehani attended the meeting alongside senior officers and a number of senior officials from ST Engineering. - QNA



Minister receives copy of credentials of United Arab Emirates ambassador

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi received yesterday a copy of the credentials of the UAE's ambassador to the Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi.

HE al-Muraikhi wished the envoy success in his duties, assuring him of all support to enhance bilateral relations and foster closer co-operation in various fields. - QNA

The Belt & Road General Chamber of Commerce Appoints Ms. Vivian Chen as President of Its Middle East Chapter

Leveraging BRGCC's Elite Global Network to Open a New Chapter in Middle East Strategy and Deepen High-Quality China-Arab Cooperation

HONG KONG, May 21, 2026 - The Belt & Road General Chamber of Commerce (BRGCC), a globally renowned international commercial organization, officially announced today at its Hong Kong headquarters the appointment of **Ms. Vivian Chen**, Chairman of Gallery Five Group, as the **inaugural President of the BRGCC Middle East Chapter** for a five-year term, effective April 1, 2026.

The establishment of the Middle East Chapter and the appointment of its first President mark a landmark milestone in BRGCC's global strategic expansion and the deepening of its regional presence. This strategic move signifies the comprehensive introduction of the Chamber's powerful international commercial resources and transnational networks into the Gulf region.

Visionary Leadership Backed by National-Level Strategic Alignment

As a driving force behind the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative, **BRGCC is headquartered in Hong Kong**, Asia's premier international financial hub. Founded jointly by **Founder Chairman Dr. Peter Lam Kin-ngok**, **Founder President Ms. Cheng Cheung-ling**, **Founder Chairman of the Supervisory Board Mr. Yan Bin**, and several heavyweight industrial and commercial leaders, **BRGCC** has consistently served as a **"Super Connector"** linking governments, top-tier enterprises, and international capital. The Chamber brings together global industry giants, companies, professional financial institutions, and multinational business leaders, commanding exceptional political and commercial influence as well as international resource mobilization capabilities.

Upholding the core philosophy of "Extensive Consultation, Joint Contribution, and Shared Benefits," and under the strategic guidance of Dr. Lam and President Cheng, BRGCC has long been deeply engaged in core sectors including infrastructure, technological innovation, digital economy, financial services, green development, and cross-border industrial synergy. Backed by an extensive global business network and rigorous professional think-tank support, the Chamber has successfully facilitated numerous milestone cross-border investments and industrial deployments, cementing its position as a highly prestigious and credible platform for international commercial cooperation.



Dr. Peter Lam Kin-ngok (Right), Founder and Chairman of the Belt & Road General Chamber of Commerce (BRGCC), presents the official Certificate of Appointment to the newly appointed President of the BRGCC Middle East Chapter, Ms. Vivian Chen (Left), at the Chamber's Hong Kong.

The GCC countries are currently experiencing a golden era of economic diversification, with rapid advancements in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence, digital tech, smart cities, and renewable energy. **Recognizing the Middle East as a vital hub for high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, BRGCC has strategically established its Middle East Chapter.** This initiative aims to project the Chamber's vast global industrial ecosystem and capital network deep into the six GCC nations, building a high-level mechanism for China-Arab investment, trade, and economic dialogue.

A Powerful Synergy: Global Network Meets Decades of Local Expertise

To ensure the Middle East Chapter seamlessly connects with top-tier regional resources, the Chamber has appointed Ms.

Vivian Chen—a dual-market leader with deep business roots and an extensive political and commercial network in the Gulf—as its inaugural President.

As the Chairman of Gallery Five Group, Ms. Chen has deeply engaged in Qatar and the wider Gulf region for over 17 years. She has achieved remarkable success in interior architectural fit-outs, digital supply chain integration, and cross-border industrial investment. Furthermore, through her innovative "Space + Content" dual-wheel drive business model, she has successfully driven the deep integration of China's leading supply chain resources with core Middle Eastern market demands. The robust, long-standing local networks she has cultivated will generate a powerful magnetic effect when combined with the global strength and top-level

institutional backing of BRGCC's Hong Kong headquarters.

Commenting on her appointment, Ms. Vivian Chen stated:

"I am profoundly honored to be entrusted by Founder Dr. Peter Lam Kin-ngok, President Ms. Cheng Cheung-ling, and the board of this prestigious international platform to serve as the first President of the Middle East Chapter. BRGCC possesses unparalleled global commercial networks, financial strength, and high-level public-private dialogue channels.

The Middle East Chapter will fully harness the powerful capabilities of the Chamber, serving as a 'Super Platform' for resource aggregation. Our mission is not only to empower leading Chinese enterprises to establish a high-level presence in the Gulf, but also to facilitate the reverse flow of Gulf

capital and premium industries into the Chinese market, achieving multi-dimensional, high-quality, and mutually beneficial growth."

Charted course: Seven Core Strategic Initiatives

Leveraging the extensive capabilities of the Chamber and aligning with the national economic visions of the Gulf nations (such as the Qatar National Vision 2030), the Middle East Chapter will focus on the following core initiatives:

- **High-Level Economic & Trade Matchmaking:** Facilitating elite public-private dialogues and large-scale capital investment matchmaking between China and Middle Eastern nations.
- **Building a Transnational Network:** Cultivating a strategic cooperation matrix comprising top-tier enterprises, mainstream financial institutions, and core business associations across the six GCC countries.
- **End-to-End Empowerment for Chinese Enterprises:** Providing policy interpretation, local regulatory compliance, and core resource introductions for leading Chinese enterprises and high-growth tech firms expanding into the Middle East.
- **Frontier Industrial Synergy:** Driving joint R&D and industrial localization in technology, AI, next-generation digital economy, and green, low-carbon solutions.
- **Fostering Cultural and People-to-People Ties:** Utilizing BRGCC's rich cultural and tourism resources to create internationally impactful programs for China-Arab cultural creativity, youth leadership development, and educational exchange.
- **High-Profile Commercial Events:** Organizing international economic forums, cross-border business delegations, and exclusive, closed-door investment promotion events.
- **Serving Regional Sustainable Development:** Supporting long-term regional economic integration under the Belt and Road framework to create sustainable social and economic value.

BRGCC remains confident that under the full support of its global network and the outstanding leadership of Ms. Vivian Chen, the Middle East Chapter will rapidly evolve into one of the most influential international commercial forces in the region, collectively driving the Belt & Road Initiative into a new era of high-standard, sustainable, and impactful growth.

Ministry announces recall of Ford Explorer 2017-2019 models

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Almana Motors Company, Qatar's Ford dealership, has announced the recall of Ford Bronco 2021-26 and Edge 2021-24 models.

The recall is due to a potential issue where the accessory protocol interface unit may temporarily stop operating when high temperatures are detected, resulting in the rearview camera image not being displayed while reversing.

The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The MoCI said that it will coordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

The ministry urges all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquiries and suggestions through the following channels:

Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)

Ashghal issues update on project in Bu Sidra, Fereej Al Manaseer

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) continues to implement the remaining road and infrastructure works in Bu Sidra and Fereej Al Manaseer as part of its plan to develop road networks and improve infrastructure services in the area.

Eng. Ali al-Shaibani, project engineer in Ashghal's Drainage Networks Projects Department, confirmed that the project comes in response to the population and urban expansion witnessed in Bu Sidra and Fereej Al Manaseer areas.

This, he said, will provide infrastructure services for around 250 citizen plots, in addition to five residential complexes in the area comprising more than 900 residential units.

Al-Shaibani added that the project will contribute to improving traffic flow and enhancing connectivity to vital facilities by developing main and vital streets in the two areas, such as Al Furo-usiya Street, Al Hasbaa Street, Khor Hassan Street, Ras Laffan Street, Salah Al Din Street, Lesweihliya Street, Tuwar Al Heraithi Street, and Al Talha Street.

Regarding the project's scope, he said that it includes the construction and development of 10km of roads, the installation of three traffic lights and 460 lighting poles, and the provision of 2,175 parking spaces.

It also includes the implementation of 16km of pedestrian and cycle paths, all aimed at improving road safety and facilitating mobility for road users.

The project also encompasses the development of infrastructure service networks, including 8km of rainwater drainage networks, over 10km of TSE (treated sewage effluent) networks, and around 4km of sewage networks.

As for the current works, backfilling and rehabilitation work is underway on Lesweihliya Street and Khor Hassan Street, following the completion of the sewage network pipe installation. Development work is also being



carried out on sections of Al Furo-usiya Street.

The project relies on local materials and manufacturers for 94% of its total materials.

These include gabbro, lighting poles and fixtures, signage, sewage and stormwater drainage pipes, asphalt, precast manholes, concrete, and reinforcing steel.



Qatar stakes claim as digital powerhouse

From Page 1

Qatar's digital credentials are increasingly recognised on the world stage.

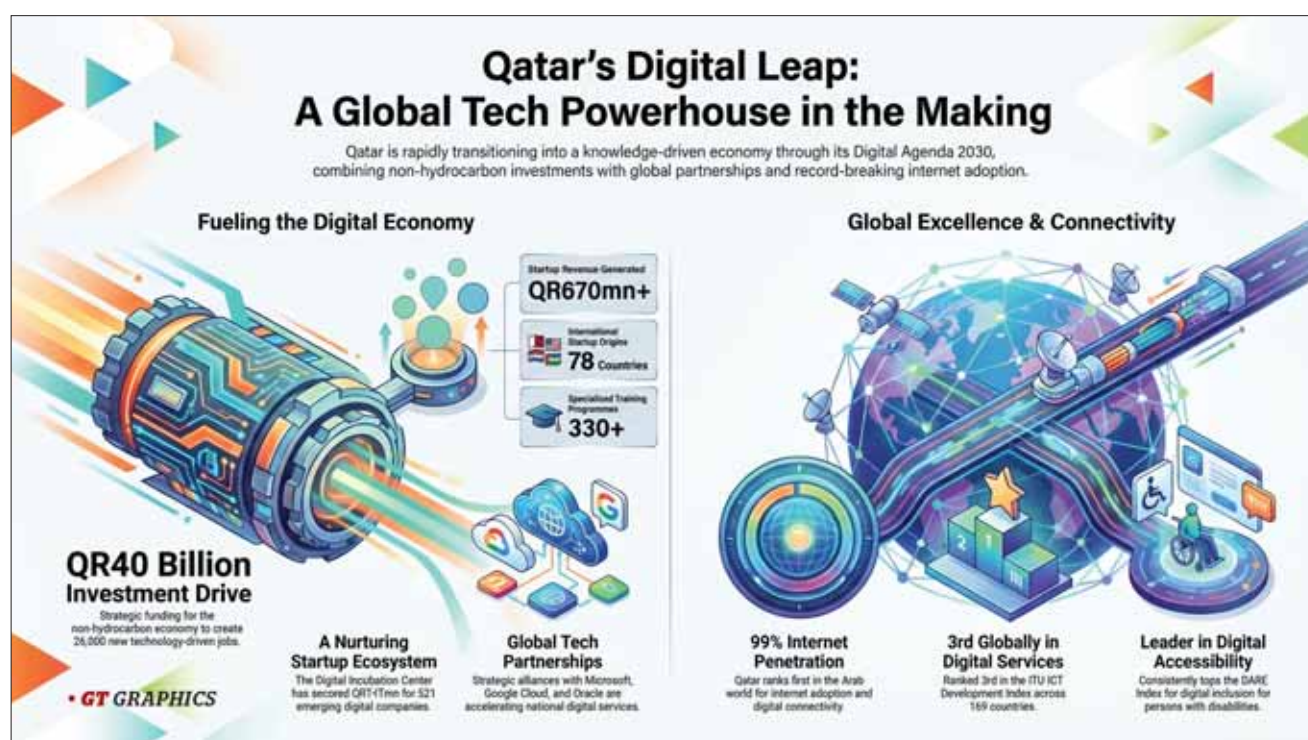
The country ranked first in the Arab world for internet adoption, with a 99% penetration rate, according to the Digital 2021: Global Overview Report.

Its commitment to digital inclusion for persons with disabilities is equally distinguished, with Qatar consistently topping the DARE Index by G3ict for its implementation of digital accessibility policies and its compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The country has also been a consistent high performer in global and regional rankings for mature government electronic and mobile services, notably in the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) indices and the UN E-Government Development Index (EGDI).

It claimed third place globally with a striking score of 97.3 out of 100, a reflection of the breadth of the infrastructure underpinning its digital services.

Qatar likewise ranked third regionally



and third globally in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s ICT Development Index (IDI), which assessed digital connectivity and infrastructure across 169 countries.

On the information security and cybersecurity front, the Ministry of Com-

munications and Information Technology (MCIT) has earned the prestigious ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certification for Information Security Management.

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), for its part, has scooped major international honours, including the coveted

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes awarded by the ITU.

Taken together, these achievements underscore the resilience of Qatar's economy and its capacity to evolve and compete in a fast-shifting global landscape, opening avenues for opportunity at every turn.

Beyond Graduation: Young job seekers in Qatar turn uncertainty into opportunity

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

As another batch of students graduates in Qatar, many from previous years remain in transition, navigating job market pressures through internships, volunteering and further studies while holding on to hope.

For graduates like Huda, who completed her studies at a university in Qatar a year ago, the journey into the job market has been marked by persistence in the face of repeated challenges.

"One of the biggest challenges has been finding opportunities that match my qualifications while also requiring little to no experience," she said. "Many entry-level positions still ask for previous experience, which can be discouraging."

Huda added that competition among graduates has also intensified the struggle.

However, she has remained active through volunteering, internships and networking opportunities.

"These experiences may not always be full-time jobs, but they help me gain skills, expand my network and strengthen my CV," she said.

Reflecting on expectations versus reality, she noted that the transition from university to employment is rarely immediate.

"I expected it to be faster," she said. "This period has taught me that rejection is not necessarily a reflection of your abilities."

For Nuha, a graduate from her home country now pursuing a master's degree while job hunting in Qatar, the challenge has been building both experience and professional connections in a new environment.

"Securing stable employment despite having qualifications and willingness to work has been difficult," she said. "Building local experience and networks takes time."

Nuha described this phase as one that requires patience and adaptability.

"Career development is not always linear," she said.



"Sometimes what feels like a delay is actually a period of growth."

Alongside her studies, she continues to engage in volunteering, internships and part-time roles.

"These experiences allow me to remain connected to the professional world while preparing for future opportunities," she added.

Both graduates emphasised the importance of consistency, up-skilling and resilience.

Huda encouraged graduates not to limit themselves to traditional applications, highlighting Qatar's growing ecosystem of forums, summits and networking platforms that create exposure for young professionals.

Nuha, meanwhile, stressed the importance of persistence.

"Do not measure your success against other people's timelines," she said. "Every effort contributes to future opportunities."



Milad Hadchiti

Qatari twins featured on Alaraby 2's Kyf Al-Hal?

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Alaraby 2's *Kyf Al-Hal?* welcomed Qatari twins Sara and Hajer Abdel Rahman for a lively conversation about the special bond between twins, exploring the challenges and experiences of sharing life with an identical sibling while maintaining their own identities, independence and personal lives.

Hosted by Milad Hadchiti, the programme tackled beyond the sisters' striking resemblance, offering viewers a deeper un-



Qatari twins Sara and Hajer Abdel Rahman.

derstanding of the challenges and privileges that come with being a twin.

The episode delved into how twins perceive the world and whether physical similarities are necessarily reflected in personality, emotions and decision-making.

Sara and Hajer also shared their experiences of navigating constant comparisons from those around them and the challenges of establishing distinct personal identities while maintaining an exceptionally close bond.

The discussion further examined a number of thought-provoking questions familiar to many twins and their families: Can twins understand each other without speaking?

Where does emotional closeness end and the need for personal space begin?

And can such a deep connection be both a source of comfort and a burden at the same time?

Commenting on the episode, producer Sahar Daher said it "blended intellectual curiosity with meaningful psychological insight, encouraging audiences to rethink one of the most fascinating and complex human relationships".

The producer added that the episode "reflects the programme's ongoing commitment to showcasing inspiring and distinctive Qatari personalities, presenting their stories in a fresh and authentic way beyond the fast-paced world of social media".

Kyf Al-Hal? (Arabic for "how are you?") airs every Tuesday at 8.30pm Doha time on Alaraby 2.

Episodes are also available on demand via the Alaraby Plus app.



Qatar at forefront of anti-smoking activities

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar's initiatives to contain and control the use of tobacco products in the country are well on course as it marked the World No Tobacco Day 2026 yesterday.

Globally, Qatar is ranked among the group of countries with the least smoking and the use of other tobacco products while the country is a champion in anti-smoking programmes among the GCC and Middle East countries, according to the latest World Health Organisation data.

Qatar was the first country among GCC and within the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region to ratify the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Qatar Tobacco Control Centre under Hamad Medical Corp has been designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre – a first in Qatar. WHO collaborating centres are institutions, such as research institutes, that are part of universities or academies, designated by the WHO director-general to carry out activities in support of WHO's programmes.

Qatar Tobacco Control Centre carries out several programmes such as curative treatment, preventive community awareness, scientific research, and clinical training. The centre offers free, specialised treatments to help citizens and residents permanently quit smoking and the use of other tobacco products.

The treatment is provided through one-on-one sessions with cessation specialists, psychologists, and health educators. It also offers nicotine replacement therapies and prescription medications, as well as laser therapy and medical devices like carbon monoxide monitors and spirometers to test lung capacity.

In addition, the centre also conducts public health campaigns to educate the community on the dangers of tobacco and emerging



Qatar Tobacco Control Centre.

nicotine products like e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches. It organises workshops and lectures for school and university students, public institutions, and ministries.

The WHO Collaborating Centre is also a hub for tobacco-related studies, with regular population surveys on smoking attitudes and evaluates cessation methods. The centre has so far published over 50 academic research papers in peer-reviewed medical journals. It leads educational events for healthcare staff across Qatar and the region and trains clinicians on integrating evidence-based screening and behavioural support.

Similarly, the Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC) has lined up a number of programmes and initiatives to discourage tobacco use among the population. PHCC has set up a 'Smoking Cessation Clinic' at most of its health centres, providing various services.

The Smoking Cessation Clinics are operated by physicians trained and certified in tobacco dependence treatment and provide effective counselling and

describe medications to help individuals successfully quit using tobacco products. Patients undergo comprehensive assessments followed by tailored treatment plans. These include behavioural counselling, healthy lifestyle coaching, and FDA-approved pharmacotherapy.

In addition, PHCC regularly organises outreach programmes, such as field awareness programmes and incentive campaigns at its health centres to educate visitors on the dangers of all forms of tobacco. It also organises public campaigns through educational lectures and initiatives at schools, universities, and public institutions to discourage youth from initiating tobacco use.

PHCC helps smokers and individuals who are tobacco dependent to make use of its services through a physician referral or by booking an appointment. With the combined efforts and support from the authorities, Qatar is taking the fight against tobacco use, which has resulted in positive outcomes in recent years.

PHCC pledges comprehensive care to support smoking cessation

QNA
Doha

The Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC) has called on smokers to take advantage of the services it offers to help them overcome this harmful habit. These services are available through smoking cessation clinics located in several of its health centres, which provide modern facilities to assist individuals in gradually quitting tobacco products until they quit completely.

Head of Community Wellness at PHCC, Dr Abdulhameed al-Khanji emphasised in a statement to the Qatar News Agency (QNA) the corporation's unwavering commitment to supporting smokers in quitting tobacco in all its forms. He affirmed PHCC's continued efforts to help individuals break this bad habit through comprehensive and specialised health services aimed at promoting community health, particularly protecting them from smoking-related diseases.

Dr al-Khanji pointed out that the celebration of World No Tobacco Day, which falls on May 31st each year, is an opportunity to reiterate the importance of intensifying efforts to encourage individuals to seek help and visit smoking cessation clinics for comprehensive scientific and medical services. This year's celebration aims to "expose the myths surrounding nicotine addiction and combat addiction."

He stated that the smoking cessation clinics affiliated with the Primary Health Care Corp provide comprehensive treatment programmes based on the latest global medical practices to help smokers quit traditional, electronic, and shisha tobacco, as well as other tobacco products. These services include a comprehensive medical assessment, individual consultations, behavioural and psychological support, and the provision of approved medications and nicotine replacement therapies appropriate for each individual case.

He added that specialised medical teams develop personalised treatment plans that take into account the needs of each patient, with regular follow-ups to assess progress and provide ongoing support to help overcome withdrawal



symptoms and reduce the likelihood of relapse.

Dr al-Khanji pointed out that the Primary Health Care Corp focuses its efforts on raising community awareness about the dangers of smoking and its health, economic, and social consequences. This is achieved through educational campaigns and awareness programmes targeting various age groups, especially youth, given the crucial role this stage plays in preventing nicotine addiction.

He outlined the health benefits expected from quitting all forms of smoking, which begin within the first few hours of stopping. Heart and lung function gradually improves, and the risk of cardiovascular diseases, blood clots, strokes, and cancers of the lung, mouth, and throat decreases. Furthermore, the quality of life and overall health of the individual and their family members improve.

He further explained that World No Tobacco Day is a global health event established by the World Health Organisation in 1987 to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and to promote efforts to reduce its prevalence worldwide.

Dr al-Khanji stated that this occasion presents an important opportunity to raise awareness about the health risks associated with smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, and to encourage smokers to quit. It also supports health policies aimed at protecting current and future generations from the health, social, and economic consequences of tobacco use.

He reiterated the call to utilise the specialised services offered by the Primary Health Care Corp (PHCC), emphasising the importance of recognising that quitting smoking is a crucial step

towards a healthier and better life. He added that specialised medical support significantly increases the chances of successfully breaking this harmful habit permanently.

He explained that the PHCC's Community Wellness Department continuously implements a number of campaigns and incentive programmes to support smokers in quitting, in addition to field awareness campaigns within primary health centres. These campaigns target patients and visitors to inform them about the services available at PHCC to support those wishing to quit this harmful habit.

He noted that the institution's smoking cessation clinics have achieved tangible results over the past five years, with clinics now operating in 21 health centres and the number increasing to 29, offering smoking cessation services during both morning and evening hours.

These clinics are experiencing increasing demand, providing comprehensive services including behavioural counselling, regular follow-up, and medication when needed, in addition to carbon monoxide testing to further motivate clients, he explained.

Data and statistics have shown encouraging success rates in maintaining abstinence from smoking for extended periods, reflecting the effectiveness of the programmes offered and the specialised professional support provided by the institution, he emphasised.

It is worth noting that the World Health Organisation warns that tobacco remains one of the leading preventable causes of death globally, causing millions of deaths annually. This makes tobacco control a global health priority requiring the concerted efforts of governments, health institutions, and local communities.

Health ministry organises awareness campaign on World No Tobacco Day



QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) organised an awareness campaign on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2026 under the slogan, "Don't be deceived, it's more dangerous than you think!", as part of its ongoing efforts to raise community awareness about the risks associated with the use of tobacco and nicotine products in all their forms and to correct common misconceptions and false beliefs related to these products.

The campaign aimed to educate community members about the health risks resulting from the use of tobacco and nicotine products, highlight the negative impact of these products on individual and community health, and encourage the adoption of

healthy lifestyles free from tobacco and nicotine products.

The campaign included a variety of awareness activities and events, including the publication of educational messages through the Ministry of Public Health's social media platforms and the organisation of an awareness event focused on correcting common misconceptions and false beliefs related to tobacco and nicotine products. The event also highlighted the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle that includes healthy eating and regular physical activity.

The campaign also included awareness lectures delivered to school students to enhance their understanding of the risks associated with smoking and nicotine products. In addition, the Ministry participated in several events organised by various entities across the country as part of joint efforts to raise commu-

nity awareness about the harms of these products and reduce the prevalence of their use.

The campaign also involved collaboration with several shopping malls that have received the "Diamond Level" classification under the Health Promoting Shopping Mall Project, contributing to the expansion of awareness efforts and the promotion of community awareness regarding the risks of tobacco and nicotine products.

MoPH reaffirmed its commitment to continuing the implementation of awareness and preventive programmes and initiatives aimed at reducing the use of tobacco and nicotine products and promoting healthy behaviours among all members of society. These efforts contribute to achieving public health goals, enhancing quality of life, and building a healthier community.

QIB encourages healthy living at 'World No Tobacco Day' initiative



The initiative was held as part of QIB's activities marking 'World No Tobacco Day' to promote healthier lifestyle and raise awareness of the health risks associated with smoking.

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has reinforced its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by organising a 'Smoking Risks Awareness Day' for employees at its head office, in collaboration with Qatar Cancer Society.

The initiative was held as part of QIB's activities marking 'World No Tobacco Day' to promote healthier lifestyle and raise awareness of the health risks associated with smoking.

The awareness day featured a comprehensive educational programme designed to encourage employees to make informed lifestyle choices and adopt healthier habits. A certified health educator delivered an informative session on lung cancer and the risks of smoking, highlighting the harmful effects of tobacco use and the importance of prevention and early awareness.

In addition, a clinical dietitian

conducted a dedicated session on nutrition and physical activity to support smoking cessation and overall wellbeing, offering practical guidance on maintaining a healthier lifestyle. Employees also participated in an interactive quiz organised by the Qatar Cancer Society, with incentive-based prizes awarded to participants.

As part of the initiative, on-site medical support was provided by Dr Ayad Al Shakaraji Medical Centre, including an informative presentation on the latest laser techniques designed to support smoking cessation and help smokers quit more effectively.

Mashaal Abdulaziz al-Derham, assistant general manager, head of Corporate Communications & Quality Assurance at QIB, stated: "At QIB, we remain committed to supporting the well-being of our employees and promoting a healthier lifestyle through meaningful awareness initiatives.

"We are pleased to collaborate with Qatar Cancer Society on this important initiative, which reflects our ongoing efforts to foster a healthy workplace culture. 'World No Tobacco Day serves' as an important reminder of the long-term health risks associated with smoking and the importance of preventive awareness."

Al-Derham added: "We thank Qatar Cancer Society and the participating specialists for their valuable contribution in delivering informative and engaging sessions for our employees."

QIB continues to develop and support CSR initiatives that contribute to the well-being of employees and the wider community, in alignment with the four pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the bank's commitment to sustainable social development.

For further information, visit www.qib.com.qa

PHCC Health Education Department marks World Hypertension Day

The Health Education Department at Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) held awareness activities to mark World Hypertension Day from May 13 to 21 to increase community awareness of hypertension prevention and early detection.

The campaign underlines the importance of regular blood pressure monitoring, and healthy lifestyle practices that help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and related complications.

Dr Sarah Rashid Musa, acting manager of Health Education and Consultant Community Medicine, highlighted that hypertension remains one of the most important modifiable risk factors for cardiovascular diseases.

She explained that hypertension often develops without noticeable symptoms and is therefore commonly known as "silent killer". If left uncontrolled, it can lead to serious complications



Dr Sarah Rashid Musa

including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, kidney diseases, vision impairment, and damage to blood vessels throughout the body.

Participants received practical guidance on adopting healthy lifestyle behaviours including reducing dietary salt intake, following the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet, which emphasises fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes while limiting food high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

Dr Musa emphasised improving health literacy, encouraging self-monitoring, strengthening self-management skills, and promoting healthy lifestyle behaviour including engaging in regular physical activity, improving sleep habits, managing stress through healthy coping strategies, and avoiding tobacco can help individuals control their blood pressure as well as attending regular follow-up appointments and adhering to prescribed medications.

Awareness was also raised about warning signs requiring urgent medical attention, including chest pain, shortness of breath, severe headache, sudden weakness, speech difficulties or vision changes.

Through this initiative, PHCC continues to strengthen commitment to chronic disease prevention, health promotion, and empowering individuals to take an active role in managing their health, reducing complications, and improving their quality of life.

Qatar Foundation participates in 2026 BAL innovation summit

Support-for-development pathways can only leave a lasting impact on people's lives if they are built with – not just for – the communities they aim to serve, Qatar Foundation (QF) representative said at an international summit on shaping Africa's sporting future.

Hosted by the Basketball Africa League (BAL), the 2026 BAL Innovation Summit in Kigali saw global sport leaders, athletes, and innovators explore how sport can be a platform for social benefit across the continent.

QF's participation spotlighted the goals of its recently launched multi-year collaboration with BAL, and its belief that investing in sport is a pathway to "confidence, leadership, connection, and opportunity" for young people and their communities.

The collaboration sees QF become BAL's first Official Community Partner, as it supports the league's social programmes and efforts to expand opportunities for people across Africa to play and benefit from basketball.

Ahead of the summit, QF presented the Ubuntu Trophy – a flagship BAL social impact initiative recognising players from the league who show outstanding community engagement – to Ariel Koranga, whose social initiative combines basketball with education and empowering women and girls.

Speaking at a summit session on why organisations are partnering with BAL and moving ambitions into action, Safia al-Naimi, director of Sports Strategy at QF, said: "At QF, we see sport as a powerful entry point into something much



Qatar Foundation's Safia al-Naimi (centre) at the summit.

bigger: participation, leadership, community, education, confidence, and lifelong development.

"Sport teaches young people how to work as part of a team, to lead, to keep growing, and to see themselves as part of something larger than themselves.

"That is what stood out to us about BAL. It is connecting young people, athletes, coaches, mentors, communities, and partners across Africa in a way that is both ambitious and deeply grounded."

During the discussion, al-Naimi explained that QF views social impact through sport as stemming from "building systems where people can enter, participate, grow, and eventually lead", and that

partnering with BAL enables this in ways that reflect local needs and contexts.

The QF-BAL collaboration includes renovating basketball courts as part of NBA Africa's commitment to building 1,000 new courts across the continent, and supporting BAL4Her, the league's platform for advancing gender equality in African sport.

The Ubuntu Trophy was presented to Koranga – whose initiative uses basketball as a tool for girls to access education and career opportunities, as well as providing pathways for those who want to pursue professional basketball careers – on behalf of QF by al-Naimi.

And she told the summit session: "It recognises that success in sport is not only about performance. It is also about responsibility, impact, and service to the community. That reflects how QF sees sport."

Through its collaboration with BAL, QF is supporting BAL4Her Power Hour, connecting young women who are looking to pursue careers in the sports industry with leading executives and practitioners. This reflects QF's emphasis on encouraging and empowering women's and girls' sporting participation within broader sport-for-development efforts built around opportunity, inclusion, and social impact.



Omar Mohammed al-Jaber

Qmic releases Qatar Traffic Report 24-25

The report highlights national mobility trends including traffic trends, congestion patterns, mobility behaviour, among others

The Qatar Mobility Innovations Centre (Qmic) has released the latest edition of the Qatar Traffic Report (QTR) for 2024–2025, providing comprehensive insights into traffic trends, congestion patterns, mobility behaviour, and road network performance across the country.

As part of this release, Qmic also launched a dedicated website for the QTR, accessible through its official website, enabling continuous yearly updates and easier access to mobility analytics as well as traffic indicators, and congestion insights.

The QTR represents one of the country's leading locally developed mobility intelligence initiatives, supporting transportation planning, smart city development, infrastructure optimisation, and data-driven decision-making.

The report provides valuable insights for government entities, urban planners, transportation stakeholders, researchers, and the wider public by analysing traffic dynamics and mobility behaviour across the country.

This latest edition highlights key traffic and mobility patterns observed throughout 2024 and 2025, including congestion evolution, peak traffic periods, commuter behaviour, and road usage trends.

The report also reflects the continued growth and transformation of the country's transportation ecosystem as the country advances its smart mobility and sustainable urban development objectives.

Omar Mohammed al-Jaber, director, strategic partnerships & outreach of Qmic, stated, "Through the Qatar Traffic Report, we aim to provide reliable, data-driven mobility insights that support smarter transportation planning and contribute to enhancing traffic efficiency and the quality of life across the country."

"The report reflects Qmic's long-standing commitment

to developing national mobility intelligence capabilities and leveraging advanced technologies to support Qatar's digital transformation and smart city objectives," he said, adding: "With the launch of the dedicated QTR platform, we are also creating a sustainable and continuously evolving resource that enables stakeholders to better understand mobility patterns and make informed decisions."

The report is powered by Qmic's advanced multi-source mobility data ecosystem, which continuously collects and processes large-scale traffic and mobility data from across Qatar.

Through the Qatar Traffic Report, we aim to provide reliable, data-driven mobility insights that support smarter transportation planning and contribute to enhancing traffic efficiency and the quality of life across Qatar.
– Omar Mohammed al-Jaber

The data is gathered through an integrated infrastructure that combines Qmic's proprietary traffic-sensing technologies, connected-vehicle telematics systems, crowdsourced mobility data, advanced GIS layers, and AI-powered analytics platforms.

By integrating multiple sources of real-time and historical traffic data, Qmic can generate highly detailed mobility insights, which can support congestion analysis, transportation planning, operational optimisation, and future infrastructure development.

The newly launched QTR platform transforms the report into a continuously evolving digital resource rather than a static annual publication. On the website, users can explore among other aspects traffic patterns, congestion indicators, and mobility trends via a centralised, user-friendly interface.



Qatar's landmark quantum-safe communications link established

In a landmark national moment, the collaboration between Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), Ooredoo, and the Ministry of Defence of the State of Qatar has resulted in the establishment of Qatar's first quantum-safe communications link, marking a significant milestone in the country's journey toward next-generation cybersecurity.

The achievement is also among the first of its kind in the region, positioning Qatar at the forefront of quantum-secure communications.

Enabled by Quantum Key Distribution (QKD), the project delivers a fully operational, end-to-end quantum-safe link that generates and distributes encryption keys using the principles of quantum mechanics.

Unlike traditional encryption, this introduces a new class of security where any attempt to intercept the communication is immediately detected.

Deployed within Ooredoo Qatar's operational network, the project builds on advanced research led by HBKU, in collaboration with ID Quantique (IDQ), a global leader in quantum-safe security, to develop a QKD testbed compatible with existing telecom-

munications infrastructure.

The testbed leverages single-photo-based key distribution to establish secure links between sites, creating a scalable foundation for future quantum-secure networks.

Against a backdrop of increasingly sophisticated cyber threats, this milestone represents a meaningful advancement in Qatar's digital resilience.

As global attention intensifies around "harvest-now, decrypt-later" risks and the long-term implications of quantum computing, the adoption of quantum-safe technologies is becoming critical to protecting high-value data and mission-critical systems.

This project also positions Qatar as an early adopter of next-generation secure communications, demonstrating real progress toward safeguarding strategic assets and national infrastructure.

The achievement reflects the strength of national collaboration across telecommunications, research, and defence. Ooredoo enabled deployment within a live telecom environment, demonstrating the practical integration and readiness of quantum-safe networking capabilities.

HBKU led the scientific devel-

opment and system integration, advancing local expertise in quantum technologies.

The Ministry of Defence supported the initiative as a strategic stakeholder, reinforcing the importance of secure communications for national priorities.

In a press statement, Thani Ali al-Malki, Chief Strategy and Digital Transformation Officer at Ooredoo Qatar, said: "This milestone reflects the power of collaboration in advancing secure, future-ready connectivity for Qatar.

"By enabling the deployment of quantum-safe technologies within operational networks, we are supporting the evolution of cybersecurity capabilities that will underpin the next generation of digital infrastructure."

Mohammed al-Zaidan, senior director, Active & Core, added: "Built on Ooredoo's commercial-grade, state-of-the-art dark fibre infrastructure, the project validated secure key generation and distribution over multiple fibre-link distances, marking an important step toward metropolitan networks protected by information-theoretic security."

Dr Saif al-Kuwari, director of HBKU's Qatar Centre for Quantum Computing (QC2), said: "Our

commitment to collaboration across government, academia, and industry made QC2 a natural partner for this initiative.

"Together with Ooredoo and the MOD, we have accelerated Qatar's already-sophisticated quantum capabilities, co-creating technology with both national and global applications."

Maj-Gen Zayed Ahmed al-Kuwari, commander of Qatar Amiri Signal Corps, stated that this achievement is the result of joint co-operation and an ambitious vision to build an advanced and secure digital infrastructure.

He noted that it contributes to supporting cybersecurity and enhancing the country's digital resilience through secure communication technologies that keep pace with modern developments and anticipate future challenges.

The successful deployment establishes a foundation for scaling quantum-safe connectivity across additional sites and critical sectors, including government and financial services, positioning Ooredoo as a key enabler of secure, next-generation connectivity, while supporting ongoing national efforts in research, talent development, and innovation in advanced technologies.

UDST hosts Student Symposium 2026 on Innovation and Enterprise

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) hosted the 2026 Student Symposium on Innovation and Enterprise at its campus in Doha, under the organisation of the UDST Capstone Committee.

The event featured approximately 100 capstone projects, alongside MSc research and UREP-funded initiatives.

The symposium gathered around 428 students, addressing real-world challenges in areas such as energy, sustainability, technology, and business, with several

projects developed in collaboration with industry partners.

The 2026 University of Doha for Science and Technology Student Symposium on Innovation and Enterprise underscored the university's continued commitment to innovation-driven education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and preparing graduates who are ready to contribute meaningfully to Qatar's future.

President of the University of Doha for Science and Technology Dr. Salem Al Naemi said: "Symposiums such as this reflect the core

of UDST's mission to deliver applied, industry-relevant education that transforms student potential into real-world impact. By bringing together innovation, research, and entrepreneurship under one platform, we not only showcased the excellence of our students and faculty but also strengthened the bridge between academia and industry in support of Qatar's development goals and knowledge-based economy."

The symposium stood as a landmark inter-college platform dedicated to showcasing student

innovation, applied research, and entrepreneurial thinking.

Aligned with Qatar's Third National Development Strategy, reinforcing national priorities related to STEM education, workforce readiness, and the advancement of a knowledge-based economy.

Industry partners were invited to engage with student projects, strengthening collaboration between academia and industry and providing opportunities to explore future project development and innovation partnerships. (QNA)



Serving Pilgrims: Qatari Haj Mission returns home

This year's spiritual journey underscored the State of Qatar's commitment to providing the best services and care for its pilgrims

QNA
Doha

The official Qatari Haj mission returned to the homeland today after successful completion of pilgrimage season.

The season was marked by advanced levels of organisation, co-ordination, and combined institutional effort, enabling the country's pilgrims to perform their rites in an atmosphere of security, tranquility, and utmost ease.

They received comprehensive care throughout the period – from their departure until their safe return home after completing the pilgrimage.

The arrival of the mission members followed the return of all pilgrims to the country in the past few days.

The success of this year's spiritual journey of pilgrims was achieved through an interconnected operational framework of field, organisational, and service efforts implemented by the mission in unison with Qatari Haj campaigns and the relevant authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Qatari Director of the Department of Haj and Umrah Affairs Ali bin Sultan al-Misifri asserted that the season witnessed remarkable success, being one of the most successful seasons in terms of organisation, co-ordination, and quality of services.

He pointed out that the pilgrims' return was smooth and seamless through successive flights operated by Qatar Airways and Saudi Airlines.

The success of the mission is a combined institutional effort and an interoperable framework in which a variety of relevant entities and personnel engaged, including included representatives from several ministries and state institutions, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, al-Misifri underlined.

This ensured role integration and co-ordination of efforts among all concerned parties to



What had been accomplished in this pilgrimage season was a direct outgrowth of the guidance of the judicious leadership of the State of Qatar and its constant commitment to providing the best means of care for pilgrims, al-Misifri underscored

apparatuses in the kingdom, emphasising that the continuous collaboration and co-ordination with those entities had a profound impact on this successful season and on achieving high-levels of flow, safety, and comfort for the country's pilgrims.

What had been accomplished in this pilgrimage season was a direct outgrowth of the guidance of the judicious leadership of Qatar and its constant commitment to providing the best means of care for pilgrims, al-Misifri underscored.

Al-Misifri further indicated that this accomplishment reflects the assiduous follow-up on the part of HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs and the Head of the Qatari Haj Mission, who had been closely monitoring the preparation for this season and had overseen the preparations for campaigns and tents in the Holy Sites, along with the services offered by the mission's supportive units.

A partner of this success, al-Misifri noted, was the mission's consultative committee, alongside a host of administrative, technical, and specialised units which operated within an interconnected organisational hierarchy and continued their mission around the clock.

This all-hands-on-deck approach has helped provide top-notch services in terms of care for the nation's pilgrims, from the phase of preparation until departure to the Holy Lands, performance of rites, and ultimately return back home, al-Misifri said.

This top-tier combined institutional operation, al-Misifri added, demonstrates the high level of co-ordination among a variety of the mission's components, underscoring that the success was a direct outgrowth of collective work based on proactive planning and integrated specialities to ensure top-notch services for the nation's pilgrims in all pilgrimage phases.

With the return of this official group of the mission back home, the curtain draws on a pilgrimage season that held numerous positive indicators, as well as organisational and field successes.

serve the country's pilgrims efficiently and competently, while reinforcing overall readiness at all stages of the spiritual journey, al-Misifri suggested.

In addition, al-Misifri noted that the administrative, service, technical, and field units operating under the mission worked within a co-ordinated and fully integrated system.

These units, he said, included the co-ordination between airport units, the communication and support unit, the medical unit, the Holy Sites services unit, the surveillance and inspection unit, the Sharia unit, alongside other supporting units, all of which played a pivotal role in delivering the best possible experience for the country's pilgrims.

Al-Misifri added that this integration was directly reflected in the level of services provided, whether in pilgrim dispatching/movement management, transportation, healthcare, religious guidance, or field monitoring.

This enabled the pilgrims to fully devote themselves to performing their rituals in an atmosphere of calm, serenity, and reassurance, he pointed out.

Al-Misifri further elucidated that the comfort and organisation experienced by Qatar's pilgrims

during the season was ensured through early efforts made by Awqaf in preparation, planning, and co-ordination with various concerned parties.

He noted that the mission played an instrumental role in supervising the preparation of the nation's pilgrims' tents in the holy sites, in direct co-ordination with Makkah Catering Company, one of the largest firms specialised in managing and preparing Haj camps.

Tents in Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalifah were prepared according to the best modern standards and specifications, providing a comfortable and safe environment for the pilgrims, and helping Qatari campaigns fully focus on providing direct services and care to their pilgrims, al-Misifri highlighted.

He affirmed that persistent co-ordination with the Ministry of Haj and Umrah in Saudi Arabia and the relevant security and service authorities was one of the foremost factors behind the season's success.

He pointed out that this productive co-operation facilitated pilgrim dispatching/movement management between the Holy Sites train during the Day of Tarwiyah, the ascent to Arafat, the departure to Muzdalifah, and the return to Mina for the stoning rituals.

Al-Misifri clarified that what had been achieved demonstrated the rock-solid brotherly relations and bilateral co-operation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia in serving pilgrims and providing everything that facilitates the performance of rituals and elevates the quality of services provided to them.

Furthermore, al-Misifri said he was grateful for the significant role played by the eighteen Qatari Haj operators, along with their full co-operation with the mission and their commitment to operational plans, pilgrim dispatching/movement management programs, and safety and security requirements.

The complementary relationship between the mission and those campaign operators helped achieve high-levels of discipline and organisation, al-Misifri noted, adding that it strengthened everyone's ability to provide the best amenities for the nation's pilgrims, making the experience an outstanding model of joint institutional work.

Al-Misifri also applauded the advisory committee and the heads and members of the various supporting units, including their sincere efforts and relentless work in a one-team approach throughout the season.

He stressed that the dedica-

tion of administrative, technical, and field personnel was directly reflected in the quality of services and preparations provided to the pilgrims, contributing to the achievement of the mission's objectives set from the earliest stages of preparation for the season.

Apart from its commitment to continuous development, Al Misifri explained that the mission will immediately upon its return begin evaluation, study, and preparation for the next Haj season.

It will review the current experience and capitalising on observations and suggestions submitted by pilgrims and campaign operators.

He added that this move comes within an institutional approach aimed at persistent development of operational and logistical plans and addressing challenges, in order to ensure services are continuously optimised in accordance with the best standards and practices.

As such, al-Misifri commended the gargantuan efforts Saudi Arabia had undertaken to serve pilgrims, advance the pilgrimage system, and promote the services provided to them.

He likewise praised the role undertaken by the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah, alongside the wide diversity of security and utility

Ministry of Municipality successfully concludes slaughterhouse inspections

The Ministry of Municipality has announced that a total of 14,584 sacrificial animals had been inspected at slaughterhouses across the country by 6pm on Friday, the third day of Eid al-Adha.

According to the ministry, inspections were conducted at 12 slaughterhouses across various regions of the country as part of comprehensive veterinary and health monitoring procedures during the Eid season.

The ministry stressed that veterinary inspections and health control measures for sacrificial animals are carried out to ensure the safety and suitability of meat for human consumption.

These efforts form part of the ministry's commitment to providing integrated veterinary services in line with the highest health and safety standards, helping safeguard public health and maintain a safe environment during the holiday period.

Official statistics indicated



that the inspection and examination process was supervised by a team of veterinarians, who monitored sacrificial animals and verified their health status at approved slaughterhouses.

The ministry noted that these measures were implemented to accommodate the high demand for slaughterhouse services during Eid al-Adha.

The ministry confirmed the success of its operational and regulatory plan for slaughterhouses.

The ministry said that the plan enabled the efficient delivery of slaughtering and veterinary inspection services while ensuring the safety of meat products and protecting public health.

The ministry also expressed appreciation for the public's co-operation and commitment to using approved slaughterhouses, noting that adherence to regulated slaughtering practices strengthens food safety standards and supports broader public health objectives.

Qatar Charity wraps its 'Greatest Days' campaign

Through its seasonal "Greatest Days" campaign, Qatar Charity extended its reach to hundreds of thousands of needy and low-income families worldwide during the recent Eid al-Adha holiday. This was achieved through the implementation of the Udhayah project in 43 countries, including Qatar. In a statement, Qatar Charity explained that the number of donations exceeded the campaign's target by 3,113 Udhayah, bringing the total number of distributed Udhayah to 45,763. The number of beneficiaries reached over 900,000 people, with a total value of approximately QAR 30 mn. Outside Qatar, implementation focused on war-ravaged countries such as occupied Palestine (including Gaza), Somalia, Syria, Kenya, and Sudan, so as to strengthen food security. Within Qatar, beneficiaries included low-income families, orphan households, widows, divorced women, and families of prisoners. The project's success was supported by Qatar Charity's field offices in more than 33 countries. In Qatar, distribution was facilitated through smart vouchers via the "Alaqraboon" app. Executive Director of Communications and Community Impact at Qatar Charity, Abdulaziz Jassim Hejji thanked donors for their generosity and trust. (QNA)

Festive season: Events at Al Khor, 974 Beach bustle with Eid al-Adha festivities

The Ministry of Municipality, represented by Al Khor and Al Thakhira Municipality, launched a series of Eid al-Adha community and recreational initiatives across Qatar, focusing on family entertainment, education, and public engagement.

A key highlight was a free-flight aviation show by the internationally renowned Lander World Parrots Team, held for the first time in Qatar at Al Khor Family Park during Eid al-Adha celebrations.

The event offered families and children an interactive experience showcasing the birds' flying skills while also providing educational insights into their behaviour and characteristics.

The initiative was designed to combine entertainment with learning and strengthen family-oriented recreational offerings during the holiday period.

In parallel, the Ministry of Municipality, in collaboration with Qatar Tourism, organised the "Eid Family Festival" at 974 Beach, which attracted large crowds throughout the Eid holiday.

The festival included a range of entertainment and interactive activities such as appearances by Angry Birds characters, live performances, competitions, games, and family attractions aimed at creating a festive environment for all ages.

Al Khor and Al Thakhira Municipality, in co-operation with Seashore Company and the Youth Committee of Al Khor Sports Club, also hosted an Eid celebration at City Centre Market in Al Khor.

This event combined recreational and educational activities with a focus on sustainability and environmental conservation, plus community engagement.

Across all initiatives, the ministry stressed its commitment to enhancing public recreational services, promoting environmental awareness, encouraging community participation, and supporting the well-being and happiness of residents and visitors during national and religious occasions.



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Ferrari Luce: A new chapter for the Maranello marque

Ferrari unveiled the Ferrari Luce on May 25 in Rome, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the company's history of engineering excellence and innovation.

The launch carries symbolic significance, as Ferrari achieved its first-ever victory in Rome in 1947 when the Ferrari 125 S won the Gran Premio di Roma.

Nearly eight decades later, Ferrari has returned to the Italian capital to introduce a vehicle that represents its vision for the future.

The Ferrari Luce is the culmination of Maranello's multi-energy strategy first outlined in 2022.

In line with Ferrari's principle of technological neutrality, electrification is not intended to replace traditional engines but to expand the company's possibilities in design, architecture, performance, and driving experience.

Ferrari says the project deepens its expertise in electric technology while opening a completely new segment that remains faithful to the marque's DNA of performance, engagement, and versatility.

"With Ferrari Luce, we are once again redefining the limits of what is possible. Today, we are not simply unveiling a new car, we are inaugurating a chapter that turns our vision into reality, strengthening Ferrari's tradition of anticipating and shaping the future," John Elkann, president of Ferrari, said, adding: "Rome, the symbolic location of our first victory, becomes the starting point for a Ferrari that lights up the future and opens new horizons."

Ferrari CEO Benedetto Vigna said: "In line with our belief in technological neutrality, we are the first in the world to combine fully electric, hybrid and combustion engine architectures for sports cars."

The name "Luce," meaning "light," reflects Ferrari's intention to create not simply an electric Ferrari but an entirely new Ferrari with a distinct identity.

In keeping with Ferrari tradition, the company engineered, developed, and manufactured the key components in-house, from the electric motors to the battery pack.

The project generated more than 60 patents and forms part of Ferrari's long-term strategy, which includes future support for electric components and batteries



under its Ferrari Forever philosophy.

Design and Architecture

The Ferrari Luce was designed in collaboration with LoveFrom, the creative collective founded by Sir Jony Ive and Marc Newson.

Ferrari says the involvement of an external design team enabled the introduction of a new design language while maintaining Ferrari's identity.

The electric architecture allows for four doors and five seats, making the Luce the first Ferrari capable of accommodating five occupants.

Ferrari describes the interior as a clean and unified space in which every element has been carefully considered to support the driving experience.

The exterior, interior, and interface share a common design language.

The interior combines recycled anodised aluminium, Corning Gorilla Glass, premium leather, and Samsung-developed OLED displays.

Mechanical controls, switches, dials, and toggles are integrated with digital interfaces to create what Ferrari describes as a highly intuitive driving environment.

The vehicle also features a premium audio system with 21 speakers, 24-channel amplification, and 3,000 watts of power, supported by Ferrari Audio Signature technology.

Performance and Electric Powertrain

The Ferrari Luce is built on a dedicated electric platform with a bespoke chassis and numerous engineering innovations derived

Performance figures include:
0-100 km/h in 2.5 seconds
0-200 km/h in 6.8 seconds
Top speed exceeding 310 km/h
Maximum power output of 1,050 cv
Driving range exceeding 530 km

from Ferrari's motorsport experience.

The vehicle is powered by four electric motors, one at each wheel, and a 122 kWh battery operating on an 800-volt architecture.

Ferrari states that the battery supports charging speeds of up to 350 kW, enabling approximately 70 kWh of energy to be added in about 20 minutes under suitable conditions.

The battery pack consists of 210 cells connected in series and is designed as a structural element of the vehicle.

Vehicle Dynamics and Driving Experience

Ferrari describes the Luce as a vehicle capable of controlling each wheel independently in terms of acceleration, braking, steering, and vertical movement.

Each wheel features separate systems for traction and regeneration, steering angle control, and suspension management.

The Ferrari Luce also introduces the company's first electric all-wheel-drive system.

Torque management is controlled through steering-wheel paddles that allow drivers to increase available power or regenerative braking while maintaining a progressive and engaging driving experience.

At the centre of the system is a new Vehicle Control Unit (VCU), which integrates powertrain and vehicle dynamics functions into a single controller.

The VCU updates operating targets 200 times per second and manages power delivery, energy recovery, efficiency strategies, and vehicle behaviour across various driving modes.

Aerodynamics and Efficiency

Aerodynamic efficiency was a major focus during the development of the Ferrari Luce.

Ferrari says the vehicle achieves the lowest drag coefficient in the history of its road cars while also providing exceptional interior space.

Thermal Management

Thermal management plays a central role in the Ferrari Luce's performance and efficiency.

Ferrari developed a comprehensive cooling system that manages battery temperature, powertrain performance, active suspension, and cabin comfort.

The system uses coolant, water, and air circuits coordinated through intelligent software designed to optimise energy consumption while maintaining performance.

Authentic Ferrari Sound

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Ferrari Luce is its approach to sound.

Rather than creating artificial engine noises, Ferrari developed a patented system that captures authentic vibrations generated by the electric powertrain.

A precision accelerometer mounted on the axle detects vibrations and mechanical activity from the electric motors and drivetrain components.

The signal is then filtered, equalised, and amplified to create



a sound experience that remains rooted in the vehicle's mechanical operation.

Comfort and Sustainability

Ferrari describes the Luce as the most comfortable Ferrari ever produced.

Extensive work in noise, vibration, and harshness reduction has resulted in a quieter and more refined cabin.

Features such as an elastically mounted rear subframe, advanced sound insulation, and active suspension contribute to overall comfort while preserving Ferrari's renowned handling characteristics.

Sustainability is also an important element of the project.

The extensive use of recycled aluminium reduces carbon dioxide emissions during production, while the integrated battery, chassis, and body structure improve efficiency and structural performance.

Ferrari states that recycled alu-

minium accounts for a substantial portion of the vehicle's overall construction.

Connectivity and Ownership Experience

The Ferrari Luce introduces a new digital ecosystem centred around the MyFerrari Luce app. Owners can remotely monitor charging, manage vehicle settings, prepare the cabin, track vehicle status, and access navigation functions integrated with Google Maps and Apple Maps EV services. Real-time battery data and charging information help optimise route planning and charging stops.

Ferrari is supporting the vehicle with its seven-year Genuine Maintenance programme, which covers routine servicing and inspections. In addition, the Luce benefits from a dedicated eight-year warranty covering major electric powertrain components, including the battery, charging system, and front and rear electric axles.

QNL's programme in June replete with cultural events

Qatar National Library (QNL) has announced its programme of events for this month, specially designed to enhance the participation of various segments of society, preserve cultural heritage, and encourage lifelong learning.

The library opens its program with a focus on family well-being, as the "Parenting Book Club" will hold a session on 3 June to discuss the topic "Confident Children in Times of Crisis", aimed at familiarising families with practical strategies that help raise children who possess confidence, resilience, and the ability to overcome challenges.

Among the foremost cultural events this month is "Keys to Palestine: Memory, Stories, and Documentation". And QNL will host a session on 5 June highlighting the enduring importance of safeguarding Palestinian history and documenting Palestinian narratives for future generations through various forms of documentation.

QNL also continues its focus on families this month through a practical and interactive workshop consisting of two identical sessions on 6 and 8 June under the "Ready for School" initiative, titled "A Parent's Guide to Building Visual Supports for Children with Special Needs".

Parents and families will be introduced to practical tools that support their children's development in the early years.

As part of efforts to advance the research and academic sector, QNL will organise a workshop on 9 June titled "Publishing Open Access with Elsevier", providing researchers, students, and authors with practical guidance to help them navigate open-access publishing, enhance the global visibility of their research papers, and expand their scholarly impact.

On 13 June, and as part of the "Qatar Contemporary History Series", a lecture titled "Historical Writing: From Law and the

Sea to the Archive", will be held, offering additional perspectives on the history of Qatar through legal documents, archival materials and other sources.

As part of its efforts to enhance access to knowledge for persons with disabilities and encourage the participation of all segments of society, the Library will present "Connecting Communities Through Inclusion: Audible Shelf" on 17 June.

On the same day, QNL will organise the musical evening "Philharmonic at the Library: Oldies Goldies II - Classical Music in Cartoons" featuring CineMoon Ensemble from the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, which will perform a selection of some of the most famous classical pieces featured in animated cartoons.

Meanwhile, QNL continues its commitment to protecting cultural heritage. In its capacity as the IFLA Regional Centre for Preservation and Conservation for Arab Countries and the Middle East, the library will host a webinar on 24 June on the Nicosia Convention 2017, titled "Protecting Cultural Heritage and Combating Illicit Trafficking: The Nicosia Convention 2017" in collaboration with the ERATO-STHENES Centre of Excellence (ECoE) in Cyprus.

The webinar will shed light on international efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property, as well as practical approaches to implementing the convention and safeguarding cultural heritage.

The library will conclude its monthly program of events with a lecture on 24 June as part of the "Gulf History Lecture Series", titled "Caravan Trade: The Story of Networks that Connected the Arabian Peninsula to the World".

The lecture will examine merchant networks and caravan trade routes in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and their profound impact on shaping the region's economic and cultural history. (QNA)

UDC concludes a vibrant season of community and lifestyle activations

A series of seasonal activations and community experiences were curated across The Pearl and Gewan Islands for residents

United Development Company (UDC) concluded a vibrant series of seasonal activations and community experiences across its master developments at The Pearl Island and Gewan Island, further reinforcing the destinations' positioning as integrated waterfront environments centred around lifestyle, hospitality, entertainment, and community engagement.

The recent Eid al-Adha celebrations, together with the introduction of Torba Market to Qanat Quartier, reflected UDC's broader approach to creating experienced destinations that extend beyond residential living, offering dynamic social and cultural environments for residents and visitors alike.

Across Porto Arabia, Crystal Walk, and Qanat Quartier, families and visitors enjoyed a diverse mix of live entertainment, children's activities, outdoor experiences, dining, shopping, and community-focused programming within distinctive waterfront settings



that continue to define the character of the islands.

The Eid celebrations brought together residents and visitors over five days through family-oriented activities and entertainment at 29 La Croisette in Porto Arabia and Crystal Walk on Gewan Island.

The atmosphere was complemented by the islands' scenic promenades, hospitality offerings, and over 500 retail outlets, restaurants, cafés, and lifestyle concepts spread across both destinations.

Further enriching the seasonal

program, UDC also introduced the popular "Torba Market" to Qanat Quartier, transforming the canal-front district into a lively, pedestrian-friendly, open-air destination on Saturdays in May and throughout the Eid weekend, celebrating local entrepreneurship, artisanal products, sustainability, and community interaction.

Set against Qanat Quartier's Venetian-inspired architecture and waterfront charm, the market offered visitors an immersive lifestyle experience while support-

ing farmers, artisans, home-based businesses, and local entrepreneurs.

These activations form part of UDC's continued focus on destination marketing aimed at strengthening the islands' appeal as year-round lifestyle and tourism destinations.

Through curated programming, seasonal events, and public realm activation, UDC continues to foster meaningful connections between people, culture, entertainment, and place.

The strong turnout witnessed throughout the recent activations reflects the growing appeal of The Pearl and Gewan Islands as premier visit-and-dwell destinations within a vibrant and integrated urban environment.

Building on this momentum, UDC is now gearing up for a summer season centred around leisurely entertainment, waterfront experiences, and beach-focused activities designed to enhance the much-anticipated summer break in Doha.





Israeli PM orders deeper Lebanon incursion

Reuters/AFP
Jerusalem/Beirut

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered troops to move further into Lebanon in the battle against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group, despite a ceasefire announced more than six weeks ago.

The fighting in Lebanon has been the broadest spillover of the Iran war, displacing more than 1.2mn Lebanese through Israeli strikes and evacuation orders since March 2, when Hezbollah began firing rockets and drones into Israel to back its ally Iran.

The incursion has so far killed more than 3,370 people, according to the Lebanese government.

Israel says 24 of its soldiers and four civilians have been killed over the same period. Tens of thousands of Israelis in the country's north have also been displaced by Hezbollah rockets and drones.

In the latest advance, Israeli troops seized the 900-year-old Beaufort Castle and a strategic ridge in southern Lebanon, the military said, a day after one of the heaviest days of Hezbollah fire toward northern Israel since the April ceasefire, prompting school closures and restrictions.

"I instructed the (military) to expand its ground manoeuvre in Lebanon," Netanyahu said in a statement.

Citing the escalating violence in Lebanon, France called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council today, its foreign ministry said in a statement.

Israeli troops and Hezbollah have continued to trade fire since the mid-April ceasefire, with Hezbollah resorting to the use of cheap, easy-to-assemble kamikaze drones that are hard for air defences to thwart and that have killed several Israeli troops in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli military already controlled territory up to the Litani River in Lebanon, but troops are pushing to the Zaharani River, around 10km north.

Netanyahu said his aim is to "deepen and expand our grip on the places that

were under Hezbollah's control".

Naftali Bennett, a challenger to Netanyahu in an upcoming election, said that he seeks stronger action in Lebanon, including hitting suburbs of Beirut.

Yesterday the military issued an evacuation warning for residents south of the Zaharani.

Eight people were killed when overnight airstrikes on Saturday hit the southern village of Deir El Zahrani, Lebanon's state news agency said.

Throughout the day yesterday, the Israeli military conducted more than 40 strikes across southern Lebanon, according to Lebanese security sources and state news.

On Friday, the US military had hosted Israeli and Lebanese defence representatives in Washington to pursue a US-brokered plan to forge peace between the two countries and disarm Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

On May 15, the two sides agreed to extend the ceasefire by 45 days.

The advance into Beaufort Castle has granted Israeli troops a vantage point over much of southern Lebanon and northern Israel, from which attacks have been launched towards Israeli residential areas.

Israeli forces used the Beaufort castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, as a base during their previous two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon that ended in 2000.

In a video statement released hours after the military took Beaufort, Netanyahu said "we have returned united, determined and stronger than ever".

"Now my directive is to deepen and expand our hold in places that were under Hezbollah's control. The capture of Beaufort is a dramatic stage and a dramatic shift in the policy we are leading."

Defence Minister Israel Katz said soldiers will retain Beaufort as part of Israel's security zone in southern Lebanon.

"The campaign is not over yet," he said. "We are all determined to crush Hezbollah's power."

Katz circulated a photo on social media of the castle with the Israeli flag and also that of the military's Golan brigade.

The latest operation, the military said,



Israeli soldiers are seen at Beaufort Ridge in southern Lebanon, in this handout image released yesterday. - Reuters

Right: Smoke billows from southern Lebanon, following Israeli strikes, as seen from Nabatieh. - Reuters

was focused on establishing control of the Beaufort Ridge and the Wadi al-Saluki area, while degrading the capabilities of Hezbollah's militants and its infrastructure on the ridge established under Iranian direction.

One Israeli soldier was killed, the military said.

There were no immediate comments from Lebanon or from Hezbollah.

Talal Atrissi, a sociology professor at the Lebanese University and an analyst who is close to Hezbollah, said the photo of the Israeli flag over the castle was intended as a message to Israeli society that the military was managing to achieve goals in Lebanon despite the challenges posed by Hezbollah's use of drones.

Israeli troops were also operating near Nabatieh, a major Hezbollah stronghold in southern Lebanon, the military said.

In a shelter for the displaced in Sidon, southern Lebanon's largest city, Zeinab Fakhri, from Nabatieh, told AFP "of course we are afraid".

"It is impossible for us to return to our home, because the city is in great destruction," she said, adding that the arrival of Israeli forces at the castle was "tragic".

Issa Taily, also displaced from Nabatieh, said: "We will return... if not today, then tomorrow, as long as there is resistance."

The Lebanese health ministry says Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,371 people since early March.



'Nothing justifies' south Lebanon escalation

French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that "nothing justifies the major escalation under way in south Lebanon" where Israeli forces have launched a new offensive against Hezbollah.

In a message on X after speaking with regional leaders, Macron said it was "essential" for an agreement to be reached quickly between the United States and Iran. Macron held talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed, and his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

At France's request, the UN Security Council will hold an emergency meeting today after the Israeli army, which is expanding its operations in Lebanon, seized the mediaeval Beaufort castle in the country's south.

"France will continue to support the Lebanese authorities in their efforts to restore the sovereignty of the state and the country's territorial integrity," Macron wrote. Regional stability "must begin with Lebanon, where it is urgent that all weapons fall silent, for good".

More broadly, he said a ceasefire must be a "priority" between the United States and Iran, and called for the immediate reopening of the Strait of Hormuz "without any conditions and in accordance with international law".

"Talks must then continue in order to reach a comprehensive and robust agreement on other issues, particularly the nuclear and ballistic programmes and regional stability," he added.

"France stands ready to fully play its part by helping to restore maritime traffic through the independent multinational mission set up with the United Kingdom," he said. - AFP

'Over 1,100 suspected Ebola cases in DR Congo, Uganda'

AFP/Reuters
Kinshasa

More than 1,100 people were suspected of having contracted Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and neighbouring Uganda, the head of the African Union's health agency said yesterday in a commentary for the *Financial Times*.

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) director-general Jean Kaseya said there were 263 confirmed cases in both countries as of Saturday, with 43 confirmed deaths.

More than 1,100 suspected cases were still being investigated, he wrote in the editorial.

On Thursday, the Africa CDC said there had been 246 suspected deaths from the virus.

"We must move at the speed of the epidemic," added Kaseya,



WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus with a woman who has recovered from Ebola in Bunia, in the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. - AFP

criticising Africa's dependence on outside financial support.

The health ministers of the DR Congo, Uganda and South Sudan

recently adopted a \$319mn response plan to the outbreak.

"That momentum must now expand across the continent," Ka-

seya said, calling the latest Ebola outbreak a "serious test" for the Africa CDC and the African Union.

"This outbreak will not be the last," he added.

International partners, Kaseya added, play an essential role, but their support matters most when it aligns with strategies that are built by African institutions and African governments.

The Ebola outbreak - the 17th in the DR Congo and the third-largest since Ebola was discovered half a century ago - is outpacing the global response.

Health officials and aid workers say that they lack even basic supplies such as masks after the outbreak spread was undetected for weeks.

The outbreak was declared on May 15 in Ituri, in the northeast DR Congo, which is home to more than 100mn people and is one of the poorest countries in the world.

The virus, which can cause a deadly haemorrhagic fever, has been detected in three Congolese provinces as well as in Uganda.

No vaccine or approved treatment is available against the Bundibugyo strain of the virus and efforts to contain its spread rely mainly on preventative measures.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has triggered an international health alert but the true scale of the outbreak is not yet known.

International health authorities believe that current figures are likely an underestimation.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus continued a visit to Ituri province yesterday and has pledged support to local communities affected by the outbreak.

"You are not alone in this. We are here, we are with you and we will see this through together," he said after arriving on Saturday.

Gunmen kidnap Nigerian former defence official

Gunmen have kidnapped a former Nigerian defence spokesman and his wife in northwestern Katsina state, according to a security report and a local source.

Rabe Abubakar, a retired major-general, and his wife were believed to have been kidnapped by members of kidnapping-for-ransom and cattle-rustling gangs.

A spokesman for the police in Katsina, Abubakar Aliyu, told local media that the couple was seized by "bandits".

Katsina is one of several states in northwestern and central Nigeria where criminal gangs, referred to as "bandits" by the locals and security agencies, kidnap travellers on highways, raid villages, abduct residents and loot homes before burning them.

A security source in Katsina told AFP that Abubakar, his wife and their driver were travelling from his hometown of Matazu to a wedding in the state capital, Katsina, about 90km (56 miles) away when they were ambushed.

Gunmen attacked the trio around 11am (1000 GMT), "kidnapping the former Director of Defence Information, Rabe Abubakar, and his wife", according to a security report prepared for the United Nations and seen by AFP. "They also shot and injured his driver."

Abubakar was Nigeria's defence spokesman between August 2015 and March 2017 before retiring.

He was the second retired military general to be kidnapped in Katsina state, where bandits have intensified attacks despite several state government-backed peace negotiations with communities. - AFP

Guinea polling stations open, five years on from coup

AFP
Conakry

Guineans voted yesterday in legislative and municipal elections five years on from a 2021 coup, with the country still facing severe restrictions on civil liberties.

Almost 7mn people were eligible to cast ballots but critics of coup leader President Mamadi Doumbouya have urged voters to boycott the process.

Voters are electing 147 MPs, most expected to be drawn from the presidential camp as the government dissolved the main

opposition parties in March.

"I don't even know who to vote for," Mariatou Diallo, 18, told AFP as she cast her first-ever vote in a Conakry suburb.

Alassane Barry, a 23-year-old student, said he did not know any of the candidates, calling them "unknown figures".

The Forces Vives de Guinee coalition of the main opposition and civil society groups called for a boycott of an "electoral farce" that they said would establish "a new dictatorship".

One constituent part, the Democratic Front of Guinea (Frondeg), which placed second in the presidential election with a 6.59% vote share, meanwhile denounced an

assault on one of its candidates in the central town of Mamou.

The party said yesterday that Abdoulaye Bademba Diallo was "violently attacked" in a restaurant on Saturday evening "by two hooded individuals who arrived on a motorcycle".

The campaign unfolded peacefully but with little voter enthusiasm and early turnout was low, according to AFP journalists in Conakry.

Turnout is key in polls taking place just days after Eid al-Adha, when Guineans gather with their families.

Doumbouya, who seized power in September 2021, was elected president for a

seven-year term last December having faced no serious opponent.

He had initially promised to hand power back to civilians at the end of a transition period.

His government has suspended a slew of political parties, banned protests and arrested opposition and civil society leaders.

Enforced disappearances and abductions of dissidents and their relatives have become increasingly common.

The Institute for Studies and Security, an African think tank, warned recently of the risk of political structures being "dominated by a single force", which would lead to a deterioration in the quality of democracy.

Japan defence chief counters China at security summit

AFP
Singapore

Japan's defence minister took a veiled swipe at China yesterday, pledging to keep strengthening the military despite Beijing's criticism of Tokyo's increasingly muscular security stance.

Under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, Japan has quickened its pivot towards a more proactive defence policy, further shaking off — with US encouragement — a pacifist outlook in place since the end of World War II.

The change has drawn frequent rebukes from Beijing, which has accused Tokyo of following a reckless policy of "new militarism" that could destabilise the region.

Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi hit back yesterday, saying "nothing could be further from the truth".

"Think about it. There is a country that has a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and strategic bombers," Koizumi said at the annual IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

"Japan has neither of such weapons. And yet, Japan is labelled (as) 'new militarism'. Isn't it strange?" he said, without mentioning China by name.

China is thought to possess hundreds of nuclear warheads and has been rapidly developing its military in recent years.

A diplomatic spat between the Asian rivals has been rumbling since Takaichi suggested in November that Japan might intervene militarily if China were to attempt



Shinjiro Koizumi, Japan's defence minister, speaks at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore, yesterday. (Reuters)

to seize Taiwan, the self-ruled island that Beijing claims is part of its territory.

Koizumi said that China was expanding its military capabilities "without sufficient transparency" and that its military activities were "a matter of serious concern for Japan".

Tokyo would "steadily build up its defence capabilities and make continuous updates with a high degree of transparency", including in the fields of artificial intelligence, uncrewed systems as well as cyber and space defence, he said.

"Japan's past as a peace-loving nation has been valued by the region and by the international community. This fact will not be shaken by false claims, because it is a fact," he said.

In a meeting with his Philippine counterpart Gilberto Teodoro, the two countries confirmed that Japan would aim to transfer Abukuma-class destroyers and TC-90 aircraft to the Southeast Asian nation during Japan's fiscal year 2027, a Philippine statement said.

Manila has been eyeing the Abukuma-class vessels — which are being retired by Japan — for some time, with the military sending a contingent to examine them in 2025.

The countries have been deepening defence ties in the shadow of China's naval ambitions, announcing that they will discuss intelligence sharing and open maritime border talks condemned by Beijing as an "illegal" violation of its expansive territorial claims.

Teodoro singled out Beijing's activities in the South China Sea for criticism, saying Manila "will not sacrifice our territorial integrity and sovereignty because our constitution does not allow us".

"To do so would be to subvert the popular, democratic and free mandate that the people gave our political leaders, unlike some autocratic systems where the mandate comes from above, dictated down."

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

As Teodoro spoke, China's People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command issued a statement online saying it had "conducted combat readiness patrols" in the waters and airspace around Scarborough Shoal, the site of a years-long territorial dispute with the Philippines.

The patrols "serve as an effective countermeasure to cope with all sorts of rights-violation and provocative acts" around the shoal, "an inherent part of China's territory", the statement said.

The Shangri-La Dialogue is Asia's top defence forum, bringing together security officials and experts from more than 45 countries.

In contrast to Japan — and its ally the US — China has sent a watered-down delegation that does not include its defence minister, Dong Jun, for the second year running.

Koizumi said he was "feeling sad that we were unable to have the opportunity to have a meeting this time".

Korea, Japan discuss military-logistics support deal: Seoul

Reuters
Singapore

Republic of Korea and Japan discussed the possibility of a military-logistics support agreement yesterday, Seoul's defence chief said, adding that Seoul remains cautious about the politically sensitive pact.

"It requires the understanding and persuasion of the citizens of both nations, and I believe we should still proceed with caution," Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back told reporters after meeting his counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi at the Shangri-La Dialogue of regional defence officials in Singapore on Saturday.

Ahn was referring to a potential acquisition and cross-servicing

agreement, which would allow neighbouring US allies Seoul and Tokyo to share and mutually procure military logistics such as fuel, food and ammunition.

Republic of Korea has been cautious about a deal, given persistent grievances over Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule and public resistance to the possibility of Japanese troops operating on the Korean Peninsula.

Calls to Japan's Ministry of Defence and Prime Minister's Office seeking comment went unanswered outside business hours.

Meanwhile, the Japanese defence ministry said in a statement that Koizumi and Ahn discussed conducting a joint humanitarian search and rescue exercise in June, for the first time in about nine years.

UK foreign minister to visit China, India

Reuters
London

British foreign minister Yvette Cooper will travel to China today, and then onwards to India later in the week, with the visits to focus on global issues from the Strait of Hormuz and the Russia-Ukraine war to the recent Ebola outbreak.

Cooper will meet her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng on June 2, before travelling to the southern tech hub of Shenzhen for a programme focussed on science and technology a day later, the government said.

The plans, announced yesterday, come after Reuters reported last month on the visit, citing three sources.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chinese leader Xi Jinping hailed a reset in ties during the British leader's visit to China in January, pledging greater co-operation on trade, investment and technology to the mutual benefit of both countries.

Starmer, who is battling some of the worst popularity ratings of any leader at home, was the first British prime minister to

visit China in eight years, with his centre-left Labour government making improving relations with China a priority.

Cooper's travel to China and India — the world's second-largest and sixth-largest economies — comes at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions, soaring oil prices following the US-Israeli war on Iran, and as Britain struggles with sluggish economic growth.

She is expected to be in India on June 4 where she is due to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as well as entrepreneurs, academics and government partners who are delivering on the UK-India Vision 2035 initiative.

The two countries signed a free trade deal last year that was aimed at boosting bilateral trade and improving market access across sectors. But India's trade secretary Rajesh Agrawal said last month that its implementation had hit a hurdle over London's new steel import curbs.

The British government said Cooper's upcoming engagements "with these two major powers are expected to be focused on tackling the most significant global challenges".

Survivors advise rescuers in search for last two stuck in Laos cave

AFP
Vientiane

From their shared hospital room, several survivors freed from a semi-submerged cave in Laos after more than a week underground are advising rescuers on how to find the last two missing men believed to be trapped even deeper inside.

Rescuers, including foreign cave divers, said yesterday they were devising a risky search for the two men and gaining insights about the narrow, flooded passageways from the survivors — one of whom spoke of "waiting to die" in the depths of the cave.

A Laotian rescue group said the information on the cave system from the hospitalised men was "considered substantial" and "being used to prepare the search plan for the remaining two people".

"The hope is that today's mission will locate both remaining victims," the group wrote yesterday on social media.

Five men were found alive on Wednesday, huddling in a tight shaft around 300 metres (984 feet) from the mouth of the cave in a remote mountainous area of central Xaysomboun province.

They were among seven stranded in the cave by flash floods nearly two weeks ago as they searched for gold, state media reports said.

Rescue divers extracted the first man on Friday, and four more



This screen grab shows two men being hugged after they were rescued from a semi-submerged cave in central Xaysomboun province. (AFP)

found their own way out on Saturday, after teams delivered them food and medicine and had for days pumped water from the cave, providing them with an easier exit.

Their emergence prompted emotional scenes as tearful relatives and rescuers ran to embrace them just before they were helped to tents for medical checks, videos from rescue groups showed.

In their shared hospital room, the five survivors rested on simple metal cots with thin mattresses, lined side by side, footage aired on state television showed.

They were receiving medical treatment and "in good condition",

Malaysian diver Lee Kian Lie said yesterday.

Rescuers had interviewed the men about how the deeper part of the cave looked, he said in a message to AFP.

"We will continue to search based on the info we have and perhaps we (will be) able to get to the other two," said Lee, who joined the rescue operation on Friday.

The four who left the cave on Saturday, he added, had "walked out themselves because the water (level had) been lowered".

One of the four, a man identified by Laotian state media as Laen, confirmed that they had

managed to escape through areas "where water was already pumped out".

But before the rescue divers found them, despair was setting in, he said in an interview with Lao National Radio from the hospital yesterday.

"We spent three days searching for a way out, but we couldn't find it. And it was hopeless," Laen said.

"I said if there is no diving team coming to help, there would be zero % chance of survival. We were just waiting to die."

The man rescued on Friday — identified only as Meud — said in a video shared by a rescue group that the two missing men had entered the cave several days before the others and had descended much further.

The search for the last two yesterday was focused on a tight, undated passage believed to lie beyond the area where the five survivors were found, according to Japanese diver Yoshitaka Isaji.

"This submerged passageway is extremely narrow and practically unpassable unless you change your posture. Imagine the space as narrow as a dresser drawer," Isaji wrote on social media, adding that the muddy water meant "visibility is zero".

Rescuers were still pumping water from the cave and trying to block more from flowing in, he added.

"Given the enormous risk, diving would only be a last resort."

Meteor explodes over US with blast equivalent to 300 tonnes of TNT

A meteor crashing toward Earth exploded over the northeastern US on Saturday, NASA said, setting off booms that echoed over the region with a blast equivalent to 300 tonnes of TNT.

The fireball broke up over northeastern Massachusetts and southeastern New Hampshire at 2:06pm (1806 GMT), the US

space agency's deputy news chief Jennifer Dooren told AFP in a statement.

"This fireball was not associated with any currently active meteor shower, but it was a natural object and not a re-entry of space debris or a satellite," she said.

"The energy released at breakup is estimated to be equivalent to about

300 tonnes of TNT, which accounts for the loud booms."

The meteor was travelling at 75,000mph (more than 120,000kph) at an altitude of 40 miles when it broke apart, Dooren said.

Area residents were alarmed by the unexpected loud booms, with social media users reporting they were so

powerful that houses were shaking.

In 2013 a fireball streaked above Chelyabinsk, Russia. The house-sized space rock blew apart 14 miles above the ground, releasing a blast equivalent to 440,000 tonnes of TNT, NASA said.

Other European defence ministers argued that security theatres

US castigates Europe over defence spend as Nato reassures Asia

Reuters
Singapore

The US fired a fresh broadside at its Nato allies in Singapore over the weekend but Western European officials insisted the grouping remains resilient.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth praised Asian partners for boosting defence spending and aligning closely with Washington as tensions with China mount.

"When our interests align, we act together with focused resolve," he said. "When our interests di-

verge, we adjust pragmatically without the drama or the moralising. I think Western Europe might take note." "Europe and Nato have some big decisions to make," he said.

President Donald Trump's administration has repeatedly accused European governments of underinvesting in their militaries and relying too heavily on US protection, while urging both Europe and Asian allies to boost defence spending to 3.5% of GDP.

Washington announced plans in May to pull 5,000 troops out of Germany, and Trump has threatened to pull out of Nato.

A senior Nato official sought to downplay the US troop withdrawal, saying it was already planned and that the alliance's cohesion was unaffected.

"In a mature alliance, if one ally which in this case is the principal stakeholder needs to redirect some power somewhere else, he can do so, and the others must be able to step in," said Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, chair of the Nato Military Committee.

Nils Hilmer, state secretary at Germany's Federal Ministry of Defence, said Berlin was accelerating military investment regardless of future US deployments.

"What we know for sure... is that there's going to be shifts in that field," he said. "That's why we are about to take the security in our own hands."

European ministers also used the forum to reassure Asian partners that Nato remained credible beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

"Our credibility in Asia also depends on our robustness in Europe, defending Ukraine in the face of the Russian aggression," said French Defence Minister Catherine Vautrin in a speech to delegates.

Other European defence ministers argued that security theatres

are increasingly intertwined.

"The European Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific theatres are becoming inseparable," said Tore Sandvik, Norway's minister of defence, noting that North Korean troops were fighting in Ukraine.

"The US will be occupied in more theatres," he said.

But for all the criticism from the Pentagon, several US Senators and members of the House of Representatives said they were seeking to reassure European and Asian allies that they had bipartisan support from Congress.

"I've heard the same anxiety from everyone, not just in the re-

gion," said US Senator Tammy Duckworth. "I've actually got Nato allies worried about America's commitment to the Indo-Pacific."

Still, scepticism among other delegates lingers over Europe's pace of change on investing in their collective security. "Europe has to learn how to become a player," said Pavlo Klimkin, non-resident senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment and a former Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs. "There is no way around it. But it could be extremely beneficial for their partnership with the US, because the States would respect such European drive."

Why Malaysian prime minister is considering a snap election

Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has said he would consider calling for snap polls if tensions within his ruling alliance got worse.

The next general election is not due until February 2028, but Anwar may seek the consent of the country's king to dissolve parliament earlier.

Government lawmakers told Reuters in March an election could be held as soon as July. Malaysia is a federal system and most state polls are usually held alongside the federal election every five years.

However, political instability since 2020 has led to some state governments collapsing before the end of their terms, breaking the election cycle.

Three states are due to hold polls within the next year – Johor and Malacca on the Malaysian peninsula, and Sarawak on Borneo island.

The Election Commission said in February that an early general election would allow the state polls to be held concurrently, reducing costs, media reported.

Anwar took office in November 2022, forming a "unity government" consisting of his Pakatan Harapan bloc, former rival Barisan Nasional (BN), and a handful of other parties after a general election

ended in an unprecedented hung parliament.

The administration has been praised for restoring stability, after a period of political infighting since 2020 that saw three prime ministers in as many years.

The ruling coalition, however, has been tested by internal divisions, with some allies concerned over corruption allegations and a rollback in democratic freedoms.

Malaysia has enjoyed steady economic growth and a jump in investment during Anwar's tenure, but public discontent has grown over rising living costs.

Anwar may be pushed to seek a fresh mandate ahead of any move to trim subsidies or raise fuel prices, which would be deeply unpopular, analysts have said.

An early election could also benefit Anwar's coalition, with the country's opposition in disarray.

The opposition is currently led by PAS, the country's Islamist party.

PAS took over leadership of the bloc this month after its key partner Bersatu, headed by former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, fractured due to internal rifts that saw more than a dozen party leaders sacked. – Reuters



The Strait truth: Why a Hormuz deal is harder than it looks

By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen



Hopes have risen that US and Iranian officials can agree an extended deal that would see the Strait of Hormuz reopen to unrestricted traffic. Three months of blockage in the Strait has wrought havoc on energy flows and global supply chains and constituted the biggest supply shock in decades, possibly ever. International stereotypes of the Gulf States as producers of oil and gas and little else have been reshaped by the recognition of their centrality in every day commodities from phosphates and aluminum to helium and sulphur.

As prewar stocks are drawn down, governments and companies are warning that the delayed impact of the economic disruption is about to hit hard if passage through the Strait is not restored soon.

Difficulties on both the US and Iranian sides mean that any agreement will be vulnerable to sudden reversal or bumps along the way. Deep domestic divisions both in Washington, D.C. and within the Iranian leadership mean that internal politics could still get in the way of an agreement that satisfies both parties.

Israel remains a wild card that could also undermine a deal especially as Benjamin Netanyahu begins to prepare for the election season. Moreover, the cavalier nature of US decision-making during the two previous rounds of US-Iran negotiation, in May-June 2025 and February 2026, means that there is a deficit of trust on the Iranian side which will not easily be regained absent a lasting and durable settlement.

While Iranian officials have mocked President Donald Trump's habit of 'negotiating with himself' over the course of the war which began on February 28, they too face a challenge of acting consistently over the way the Strait of Hormuz eventually reopens to maritime traffic. Just as Trump's statements have occasionally been contradictory and at odds with each other over the prospects and content of a deal, so too have Iranian pronouncements on Hormuz. This has added to the frustration both sides feel toward the other and has caused confusion to analysts and industry experts who need clarity to be able to plan and develop next steps.

For shipping and insurance companies, in the Gulf States and around the world, predictability in security will be essential prerequisites to addressing the surging risk assessments that amounted to the de facto closure of the Strait in the opening days of the war.

Much of the focus from industry analysts will be on the detail that structures the resumption of shipping through Hormuz. Iranian negotiators have realised that their early talk of imposing tolls on shipping run contrary to decades of customary international law as laid down by the International Court of Justice in the Corfu Channel Case in 1949. This decision, which remains foundational today, determined the legal regime that governs innocent passage through international straits and affirmed the protection

of navigational rights even in politically sensitive contexts.

However, there is greater leeway in the imposition of charges and fees, such as the service-related charges imposed by Turkiye on ships that pass through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits that connect the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

It is these charges – for issues such as environmental and health factors or search-and-rescue services – which Iranian officials have raised in recent weeks and have suggested might enjoy the support of Oman, the other coastal state bordering Hormuz, as well. It may be that such commentary is an Iranian attempt to spread misinformation or sow discord between Muscat and its Gulf neighbours, but it is the case that any decision by Tehran to impose service-related charges will be harder to challenge than the tolls initially proposed. It is for this reason that the shipping and insurance industries, to say nothing of governments across the world, will watch closely for the terms of the resumption of passage, and for whether any charges are levied unilaterally by Iran alone.

The fact that, pre-war, the shipping channels ran through Omani waters in the Strait of Hormuz, and only briefly entered Iranian waters on their way into and out of the Gulf, strengthens Oman's position considerably.

The other key aspect of restoring innocent passage will be the speed with which transits resume and what takes priority. Around 1500 vessels have been stuck in the Gulf for nearly three months on oil tankers, LNG carriers, and container and dry cargo ships, and they will need to clear the Strait and make their way to intended destinations or home ports. Many of the vessels may have suffered damage from the buildup of marine organisms and algae on their hulls during extended periods of inactivity, which will require extensive cleaning and maintenance before they can return to service. As a result, logistical bottlenecks will likely endure for many months even after 'normal' flows begin to resume; the same goes for the restarting of oil and gas facilities where production has been shut-in since early March.

Finally, insurance companies will monitor the conditions of reopening in practice, rather than just as words on paper, before making any decision on war risk coverage for vessels transiting the Strait. It was the repricing and, in some cases, suspension of war risk premiums and surcharges in early March that was the decisive factor in restricting traffic through Hormuz, rather than any physical blockage by Iran.

The ease with which passage was interrupted took analysts by surprise as it upended prior assumptions that Iran would have to physically disrupt shipping by mining activities or attacking vessels, as they had done during the Tanker War phase of the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s.

Back then, the international community belatedly came together in Operation Earnest Will to establish the largest naval convoy operation since the Second World War to protect shipping, and, in so doing, planted the seeds of the permanent US military presence that continues to this day. It would be ironic if the unintended consequences of the US strikes on Iran in 2026 contributed to the unraveling of the regional order set in motion by those earlier events four decades ago.

• The writer is a leading scholar specialising in Gulf politics and international political economy, and a fellow at the Baker Institute and co-director of the Middle East Energy Roundtable.

Empty guns: How Iran's drone arithmetic is rewriting naval strategy



By Jasim Al-Azzawi

Somewhere in the Persian Gulf, a billion-dollar warship is burning through its ammunition, shooting down drones that cost less than a second-hand car. That quiet arithmetic, a \$4mn interceptor missile destroying a \$20,000 drone, may be the most consequential military equation of our time, and Washington is only beginning to grapple with its implications.

The scenario is not hypothetical. American destroyers operating in contested Gulf waters have been drawn into precisely this kind of exchange in recent months, compelled by doctrine and caution to fire expensive, finite interceptors at cheap, expendable swarms. Each engagement feels like a tactical success. Cumulatively, it is a strategic trap that Tehran has patiently engineered with mathematical precision.

Seneca observed that "we suffer more in imagination than in reality." In the Persian Gulf, the reverse may be true. The real danger is not the drone that the radar catches. It is the cumulative drain that no single engagement reveals.

The math is brutally simple. A US Navy Arleigh Burke-class destroyer carries roughly 96 vertical-launch interceptors, its entire defensive magazine. It cannot reload at sea. Sustain enough drone pressure, and a \$2bn warship eventually floats defenceless. Iran's strategists understand this arithmetic intimately. They may not be able to sink an American destroyer in open battle. But they may not need to. The goal is not destruction. It is exhaustion.

"You don't need to beat the United States Navy. You just need to empty its guns."

Compounding the economics is what intelligence officials describe as a deepening electronic shadow over the Gulf. There are credible, if unconfirmed,

indications that Russian military satellites are providing Iran with real-time targeting intelligence, while military-grade electronic warfare systems are flooding American combat radars with false signals, which one Pentagon assessment grimly labeled a "digital fog." When a radar cannot cleanly distinguish a decoy from an incoming cruise missile, commanders default to shooting. Conservative rules of engagement, sensible in isolation, become catastrophically expensive across a sustained swarm campaign. Every misclassification accelerates the drain. Every phantom target costs a real interceptor.

Carl Jung once observed that "thinking is difficult, which is precisely why most people judge instead." The electronic warfare dimension exploits exactly that vulnerability. When sensors lie, commanders stop analysing and start reacting. Tehran is not merely flooding the skies with drones. It is flooding decision cycles with noise, deliberately engineering the conditions under which snap judgment replaces deliberate thought.

The geography amplifies everything. The Strait of Hormuz, just 21 miles wide at its narrowest point, carries roughly 20% of the world's oil supply through waters that Iran can observe from its own coastline. Any serious escalation in those waters would not remain military for long. Energy markets would register the shock within hours. Analysts warn that sustained conflict near the Strait could send fuel prices spiking dramatically, with cascading effects across every economy that runs on imported oil, which is to say, most of them, including American allies whose political stability Washington cannot afford to take for granted.

American policymakers face an uncomfortable binary that Tehran has carefully constructed. Maintain presence and fight through the swarms: prestige is preserved, but magazines drain and the risk of escalation climbs with every exchange. Stand off and attrition stops, but the image of American ships withdrawing from Iranian pressure carries its own strategic cost, one that adversaries from Beijing to Moscow will measure carefully, and that partners from Riyadh to Tel Aviv will absorb quietly.

There is, defence planners argue, a third path. But it requires intellectual honesty to admit that the current posture is broken, and the institutional courage to say so publicly.

The answer is not to match Iran drone-for-drone, nor to escalate

toward strikes on Iranian territory that would ignite a broader regional war. It is to change the economics of the engagement entirely, to make the swarm tactic expensive for Tehran rather than for the US Navy.

That means investing urgently in close-in, high-volume counter-drone defences, optimised weapons systems, proximity-fused naval guns, and directed-energy platforms, so the Navy stops trading four-million-dollar missiles for twenty-thousand-dollar nuisances. It means hardening ship radars against electronic warfare through frequency agility and multi-sensor fusion, restoring the fire discipline that sensor degradation is deliberately eroding. It means restructuring magazine loadouts to blend expensive interceptors with lower-cost area-effect munitions, and integrating off-board shooters, submarines, manned aircraft, and unmanned platforms, so that no single destroyer bears the full burden of its own defense.

The famous Rumi wrote that "the quieter you become, the more you can hear." The lesson applies with uncomfortable precision to American naval posture. The loudest response – interceptor after interceptor lighting up the Gulf sky – is also the most legible, the most predictable, and the most exploitable. Silence, in strategic terms, means denying Iran the feedback loop it depends on: knowing exactly how many missiles remain in an American magazine.

That deeper rethinking must extend to theatre architecture altogether – deploying crewless picket vessels and standoff surveillance assets to detect swarms earlier, dispersing their concentration before they reach a single hull, and forcing Iranian commanders to solve new tactical problems rather than optimise against a posture they have already mapped.

None of this is fast or cheap. Bureaucracies resist admitting that a regional power with a satellite dish, a drone factory, and a mathematician has outmaneuvered a decades-old playbook. But the alternative, continuing to burn irreplaceable interceptors against a threat engineered specifically to exhaust them, is a strategy that runs out before Iran does.

The United States has rarely lost a naval engagement by firepower. It would be a singular historical irony to lose one by arithmetic.

• The writer is a prominent news anchor, programme presenter and media instructor.

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Trump toughens terms of Iran deal

AFP
Teheran

Iran's chief negotiator warned the United States is not to be trusted yesterday, saying Tehran would not agree to any deal with Washington unless it fully secures Iranian rights.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf's remarks came as reports emerged that US President Donald Trump had sent a tougher peace proposal back to Iran, and underlined the rift that the parties still need to close.

Any further tweaks to the draft could further delay an agreement to formally end the Middle East war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz after weeks of fraught negotiations marked by sharp rhetoric and occasional flare-ups of violence.

The *New York Times* and Axios reported that Trump had sent back a "tougher" new framework to be considered by Iran, though details remain unclear.

Trump has said his priorities include stopping Iran from any nuclear weapon development and re-opening the Hormuz shipping lane, over which Iran has sought to impose control since the war began.

"The one guarantee that I have to have is that there will be no nuclear weapons. They've agreed to that, and it was very interesting," he told his daughter-in-law Lara Trump in an interview on her Fox News show.



US President Donald Trump talks on the phone as he departs the White House for Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia, yesterday. (Reuters)

But Tehran has previously cast doubt on Trump's assertions and the sides remain far apart on key issues.

"We will not approve any agreement until we are certain that the rights of the Iranian people have been upheld," Ghalibaf said, in a video broadcast on state television.

According to the Tasnim news agency, "exchanges between Iran and the United States regarding the text of a possible memorandum of understanding are ongoing, with both parties regularly proposing amendments."

"No agreement has yet been finalised, and it is possible that any agreement will be rejected," it said.

Iran has said it needs the release of \$12bn in frozen assets before engaging in substantive talks on its

nuclear program, dismissing earlier Trump comments that its enriched uranium stockpile would be destroyed as "baseless"; according to Iranian media.

Tehran has also insisted that Lebanon be included in any deal, despite ongoing fighting, with Beirut accusing Israel of a "scorched-earth policy" as it expands operations against Hezbollah.

Though daily strikes throughout Iran and the Gulf halted after Tehran and Washington struck a temporary ceasefire in April and talks mediated by Pakistan, sporadic fighting has continued.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards had shot down a US military drone "about to enter Iranian territorial waters", Iran's state broadcaster IRIB reported, though Washington has not confirmed the incident.

780 arrested in riotous Champions League victory celebrations across France

AFP
Paris

French authorities announced yesterday that 780 people were arrested across the country when overnight celebrations of Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League victory over Arsenal were marred by violent clashes, and a road accident that killed a young man.

Thousands of people poured into the streets of Paris for the match and to revel in PSG's triumph in the final held in the Hungarian capital Budapest late Saturday.

But some mobs clashed with police, around 22,000 of whom were deployed across France after unrest last year when PSG also won the competition.

Highlighting an increased use of fireworks directed at law enforcement, Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said in a press briefing 57 security forces were injured and that there had been "219 participants injured in France, including eight seriously".

The Paris public prosecutor's office announced the death of a young man in his twenties after he crashed head-on into concrete blocks on a Paris ring road exit ramp on his motocross bike.

Another young man was seriously injured in a knife attack in Paris allegedly over a robbery, the prosecutor's office added.

Nunez said a small number of thefts and lootings had taken place in around fifteen cities



A car is set ablaze as PSG supporters celebrate their team's win in the UEFA Champions League final between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Arsenal FC played in Budapest, at Place du Trocadero opposite the Eiffel Tower. (AFP)

across the country and incidents of violence were recorded in 71 municipalities.

The 780 arrests was a 32% increase compared to the celebrations of PSG's Champions League win last year, the minister noted.

Around 100,000 people are expected to gather for a parade including the players yesterday afternoon on the Champs-Élysées in front of the Eiffel Tower, before being received at the Elysee Palace by President Emmanuel Macron.

Nunez promised "a strong law enforcement response" during the players' return celebrations and fines for "obstructing traffic" in the event of any intrusion onto the Paris ring road.

The district mayor of Paris's 8th arrondissement — home to the famed Champs-Élysées

where 20,000 people converged after PSG's victory — called for "zero gatherings" on the iconic avenue as the only way to avoid further violence.

On Saturday night, the "Champs-Élysées avenue and its surroundings ceased to be a place of celebration and became an arena of urban guerrilla warfare", the town hall said in a statement.

"Since it has become impossible to celebrate a match without descending into riots, the only common sense response is a new doctrine: 'zero gatherings'" it demanded.

Nunez dismissed the idea saying it would "tie up almost half of the security deployment". Nearly 6,000 police and gendarmes have been deployed for security during the celebrations yesterday.

Romania traces apartment drone strike to Russia

AFP
Bucharest

Further analysis of a drone that smashed into a Romanian apartment building, sparking furious condemnation of Russia, has shown that it undoubtedly came from Moscow's forces, Bucharest said yesterday.

"The drone that crashed Thursday night in Galati is a Geran-2, of Russian origin," Romania's President Nicusor Dan said in a post on X yesterday.

"This is the unequivocal conclusion of the technical report finalised by experts of the Romanian state," he added.

A 14-year-old boy and a 53-year-old woman were hospitalised on Friday after the drone hit a block of flats in Galati, close to the border with Ukraine.

That marked the first drone hit on a residential building outside Ukraine since Russia started its full-scale invasion in 2022.

Russia's embassy in Romania has accused Ukraine of staging a provocation with the incident, and President Vladimir Putin said Friday that "no one" could determine the aircraft's origin with any

authority until a thorough examination was carried out.

In his post yesterday, which carried four images said to show the device, Romania's Dan said comprehensive technical analysis had been carried out and showed that Russia was "solely responsible".

"The Cyrillic inscription 'EPAH-2' was identified on the recovered fragments, and the analysed electronic components, navigation systems, control modules, engine, and structural elements show similarities — even identical features — to those of other Geran-2 drones previously recovered on Romanian territory," he said.

"Physical and chemical analyses have confirmed the presence of the same types of materials and fuels repeatedly identified in devices of this series," he added.

Dozens of drones have strayed into Romania since the start of the Ukraine war, but no residential buildings had previously been hit.

The drone entered Romania's airspace during Russian strikes on Ukraine, the defence ministry in Bucharest said.

Ukrainian drones hit Russian oil facility in overnight strikes

Reuters
Kyiv

Ukrainian drones struck targets across several Russian regions overnight, including an oil pipeline pumping station, a refinery and a fuel depot, Russian and Ukrainian authorities said yesterday, in an escalating campaign of strikes against energy infrastructure often hundreds of miles inside Russia.

Ukraine's General Staff said it had struck the Saratov oil refinery on the Volga river, causing a large fire. Saratov regional governor Roman Busargin said on Telegram that "civil infrastructure" had been damaged in the strike, but gave no more details.

"During the night, our soldiers applied Ukraine's long-range sanctions against an oil refinery in Saratov, Russia. This is about 700km from the front line," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Not all the drones struck their targets. Russia's Defence Ministry said it had downed 216 drones overnight.

Kyiv said it had also struck the



Firefighters work at a site of a Russian drone strike, in Dnipro, yesterday. (Reuters)

Lazarevo pumping station in the Kirov region, northeast of Moscow and around 1,300km (800 miles) from Ukrainian-held territory, which serves the Surgut-Gorky-Polotsk pipeline, shipping Russian oil from Siberia to Belarus.

Kirov regional governor Alexander Sokolov said drones had hit a facility in the region, but gave no further information.

In the Rostov region, which bor-

ders Ukraine's Donbas, the focus of fighting in the more than four-year-old war, authorities in the town of Matveyev Kurgan said a major fire was burning after drones hit a fuel depot in the town, which adjoins the Russian-held part of Donetsk region. Ukraine confirmed the strike.

Governors in the Voronezh and Belgorod regions, both of which border Ukraine, also reported

damage, with three civilians injured in Belgorod.

On the Russian-controlled Crimean peninsula, Moscow-backed governor Sergei Aksyonov said authorities were introducing restrictions on sales of petrol.

He did not say why, but Ukraine has for months been attacking fuel infrastructure in southwestern Russia, close to Crimea.

Ukraine's air force said Russia had launched 229 drones overnight, 212 of which were downed over northern and eastern Ukraine.

Russia accused Ukraine of hitting a garage at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in occupied Ukrainian territory yesterday. Ukraine's foreign ministry denied the allegation, which followed a separate accusation of a strike on the plant yesterday, which Ukraine also denied.

The UN's nuclear energy watchdog, which has inspectors at the Russian-occupied and administered plant, said yesterday its team observed damage to a turbine building caused by drones on Saturday, but did not specify whose drones.

It said that radiation levels at the site remained normal.

Malta's Labour party wins historic fourth term

AFP
Naxxar

Malta's Labour party won an unprecedented fourth term yesterday in a victory for outgoing Prime Minister Robert Abela, who had called a snap election in light of geopolitical uncertainties.

Fireworks were set off across the tiny Mediterranean island and ecstatic Labour supporters dressed in the party's red chanted "four times!" after officials in the Counting House in Naxxar said preliminary results gave the election to the governing party.

"Today we have written a page in history, together," Abela told cheering crowds from the balcony of the party headquarters.

The 48-year-old had sent the country to vote a year early, saying the government needed a fresh mandate in order to shield the tiny, import-reliant island from the Middle East crisis.

While Malta's economy grew 4.0% last year, there are concerns the conflict could have an impact on tourism due to spiralling aviation fuel costs and drive up inflation.

Abela campaigned on Labour's economic record since 2013, pledging stability in a period of uncertainty.

"I've voted Labour since I was a little girl, I'm thrilled," 73-year-old Margaret Camilleri told AFP, as Labour supporters drove past on a truck with speakers blaring the Queen song "We are the Champions".

Abela's main rival was National-

ist Party (PN) candidate Alex Borg, a 30-year-old lawyer and former "Mr World Malta" beauty pageant winner, who had urged the Maltese to vote for change.

Borg conceded yesterday, saying in an address posted on social media that he had "personally called Robert Abela to congratulate him" on the win.

Abela has led Malta since 2020, when his predecessor quit following a political crisis over the assassination in 2017 of reporter Daphne Caruana Galizia, who exposed corruption at the highest level in the country.

According to a 2025 Council of Europe report, Malta remains significantly behind in the fight against corruption — but the issue was not a hot topic on the campaign trail.

Malta's economic performance trumped other concerns.

Located off the coast of Sicily, Malta is the smallest and most densely populated country in the European Union, with around 550,000 people living in 316 square kilometres (122 square miles).

The island has a thriving economy based largely on tourism, online gaming and financial services, and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the EU.

But despite a low birth rate the population has grown nearly 30% over a decade, driven largely by immigrants.

That has fuelled a construction boom, filling the skyline with cranes, creating traffic bottlenecks and putting a strain on key services.

Heritage groups have denounced environmental degradation and risks



Malta's Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Robert Abela waves to supporters after the party won a record-breaking fourth consecutive general election, at the party headquarters in Hamrun, yesterday. (Reuters)

to Unesco world heritage sites in the former British colony.

The country has very few natural resources and imports much of its energy, leaving it exposed to external shocks.

Labour heavily subsidises energy bills and pledged to continue doing so.

Malta is also on the front line of climate change and at risk of desertification and drought, but neither main party made the issue its priority.

There is a green party, the ADPP, but no third party has held even a seat in Malta's parliament since before independence in 1964.

Fireworks send horses bolting through Rome

Fireworks set off without permission by a traffic policeman during a late-night rehearsal for Italy's Republic Day parade startled dozens of horses, sending them bolting through the capital and injuring several riders, police said.

The unexpected bangs shortly before 11:30pm on Friday caused panic among the ceremonial horses, some of which had riders while others were being led by hand. Around 35 horses fled onto the busy Via Cristoforo Colombo, where some drivers videoed them as they galloped down the road. The last horse was recovered at dawn around 14km (9 miles) from the scene.

Several riders were thrown. A 22-year-old soldier suffered broken ribs and a punctured lung but was not in life-threatening condition. Around 15 horses were injured, but none was put down. Mario De Scavis, commander of Rome's police force, told yesterday's *Corriere della Sera* newspaper that the incident "discredits the image of the Corps and its officers".

The fireworks were set off near the ancient Baths of Caracalla, where mounted units from the army, Carabinieri paramilitary force and police were rehearsing for the annual June 2 parade.

Officials have said a municipal policeman from the traffic emergency unit had lit a battery of fireworks about 200 metres (yards) from the horses. (Reuters)

Italy bans Kanye West concert over security concerns

A concert by the US rapper Kanye West, who was supposed to perform on July 18 in Reggio Emilia in northern Italy, has been banned on public safety grounds, the authorities said.

The prefect of the province, Salvatore Angileri, said the decision was made following requests from bodies including the local Jewish community.

They had "expressed reservations" about the appearance of the rapper as part of the Pulse of Gaia Festival, the statement released on Friday evening said. (AFP)

Katara Hospitality launches 'Summer Your Way'

Katara Hospitality has announced the launch of its highly anticipated "Summer Your Way" campaign, offering exclusive seasonal experiences, luxury staycation packages and family-focused benefits across its portfolio of hotels and resorts in Qatar from June 1 to August 31.

The campaign brings together some of Katara Hospitality's most iconic hospitality destinations under one summer initiative, providing nationals, residents and GCC visitors with exceptional value and access to a diverse collection of luxury hotels, beach resorts, wellness retreats and family entertainment experiences.

Participating properties include The Ritz-Carlton, Doha; Sharq Village & Spa, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel; Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel; Al Messila, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Doha; Fairmont Doha; Raffles Doha; Hilton Salwa Beach Resort & Villas; Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha; Simaisma, a Murwab Resort; Sealine Beach, a Murwab Resort; Jouri, a Murwab Hotel; Mövenpick Hotel Doha; Somerset West Bay Doha; and Dana Club. The "Summer Your Way" campaign re-



Raffles and Fairmont Doha



Sheraton Grand Doha



The Ritz-Carlton Spa Sharq Village

flects Katara Hospitality's commitment to creating meaningful experiences that encourage families to reconnect, explore new destinations within Qatar and enjoy exceptional hospitality closer to home.

By bringing together a broad range of experiences across its local portfolio, Katara Hospitality aims to provide guests with the flexibility to design a summer holiday that matches their individual interests, whether focused on relaxation, adventure, wellness, gastronomy or family entertainment.

Building on this momentum, Katara Hospitality's summer campaign aims to

create memorable experiences for families, couples and leisure travellers seeking luxury escapes within Qatar while supporting the continued growth of domestic tourism and staycation demand.

The "Summer Your Way" offer is exclusively available across participating Katara Hospitality hotels and resorts in Qatar, rewarding guests with greater value and benefits based on the length of their stay.

Guests booking a one-night stay can enjoy 20% savings on the best available room rate, hotel-operated restaurants and spa treatments.

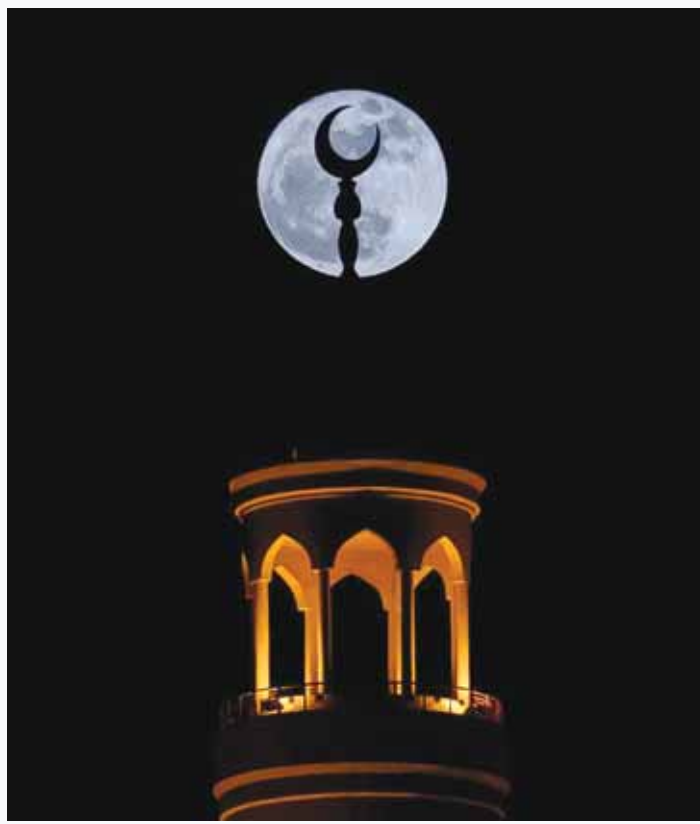
participating hotel-operated outlets and spa treatments, creating one of the most attractive luxury staycation offers available in Qatar this summer.

Recognising the growing demand for day experiences and leisure escapes without overnight stays, the campaign also introduces dedicated benefits for visitors wishing to enjoy hotel facilities during the summer season.

Guests can receive 25% savings on participating restaurants and cafés, spa treatments, pool and beach access, as well as admission to selected attractions, including Desert Falls Water & Adventure Park, one of the region's largest waterpark destinations.

Across the portfolio, participating hotels and resorts have curated an extensive calendar of family-focused activities, wellness programmes, culinary experiences and entertainment designed to appeal to guests of all ages.

This summer, Katara Hospitality invites families, friends and loved ones to discover, relax and create memorable moments together across some of Qatar's most iconic destinations.



The rare Blue Moon rises over illuminated architectural features in Doha yesterday. Visible after sunset, the full Dhu Al-Hijjah Moon marked the second full moon of the month, a phenomenon known as a Blue Moon and the first seen from Qatar since August 2023. **PICTURES:** Noushad Thekayil

Blue Moon lights up the night sky

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Residents across Qatar witnessed the rare Blue Moon phenomenon last evening as the full Dhu Al-Hijjah Moon rose over the country's skies, providing a striking celestial spectacle that will not recur until late 2028.

The event reached its full phase at 11:45am Doha time, according to the Qatar Calendar House (QCH), before becoming visible after sunset. The Moon rose at approximately 6:39pm and remained visible throughout the night, allowing residents to observe the phenomenon with the naked eye from across the country.

Astronomy experts noted that despite its name, the Blue Moon did not appear blue. The term refers to the occurrence of a second full moon within a single calendar month, a relatively rare event that typically takes place once every two to three years. May 2026 opened with a full moon on May 1 and concluded with another on May 31, fulfilling the conditions required for a Blue Moon. QCH astronomy expert Bashir Marzouq had explained ahead of the event that two conditions must be met for a Blue Moon to occur: the presence of two full moons within the same Gregorian month and the alignment of the lunar cycle, which averages about 29.5 days.

The phenomenon carried additional astronomical significance as this year's Blue Moon also coincided with a "Micromoon", meaning the Moon reached its full phase while near apogee, the farthest point in its orbit from Earth.

As a result, it appeared slightly smaller and dimmer than a typical full moon, although the difference was difficult to detect with the naked eye.

Skywatchers gathered at waterfront locations, open areas and desert vantage points to observe the event, with many noting the Moon's golden-orange appearance shortly after moonrise before it gradually assumed its familiar silvery-white glow higher in the night sky.

The Blue Moon was the first visible from Qatar since August 2023. Astronomers said the next monthly Blue Moon is not expected until December 2028, underscoring the rarity of the event and the origin of the popular expression "once in a blue moon".

The spectacle served as a reminder of the enduring public interest in astronomy and celestial events, drawing the attention of residents and photography enthusiasts alike as Qatar's skies hosted one of the year's most notable lunar displays.



Ayoub Benchaabane



Amna Jassim al-Marzouqi



Engy Ashraf



Salman Ahmed al-Jehani



Fatima Abdullah al-Kuwari



Sirin Hamouda

QF school graduates celebrate graduation, look ahead to new academic journeys

As graduation approaches, students from Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Pre-University Education (PUE) schools are preparing to begin a new chapter in their lives, carrying with them academic and personal experiences that have shaped their character and future aspirations.

Between academics, sports, competitions, and student-led initiatives, Ayoub Benchaabane made his years at Qatar Academy Doha (QAD) a journey that extended beyond the classroom.

By taking advantage of opportunities offered through the QF, he developed his interests, leadership skills, and personal growth.

Benchaabane reflects proudly on the experiences that shaped him and said:

"I feel very excited about what lies ahead, while also feeling proud of everything I achieved throughout my educational journey," he said.

During his time at the QAD, Benchaabane balanced academics with extracurricular activities, participating in mathematics competitions, Model United Nations conferences, and representing the QF in a basketball championship in China.

Since her early years at Qatar Academy Al Wakra, Amna Jassim al-Marzouqi has been on a journey shaped by friendships, learning, and opportunities that have strengthened her confidence and character.

Reflecting on her school years, she said: "It has been a very beautiful experience. I learned so much about life and academics."

As graduation approaches, al-Marzouqi described her emotions as "mixed feelings".

"I don't want to leave school, but at the same time I feel proud that I reached this stage and accomplished it," she said.

Between challenges, memories, and

personal growth, Engy Ashraf views her graduation from Qatar Academy Al Khor as a milestone that shaped her character and prepared her for the future.

Reflecting on her school years, she said: "I went through everything a person could experience at school, from stress and sadness to joy and happiness."

"I feel like I built a family, not just friendships," Ashraf added.

Looking ahead, she said: "I'm grateful to have reached this stage, and I feel that every challenge and experience helped shape the person I am today."

She hopes to continue learning, meeting new people, and using her experiences to positively impact others worldwide someday.

For Salman Ahmed al-Jehani, a graduate of Qatar Leadership Academy, school was a journey shaped by discipline, responsibility, and leadership.

Reflecting on his experience, he said: "It

was a completely new and different experience for me, but it helped me face challenges, become more independent, and go through experiences that shaped my personality in a significant way."

For al-Jehani, graduation represents both an achievement and a new beginning.

"Graduation, for me, marks the end of a long journey of effort and the beginning of a new stage that we have been well prepared for," he stated.

For Fatima Abdullah al-Kuwari, a graduate of Awsaj Academy, graduation reflects years of learning, challenges, and meaningful relationships that helped shape her personality and future aspirations.

Reflecting on her journey, she said: "I feel extremely proud to have reached this stage after spending 12 years at school."

At the same time, al-Kuwari admitted feeling sad about leaving behind "people who felt like family."

Throughout her educational journey, she participated in Model United Nations conferences, human rights initiatives, and environmental and sustainability projects that contributed to the school receiving the Green Flag award as part of the Eco-Schools programme.

For Sirin Hamouda, a graduate of Qatar Academy for Science and Technology, graduation represents more than the end of school – it reflects years of growth and experiences within the QF.

"Right now, I feel happiness more than anything else," she said, adding that receiving her diploma will bring "completely different emotions" after spending most of her life at the QF.

Reflecting on these experiences, she said: "Over time, I became eager to take part in every volunteering opportunity available to me, because I realised these experiences help me grow and give me new perspectives."