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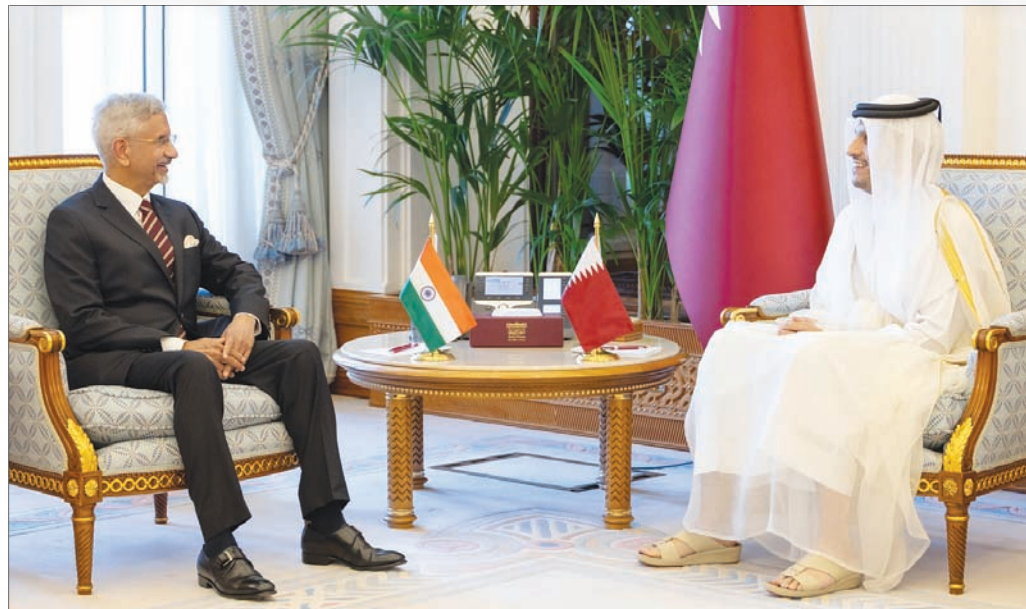
SCAN TO SHOP

PM receives Saudi message, holds calls with counterparts

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a written message from Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud yesterday, pertaining to bilateral relations. HE the Prime Minister received the message during a meeting with Saudi ambassador to Qatar Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad al-Saud. Separately, the Prime Minister held phone calls with the foreign ministers of Turkiye, Jordan and Ghana, reviewing bilateral cooperation and the latest regional developments. In his call with Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, they discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on regional developments, particularly diplomatic efforts to enhance security and stability following the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran. The call also touched on a number of issues of mutual concern. The Prime Minister held a similar call with Jordan's Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi, in which they discussed bilateral cooperation and ways to further strengthen ties, along with regional developments and the diplomatic push for security and stability following the US-Iran memorandum, as well as other issues of mutual interest. The PM also fielded a call from Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic Jean-Noel Barrot with the two discussing bilateral cooperation, the latest regional developments, particularly in Lebanon, and diplomatic efforts to promote security and stability in the region following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran as well as other issues of mutual interest. HE the Prime Minister also spoke with Ghana's Foreign Minister Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, with the two reviewing bilateral cooperation and the latest regional developments, particularly efforts to promote security and stability following the US-Iran memorandum, and other matters of mutual concern. (QNA) Page 2

Qatar, India review ties, energy



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. They discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and develop them, particularly in the economic field, along with regional developments and their impact on the global economy and energy markets, as well as several other issues of common interest.

Both sides stressed the importance of resolving disputes and conflicts through dialogue and diplomatic means, which contributes to strengthening security and stability at the regional and international levels. They agreed to continue enhancing cooperation on a number of priority issues for Qatar and India by activating joint working mechanisms and bilateral committees between the two countries. (QNA)

Successor not seen at funeral of Khamenei

Three of late Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei's sons made a rare public appearance at his funeral yesterday, but there was still no sign of his successor and other son, Mojtaba Khamenei. Crowds of thousands filled the Grand Mosalla religious complex in Tehran for a second day to attend the ceremonies for Khamenei and four family members killed on February 28 in Israeli air strikes based on US intelligence. As well as laying to rest the man who ruled Iran for over three-and-a-half decades, the funerals are a chance for the authorities to burnish their resilience after five weeks at war with Israel and the US. The ceremonies were marked by the appearance of Khamenei's eldest son Mostafa and younger siblings Masoud and Meysam, all clerics. But their presence highlighted the absence of Mojtaba Khamenei, named supreme leader shortly after his father's killing but yet to appear in public. Officials have said he was wounded in the airstrikes, though the severity of his injuries remains unclear. So far he has communicated only through written statements, amid speculation he is too badly hurt or too concerned over the risks of being targeted to emerge. A funeral procession is planned for today in Tehran, followed by events in Qom tomorrow and in Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday, culminating in Khamenei's burial in his hometown of Mashhad on Thursday. The burial will be closely watched to see if Mojtaba Khamenei appears. The Middle East war is on hold following a ceasefire and an initial accord with the US, but both sides have warned they are ready to resume action. Vengeance was a major theme at the funerals, with mourners demanding punishment for those behind the killings. (AFP)



Mojtaba Khamenei

MoCI, QatarEnergy sign up ToR Pact to steer hydrocarbon resources into industry

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

THE Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) and QatarEnergy signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) yesterday for the establishment and implementation of a governance mechanism for the allocation of hydrocarbon-derived resources to industrial investment opportunities and to develop a new medium industries area in Mesaieed Industrial City (MIC). The agreement was signed by Saleh Majid al-Khulafi, Assistant Undersecretary for Industrial Affairs and Business Development at MoCI, and Ahmad Saeed al-Amoodi, executive vice-president for Surface Development and Sustainability at QatarEnergy. HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal al-Thani and HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabbi, who is also president and CEO of QatarEnergy, witnessed the signing ceremony. HE Sheikh Faisal said: "This



The ToR stipulates the evaluation and allocation of hydrocarbon-derived resources, natural gas, power, and related natural resources to downstream derivative industrial investment opportunities. It will also ensure the optimal use of national resources and enhance the added value of the industrial sector by establishing a joint governance framework to evaluate and allocate resources required by qualified industrial investment opportunities. HE Sheikh Faisal said: "This

agreement represents a strategic step towards enhancing the competitiveness of the industrial sector in Qatar by establishing a joint governance framework that ensures the optimal use of national resources and directs them towards value-added industrial investment opportunities, thus helping attract qualitative investments and supporting sustainable industrial growth. "Through this agreement, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will lead efforts to attract industrial investments, connect

with investors, and coordinate the industrial ecosystem, while QatarEnergy will provide technical and commercial expertise related to resource allocation and utilisation." He added: "This comes as part of the ministry's efforts to strengthening the industrial investment environment, supporting economic diversity, and achieving sustainable development in Qatar as stipulated by Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy." To Page 2

Qatar fully resumes maritime navigation

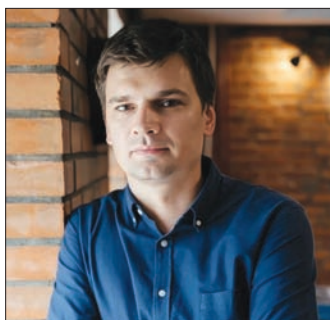
Qatar has fully resumed maritime navigation for all types of vessels and ships, the Ministry of Transport (MoT) announced yesterday. In a circular posted on its official X account, the ministry said the resumption takes effect from the date of issuance, allowing navigation activities to return to normal for all categories of maritime vessels and ships. The move lifts a precautionary suspension a few days ago. The MoT had, then, advised owners and users of maritime vessels — including leisure boats, fishing boats and jet skis — to temporarily halt sailing and all maritime activities until further notice. That measure, taken in coordination with the concerned security bodies, was aimed at ensuring public safety, with updates to be announced through official channels. The MoT urged all seafarers and operators to adhere to the maritime regulations and instructions in effect, and to ensure the availability of safety and security equipment on board to guarantee the highest levels of safety and security for all voyages.

AI curiosity is shaping young minds in Qatar: expert

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

CHILDREN in Qatar are showing strong engagement with AI tools and social media platforms, reflecting global digital trends while carving out unique patterns of curiosity, according to an industry expert. "YouTube remains the primary content platform for children, accounting for nearly a quarter of all app time among children in Qatar, a pattern consistent with global trends," Andrey Sidenko, Cyber Literacy Projects lead at Kaspersky, told Gulf Times in an exclusive interview. He said Google Chrome and WhatsApp follow as the second

and third most popular apps, underscoring the breadth of digital activity among young users. According to Sidenko, children's interests are diverse, spanning education, global sporting events, music, gaming, and content creators. AI-related apps and services already make up a quarter of all Google searches among children, underscoring their readiness to adopt emerging technologies. This trend demonstrates that children are naturally curious about new technologies and are often among the earliest adopters of digital innovations, he said. Sidenko noted that children perceive AI tools as learning companions, creative assistants, and entertainment platforms, using



Andrey Sidenko, Cyber Literacy Projects lead at Kaspersky.

them for schoolwork, curiosity, and content creation. Unlike traditional search engines, Sidenko explained that AI systems offer conversational interactions that feel more engag-

ing and intuitive, particularly for younger users. Educators and families face the challenge of guiding this early adoption with digital literacy and critical thinking skills, rather than restricting access altogether. He said: "The goal should be to equip them with the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to benefit from technology safely rather than restrict it altogether." Parents are encouraged to foster open conversations about technology, building digital hygiene habits and encouraging children to verify information. "Children learn very quickly, and technology develops just as rapidly. It's perfectly acceptable for parents to turn to their child for help mastering a particular

technology or service, whether it's social media, a computer game, or even AI," he stressed, adding that parental control solutions, such as Kaspersky Safe Kids can provide additional support by giving parents visibility into online activities while respecting independence. As children in Qatar continue to explore AI tools and digital platforms, Sidenko reiterated that the balance between curiosity and responsibility will define how this generation navigates the online world. He added: "With AI tools becoming a part of everyday life, whether this is amongst adults or children, in educational or professional settings, it is important to embrace new technologies rather than avoid them altogether."

PM receives message from Saudi minister



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a written message yesterday from Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah al-Saud, pertaining to bilateral relations. HE Sheikh Mohammed received the message during his meeting yesterday with Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Qatar Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Algeria's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of congratulations to Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of

congratulations to Tebboune. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Algeria's Prime Minister Sifi Ghrieb on the occasion. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Venezuela's Rodriguez

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of congratulations to Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodríguez on the occasion of her country's Independence Day. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah

bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent similar cables of congratulations to Rodríguez on the occasion. - **QNA**

PM congratulates Korea's new prime minister

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations

yesterday to Han Seong-sook on the occasion of her appointment as the prime minister of the Republic of Korea. - **QNA**

PM meets North Macedonia minister



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with North Macedonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Timco Mucunski, who is visiting the country. The meeting discussed bilateral cooperation relations and ways to support and develop them, in addition to a host of topics of mutual interest. - **QNA**

Lekhwiya is awarded Venezuela's 'Heroes' medal

Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodríguez has awarded the "Heroes of Venezuela" medal to the Qatar International Search and Rescue Group of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), in recognition of their humanitarian efforts during rescue and relief operations following the twin earthquakes that struck the country. This honour recognises the Qatar team's successful relief missions, during which it demonstrated a high level of professionalism, rapid response, and commitment to humanitarian duty, setting an example of international cooperation in disaster response, mitigating its effects, and alleviating the suffering of those affected. - **QNA**



Qatar, North Macedonia sign accords

A round of political talks was held yesterday in Doha between the foreign ministries of Qatar and North Macedonia. The Qatari side was headed by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, while the Macedonian side was headed by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Timcho Mucunski.

During the political talks, relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them were discussed, in addition to a number of issues of common interest.

Following the talks, the two governments signed three agreements: an agreement to establish political consultations between the two foreign ministries, an agreement in the field of diplomatic training and development, and an agreement on the mutual exemption from entry visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, special, and official passports.

The agreements were signed on behalf of Qatar by HE al-Muraikhi, and on behalf of the Macedonian side by Mucunski. - **QNA**

Labour minister meets Kuwait's ambassador

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Samikh al-Marri met yesterday with Kuwait's ambassador to Qatar Ahmad bin Abdulrahman al-Shuraim. They discussed bilateral cooperation and relations in the labour sector, and explored ways to further strengthen and enhance them. - **QNA**



Experts hail labour law amendments

Labour law amendments set up a legislative framework to balance labour relations, boost economic competitiveness, say experts

The amendments to Labour Law No. 9 of 2026, which amend some provisions of the Labour Law issued by Law No. 14 of 2004, issued by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, embody a significant step in the evolution of labour legislation.

The changes aim to bolster the competitiveness of the national economy, enhance the labour market's efficiency, and create a more stable and attractive business environment for investment, all while aligning with the requirements of economic development and the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The amendments also represent a strategic step toward establishing legal and regulatory frameworks for part-time and freelance work through implementing decisions to be issued at a later stage.

The measures are expected to provide businesses with greater flexibility in utilising skilled talent and expertise while accommodating modern labour market trends, including the platform and services economy.

Specialists and experts interviewed by the Qatar News Agency (QNA) said that Law No. 9 of 2026 is expected to have a positive impact on project execution, workplace safety standards, the reduction of professional errors, operational efficiency, and the competitiveness of Qatar's labour market.

They highlighted training and professional qualification requirements as among the law's most significant reforms.

Dr Rajab Ismail, a professor of economics at Qatar University (QU), told the Qatar News Agency (QNA) that one of the most significant provisions of Law No. 9 of 2026, which has entered into force in accordance with its provisions, is the introduction of mandatory professional qualifications.

He described the measure as a key positive development, noting that most projects require specialised expertise and that academic credentials alone are no longer sufficient.

Dr Ismail added that many advanced economies require professional certifications for certain occupations.

Dr Ismail also pointed to the regulation of modern forms of employment as one of the law's major reforms.

These include establishing a legal framework for part-time and freelance work in line with labour market needs, as well as strengthening oversight of

recruitment agencies through stricter supervision and new regulations aimed at improving service quality and protecting both employers and workers.

He added that another major reform is the acceleration of labour dispute resolution through updated procedures designed to expedite the adjudication of disputes and strengthen the protection of rights.

The amendments also regulate non-compete clauses by introducing clearer rules governing their application after the termination of employment, balancing employers' interests with workers' right to seek employment.

Dr Ismail noted that the law also introduces mandatory professional qualifications for certain occupations, including requirements to obtain training certificates or pass professional examinations for specific jobs, with the aim of improving efficiency, productivity, and workplace safety.



Dr Ismail also noted that the amendments update provisions governing recruitment and employment relations to reflect evolving economic and social conditions while reinforcing labour market stability in Qatar.

The director of the Legal Affairs Department at the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), Nasser Marzouq Sultan al-Marri, told the QNA that the labour law amendments mark a significant milestone in advancing respect for and protection of workers' rights in Qatar.

He said the amendments usher in a new phase of balanced labour relations and strengthen workers' rights to safe and healthy working conditions.

Al-Marri said the amendments reinforce guarantees ensuring workers' access to domestic grievance and redress mechanisms, further solidifying Qatar's standing as an attractive and secure labour market founded on justice and mutual respect between employers and employees.

He noted that the amendments reflect recommendations and observations submitted by the NHRC.

He said that the NHRC welcomes the legal safeguards introduced by the

new law, including the development of the regulatory framework governing worker recruitment and the guarantee of workers' right to engage in peaceful strikes when employers fail to meet their obligations.

In this regard, al-Marri said, the NHRC highly values the provisions of Article 124, which require enterprises employing 100 or more workers to establish joint committees with equal representation from employers and workers.

He added that this reflects a progressive approach and demonstrates the Qatari legislature's recognition of the importance of partnership and shared responsibility in the workplace.

The official reaffirmed the NHRC's support for the consultative approach adopted in labour issues and its commitment to continuing efforts to promote a culture of human rights in the workplace, while maintaining its oversight and advisory role to ensure the effective implementation of the law.

He also urged employers and workers to make full use of the new mechanisms established under Law No. 9 of 2026 to reinforce the principles of justice and effective redress.

Qatar Society of Engineers (QSE) chairperson Eng. Amna Mohammed al-Naama welcomed the issuance of Law No. 9 of 2026, telling the QNA that the reforms represent an important step toward developing and regulating the labour market while elevating technical and skilled trades through the institutionalisation of professional training and certification.

She said that linking the practice of certain professions to mandatory training, professional qualifications, and competency examinations reflects the Ministry of Labour's forward-looking vision for building a more professional and sustainable labour market.

Al-Naama added that the reforms also create opportunities for professional institutions and national training centres to contribute to preparing qualified personnel capable of meeting the country's development needs.

She said the next phase will require close coordination among government agencies, professional organisations, and training centres to develop national and professional talent.

In that context, al-Naama said that the QSE, through the Qatar Academy for Engineering and Vocational Training, stands ready to support this national effort by offering specialised training and qualification programmes that align with the requirements of the Ministry of Labour and contribute to achieving the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030. - **QNA**



Saleh Majid al-Khulafi, Assistant Undersecretary for Industrial Affairs and Business Development at the MoCI, and Ahmad Saeed al-Amoodi, executive vice-president for Surface Development and Sustainability at QatarEnergy, signed the agreement in the presence of HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani bin Faisal al-Thani and HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, who is also president and chief executive of QatarEnergy.

MoCI and QatarEnergy sign Terms of Reference

From Page 1

Al-Kaabi said: "We are pleased to sign these Terms of Reference, which will support the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's effort to develop an expansion in Mesaieed Industrial City to accommodate more medium industries."

"In this respect, QatarEnergy has pledged to supply this expansion with natural gas quantities equal to those dedicated to the small and medium industries in Doha's Industrial Area," he said.

Under the terms of the agreement, QatarEnergy and the MoCI will establish a working team that will oversee the allocation of hydrocarbon-derived resources for qualifying industrial investment opportunities.

The team will seek assistance from other relevant stakeholders as needed, including the Ministry of Finance, Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), Invest Qatar, Qatar Free Zones Authority or other Special Economic Zones representatives as applicable, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Qatar Development Bank (QDB), and any other stakeholder as required.

The MoCI will lead on investor engagement, opportunity sourcing, and ecosystem coordination, while QatarEnergy shall provide technical and commercial evaluation expertise related to resource allocation and utilisation.

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MoECC concludes summer training programme for QU, UDST students

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), represented by the Hazardous Chemicals and Waste Department, concluded its summer training programme for students of Qatar University (QU) and University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), with the participation of 30 male and female students, as part of its efforts to support national capacity building, qualify young talents, and enhance their contribution to the sustainable development process.

The ministry said in a statement yesterday that the training programme extended over nine weeks for UDST students, and six weeks for QU students to develop students' knowledge of modern concepts of environmental sustainability, and introduce them to the

most prominent strategic initiatives and projects implemented by the Ministry in the areas of green development, environmental protection, and natural resource management.

The ministry indicated that the programme, during its activities in the first and second weeks, focused on linking the academic aspect with practical and field applications, enabling students to directly learn about the specialisations of the various departments in the ministry, which contributes to refining their skills and preparing qualified national cadres capable of supporting national efforts in the fields of environmental protection and sustainability.

The ministry explained that the programme began for UDST students by receiving them in the



Hazardous Chemicals and Waste Department, which took over the supervision of the implementation of the programme and coordination with the relevant departments, allowing the students the opportunity to learn about the ministry's specialisations and gain scientific and practical experiences

through specialised lectures, field visits, and practical applications.

During the programme, UDST students participated in training programmes in cooperation with the Radiation Protection Department and Green Development and Environmental Sustainability Department, where they learned

the fundamentals of radiation protection, radiation safety requirements, safe uses of radiation technologies, and radiation monitoring and inspection.

The students were also briefed on the ministry's efforts in sustainability, circular economy, green finance, biodiversity, and the role of modern technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in supporting environmental work.

QU students also began their training programme in green development management and environmental sustainability, where they learned about sustainability concepts, the circular economy, and related national initiatives, and presented applied projects that promote innovation in finding sustainable environmental solutions.

The students continued their

training in the Environmental Assessment and Permit Department, where they learned about environmental impact assessment procedures and the issuance of environmental permits, efforts to protect the marine environment and preserve biodiversity, and topics related to environmental pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and renewable energy projects.

The ministry affirmed that the programme comes within the framework of its ongoing commitment to developing national talent and enhancing cooperation with academic institutions, contributing to the preparation of young cadres capable of supporting the path of sustainable development and protecting the environment in the State of Qatar. (QNA)

UDST signs MoU with Qatar Armed Forces Medical Services

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Qatar Armed Forces Medical Services, reinforcing cooperation in education, training, research, and knowledge exchange to support the development of highly qualified healthcare professionals and advance applied learning opportunities in Qatar.

The agreement was signed by Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST; and Major General Dr Abdulrahman Ali Alabdulmalik, commander of Qatar Armed Forces Medical Services.

The MoU establishes a framework for collaboration in several key areas, including joint academic programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels, management of UDST internship and research students at Military Medical City Hospital, project-based collaborative activities, organisation of joint conferences, seminars, symposiums and lectures, academic and clinical staff exchange, and research collaboration.

Dr Al-Naemi said: "This memorandum of understanding reflects our commitment to building meaningful partnerships that enhance applied learning, research, and professional development.

"Through our collaboration with Qatar Armed Forces Medical Services, we aim to create valuable opportunities for students, faculty, and healthcare professionals while supporting the development of a highly skilled workforce that contributes to Qatar's national priorities and future aspirations."

The partnership reflects the shared commitment of both institutions to advancing applied education and strengthening col-

laboration between academia and the healthcare sector. Through this cooperation, students will benefit from enhanced experiential learning opportunities, while faculty and healthcare professionals will engage in collaborative initiatives that contribute to knowledge creation and professional development.

The agreement also supports the exchange of expertise and the development of future initiatives that contribute to healthcare education, research excellence, and workforce development in Qatar.

Major General Dr Alabdulmalik added: "This agreement reflects the importance of collaboration between academic institutions

and the healthcare sector in developing highly qualified professionals equipped with the knowledge and skills required to meet the evolving demands of healthcare. This partnership reflects our commitment to investing in the future of healthcare by supporting the education and training of the next generation of medical professionals. The Military Medical City Hospital is proud to serve as a centre of clinical excellence, providing learners with access to advanced medical technologies, highly specialised expertise, and a dynamic healthcare environment that fosters excellence, innovation, and lifelong learning."



NCSA, beIN MEDIA GROUP sign MoU to enhance cybersecurity awareness, capacity building

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) and beIN MEDIA GROUP have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening cooperation in the fields of cybersecurity awareness and national capacity building.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the National Cyber Security Agency by Dalal al-Aqeedi, Assistant Director of Cyber Security Policies and Strategies Department, and on behalf of beIN MEDIA GROUP by Hamad al-Sheikh, Human Resources Director for the Middle East and North Africa, in the presence of senior officials from both parties.

The MoU reflects the shared commitment of both parties to expanding cooperation between the government and media sectors in support of national efforts to enhance cybersecurity and promote digital awareness across the State of Qatar.

For her part, Dalal al-Aqeedi, Assistant Director of the Cyber Security Policies and Strategies Department at the National Cyber Security Agency, stated that the MoU establishes a framework for collaboration on future initiatives and projects related to cybersecurity and digital safety, reinforcing national efforts to build a secure and digitally aware society.

The MoU outlines cooperation across several areas, most notably offering training opportunities to beIN MEDIA GROUP employees through the Agency's specialised national programmes, including the Graduate Bootcamp, Professionals Programme, Managers Programme, and Leaders Programme, in addition to participation in cybersecurity workshops and awareness sessions.

Hamad al-Sheikh, Human Resources Director at beIN MEDIA GROUP, stated that the partnership reflects the growing importance of cybersecurity as a cornerstone of national security in the State of Qatar, particularly in light of the rapidly evolving cyber threats targeting individuals, organisations, and critical infrastructure.

He emphasised that awareness and training constitute the first line of defence against cyber threats, and that investing in a strong security culture is as critical as investing in advanced technologies, given its pivotal role

in strengthening resilience and mitigating cyber risks.

He further stated that the collaboration reflects beIN MEDIA GROUP's commitment to supporting the national cybersecurity ecosystem through raising awareness, developing capabilities, and strengthening the protection of its digital infrastructure, to ensure the continuity of its media and sports services in accordance with the highest standards of security and reliability.

He added that the partnership is aligned with the State of Qatar's strategy to establish a secure national cybersecurity ecosystem founded on partnership, innovation, national capacity building, and enhanced preparedness to address evolving cyber threats.

The MoU further encompasses cooperation in promoting the Agency's national training programmes and initiatives through beIN MEDIA GROUP's internal channels and digital platforms, supporting the dissemination of cybersecurity and digital safety awareness campaigns and public service announcements across its media platforms and television channels, and exploring opportunities to develop and produce awareness content and programmes for children on cybersecurity and digital safety, thereby promoting digital awareness among younger generations and fostering safe online practices.

The MoU forms part of the National Cyber Security Agency's ongoing efforts to strengthen strategic partnerships with national and regional entities and leverage influential platforms to raise cybersecurity awareness and promote a culture of safe and responsible use of technology, in support of Qatar's cybersecurity and digital safety objectives.

The National Cyber Security Agency continues to implement a range of national initiatives and programmes aimed at enhancing cybersecurity awareness, developing national capabilities, and strengthening digital readiness across all segments of society, thereby contributing to a secure and trusted digital environment that supports Qatar's development and digital transformation agenda. (QNA)

Qatar National Library's 'My Mentor' programme empowers graduates to shape their future

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Recent graduates Bdour Saeed Bakhams and Mai Khamis al-Mansouri have praised the Qatar National Library (QNL)'s new "My Mentor" (*murshidi* in Arabic) Academic Mentoring Programme, describing it as a valuable initiative that combines practical guidance with meaningful mentorship to help young people navigate their academic and professional journeys.

The two graduates, who completed their studies in Management Information Systems and taxation at Qatar University in June, took part in the programme's introductory session held on July 4.

They spoke to *Gulf Times* and highlighted the programme's interactive approach and the opportunity to connect directly with experienced academics and professionals from across Qatar.

Bakhams said the programme exceeded her expectations by offering practical advice rather than theoretical guidance.

"What impressed me most was the opportunity to interact directly with experienced mentors who

understand the challenges students and recent graduates face," she said.

"The programme provides realistic guidance that can help participants make informed decisions about their future" Bakhams added. "I believe the one-on-one mentoring sessions will be especially valuable in building confidence and identifying the right academic and career paths."

Al-Mansouri described the initiative as an important platform for young graduates preparing to enter the labour market.

"The programme creates a supportive environment where participants can benefit from the experiences of accomplished professionals," she said. "It gives us the chance to ask questions, receive personalised advice, and better understand the opportunities available to us. I am confident the mentoring experience will strengthen my professional skills and help me plan my career with greater clarity."

Organised by the QNL, the "My Mentor" programme is designed to support students and graduates in making informed academic and career decisions.

The initiative draws on the expertise of academics, profession-



A session of the 'My Mentor' programme.

als from Education City, alumni networks, and specialists from institutions across Qatar.

The programme begins with an introductory session that familiarises participants with its objectives, mentoring framework, and available services.

Participants could also meet prospective mentors before selecting one whose academic background and professional experience best match their aspirations.

Following the orientation, each participant is paired with a mentor for a series of weekly one-on-one sessions that provide personalised guidance on academic planning, university applications, scholarships, career development, and professional growth.

The mentoring relationship is designed to equip participants with practical insights, expand their professional networks, and enhance their readiness for higher education and the job market.

The initiative targets high school students preparing for university, university students approaching graduation, and recent graduates beginning their careers.

Through "My Mentor", the QNL aims to foster direct connections between young people and experienced professionals, enabling participants to gain real-world perspectives, develop essential skills, explore educational and career opportunities, and make confident decisions about their futures.

QC implements 28 projects in Burkina Faso

Qatar Charity (QC), through its Burkina Faso Branch, has implemented a series of projects and activities across several regions of the country, as part of its ongoing humanitarian and development efforts.

The initiatives included the implementation of 28 development projects, alongside participation in key national activities, highlighting the vital role played by Qatar Charity in supporting sustainable development efforts and strengthening cooperation with government institutions and development partners.

The projects included the inauguration of four mosques in several areas. Each mosque comprises a 70sq m prayer hall, four sanitation units, and ablution facilities, providing suitable spaces for worship and serving the needs of local communities.

Qatar Charity also inaugurated two Quran Memorisation Centres in two different areas. Each centre covers an area of 306sq m and consists of classrooms, a boarding facility, a dining hall, a kitchen, and other integrated service facilities, helping enhance educational opportunities for younger generations.

In the water sector, the QC inaugurated 30m-deep wells in various locations, improving access to clean water and reducing the burden on residents.



As part of its economic empowerment efforts, the QC handed over 20 shops to low-income families, enabling beneficiaries to establish sustainable sources of income and improve their living conditions.

These initiatives align closely with Burkina Faso's National Sustainable Development Strategy, focusing on education, water, and sanitation.

The beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the improvements in their lives, saying that these projects contributed to meeting basic needs, enhancing educational opportunities, and promoting Islamic values.

Local officials lauded the efforts and their positive impact, stressing the need for ongoing cooperation to drive comprehensive, long-term development. (QNA)

SJC, QC launch humanitarian partnership

The Enforcement Court and the Alaqraabon Centre of Qatar Charity (QC) have signed a memorandum of cooperation aimed at providing an integrated support system for custodial children.

The Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) said in a statement yesterday that this step reflects Qatar's commitment to enhancing child protection, consolidating family stability, and institutional cooperation between the judicial and charitable sectors, in order to achieve the goals of the National Initiative to Develop Justice Systems.

Under the memorandum, the two parties will cooperate in providing a package of humanitarian and social services, including urgent living assistance, support for the basic needs of foster and needy families, and contributing to providing educational support for children, in addition



tion to implementing programmes and activities that contribute to enhancing their psychological and social stability, in accordance with the approved regulations, rules and policies.

HE the Deputy President of the Enforcement Court Judge Mohammed Khalifa al-Kubaisi said

that the memorandum establishes an effective institutional partnership to support custodial children and deserving families.

Alaqraabon Centre executive director Faisal Rashid al-Fehaidi said that the memorandum represents a humanitarian partnership with a sustainable impact. (QNA)

QIB encourages sustainable choices on 'International Plastic Bag Free Day'

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) marked 'International Plastic Bag Free Day' with an internal awareness initiative encouraging sustainable everyday practices among its employees and promoting greater environmental responsibility. As part of the initiative, QIB distributed reusable tote bags to employees across its offices, encouraging them to reduce their reliance on single-use plastic bags and adopt more environmentally friendly habits in their daily lives. The initiative reflects the bank's commitment to promoting sustainability through simple yet impactful actions that contribute to protecting the environment. The activation forms part of QIB's broader Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability strategy, through which the Bank continues to champion initiatives that create positive social, environmental, and economic impact. Mashaal Abdulaziz al-Derham, assistant general manager, head of Corporate Communications & Quality Assurance at QIB, said: "At QIB, we believe that sustainability begins with everyday choices. Through such initiatives, we encourage our employees to adopt practical habits that contribute to



protecting the environment while reinforcing our broader commitment to responsible corporate citizenship. As part of our CSR strategy, we remain dedicated to supporting initiatives that create lasting value for our employees, our communities, and future generations." In line with Qatar National Vision 2030, QIB's CSR programmes span environmental sustainability, community engagement, health and wellbeing, financial literacy, education, and social development, reflecting the Bank's commitment to creating long-term value for society. For further information: visit www.qib.com.qa

5th 'Future Engineer' Programme launched

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal), in collaboration with the Qatar Scientific Club, has launched the fifth edition of the "Future Engineer" Programme from July 4-16, with the participation of 40 secondary school female and male students.

The programme is part of the two organisations' joint efforts to develop young talent, foster interest in engineering disciplines, and prepare a generation equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the demands of the future.

In a statement yesterday, Ashghal said that the programme aims to enrich students' understanding of various engineering fields and introduce them to real-world engineering applications through a comprehensive training experience that combines theoretical knowledge with practical fieldwork.

The programme also strengthens participants' logical thinking, innovation, and teamwork skills.

The programme continues to build on the achievements of previous editions, most notably the success of Shahad Ahmed al-Sulaiti, a participant in the fourth edition of the Future Engineer Program, who won the Gold Medal in the International Exhibition of Inventions in Kuwait, under the "Innovators of Tomorrow" category, for her innovative Smart Helmet designed for use at construction sites.

This achievement reflects the programme's success in nurturing innovation, developing young talents, and empowering them to compete on the international stage.

During the first week, participants will take part in a field-based training programme at the Public Works Author-



ity, where they will visit several key departments and strategic projects.

The programme includes site visits and specialised workshops introducing students to engineering planning, project management, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), surveying technologies and drone applications, as well as quality and safety concepts, asset management, and construction projects.

In the second week, the programme will continue at the Qatar Scientific Club, where students will participate in a series of hands-on workshops focusing on engineering skills, engineering project management, and modern construction technologies.

Participants will also design and develop innovative engineering prototypes under the supervision of a distinguished group of specialists.

Working in teams, participants will develop innovative engineering ide-

as and practical solutions to address real-world challenges, including improving worker safety at project sites, promoting energy efficiency, detecting road defects and potholes, raising awareness of the proper use of sewerage networks, developing smart city solutions, and enhancing preventive maintenance efficiency.

The programme will conclude with a closing ceremony on July 16, during which students will present their final engineering projects and prototypes before a specialised judging panel.

Outstanding teams in the Engineering Challenge will be announced, while all participants will be honoured and awarded certificates and commemorative shields, marking the successful completion of a training journey that combined knowledge, practical application, and innovation, while fostering participants' engineering skills and passion for creativity. (QNA)

QCS launches individual psychological support programme, survivor podcast

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has concluded its awareness campaign, "I'm a Survivor... and I will Inspire You with My Story", launched throughout June to raise awareness about people living with and beyond cancer.

As part of the campaign, QCS launched its sustainable Individual Psychological Support Programme for Qatari cancer survivors, providing personalised counselling sessions to help survivors overcome the psychological and social impact of cancer, improve their quality of life, and successfully reintegrate into society.

QCS also introduced, for the first time, "I'm a Survivor... Let Me Inspire You with My Story" Podcast, a platform featuring inspiring survivor stories that promote hope, raise public awareness, reduce cancer-related stigma, and highlight the importance of psychological support throughout the cancer journey.

The campaign included publishing inspiring survivor stories, organising visits to patients at Sidra Medicine and the National Centre for Cancer Care and Research, delivering psychological sup-



port sessions, broadcasting radio and television interviews with survivors, sending public awareness text messages, and producing educational content across social media platforms.

Mona Ashkanani, general manager at QCS, said the campaign reflects the society's commitment to empowering cancer survivors, enhancing their psychological well-being, and increasing community awareness of the importance of supporting them throughout their recovery.

She added: "This campaign is more than an awareness initiative; it is a sustainable platform that gives survivors a

voice and promotes hope. The launch of the Individual Psychological Support Programme and the survivor podcast represents a practical extension of our mission to provide specialised and sustainable support services."

Ashkanani affirmed that QCS will continue expanding its survivor-focused programmes by providing psychological and community support, promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating platforms that share survivors' stories, combat misconceptions about cancer, and encourage their positive reintegration into society.

PRE-QUALIFICATION INVITATION

TAMKEEN SILVER VENDOR PRE-QUALIFICATION INVITATION

| Pre-Qualification Reference | Description | PQ Closing Date |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| QF/PD/26/PQ/424 | Tamkeen Silver Vendor - Pre-Qualification for Catering Services (Cafes & Coffee Shops) | 22 nd July 2026 |

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate invites qualified companies to participate in the Pre-Qualification (PQ) process under the TAMKEEN SILVER initiative dedicated to supporting local Qatari companies.

Interested companies must request the Pre-Qualification documents by submitting clear copies of the required documents to QF at pdpq@qf.org.qa no later than **8th July 2026, 2:00 PM**. Please ensure that the correct PQ reference number and title are clearly stated in the email subject line.

Covering Letter

A covering letter, signed by the company's authorized signatory must confirm the company's intent to participate and include the following details:

- QF Pre-Qualification Reference Number and Title
- Company's Commercial Registration (CR) number
- If the CR lists other holding companies, the letter must also state the commercial registration number and name of the corporate partner.
- Name and contact details of the company's designated focal person responsible for all correspondence related to the pre-qualification. Please note that all communication will be directed exclusively to the email address provided.

Companies must meet the following mandatory eligibility criteria to pre-qualify for the above category:

| Criteria | Requirement |
|------------------------------|--|
| Qatari Ownership | Minimum 51% owned by Qatari National(s) and company must be locally based. |
| Annual Turnover | Latest annual turnover shall fall between QAR 1 Million and QAR 20 Million |
| Audited Financial Statements | Audited Financial statements for previous year |
| Industry Experience | Minimum 3 years in café, coffee shop, or catering operations |
| Past Contracts | Minimum 5 Purchase Orders / Contracts with a value of at least QAR 100,000 each or more, executed in the same field within the past five (5) years |
| Food Safety | Valid HACCP Certification as a minimum mandatory requirement |
| Legal Standing | Valid Commercial Registration, Business License, Tax Card, and Company ID Card |

Qatar Foundation Terms and Conditions shall apply as stipulated in the Pre-Qualification document.

QF-PD-PQA-01



Dolphin Energy Limited

Invitation to Tender

| Tender Number | Description | Tender Bond | Deadline for Tender Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on |
|-----------------|--|-------------|---|
| ITT-QC-HRU-1938 | Transportation Services | QAR 65,000 | 28 th July 2026 |
| ITT-QC-OPU-1940 | Rental of 250kVA Offshore Diesel Generator | - | 28 th July 2026 |
| ITT-QC-OPU-1935 | Call-Off Contract for Periodic Intervention Support for Static Equipment | QAR 40,000 | 4 th Aug 2026 |

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Tenders.

Only companies with proven experience, technical knowledge, as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

Expression of Interest (EOI) Form and Scope of Services/Works can be downloaded from the company's website:
<https://www.dolphinenergy.com/en-US/Supplier/>

How to Tender
Interested companies must complete the EOI Form and submit to company's email address within two (2) working days from the publication date of this advertisement.

Following receipt of completed EOI Form, interested companies will receive a Request for Proposal (RFP) through Dolphin Energy's SAP Ariba to tender.

Afghanistan deputy PM meets Qatar's ambassador

Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs at the Caretaker Government of Afghanistan, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, met with ambassador of the State of Qatar to Afghanistan, Dr Mirdif bin Ali al-Qashouti. During the meeting, they reviewed the latest developments in Afghanistan and ways to support the Afghan people. (QNA)

'Over 493,000 standard containers received during H1-2026'



Mwani Qatar announced that it received approximately 866 vessels and handled more than 493,000 standard containers during the first half (H1) of 2026.

In a post published on the social media platform X yesterday, Mwani Qatar said it received over 273,000 tonnes of general cargo, 325,000 of bulk cargo, almost 25,000 of Roll-on/Roll-off cargo, and over 112,000 head of livestock. (QNA)



شركة قطر للإضافات البترولية المحدودة
QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:

| NO. | TENDER NO. | DESCRIPTION | COLLECTION FEE Qrs. | TENDER BOND Qrs. | BID CLOSING DATE |
|-----|----------------|--|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | QTC/062/26 | Three (3) Year Contract for Supply of Office Waiters and Cleaning Staffs at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed and Doha Office. | 300/- | 150,000/- | 27 th July 2026 |
| 2. | RFQ-2000012204 | Four (4) Year Call off Contract for Disposal of E-Waste Management at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed. | 300/- | 10,000/- | 27 th July 2026 |

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender documents as follows:

- **Collection Date** : From **Monday, 06th July 2026** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
 - **Collection Time** : 08:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m
 - **Location** : The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13th Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
 - **Tender Fees** : As shown above, (**Non-refundable**) can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
 - **Validity** : Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
 - **Bid Bond** : Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 days from closing date.
- Authorization** : Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
1. Official authorization on Company Letter Head.
 2. Proper Identification.
 3. Copy of valid Company's Commercial Registration.
 4. Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)

UN warns of intensifying El Nino, global weather risks

United Nations reports have sounded the alarm, warning that conditions for a strong El Nino could significantly increase the likelihood of droughts, floods, and severe storms worldwide.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP)'s latest report, El Nino conditions have been confirmed with an 80-90% probability that the phenomenon will intensify during 2026, potentially becoming one of the strongest on record.



Rice plants struggle to grow in a paddy field overrun by weeds during a drought in Torre Beretti, near Pavia, Italy. Rice fields in the area are normally flooded at this time of year, but prolonged dry conditions have left many fields without sufficient water. (AFP)

The WFP stressed that early action could protect millions of people in the most vulnerable countries.

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) also warned that El Nino is expected to strengthen over the coming months, likely peaking between July and September, increasing the risk of extreme weather events across several regions of the world.

The WMO, in a recent report, explained that the phenomenon is inevitable and has already developed in the tropical Pacific Ocean.

It is expected to strengthen further as sea surface temperatures continue to rise across the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

Acting WFP executive director Carl Skau warned that the international community only has a small window of opportunity to prevent another major food crisis, stressing that swift action is crucial to protecting families before losing their livelihoods.

These projections are particularly important because they allow governments and humanitarian organisations to act early, before droughts, floods, or crop failures begin to impact food production.

The warnings come at a time when global food systems are already under mounting pressure.

According to the WFP, the 2015-16 El Nino affected around 60mn food-insecure people, highlighting how climate shocks can quickly escalate into large-scale hunger crises.

The impact of El Nino varies by region, but hunger is expected to worsen most severely where climate shocks coincide with existing vulnerabilities.

Climate experts believe that because El Nino can be forecast well in advance, governments can take preventative

measures before its impacts peak.

They noted that every US dollar invested in anticipatory action can help avert up to \$7 in future losses, making early intervention far more cost-effective than post-disaster recovery while helping vulnerable families remain self-reliant.

Professor of Marine Environment at Qatar University, Dr Mohsen Abdullah al-Yafei, stated that the El Nino is a dangerous and intensifying phenomenon that typically occurs every two to seven years.

In his remarks to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the expert said that global warming is the primary driver behind the intensification of the El Nino phenomenon.

The rising temperatures are affecting ocean surface waters, particularly in the Pacific Ocean, the world's largest, causing warmer sea surface conditions.

Dr al-Yafei said that seasonal winds then push this warm water toward land, raising temperatures and contributing to severe weather disruptions, including the abnormal heatwaves in Europe, flooding in some regions, and droughts in others.

He added that El Nino is expected to strengthen by more than 60% compared to the previous event and could extend into early 2027.

Dr al-Yafei said the phenomenon has multiple adverse effects, including a rise in average global temperatures, longer heatwaves, and increased mortality rates, particularly in regions with limited capacity to cope with climate variability.

He warned that prolonged drought

conditions can also trigger wildfires, contributing to air pollution.

He further highlighted additional impacts such as declining agricultural yields, heavy rainfall leading to flash floods and landslides, as well as fish die-offs and coral bleaching.

He noted that coral reefs, which host around 90% of marine life, are highly sensitive to temperature changes and typically cannot survive when sea temperatures exceed 32° Celsius.

He cautioned that continued El Nino events could threaten the long-term survival of coral ecosystems, potentially leading to their disappearance by 2050.

Regarding the role of international organisations, such as the UN and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in coordinating efforts between countries to prevent climate shocks from escalating into widespread hunger crises, Dr al-Yafei expressed his regret that most countries only take action after disaster strikes.

He stated that there should be coordination between the UN and donor countries to protect as many lives as possible, emphasising the importance of early action to address the effects of El Nino.

He cited the example of drought-resistant seeds that can be distributed to farmers in drought-prone areas, as these seeds do not require large amounts of water and planting schedules that can be postponed if the drought is severe.

Dr al-Yafei highlighted the importance of early warning systems for heat waves, floods, and droughts and stated that early preparation in all sectors is a crucial element. (QNA)



Katara launches summer camps with around 190 participants

The Cultural Village Katara has launched the Katara Summer Camps 2026, attracting significant interest with around 190 children and young participants enrolled in a diverse range of cultural, artistic, scientific, and educational programmes designed for both boys and girls.

The camps will continue until July 29, offering an engaging environment that combines learning, entertainment, and skills development. Participants have been distributed across 11 specialised summer camps, each tailored to different interests and talents. The camps include the Heritage and Traditional Crafts Camp, Al Thuraya Summer Camp, Little Actor Camp, Literature Camp, Photography Camp, Be Smart, Be Strong Camp, Summer Pottery Camp, Summer Visual Arts Camp, Religious Camp, Beauty from Our Heritage Camp, and Silent Laughter Camp. Each programme has been carefully designed to provide participants with enriching educational and hands-on experiences that expand their knowledge and nurture their talents.

From the very first day, the camps have been marked by an atmosphere of enthusiasm and active participation. Children engaged enthusiastically in practical workshops and interactive activities, demonstrating curiosity and a strong desire to explore and learn. Through group exercises, discussions, and creative projects, par-

ticipants have been encouraged to express their ideas, develop their imagination, and enhance their skills in a stimulating educational environment that successfully blends knowledge with entertainment.

The Literature Camp has recorded particularly strong engagement through a series of specialised workshops, including Knights of the Arabic Language, Future Broadcaster, I Am a Poet, Story Makers, and Stage Stars. These workshops aim to strengthen Arabic language proficiency, public speaking, creative writing, self-confidence, and presentation skills. Meanwhile, the Visual Arts, Pottery, Photography, and Little Actor camps have attracted talented young participants eager to gain practical experience and discover their creative potential.

Al Thuraya Summer Camp offers participants an enriching scientific journey into the worlds of space and astronomy, while the Be Smart, Be Strong Camp combines physical and mental activities to promote well-rounded personal development. The Religious Camp provides an educational programme that integrates moral values with knowledge through interactive activities tailored to the target age group.

The Katara Summer Camps are organised as part of Katara's vision to make productive use of the summer holiday by offering purposeful programmes that contribute to the personal development of children and youth.

GU-Q graduates defy liberal arts stereotypes

For two decades, Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) has served as a gateway to the world, producing graduates who are consistently sought after by leading institutions, from top consulting firms and sovereign wealth funds to elite graduate programmes.

A recent look at alumni over the past five years shows success across a wide range of sectors, challenging the stigma that a liberal arts education does not lead to strong career outcomes.

Many graduates have moved into competitive roles soon after graduation, reflecting the university's reputation for producing highly capable professionals.

For graduates drawn to strategy and business transformation, the path to elite consulting firms has been strikingly direct.

Shaza Afifi, who majored in Culture and Politics, joined Boston Consulting Group as a junior associate just three months after graduation.

In the years since, she has advanced through the ranks and now manages client engagements while training aspiring consultants.

Alongside Afifi, shortly after graduating, Adeena Yaqoob secured a consulting role at PwC, earning a promotion to



senior consultant in just two years.

Ayesha Iqbal began her career at Bain, a top global management consulting firm, where she rose to senior associate before moving into a consulting role at Visa.

These graduates are just a few examples of GU-Q success stories, further demonstrating that the university's graduates are sought after by major firms for their track record.

The spirit of inquiry fostered on campus has also led many graduates toward entrepreneurship.

Mudassar Raza Shakir founded Active Arenaz, a sports facility booking app, while Labeeba Ahmed co-founded AgriCope, a business-to-business food supply chain platform.

Ahmed received funding from incubators in Qatar, and during her time as a

student at the GU-Q, she also explored startup ventures while working as a researcher at Qatar University.

For those whose appetite for ideas led them deeper into academia, the transition to elite graduate programmes has been seamless.

Fiza Shahzad is pursuing her PhD at the University of Pennsylvania, while Syed Taha Kaleem is enrolled at Brandeis University.

Both have leveraged their GU-Q foundation to thrive in doctoral programmes, where they continue to analyse complex global issues, arriving prepared not just to absorb ideas but to interrogate them.

Years out, GU-Q alumni are gaining experience while already shaping the fields they enter, underscoring the enduring value of a Georgetown education.

Al Dana Girls Centre launches summer camp marking Arab Youth Day

QNA
Doha

Al Dana Girls Centre of Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth staged its summer camp in Doha yesterday.

The event marks Arab Youth Day and upholds the mantra of "from dialogue to change". It broadly stems from the centre's mission to empower young people and deepen their role in national development, as well as the culture of dialogue, scientific research, and innovation.

Al Dana Centre head Wadha al-Jaber told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that youth centres always leave a footprint and create impact, emphasising that today the centre opened the camp with incredible enthusiasm in 2026, pursuing the motto of a summer that delights, and awareness that unites people.

The Centre acknowledged that the camp should commence with a panel discussion moderated by educator Hessa al-Nasr in sync with Qatar National Vision 2030, al-Jaber explained.

Al-Jaber added that to mark this interactive panel, an exhibition was staged to showcase scientific research that focuses on the themes of youth national policy.

Artist Aida al-Mulla from the Qatar Cultural Centre for the Deaf told QNA that she was glad to work in tandem with Al Dana Centre, emphasising that there is significant priority to engage girls in such awareness events.

Dana al-Saadi, a volunteer at the event, a member of the advisory committee of Al Dana Girls Centre, and the founder of the "Rasanah" initiative, said her participation is intended to spotlight the role of young people in development.

She noted that the ideas and

initiatives of these young people are the cornerstone of charting the future, applauding the launch of this initiative that aims to help young people integrate and spread awareness.

Having benefited 40 girls aged 15 to 39, this interactive panel focuses on consolidating the culture of constructive dialogue, communication skills, crafting societal initiatives, and strengthening awareness of the significance of positive engagement and national responsibility.

Arab Youth Day is annually marked on July 5, as adopted by the Executive Office of the Council of Arab Ministers for Youth and Sports during its 66th session.

The celebration aims to garner the attention of the Arab community to youth issues and recognise their potential as key partners in the region's societies.



INVITATION TO TENDER

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

| S. No. | Tender Ref. | Tender Title: | Tender Reg. Fee (QAR) | Tender Bond (QAR) | Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period |
|--------|------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. | STC-CN-014-26-IT | SOC Support Services FY 27-29 | 500/- | 45,500/- | 29 July 2026 at 12.00 noon & 180 days |
| 2. | STC-CN-014-26-IT | Call-off Contract for Cafe Lounge Services in Ras Laffan & Doha | N/A | N/A | 05 August 2026 at 12.00 noon & 180 days |

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:


| | |
|--|--|
| Payable to | ORYX GTL Limited |
| IBAN (29 Digits) | QA23QNBA00000000013010705001 |
| Bank | Qatar National Bank - HQ or any branch (cash only) |
| Registration Dates | From 06 Jul 2026 to 12 Jul 2026 |
| Registration Process and Requirements: | Write an e-mail to oryxgtltenders@oryxgtl.qa with the following attachments: 1. Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2. Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate |

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <https://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>



GULF HELICOPTERS COMPANY (GHC) Q.P.S.C.

Invites prospective suppliers to participate in the following tender

| Tender Reference and Description | Submission of information & willingness for bidding | Tender fee (non-refundable) | Tender publication | Tender Bond | Bid Closing Date |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|----------------|---|
| RFQ-GHC/SCO/022/2026 Provision of SAP Support Services (3 years) | Until 9 th July 2026 | QAR 750/- Until 12 th July 2026 12:00 pm | 14 th July 2026 | QAR 40,000. 00 | 2 nd August 2026 12:00 pm |

Brief Scope: GHC invites Certified SAP Platinum or Gold Partners to submit their bids for the Provision of SAP Support Services (3 years). The contract covers the provision of Application Management Services (AMS) Agreement, provide exhaustive support, including but not limited to troubleshooting, problem resolution, maintenance, enhancements, and support packages, enhancement packages and upgrade services for our existing implemented and future modules on SAP S/4Hana (On Premises) and SuccessFactors (Cloud). Services must be delivered based on mutually agreed SLA, without any interruption to aviation safety or operational continuity.

i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and send contact details to GHC email (procurement@gulhelicopters.com) indicating company name, address, telephone, official email, authorized company representative, etc. latest by 9th July 2026.

GHC tender reference numbers and description must be mentioned in the email.

ii. Non-refundable tender fee of QAR 750/- is payable to GHC, only through QNB account # 0013-036531-001 IBAN # QA80QNBA00000000013036531001 via online or at any QNB branch. Interested bidders shall attach the evidence of the tender fee payment and send it via bidder company official email to GHC email: procurement@gulhelicopters.com, latest by 12th July 2026, 12:00 pm for GHC approval.

iii. Tender package will be sent via email to the confirmed participants from tender@gulhelicopters.com by 14th July 2026. GHC shall provide the necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.

iv. Original of the Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee) must be submitted by hand to the following address:
Gulf Helicopters Company,
P O Box: 811, Al Areeesh Street,
Ras Abu Aboud, Doha, Qatar
Tel: +974 44 333 888
Attention: Supply Chain Manager

Attach a copy of tender bond to the technical offer. Offer without Tender Bond will not be considered.

v. For any clarifications on the above, please send your queries with tender reference and description addressed to Supply Chain Mail to email procurement@gulhelicopters.com

vi. For the submissions of technical and commercial proposals shall be submitted to tender@gulhelicopters.com

Notes: Bidders who are not registered in GHC will be requested to complete the supplier registration process during the tendering period.



New Iran leader absent as other sons pay respects to Khamenei

AFP
Tehran

Three of late Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei's sons made a rare public appearance at his funeral yesterday but there was still no sign of his successor and other son, Mojtaba Khamenei.

Crowds of thousands filled the Grand Mosalla religious complex in Tehran for the second day in a row to attend the funeral ceremonies of Khamenei and four family members killed on February 28 in Israeli airstrikes based on US intelligence.

As well as laying to rest the man who ruled the Islamic republic for over three-and-a-half decades, the funerals are a chance for the Iranian authorities to burnish their resilience after five weeks at war with Israel and the US.

Iran's speaker of parliament and chief negotiator with the US, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, one of the most prominent faces of the post-Ali Khamenei era, hailed on X how the "proud and invincible nation of Islamic Iran unanimously" paid tribute to its "martyr".

A funeral procession is planned for Monday in Tehran, followed by similar events in the clerical hub of Qom on Tuesday and in Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday, culminating in Khamenei's burial in his hometown of Mashhad in northeastern Iran on Thursday.

The ceremonies yesterday were marked by the appearance of Ali Khamenei's eldest son Mostafa



Mourners throng the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla to pay their respects to late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. (Reuters)

and the two younger siblings Masoud and Meysam, all clerics.

But their presence further highlighted the absence from the funeral ceremonies of Mojtaba Khamenei, who was named supreme leader shortly after his father's killing but has yet to appear in public.

Officials have said he was wounded in the airstrikes but the severity of his injuries remains unclear. So far, Mojtaba Khamenei has only communicated through written statements amid speculation he is too badly wounded or too concerned over the risks of being targeted to emerge.

The remaining days of the funerals – in particular the burial on Thursday – will be closely watched to see if Mojtaba Khamenei appears in public.

The new commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guards, Ahmad Vahidi, whose predecessor

was killed in the February 28 strikes, appeared at the funerals for a second time on Sunday, this time in the open air, after he went unseen throughout the war.

Esmail Qaani, the shadowy head of the Guards' Quds Force – responsible for its foreign operations – also made a rare appearance, telling Iranian TV that Khamenei's "blessed end" was fitting after a lifetime of "striving".

While Iranian authorities have been keen to present a united front, none of President Masoud Pezeshkian's surviving predecessors – Mohammad Khatami, Mahmood Ahmadinejad and Hassan Rouhani who all had tensions in their relationship with Khamenei – have so far been seen at the ceremonies.

The government is also eager to tout the mass mobilisation in support of the authorities af-



A large depiction of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei at the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla, in Tehran. (Reuters)

ter mass protests in January that rights groups say were quelled by a crackdown that left thousands dead.

With Sunday a public holiday across Iran, crowds thronged the vast religious complex, kept cool by a sprinkler system in temperatures of 35C and overlooked by a giant portrait of Ali Khamenei.

The Middle East war is on hold following a ceasefire and an initial accord struck with the US. But both Washington and Tehran have warned they are ready to resume military action, and vengeance has been a major theme at the funerals.

"The killers (of Khamenei) must face punishment," a 38-year-old man who gave his surname as Miremadi told AFP as he attended the prayers.

"We're here to show the world that we back our revolution and our leader, and we demand re-

venge for the blood of our loved ones," added a 39-year-old woman who gave her surname as Bakand.

Khamenei long pursued a course of confrontation with the West, and Tehran for years has provided support to anti-US and anti-Israel armed groups around the Middle East, including Palestinian Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah who both sent delegations to the ceremonies.

The visiting head of the Hamas political bureau, Mohammed Darwish yesterday met Ghalibaf who told him "we do not have peace with America and will not recognise Israel", state television said.

Iran's army commander Amir Hatami meanwhile told state TV he had vowed to Mojtaba Khamenei that he "will not let go of the collar of those who killed" the new leader's father.

Lebanese Christian villages 'asked to be annexed': Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that some Christian villages in southern Lebanon had asked to be annexed by Israel, in order to be protected from Hezbollah.

"Christian villages in Lebanon, some of them have actually asked to be annexed to Israel, because we protect them against the Hezbollah, Hezbollah fanatics who want to kill them, and we do the same things with Christians everywhere," Netanyahu told Fox News's show. (AFP)

Syria postpones 1st parliament session

Syrian authorities have postponed the first meeting of the country's new transitional parliament, days after announcing the inaugural session had been scheduled for today. "The convening of the first session of the people's assembly has been postponed to a date to be determined later," state television reported yesterday, citing an electoral official and without specifying a reason. Syria dissolved the country's rubber-stamp legislature in 2024, and adopted a temporary constitutional declaration to cover a 5-year transition period. (AFP)

Israeli strikes kill two in Gaza City

An Israeli airstrike killed at least two Palestinians in Gaza City on Sunday, health officials said. Medics said the two people were killed when an airstrike hit a group of people at the Omar al-Mokhtar road in the heart of the city, north of the enclave. Several others were wounded, they added. The Israeli military did not respond on the incident. (Reuters)

Attack by Yemen's Houthis kills 16 government troops

AFP
Aden

Yemen's Houthi rebels killed 16 troops in an attack on government-aligned forces south of the port city of Hodeidah, two medical officials told AFP yesterday, in some of the most violent fighting between the sides in years.

The two medical sources said hospitals in the area on the Red Sea coast received 16 dead from pro-government forces and 22 wounded.

Earlier an officer with the government-aligned forces in Jabal Dubas in the Hays district, where the clashes took place, gave a provisional toll of 14 troops and 23 injured in "fierce fighting".

The officer said the Iran-backed Houthis briefly took control of pro-government positions in the clashes, which began late on Friday last week, before a counterattack to retake them concluded at dawn on Saturday.



Armed Yemenis rally in solidarity with Lebanon and Iran on the outskirts of the Houthi-controlled capital Sanaa last week. (AFP)

"This was the deadliest Houthi attack in years," the officer said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

He described how the rebels had attacked with snipers, which accounted for most of the casualties,

before launching drone and mortar salvos.

Another military official said pro-government forces had repelled the Houthi attack in Hays district in "clashes lasting for several hours".

He added "fighting resulted

in dead and wounded among (Houthi) ranks," without specifying the number killed in the opposing force.

The Houthis have been at war with the government since 2015 in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

The rebels control Yemen's capital Sanaa and much of the north, including Hodeidah on Yemen's western Red Sea coast, while the internationally-recognised government holds much of the south.

The fighting between the two sides has largely been frozen since a UN-negotiated truce in 2022.

But on Friday the Houthis threatened airports and vital assets belonging to Saudi Arabia, a key backer of Yemen's Aden-based government.

The rebel group, part of Iran's "axis of resistance" against Israel and the United States, accused the kingdom of trying to stop an Iranian plane from landing.

Rebels pressure Mali's junta with attacks as it struggles for control

In the wake of fresh, coordinated attacks in Mali by militants and their Tuareg allies, the country's junta appears more threatened and isolated than ever in the capital Bamako and the nearby garrison stronghold of Kati.

Just over two months after launching a major offensive that weakened the military rulers, Al Qaeda-linked JNIM militants and Tuareg FLA separatists carried out a new wave of assaults on Saturday.

The demonstration of their ability to harass the central government laid bare the junta's difficulty in controlling the vast, Sahel nation. The rebels attacked several key towns in the north and centre, as well as one of the country's largest prisons.

In the northern Kidal region, the FLA claimed control of the town of Anefis, where Russian paramilitaries have presence, with fighting continuing yesterday.

The FLA reported additional intense combat yesterday afternoon after it ambushed a convoy of Russian mercenaries and Malian soldiers that was travelling from Gao to Anefis.

"We inflicted heavy losses on the enemy," FLA spokesman Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadan told AFP.

The coordinated attacks by JNIM and FLA "are intended to overwhelm the Malian army and Africa Corps, and they appear to be successful at that", Rida Lyammouri, a senior fellow at the Moroccan think tank Policy Centre for the New South (PCNS), told AFP. Faced with what seems to be a strategy to wear down the central government, the junta is struggling to maintain control.

"The state controls Bamako and a few strategic pockets within the country, that's it. The rest is in flux," said Bakary Sambe, director of the Dakar-based Timbuktu Institute. (AFP)

Israel to act decisively on Hezbollah: Army chief

AFP
Jerusalem

Israel's military chief visited forces deployed around Beaufort castle in southern Lebanon yesterday, vowing to push ahead with the campaign against Hezbollah.

"The IDF will continue to operate decisively to remove threats from Lebanese territory and is prepared to transition rapidly to offensive operations should the ceasefire be violated," Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir told soldiers during the visit, according to a statement issued by the Israeli military.

Israeli forces seized the crusader-era castle and the area around it recently, giving the military a strategic foothold it previously occupied for nearly two decades.

Israel says it uncovered a tunnel network beneath the castle, saying it was built to give fighters of Lebanese group Hezbollah a fortified strike hub just kilometres from Israeli territory.

Israel previously overran the fortress during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon, after a prolonged battle with the Palestinian fighters hidden in the castle's maze of historic underground tunnels.

The castle was damaged by vi-

olent bombardment in the process.

Israel then used it as one of its main observation posts until its troops withdrew from the country in 2000.

"Our troops' activities at the Beaufort Ridge and throughout southern Lebanon are being carried out in accordance with the framework of the agreement and the mechanisms established under it," Zamir said yesterday, referring to the recent US-brokered agreement between Israel and Lebanon intended to permanently halt hostilities.

But Zamir said that "any threat directed at our troops or the Israeli civilians will be struck immediately and eliminated".

"The Lebanese Armed Forces are required to fulfil their commitments under the historic agreement that was signed and act to clear the area of Hezbollah and (their) infrastructure," he added.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2 with rocket fire at Israel to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes days earlier.

Israel responded with massive airstrikes and a ground invasion of southern Lebanon, where its troops now occupy swathes of territory near the border.

Qatar healthcare report attracts global attention

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

A report by the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), in partnership with the World Health Organisation, has attracted global attention, with leading international organisations discussing its contents at major forums.

"We collaborated with WHO and came up with a landmark report called 'In the line of Fire', which talks about attack on health. Now this report in the last 18 months has been feeding the agenda at forums like the Human Rights Council in Geneva or WHO's World Health Assembly," Dr Sunoor Verma, director of Partnerships and Outreach, WISH, told the *Gulf Times*.

Dr Sunoor said that WISH, a global healthcare initiative of Qatar Foundation, commissions reports on several important topics, which are then launched at every summit, and thereafter advocacy work is carried out around the world with WISH partners.

"So that took us to Osaka, where Qatar Pavilion hosted us for a public-facing event to discuss the healthcare issues," explained Dr Sunoor.

"Then we convened in New York at the General Assembly to talk more specifically about what happens to humans and various diseases, when there is a humanitar-



Dr Sunoor Verma PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam.

ian crisis, when there is an attack on health," he said.

The official said that there has been a drastic change in recent years in the fate of healthcare entities during conflicts or periods of geopolitical tension.

"In earlier years, during a war or other conflicts, the moment there was any building or facilities associated with healthcare emergency, or an ambulance, nobody would touch it. Over the last 15-20 years or so, there has been a remarkable change, an unfortunate one, where these signs have become actually the primary targets so that you get populations to be displaced and move. So attacking health has become a tool in conflicts for warring parties," he lamented.

In the course of the last 14-15 years since its inception, Dr Sunoor said that WISH has com-

missioned a number of evidence-based reports.

"I think the unique part about WISH is, it chooses what to report on. So these are either issues that are under the radar, or there are issues that are underfunded globally," he noted.

He said that all the reports WISH produces address issues that require urgent attention or dialogue, and that WISH has so far produced a large number of such reports.

"As you see, health is not healthcare or medical science alone anymore. Health is at the intersection of things like urban planning, information technology, climate change, innovation among others. So health is now at an intersection of so many disciplines and all these determine the path of health. These reports are shaped accordingly and they can inform policy-



Cover page of the report: In the line of Fire.

makers and then policymakers can advance the agenda," underlined Dr Sunoor.

The report 'In the Line of Fire' describes trends in global conflict, highlighting the scale and nature of attacks and their effects on population health.

It speaks about protective mechanisms for the delivery of healthcare in armed conflict, setting out existing legal frameworks and accountability under International Humanitarian Law.

It also underscores the need to build resilience and preparedness through capacity building, to explore protective measures through adaptive design, and to engage more effectively with armed forces and non-state actors.

WISH will hold its 8th summit this year on November 29-30 under the theme 'The New Health Span' at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

On America's big birthday, mixed emotions over legacy and future

AFP
Washington

Americans celebrated 250 years of independence Saturday with conflicting emotions as pride, hope and patriotism battled with uncertainty and unease over the country's direction. On Washington's grassy National Mall, lined by monuments and museums, thousands sweltered in multiblock lines as temperatures neared 38C.

With National Guard troops — controversially deployed across Washington by President Donald Trump — imposing crowd control, forklifts dropped pallets of bottled water which crowds clawed through in scenes evoking a disaster response.

Still the mood was joyous, with chants of "USA! USA! USA!" breaking out in one set of lines near the National Gallery.

Nearby, Iowa state congressman Eddie Andrews was hanging off the back of a farm tractor draped with stars-and-stripes livery, shouting "God bless America!" at the top of his lungs to crowds headed toward the Mall.

"Really this day, 250 years ago, really marked the new modern day of freedom, and it's why America leads the world in so many areas," he told AFP, between laps through downtown DC.



American flags are planted in the ground in front of a banner of President Donald Trump, hanging from the US Department of Labour building, ahead of July 4th festivities. (AFP)

A few blocks away, Donna Dasher and her husband Albert were trying to get a photo of the White House.

"I think it's just the greatest event in our nation's history," Dasher said. "President Trump is trying to do everything he can to make it the greatest celebration, and some people say, 'Oh, it's about Trump! No, it's not.'"

The Dashers traveled from Richmond Hill, Georgia to celebrate both America's anniversary

and their own, adding that they were holding military veterans — including some members of their family — in their thoughts during the festivities.

As the afternoon sun continued to bake attendees, the National Guard rolled out more bottles of water. "Take two or three or as many as you guys want!" one soldier said. "You guys got any Stella?" one attendee joked.

Inside the security perimeter more lines formed — specifically

for the air conditioned pavilions of each state and the water stations dotting the vast lawn.

The larger tents where companies like Micron and Mastercard have booths struggled to keep temperatures down.

Underneath a large model of the proposed Trump Arch, dozens sheltered in the short mid-afternoon shadows as the roaring sound of military aircraft was heard overhead.

While the crowd in the US capi-

tal may have represented America geographically, it did not appear to do so ideologically.

Amid accusations that Trump co-opted the anniversary to celebrate his own achievements, his and his MAGA movement's stamp was immediately clear on the clothing and accessories spotted around the Mall.

In Atlanta, Georgia, music therapist Melissa Pate was far more somber about the holiday.

"I guess in this current political climate, 250 years — it feels like we still have a long way to go," she told AFP. "To think that we're 250 years in and there are people in this country that are still not living in true freedom," she added. "It's kind of disappointing."

Yet she and her husband would still celebrate the holiday with a traditional barbecue — but later in the evening after the heat subsided. Pate said recent Democratic wins in regional and local elections had given her "hope that the little people — the working class — maybe are being heard."

William-Jose Velez Gonzalez, a Washington resident who is originally from Puerto Rico, had similar thoughts, saying that he felt a certain "sense of grief with the way that things are being handled, with the way that the country is being run." He was planning a small gathering with friends to watch the fireworks.

Eight shot on 4th July in New York, ABC News reports

At least eight people, including four children, were shot and injured late on the US Independence Day holiday in New York City's Coney Island neighbourhood, ABC News said yesterday, citing the New York City Police Department.

Officers from the NYPD responded to reports of a shooting in the morning yesterday on the Brooklyn neighbourhood's West 31st Street, the NYPD said in a statement to ABC News.

Police said they recovered a firearm at the scene but have not made any arrests, according to ABC

The injured included two men, two women, and four children — aged 14, 12, 7 and 6 — according to the news outlet.

It quoted the NYPD as saying all the victims had been transported to hospitals. Seven were in stable condition, it said, while a 21-year-old woman was in critical condition.

Police said they recovered a firearm at the scene but have not made any arrests, according to ABC.

The NYPD did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Saturday marked the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States. (Reuters)

Korea Beauty Festival 2026 showcases the future of global beauty and wellness tourism

The 2026 Korea Beauty Festival (KBF) is attracting thousands of international visitors to Seoul, further reinforcing South Korea's reputation as a global destination where beauty, wellness, technology, and tourism converge.

Organized by the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), the festival officially opened on June 24 and has quickly emerged as one of the country's most anticipated tourism events, offering travelers immersive experiences that extend far beyond traditional shopping.

At the heart of this year's festival is the KBF Beauty House, a large-scale pop-up exhibition at HiKR Ground, one of Seoul's most accessible tourism and cultural landmarks. The venue brings together leading Korean beauty brands under one roof, allowing international visitors to explore,

Sha massage experiences, and creative lifestyle activities such as custom sock-making. These additions reflect the festival's broader vision of beauty as an integral part of a holistic wellness lifestyle rather than merely cosmetic enhancement.

To further enhance accessibility for international tourists, the Korea Tourism Organization has partnered with nine major global online travel agencies (OTAs), including Trip.com and Klook, to launch the KBF Special Promotions campaign. Running through September 30, the initiative enables overseas travelers to reserve exclusive beauty and wellness experiences before arriving in South Korea.

The curated travel packages include skincare and makeup masterclasses inspired by K-pop celebrities, premium spa and wellness programs, healing tours, and exclusive booking discounts. Visitors can also benefit from



compare, and experience the latest innovations in skincare, cosmetics, haircare, and wellness.

Unlike conventional beauty exhibitions, the 2026 festival places a strong emphasis on personalization and technology. Visitors can undergo advanced skin diagnostics powered by artificial intelligence, receive personal colour analyses, and obtain customized skincare recommendations tailored to their individual needs. These interactive experiences demonstrate how digital innovation is transforming the global beauty industry while making professional beauty consultations more accessible to travelers.

Following the overwhelming success of its first exhibition phase, held from June 25 to 28, the festival expanded into a second phase running from July 1 to 19 on the fourth floor of HiKR Ground. The new exhibition features an enhanced lineup of 11 participating companies, showcasing both established and emerging Korean beauty brands.

Several popular exhibitors from the festival's opening days—including beall-Heumm, ECLAT HARMONIE, and Dr. HAN K-BEAUTY CARE CENTER—have extended their participation in response to strong public demand. Visitors continue to enjoy customized hairstyling, professional makeup consultations, and traditional Korean beauty experiences that blend modern techniques with the country's rich cultural heritage.

The second phase also introduces new attractions, including AI-powered smart mirror scalp analysis, personalized skincare matching services, therapeutic Gua

Sha massage experiences, and creative lifestyle activities such as custom sock-making. These additions reflect the festival's broader vision of beauty as an integral part of a holistic wellness lifestyle rather than merely cosmetic enhancement.

According to the Korea Tourism Organization, the festival reflects the rapid global expansion of K-beauty and its growing influence on international travel trends. Rather than serving solely as a platform for cosmetic products, the event is designed to position South Korea as a leading destination for beauty tourism by offering immersive, hands-on experiences that appeal to visitors of all ages and nationalities.

The Korea Beauty Festival also demonstrates how South Korea continues to integrate technology, culture, healthcare, and tourism into a seamless visitor experience. By combining artificial intelligence, personalized wellness services, cultural traditions, and internationally recognized beauty expertise, the festival offers travelers a unique opportunity to experience Korean beauty from an entirely new perspective.

As global demand for K-beauty products and wellness experiences continues to rise, the 2026 Korea Beauty Festival stands as a compelling example of how experiential tourism is shaping the future of travel. Through innovation, collaboration, and cultural exchange, the festival not only promotes South Korea's beauty industry but also strengthens Seoul's position as one of Asia's premier destinations for wellness and lifestyle tourism.





White supremacist march in DC just 'messy' democracy, official says

AFP
Washington

A top Trump administration official yesterday shrugged off a July Fourth parade by masked white supremacists in Washington as an example of "messy" democracy that fell under the banner of constitutionally protected free speech.

"Certainly what they stand for is nothing that I could possibly agree with. But one of the foundational principles of the US, which makes democracy messy, is free speech," Interior Secretary Doug Burgum told CNN's "State

of the Union" talk show.

In striking scenes as Americans celebrated the nation's 250th birthday on Saturday, hundreds of masked men carrying Confederate battle flags or US flags and sporting logos of the white supremacist Patriot Front movement were seen marching through parts of Washington, shouting "Reclaim America!"

Wearing a uniform of tan pants and hats and dark blue shirts, and apparently led by the neo-fascist group's founder Thomas Rousseau, the masked men crowded onto the city's Metro system, gathered outside Union Station train station and marched towards Capitol Hill.

Asked by CNN whether he would condemn the group and what they stand for, and whether he would urge President Donald Trump to do the same, Burgum couched his language carefully.

"There are plenty of things that I see that I might personally find offensive, irreprehensible (sic). But in America, free speech is allowed" under the US Constitution, the interior secretary said.

He went on to decry progressive candidates who were running for election as "communists" in the US.

Washington's Metropolitan Police Department said the white nationalist group marched briefly

through neighborhoods around the US Capitol and left the city a little before midday.

"MPD recognises the rights of individuals to peacefully express their views and remains committed to maintaining public safety and security for DC residents and visitors," a police spokeswoman said in a statement reported by US media.

Several videos have emerged online showing the Patriot Front members marching through Washington on Saturday.

In one video circulated by Republican Senator Mike Lee, a man who appears to be hosting a live stream showing the gathering out-

side Union Station describes it as a "total Aryan victory".

The Patriot Front was founded in the aftermath of a deadly "Unite the Right" rally in 2017 that brought torch-bearing white nationalists from all over the country to Charlottesville, Virginia.

That rally culminated in an avowed white supremacist driving a car into counter-protesters, killing one woman and injuring 19 other people.

Trump infamously took 48 hours to respond to the violence, and then said there were "very fine people on both sides" of the protests, drawing widespread criticism.

The Southern Poverty Law Centre, a legal advocacy group that tracks extremism in the US, describes the Patriot Front as a white nationalist hate group that "focuses on theatrical rhetoric and activism".

In a new counterterrorism strategy released in May, the Trump administration identified "violent leftwing extremists" as among three major types of terror threats that the country faces.

This marked a break from the previous administration of Democrat Joe Biden, which had identified far-right fringe groups, particularly those espousing white supremacy, as a major threat.

Venezuela quake survivor 'reborn' after 8 days in rubble

AFP
Caracas

Hernan Gil was working his shift as a security guard in the basement of a building in Venezuela on the afternoon of June 24 when he felt the earth shake.

The first tremor was short, Gil recounted in an interview with AFP from the hospital room where he was recovering after being rescued from the depths of a collapsed building.

Gil became a symbol of hope for Venezuela after he survived eight days of being buried alive by the double earthquake that devastated the north of the Caribbean country, leaving nearly 3,000 dead.

"The second one was incredibly strong," said the 43-year-old, who remembers freezing inside his guard booth, overcome with nerves.

He heard a neighbor in the parking lot say it was an earthquake, and then "everything collapsed." Gil felt everything crumble and stones hit the back of his head and eye.

"I lost consciousness for a moment. When I woke up, everything was dark...From then on, everything was uncertain."

Gil couldn't see anything or hear anyone. He tried calling the neighbor he had last seen before being swallowed by the earth, "but nothing."

"And at that moment, despair overwhelmed me," said Gil, who began shouting for help, but received no response.

In the darkness, partially kneeling, gasping for air and practically immobile, he suffered aftershock after aftershock. "I felt like the wall was completely crushing me."

Despite the traumatic experience, Gil appeared in good spirits 72 hours after being freed from the hole where he was buried beneath a collapsing eight-story building.

Seated in an armchair, dressed in a blue hospital gown, with his left arm in a sling, the security guard said his faith sustained him during the harrowing hours.

"I prayed a lot. I cried out to God, and I said, 'My God, why



Rescue workers look for victims in Playa Grande, Catia La Mar, La Guaira State, yesterday. (AFP)



Members of the Rescue Florida Task Force 2 team take down tents as they prepare to leave, in Maiquetia, La Guaira state. (AFP)

me? Why like this? Please, at least let me see my children?"

Trapped in an uncomfortable position, Gil tried to lie on either side of his hole, but he couldn't sleep.

The rocks he had fallen on bruised his legs, his nose bled, and his right eye was swollen and red, although he didn't realise that at the time.

In those lonely hours, he thought of his wife, Gusbimar Gonzalez, who was outside looking for any sign of life.

He also thought of his children and his deceased father.

"So many memories came flooding back," he said.

Gil lost track of time, but it was

on the third day that he heard footsteps, "but very far away."

He began to shout and call for help, and finally, he heard a response. Gil remembers, smiling, that at that moment he thought, "Oh my God, there's a step. There's a glimmer of hope."

But then began a dramatic rescue that Gil described as "a fierce struggle."

While rescue teams from seven countries fought to reach Gil, keep him hydrated, and maintain his spirits, the 43-year-old felt the walls continue to shift, trapping him more and more.

But when two rescuers from Chile and the US finally reached him after more than three days of

Venezuela leader vows 'no social unrest here' after quakes

Venezuela's interim president said yesterday that the country would not descend into social unrest after the twin earthquakes which killed nearly 3,000 and left thousands more missing. "There will be no social unrest here, what we have here is deep social solidarity," Delcy Rodriguez said during a military ceremony marking the country's independence day. Many Venezuelans have expressed anger at what they see as the US-backed government's inadequate response to the June 24 disaster before international teams arrived. Rodriguez has defended the response, saying thousands of officials were dispatched to help. (AFP)

'I prayed a lot. I cried out to God, and I said, 'My God, why me? Why like this? Please, at least let me see my children... Oh my God, there's a step. There's a glimmer of hope.'

—Hernan Gil, survivor

complex operations, Gil couldn't bring himself to rejoice.

"The hardest part was getting out," recalled Gil, whose legs had been entangled in a chair.

Gil has no doubt that it was a life-changing miracle.

"I was reborn!" he said.

Now in the hospital, Gil managed to talk to his children via video call and can't wait to go home. But the doctors haven't given him a discharge date.

He sleeps more easily now, but sometimes the harrowing moments he experienced underground wake him.

Accompanied day and night by his wife, Gil isn't quite sure what comes next in his new life.

For now, all he knows is that he wants to celebrate his son's birthday on July 15th, take some long-awaited vacations at the beach, and that he'll never work in a basement again.

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump will meet his Ukrainian and Syrian counterparts on the sidelines of the Nato summit in Turkey, the White House said yesterday, as he seeks to make headway in addressing two key conflicts.

"On Wednesday afternoon, President Trump will participate in bilateral meetings with President Zelensky of Ukraine and President al-Sharaa of the Syrian Arab Republic," Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly said in a call with reporters.

Trump's meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky in Ankara comes amid growing efforts to end the grinding, nearly stalemated invasion of Ukraine that Russia launched over four years ago.

"The president's obviously getting together with him to talk about how we can end the war. That's been a priority of his for a long time," a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, added about the Zelensky meeting.

Trump would "follow up" with Russian President Vladimir Putin afterwards, the official said.

New species of ghost shark found in Costa Rica waters

AFP
San José

Costa Rican scientists may have discovered a new species of ghost shark in Pacific waters near Cabo Blanco and Cano Island.

The latest discovery has a "shorter" snout, a "darker coloration pattern" and a "much longer spine on its dorsal fin," according to Arturo Angulo Sibaja, a biology professor at the University of Costa Rica.

The discovery marks the only such species "known for the Central American coast," Sibaja said.

The expert added that genetic analysis indicates the new species has "no reproductive contact"

with other ghost sharks.

But earlier specimens collected "near Peru and Chile are very similar to the species" from Costa Rica, so scientists are still comparing the specimens before finalising the conclusion, he said.

Three species of ghost shark — a type of fish that is related to sharks — have been discovered elsewhere, in waters off South Africa, Taiwan, Australia, Japan and in the Atlantic between Greenland and Brazil.

Ghost sharks belong to a group of cartilaginous fish called Rinochimaera that is related to sharks but genetically diverged from them nearly 400 million years ago.

Sibaja said it's "most likely" the new species "has broader distribution along the (Pacific) coast of Central and South America"

'Very dangerous' super typhoon to bulldoze through Pacific islands

People in Guam and the Northern Marianas moved to emergency evacuation centres and made last-minute preparations yesterday, hours before a "super typhoon" was projected to bulldoze through the US Pacific territories.

Super Typhoon Bavi was forecast to roar westwards over the area from today with winds of 260 kilometers per hour (160 miles per hour) — equivalent to a category 5 hurricane — and gusts of up to 315 kph.

The National Weather Service called the typhoon "very dangerous", warning of "tropical storm force" winds from yesterday afternoon or evening and "catastrophic" damage near the system's centre later.

"Significant flooding from torrential rains, and coastal inundation are expected," the NWS said, with projected waves of up to 35 feet (10.7 meters) — the height of a 10-storey building — creating "extremely dangerous" conditions at sea.

Pinky Cubacub, 55, said as she boarded up the windows of her eatery in Guam that she had lined up early on Saturday morning to buy

\$500 worth of plywood at a lumber store.

"I cannot afford to lose so many days. It hurts," she told AFP. "Because I just started, whatever we're making right now is just for rent, utilities, and my people, and supplies. I don't even pay myself yet."

Call centre employee Arabella Paulino, 48, said: "My girls were saying to me it's scary. But it will be okay."

"My house is concrete, so the worst that can happen is a window could blow in," she told AFP.

Derma Soaladaob said she was going to a hotel.

"I have a concrete house but with the noise and the wind, it's scary," said the 51-year-old, who drives a school bus for the US military.

Japanese tourist Miku Sakurai, 25, was supposed to fly back to Tokyo with her friends on Sunday but their flight was cancelled because of the weather.

"We will stay in the hotel when the storm comes. I am scared," the office worker told AFP as heavy rain began to fall.

The Northern Marianas in the western Pacific has a population of around 40,000, and nearby Guam



High waves crash against the coastline at a beach as the Super Typhoon Bavi approaches Guam. (AFP)

— a separate US territory, although both are part of the Marianas archipelago — about 170,000.

Super Typhoon Sinlaku, which hit the region in mid-April, knocked out power for tens of thousands of inhabitants, uprooted trees, overturned cars and ripped metal roofs off buildings.

A cargo ship, the MV Mariana, suffered engine failure and overturned in the storm. The body of one crew member was recovered and five others were missing, presumed dead.

By Sunday morning, Bavi was forecast to pass nearest to Rota, a small island roughly halfway

between Guam and Saipan, the Northern Marianas' main island and home to around 1,500 people.

"By working together and taking the necessary precautions, we can help protect our families, neighbors and community. We pray for the safety of our people," Rota mayor Aubry Hocog said.

Teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) teams were on the ground in Guam and its distribution centre was stocked with 1.1 million litres of water, 1.2 million meals, 6,700 cots and 90 generators.

The NWS said the "window to evacuate or seek shelter is closing", and Guam opened five evacuation centres in schools with total capacity of 1,900, primarily for those in vulnerable homes.

The world's oceans experienced their hottest June on record and could set fresh highs in the months ahead, the European Union's Copernicus Marine Service said.

Warmer oceans help tropical storms to intensify and add more moisture, which can fall as heavy rain. The World Meteorological Organisation warned on Friday that El Niño, which typically occurs every two to seven years and lasts nine to 12 months, has already begun in the tropical Pacific and is likely to be strong.

The natural climate phenomenon warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns. (AFP)

Britain has been failed by leaders, says Vance

Reuters
London

US Vice-President JD Vance said Britain had been “failed by its leadership for a long time,” adding that he hoped the country’s next prime minister could deliver the structural change voters were seeking after years of political turmoil.

In an interview with the *Sunday Times* newspaper, Vance said frequent changes of government pointed to deeper problems in British politics.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced last month he would step down after two years in office, paving the way for Britain’s seventh prime minister in a decade.

Lawmaker Andy Burnham is widely expected to succeed Starmer after emerging as the sole candidate to replace the outgoing leader.

“What I see is six prime ministers in the last few years,” Vance told the newspaper. “What that



Members of the US Marine Corps and US Navy salute as Vice-President JD Vance walks during the Sail 250 parade of ships in New York Harbour. (Reuters)

says to me is that something is very broken about British politics and that people are really crying out for significant structural change.”

“I hope that Andy Burnham – and if not Andy Burnham, somebody else – is able to deliver it,” the vice-president said, adding that “whoever the prime minister is figures out how to get Britain back on track.”

Vance, whose wife Usha stud-

ied at the University of Cambridge and who has frequently spoken of his affection for Britain, described the country as an “amazing place” with the “most amazing people in the world” outside the US.

His comments come after a sometimes uneasy but largely functional relationship between Starmer and US President Donald Trump.

The two leaders repeatedly

stressed the importance of the US-UK “special relationship” despite disagreements over issues including Iran, Gaza and Ukraine, while also securing trade and investment agreements between the two allies.

Reacting to Starmer’s resignation last month, Trump described him as a “lovely man” and a “sort of friend of mine,” but said that he had failed on immigration and energy policy.

Trump had added: “I wish him well.” Trump has described Burnham as “extremely liberal” and suggested Britain’s next likely prime minister would be unlikely to support further North Sea oil and gas development – something the US president had been asking Starmer to do.

In his interview with the *Sunday Times*, Vance said he did not know much about Burnham, but added that Britain remained one of Washington’s closest allies.

“Whoever is the prime minister, we’re going to work with them and work with them as successfully as we can,” he said.

Nigel Farage referred to standards watchdog

Reuters
London

The leader of Britain’s anti-immigration Reform UK party Nigel Farage was referred to parliament’s standards watchdog yesterday after a report that he failed to declare some benefits, raising the possibility of a second probe into gifts he has received.

Farage is already under investigation by the standards watchdog over whether he should have declared a £5 million (\$6.7 million) donation from a cryptocurrency billionaire he received before entering parliament.

The *Sunday Times* reported that Farage was provided with security services, social media support and accommodation by George Cottrell, a long-standing ally, in the year before Farage was elected an MP in 2024.

Farage’s spokesperson said the story was “baseless and contrived”.

“No parliamentary rules have been broken,” he said.

But Josh Babarinde, a lawmaker in Britain’s Liberal Democrats party, wrote to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards yesterday, calling for an investigation into the new allegations.

“Given the value and nature of the support described, there is a serious question as to whether Mr. Farage met his obligations under the Code of Conduct for MPs,” he said in a letter he made public on X. “This is not an isolated concern.”

The right-wing, anti-immi-

gration Reform UK party tops national opinion polls, making Farage a possible future prime minister after a 2029 election, and raising scrutiny of the party and its leader’s finances.

According to the *Sunday Times*, Cottrell went to prison in the United States in 2017 after pleading guilty to wire fraud and now works in cryptocurrency.

Under parliamentary rules, new MPs must declare financial interests and “registrable benefits” received in the previous 12 months, although personal gifts are exempt.

“I think quite a lot of questions come up in relation to his (Farage’s) finances. He seems to have a bit of a flexible relationship with transparency,” Britain’s health minister James Murray told the BBC yesterday.

Farage has said the £5 million he received from Thailand-based crypto investor Christopher Harborne before he announced he would stand as an MP in 2024, was an unconditional gift and exempt from disclosure rules. He has also said the money was intended to fund his personal security.

The donation was not publicly disclosed until reported by a newspaper in April.

Farage is awaiting the outcome of the investigation. If he is found to have committed a serious breach of parliamentary disclosure rules, he could be suspended from the House of Commons. A suspension of 10 days or more could trigger a recall petition, potentially forcing a by-election in his constituency.

China and Russia to hold joint naval drills

AFP
Beijing

Beijing and Moscow announced yesterday they will hold their annual joint naval exercises off China’s coast, with Russia saying the drills will begin on Monday.

The two countries have close economic and diplomatic ties, and their relations are strengthened by shared opposition to a global order dominated by Washington.

The Chinese and Russian militaries have held regular joint exercises in recent years, a partnership that Western and some other governments view with suspicion as Moscow’s war on Ukraine grinds on.

The naval forces of both countries will take part in the “Joint Sea-2026” exercise in “waters

and airspace” off Qingdao, a major military port and seaside resort in China’s east, a Chinese defence ministry statement said.

“Following the exercise, some forces from both sides will conduct a joint maritime patrol in relevant areas of the Pacific Ocean,” the statement said, without specifying where.

“This arrangement is... aimed at jointly responding to security challenges and safeguarding regional peace and stability.”

A separate statement issued by the Chinese military’s Northern Theater Command said two destroyers, a frigate, a submarine, a supply ship and a rescue vessel will take part.

The statement noted all participating forces had already arrived in Qingdao.

The manoeuvres will cover reconnaissance, air and missile de-

fence and surface strikes, it said.

The Russian Pacific Fleet said in a statement that the exercises will take place from July 6 to 13 in the Yellow Sea, the body of water separating China from the Korean peninsula.

The statement carried by Russian news agencies said the manoeuvres will also include joint rescue operations, “anti-submarine warfare and air defence missions”, as well as artillery exercises.

One Russian cruiser, a corvette, a diesel submarine and a rescue vessel had arrived in the Qingdao port ahead of the war games, it said.

Speaking at a ceremony in Qingdao, Russian Rear Admiral Sergei Sinko said that “Joint Sea-2026” was aimed at “strengthening the strategic partnership between our countries” and ensuring

“peace and stability” in the region, according to TASS news agency.

The drills come about two months after Russia’s President Vladimir Putin visited China.

Putin said at the time relations had reached an “unprecedentedly high level”, while Chinese leader Xi Jinping hailed an “unyielding” partnership.

Beijing and Moscow have held their “Joint Sea” exercises since 2012, with last year’s edition near the eastern Russian port of Vladivostok also followed by joint patrols in the Pacific.

China has never denounced Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, but Beijing insists it is a neutral party, regularly calling for peace talks.

Many of Ukraine’s Western allies, including the United States, believe that Beijing has provided support to Moscow’s war effort.

Nepal PM marks 100 days with fast change, few words

AFP
Kathmandu

One hundred days after taking power promising sweeping reform, Nepal’s 36-year-old rapper-turned-Prime Minister Balendra Shah (pictured) has upended the government while remaining an elusive public figure.

The former mayor of Kathmandu, better known as “Balen”, reached the milestone yesterday and has moved quickly since taking office.

Just a day after he was sworn in, police arrested former prime minister KP Sharma Oli and his ex-interior minister on the recommendation of an inquiry commission into the deadly September 2025 uprising that toppled Oli.

The two have since been released without charge while investigations continue.

Observers say that first move set the tone for the government’s subsequent actions – fast and symbolically loaded but often legally contested and executed with little patience for institutional processes.

Shah has kept an unusually low profile, preferring to communicate through social media and even delivering his victory speech as a rap song.



He has also avoided meetings with foreign envoys and relegated visits to neighbouring India and China, the traditional first stops of a Nepali prime minister, to his foreign minister.

“In three months, we know very little about the man we have elected as the prime minister,” said journalist Pranaya Rana. “He needs to open up.”

Few predicted the scale of Shah’s landslide victory in the March 5 general election, the first vote since the youth-driven anti-corruption protests toppled Oli’s government.

His rise was powered by the

same public anger that drove young protesters onto the streets, fuelled by a lack of economic opportunities and corruption among the entrenched political elite.

The government launched a 100-point reform agenda covering governance, anti-corruption measures, service delivery and digitalisation.

About 70 measures have been implemented, with the rest underway, according to the government.

Shah said in a rare public address to a meeting of the ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party in June that his administration was “on an expressway” towards change.

“The brakes will only be applied when we reach our destination,” Shah said.

The government has presented a 2.1tn rupee (\$13.8bn) spending plan focused on boosting infrastructure, technology, health and education, while pledging to stabilise the economy.

“The nation is standing at a decisive crossroad of comprehensive economic reform,” Minister of Finance Swarnim Wagle said as he presented the budget.

Shah’s breakneck style has won admirers.

“First of all, it has changed the style of working – it started work-

ing from day one unlike previous governments,” said journalist Sudheer Sharma. “It seems to be action-oriented.”

Shah’s government has pushed reform through ordinances to speed up change despite having the parliamentary majority needed to pass legislation.

Some worry the approach is undermining checks and balances.

“Work has been done, but the understanding of how it is to be done seems to be different,” said Anusha Khanal, a political researcher who also took part in the protests. “We have to stay vigilant.”

One ordinance allows the constitutional council – chaired by Shah – to make decisions, including judicial appointments, by a simple majority.

Discussions around constitutional amendments and restructuring Nepal’s federal system have triggered political backlash.

Yujan Rajbhandari, 23, who took part in the 2025 protests, told AFP that the government was born “from the womb of the movement” and must listen to its voice.

“We have a lot of hope with this government,” he said. “It is good that they are result-oriented, but if that result is not through a due process then it may not be sustainable.”



A northern giant petrel after being brought into care at the Esperance Wildlife Hospital after it was found at Wylie Bay Beach and later tested positive for the H5N1 bird flu, in Esperance, Australia. (Reuters/File Photo)

Australia’s New South Wales confirms H5N1 bird flu case

Reuters
Sydney

New South Wales became Australia’s third state to confirm a case of H5N1 bird flu after authorities said a migratory seabird found near a coastal town returned a positive result for the highly pathogenic virus.

Australia last month became the final continent to confirm a mainland case of H5N1, although the virus had been detected in late 2025 on the sub-Antarctic territory of Heard Island, about 4,100km (2,600 miles) from continental Australia.

Six infections have now been confirmed across three states, including in a seabird called the giant petrel found near the seaside town of Hawks Nest in New South Wales, Australia’s most populous state, the authorities said late on Saturday.

The H5 strain has led to the culling of hundreds of millions of birds in the past few years, disrupting food supplies and driving up prices. Human infections of the virus remain rare.

“The positive test is the first confirmed detection of H5 in New South Wales,” state Agriculture Minister Tara Moriarty said in a statement.

There is “no evidence of spread to local wildlife and H5 bird flu has not been detected in commercial poultry flocks, captive birds or any other birds in New South Wales”, Moriarty said. “There is no impact on the supply of chicken meat or eggs and I would encourage everyone to purchase these products as they normally would.”

The state government has launched a response plan that includes bolstered surveillance operations and the deployment of extra staff to support industry, she said.

North Korea’s Kim oversees latest naval weapons tests

AFP
Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un oversaw weapons tests this week of the 5,000-tonne destroyer Kang Kon, including cruise missile launches and “electronic warfare means”, state media reported Sunday.

The naval vessel was notably the one that tipped over last year during its launch ceremony, but later repaired.

The tests took place on Friday, the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said, less than two weeks after another 5,000-tonne destroyer, the Choe Hyon entered military service.

During that commissioning ceremony, Kim vowed to equip his navy with nuclear weapons and

develop new 10,000-tonne warships.

After the weapons test on Friday, Kim “gave an instruction to complete the trial process of the destroyer in a responsible manner and commission it for the Navy within two months,” KCNA said.

A photo released by KCNA shows Kim, wearing a yellow hat, watching a weapons test from a coastal observation point, flanked by officials.

Another photo shows Kang Kon firing a missile at sea, with a plume of smoke rising from the launch.

While reiterating the need to strengthen the country’s “war deterrent”, Kim also pledged to demonstrate North Korea’s determination to possess “absolute power”, KCNA said.

The Kang Kon suffered a setback



The performance tests of the main weapons systems of the destroyer Kang Kon at an undisclosed location in North Korea. (AFP)

in May last year when it partially capsized after tipping into the water during its launch, damaging the

vessel in full view of Kim.

He blamed the accident on “absolute carelessness” and “irresponsibility”, ordering that those responsible be held accountable.

Analysts said Kim’s instruction to commission the vessel within two months could be linked to a major political anniversary.

“Given North Korea’s political calendar, the most likely scenario is that the vessel will be commissioned to coincide with the 78th anniversary of the country’s founding on September 9,” Hong Min of the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul told AFP.

Once deployed, the warship is likely to operate off the Korean peninsula’s eastern coast, he said.

“For the time being, the focus is likely to be on building proficiency in



North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un (centre) reacting after observing performance tests of the main weapons systems of the destroyer Kang Kon at an undisclosed location in North Korea. (AFP)

low-threat, nearshore operations”

Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an “irreversible” nuclear state since a 2019 summit between Kim and US counterpart Donald Trump in Hanoi collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief.

North Korea remains technically at war with the South because the neighbours’ 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

The Korean navy runs more than 10 ships over 5,000 tonnes compared to the North’s two.



Beneath the calm, a new diving frontier surfaces

Qatar has long been defined by what rises above the waterline — the towers of Doha, the sweep of the Corniche, the ambition written into stadiums, museums and a national carrier that carries the country's name to every continent. Yet the discovery of a new dive site some three kilometres south of GMC Reef is a quiet reminder that this country's most compelling story may lie not only in the heights it has built, but in the depths it has scarcely begun to explore.

There is something fitting in that. A nation that has spent a generation projecting itself confidently onto the world stage now finds fresh promise by looking downward — into the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf, where shipwrecks, coral reefs and some of the sea's most magnificent creatures have been waiting, largely unseen, all along.

The case made by diving ambassador Khaled Zaki in our story published Sunday is persuasive precisely because it is unhurried. Diving, he reminds us, is far more than a recreational sport. It is an adventure, an education and a gateway to

understanding the marine environment — and ourselves a little better.

Qatar's underwater portfolio is already richer than many residents realise: GMC Reef, the newly developed Club Reef, the Barj Wreck at some 20 metres, the Inland Sea site, the QAFCO Reef Balls. And then the great visitors — the seasonal aggregations of whale sharks, among the largest anywhere on earth, alongside dugongs, turtles and dolphins. These are living evidence of an ecological inheritance Qatar has every reason to cherish and every obligation to protect.

There is a practical hurdle. Too few sites are reachable from the shore; most require a boat, and with that come cost and inconvenience that keep many would-be divers on dry land. Expanding shore-accessible sites would open the sport to schools, families and curious first-timers.

The treasures beneath these waters, as Zaki puts it, are waiting to be explored. Qatar has the ingredients, the resolve and the responsibility to explore them well.



Sixth in ten years: Will Burnham be able to buck the trend for PMs?



By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Andy Burnham will become prime minister on July 20, almost ten years to the day since Theresa May became the first of the 'Brexit era' heads of government — on July 13, 2016. Remarkably, Burnham will become Britain's sixth prime minister in ten years, or alternatively the fourth in the four years since Boris Johnson was forced from the job in the summer of 2022. Such a run of short-lived leaders is unprecedented in modern British political history and demonstrates just how disruptive the past decade has been.

David Cameron announced in January 2013 his intent to call an in/out referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union should the Conservatives win the next general election, which was held in May 2015.

The vote took place on June 23, 2016 and, to Cameron's surprise, resulted in a 52-48% decision to leave the EU. Cameron resigned as prime minister the day after the referendum, choosing to walk away from the issue which will forever define his political legacy which has overshadowed most of his six successors in 10 Downing Street.

The fact that the question on the ballot paper was framed purely as a question of whether Britain should leave or remain in the EU meant that no direction was given as to the details of how and when that should happen, and this caused chaos for years.

Brexit finally happened on January 31, 2020, under Johnson, but it was followed almost immediately by the Covid-19 pandemic, which ultimately contributed to Johnson's political undoing two years later. Whereas Johnson and May had each served three years as prime minister, the tenure of their successors was shorter still: a historic 49 days for Liz Truss, 20 months for Rishi Sunak, and a little over two years for Keir Starmer. Not since 1922-24, when Andrew Bonar Law, Stanley Baldwin, and Ramsay MacDonald each held the premiership for less than a year, has there been such a rapid churn at the top of the British political tree. The era when Britain had a total of three prime ministers —

Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Tony Blair — in 28 years, from 1979 to 2007, seems unfathomable just two decades later.

It now falls to Burnham, who must hold a general election by July 2029 at the latest, to see if he can buck the trend and restore a degree of stability to British politics. Burnham is an experienced politician who sat in the House of Commons from 2001 to 2017 and served as a junior minister under Tony Blair and as a Cabinet member in Gordon Brown's government. Burnham left Westminster in 2017 and became the elected Mayor of Greater Manchester, a post he held until his return to parliament last month. He thus missed the intra-Labour Party feuding during and after the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn and he performed well in the job, presenting himself as a credible northern alternative to his counterparts in London.

To an extent, Burnham has followed the path set by Boris Johnson who was also elected to the House of Commons in 2001, the year of Tony Blair's second landslide victory. Johnson resigned from parliament in 2008 when he was elected Mayor of London and served two terms before returning to Westminster in 2015. Just as Burnham did in Manchester, Johnson used his time in charge of a major city to craft a reputation as an effective governor. Their shared experience indicates how there are multiple pathways to the top, especially in an age of devolved government where more powers are being delegated to regional authorities.

As prime minister, Burnham will inherit a difficult set of tasks which include restoring credibility and direction to a Labour government which won a huge majority just two years ago, but which has been rudderless under Starmer. Although Starmer came to politics after a distinguished career in the legal profession, which included five years as Director of Public Prosecutions, his time as prime minister was marred by a series of political lapses which made him deeply unpopular with the public and ineffective within

his own party. Burnham will need to restore a sense of party management if he is to energize a government which already looks exhausted and out of ideas only two years into office.

Once in government, Burnham will also have to focus on the political threat posed by Nigel Farage and Reform UK. This is not only a threat to the Labour Party but also an existential challenge to the Conservative Party, which was reduced to winning 2.2% of the vote in the Makerfield by-election which brought Burnham back into the House of Commons. It may be that scrutiny from both the left and the right of Reform UK increases as the next general election draws nearer as Labour and the Conservatives seek to pre-empt the further draining of support to Reform.

One of Burnham's key calling cards to power was his ability to take on and defeat the Reform challenge in Makerfield as he increased Labour's share of the vote from 45% in 2024 to 54% and swept to victory by 20 percentage points.

Changes of leadership mid-parliament rarely work as intended as they signify that something has gone wrong in the governing party. Both James Callaghan, who took over from Harold Wilson in 1976 and Gordon Brown, who replaced Blair in 2007, went on to lose the next general election, whereupon Labour was out of power for 18 and 14 years, respectively.

Burnham will hope to avoid the fate of his two predecessors as Labour prime minister and instead replicate that of Johnson, who replaced Theresa May two years into the 2017 parliament and called a snap election in December 2019 which he won easily.

At the very least, Burnham looks to have the political skills Starmer so sorely lacked and this may give him an early bump in the opinion polls as he settles into life as Britain's next prime minister.

• *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.*



Labour MP and challenger for Leader of the Labour party, Andy Burnham. (AFP)

The fortress that failed



By Jasim Al-Azzawi

Empires do not fall in a single hour. They erode in polling booths, in parliamentary chambers, and on the killing grounds where the wrong lesson was drawn too late. The State of Israel, whose founders promised their people a "villa in the jungle is now confronting what that metaphor always concealed: the jungle never agreed to its terms.

A new Quinnipiac University poll conducted June 18-22, 2026, among 1,165 registered voters, finds that 48% of Americans now consider their government "too supportive" of Israel. This is the highest figure since the pollster first posed that question in 2017. Among Democrats, the number swells to 66%. Even more corrosive to Tel Aviv's political calculus: only 20% of respondents hold a favourable view of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, compared with 48% who hold an unfavourable view. The Quinnipiac analyst Tim Malloy rendered his assessment with clinical precision: "Netanyahu gets poor marks from American voters as their appetite for supporting Israel wanes."

"After months of diplomatic fits and starts, global economic repercussions and a broad loss of life in the region, a majority of voters make their feelings clear: the Iran war was a bad idea." — Tim Malloy, Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst

The MOU signed on June 17 between Washington and Tehran has been the proximate trigger of Israel's political panic, but the deeper wound is structural. Sixty percent of American voters now judge that military action against Iran was "not worth it." The arithmetic is merciless and an eye-opener. Israel prosecuted a war it could not win without American blood and treasure, and the American public has rendered its verdict.

On the battlefield, the verdict is no less damning. In southern Lebanon, the Israel Defense Forces are being bled, not by ballistic missiles or armor, but by a \$300 drone. These drones are assembled in a workshop from Chinese components and 3D-printed parts, guided by a fiber-optic cable no thicker than dental floss. Hezbollah's FPV drone campaign, which began in earnest after its second war with Israel erupted in March 2026, has exposed the most consequential gap in Israeli

military doctrine since the anti-tank missiles of 1973. The Alma Research and Education Center acknowledged in a classified-grade public assessment that the operational deficit is "not limited to technology but to doctrine, procurement, and the Israeli defence establishment's risk perception."

The fiber-optic tether makes these drones immune to Israel's dual counter-drone defenses of electronic warfare and spectral jamming, exposing a critical gap in their architecture that Hezbollah is now exploiting. Hezbollah operators, some stationed within the occupied villages themselves, release footage with serene regularity: Merkava tanks, Namer armoured personnel carriers, logistics routes — all struck, all publicised, all corrosive to the mythology of IDF invincibility. A single asymmetric calculus haunts every Israeli commander in the south: a \$300-\$400 drone kills a soldier, grounds a battalion's manoeuvre space, and wins a news cycle.

"The operational gap between Hezbollah and the IDF in the small drone arena is the most significant gap that has opened in the current campaign." — Alma Research and Education Center

Those who comfort themselves with the notion that Netanyahu's removal will alter the fundamental trajectory mistake the figurehead for the system. The core pathology is not one man's political survival; it is what the political theorist Norman Finkelstein once called the "iron wall" logic — the conviction, inherited from Ze'ev Jabotinsky and codified through Moshe Dayan's dictum that security demands "permanent superiority of force," which any successor will be bound to maintain. Naftali Bennett has publicly faulted Netanyahu for insufficient aggression against Iran. Benny Gantz commanded the 2014 assault on Gaza. Gavi Ashkenazi authored the Dahiya Doctrine of deliberate disproportionality. The

ideology does not change when the face does.

Inside the Republican Party, the MOU has ignited ideological combustion of a kind not seen since the neoconservative ascendancy of the early 2000s. Vice President JD Vance, mobilising a conservative anti-war coalition, is actively selling the deal as a matter of strategic sanity. Vance's message to Israeli officials was blunt: "If I were in the Cabinet of the Israeli government, I might not be attacking the only powerful ally that I have anywhere left in the entire world." It is the kind of public rebuke that, once delivered, cannot be undelivered. The alliance is being renegotiated in real time, and Israel is not at the table.

The foundational promise of Zionism — articulated by Theodor Herzl as a "rampart of civilisation against barbarism" and operationalised by successive governments as an impregnable sanctuary has not been delivered. The Iron Dome has prevented Iranian ballistic missiles from striking Israeli cities. Security, it turns out, is not a product of military supremacy alone. It requires political legitimacy, strategic restraint, and an enemy that has reason to stop fighting. Israel has cultivated none of these conditions.

What remains is the arithmetic of exhaustion. A state that has mobilised its entire society for permanent war, that has burned its relationships with the European centre-left, that now generates majority disapproval inside its principal patron's electorate, is not winning. It is spending. And the account, as every serious strategist from Clausewitz to Kissinger understood, must eventually be rendered. The fortress, as presently conceived, has failed. What replaces it is the only question that matters — and Israel's current political class has not begun to ask it.

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



US Vice President JD Vance. (Reuters)

"If I were in the Cabinet of the Israeli government, I might not be attacking the only powerful ally that I have anywhere left in the entire world."

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Fires devastate forests as Europe's temperatures rise again

AFP
Barcelona

Hundreds of firefighters across southern Europe battled wildfires yesterday that forced thousands of people from their homes and led officials to ban spectators from a stage of the Tour de France cycling race, as temperatures rose again in the heatwave-scarred region.

The infernos have devastated more than 19,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of land — an area more than twice the size of Manhattan — across Portugal, Spain, France and Greece, with temperatures predicted to reach 40C in places.

Some 5,000 were being evacuated from their homes near the city of Perpignan in southwestern France as firefighters tried to control a blaze that has devoured 1,650 hectares, Pierre Regnault de la Mothe, the regional prefect, told reporters.

"We started seeing smoke around 10.30pm, then it kept coming closer and closer. Someone from the town hall knocked on our door around 1:00am to tell us to leave," said Charlotte Pignol, 30,



A Canadair CL-415 plane of France's Civil Security services drops water on a wildfire at the Col des Auzines, near Trevillach, southern France, yesterday. (AFP)

who was evacuated from her home overnight in the area.

"There were fire trucks everywhere, and the smell of smoke was overwhelming," she said.

The blazes come shortly after a heatwave in June, one of Europe's worst, during which thousands of excess deaths were registered and which would have been "virtually impossible" without climate change, the World Weather Attribution group of scientists said.

With the mercury set to rise

again in the coming days, authorities expressed alarm that the annual summer wildfire season had started a month early.

"Climate change is here, we are living the consequences and it is only the start of July," said French fire service Colonel Eric Belgioino as he appealed to people near the Pyrenees inferno to take precautions to avoid starting fires.

"The season is going to be long for the soldiers fighting fires. You have to help us," he pleaded.



A Canadair firefighting plane drops water at a burning recycling factory in Oreokastro, on the outskirts of Thessaloniki, Greece, yesterday. (Reuters)

In France, officials announced that today's third stage of the Tour de France cycling race through the Pyrenees would take place without spectators who normally line the routes of the storied competition.

The stage, which sees cyclists ride from Spain into France and on French territory, "will be limited to the passage of the riders only and the vehicles essential to organising the race," the regional prefect of la Mothe told reporters.

"The public is asked not to go near

the route or to the finish area," he said.

"In other words, and I regret having to say this, it will be, in France at least, a stage of the Tour de France without spectators."

In Greece, flames set off by a forest fire tore through two factories in Thessaloniki in the north of the country, forcing authorities to evacuate the surrounding area and to warn households to keep their windows closed.

A fire near the northeastern Costa Brava coast of Spain burned

more than 2,200 hectares in two days and firefighters said their efforts would be "complicated" by rising temperatures and the many "smoking hotspots" within the fire's perimeter.

Another 300 French firefighters battled another fire in a mountainous district of the southeastern Drome department.

In Portugal, emergency services said they had controlled "80 per cent" of a wildfire that has devastated some 13,000 hectares of forest and scrub land in the north of the country.

Elsewhere, major fires also destroyed hundreds of hectares of forest, vineyards and scrub land on the Croatian island of Hvar and at Tale in Albania, authorities said.

Regions across Portugal, Spain and southern France have stepped up heat alerts for the coming days.

On Monday the latest heatwave was expected to move north, with forecasters saying it could last until next weekend.

Following a two-week surge in temperatures in June, France said there had been more than 2,000 extra deaths than usual in just one week, while Spain and Belgium each reported more than 1,000.

Turkiye eyes fighter jet engines as Trump comes to town

AFP
Istanbul

US President Donald Trump's visit to Ankara for the Nato summit could help secure Turkiye's acquisition of dozens of fighter jet engines, but won't resolve the F-35 dispute that has soured ties, analysts say.

The July 7-8 summit, which is being hosted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will bring together leaders from the military alliance's 32 member states.

Last month, Trump promised to make Erdogan "very happy" when asked about Turkiye looking to secure F110 jet engines and being readmitted to the F-35 fighter jet programme.

Analysts said it would likely mean freeing up fighter jet engines Turkiye wants to use in its flagship KAAAN stealth fighter project.

"It's likely to be the green light for the F110 GE engines for the KAAAN fighter plane, about 40 of them. There had been obstacles to that supply and very possibly those are now being removed," Sinan Ulgen, director of the Istanbul-based Edam think tank, told AFP.

"Turkiye has produced a couple of prototypes which are flying with the F110 engine, but it has been waiting for the supply of additional engines to increase the number of KAAAN platforms," he said.

KAAAN is a twin-engine stealth fighter being developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) to replace the Turkish Air Force's fleet of F-16s as Ankara seeks to join the exclusive club of nations producing fifth-generation combat air-



Police officers walk in front of demonstrators holding placards and flags during a protest ahead of Nato leaders' summit, in Istanbul, yesterday. (Reuters)

craft, notably the US, China and Russia.

Although Turkiye will eventually fit the fighter with its own domestically-produced engine — the F110s lacking stealth capability — that project is still in the preliminary design phase, Defence Minister Yasar Guler said in September.

Turkiye received a first batch of 10 F110s in September, and talks with the US government to acquire 80 more were "ongoing", he said.

But that's been held up by a lack of political clearance linked to Turkiye's 2017 acquisition of a Russian S-400 missile defence system, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said in September.

Infuriated, Washington expelled Turkiye from its F-35 fighter jet programme in 2019 and imposed CAATSA sanctions a year later, hampering Turkish defence projects and souring ties.

"The CAATSA issue must be resolved. The US needs to take steps both regarding the F-35 and the

engines for KAAAN. KAAAN's engines are currently awaiting approval in the US Congress," Fidan said, his remarks raising eyebrows back home as Turkiye had said the KAAAN would be entirely domestically produced.

Ankara's F-35 exclusion has forced it to refocus on self-sufficiency.

"Some argue we should not buy F-35s and invest that money into our own fifth-generation fighter jet programme. And that's exactly what's happening with President Trump's decision to export jet engines," Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, head of the German Marshall Fund in Ankara said.

"Without those engines, Turkiye cannot produce the KAAAN jet."

With a KAAAN delivery date many years away, only Indonesia has placed an order, signing a \$10bn contract to buy 48 fighters, although the Nato summit could generate further interest, Ulgen said.

"Looking at the failure of the German-French FCAS initiative, Spain could potentially become a partner and there may be interest from the Gulf as well... But there are more obstacles to be overcome for it to become a credible offer on the international stage," he said.

Experts expected little progress on the lingering F-35 dispute: for Congress to lift the CAATSA sanctions, Ankara would have to get rid of the S-400 — but selling it to a third country would require Moscow's approval, and returning it to the Russians was not on the cards.

"The US administration might wish to... put this issue behind it and sell Turkiye some F-35s, but that will go to Congress and changing the congressional decision won't be easy," said Professor Mustafa Aydin, an international relations expert at Istanbul's Kadir Has University.

But Matthew Bryza, a retired US envoy and former senior White House and State Department official, said Trump could move to resolve the matter as the F-35 was an executive decision which he could easily reverse.

"President Trump can certainly declare that the S-400/F-35 dispute is finished. It's the CAATSA sanctions that require congressional action. Whether he can persuade Congress to do that, depends on how much political capital he's willing to expend," he told AFP of a move that could be "politically costly in the lead up to the midterm elections" due to Turkiye's opponents in the Greek and Armenian diaspora.

'Fighting continuing' for key town: Zelensky

AFP
Kyiv

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Kyiv and Moscow's troops were still battling for the key eastern town of Kostyantynivka, which the Kremlin has claimed it has captured.

Moscow earlier this week announced it had taken the outpost — on the way to important hubs in the Donetsk region — but Kyiv has denied that as a "lie", saying that it is defending the town.

"Fighting is also continuing for Kostyantynivka, which (Russian leader Vladimir) Putin has already claimed as his own, but it is obvious that he will never dare to appear there," Zelensky said in his daily evening address.

Kostyantynivka had some 78,000 inhabitants before Russia invaded in 2022.

Zelensky also warned Russia was preparing new large-scale attacks ahead of this week's Nato summit in Turkiye, where he is expected to hold talks with US President Donald

Trump on the war.

"Intelligence once again has information the Russians are preparing a new massive strike," Zelensky said.

Earlier this week, Zelensky had issued a warning of an incoming Russian strike on Kyiv. Hours later Moscow struck the Ukrainian capital, killing 30 people.

Zelensky also said that Ukrainian strikes on Russia — which have hit as far as the Urals in recent months — were "every single day delivering results".

Kyiv's increased strikes on Russia — especially targeting Russian oil and fuel depots — have affected ordinary life in Russia.

"Pressure must be put on Russia so that there is peace," Zelensky said, adding that Kyiv has put forward its proposals and that it expects in the "coming months the conditions for a dignified peace will be brought closer either by force or by diplomacy".

At least four people were killed by Russian drone and missile strikes in Ukraine yesterday.



Jewellery created by French glass maker Rene Lalique are seen at the Lalique museum in Wingen-sur-Moder, eastern France. (AFP/ File Photo)

Millions in jewellery lost in French museum theft

AFP
Strasbourg

Jewellery worth millions of euros was stolen in a burglary at the museum of French luxury glassmaker Lalique yesterday, the company and an investigation source said.

The thief or thieves broke in to the museum in Wingen-sur-Moder in northeastern France around 5:30am (0330 GMT) and headed straight for the jewellery room, the source close to the investigation told AFP.

"Around twenty pieces of jewellery were stolen. The loss is currently being assessed but could amount to several mn euros, likely close to four mn," the source said.

The museum said on its website that it will be closed

for several days because of the burglary.

"An alarm went off, but by the time the security company had completed its checks, it was a cleaning lady who arrived first on the scene and called the police," the investigation source added.

The CCTV footage is currently being examined.

The museum, dedicated to the Art Nouveau and Art Deco jeweller and glassmaker Rene Lalique, was opened in 2011 near the company's factory.

A dramatic daytime jewel heist at the Louvre museum in Paris in October last year put security at French museums and galleries under the spotlight.

Thieves made off with \$102mn worth of jewellery from the Louvre in a raid lasting less than eight minutes.

Court frees Albania protesters held after violent clashes

AFP
Tirana

Tirana court yesterday freed 19 protesters detained during a protest against a resort linked to US President Donald Trump's family that was marked by violence, a lawyer said.

Since late May, protests have been held against the planned construction of a luxury hotel linked to Trump's daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner in a nature reserve on the country's coast.

The demonstrations have been held daily in Tirana, while on Thursday morning for the second time this week, demonstrators gathered outside parliament to confront lawmakers and block entry to the building.

Police used tear gas, pepper spray and water cannon to break up hundreds of demonstrators, some of whom tried to push through lines of officers, and threw eggs, stones and other objects.

Fifteen police officers were injured, while 25 demonstrators were detained.

Yesterday, the court released 19 demonstrators, who were held on suspicion of "refusing to obey police orders, organising illegal demonstrations and disturbing public order", one of their lawyers told reporters.

Two of them will be put under house arrest and 12 must report to



This aerial photograph shows protesters as they demonstrate in front of the Albanian Prime Minister's Office against the construction of a luxury resort near a protected natural area on Albania's southern coast, in Tirana. (AFP)

the judicial police once or twice a month, lawyer Dorian Matlija said.

The remaining five will face no charges.

Dozens of people who gathered outside the tribunal chanting "Free the boys", greeted the announcement with cheers of joy, according to an AFP reporter.

Thursday's violence was a marked contrast to the overwhelmingly peaceful daily gather-

ings that have drawn thousands on to the streets since the movement began.

Tens of thousands rallied on Saturday evening in Tirana in the largest protest since the movement began.

The crowd also chanted "Free the boys" referring to the detained protesters.

The planned resort was first unveiled in 2024, but the lat-

est wave of protests began after barbed-wire fencing and bulldozers appeared on beaches in late May.

Opposition to the project has become a flashpoint for frustrations over perceived corruption, with demands now including the resignation of Prime Minister Edi Rama.

Another rally is to be held on Sunday evening in Tirana.

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

From a young student visiting the National Museum of Qatar (NMQ) to a global champion of sport for development, Nasser al-Khori's journey reflects Qatar's own transformation, a narrative central to the Evolution Nation campaign celebrating the country's cultural legacy.

As Qatar continues to build on the legacy of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the *Evolution Nation* video series highlights the people driving the country's cultural, creative and social transformation.

Launched last year, the campaign is spearheaded by Qatar Museums (QM) and curated by Qatar Creates, a cultural movement that promotes engagement with art, design, food, fashion, film and sport in Qatar and beyond.

Among the personalities featured is al-Khori, executive director of the Generation Amazing Foundation, whose work has helped transform football into a platform for social development, reaching more than one million people across 75 countries.

From museum visitor to global changemaker

Evolution Nation traces Nasser al-Khori's journey in shaping Qatar's cultural legacy



"I truly believe that art, culture, and sports as well are universal languages," he said.

"They do not need translation to reach anyone," al-Khori pointed out. "For Qatar, this is an opportunity to share our values, history, and heritage, and build bridges with the world and its people."

He said his own journey has evolved alongside the country's development, de-

scribing how his childhood experiences at the NMQ shaped his appreciation of the nation's heritage and identity.

"I feel my journey is connected to Qatar's evolution," he said. "Just as Qatar brought together its heritage and openness to the world, I also tried to use sports and culture as a bridge connecting people and cultures."

"Through my work on the FIFA World Cup 2022, I had the honour of being part of this global event, and we were able to present Qatar in a new light: a country small in size but great in vision," al-Khori added.

The Generation Amazing Foundation was established in 2010 during Qatar's successful FIFA World Cup bid and has since focused on using football to teach leadership, communication, teamwork and compassion to young people and underserved communities.

Its programmes support the United Na-



Nasser al-Khori

tions Sustainable Development Goals and Qatar National Vision 2030 by promoting inclusion, sustainability and gender equality.

For al-Khori, however, Qatar's story is also deeply personal.

He recalled visiting the NMQ on school trips and watching it evolve into a modern landmark that continues to celebrate the country's heritage.

"Honestly, the National Museum of Qatar holds a special place for me," he said.

"Ever since I was young, we used to visit the museum on school trips, and those were some of my favourite memories," al-Khori recounted. "And today, with the new version, I see a modern design that still carries a heritage spirit."

He believes Qatar's greatest legacy will be defined not only by its achievements but also by the values it passes on to future generations.

"If I had to choose something for the next generation, I would choose the value of generosity and hospitality," he said.

"For me, this is not just a custom, it is the essence of our Qatari identity," al-Khori continued. "If the next generation preserves it, they will be an extension of our heritage, while also remaining open to the world."

Launched to mark 50 years since the establishment of the original NMQ in 1975, *Evolution Nation* celebrates the individuals, institutions and ideas that have shaped the country's cultural development.

Episodes are available on the Qatar Creates YouTube channel and the QM's social media platforms, documenting the people behind Qatar's continuing evolution as a cultural, creative and sporting nation.



Holistic youth development at heart of Aspire Summer Camp

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

The Aspire Summer Camp 2026 has opened with an expanded programme that combines sport, education and recreation, offering young participants a structured summer experience designed to nurture

The Aspire Summer Camp provides children with an environment where physical activity, education and personal development go hand in hand. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



healthier, more confident and well-rounded future generations.

Held at the world-class Aspire Dome and the Ladies Sports Hall, the camp provides children with an engaging environment where physical activity, education and personal development go hand in hand.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, Aspire Summer Camp organising committee member Ghada al-Abid said that the 2026 edition has been carefully designed to deliver "a comprehensive, enriching experience that combines sports, education, and recreation in one structured programme".

"It focuses on creating a balanced summer journey where children can learn, play, and grow in a safe and engaging environment," she said.

Participants take part in a wide range of sports, including football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, martial arts, shooting and fitness programmes.

Alongside the sporting schedule, the camp features educational and creative workshops covering reading, drawing and interactive learning, while organised field trips to landmarks across Doha provide children with opportunities to learn beyond the classroom.

Al-Abid said the programme's primary objective extends beyond keeping children occupied during the school holidays.

"The camp is intentionally structured to go beyond physical activity and focus on holistic child development," she said, explaining that teamwork is developed through group games, leadership through team-based challenges, discipline through the camp's structured daily schedule, and confidence by encouraging children to try new sports and participate in interactive activities.

"The environment encourages children to step out of their comfort zone in a safe setting, helping them develop both socially and personally," she added.

The Aspire Summer Camp also reflects the Aspire Zone Foundation's long-term ambition to foster a lasting culture of sport among young people in Qatar.

According to al-Abid, children benefit from access to internationally recognised sporting facilities while being introduced to structured routines that can inspire continued participation in sport long after the summer programme ends.

"It does this by providing access to world-class facilities like Aspire Dome and the Ladies Sports Hall, encouraging consistent physical activity in a fun, non-competitive environment and introducing children to structured sports routines that can later lead to more advanced training pathways," she said.



Ghada al-Abid

Al-Abid noted that the initiative closely supports Qatar's national vision for youth development by promoting healthy lifestyles from an early age while combining education with recreation.

"As highlighted by Aspire Zone Foundation, the camp reflects its commitment to developing youth and fostering a culture of sport across the community," she said. "It promotes physical fitness and healthy lifestyles, supports education through sport, creates safe, organised environments for youth development, and encourages values such as discipline, respect, teamwork and community engagement."

Summer programmes empower girls through leadership, innovation and skills development

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The various summer initiatives for girls this season have shown a growing national commitment to empowering young women through comprehensive development programmes that extend far beyond seasonal entertainment, a number of officials and directors at different girls' centres have affirmed.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth and its affiliated girls' centres have introduced such initiatives to focus on leadership, innovation, technology, volunteerism, entrepreneurship, sports and community engagement, reinforcing Qatar National Vision 2030 and the country's long-term investment in human capital.

Officials stressed that the current summer programmes have evolved into structured development pathways that are designed to equip girls with future-ready skills through hands-on training, specialised workshops and inter-

active learning experiences.

Qatar Youth Hostels (QYH) executive director Hussein al-Hbabi said that the QYH's summer programme features specialised initiatives, including a tour guide training programme in partnership with Qatar Tourism and Visit Qatar, workshops on artificial intelligence (AI), photography, scientific research, financial investment and creative thinking, alongside a youth awareness camp and a volunteer-led summer activities management programme that provides practical leadership experience.

Wadha Nasser al-Jabr of Al Dana Girls Centre, said that the centre has launched an integrated summer camp in collaboration with various organisations, including Qatar University and Qatar Scouts and Guides Association.

The programme combines leadership training, digital skills, creative arts, sports, swimming, research competitions and events marking the Arab Youth Day under the theme *A Summer to Enjoy... Awareness that Unites Us*.



In the meantime, Simaisma and Al Daayen Girls Forum is running its month-long programme from July 1-29 for participants aged 15-39, offering creative workshops, cultural and awareness activities, sports and recreational events aimed at fostering teamwork, innovation and personal development.

Similarly, Al Khor Girls Centre is delivering its "Summer of En-

richment and Fun" programme for girls aged 10-14 and another category for girls aged 15 years and above, featuring technology, self-development, arts, sports, and interactive educational activities tailored to different age groups.

Further, Al Wakrah Girls Centre has strengthened partnerships with national institutions to deliver workshops on AI, family development, adolescent life skills,

swimming and field visits.

Running from July 1 to August 20, the programme targets girls and young women aged 10-39, blending education with practical experience.

The Qatar Women's Sport Committee has unveiled a three-month summer programme from June to August, featuring eight major initiatives designed to increase female participation in sports and promote healthy lifestyles.

Activities include the ongoing "An Hour for You" fitness programme, Tai Chi sessions, sports camps, leadership activities, awareness workshops in partnership with the Qatar Anti-Doping Agency, and specialised training camps with the Al Rayyan Youth Department and the Elite Strides International Sports Academy.

Barzan Girls Forum has introduced a summer camp centred on leadership and innovation, offering workshops on life skills, AI, constructive dialogue and the "Leaders of Tomorrow" programme to prepare future female leaders through interactive learning.

Al-Reyada Girls Centre is presenting a broad schedule of cultural workshops, sports activities, field visits and leadership development programmes in collaboration with specialist organisations, providing girls with practical knowledge and exposure to diverse professional environments.

At Al Majd Girls Centre, the "Skill, Innovation, Impact" summer programme targets girls aged 10-21 through sports, technology, life skills, AI workshops, swimming, handball, social dialogue sessions and values-based activities that balance personal growth with character development.

The Doha Girls Centre has launched its "Our Summer, Our Youth 2026" initiative across July and August, featuring leadership camps, entrepreneurship programmes, digital literacy workshops, environmental sustainability activities, heritage arts, professional development sessions and youth innovation challenges.

The programme concludes on August 19 with a ceremony recognising outstanding participants.

Qatar turns sport into a platform for culture and change

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Major sporting events in Qatar have become platforms for celebrating cultural heritage while advancing sustainability, gender equality



Stanley Eliuds

and other social causes, members of the Kenyans Green Maasai Qatar (KGMQ) said, citing the role of international competitions in promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The KGMQ dance troupe represented Africa at the 2026 Diamond League meeting in Doha on June 19, using traditional Maasai dances and colourful attire to advocate cultural preservation and raise awareness of the SDGs before an international audience.

Stanley Eliuds, a photographer and KGMQ member, told *Gulf Times* that Qatar has demonstrated how global sporting events can extend their impact far beyond athletic competition.

"Qatar has demonstrated that major sporting events can be powerful platforms for promoting not only athletic excellence but also culture, education, sustainability and social progress," he said.

"Events such as the Diamond League provide a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich cultural heritage while engaging audiences from around the world on is-

suues that matter to everyone," he added.

According to Eliuds, integrating traditional culture into international sporting events helps preserve cultural identity, foster cross-cultural understanding, and showcase the values of hospitality, respect and community.

He added that promoting education through sport encourages young people to embrace lifelong learning, discipline and leadership.

He underlined the importance of highlighting gender equality, saying that it highlights the message that women and girls deserve equal opportunities to participate, compete and lead in sport and society, while inspiring future generations.

On environmental conservation, Eliuds said hosts of major sporting events have a responsibility to demonstrate sustainable practices, from reducing waste and conserving resources to encouraging environmentally responsible behaviour among athletes, spectators and organisers.

"When traditional culture is connected with these global priorities, sport becomes much more than competition," he said. "It becomes a bridge between heritage and innovation, inspiring dialogue, mutual respect and collective action."

KGMQ founder Zacchaeus Njuguna said the organisation promotes the SDGs by combining culture, volunteerism, sport and community service to create positive change within Maasai communities.

"Through health awareness campaigns, educational outreach, environmental conservation, beach clean-ups, recycling initiatives and cultural performances, we promote healthy living, quality education, climate action and sustainable communities," he said.

Njuguna added that partnerships with the Kenyan embassy in Qatar, local organisations and international event organisers have enabled the KGMQ to showcase African heritage while promoting unity, inclusion, environmental responsibility and global co-operation.



Zacchaeus Njuguna

"Our participation in international events, including the 2026 Diamond League in Qatar, demonstrates how culture and sport can bring people together and contribute to achieving the SDGs," he said.