



Travel connected with GCC
Roam Like Home

Use your local plan's data, minutes, & SMS while roaming the GCC for QR 125 / week.



vodafone

Roblux Interior Paint with Low VOC
 Exceptional Washability
 Superior Stain Resistant
 Obtained Qatar Quality Mark
 Obtained International Green Mark

ROBSON

تخصصنا في طلاءات
 Interior Paint with Low VOC
 Exceptional Washability
 Superior Stain Resistant
 Obtained Qatar Quality Mark
 Obtained International Green Mark

مركز الصناعات الكيماوية والطلاءات
 NATIONAL PAINTS FACTORIES CO. LLC - Qatar
 Tel: 446016023

THE PERFECT GIFT?
THE ONE THEY CHOOSE

Doha Festival City

SPORT | Page 1

Argentina stage stunning late comeback to see off Egypt

Ready to GUAC AND ROLL?
Only on talabat

FREE DELIVERY

6THSTREET.COM

1200+ Top Fashion Brands

DELIVERY IN 90 MINUTES

SCAN TO SHOP

Tanker attack: Qatar summons Iran envoy

- Vessel Al Rekayyat struck by drone ● 3 vessels targeted: US
- Tehran urged to stop endangering security of navigation

QNA, Reuters
Doha

Qatar has strongly condemned the targeting of the Qatari tanker Al Rekayyat while it was transiting near the Strait of Hormuz, describing the attack as a grave violation of the safety of international navigation, a direct threat to global energy supply security, and a flagrant breach of international law.

The condemnation came in a protest note handed by Director of the Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ibrahim bin Yousef Fakhro to Iran's deputy ambassador to Qatar, Mohsen Mohammad Ghanei, who was summoned to the ministry's headquarters yesterday.

The note set out Qatar's unequivocal rejection of the assault and the threat it poses to the security of international navigation and the stability of the region.

It demanded that Iran immediately cease any practices that compromise regional security and refrain from endangering international shipping and global energy supplies. The note affirmed that Qatar reserved all its rights under international law to take any measures it deemed appropriate to protect its interests and assets.

It further called on Iran to provide an urgent explanation for the attack, take immediate steps to prevent any recurrence, and fully comply with the relevant rules of international law.

Earlier, HE the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson and Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Majed al-Ansari, in a X post, termed the attack "unacceptable". **To Page 5**



US revokes Iran oil waiver after attacks

AFP
Washington,

The United States revoked a temporary sanctions waiver for Iranian oil yesterday after three tankers were struck in the Strait of Hormuz, raising pressure on Tehran as it negotiates with Washington over ending the Middle East war. The US Treasury Department cancelled a licence announced

in June that had allowed Iran to produce, sell and deliver crude oil and related products through August 21.

"Iran's actions in the Strait were wholly unacceptable to the United States and will be met with consequences," a US official told AFP.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the US-Iran memorandum of understanding was "entirely performance-based", warning

that Tehran would see benefits only if it showed "good behaviour". But US negotiators were continuing to work "in good faith towards a final deal", the official said. "We are now in a sensitive period where potential alternatives to an Iranian toll or fee system are being explored," Andreas Krieg, a security expert at King's College London, told AFP.

د. ماجد محمد الأنصاري
Dr. Majed Al Ansari
@majedalansari

"We demand that the Islamic Republic of Iran immediately cease all practices that undermine regional security or threaten the safety of international maritime navigation, & refrain from endangering global energy supplies & the resources of the countries of the region in pursuit of narrow interests."

Arab states rally behind Qatar

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Egypt and Kuwait have voiced their full solidarity with Qatar following the targeting of the Qatari tanker Al Rekayyat near the Strait of Hormuz, condemning the assault as a grave violation of international law and a threat to the safety of international navigation and global energy supplies. Saudi Arabia condemned the attack on Al Rekayyat, along with the targeting of its own tanker Wedyan as it transited the strait, calling both a breach of UN Security Council Resolution 2817, which guarantees freedom of navigation. Riyadh held Iran fully responsible for the attacks and their consequences. The UAE denounced the "Iranian aggression" as a dangerous escalation aimed at undermining one of the world's most vital waterways, stressing that using the Strait of Hormuz as a tool for economic pressure or blackmail was unacceptable. Jordan branded the attack a flagrant breach of international law, reaffirming its backing for all measures Qatar takes to safeguard its security and national assets. Egypt voiced complete rejection of any actions endangering freedom of navigation, calling for adherence to international law and an end to practices that escalate regional tensions. Kuwait's Cabinet, meeting under Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, expressed its utmost denunciation of the attack, affirming that Kuwait stands side by side with Qatar and urging an immediate halt to all escalatory actions. **(QNA)**

Foreign firms flock to Qatar in first quarter

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar has drawn one of its strongest waves of foreign business in recent years, with 3,295 non-Qatari companies registered in the first quarter of 2026 – a vote of international confidence that underscores the country's growing pull as a regional investment hub.

The surge came despite the economic uncertainties and geopolitical challenges buffeting global markets during the quarter, and points to a business environment that continues to reassure investors even in turbulent times.

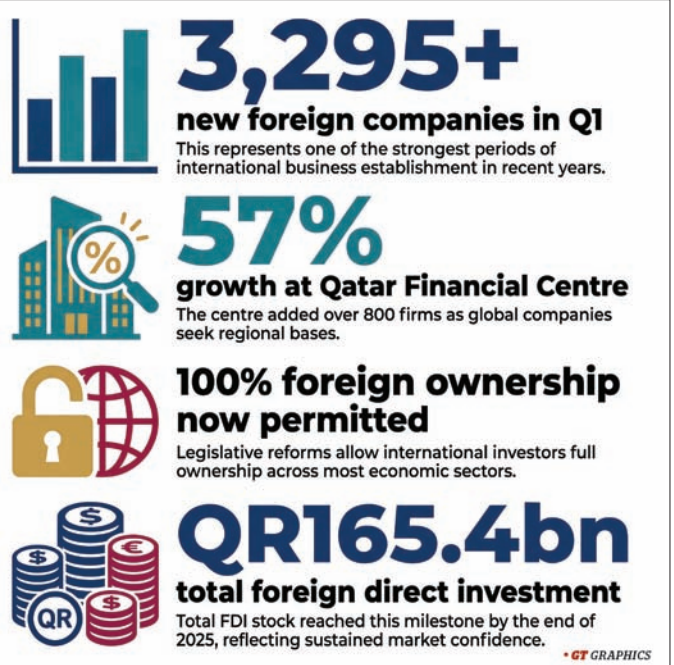
According to a report by Qatar TV, the first-quarter figure marked one of the strongest bursts of foreign business establishment in years. The momentum reflects Qatar's ability

to attract international investors through a blend of economic stability, advanced infrastructure, investor-friendly legislation, and expanding opportunities across multiple sectors.

The increase comes as Qatar presses ahead with policies designed to sharpen its competitiveness as a regional and global business hub. Key drivers include the steady development of economic and investment regulations, efficient and easily accessible procedures for setting up businesses, and broader scope for foreign ownership across various sectors.

Over recent years, the country has introduced a series of reforms aimed at making the investment process faster and more accessible. These measures have improved the ease of doing business, encouraging multinationals and entrepreneurs to establish operations in Qatar.

To Page 2



The second phase will see two autonomous robotaxis operated remotely, with no safety officer on board, along three routes already tested and approved

Driverless robotaxis move a step closer to Doha's roads

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar has moved a step closer to putting driverless taxis on its roads after Mowasalat (Karwa) completed a successful trial of electric robotaxis under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport (MoT).

Announcing the milestone yesterday, the MoT said the robotaxis had made a round trip between the ministry's headquarters and the Old Doha Port – a run it described as the latest in a string of successes for the project, and a signal that Qatar's autonomous

vehicles are edging towards a fully driverless future.

"This pioneering project aligns with the plans of the Autonomous Vehicles Strategy developed by the MoT, which aims to leverage advanced technology applications, incorporating the latest smart, eco-friendly systems, within the public transportation industry," said MoT Assistant Undersecretary for Land Transport Affairs Abdullah Saif al-Sulaiti.

He added that the ministry's departments continue to keep pace with the best global practices in adopting smart and sustainable mobility solutions. The trials, he said, followed the high-

est known safety standards, with the MoT set to launch the next operational phases in collaboration with Karwa.

The most striking prospect lies just ahead. According to MoT Road Affairs Department In-Charge Nayla Khaled al-Noaimi, the successful pilot shows the operating and technical systems are now ready for broader adoption of autonomous services – making the switch to a second phase highly likely. That phase, she said, aims to advance to the full running of autonomous vehicles, with no driver at the wheel, in co-ordination with the relevant authorities in Qatar. **To Page 2**

Qatar condemns Syria bombings

Qatar has condemned two bombings near the Ministry of Tourism in Damascus that left a number of people injured. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm rejection of violence and terrorism, regardless of motive, and affirmed its full solidarity with Syria and its complete support for all measures taken to preserve the country's security and stability. The ministry also wished the injured a speedy recovery. **(QNA)**

Qatar takes part in meeting of Istanbul Co-operation Initiative and Nato states

Qatar participated in the ministerial meeting of the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative (ICI) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) member states, held on the sidelines of the Nato Summit in Ankara.

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi led Qatar's delegation at the meeting.

In his remarks, the minister indicated that the meeting comes at a pivotal stage, in which security and political challenges have become more interconnected and intertwined, and international interests have become more overlapping, which makes it necessary to unify efforts and enhance co-ordination to confront these challenges.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi pointed out that the Middle East region has

recently witnessed a dangerous escalation, highlighting the grave risks involved in military escalation.

He stressed the urgent need to prioritise diplomacy, dialogue, and collective efforts aimed at maintaining regional peace and stability.

The minister reiterated Qatar's commitment to the path of dialogue and diplomacy, and the



pursuit of de-escalation, and building on the gains achieved under the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the US and Iran, in a way that contributes to strengthening security and stability regionally and internationally.

He noted that, following the

ceasefire and in close co-ordination with Pakistan and other regional and international partners, Qatar intensified its mediation efforts to help maintain the ceasefire, facilitate the continuation of dialogue, and encourage confidence-building measures.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi affirmed Qa-

tar's belief that sustainable security cannot be achieved by military means alone, but rather through diplomacy, direct dialogue, and the creation of political pathways, stressing its commitment to playing the role of a trusted mediator and facilitator of dialogue.

He noted that Qatar attaches great importance to strengthening its co-operation with Nato within the framework of the ICI, which was launched in 2004.

The minister announced that an agreement had been reached regarding the Individually Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) between Qatar and Nato.

He also announced that the final stage of establishing a regional centre for peace support operations in Qatar, under the auspices of the Nato, is nearing completion. - QNA

Minister participates in Nato chief's meeting

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi participated yesterday in the meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) Secretary-General Mark Rutte with heads of delegations participating in Istanbul Co-operation Initiative. - QNA



Minister meets officials on sidelines of Nato summit

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi held separate meetings yesterday with Special Representative of the Nato Secretary-General for the Southern Neighbourhood and Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Javier Colomina, Chief Adviser on National Security and Foreign Policy to the Turkish President Akif Cagatay Kilic, and Turkiye's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Musa Kulaklikaya. The meetings took place on the sidelines of the Nato Summit in Ankara. The meetings focused on deepening and expanding bilateral co-operation, discussing the latest developments in the region. - QNA

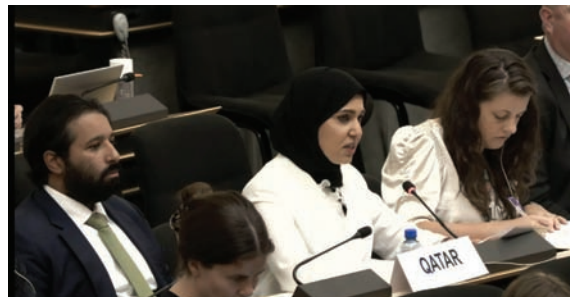
UNHRC adopts resolution by Qatar

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva unanimously adopted the resolution entitled "Protecting Healthcare in Armed Conflicts" during its 62nd session yesterday.

This is the first resolution that Qatar has drafted entirely on its own, led the negotiations on, and submitted to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, garnering broad consensus among member states, with 62 countries from various geographical groups joining in its sponsorship.

Introducing the resolution for adoption, HE the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah affirmed that the resolution was submitted in response to the unprecedented escalation in attacks on health facilities and health workers in situations of armed conflict, and the resulting grave humanitarian consequences that threaten the lives of civilians and undermine health systems in conflict zones.

She indicated that the decision is based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law.



HE Dr al-Muftah stressed that providing healthcare is a fundamental right and an inalienable human duty, even in times of armed conflict and occupation.

She highlighted the need for States and parties to armed conflicts to comply with their international obligations, respect and protect medical facilities, medical transport and health workers, and ensure that all those affected have ac-

cess to safe and high-quality health services without discrimination, in addition to strengthening the protection of health systems and ensuring unhindered access to humanitarian and medical aid, which are the principles enshrined in the resolution.

HE Dr al-Muftah indicated that the resolution stipulates holding a panel discussion with the participation of experts during the 66th session of the council in September/October 2027, in addition to preparing a report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to be presented at the 67th session of the council in February/March 2028.

During the session to adopt the resolution, several representatives of states and groups made statements supporting it.

Statements included remarks delivered by Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states, Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), as well as by Egypt, Iraq, Indonesia, and other countries. - QNA

Foreign firms flock to Qatar in first quarter

From Page 1

Among the most significant steps has been the expansion of foreign ownership rules, allowing international investors to hold up to 100% of companies in many sectors - a move that has notably lifted market confidence.

The strong showing was also evident on specialised economic platforms, particularly the Qatar Financial Centre, which added more than 800 new companies during the first quarter - a growth of around 57% on the same period a year earlier.

The jump signals rising interest from global firms seeking to use Qatar as a base for regional operations.

Foreign investment inflows are also undergoing a structural shift. While energy, particularly liquefied natural gas (LNG), remains the cornerstone of the economy, international capital is increasingly flowing into emerging fields such as financial services, technology, artificial intelligence (AI), digital transformation, and other knowledge-based industries.

This diversification aligns with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, which seeks to build a sustainable, diversified economy capable of competing globally while reducing reliance on traditional sectors.

The strategy places strong emphasis on innovation, human capital development, entrepreneurship, and the growth of a knowledge-driven economy.

Qatar's ability to attract international companies has been further underpinned by major investment in infrastructure and logistics.

World-class transport networks - including the expansion of Hamad International Airport and the continued growth of Hamad Port - have strengthened the country's role as a gateway linking Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Financial indicators tell the same story.

The stock of foreign direct investment reached around QR165.4bn by the end of 2025, reflecting sustained confidence among international investors and the continued inflow of foreign capital into the national economy.

The growth in foreign companies mirrors Qatar's current economic performance and points to bright prospects ahead.

International businesses increasingly view the country as a strategic location offering political stability, competitive regulations, advanced infrastructure, and access to fast-growing regional markets.

Investment promotion bodies, meanwhile, continue to step up efforts to position Qatar as a global centre for business and innovation.

Through initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, digital transformation, and sector diversification, the country is aiming to attract higher-value investment that contributes to long-term growth.

As global competition for capital intensifies, Qatar's ongoing economic reforms, financial strength, and commitment to sustainable development are reinforcing its reputation as an attractive destination for international business.

Qatar to host World Maritime Day 2028

During its 137th regular meeting, the Council of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) approved Qatar's hosting of the World Maritime Day 2028 event.

Marking the occasion, Qatar's ambassador to the United Kingdom and Permanent Representative of Qatar to the IMO Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani thanked the member states for their confidence and support for Qatar's request.

He emphasised Qatar's keenness to organise a distinguished event that contributes to supporting the goals of the IMO and enhancing international

co-operation and the exchange of experiences in the maritime sector, welcoming the participation of member states and relevant parties in this international event.

World Maritime Day is an international platform held annually by the IMO in co-operation with the host country.

It brings together government officials, maritime sector leaders, and representatives of international organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector to discuss issues, challenges, and future opportunities facing the global maritime sector. - QNA

Minister meets EU envoy

HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met yesterday with the European Union's ambassador to Qatar Cristian Tudor. They discussed ways to deepen bilateral co-operation, as well as a range of matters of shared interest. - QNA



MoECC discusses National Radiological, Nuclear Emergency Plan

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) launched a workshop yesterday on the project to review, update, and develop Qatar's National Radiological and Nuclear Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.

The workshop was organised in co-operation with Finnish consultancy STUK International.

The workshop brought together representatives of national agencies involved in the country's emergency preparedness and response system to review the project's objectives, key areas of work, co-ordination mechanisms, and updates to Qatar's national arrangements for radiological emergencies.

During the workshop, HE the

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Abdulaziz bin Ahmed bin Abdullah al-Mahmoud said that the launch of the project reflects the country's commitment to strengthening its national preparedness and response capabilities and developing a system capable of responding to a wide range of potential scenarios in a co-ordi-

nated and effective manner in line with international best practices and standards.

He said that responding to radiological and nuclear emergencies is a shared national responsibility that requires clearly defined roles, rapid information exchange, and effective co-ordination among all relevant institutions and agencies.

HE al-Mahmoud praised the important role of the Civil Defence Council as the national framework for interagency co-ordination, as well as the National Radiological and Nuclear Emergency Team for overseeing the project's outcomes and helping translate them into practical and implementable arrangements. - QNA

Lebanon PM meets Qatar's ambassador

Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam held talks in Beirut yesterday with Qatar's ambassador Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani to explore ways to strengthen bilateral relations across multiple avenues and review the latest developments in Lebanon and the region.

Salam praised Qatar's unwavering support for Lebanon and its people.

Sheikh Saud reiterated Doha's backing for the security and stability of Lebanon. - QNA

Qatar Charity campaign to support 150,000 in Pakistan

Qatar Charity (QC) has launched a large-scale campaign to distribute in-kind and development assistance across several provinces of Pakistan.

The QC's statement said that the campaign targeted more than 150,000 beneficiaries among flood-affected families, persons with disabilities, schoolchildren, and vulnerable households.

The first phase of the campaign saw the distribution of 600 relief packages containing blankets, camping heaters, winter clothing, kitchen sets, solar-powered lamps, and water bottles, helping meet the basic needs of affected families.

In the education sector, Qatar Charity provided 11 government schools with

new classroom furniture, contributing to a more conducive learning environment for students.

The organisation also distributed 275 wheelchairs to support persons with disabilities and enhance their independence and mobility.

In the coming weeks, the QC plans to expand the campaign through the distribution of 200 family tents, 1,212 blood pressure monitors, and an additional 4,400 relief packages.

The interventions will also include the provision of 700 additional wheelchairs, alongside a range of livelihood support projects.

These encompass the distribution of 200 sewing machines, 130 tuk-tuks, 130 cargo

tricycles, and 100 corn flour milling machines, helping vulnerable families establish sustainable sources of income and improve their long-term resilience.

Qatar Charity emphasised that the campaign goes beyond addressing immediate humanitarian needs.

It also focuses on supporting education, promoting economic empowerment, and enhancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities, helping beneficiaries build more stable and self-reliant futures.

Through its various interventions, the Qatar Charity campaign is expected to improve the living conditions of nearly 150,000 people across different provinces of Pakistan. - QNA

Driverless robotaxis move a step closer to Doha's roads

From Page 1

MoT Land Transport Licensing Department dHamad Ali al-Marri stressed that the ministry places great emphasis on providing reliable and secure services for the public, and on continuing to raise the quality of land transport services to the highest standards of innovation and sustainability.

Mowasalat (Karwa) chief Ahmed Hassan al-Obaidly said the company was working side by side with, and under the supervision of, the MoT on the vital project.

"At Mowasalat, we dedicated all necessary resources, including skilled personnel, workforce, vehicles, technology, and advanced software to ensure the success of this initiative across all its stages," he said. "Our goal is to deliver the service to the public with the highest standards of safety



and comfort, while keeping pace with developments in the public transport sector and aligning with Qatar National Vision 2030."

The groundwork has been building for nearly a year.

Phase one of the project, launched in August last year and followed by the roll-out of a pilot commercial service through the Karwa app last December, clocked up 2,500 trips - each run autonomously under the watch of a trained safety officer

(SO) seated behind the wheel.

The results, the ministry said, exceeded expectations: a successful commercial operation, high passenger satisfaction, and safety rates that beat initial targets, with 94% of pilot trips completed with no human intervention.

The second phase raises the stakes. It will see two autonomous robotaxis operated remotely (RO), with no safety officer on board, along three routes already tested and approved: Old Doha Port-The Gate Mall, Souq Waqif-Sheraton Doha Hotel, and MIA-West Bay.

That phase will be rolled out gradually, one route at a time, with progress from one stage to the next conditional on meeting all necessary safety requirements - and only after a fully safe deployment and operation has been verified and guaranteed.

Katara hosts Egyptian National Day celebrations

Katara Cultural Village hosted yesterday a celebration organised by the embassy of Egypt in Qatar on the occasion of Egypt's National Day, bringing together senior officials, diplomats, and cultural figures in a gathering that highlighted the depth of the longstanding relations between Qatar and Egypt.

Held at Katara Building 12, the event was attended by Prof Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, general manager of Katara, alongside Egyptian ambassador Walid Fahmy al-Faqi, as well as a number of ministers, ambassadors, heads and representatives of accredited diplomatic missions, and distinguished guests interested in cultural and diplomatic affairs.

The celebration started with the playing of the national anthems of Qatar and Egypt, followed by a speech delivered by al-Faqi, who expressed his pride in the deep-rooted fraternal ties between the two countries.

He stressed the importance of

national occasions in strengthening communication and mutual understanding among peoples, while further enhancing friendship and cooperation in cultural and civilisational fields.

The event also featured a documentary film highlighting key milestones in Egypt's history, its national achievements, and aspects of its rich cultural identity and heritage.

The presentation received positive engagement from attendees, who praised its portrayal of Egypt's historical legacy and contemporary accomplishments.

The celebration reflected the strong bonds between the two nations and provided an opportunity for diplomatic representatives, officials, and cultural figures to connect in an atmosphere that promotes dialogue, openness, and intercultural understanding.

Katara's hosting of the event reflects its ongoing mission to serve as a global platform for cultural dialogue and civilisational exchange.



Local fresh dates start to hit the market as harvest season begins

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The first batches of locally produced fresh dates (rutab) have begun arriving at the popular markets in Al Wakrah and Al Saliya, marking the start of Qatar's annual fresh dates season.

Early varieties currently available include Khanizi, Barhi, and Shishi, with supplies expected to increase significantly over the coming days as additional varieties, including Khalas, enter the market.

Some date palm farm owners stressed that the process of harvesting the season's first crop has already started, with production expected to rise by the end of this week and over the next week. They explained that the initial harvest includes the Khanizi and Shishi varieties, noting that these continue to enjoy the strongest consumer demand at the beginning of the season due to their popularity within the local market.

Farm owners also noted that many farms have partnered with delivery companies to transport fresh produce orders directly



from farms to customers nationwide. They expect the local market to see a substantial increase in supplies after July 15, when harvesting operations will be completed or nearing completion. They further noted that several Qatari date farms cultivate rare and premium varieties.

Yousef al-Taher, owner of a date palm farm, said his farm has already begun harvesting the season's first dates and expects production to increase by the end of this week and into next week, stressing the farm's commitment to offering high-quality produce and meeting customer expectations.

The current harvest includes the Khanizi and Shishi varieties, which enjoy the highest demand early in the season.

Ali al-Henzab, another date farm owner, said his farm will begin harvesting its first crop this week. He explained that Khanizi is the earliest variety to be harvested, followed by Shishi and finally Khalas.

He said that sales are conducted directly at the farm, where traders purchase the produce before distributing it to markets. Accordingly, the farm has agreements with several traders, and its entire fresh date production has already been reserved.

Meanwhile, Hamad al-Kuwari, owner of another date farm, said harvesting at his farm will begin within a week. He explained that the farm is home to around 50 varieties of dates, including many rare and premium cultivars sourced from Tunisia, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

He added that harvesting starts with Khanizi and Shishi before moving to Khalas later in the season. He noted that Iraqi date varieties are among the finest available and explained that sales of the farm's rare and expensive varieties are conducted directly from the farm.

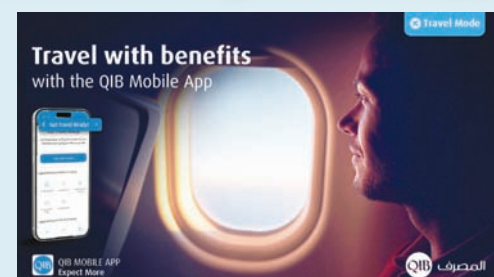
QIB ensures travel confidence through mobile app

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) is inviting customers travelling this summer to take advantage of the wide range of travel-friendly features available through the award-winning QIB Mobile App. Designed to provide greater convenience, security, and control while abroad, the app enables customers to manage their banking seamlessly and enjoy a safe, worry-free travel experience. Before travelling, customers are encouraged to activate the Travel Mode feature available on the QIB Mobile App by selecting their travel destinations. The travel mode feature is designed to elevate the travel experience for all frequent travellers.

The powerful tool suite empowers users with features like Travel Takaful, accessing instant finance for travel expenses, temporary credit limit increases, convenient payment plans, live exchange rate updates, activating card magstrips, scheduling trips, checking free lounge access, and finding ATMs abroad, along with valuable travel tips. It also allows QIB to recognise legitimate card transactions in the selected countries while continuing to monitor and block suspicious activity originating elsewhere, helping customers enjoy uninterrupted access to their banking services while benefiting from enhanced protection against fraud.

For added convenience, QIB also recommends that customers add their QIB debit and credit cards to their preferred digital wallet before departure, ensuring they always have a secure and convenient payment option available wherever contactless payments are accepted. When making purchases abroad, customers are advised to choose the local currency of the country they are visiting, to avoid any additional currency exchange fees. To further protect their banking information, customers should avoid accessing their accounts through public Wi-Fi networks and instead use secure mobile data or trusted private internet connections whenever possible.

Through the QIB Mobile App, customers also remain in full control of their cards while travelling, with the ability to activate or temporarily deactivate their cards, manage international usage, control magnetic stripe functionality, and access a range of



card management features instantly. In the event of a lost or stolen card, customers can immediately deactivate the card through the QIB Mobile App and request a replacement. QIB also encourages customers to keep their contact information updated to ensure the Bank can promptly communicate important notifications and provide support whenever needed.

D Anand, QIB general manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "At QIB, we are committed to delivering innovative digital banking solutions that provide our customers with convenience, security, and peace of mind wherever they are."

"As travel activity increases during the summer season, the QIB Mobile App offers a comprehensive suite of features designed to support customers before and throughout their journeys." He added: "From activating Travel Mode and managing cards instantly to using digital wallets and accessing a wide range of self-service banking features, customers can travel with confidence knowing their banking is always within reach. We encourage all customers to take advantage of these services and follow the recommended travel advices to enjoy a secure and seamless banking experience."

QIB continues to enhance its award-winning QIB Mobile App with innovative features that simplify everyday banking and empower customers to manage their finances securely anytime, anywhere. With more than 320 digital banking features and services available through the app, customers can enjoy a seamless banking experience whether at home or travelling abroad. For more information, visit www.qib.com.qa

New pathway aims to uncover Qatar's next generation of cycling and triathlon talent

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

A partnership between Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Pre-University Education division and the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation is expected to strengthen opportunities for young people to progress from school sport into organised cycling and triathlon, with a particular focus on identifying and developing promising athletes.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, Dr Ahmad Alameddine, Sports Affairs Specialist at QF's Pre-University Education, said the collaboration marks a new phase in expanding sporting opportunities for students and strengthening support for educators. "Although we have collaborated before, this framework creates the foundation for a new phase of success for both organisations," he said.

Dr Alameddine explained that the initiative is designed to help students discover their sporting potential, equip teachers with additional training, and make greater use of QF's sporting facilities. "Our goal is to provide students with more opportunities to identify



Abdulla Mohammed Almenhali



Dr Ahmad Alameddine

and develop their talents, while ensuring teachers receive the support they need to guide them," he said. He added that the programme is intended to be accessible to all learners, regardless of experience or ability. "Everyone in the community will be included, from students with special needs to beginners and those already competing at a high level," he said.

Executive Board Member Abdulla Mohammed Almenhali said the federation hopes to identify students with strong potential and introduce them to competitive cycling and triathlon at an early stage. "Schools are the ideal place to discover talented students who can grow with the federation and eventually represent Qatar," he said.

Almenhali noted that intro-

ducing young people to triathlon, which combines swimming, cycling and running, could broaden participation in endurance sports while opening new opportunities for aspiring athletes. He also said the initiative supports Qatar National Vision 2030 by encouraging active lifestyles among young people and creating a sustainable pipeline of future athletes.

"We hope to see more talented students joining the federation in the years ahead," he said.

Officials from both organisations believe that strengthening links between schools and national sports programmes will help create clearer development pathways for young athletes while fostering a lasting culture of participation, healthy living and sporting excellence.

QF, Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation partner to boost sports development, inclusion

Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Pre-University Education division and the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation have signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen co-operation in sports development, inclusion and community engagement.

A Qatar Foundation statement said the agreement aims to expand access to endurance sports for children, young people and the wider community across Qatar, with a particular focus on students with accessibility needs, increasing girls' participation and broadening grassroots involvement in cycling and triathlon.

The statement hailed the partnership as a reflection of a shared commitment to creating more inclusive and accessible sporting pathways while supporting healthier and more active communities.

President of Pre-University Education at Qatar Foundation, Abeer al-Khalifa, said sport is a core part of the educational experience, helping to build confidence, teamwork, discipline and leadership skills.

She said the partnership would create more opportunities for students to take part in specialised sports programmes while making use of Qatar Foundation's sporting facilities to support school and community



initiatives promoting health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Al-Khalifa added that the agreement would also support coach development, workshops and joint initiatives, saying a sustainable sporting culture begins in schools and is strengthened through partnerships between educational institutions and national organisations.

President of the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation, Abdulaziz al-Tamimi, said the agreement builds on an existing partnership between the two organisations and reinforces their shared commitment to promoting sport and healthy lifestyles among students.

He said the collaboration would help expand participation in cycling and triathlon while creating more inclusive and sustainable sporting opportunities for different groups across the community. (QNA)

Northwestern University helps shape global media scholarship at IAMCR 2026

Scholars from Northwestern University in Qatar (NUQ) will contribute research, creative scholarship, and academic leadership at the 2026 International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Conference, taking place from June 28 - July 3 in Galway, Ireland.

This year's conference explores the theme Peripheries and Connections: Media, Communication, and Transformation, examining how media and communication illuminate questions of inequality, identity, power, and social change across diverse global contexts.

Northwestern Qatar will contribute through faculty research, Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South (#IAS-NUQ) initiatives, post-doctoral scholarship, undergraduate research presentations, and institutional engagement, reflecting the uni-

versity's commitment to advancing evidence-based scholarship centred on the Global South. The university community will participate across more than a dozen conference sessions, ranging from paper presentations, a plenary address, multimodal exhibitions, to international collaborations.

"IAMCR is one of the leading global forums for advancing communication and media scholarship," said Marwan M Kraidy, dean and CEO of NUQ. "It is especially meaningful to see our faculty, researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and undergraduate students exemplifying NU-Q's commitment to academic excellence through scholarship that engages with the most pressing global questions and contributes perspectives from the Global South to international conversations."

Faculty members will present



research spanning artificial intelligence (AI), digital identities, journalism, political economy, media history, communication technologies, geographical and cultural representation.

Dean Kraidy will also serve as a plenary speaker during one of the conference's flagship sessions, Communicating Peace in an Era of War, joining international schol-

ars in examining the role of communication amid contemporary global challenges.

#IAS-NUQ will maintain a significant presence throughout the conference. Alongside presentations by faculty, post-doctoral scholars, and undergraduate fellows, the Institute will serve as an official Digital Sponsor, hosting a conference booth showcasing its

publications, research initiatives, and opportunities for international collaboration.

Postdoctoral scholars will present research examining biometric citizenship in Nepal and the temporal dimensions of carcerality in Lebanon, while #IAS-NUQ director Clovis Bergère will share findings from his ongoing work exploring youth

and digitality in Guinea-Conakry. Across the conference, researchers will present documentary films, interactive digital platforms, graphic narratives, oral histories, and game-based research alongside traditional academic papers, demonstrating how evidence-based storytelling can expand the ways knowledge is produced, communicated, and experienced.

For NUQ, participation at IAMCR 2026 reinforces the university's role as a multidisciplinary community of evidence-based storytellers focused on the Global South. Through research, teaching, and creative practice, the university continues to contribute to international conversations that deepen understanding of media, communication, technology, and society while fostering dialogue across regions, disciplines, and perspectives.

Ministry of Endowments launches 2026 summer programme

QNA
Doha

The Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs launched the annual summer programme that will run throughout July.

More than 1,000 students are participating across 10 religious centres in different parts of the country as part of the department's efforts to make productive use of the summer break by strengthening young people's character and reinforcing Islamic and moral values through an integrated programme of educational activities, learning opportunities, and interactive events.

The programme, which runs from July 5 to July 30, is designed for boys aged 10 to 15. It aims to provide an engaging educational environment that combines learning with enjoyment while promoting religious awareness, personal development, and positive behaviour in ways suited to this age

group and helping participants interact positively within their families and communities.

Commenting on the initiative, Head of the Religious Guidance Section Muath Yousef al-Qasimi said that this year's edition continues to offer a comprehensive package of educational, religious, and skills-based programmes tailored to the needs of young people and intended to develop various aspects of their personalities.

He noted that the curriculum focuses on key Quranic concepts, particularly the rulings and values derived from Surahs An-Nur and Al-Hujurat, in addition to practical social and moral values such as honouring parents, mosque etiquette, the importance of time management, respecting elders, proper conduct with others, and the responsible use of social media.

He added that the program also includes practical instruction on acts of worship, with training on the rulings governing ablution, ritual bathing, and other devotional practices to help students

correctly apply Islamic rituals through simple educational methods. He said there was a diversity of activities covering Qur'anic studies, moral education, skills development, sports, and recreation. He highlighted that as one of the programme's greatest strengths, noting that it creates an engaging learning environment while enabling participants to acquire knowledge, practical skills, and experiences that positively influence their personal, academic, and social development.

Al-Qasimi noted that the programme also includes educational and recreational trips and external activities organised in co-operation with several national institutions, including the Lekhwiya and the ministry's Scholarship Department, enriching participants' learning experiences and strengthening their connections with community institutions.

The programme operates four hours a day, from Sunday through Wednesday, between 8:00am and 11:00am. It offers a wide range of activities combining faith-based

instruction, character development, skills training, and recreation. The curriculum includes Qur'anic concepts that deepen religious understanding and correct interpretation of Islamic texts, educational values that foster balanced personalities, practical training in acts of worship, skills courses, interactive activities, physical competitions, incentive prizes, and educational trips and outdoor events designed to broaden students' horizons.

This year's program also introduces three specialised skills courses: public speaking, Islamic vocal performance, and the call to prayer (adhan). These courses aim to identify and develop promising talents while strengthening participants' communication and personal skills.

The public speaking course focuses on building confidence and effective presentation skills, the vocal performance course seeks to develop linguistic appreciation and aesthetic awareness through meaningful artistic expression, and the adhan course trains stu-

dents in the proper performance, rules, and etiquette of the Islamic call to prayer, preparing a new generation of young people to perform this important religious practice.

Meanwhile, the Mohammed bin Hamad Al Mana Mosque centre in the Al Waab area has attracted more than 120 students, reflecting parents' confidence in the educational programmes offered through the department's summer centres.

Head of the Mohammed bin Hamad Al Mana Mosque Center Mohammed Samir said students have been divided into seven educational groups supervised by a select team of qualified instructors to ensure the programme's educational and developmental objectives are achieved while instilling values and concepts through modern teaching methods tailored to participants' ages and needs.

He added that the centre is committed to building an effective educational partnership with parents through daily communication and regular updates on the programme's activities, enabling them to monitor their children's

progress and maximise the programme's educational benefits.

The programme is being held at 10 religious and summer centres across Qatar to maximise participation.

The launch of the programme reflects the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs' commitment to implementing the objectives of its 2025-2030 strategic plan, which focuses on strengthening Islamic identity, enhancing religious awareness among young people, and fostering well-rounded personal development through high-quality programmes that combine tradition with modern approaches to prepare a generation grounded in values and knowledge.

The programme also aligns with the pillars of Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly human development, by investing in a generation capable of assuming responsibility, making positive contributions to society, and developing the skills and values that strengthen their commitment to their faith and country while supporting Qatar's comprehensive development across all sectors.

QCDC, QFSW partner to strengthen career guidance

Qatar Career Development Centre (QCDC), founded by Qatar Foundation, and the Qatar Foundation for Social Work (QFSW), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen co-operation in the fields of career guidance, career development and capacity building.

The MoU was signed by Saad Abdulla al-Kharji, executive director of QCDC, and Khalid bin Mohammed al-Kuwari, deputy chief executive officer of QFSW, during a ceremony at Education City. The agreement sets a foundation for closer co-operation between the two entities, combining QCDC's expertise in career development with QFSW's mandate to support and empower civil society organisations and the communities they serve.

Through the MoU, QCDC and QFSW will work together to develop specialised training programmes and workshops for employees of both entities and QFSW-affiliated centres. The partnership will also introduce career guidance and professional development initiatives tailored to the needs of QFSW's beneficiaries, with a focus on building readiness, strengthening skills, and supporting clearer career pathways.

The agreement further includes career advisory support and technical expertise, such as training needs



analysis, skills assessment, career pathway design, and guidance on relevant policies and strategies. It also opens the door for knowledge exchange, joint awareness materials, and collaboration on conferences, seminars, workshops, panel discussions, and training programmes. A joint committee will oversee implementation, monitor progress, and address any challenges that may arise.

Al-Kharji said: "This partnership with QFSW reflects our belief that career development is not only a service for individuals, but an important tool for strengthening institutions and enabling wider social impact. By combining QCDC's expertise in career guidance and capacity building with QFSW's

important role in supporting civil society organisations, we aim to help more people access the knowledge, skills, and guidance they need to make informed decisions and contribute meaningfully to Qatar's future."

"This MoU marks an important step in deepening institutional co-operation in career guidance, professional development, and capacity-building. It will help strengthen national competencies and enhance the quality of services delivered through QFSW's affiliated centres. By bringing our efforts together, we can exchange expertise and develop joint programmes that build the readiness of our teams and better empower the communities we serve," al-Kuwari added.

QF celebrates World Volleyball Day 2026

Qatar Foundation (QF) celebrated World Volleyball Day 2026 yesterday (July 7) with a ladies-only tournament and a series of interactive challenges at the Education City Recreation Centre, bringing together more than 150 young people from across Qatar.

The event concluded with an awards ceremony, where participants were recognised by Ali Ghanim al-Kuwari, president of the Qatar Volleyball Association, and Alanoud al-Mesnad, executive director of Women's and Girls' Sports at QF.

Observed annually on July 7, World Volleyball Day was established by the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) – the governing body for all volleyball disciplines – to celebrate



the sport's ability to inspire, connect, and empower communities around the world.

Volleyball is one of five sports in QF's Creating Pathways programme, an initiative that empowers women and girls. Launched in 2024 as part of

QF's FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 legacy, the programme encourages physical activity and promotes overall well-being, enabling women and girls to build confidence, develop new skills, and explore opportunities both on and off the field.

Justice ministry, Kanaf host workshop

Qatar's Ministry of Justice has partnered with the Kanaf Parenting Center to host an interactive workshop aimed at helping families navigate the challenges of the digital age.

The session forms part of the ministry's efforts to strengthen social responsibility, improve digital awareness and equip employees with the knowledge and skills needed to support family stability amid rapid technological change.

Organisers said the workshop was designed to raise awareness of the risks associated with the digital environment while reinforcing the family's role in promoting values and encouraging the safe and responsible use of technology.

The event is the first in a series of activities being held under a new summer programme launched jointly by the Ministry of Justice and Kanaf. The initiative seeks to enhance employees' knowledge, improve their family and professional well-being, and support the ministry's broader goals of investing in human capital and promoting lifelong learning.

The workshop covered key challenges facing families online, including digital security, protecting chil-

dren from harmful online behaviour, and encouraging responsible technology use. It also highlighted the importance of strengthening Qatari values and identity within the family, fostering open communication between parents and children, and using technology to support stronger family relationships.

Participants were told that helping children thrive in the digital world is not simply about limiting screen time, but about equipping them with the skills and confidence to use technology responsibly.

The workshop also provided parents with practical strategies to encourage constructive family dialogue and informed decision-making in an increasingly digital society. (QNA)

QLC launches Leaders of Tomorrow Camp 2026

The third edition of the Leaders of Tomorrow Camp 2026, a youth leadership programme organised by the Qatar Leadership Centre in co-operation with the American University of Beirut, has officially begun, with 100 students participating. The programme is part of the centre's ongoing efforts to prepare a new generation of promising national leaders and develop the leadership and personal skills of young people, enabling them to contribute effectively to Qatar's national development. The programme targets Qatari high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12 through an integrated educational and training experience that combines academic learning with practical application. It focuses on developing leadership, entrepreneurship, and community service skills, while fostering initiative, teamwork, and creative thinking in line with Qatar's vision of investing in human capital and preparing future leaders.

The programme is being held from July 5 to 16 at the Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha. Participants will take part in a series of interactive workshops and practical activities led by faculty members and experts from the American University of Beirut, using a teaching approach that combines academic best practices with real-world experience.

The programme also includes field visits to several institutions across Qatar to introduce participants to institutional best practices and provide them with practical exposure to professional work environments. These visits are designed to bridge theory and practice while enhancing participants' understanding of the role national institutions play in supporting the country's development.

The initiative reflects the Qatar Leadership Centre's commitment to providing a learning environment that develops leadership capabilities, strengthens strategic thinking, effective communication, and teamwork, and equips participants to meet future challenges and serve their communities and country. It also underscores the centre's continued commitment to developing leadership initiatives across age groups and to promoting a culture of leadership among young people through specialised programmes that refine their skills and prepare them to become future leaders. (QNA)

End of the Liquidation Announcement

The Liquidator – Samer Husein Ahmad Jaghoub
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Declares finalizing the procedures
of the Liquidation of

Material Science Center Qatar QSTP- LLC
Certificate of Incorporation No. (20120620-1)

In accordance with the provisions of the law, and Qatar Science & Technology Park regulations, and accordingly, he disclaims his responsibility from the company, and its certificate of incorporation was cancelled from the Qatar Science & Technology Park.



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/ 063/26	Installation of Various Lighting System at QAFAC Plant	300/-	20,000/-	02 nd August 2026

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

- **Collection Date** : Wednesday 08th 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 Company's Commercial Registration.

Syria should not be destabilised: Macron

AFP
Damascus

French President Emmanuel Macron warned yesterday that Syria must not be destabilised after twin bomb attacks near the Damascus hotel where he spent the night, during a landmark state visit to a country emerging from years of civil war.

The attacks cast a shadow over the first trip of a European Union head of state since Bashar al-Assad was toppled in late 2024, as President Ahmed al-Sharaa tries to rebuild the country's image after more than a decade of conflict.

The two leaders vowed to step up economic and diplomatic ties with new ambassadors to be installed in each country.

In a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart, Macron said he must "not let ourselves be destabi-

lised" by such attacks, before which he had already left for the presidential palace in the heart of the Syrian capital, and reiterated Paris' support for the country.

Al-Sharaa saluted Macron's "courage" for carrying on with his visit despite the bombings.

Macron said that Paris will return more than €50mn (\$57mn) stolen by the family of former ruler Bashar al-Assad to the country.

One blast echo through Damascus and a plume of smoke rising near the hotel, where security forces closed a road.

Syria's interior ministry said one bomb had been placed inside a car parked on the side of a road, while the second was planted in a garbage container.

It said they exploded "while preparations were underway" to dismantle them.

Syria state media said that the explosions wounded 18 people, includ-

ing four police officers.

An AFP photographer near Syria's tourism ministry, opposite the hotel, saw windows damaged by one of the explosions, amid a heavy security presence.

France's Elysee Palace said Macron would continue his trip until his expected departure yesterday evening, when he travels to Ankara for a Nato summit and holds talks there the following day with Turkiye's president.

The explosions are the second in the Syrian capital since Thursday, when 10 people were killed in a bombing in a Damascus cafe.

The French president had postponed announcing the date of his visit until his plane landed on Monday, for security reasons.

Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani said that Macron's visit marked a "pivotal point" in the two countries' relations, vowing to continue to "confront terrorism in all its forms".

Al-Sharaa also announced "our agreement to begin the process of exchanging resident ambassadors between Damascus and Paris as soon as possible, signalling the return of diplomatic relations to their normal state".

The blasts came moments before Syrian state television announced Macron's arrival at the palace. The visit included an economic forum during which the two sides signed 15 bilateral agreements in several sectors, including civil aviation, health, banking, water infrastructure and roads, although French investors remain cautious about the situation.

"After the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the world realises the value of a safe and stable corridor," al-Sharaa said at the forum.

"Here the importance is highlighted of the geography of Syria, which today has regained its vital role as an indispensable link in the global corridors market."



President Ahmed al-Sharaa with President Emmanuel Macron for a joint press conference in Damascus yesterday. (AFP)

National Planning Council, DI sign MoU

The National Planning Council and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen co-operation and exchange expertise across a range of research and training fields.

The MoU was signed by Bassam Issa al-Mannai, assistant secretary-general for the Future Foresight and National Visions Centre at the National Planning Council, and DI president Dr Abdelwahab El Affendi.

Al-Mannai said that the MoU with the DI represents an important step toward integrating national planning with scientific and academic research in Qatar, contributing to evidence- and data-based decision-making and policymaking.



"We are pleased to sign this MoU with the National Planning Council, whose role is becoming increasingly important in supporting development in today's information age," said Dr El Affendi. "The MoU reflects the Institute's commitment to its national role

in generating knowledge and scientific research, and linking the outputs of studies and research to national development priorities through effective partnerships with government institutions concerned with planning and policy-making." - QNA

Children must be accompanied while swimming at sea

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Children are not permitted to swim in the sea unless accompanied by their guardians or a responsible adult, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has underlined.

Speaking on the topic of "Marine Safety" during an awareness webinar organised yesterday by the General Directorate of Civil Defence and the General Directorate of Coasts Guard at the MoI, Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmed Ali Saad stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of children while swimming in the sea or other deep water bodies.

"Children are not permitted to swim in the sea unless accompanied by their guardians or a responsible adult who must continuously supervise them both in the water and on the shore,"

the General Directorate of Coasts and Borders Security officer said. "Moreover, children must wear life jackets before going for swimming."

He noted that extra care and caution must be given to children while taking them for swimming.

"Extra care should be given to the children when they are not only in the sea, even in the swimming pools," Lt-Col Saad said.

"This is very important because in some cases, parents or guardians of the children will not be attending the children," he stated. "The children may be assigned to someone who may not be taking care of them or not even capable to take care of the children."

The officer underscored the importance of not allowing the children to swim with their friends of the same age or less as they would not be able to properly ensure their safety.



Lt-Col Ahmed Ali Saad.

The officer stated that parents or guardians should be extra vigilant and be aware of the safety practices while accompanying the children to the sea.

In any case, Lt-Col Saad noted, people should not swim at places where there are signs prohibiting swimming, adding that people must wear proper swimwear while out on swimming.

"People must avoid any areas where official notice prohibiting swimming is displayed," he said.

"It is always good to wear appropriate swimwear," the officer continued. "Sometimes, normal clothes may not be helpful if a person faces difficulties while swimming."

Third Pakistani Mango Exhibition to open at Souq Waqif today

The third Pakistani Mango Exhibition and its Products will open on July 9 at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif, featuring the largest participation since its debut with more than 30 Pakistani companies.

The event, under the patronage and organisation of the Celebrations Committee at the Private Engineering Office (PEO), and in co-operation with the Embassy of Pakistan in Qatar, will run until July 18. It is expected to attract a large number of visitors following the success of its previous editions.

Now in its third consecutive year, the exhibition has established itself as one of the region's leading seasonal speciality events. Within a short period, it has gained an outstanding reputation across Qatar and the Gulf region, benefiting from the growing popularity of Souq Waqif as a cultural and tourist destination, particularly during the summer holiday season.

The second edition achieved exceptional results, attracting more than 101,200 visitors, while mango sales exceeded 228 tonnes, alongside strong participation from Pakistani companies and speciality restaurants, further reinforcing the exhibition's position as one of the region's premier events dedicated to Pakistani mangoes.

This year's edition will also see exhibitors arriving directly from Pakistan alongside locally based Pakistani businesses. In addition, more than 30 restaurants will participate, offering a wide variety of Pakistani pickles, desserts, traditional dishes and food products, highlighting the richness and diversity of Pakistan's mango-related food industry.

The exhibition will not be limited to mangoes alone. Visitors will also have the opportunity to explore a selection of Pakistan's seasonal fruits, including apricots, peaches, jamun and chikoo, which together represent approximately 20% of the products on display, providing visitors with a broader introduction to Pakistan's agricultural produce.

Although Pakistan is home to more than 400 mango varieties, the embassy has carefully selected a premium collection of this year's finest and most renowned varieties for this year's exhibition, emphasising quality over quantity.

Visitors will have the opportunity to discover some of Pakistan's most celebrated mango varieties, including Sindhri, Chaunsa, White Chaunsa, Azeem Chaunsa (Rati Wala), Black Chaunsa (Kala Chaunsa), Anwar Ratol, Dussehri, Fajri, Ratol No. 12, and Lal Badshah, all widely recognised for their exceptional quality,



distinctive flavours and international reputation.

Pakistan ranks as the world's fifth-largest producer of mangoes, with an annual production exceeding 1.8mn tonnes. Sixteen mango varieties are commercially exported, while several—including Chaunsa, Sindhri, Anwar Ratol, Nawab Puri and White Chaunsa—are internationally recognised as premium mango varieties.

This year's exhibition also places greater emphasis on education and awareness by introducing visitors to the characteristics of Pakistan's most famous mango varieties and their various culinary applications.

The event will also showcase innovative mango-based products, with the participation of renowned chefs from Pakistan and restaurants across Qatar presenting creative recipes, desserts, beverages and speciality dishes inspired by mangoes.

Khalid Saif al-Suwaidi, general supervisor of the 3rd Pakistani Mango Exhibition and Its Products, said: "When the exhibition was first launched, it was intended as a one-time event. However, the overwhelming public response and remarkable success encouraged us to develop it into an annual event that visitors now eagerly anticipate."

He added: "This year's edition features the largest participation since the exhibition began, both in terms of exhibitors and product diversity. In co-operation with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, we have focused on presenting a carefully selected collection of Pakistan's finest mango varieties, emphasising exceptional quality and offering visitors the opportunity to discover some of the country's most celebrated produce."

Al-Suwaidi noted that each edition of the exhibition has witnessed continuous growth in visitor numbers and sales, reflecting the outstanding reputation the event has built both within Qatar and abroad. He expressed confidence that this year's edition will set new attendance and sales records, particularly following the tremendous success of the 3rd Indian Mango Exhibition held earlier this year.

Preparations for the exhibition began more than four months ago.

A fully air-conditioned exhibition tent measuring approximately 100m in length and 30m in width has been installed at Souq Waqif's Eastern Square.

The exhibition will welcome visitors daily from 4pm to 10pm throughout its duration, offering a wide range of services and facilities to ensure an enjoyable shopping and family entertainment experience.

Tanker attack: Qatar summons Iran envoy

From Page 1

"The targeting of the Qatari vessel 'Al-Rekayyat' while transiting near the Strait of Hormuz constitutes an unacceptable attack on the security & safety of international maritime navigation, the security of global energy supplies, & a grave & explicit violation of international law, particularly the rules guaranteeing freedom of navigation & safe passage through international waterways," he noted.

He further tweeted: "We demand that the Islamic Republic of Iran immediately cease all practices that undermine regional security or threaten the safety of international maritime navigation, & refrain from endangering global energy supplies & the resources of the countries of the region in pursuit of narrow interests."

HE al-Ansari also said Qatar held Iran "fully legally responsible for this attack & for any resulting damages & consequences".

Reuters adds: Three tankers were hit in the Strait of Hormuz yesterday, including an LNG carrier at risk of explosion.

Qatar blamed Iran for the attack on a huge Qatari liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker, Al Rekayyat, which reported being struck overnight by a drone that caused a fire in its engine room.

The crew were safe and being evacuated, but maritime security sources told Reuters the fire could put the ship at risk of explosion.

A Saudi-flagged crude oil tanker, believed to be the supertanker Wedyan, was also damaged off Oman, maritime security sources said.

The cause was not immediately clear. "Mayday mayday mayday. This is vessel Al Rekayyat, LNG vessel Al Rekayyat. We are being hit by drone on port side, top of engine room," the Qatari tanker's captain said in a recorded radio call reviewed by Reuters. "Status: engine room fire and full of smoke. Unable to assess further damage."

While Qatar's foreign ministry summoned Iran's deputy ambassador and handed him a protest note, there was no immediate comment from Tehran, or any claim of responsibility.

Iran's Press TV cited an official as saying traffic through Hormuz was conducted in line with Iran's arrangements, adding that any "provocative action" by the US would be met with a decisive response.

The unidentified official did not mention yesterday's attacks.

GCC secretary-general condemns attack on Saudi, Qatari tankers

Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi has strongly condemned Iran's targeting of the Saudi tanker "Wedyan" and the Qatari tanker "Al Rekayyat", while transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

In a statement, Al-Budaiwi called upon the international community to assume its responsibilities and take a firm and deterrent stance toward these repeated Iranian attacks, to safeguard regional and global peace and security and prevent the recurrence of such hostile acts that threaten the stability of the region.

He stressed the GCC states' full solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and their support for all measures taken to protect and safeguard their national interests. Kuwait and Egypt have also denounced the Iranian attacks.

During Kuwaiti Cabinet meeting yesterday, chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Cabinet reaffirmed that Kuwait stands side by side with Qatar in all measures it takes to protect its security and national interests.

In a statement yesterday, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed Egypt's complete rejection of all actions that threaten the security and stability of the region or endanger freedom of navigation in international waterways. - QNA

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said initial indications were that Iran had fired at three commercial vessels.

It was unclear whether the three attacks cited by the official included an incident reported later yesterday by British navy-affiliated agency UKMTO in which a tanker was struck by a drone while transiting the strait.

The vessel sustained minor damage but was able to sail to its next port of call, the agency said.

The incidents were the first reported attacks in the strait since mourning for Khamenei began last week, underscoring persistent risks to Gulf shipping despite last month's interim peace deal.

Qatar launches Global Alliance for AI Ethics

From Page 1

During his address, the minister outlined three key priorities for advancing more effective global artificial intelligence (AI) governance: bridging gaps in computing infrastructure, data, and talent; promoting interoperability across AI governance frameworks; and ensuring that human rights and meaningful human oversight remain at the core of building public trust in AI systems.

He further highlighted that Qatar's approach to artificial in-

telligence builds on its national experience and was guided by Qatar National Vision 2030 and the National AI Strategy, through sustained investment in digital infrastructure, computing capacity, scientific research, and regulatory frameworks that foster trust in emerging technologies.

The United Nations Global Dialogue on AI Governance brings together governments, international organisations, and key AI stakeholders from around the world to strengthen international co-operation and advance more

inclusive and responsive governance frameworks capable of keeping pace with the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence.

The launch of the Global Alliance for AI Ethics (GAAIE) marks one of the key outcomes of Qatar's participation in the Dialogue and reflects the country's commitment to advancing more inclusive and responsible global AI governance, strengthening international co-operation, and promoting the use of artificial intelligence in support of sustainable development, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030. - QNA

Israel, Lebanon to hold negotiations in Rome this month

Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors are due to hold direct talks in Rome this month, Italy's foreign ministry said yesterday, after several rounds of discussions in Washington aimed at de-escalation.

"We welcome with pleasure the announcement that the next round of talks between Israel and Lebanon mediated by the US will take place in Rome," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said on X.

A ministry spokesman said the talks would take place at the ambassador level on July 15 and 16.

This round of talks will be the sixth since spring between the two neighbours.

The two countries and the US signed a framework

agreement last month aimed at "lasting peace", five days after the entry into force of a fragile ceasefire in the fighting between the Israeli army and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah.

This framework agreement stipulates that the Lebanese army will restore its authority in the south of the country, subject to Hezbollah's disarmament, starting with "pilot zones" from which the Israeli army would withdraw.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the regional war on March 2 by attacking Israel. Israel responded with a large-scale bombing campaign and a ground offensive. - AFP



Zimbabwe president signs into law constitutional change extending his term

AFP
Harare

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa yesterday signed into law constitutional changes that will extend his term by two years until 2030 and scrap direct presidential elections.

The raft of amendments have been sharply criticised by opposition figures in the country where 83-year-old Mnangagwa's Zanu-PF party holds a parliamentary majority.

"SIGNED, SEALED AND DE-

LIVERED - IT'S NOW LAW" information ministry senior official Nick Mangwana announced in a post on X that showed a copy of the new act.

The raft of changes - labelled a "constitutional coup" by critics - includes a provision that would extend the presidential and parliamentary terms from five to seven years.

Another amendment gives parliament the power to appoint the president, doing away with direct presidential elections that were introduced in 1987, seven years after independence.

The sweeping changes sailed

through both houses of parliament and were finalised by the National Assembly a week ago.

When the cabinet approved in February the plan to extend Mnangagwa's term, it said this would "enhance political stability and policy continuity to allow development programmes to be implemented to completion".

Mnangagwa - nicknamed "The Crocodile" because of his ruthlessness - came to power in 2017 in a military-backed coup that ousted Robert Mugabe at the age of 93 and after 37 years in power.

He was elected for two five-year terms, in 2018 and 2023, which is

the constitutional limit for a president.

Zimbabwe's opposition has been weakened by years of repression and tainted elections. The opposition charges that the amendments will entrench Zanu-PF's grip on power in the resource-rich nation, which it has governed since independence in 1980.

Prominent opposition lawyer Tendai Biti said on X that the new law allowed "the complete privatisation of power".

"It pushes away power and legitimacy from millions of Zimbabweans to those that will be able to control the process and outcomes

of any party primary election process," Biti said, adding elections were effectively suspended to an unknown date.

Lawyer and leading opposition figure Doug Coltart said Mnangagwa had "failed to defend and uphold the constitution".

"There will be challenges made," he told AFP. This included via the courts over the failure to submit the Bill to a referendum as required by the constitution, he said.

"It is also important for the people of Zimbabwe to stand up and use their lawful right to defend their constitution," he said.

Democracy activist Lovemore

Madhuku told AFP that Mnangagwa "is in office by virtue of an election by the people yet uses that office to take away the very power that brought him into office".

Critics of the changes have told AFP they have been tortured, intimidated and abducted by suspected state agents.

They accuse Zanu-PF of failing to tackle deep economic problems or shake off accusations of corruption and repression.

Human Rights Watch said in March that Zimbabwean authorities had used violence and intimidation against opponents of the constitutional amendments.

Turkish delight: Trump revels in Erdogan's lavish welcome

AFP
Ankara

From Ottoman warriors in suits of armour to a marble palace and fighter jets, US President Donald Trump got the kind of welcome he loves in Turkey yesterday.

World leaders seeking to woo the unpredictable Trump have learned that nothing impresses the 80-year-old more than an arrival fit for a king.

And Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan knows it better than most. The two ageing leaders share a taste for both lavish presidential architecture and an autocratic style of government, and their bromance was on full display when Trump arrived in Ankara for a Nato summit.

"You've been a great leader," a clearly satisfied Trump told reporters as he sat beside Erdogan after his arrival at the sprawling Bestepe Presidential Compound in the capital. "We've had a very special relationship."

Erdogan even personally met Trump at the airport - with the 72-year-old on several occasions holding the US leader under the arm after he disembarked his new Air Force One plane.

The jet itself illustrates how allies have used flattery and envy to keep Trump onside.

Qatar's royal family controversially gifted the retrofitted plane to the US last year, after Trump complained about the embarrassing state of the older US aircraft that



President Donald Trump with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Bestepe Presidential Compound in Ankara. (Reuters)

transport the president.

In Ankara, Turkish riders on horseback flanked Trump's limousine as it drove through the hushed streets to the presidential palace where an honour guard in red and blue uniforms greeted him.

Trump stood to attention as the "Star Spangled Banner" played and even attempted a greeting in Turkish - before Turkish fighter jets streaked overhead trailing red, white and blue smoke.

In a theatrical touch, around two dozen soldiers wearing historic-style suits of armour, pointed helmets and what appeared to be fake beards and moustaches stood outside the palace itself.

Popularly known as the "White Palace", the vast complex cost around \$615mn when it was built in 2014, and draws its architectural

inspiration from Turkey's Ottoman and Seljuk heritage.

The cost prompted critics to lambast it as the latest excess of Erdogan, whom they accused of authoritarian leanings.

But its soaring atriums decorated with onyx and green marble could hardly be better calculated to induce jealousy in Trump, who is quite frequently found talking about the opulent dwellings of other foreign leaders.

In his second term in office, the former real estate billionaire has appeared increasingly obsessed with turning Washington into his own vision of an imperial capital.

Trump demolished an entire wing of the White House to build a massive \$400mn ballroom, is planning a giant triumphal arch dubbed the "Arc de Trump" and

has launched a huge drive to renovate the city's monuments.

The Turkish leader's opulent welcome was meanwhile part of a pattern used by leaders seeking to weaponise Trump's love of palatial splendour.

French President Emmanuel Macron hosted Trump for dinner at Versailles after a G7 summit last month, with the US president calling the palace of the Sun King Louis XIV "the real deal".

Chinese President Xi Jinping gave Trump a grand ceremonial welcome at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in May, followed by a trip to the Temple of Heaven and tea at the Communist Party's exclusive Zhongnanhai compound.

Britain's King Charles III laid on a state visit for Trump at Windsor Castle in September 2025 complete with yet another flyover and lashings of pomp and ceremony.

Earlier this week, Trump was still talking about the castle, describing it as the "longest building I've ever seen".

And in May 2025 Trump sounded more than a little envious of his Arab hosts as he praised the marble of Qatar's royal palace as "perfect" and marvelled at Saudi Arabia's architecture.

Back in Turkey, Trump seemed particularly touched by what he said was having a "building named after me" at Ankara airport.

"I'm very happy about that," said Trump - whose attempt to add his own name to the John F Kennedy Performing Arts Centre in Washington was recently overturned by a court.

Nigeria's Dangote taps Lamu, Kenya for east Africa mega-refinery

A 700,000-bpd east African oil refinery proposed by Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, will be built in Kenya, a senior company official said Tuesday, putting a lid on speculation over the location of the mega-project.

The massive refinery - similar to Dangote's sprawling complex in Nigeria - will be based in Lamu, an island off the coast of Kenya, Edwin Devakumar, the vice-president in charge of oil and gas at Dangote Industries Limited, told AFP.

It will take around 30 months to build the facility in east Africa's largest economy. Nigerian Dangote held talks with President Samia Suluhu Hassan in Tanzania last month, where he explained "the commercial and technical considerations behind the Group's decision to locate its planned East African refinery in Lamu". (AFP)

Drone strikes on vehicles in Sudan kill 15 civilians

Drone strikes on vehicles in Sudan's North Kordofan state killed 15 civilians, including five women, in two areas controlled by the paramilitary forces, a rights group said yesterday. The attacks come as the southern Kordofan region has seen some of the deadliest fighting in recent weeks between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which have been at war since April 2023.

The violence also coincides with what residents and aid groups de-

scribe as the fiercest RSF assault yet on El-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, where the paramilitary group has been carrying out near-daily drone attacks on the strategic city.

The Emergency Lawyers, which has documented abuses throughout the conflict, said one of the vehicles was carrying wedding guests when it was struck on Monday, while the second was transporting water when it came under attack early yesterday.

The group did not specify who

was behind the attacks.

The claims could not be independently verified and neither the Sudanese military nor the RSF immediately commented.

Both locations are situated north of El-Obeid, which sits on a key route linking RSF-controlled areas in the western Darfur region with army-held territory in eastern Sudan. In recent weeks, the UN has warned that atrocities similar to those committed during the RSF's assault on the Darfur city of El-Fasher in October last year

could be repeated in El-Obeid.

Earlier this year, a UN independent fact-finding mission concluded that the siege and capture of El-Fasher bore "the hallmarks of genocide".

On Monday, the UN Human Rights Council ordered an urgent inquiry into alleged violations and abuses in El-Obeid, warning of a growing risk of "large-scale atrocities". Now in its fourth year, the conflict in Sudan has already killed tens of thousands of people, displaced more than 11mn. (AFP)

Kenya, Tanzania shut down protest anniversaries

AFP
Nairobi

Kenya and Tanzania both deployed a massive police presence yesterday to prevent protests as the east African nations increasingly take a zero-tolerance approach to demonstrations.

The two countries have both faced major bouts of public unrest in the last two years and have responded with brutal police repression. In Tanzania, rights groups and the opposition allege thousands were killed by security forces during election unrest in October last year over alleged rigging and attacks on those critical of the government.

And at least 127 Kenyans were killed during protests over economic hardship, corruption and police brutality in June-July 2024 and the same period in 2025, according to a police watchdog.

Activists called for peaceful demonstrations on July 7 - known as "Saba Saba" ("seven seven") - which happens to mark historic protests in both countries.

But massive security deployments have deterred any action, with Tanzania recently banning all political gatherings, and Kenyan



Tanzanian police officers stand guard as they monitor the area during planned anti-government protests in Dar es Salaam. (AFP)

police refusing to accept any notifications of protests from rights groups.

Meanwhile, citizens are increasingly scared of raising their voices.

"I'm not ready to risk my life," Hussein Matimbwa, 33, a resident of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, told AFP.

"The deaths that occurred last October are scary. Demonstrating is legal, but here in Tanzania you can be eliminated simply for participating," he added.

Police and military were stationed across the regions of Dar es Salaam, an AFP journalist saw, and the busy trading area of Kariakoo was largely deserted, with several

stalls closed for business.

One man said he had hoped to protest but could not find support.

"Many people are afraid to die. Police and soldiers are everywhere with guns," he said.

In Nairobi, police shut down roads and swarmed on a tiny group of protesters that had managed to gather in the city centre.

AFP saw at least three people bundled into an unmarked car and a police wagon, which a police spokesman said may have been "an arrest by our undercover teams."

"Why should they deploy security like this? We have a right to protest," said one of the group, Collins Otieno.

Later, Nairobi Regional Police Commander Issa Mohamud said 10 people were arrested and will be charged with "obstruction and other relevant offences".

"We do not have any deaths or injuries but we had arrests," he told journalists.

A group called the Economic Justice Movement had announced a march yesterday to draw attention to "extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and police brutality, but also an escalating economic crisis... and declining opportunities for millions of young people and families".

However, many are too afraid to join in.

"There's a general sense of exhaustion," local rights group organiser Wanjira Wanjiru, of the Mathare Social Justice Centre, told AFP.

President William Ruto has grown increasingly combative towards critics, recently lashing out online at The Standard newspaper for its negative coverage.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists called for an investigation on Monday after saying a senior journalist with The Standard narrowly escaped an abduction by armed men three days after Ruto criticised the paper.

Medical evacuations on the rise as conflict rages in South Sudan: ICRC

AFP
Nairobi

Medical evacuations of wounded South Sudanese rose by 50% in the first half of 2026, the International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday, as deadly conflict continued to limit access to healthcare in the country.

The world's youngest nation has endured months of renewed violence since late 2025, with government forces loyal to South Sudanese President Salva Kiir battling opposition militias aligned with his rival, Riek Machar, in several regions.

The ICRC said it evacuated 266 wounded people across South Sudan between January and June, marking a 50% increase from the same period last year. "The rise in evacuations comes as conflict and violence intensified since late 2025," ICRC said in a statement.

"The fighting also led to significant loss of life and injuries, increasing demand for life-saving care," it added.

Most evacuations were carried out by air to Juba Military Hospital, where surgeries increased

by nearly 30% in the first half of 2026, the ICRC said.

Multiple foreign aid-run hospitals have shut down following attacks since the resurgence of violence, which has also displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

"Conflict is not getting any better, and humanitarian needs are also on the rise," said Rose Ochieng, ICRC health co-ordinator in South Sudan, adding that funding shortfalls have caused a "strain" in hospitals.

Between January and March 2026, 206 incidents of conflict-related violence affected 1,388 civilians, mostly men, with 767 killed - an 89% increase from the previous quarter, according to UNMISS.

Hundreds more were wounded, while 93 were abducted and 71 subjected to conflict-related sexual violence.

"Every statistic in the report represents the impact of continued violence on human lives," said Anita Kiki Gbeho, Head of UNMISS calling on parties "to prioritise the protection of civilians".

South Sudan gained independence in 2011 but soon descended into civil war.



A health worker wearing PPE kit stands near displaced people at the burial of suspected Ebola victims in Bunia. (Reuters/File Photo)

Ebola outbreak in Congo still spreading: WHO

Reuters
Geneva

The Ebola outbreak in Congo has not yet stabilised and is still expanding as population movement fuels transmission, a World Health Organisation official said yesterday.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has confirmed 1,561 cases, including 506 deaths, in the worst-ever outbreak of the rare Bundibugyo species of Ebola, for which there is no proven treatment or cure.

"It is still in the expansion phase, unfortunately. We would like to say it is stabilising but, frankly, we cannot say it yet," Anne Anca, WHO representative in Congo, told reporters by video link from Bunia, at the epicentre of the epidemic.

She said major challenges remained, such as the fact that some Ebola treatment centres were 90% full. Another difficulty is that workers falling ill in the mining town of Mongbwalu are not seeking treatment lo-

cally, but instead travelling and spreading the disease to new regions, she said.

"It's really those people who are coming back, and coming back too late and going to die with their family," she said, adding that responders were trying to establish more checkpoints on roads to stop them.

Many of the victims of the epidemic have been healthcare workers, including those who caught the virus before the outbreak was declared in mid-May.

Other healthcare workers lack equipment such as boots, gloves and waterproof overalls to protect themselves from Ebola, which is transmitted through bodily fluids. Healthcare workers in the worst-hit province of Ituri went on strike recently, complaining of delays in salary payments.

"Most of the health workers restarted work as of yesterday. There are still a few groups who are dissatisfied," said Anca, adding that some of those still on strike had been controlling transmission in a displacement camp.

Trump reiterates Greenland must be controlled by US, not Denmark

Reuters
Ankara

President Donald Trump said yesterday Greenland should be controlled by the US, not Denmark, reaffirming a stance that has caused tensions among Nato allies just as leaders of the alliance gathered for a summit in Türkiye.

Trump's assertions that the US must acquire or control Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish terri-

tory, have long strained relations between Washington and Copenhagen — both founding Nato members — and more broadly US ties with Europe.

The issue has since moved to a diplomatic track.

"That should be controlled by the US, not by Denmark," Trump said of Greenland in comments to reporters during a meeting with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

Hours later, also speaking in Ankara, Danish Prime Minister Mette

Frederiksen said she expected allies to respect the sovereignty of the Danish kingdom and accept that Greenland was not for sale.

"It is a well-known position of the US that it wants to own and take over Greenland. I hope that it is equally well-known everywhere that this is not going to happen," Frederiksen said.

She added that there were no plans to discuss in Ankara issues concerning the High North, the Arctic or Greenland. Greenland's

Foreign Minister Mute Egede said in a post on Facebook that Greenland's future should be decided by its people.

"That's how it has always been. And that's how it always will be," he said, adding that Greenland should continue close co-operation with its allies.

Trump said the issue of control over Greenland had harmed US ties with Nato.

"That's what hurt my relationship with Nato, because Greenland

doesn't help Denmark. Denmark doesn't spend money to really help Greenland, but it's an important part for the US, and it's surrounded by China ships and Russian ships, and that's not going to happen," he said.

"They (Denmark) wouldn't go along with it, and with all the money we spend to help them with Russia," US Secretary of State Rubio said in June that conversations with Denmark and Greenland were continuing on a monthly basis.

US airlines fuel bills rose by \$3bn

Fuel costs for US airlines jumped 85% in May to nearly \$6.7bn as the Middle East conflict drove up prices, the US Transportation Department said yesterday. Airlines spent \$3.62bn on fuel in May 2025 compared with \$6.66bn in the same month this year. The cost per gallon of fuel in May was \$4.09, up \$1.88 over May 2025, USDOT added. Jet fuel costs have fallen sharply in recent weeks. (Reuters)

Trump praises Erdogan, says US will lift Turkiye sanctions

Reuters
Ankara

President Donald Trump yesterday announced that the US would lift sanctions on Turkiye that were imposed in 2020 over Ankara's purchase of Russian defence missiles, and signalled a willingness to sell the Nato ally F-35 fighter jets, moves that would both be massive gestures to Turkiye but may face legal hurdles.

In the first visit to Turkiye by a US president in 11 years, Trump was welcomed by President Tayyip Erdogan at the airport with a lavish state ceremony during which Turkish soldiers riding horses escorted Trump's motorcade to the presidential palace. Both leaders sang each other's praises in their public remarks.

Under Trump, Turkiye's deteriorating human rights track record has never been a topic of much concern for Washington.

Speaking to reporters at the Turkish presidential palace, Trump repeatedly praised Erdogan, saying he had "chemistry" with him and that the relationship with Ankara has never been better. The warmth was a near sea change in the relationship which was distant under former President Joe Biden.

Despite the better ties, Turkiye's 2019 acquisition of a Russian S-400 system and Washington's 2020 imposition of US sanctions on a major Turkish defense company and removal of Turkiye from



President Donald Trump. (Reuters)

the F-35 stealth fighter jet program have long been a sore point. Solving those issues would eliminate a key irritant in the relationship but it is unlikely to materialise quickly.

"We're going to be taking the sanctions off," Trump told reporters just before his meeting with Erdogan during a visit to Turkiye at a Nato summit. "It's time. We don't want to sanction friends," he said, adding that his secretary of state and Treasury secretary were working on the issue. Asked if he had any concerns about Ankara still being in possession of the Russian S-400s, he said he did not. "I have no concerns about anything having to do with Turkiye," he said. "I would say the relationship with Turkiye right now is better probably than it's ever been."

Trump also indicated his possible support for letting Turkiye

buy F-35 stealth fighter jets even as he did not say how exactly such a transaction would take place given legal hurdles and objections from the US Congress.

"Turkiye has been, in many ways, much more loyal than other countries that we think would be loyal.... It's a great plane, it's the best, currently the best plane by far. And it's certainly something we will consider," Trump said.

Erdogan also said he hoped for a positive result on Ankara's desire to buy F-35 fighter jets. "We have discussed this before with the US and were promised five jets," Erdogan said, adding: "I know that Mr Trump always keeps his promises."

Congress passed a law prohibiting any F-35 sales to Turkiye as long as it retained the S-400s, saying the Russian system posed a security risk to US-made combat aircraft. Currently, US law does

not permit Turkiye to operate or possess the S-400 system if it wishes to rejoin the F-35 program.

Earlier, two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters that Trump was expected to throw his support behind a potential F-35 sale to Turkiye. One solution that has in recent weeks gained traction is to send the Russian system to a third country, although an agreement on this has yet to be sealed, according to the sources, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

It was unclear if such a move would be accepted by Russia, which requires end-user obligations in weapons sales.

Nato allies increasingly see Turkiye, which has the alliance's second-largest military and is a leading exporter of armed drones, as a bulwark against Russian aggression on the southeastern flank while concerns about human rights and press freedoms are seldom expressed.

As Trump has ratcheted up his criticism of Nato over what he describes as the pact's refusal to help with the Iran war, members are unlikely to criticise Turkiye's declining democracy and rule of law, particularly after the Republican president said he may not have attended the Nato summit at all if it hadn't been Erdogan who invited him.

Turkiye has seen an unprecedented legal crackdown on the main opposition Republican People's Party, including the jailing of its presidential candidate, Istanbul's Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu.

Mexico probing if US violated sovereignty in 2024 druglord capture

AFP
Mexico City

Mexico said yesterday it is investigating whether its sovereignty was violated by the US in the 2024 capture of druglord Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada. The inquiry comes after the FBI displayed in an exhibition the plane used to bring most-wanted Zambada, co-founder of the notorious Sinaloa cartel, to the US.

"If one of the US agencies participated in this operation, they would be violating international treaties and the (Mexican) constitution," President Claudia Sheinbaum said at her daily press conference.

Zambada was arrested in the US in July 2024 alongside Joaquin

Guzman Lopez, the son of Sinaloa cartel co-founder Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, who is also imprisoned.

When Guzman Lopez pled guilty to US narco-trafficking charges last December, he admitted to having kidnapped Zambada to bring him to the US — a betrayal meant to win favour with US authorities.

The US Embassy in Mexico said in 2024 that no US agency had participated in the operation, Mexican government secretary Rosa Icela Rodriguez told the morning news conference.

"The versions are contradictory. Someone lied," she said.

The war between factions of the Sinaloa cartel unleashed after the arrest of Zambada has left thousands dead and disappeared.

US states are seeking \$1.4 tn in penalties from Meta

Meta Platforms said in a court filing on Monday that four states were seeking \$1.4tn in penalties over accusations the company designed its Facebook, Instagram platforms to addict young users and misled the public about their safety.

Meta put forward the figure in its response to the attorneys general's filings on how penalties should be calculated if the states prevailed at trial. The number, which has not previously been disclosed and is close to Meta's market capitalisation of around \$1.5tn, comes ahead of an August trial in Oakland, California, over the claims brought by California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey.

Meta said the amount was unsupported by the evidence. "A sanction of that size has no analog in the history of consumer protection enforcement," the company said in the filing. "The plaintiffs'



Logo of Meta Platforms company. (Reuters/File Photo)

outlandish calculations have no basis in fact or law," the company said in a statement, adding that it would continue to defend itself against the states' demands.

Representatives for the other attorneys general did not respond to requests for comment after the filing. The states' filings are sealed, but at a court hearing in June they said they were calculating the penalties by multiplying the number of

violations by fine amounts set by state law. The number of violations is based on the estimated number of teens and young users affected by Meta's actions, the states said.

Twenty-nine states have sued Meta in federal court, most of them alleging the company violated the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act by collecting data from children without proper parental consent. The trial in August

before US District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers will address all claims brought under that law, plus the four states' allegations that the company violated their state laws by misleading consumers about the safety of their platforms.

Meta has denied the allegations, saying the attorneys general have no evidence it misled consumers about its platforms' alleged addictiveness because "social media addiction" is not an established psychiatric condition, and therefore statements that its platforms were not addictive could not be false. A further 14 states have brought claims under their own laws, which will be heard later.

Last month, Rogers rejected Meta's bid to cancel the trial, saying there remained factual disputes over whether its social media platforms were addictive, whether Meta falsely denied it designed them that way. (Reuters)

Thousands without power in US Pacific islands after super typhoon

Tens of thousands of people were without power yesterday on Guam and the Northern Marianas after a super typhoon tore through the US Pacific territories, with no deaths reported.

The small island of Rota was the worst affected after a direct hit from Super Typhoon Bavi with winds up to 290 kilometers per hour on Monday, bringing down trees and power lines and knocking out water supplies.

Rota's Mayor Aubry Hocog said she had been told that two people sustained non-fatal injuries but that "there were no deaths confirmed."

Hocog said that over "50% of our island has undergone damages, and it could be more," adding that it could take "two to three months" to fully restore power supply.

"There is still a very long line of our people lining up to get water. (Utilities company) CUC is rationing the water up to 95 litres per

household just so we can be sure to have enough for everybody," she added.

Rota resident Masum Dhali, 24, said that "many homes have suffered severe damage, with countless roofs completely torn off."

"Across the island, there is no electricity, no running water, and no mobile network service," Dhali told AFP via Facebook.

Dhali added that "numerous water pipelines have been broken, and many power poles have fallen, leaving the entire island without essential services."

Local media showed a long line of cars on Rota — home to some 1,500 people — queuing to get drinking water as temperatures hit a hot and humid 29C.

Saipan and Tinian, the two main islands of the Northern Marianas home to around 40,000 people, also lost power as did parts of nearby Guam, a separate US territory home to major military bases.



A damaged structure in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Bavi in Sinapalo on the island of Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands. (AFP)

On Guam, less than 80 kilometers from Rota, fallen trees, bits of streetlamps and rocks were strewn over the roads late Monday and AFP saw at least one car flipped on its side.

With the exception of Rota, the damage in the region of around 210,000 people was less severe than after Sinkalu, a super typhoon that hit in April.

Guam resident Marie and her

partner, who were clearing up the debris with an excavator, had to move out of their house after Sinkalu and were living in a van when Bavi struck.

"All of our stuff (in the van) got wet from this typhoon now, so we ended up coming here to our car because we have nowhere else to go," 37-year-old Marie told AFP.

Handyman Bob Benavente said at a seaside park where rocks had been washed ashore by the storm surge that some rainwater leaked into his house but that he and his neighbours had not suffered major damage.

"Everybody goes out and gets gas, water, all the supplies (before storms arrive)... Everyone's used to it here. It's part of the island lifestyle," the 61-year-old told AFP.

Oceans experienced their hottest June on record and could set fresh highs in the months ahead, the European Union's Copernicus

Marine Service said last week.

Warmer oceans help tropical storms to intensify and add more moisture, which can fall as heavy rain.

Adding to the mix is the return this year of El Nino, a natural climate phenomenon that warms Pacific surface temperatures and typically occurs every two to seven years.

Its effects can include drought across parts of the Amazon, Indonesia and Australia, disrupted monsoons in India, and more tropical storms and typhoons in the Pacific.

Charles "Chip" Guard, 80, a meteorologist who for years worked for the National Weather Service in Guam, remembers 11 super typhoons in the Pacific in 1997.

"That was very strong El Nino year. This is a strong El Nino year, but you know the season's only just started and we already had a couple," Guard told AFP. (AFP)



Japan, China coast guards face off near disputed islands

AFP
Tokyo

Ships from Japan's and China's coast guards faced off near disputed islands yesterday, with each claiming they drove into the other's vessels that had intruded into their territorial waters.

The incident took place near uninhabited islands claimed as the Senkaku in Japan and the Diaoyu in China, which sit between Taiwan and Okinawa and have caused diplomatic tensions for decades.

Japan's coast guard said it expelled two Chinese ships as they approached a Japanese fishing vessel sailing in the area.

China's coast guard said separately that it drove out a Japanese fishing boat that "intruded into" waters around the islands.

Relations between Japan and China have worsened since Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi angered Beijing in November with comments about Taiwan.

Chinese ships last entered waters Japan claims as its territory on June 10, but it is rare for them to

approach Japanese fishing boats.

The Japan coast guard said it "issued orders to leave... successfully forcing the Chinese coast guard vessels to leave Japanese territorial waters by approximately 9:20am (0020 GMT)".

In addition, the coast guard "was deployed around the Japanese fishing vessel to ensure its safety".

China's coast guard (CCG) said in its statement that the "Japanese fishing boat Zuihou Maru intruded into the territorial waters" and that "CCG vessels took necessary measures to warn and expel it".

China and Japan have long accused each other of deploying ships around the islands, sometimes resulting in dangerous standoffs.

The Japanese coast guard said there were four Chinese ships sailing around the area before two entered Japanese waters, saying the action was "a violation of international law".

It said it would "continue to respond calmly and resolutely in accordance with international and domestic law, and will take every possible measure to ensure the security of our territorial waters".

China has also sent boats to other disputed waters in the East China Sea, which is believed to hold possible deposits of energy reserves, despite repeated protests by Japan to stop.

Takaichi said in November that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on self-ruled Taiwan, which China views as its territory and has not ruled out taking by force.

Beijing condemned her comments, and has since urged its citizens against travelling to Japan as well as tightened trade restrictions on some Japanese firms.

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

Tokyo said last month that China had detained two Japanese citizens for allegedly "smuggling goods subject to a national export and import ban".

Japanese media reports said that the two Fuji Electric employees were formally arrested over attempts to take rare earth minerals out of the country.

Korean revised law targeting false online information takes effect

AFP
Seoul

Republic of Korea began enforcing yesterday a revised law targeting false information posted online, toughening penalties for repeat offenders despite concerns over the impact on free speech.

The law, which requires major platforms to set up new response systems, comes as concern grows in the country over digital misinformation, including high-profile cases involving celebrities.

But opposition politicians, civic groups and media experts warn it could chill free speech and open the door to government-influenced censorship.

The Asian tech powerhouse previously relied on general defamation laws and civil damage claims to address false information — without a clear legal framework targeting so-called fake news.

With the revision to the information and communications network act it joins many countries trying to tackle the flood of falsehoods online that can have serious real-life consequences.

Now users who intentionally spread illegal false or manipulated information could be ordered to pay up to five times the actual cost of damages.

And repeat offenders whose content has been ruled illegal by courts face fines of up to 1bn won (\$655,000).

Platforms including Korea's

Naver and Kakao and US giants Google and Meta must introduce systems for users to report alleged false or manipulated information, and publish transparency reports every six months detailing complaints and actions taken.

Republic of Korea saw a surge in online misinformation following the botched 2024 martial law attempt.

Critics of the revised law warn that the lack of a clear legal definition for false or manipulated information could create uncertainty and invite overly broad legal enforcement at first.

The law, which requires major platforms to set up new response systems, comes as concern grows in the country over digital misinformation

The main opposition People Power Party (PPP) has repeatedly criticised the revision, arguing that platforms will censor content to avoid clashing with the government, while users will self-censor.

"We will see a world where platform companies excessively remove information, investigative journalism is stifled, and citizens find it difficult to even speak their minds," PPP spokesperson, Cho Yong-sool said in a statement.

The Journalists Association of Korea also called for safeguards to ensure public-interest reporting and news-gathering are not suppressed.

Death toll from China storms rises to 17, hundreds injured

AFP
Beijing

The death toll from devastating storms in parts of China rose to 17 yesterday, with hundreds more injured and tens of thousands evacuated, state media reported, as President Xi Jinping urged "all out" rescue efforts.

Dramatic video shared by state broadcaster CCTV showed a torrent of muddy water rushing past the crumbled concrete walls of a reservoir dam that had burst in the southern region of Guangxi, the worst-hit area.

Rescue workers wearing life vests searched for missing people in inflatable boats, state media footage showed, while authorities erected emergency shelters to house those displaced.

Intense rain and severe flooding from Typhoon Maysak killed at least six people in Guangxi, where authorities raised the flood control emergency response to its highest level in the regional capital, Nanning.

At least 130,000 people were evacuated but 11 are still missing, regional officials told a news conference, adding that the rain has damaged nearly 13,000 acres of agricultural land.

CCTV said 40 rivers and waterways in Guangxi were overflowing.

Videos of villagers knee-deep in floodwater frantically trying to catch snakes swimming in a flooded Guangxi town went viral on social media, with a related hashtag racking up more than 180 mn views.

Around 800-900 snakes escaped on Monday morning after a breeding farm was washed away, Wu Zhi, the head of a local village committee, told state-owned media Red Star News.

Thunderstorms and gale-force winds killed another 11 people and injured 331 in the central province of Hubei, and tornadoes were reported elsewhere late on Monday, state news agency Xinhua said.

One person is missing in Hubei, Xinhua said, adding that 4,800 houses were damaged and



Destroyed and damaged buildings and vehicles are pictured after a tornado hit the city of Huanggang, in China's central Hubei province, yesterday. (AFP)

22 more had collapsed. A man surnamed Wang told local media that his brother-in-law, surnamed Zhang, had been "sucked out" of his home in Hubei's Huanggang city by the strong winds, and was found unconscious outside his apartment complex, breathing only faintly.

"Wall cabinets, sofas, coffee tables, dining tables and chairs vanished in an instant. It was as if the entire building had been hollowed out," Wang told the Xiaoxiang Morning Herald.

Xi said on Tuesday that rescuers should "go all out" in organising emergency operations, CCTV reported.

Natural disasters are common across China, particularly in the summer when some regions experience intense rainfall while others bake in scorching heat.

Parts of Guangxi's coastal and eastern regions, as well as southwestern Guangdong, will continue to be hit by heavy rain on Wednesday, Minister of Water Resources Li Guoying said yesterday.

Flood peaks "exceeding the warning water level" by more than six metres (20 feet) are expected at the Guigang Hydrological Station in Guangxi last evening, Li said.

"Due to the impact of persistent heavy rainfall and the prolonged passage of floodwaters

at high levels, the safety of reservoirs and embankments in the affected areas faces a severe test," he said.

Separately, a landslide in China's northwestern Gansu province killed five people yesterday, with rescuers working to locate 12 others still missing, Xinhua said without specifying what caused it. At least 33 people were initially reported missing after the landslide in a village near Gansu's Longnan city, it said.

Rescue teams had located 21 trapped individuals but five of them died "despite emergency medical efforts", the agency said.

Authorities have set aside 30mn yuan (\$4.4mn) in reconstruction funds following the landslide.

Scientists warn the intensity and frequency of global extreme weather events will increase as the planet continues to heat up because of fossil fuel emissions.

China is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, but it is also a global renewable energy powerhouse that aims to make its massive economy carbon-neutral by 2060.

At least 22 people were killed in China in May after heavy rains lashed its central and southern regions, with some places "hit by record-breaking rainfall", state media reported.

Indonesia, India sign agriculture, critical minerals and missile deals

Reuters
Jakarta

Indonesia and India yesterday signed a raft of deals on critical minerals, agriculture and defence, including for the BrahMos cruise missile system, the Indonesian presidential palace said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Prabowo Subianto as part of a visit to Indonesia, his first trip to the Southeast Asian country since 2023, and the pair reaffirmed their regional commitments. "We're two of the largest democracies in the world," Prabowo said. "Partnerships between us will bring benefits to the region." BrahMos, an India-Russia joint venture missile manufacturer, and Indonesia's defence ministry signed a contract for the BrahMos missile defence system, according to an announcement by the Indonesian palace in Jakarta, which provided no details. Reuters reported earlier on Tuesday that India will supply the BrahMos cruise missile system and the Astra air-to-air missile to Indonesia, citing an Indian government official.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto shake hands after attending a joint press conference at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta yesterday. (AFP)

Indian sources earlier told Reuters that the deal was worth around \$630 mn.

In 2023, BrahMos said it was in advanced discussions with Indonesia on a deal worth between \$200mn and \$350mn for its missile systems. It has already signed deals with neighbours Vietnam and the Philippines.

Separately, Indonesia's Repub-

likorp, a defence private holding company, and India-based defence company Bharat Dynamics signed an agreement on air-to-air missiles, the palace announced.

The countries also signed memorandums of understanding for strengthening supply chains in critical minerals and steel, as well as agriculture.

Steel Authority of India and

Indonesia's Krakatau steel will also establish a joint venture for stainless steel slab making in Indonesia.

India and Indonesia will accelerate preferential trade agreement talks, Prabowo said. India is a major buyer of palm oil and coal from Indonesia, a global commodities powerhouse.

Modi said the two countries will work on promoting maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean.

"Our partnership is not merely a relationship between two countries, it is a pledge of trust in the stability in the Indo-Pacific, strength of the Global South and in a shared future of the world," Modi said in an address to the Indonesian parliament.

Neither leader mentioned the BrahMos deal in their remarks.

Modi will be in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta today, where he said he would visit Prambanan, Indonesia's largest Hindu temple complex and a Unesco World Heritage site. Prabowo met Modi in New Delhi last year, where they signed a wide range of agreements.

Modi is set to leave for Australia and New Zealand today.

'Taiwan's preparations to face a Chinese attack are not a provocation'

Reuters
Taipei

Taiwan's preparations to deal with a possible Chinese attack are not a provocation, and the island's people need to take the threat seriously and prepare now, a senior Taiwanese security official said yesterday.

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control, sending its military in the skies and waters around the island on a daily basis. Taiwan's government, which rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims, has been ramping up military spending and regularly holding civil defence drills under what President Lai Ching-te refers to as whole-of-society resilience efforts.

Speaking at a forum in Taipei, Lin Fei-fan, deputy secretary-general of Taiwan's National Security Council, who oversees the resilience programme, said China's massive defence spending and its ongoing military pressure

in the region were real threats. "People often portray Taiwan's preparations as provocation toward the other side," he said.

"I want to take this opportunity to tell everyone: all of China's preparations have one clear goal - military aggression and external expansion."

China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. China routinely blames Lai for tensions and calls him a "separatist". It says its military actions are to protect Chinese sovereignty and security.

Lin said Beijing's actions were the opposite of Taipei's.

"A country that advocates 'the two sides of the strait are one family' does not need to test-fire missiles and rockets in the Taiwan Strait," he added.

"Taiwan today does not fly a single aircraft or send a single warship to intrude into the other side's airspace or waters. The one provoking the regional order is not anyone else - it is China."

Lin said that given the danger posed, government efforts to get people ready for conflict are vital.

Vietnam police bust \$133mn World Cup betting rings

Vietnamese police said yesterday they had arrested 85 people linked to two "exceptionally large-scale" betting rings worth a combined \$133mn, as the government cracks down on illegal gambling during the World Cup. Online gambling is banned in the communist country, but lucrative illegal operations abound prompting periodic clampdowns especially during interna-

tional sporting events.

The raids in late June targeted two rings with an "exceptionally large scale of operation" and a "high level of hierarchy and tight control", police in Ho Chi Minh City said in a statement.

Since October, the rings had logged an estimated \$133mn in illegal transactions, the statement said.

Vietnam's public security ministry said

last week police had dismantled 73 gambling operations across the country, arresting 346 suspects involved in illegal gambling and football betting during the first 20 days of the World Cup.

"Transaction money in these cases totalled thousands of billions of dong (hundreds of millions of dollars)", said colonel Bui Tuan Anh of the public security ministry. (AFP)

Philippine Senate opens trial to decide Duterte's political future

The Philippine Senate opened Vice-President Sara Duterte's impeachment trial on Monday, with her political career — and a planned 2028 presidential run — in the balance. Thousands of security personnel were deployed, while protesters briefly clashed with riot shield-wielding police outside the Senate building. The vice-president did not attend the initial three-hour session, in which both sides gave opening statements but no witnesses were called. The rest of the trial could take months. The House of Representatives impeached

the 48-year-old daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte on May 11 on allegations of graft, corruption, bribery and an alleged assassination plot against one-time ally President Ferdinand Marcos. Only a guilty verdict by two-thirds of a bitterly divided 24-seat Senate can strip her of the vice presidency and permanently bar her from elected office. She still enjoys public support, with a May survey showing her as the 2028 front-runner and 51% of respondents saying they planned to vote for her. (AFP)

'Pokemon airport' given new look in Japan's quake-hit region

An airport in a remote Japanese region hit by a deadly earthquake in 2024 was given a new look yesterday, temporarily nicknamed after the Pokemon universe, and its lobby adorned with a floating Pikachu on a plane-shaped balloon.

The Noto Peninsula has faced a decline in tourists since the powerful 7.5-magnitude quake on New Year's Day two years ago that claimed over 700 lives. Yesterday, a life-size Pikachu mascot dressed as a pilot joined officials for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially nickname the local facility "Noto Satoyama Pokemon With You Airport" and welcome visitors. More than 100 Pokemon characters are displayed across the airport, including the lobby wall.

The name will be used for three years, according to the Pokemon With You Foundation. Public broadcaster NHK reported in February that the number of visitors who stay overnight in the region remains at just over 30% of pre-quake levels. (AFP)

Nigel Farage resigns as MP to force by-election

AFP
London

British anti-immigrant politician Nigel Farage announced yesterday he would resign as a member of parliament to run in a snap by-election, in a high-stakes gamble following scrutiny over his finances.

The highly unusual move comes with Farage, whose Reform UK party leads national opinion polls, facing mounting pressure over the non-disclosure of gifts, including allegedly from a convicted fraudster.

Parliament's anti-sleaze watchdog was investigating the hard-right firebrand and long-time anti-European Union campaigner over donations from two wealthy individuals.

Farage's resignation means the probes will now be suspended.

"I've decided that the people of Clacton should be the judges of my actions," Farage said in a televised address, referring to the southeast England constituency he has represented for two years.

"This will be a people versus the establishment by-election.

"It's a chance to stick two fingers up to the entire establishment to frankly tell them where to go, and that is why I will be putting my name forward to stand in this by-election," he added.

Farage, who helped persuade Britons vote to leave the EU during a divisive referendum in 2016, was elected an MP at his eighth attempt during the July 2024 general election.

Reform, which advocates mass deportations of illegal migrants and the scrapping of net zero energy targets, has led the ruling Labour party in opinion polls for over a year.

Fears among Labour MPs that Reform could win the next nationwide vote, expected in 2029, ultimately led them to force Prime Minister Keir Starmer to announce his resignation last month.

Daniel Greenberg, the parliamentary commissioner for standards, is probing Farage over the non-disclosure of a £5m (\$6.6m) donation from Thailand-based crypto-currency billionaire Christopher Harborne.

New MPs are supposed to register any money they received in the 12 months before their election unless it cannot be "reasonably" seen as linked to political activities.

Farage has insisted he did not need to declare the money because it was a personal gift to pay for his own security — a claim that Harborne, a major Reform donor, corroborated.

"I am the most physically and verbally attacked public figure or

politician of modern times," Farage said in his defiant address, seeking to justify the donation.

Farage also confirmed that the commissioner was looking into allegations published in the Sunday Times this weekend that convicted fraudster George Cottrell paid for Farage's security and staff who worked on his social media shortly before he became a member of parliament.

Cottrell, a 32-year-old crypto entrepreneur from an aristocratic family, pleaded guilty to wire fraud in the US in 2017 and was jailed for eight months.

Labour and the centrist Liberal Democrats had asked Greenberg to prove the latest allegations.

"I have done nothing wrong. I have not broken the law in any way at all," Farage said, claiming that parliamentary standards were "now being used as a political tool".

Farage won Clacton with a majority of 8,405.

Far-right rival party Restore Britain, led by Rupert Lowe and backed by US tech tycoon Elon Musk, is expected to try to take the seat.

The by-election, the date of which is not yet set, could also be an early test for Andy Burnham, who is widely expected to become Labour's new leader and therefore prime minister later this month.

Prince Harry, others lose privacy lawsuit against Daily Mail publisher

Reuters
London

Prince Harry, the estranged younger son of King Charles, and other high-profile British figures yesterday lost their privacy lawsuits against the Daily Mail's publisher, which had alleged widespread unlawful behaviour.

Harry, who was in Britain when London's High Court gave its ruling, has brought several legal cases against the British press and has long railed against their alleged abuse of power.

The prince, 41, who has long blamed the press for the 1997 Paris car crash that killed his mother, Princess Diana, saw bringing the lawsuit against the Daily Mail publisher as his "public duty".

He held back tears in the witness box in January as he said the Daily Mail had made his wife Meghan's life "an absolute misery".

He had previously won against the publisher of the Daily Mirror tabloid and settled a claim with Rupert Murdoch's British newspaper arm, but yesterday's ruling is a significant defeat in his battles with the media.

He and the other claimants, including Elton John, alleged dozens of stories about them



Britain's Prince Harry arrives at Chatham House as he is expected to attend the 'Invictus Games Foundation Conversation: From Policy to Practice', for discussions on issues facing wounded, injured and sick service personnel and veterans, in London, yesterday. (Reuters)

published by Associated Newspapers in the Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday from the 1990s to 2011 were based on information which had been obtained unlawfully.

Associated, however, said the allegations were smears and the claims against it were dismissed in their entirety yesterday, in what the publisher called "an overwhelming victory for the Daily Mail and its journalists".

Judge Matthew Nicklin said in

a summary of his ruling that the claimants had needed to prove that information published about them had been obtained unlawfully, but suspicion was not enough.

"The court rejected the argument that, simply because information was private, and because Associated could not positively explain how it had been sourced, the relevant article must have been unlawfully sourced," the summary said.

UK spends \$254mn on long-range missile programme

Reuters
London

Britain said yesterday it would strengthen the Army's long-range capabilities by spending £190m (\$254.22m) on the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) programme, buying a weapon which can neutralise targets up to 500 kilometres away.

The country's outgoing Prime Minister Keir Starmer is at the Nato summit in Ankara yesterday, where he wants to convince US President Donald Trump and other countries in the western military alliance that UK defence spending is heading in the right direction.

The PrSM procurement will strengthen Britain's contribution to Nato deterrence, Britain's Ministry of Defence said in a state-

ment, adding that the first deliveries could be received in 2027.

The acquisition was funded by Britain's Defence Investment Plan which has been criticised for not plotting a route to spending 3.5% of GDP on core defence, a Nato target set last year after Trump said Europe should spend more on defending themselves.

The next-generation supersonic ballistic missiles are built by Lock-

heed Martin and the programme is a collaboration between the US and Australia.

Britain said it could join work to further develop the missile in future.

Britain remains committed to other weapons projects with European partners such as Deep Precision Strike and European Long Range Strike Approach, the statement said.

Artist accused of scaling Australian bridge tower, painting cartoon bird

Reuters
Sydney

Australian police arrested a man yesterday after he allegedly scaled a 140-metre-high (460-foot) tower of a cantilever bridge in the city of Melbourne and painted a giant cartoon bird on it.

An Instagram account posting footage from Bolte Bridge, not far from the city's central business district, showed a man dangling his legs from the top of the tower.

In subsequent posts, he demanded lower taxes in Australia and requested a peanut butter sandwich be delivered by drone before he would come down.

The demand caused a stand-off with police, which in turn closed a lane on the bridge, disrupting commuter traffic.

Paul Hogan, an acting sergeant with Victoria Police, said a 22-year-old man was arrested

after descending from the tower. "The man allegedly spray-painted an external wall. As the morning played out, the man allegedly refused to follow police direction and come down," he said.

A police statement said that significant resources were deployed to the location, including uniform members, highway patrol officers, a critical incident response team as well as Search & Rescue and Water Police.

The graffiti on the bridge closely resembles Pam the Bird, a symbol that has appeared on dozens of buildings in Melbourne in recent years, including on the heritage-listed Flinders Street railway station.

The police statement made no mention of what eventually persuaded the man to come down. It did not appear to be a peanut butter sandwich, with the Instagram account posting: "The audacity to fly a drone up with here no sandwich."

Australia vows stronger ties with Solomon Islands

Reuters
Sydney

Australia and the Solomon Islands said yesterday they were stepping up bilateral ties, a day after China test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific in a move analysts say could intensify strategic rivalry in the region.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who arrived yesterday in the Solomon Islands capital Honiara and was greeted by newly elected Prime Minister Matthew Wale, said both nations have agreed to continue negotiations on a new comprehensive treaty.

"Australia and Solomon Islands are stepping up our partnership," Albanese said in a post on X from Honiara as part of a Pacific tour.

"Because Australia's security starts in the Pacific, and we'll always show up for our neighbours," Albanese added.

China on Monday test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile from a nuclear-powered submarine in the Pacific, its first test since 2024, drawing concerns from the US, Australia, Japan,



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Solomon Islands' Prime Minister Matthew Wale attending Independence Day celebrations at the National Stadium in the Solomon Islands' capital Honiara, yesterday. (AFP)

New Zealand and Taiwan.

Joseph Wu, secretary-general of Taiwan's National Security Council, posted an image on social media showing the missile flying over the Philippines and landing between Tonga and Nauru, about 1,000km (620 miles) from the Solomon Islands.

"China just proved itself again to be a bully on the block,"

Wu said in the post.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said in a briefing on Monday that Beijing hoped countries "will not over-interpret the matter".

The Lowy Institute think tank last month said in a report that China's ability to militarily strike Australia will grow markedly over the next decade.

"This is China demonstrating a much greater range in terms of being able to deploy a nuclear weapon and ultimately what that is, is deeply destabilising," Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles told Australian Broadcasting Corp yesterday.

The Solomon Islands is viewed by analysts as having the closest ties to Beijing among Pacific nations after signing a security pact with China in 2022. The agreement prompted concern from the United States and intensified Australia's diplomatic efforts in the region.

The Solomon Islands' new prime minister, who took office in May, said during an official visit to Australia last month that he would negotiate a comprehensive treaty with Australia and review the security agreement with China.

"We have much to transact, so we look forward to great conversations going forward," Wale said during his meeting with Albanese yesterday in Honiara.

The push for a new comprehensive treaty comes amid a flurry of strategic announcements, with Australia signing pacts with Fiji on Monday and Vanuatu last month.

Court orders India to unblock BJP's X account

Reuters
New Delhi

An Indian court directed the federal government to unblock the X account of the youth Cockerroach Janta Party (CJP) yesterday, more than a month since it went offline after amassing some 200,000 followers within days of being created, its founder and a lawyer involved in the case said.

The government had justified the move in court by citing concerns that posts from the account could cause chaos during a national medical college entrance examination that had to be reconducted after its question papers were leaked.

The CJP, which has been communicating with its X followers via an alternate account, has been holding sit-in protests for the last fortnight demanding

the education minister's resignation over the issue.

The Delhi High Court order came after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government said it had no objection to the account being unblocked, the lawyer told Reuters.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, in a post on X, termed the decision a "big win" for the party, the movement, and for "free speech and digital rights".

The account remained withheld in India yesterday evening, "in response to a legal demand", its page said.

The CJP, which describes itself as representing "the lazy, the unemployed, and the chronically correct", has almost 22 million followers on its Instagram page.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, which has termed the group part of "an anti-India gang", has little over 9 million followers.

Drug smuggling caused deadly Sri Lanka prison riot: minister

Reuters
Colombo

A riot in a Sri Lankan prison that killed 26 people and injured dozens was due to a clash between two groups over drug smuggling within the jail, a top official said yesterday.

Two days of fighting between two groups of inmates at the prison in the coastal town of Negombo, about 35km (20 miles) north of the commercial capital, Colombo, left 26 people dead, including seven prison officials, authorities said.

Initial investigations show the fight had started when a few prisoners had leaked information of efforts to smuggle drugs into the prison to prison officials, Minister of Justice and National Integration Harshana Nanayakkara told parliament.

"This had angered a second group of inmates who were supporting the smuggling. This was what started



Army officers stand guard outside the Negombo prison on the outskirts of Colombo yesterday, following clashes between inmates of two drug gangs. (AFP)

the clash," he told lawmakers. "When prison officials attempted to intervene it had escalated. Prisoners attacked prison officials with bricks and poles. Prison officials fired in self-

defence. At the moment we are unaware of how prisoners got possession of weapons. Investigations into these details are ongoing."

A small group of prisoners had

also managed to disable the CCTV cameras installed within the prison, Nanayakkara added.

As many as 734 prisoners were moved to four other prisons yesterday morning to reduce the severe overcrowding, the Department of Prisons said.

The Negombo prison housed about 2,400 inmates despite only having facilities for about 650, according to the Committee for Protecting Rights of Prisoners, resulting in severe overcrowding.

Dozens of police and police special forces were called in to calm the situation on Monday, and about 100 injured inmates and prison officials were treated in hospital.

A contingent of military personnel with armoured vehicles were still on guard outside the prison yesterday. Previous prison violence in Sri Lanka includes a riot in November 2020 that left 11 inmates dead, and a prison riot in 2012 in Colombo that left 27 dead.



EU probes into Big Tech spotlight widening trust deficit

The Big Tech professes to have the loftier aim of building a more equitable global society. However, governments, business leaders and the general public are coming to view its overarching power and influence with caution and suspicion. Consequently, the European Union's regulatory crackdown is intensifying across multiple legal frameworks with over 60 active antitrust and regulatory probes targeting US technology giants.

The EU has put in place two laws: the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act, both better known by their initials, DMA and DSA.

Europe's top court on July 2 dismissed Google's challenge against a €4.1bn (\$4.8bn) EU antitrust fine over Android, largely upholding regulators' findings that the company used its mobile operating system to shut out rivals.

The European Commission originally imposed a €4.3bn penalty in 2018, which a lower tribunal

reduced in 2022. Google has accumulated almost €11bn in EU antitrust fines over the past decade.

Italy's privacy watchdog in February ordered an Amazon.com unit to stop using personal data from more than 1,800 warehouse workers near Rome.

Germany's cartel office in the same month barred Amazon from imposing price caps on retailers selling through its German marketplace and sought recovery of profits it said were generated through anti-competitive conduct.

Italy's competition authority fined Apple and two subsidiaries €98.6mn last December over alleged abuse of a dominant position in the mobile apps market.

The European Commission fined Apple €500mn in April 2025 under the DMA, while Germany's Federal Court of Justice upheld a regulatory designation subjecting the company to tighter competition controls. Meta said in March it would allow AI rivals access to WhatsApp for a fee after the Commission

threatened interim measures during an abuse-of-dominance investigation.

The EU ordered Meta yesterday to give rival AI chatbots access to its WhatsApp platform for free within five working days as it carries out an antitrust probe, or risk a heavy fine.

Meta said it would appeal the order, which follows the launch in December of an EU investigation into the US firm. Britain's competition regulator said in March it would investigate Microsoft's business software ecosystem, including software licensing practices in cloud computing.

Microsoft avoided a potentially hefty EU antitrust fine by promising in September reduced prices for Office products excluding its Teams app after the European Commission had charged the US company with illegally bundling the app with its Office software suite. EU regulators charged TikTok in February with breaching online content rules through

what they described as addictive platform features.

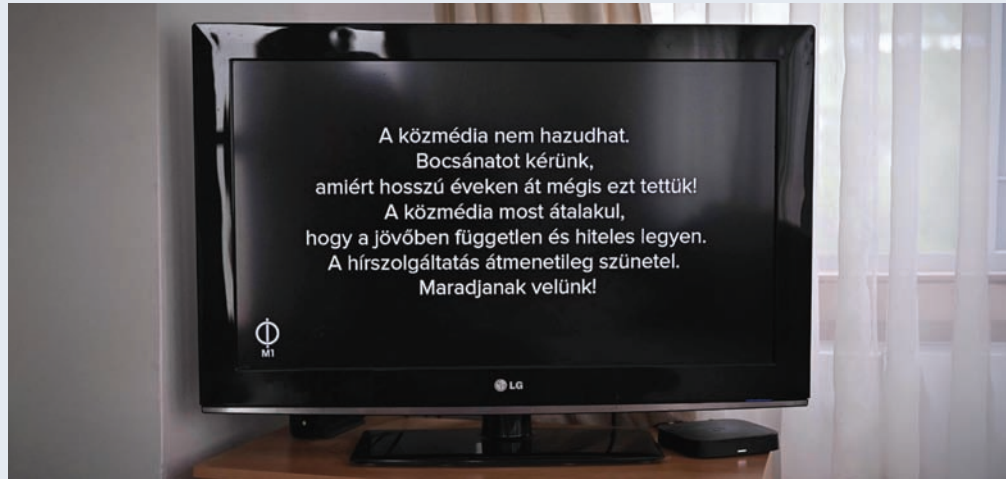
The European Commission said in January it would investigate X's AI chatbot Grok over concerns it may disseminate illegal content, including manipulated images. Ireland's Data Protection Commission also opened a formal investigation into Grok in February, while French police raided X's offices later as part of a separate probe.

The Big Tech, despite its overarching global reach, has for long been facing a widening trust deficit, both from the users and regulators.

For sure, technology has become an inseparable part of everyday life across the world. But the business model of social media, with its stifling data monopoly, may be undermining the well-being of its users.

Fundamentally, social media users are driven by the same ancient desire: Human Connection. But that has for long been crowded out by addictive technology, amazing products and invasive corporate branding.

In Hungary, a bid at redemption



A message can be read on a tv screen at a family home in Agard, Hungary, yesterday as the main state channel, the M1, informs viewers of the temporary suspension of news broadcasts in all state broadcasters. Message reads - 'The public state media cannot lie. We apologise for doing this for so many years! The public media is now transforming itself to be independent and credible in the future. News service is temporarily suspended! Stay tuned! According to the statement, the decision is intended to support the organisational and editorial renewal of public media, with the aim of establishing an independent and trustworthy public service broadcaster. (AFP)



Nato defence push already strains Europe's budgets

By Mark John
London

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte is insisting that member states are keeping their promise to boost defence spending. Yet progress has been uneven and the push is already stretching some national budgets.

Under pressure from US President Donald Trump, members of the 32-country military pact agreed at last year's summit to boost defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035 – just over double the overall level for European states and Canada in 2025.

But since then, two camps have emerged: one is led by Germany and the mostly Nordic and eastern European nations which have found the fiscal space to raise spending; in the other are several big players struggling to do the same.

"The UK isn't managing, for example. France isn't and Italy isn't either," Guntram Wolff, senior fellow at the Bruegel economics think tank, said of the three largest economies in Europe behind Germany.

Nato says its European members plus Canada spent an extra \$90bn on defence in real terms last year compared to 2024 as they seek to raise core military spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2035 with a further 1.5% GDP on security-related items.

Before the summit, Rutte has stressed that last year's new spend amounts to a bigger \$139bn tally in nominal terms and that there is a "strong commitment" to hit the combined 5% target on time.

Germany will use a rule change exempting defence items from strict borrowing limits to double its spending to over €200bn (\$228.38bn) between now and 2030, according to a budget draft seen by Reuters ahead of a cabinet review on Monday.

Poland, Lithuania and Estonia – countries where the perception of the threat posed by Russia is at its sharpest – are already well on their way to making the new targets, with Warsaw notably having devoted 4.3% of GDP to defence last year.

Elsewhere the push faces political and fiscal roadblocks.

Britain last week announced plans for an extra £15bn (\$20.01bn) of defence spending, partly funded by cuts elsewhere. But it emerged that one-third was still unfunded, creating an early budget challenge for the

likely new prime minister Andy Burnham.

More fundamentally, the plan was criticised by opposition politicians and former military chiefs for failing to set out when defence spending would reach 3% of GDP, on the way to meeting Britain's Nato commitment to spend 3.5% of GDP by 2035.

"Defence spending will likely remain one of the biggest fiscal pressures facing the UK in the medium term," said Max Warner, senior research economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think tank.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is due to tell the summit that Rome, despite one of Europe's largest debt burdens, will lift core and non-core defence spending to 2.8% of GDP in 2026, roughly 0.71 percentage point higher than last year.

But with higher military spending unpopular with many voters ahead of next year's national elections, most of the increase will come from domestic security spending such as police duties.

Plans detailed by France in April would lift its defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by the end of the decade from about 2% now, even as it attempts to bring its overall deficit into line with euro area rules – a tough budget goal as it heads towards next year's presidential elections.

Spain's Socialist government meanwhile is not seen budging from its refusal to spend more than 2.1% of GDP on defence, with new resources set to be heavily skewed towards technologies with civil

applications. Elsewhere, NATO officials have queried the assertion of three countries – Czech Republic, Slovenia and Albania – that they had met the old alliance target of 2% of GDP and asked them to review and re-submit their spending figures.

"For us, the challenge is to ensure that Allies remain on the credible path towards that 3.5% commitment, if you keep on bumping along at 2%, then you're not on the credible path," a senior Nato official said.

Bruegel's Wolff noted that, unlike at last year's summit in the Hague, European leaders can look Trump in the eye and argue they have stepped up to shoulder the burden of a Ukrainian war effort that has shown it is able to resist Russian advances.

Still, even if European publics may be starting to accept that more money should go on the military, some observers argue that arms suppliers will need to be convinced that government defence spending will remain high before they make the investment needed to increase their capacity.

"There has been a before Trump, and there will be an after Trump, so this 5% target can change any time," said Ana Boata, head of economic research at Allianz Trade.

"So I think there is a bit of scepticism from European defence companies to actually ramp up investments in order to ramp up production," she said. – Reuters



Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte reacts at the end of a press conference ahead of a Nato leaders summit in Ankara, Turkiye, on Monday. (Reuters)

Burnham vows discipline on fiscal rules he may need to bend

By Andy Bruce
Manchester



Britain's prime minister-in-waiting, Andy Burnham, promises radical change while sticking to the country's fiscal rules, a strategy that needs discipline, luck, and maybe an old trick: kicking the pain points into the long grass.

Last week, Burnham committed to existing fiscal rules that require the government to match day-to-day spending against revenue – a balanced current budget – a feat achieved only fleetingly in the last 25 years.

So far, Britain's £2.9tn (\$3.87tn) government bond market has shown little sign of concern, helped by falling oil prices since the de-escalation of the Iran war, but also Burnham's efforts to burnish an image of fiscal responsibility.

But he has yet to set out how he will square demands for spending and borrowing against his commitments to the fiscal rules and the Labour Party's 2024 manifesto, which ruled out raising taxes on working people.

In March, Britain's Office for Budget Responsibility estimated that finance minister Rachel Reeves' plans would meet the rules with a current budget surplus of £24bn by 2029/30.

But that outlook was based on the economy before the outbreak of war in the Middle East, and above-consensus growth forecasts for the years ahead. Economists at Bank of America last week estimated that margin had shrunk to £19bn.

That combination – shrinking headroom and a manifesto that rules out broad tax rises – increases the temptation to do what governments have done before: defer the reckoning.

"The idea that this government might promise fiscal consolidation in the future, while topping up spending plans in the near term, seems quite plausible to me," said Bee Boileau, senior researcher at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think tank.

Reeves' reforms to the fiscal framework, including comprehensive spending reviews every two years, have made gaining the fiscal rules harder, but not impossible.

Her Conservative Party predecessor Jeremy Hunt set the modern template: his March 2024 Budget contained pre-election tax cuts to be paid for by large, unspecified real-terms cuts to government departments in later years. Here's how a similar ploy could look for Burnham.

Once in power, the new prime minister

could publish an initial Budget this year that mostly sticks with current plans, meeting the rule to balance the current budget in the 2029/30 financial year while teeing up his defining Budget in 2027.

From April 2027, the three-year target to balance the budget will shift to 2030/31, which will give Burnham the chance to shift fiscal consolidation past the next election, due in mid-2029 at the latest, while potentially increasing near-term spending.

A biennial review of government spending due next year represents a potential complication. Burnham will be required to set government department budgets for the post-election 2030/31 financial year, and cuts would look politically difficult.

But for a pre-election Budget 2028, Burnham could again postpone fiscal consolidation to 2031/32, this time without specifying where the axe will fall, because that year will fall outside the scope of the Spending Review 2027 for departmental budgets.

The trouble is, the gilt market's tolerance for these strategies may now be limited, said Emma Moriarty, portfolio manager at CG Asset Management, which specialises in fixed income.

"Meeting the fiscal rules is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the bond markets," Moriarty said, adding that gilts had to be viewed in the context of a crowded sovereign debt market, where competition for buyers is strong.

Some argue there is still room to borrow more.

Jim O'Neill, a former British government minister who was chief economist of Goldman Sachs and has recently advised Burnham, has argued that Britain should borrow more to boost infrastructure – something the fiscal rules would allow for. But Moriarty said the market would still be focused on the bottom line, whatever the stated purpose of the borrowing.

"For gilt investors, the purpose of borrowing matters less than the volume – what moves markets on Budget day is the Debt Management Office's issuance remit, not the Chancellor's justification for it," she said. – Reuters

Nato showcases big arms deals as Trump feels let down

Reuters
Ankara

Nato leaders unveiled arms deals worth tens of billions of dollars in Türkiye yesterday, driving home the message that they are heeding US calls to spend more to defend Europe even as President Donald Trump said he felt let down. Leaders were convening for a summit in the capital Ankara, hoping to project unity after another bruising year, in which the Iran war once again exposed cracks in the alliance that has underpinned Western security since the end of World War Two. In a meeting with President Tayyip Erdogan, Trump said he might have boycotted the Nato summit altogether had it not been for his warm relations with the Turkish leader, and did not rule out further troop withdrawals from Europe. "Well, we're going to see. I was very disappointed with Nato," he said, singling out Britain, France, Germany and Italy for not doing enough to support the US war on Iran. Trump added that "we weren't treated well" by the allies, even as he reiterated that he did not want or need their help. "Before I asked, they said they wouldn't be there, and we've invested trillions of dollars in Nato," Trump said. Trump said he had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky before the summit about ending the war that started in February 2022 when Russia invaded its neighbour. "I think they both want to



Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte smiles before meeting European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa on the sidelines of the Nato leaders' summit, in Ankara, yesterday. (Reuters)

make a deal. It's too bad it took so long ... Something's going to come out," he said. While sharply criticising longstanding allies, Trump announced Washington would lift sanctions on Türkiye that were imposed in 2020 over Ankara's purchase of Russian air defence missiles. He also expressed a willingness to sell Türkiye F-35 fighter jets. The move would be a major gesture to Erdogan and remove a longstanding irritant in bilateral ties.

Nato members have repeatedly tried to show Trump that they are stepping up to the plate. Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte said on Monday Europeans had made "staggering" increases in defence spending. Before Trump's arrival, Rutte trumpeted a series of initiatives and deals at a defence industry forum, and called for a defence industry "revolution" across the

alliance, warning over Russia's massive military spending as well as China, North Korea and Iran.

"We don't have the luxury of time. We need capabilities now to ensure we remain ready. The security situation demands it," Rutte said. "The hum of machinery must become a roar." The deals, estimated to be worth at least \$50bn according to one Nato official, included European countries buying surveillance drones from US company Northrop Grumman, and Nato buying planes from Sweden's Saab. Saab shares at one point rose more than 5% as investors bet on the company benefiting from European rearmament. Morgan Stanley upgraded the stock.

Europe's defence sector has often been criticised as fragmented and saddled with red tape and rivalries between companies and countries. That has left Europe

more reliant on purchases of US weapons.

Weak economic growth and the need to maintain generous state welfare provisions have also made defence spending a tougher sell in Europe.

Tensions within Nato, already strained over Ukraine and Trump's desire to wrest Greenland from fellow Nato member Denmark, have deepened since the US attacked Iran in February. Trump has repeatedly criticised Nato members for insufficient support in the conflict, threatening to quit the alliance.

European officials insist they largely honoured commitments to let the US use their airspace and bases, despite not having been consulted about a deeply unpopular war that roiled their economies.

The US has also announced troop withdrawals from Europe and launched a six-month review of its military presence there. European officials had said they were braced for a repeat of some of Trump's recent criticism and cannot be sure of a positive outcome, in part due to Trump's volatile relationship with some leaders, most recently seen in a feud with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Nato members are expected to reaffirm support for Ukraine, with Zelensky urgently calling for more air defence supplies. Underscoring the stakes, Russia hammered the Kyiv region with missiles and drones on Monday, killing at least 28 people and exposing Ukraine's critical shortage of US-made air-defence interceptors.

Suspect in Monaco bombing found dead in Ukraine, shot in the head

Reuters
Kyiv

A woman suspected of carrying out a bomb attack in Monaco last week that seriously injured a Ukrainian-born businessman has been found dead in Ukraine, and a military intelligence officer has been arrested in connection with her murder, authorities said yesterday.

The body of Anastasia Berezovska, a Ukrainian citizen who was wanted by Interpol for the June 29 bombing, was found with gunshot wounds to the head and pistol cartridges nearby, Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office said in a statement on Telegram.

Two men have been detained on suspicion of killing Berezovska, including the employee of Ukraine's military intelligence service (HUR) and a former police officer, the statement said.

The two men had communicated with Berezovska after she returned to Ukraine on July 1 and had made repeated transfers to her crypto and bank accounts, the statement said.

The HUR employee had confessed to killing 39-year-old Berezovska with the other defendant, the prosecutor general's office said.

"He also said that he had not informed his superiors about his contacts with Berezovska, the money transfers, or any of his other actions, and had acted

on his own initiative," the statement said.

The two men were arrested on suspicion of committing murder and are also believed to be involved in the Monaco bombing, the statement said.

During a search of the home of the former law enforcement officer, a basement room resembling a torture chamber was discovered, it added.

Ukrainian-born property developer Vadym Yermolaiev, his partner and son were wounded in last Monday's bomb attack, sources said.

Yermolaiev, who took Cypriot nationality seven years ago, was placed under sanctions by Ukraine in 2023, following Russia's invasion the previous year.

Berezovska was wanted by authorities in Monaco on charges of attempted murder, placing an explosive device in a public place with criminal intent, and criminal conspiracy. Monaco's deputy prosecutor said last week that the attacker had left the principality on foot to nearby France then fled by car to Germany via several European countries, including Italy.

Ukrainian media outlet Ukrainska Pravda had reported earlier yesterday that Berezovska's body was found near Ukraine's capital Kyiv close to 11pm local time (2000 GMT) on Monday.

Law enforcement agencies are working to identify those who ordered the attack in Monaco and any other individuals involved in the case, the statement said.

Ukraine strikes Russian 'shadow fleet' tankers supplying Crimea

Reuters
Kyiv

Ukrainian drones have attacked a dozen tankers from Russia's "shadow fleet" over the past two days that were delivering fuel to Crimea, Kyiv's military said yesterday, as it intensifies efforts to isolate the Russian-occupied peninsula.

Ukraine's drone forces said they had struck eight vessels subject to sanctions in the Sea of Azov, each with a deadweight of around 7,000 metric tonnes. Two more tankers were hit later in the day, they added.

The strikes followed attacks on two other shadow-fleet vessels in the same area a day earlier, according to the drone forces. The Sea of Azov is a key supply route for Russian forces in Crimea and other occupied parts of southern Ukraine.

Ukraine has stepped up attacks

on logistics and energy infrastructure in Crimea in recent weeks, contributing to fuel shortages and prompting authorities to declare a state of emergency in the peninsula, a critical hub for Russia's war effort.

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, eight years before launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Moscow has not publicly commented on this week's attacks, which also included strikes on electrical substations, radar systems and missile installations.

In an interview with Reuters last month, Kyiv's top drone commander, Robert Brovdi, pledged to effectively cut off Crimea from Russia through a campaign of systematic strikes.

Ukraine's drone forces posted drone footage — which Reuters could not independently verify — showing vessels being attacked and erupting into flames.

"Striking the enemy's naval logistics complicates the supply of

fuel and ammunition necessary to support the activities of Russian troops, primarily in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea," the forces said in a statement.

Only two of the seven identified vessels initially reported as struck yesterday were under international sanctions, according to a Reuters review.

Ukraine has long urged its allies to crack down on vessels that circumvent sanctions to transport Russian oil to international markets.

Kyiv has previously used sea drones to attack tankers carrying Russian oil in the Black Sea as part of a broader effort to reduce Moscow's energy revenues.

There have also been a series of unexplained blasts on tankers that had previously called at Russian ports. Ukraine has neither confirmed nor denied involvement, although maritime security sources have said they suspect Kyiv was behind the incidents.

Russia's largest oil refinery halts processing after drone attack: sources

Reuters
Moscow

Omsk oil refinery, Russia's largest, has halted operations following a Ukrainian drone attack, two industry sources said yesterday.

Monday's strike on the refinery, deep in Siberia, was one of Ukraine's longest-range attacks of the conflict, now well into its fifth year.

The halt in operations at the plant, which is Russia's top producer of petrol, is likely to exacerbate fuel shortages across the country.

"Facilities at the Omsk oil refinery were damaged as a result of (Monday's) attack. No plant personnel were injured," Anatoly Seryshev, President Vladimir Putin's representative in Siberia, said in a statement yesterday.

"Damage assessment is cur-



A man fills a fuel canister at a gasoline pump in the Siberian city of Omsk. (Reuters)

rently under way, and competent services have organised restoration work," Seryshev said, without spelling out how the refinery's operations were affected.

Gazprom Neft, which owns the refinery, did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

According to the sources, a crude distillation unit, CDU-10,

which accounts for around 38% of the plant's production capacity with a capacity of 24,580 metric tonnes a day, caught fire and was damaged in the attack.

Omsk refinery has stopped selling gasoline and diesel on the Saint Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange since yesterday, according to data from the exchange.

Le Pen to announce if running for president with ankle tag

AFP
Paris

French far-right chief Marine Le Pen was to announce if she will stand for president next year, after an appeals court paved the way for her to run but wearing an ankle tag as it confirmed her embezzlement conviction.

The Paris appeals court found the three-time presidential hopeful from the anti-immigration National Rally (RN) party guilty over a fake jobs scam at the European Parliament that diverted more than 2.8mn euros (more than \$3mn) in EU funds.

It banned her from office for 15 months and sentenced her to one year under house arrest to be served with an electronic tag, throwing into doubt her candidacy in what is viewed as her party's best ever chance to win the Elysee.

She was expected to be interviewed later yesterday on the evening news from 8:00pm (1800 GMT).

A lower court in March last year had initially sentenced her to a five-year ban from public office, quashing her ambitions to succeed outgoing centrist President Emmanuel Macron in next year's polls.

Backdated to March 2025, the new ban from office is thought to have expired this year, clearing the way in principle for Le Pen to run in polls set for April and May 2027.

But she has said she may not run if wearing a tag prevents her from campaigning.



French far-right leader Marine Le Pen, member of parliament for the Rassemblement National (RN) party, and Jordan Bardella, president of the RN party, leave after a party meeting at the Rassemblement National headquarters, in Paris, yesterday. (Reuters)

"When you're a presidential candidate, you need to be completely free to move around," she said last week. "I can't depend on a magistrate to allow me to go to a rally."

Le Pen could hand the candidacy to her 30-year-old lieutenant, RN party leader Jordan Bardella.

Or she could change her mind.

Under France's house arrest system, a magistrate can approve time at which someone with an ankle tag can leave their home, and pre-approve outings all over France.

A judge could also reduce the period she has to wear an ankle tag by six months, allowing her to campaign unhindered from early next year, magistrates have said.

Macron, visiting Syria yesterday, said he would not comment on a court decision.

Le Pen's lawyer Rodolphe Bosselet said he was "partially" happy

with the verdict, which also sentenced her to paying a 100,000-euro (\$114,000) fine.

"We note a considerable shift in the sentences, particularly with regards to the ban from office, which for us is an extremely important point," he said.

In the northern town of Henin-Beaumont, an RN stronghold, 57-year-old plasterer Pierre Pagniez said he expected Le Pen to run.

"They need to stop trying to trip her up," he said, adding he preferred the three-time presidential candidate to the much less experienced Bardella.

"So what if she runs her campaign wearing an ankle monitor?"

Socialist party leader Olivier Faure was among leftists who said Le Pen should not run next year, as any candidate should be "exemplary".

Outrage in Germany at bid to restrict freedom of information

AFP
Berlin

An alliance of German NGOs yesterday denounced the government's plans to restrict access to official documents, warning it could hamper efforts to fight corruption and abuse of power.

Germany's Freedom of Information Act, in force since 2006, has given the public access to government documents and is widely seen as an important tool for journalists and non-profit groups.

But, under plans announced by Chancellor Friedrich Merz's coalition, only German or EU citizens in the country who demonstrate a "legitimate interest" will in future be able to get hold of such information.

An open letter signed by 110 media advocacy groups and NGOs warned that "with these plans, important information would in future be denied to journalists and civil society organisations."

"A main tool used against corruption and abuse of power would be abolished."

"The loss of the right to freedom of information for millions

of citizens makes fact-based reporting, public oversight and civil society engagement more difficult," they add, stressing that "trust in politics" would be "weakened".

The government has argued the rules need to be changed to help reduce bureaucracy, one of Merz's priorities, and to protect sensitive information on topics such as critical infrastructure.

The alliance includes the DJV journalists' association, the Germany Society for Freedom of Information and the German branch of NGO Transparency International.

Italy arrests two over alleged spying for Russia

Reuters
Rome

Italy has arrested two people, including a former member of its intelligence services, for allegedly passing classified information to a Russian agent, the Rome prosecutor's office said yesterday.

Prosecutors said the main suspect, whom they did not name, was a 59-year-old former officer in the Carabinieri military police who had worked as part of the intelligence community. The accusations include the transfer of protected information, as well

as unauthorised access to IT and telecoms services.

Five other people have been placed under investigation as part of a probe launched in May 2025.

The main suspect is accused of taking money to pass on to a Russian agent information obtained from his sources who include four serving members of the Italian military. The Russian operative allegedly involved is protected by diplomatic immunity in Italy.

There was no immediate comment from the Russian embassy in Rome.

Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto said the investiga-

tion helped to reveal Russia's true attitude to Italy, where the government has provided military and civilian aid to Ukraine since it was invaded by Russia in 2022.

"This hybrid war is the tip of a gigantic iceberg, comprising external enemies and internal traitors who are prepared to sell out their nation for money, power or personal gain," Crosetto wrote on X.

In 2021, Italian navy captain Walter Biot was arrested while caught handing over documents to a Russian embassy employee in a Rome car park, and was later sentenced to almost 30 years in prison.

Beyond the final whistle: How Qatar turned a World Cup into an enduring destination legacy

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup unfolds across North America, the global spotlight once again falls on football's greatest stage.

Yet for many fans, commentators and media, the conversation continues to return to Qatar 2022.

Four years later, the tournament is remembered for far more than the action on the pitch.

It also stands out as the only FIFA World Cup hosted across a single, connected destination, allowing fans to attend multiple matches in one day while discovering Qatar's culture, heritage and hospitality, and introducing millions of visitors to Qatar for the first time.

What began as the world's biggest sporting event was never intended to be an endpoint.

Instead, it became the catalyst for a broader transformation, accelerating Qatar's evolution into a global tourism destination and creating a legacy that extends well beyond the tournament itself.

Today, as Doha serves as the 2026 GCC Tourism Capital, that legacy still shapes the destination long after the final whistle.

A Legacy Built on Authentic Hospitality (Karam)

At the heart of Qatar's tourism story lies a quality that cannot be built through infrastructure alone: *Karam*.

Deeply rooted in Qatari culture, it reflects a tradition of generosity and genuine hospitality that visitors experienced during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and continue to encounter today.

Perhaps nowhere is this spirit more clearly reflected than in the *majlis*, a space built around welcome, conversation and connection, where the aroma of freshly brewed Arabic coffee (*qahwa*), infused with cardamom, carries a tradition of hospitality passed down through generations.

Together, the *majlis* and *qahwa* serve as enduring symbols of Qatari and Arabian hospitality, offering visitors a glimpse into a culture where *Karam* is not simply a gesture, but a way of life.

In fact, during the tournament, *Karam* came to life in a particularly memorable way, as locals opened their *majlises* to visitors from around the world.

Complete strangers found themselves welcomed into a *majlis*, sharing *qahwa*, conversation and dinner with their hosts, turning unexpected encounters into genuine moments of connection and creating memories that would last long after the tournament.

Seamless Connectivity, Meaningful Exploration

One of the defining features of Qatar 2022 was its accessibility, and that convenience continues to shape the visitor experience today.

From the moment travellers arrive at Hamad International Airport, Qatar's integrated transport network makes exploration effortless.

The Doha Metro connects museums, cultural districts, shopping destinations and the waterfront, allowing visitors to discover multiple facets of the country within a single day.

A Destination for Every Traveller

Since 2022, Qatar has continued to build on the momentum of the tournament, broadening its appeal with experiences that speak to travellers of all ages and interests.

New attractions, cultural experiences, entertainment venues and waterfront destinations have added fresh dimensions to the visitor journey, while Qatar's museums, heritage sites and traditional marketplaces continue to offer a deeper connection to the country's identity.

Together with its expanding



collection of luxury resorts, wellness retreats and beach clubs, this evolving offering has helped shape a destination with something new to discover on every visit.

A Year-Round Calendar of Experiences

While football introduced millions of people to Qatar, a dynamic programme of events continues to inspire visitors to return.

Through Qatar Calendar, residents and visitors can enjoy international sporting events, cultural festivals, concerts, exhibitions, family entertainment and seasonal celebrations throughout the year.

More Than a World Cup Legacy

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 will always be remembered as a defining moment in the nation's history.

Since then, Qatar has continued to welcome the world through events such as the FIFA Arab Cup and Formula 1, while looking ahead to a sporting calendar that includes the FIFA U-17 World Cup and the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 qualifier matches.

Today, visitors come not only for major events, but also for the experiences that define modern Qatar: authentic hospitality, cultural discovery, world-class dining, family-friendly attractions, seamless connectivity and a vibrant year-round calendar of events.

Football may have been the introduction, but Qatar's tourism story continues to unfold, inviting travellers to discover a destination that has transformed a historic sporting moment into an enduring legacy.



Families turn to Qatar Toy Festival for screen-free fun

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

With schools closed for the summer, families are flocking to the Qatar Toy Festival, where interactive attractions, colourful experiences and shared activities are helping children swap screen time for quality family moments.

At this year's festival, taking place until July 31 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), parents say the event has become a welcome opportunity to keep youngsters active, engaged and away from electronic devices during the long summer holiday.

Beyond the colourful attractions and popular children's characters, visitors described the festival as a place where families can spend meaningful time together in a safe and welcoming environment.

Mohammad Zahi, who attended the festival with his family, said the event provides a much-needed alternative to outdoor activities during the hotter months.

"It's very joyful for them, especially now with the weather in Doha," he told *Gulf Times*. "The outdoor option is very limited, so here they can really enjoy it. We have too much fun."

Like many parents, he admitted that managing children's screen time has become one of the biggest challenges during the school holidays.

"Our struggle as parents now in the summer vacation is to take time out from screens," he said. "We are fighting with the kids to take them off screens, so I think this is a very good option for that."

His daughter, Rose, was equally enthusiastic about the experience: "I like all the games, and I'm really having fun. Now it's my summer holidays."



An array of activities, games, and attractions at the Qatar Toy Festival.
PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



Mohammad Zahi and his family (above), Dinush Chamika De Silva and his family (right), and Esraa Zakout (left).
PICTURES: Shaima Sheriff

For Dinush Chamika De Silva, who visited with his wife and their nine-month-old son, the festival offered something different from spending long days indoors.

"We stay (indoors too) much," he said. "The kids need to see the outside, something different. This is really amazing."

Although his son is still too young to enjoy every attraction, De Silva believes events such as the festival create valuable experiences for children of all ages.

"For those (whose daily routine is limited to) going to school, coming back to the house, espe-

cially in the summer, this is really great," he said. "The colourful vibes are really amazing."

Returning visitor Esraa Zakout said the festival has become part of her family's summer tradition.

"We stay here during the summer. I have a four-year-old and a two-year-old, and there's something for every age," she said.

Zakout lauded the organisers for introducing new attractions each year, noting that one of her suggestions from last year's visitor survey had been included in this year's programme.

"Last year, they didn't have

Paw Patrol. I suggested it in a survey, and they had Paw Patrol this year, which was amazing," she said.

Zakout also highlighted the event's family-friendly atmosphere and the sense of security it offers parents.

"It's time away from screens for the kids, and they love it so much," she said. "I love the fact that the kids can independently go inside. The parents know that they're safe inside. All of the attendants and all of the booths have been extremely gentle with the kids."

Msheireb Museums events inspire summer creativity

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Msheireb Museums has launched its 2026 summer programme, "Reflections of Creativity and Art", offering a cultural and educational initiative designed to transform the summer holiday into a season of creativity, discovery and hands-on learning for children, young people and adults.

Running from July 6 to August 13, the programme features workshops and practical experiences.

The initiative reflects the museum's commitment to creating educational experiences that blend tradition with innovation while making culture accessible to all age groups.

The programme includes creative workshops, led by Msheireb Clay Art, where participants learn clay modelling techniques and create their own artistic pieces, alongside the Creative Dot Art workshop, which introduces a visual art form using colourful dot compositions.

Other highlights include Msheireb Arcade, an interactive activity that promotes teamwork and creative play, and the 3D Creativity Workshop, where participants develop design and spatial-thinking skills by building three-dimensional models.

The programme also explores the future of innovation through the Smart Home experience, introducing visitors to modern technologies and intelligent design concepts, while the Art and Karak session combines artistic expression with Qatar's traditional hospitality in an informal social setting.

"I hope this year's programme achieves the same success as the 2025 edition, from which all participants, especially children, benefited through enjoyable, skill-building activities in a fun and motivating environment," parent and educator Najat Ali al-Meer told *Gulf Times*.

"This year's programme appears rich and diverse," she said. "It offers children the opportunity to acquire new skills while interacting positively with their peers under the guidance of experienced facilitators. The activities provide a refreshing environment that is different from school, allowing them to enjoy their summer while continuing to learn and develop."

The opening programme also features children's clay workshops, heritage-inspired art activities and creative sessions that encourage experimentation and collaborative learning.

Delivered in partnership with leading educational and creative institutions, including Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar, Doha Design District, Kamel Code, and other specialist organisations, the programme introduces participants to visual arts, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, game design, and digital media, alongside activities inspired by Qatar's heritage.

Open to participants aged 6-16, with selected workshops for adults, the programme takes place across the four heritage houses of Msheireb Museums, offering an immersive setting where creativity, culture and innovation come together through interactive learning.



QM achieves Carbon Neutrality Certification for four landmark cultural sites

Reinforcing its commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable cultural stewardship, Qatar Museums (QM) has achieved Carbon Neutrality Certification for the operations and services of four of its landmark cultural and heritage sites: the National Museum of Qatar (NMQ), Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), Fire Station, and Al Zubarah Fort.

Awarded in accordance with the internationally recognised ISO 14068-1:2023 standard for the 2025 reporting period (January 1 to December 31, 2025), the certification marks a significant milestone in the QM's sustainability journey, embedding internationally recognised carbon management practices across its institutions and operations.

Notably, Al Zubarah Fort has become the first UNESCO World Heritage site in the Middle East to achieve Carbon Neutrality Certification, setting a new regional benchmark for sustainable heritage management.

The achievement was recognised during a ceremony held at the NMQ Auditorium, where Gulf Organisation for Research

& Development (GORD) founding chairman Dr Yousef Alhorr presented the Carbon Neutrality Certificates to QM chief executive Mohammed Saad al-Rumaihi.

"This accomplishment demonstrates that preserving cultural heritage and advancing environmental sustainability are complementary responsibilities," said Dr Alhorr. "Through the application of internationally recognised greenhouse gas accounting methodologies and credible third-party verification, Qatar Museums has established an important benchmark for the cultural sector."

"At GORD, we remain committed to supporting organisations with science-based, internationally aligned climate solutions that contribute to Qatar National Vision 2030 and broader global climate goals," he said.

"As custodians of Qatar's rich cultural heritage, we recognise that preserving our museums and heritage sites also means protecting the environment for future generations," al-Rumaihi said.

"This achievement reflects our commitment to embedding sustainability across our operations while supporting Qatar's broader

Qatar Museums
Achieves Carbon Neutrality Certification for Four Landmark Cultural Sites

Sites:

National Museum of Qatar

Museum of Islamic Art (MIA)

Fire Station

Al Zubarah Fort

Al Zubarah Fort has become the first UNESCO World Heritage site in the Middle East to achieve Carbon Neutrality Certification

Dr. Yousef Alhorr
Founding Chairman of the Gulf Organization for Research & Development (GORD)

Mohammed Saad Al Rumaihi
Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Museums

This accomplishment demonstrates that preserving cultural heritage and advancing environmental sustainability are complementary responsibilities.

GORD
Gulf Organization for Research & Development

As custodians of Qatar's rich cultural heritage, we recognize that preserving our museums and heritage sites also means protecting the environment for future generations.

We remain committed to supporting organizations with science-based, internationally aligned climate solutions that contribute to Qatar National Vision 2030

We value GORD's partnership and technical expertise throughout this initiative and remain committed to advancing responsible practices

environmental ambitions," he said. "We value GORD's partnership and technical expertise throughout this initiative and remain com-

mitted to advancing responsible practices that preserve both our cultural legacy and our natural environment."

The four certified sites followed a structured GHG accounting approach, including defining organisational and reporting boundaries, developing greenhouse gas inventories, collecting activity data across identified emissions sources including electricity consumption, water consumption, refrigerant consumption, solid waste generation, wastewater generation, visitor commuting, and employee commuting and preparing facility-level GHG emissions models.

The GHG accounting and reporting for all four facilities were carried out in line with ISO 14064-1, ISO 14068 and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) GHG Protocol guidelines.

This internationally recognised approach provides a robust framework for quantifying, substantiating and reporting greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with globally recognised standards.

GORD also developed a carbon management plan to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions by identifying and prioritising carbon reduction opportunities and mitigation interventions to be implemented by 2030.

The plan includes renewable energy adoption, energy efficiency measures, sustainable transportation, optimised water use, strengthened greenhouse gas accounting practices, and ongoing carbon footprint assessments.

A carbon offsetting strategy was developed to address emissions through the procurement of high-integrity carbon credits from internationally recognised carbon crediting programmes, enabling the facilities to achieve carbon neutrality.

The complete documentation and emissions calculations were submitted to Earthhood Services Limited for independent third-party verification.

Following verification, Carbon Neutrality Certification for the operations of each of the four facilities was independently issued.

Looking ahead, the QM will continue to build on this achievement by advancing sustainable practices across its institutions alongside partners like GORD, further advancing the Qatar National Vision 2030 mandate for responsible environmental stewardship, innovation and the preservation of cultural heritage. - QNA