



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ ارْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَخَلِّ عَلَىٰ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَلَا تَلْمِزْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ

صَلَّىٰ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ

We extend our sincere condolences and
deepest sympathy to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

and

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to the honorable members of the Al Thani family
and the people of Qatar
on the sad demise of the nation's leader

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and
grant him a place in his spacious paradise.

"إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمَطْمَئِنَّةُ اجْعِي إِلَى بَرِّكَ رَبِّكَ وَارْجِعِي إِلَى عِبَادِكَ وَأَجْنَبِي

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Board Chairman Issa Abdul Salam Abu Issa, Vice Board Chairman Hussam Abdul Salam Abu Issa,
CEO Abdul Salam Issa Abu Issa , all Board members and employees of
Salam International Investment Limited extend their heartfelt condolences....





بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

((يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي))

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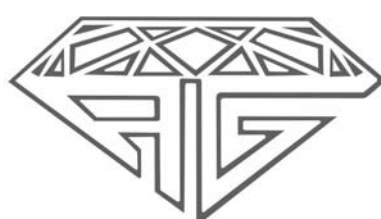
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AMIRI GEMS

المجوهرات الأميرية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُنِيبَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ الرَّحِيمِ ضِعْفًا وَتَمَلُّوْا فِي عِبَادِي وَلَا تَغْلِي حَبْنِي

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KATARA
HOSPITALITY



كتارا
للضيافة

يَا أَيُّهَا الشَّافِعِيُّ الطَّبِيعَةُ لَمْ تَجْعَلْ إِلَّا زَيْلًا رَاضٍ مُسْتَعْدَدٌ يَخْلُفُ فِي عِبَادَتِي وَالْأَمْرُ عَلَى حِمْنِي

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ام الحول للطاقة
UMM AL HOUL POWER





يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ الرَّحِيمِ وَتُغْفَرُ لِي وَبِعَاقِبَتِي وَالْأَعْيُنُ حَزِينَةٌ

صَلِّ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

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هليكوبتر الخليج
GULF HELICOPTERS

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُنِيبَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ الرَّحِيمِ وَخَلِّينِي فِي عِبَادِي وَلَا تُغْنِي عَنِّي حَبْنِي

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BÜRGENSTOCK
Resort · Lake Lucerne

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
((يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي))
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المؤسسة العامة القطرية للكهرباء والماء
Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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EMBASSY OF INDIA
Doha - Qatar



Indian Sports Centre
UNDER THE AEGIS OF EMBASSY OF INDIA

The Embassy of India and the Indian Community in Qatar.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمَطْمَئِنَّةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكَ أَمِيرِنَا وَرَجُلِنَا فِي عِلِّيَّاتِهِ وَأَرْجِنَا فِي

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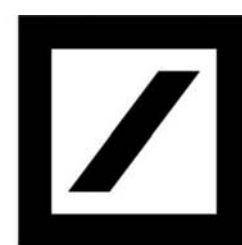
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Deutsche Bank





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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَارِكِ صَيْتَهُ مُضِيَّةً فَأَدْخِلِي عِيَا وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي
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Hydro

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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Ras Laffan Power Company Limited (RLPC)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُسْلِمُونَ إِنَّ فِي رَأْسِ الْبَيْتِ رَأْسَ الْوَسْطَى وَرَأْسَ الْوَسْطَى وَرَأْسَ الْوَسْطَى وَرَأْسَ الْوَسْطَى
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Yusuff Ali M.A.
Chairman, Lulu Group International.

Lulu  **لولو**
Where the world comes to shop حيث يأتي العالم للتسوق

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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المايا ريتيل للتجارة (ش.ذ.م.م.)
AL MAYA RETAIL TRADING (W.L.L.)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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شركة قطر للتجارة والنقل
QATAR TRADING & TRANSPORT COMPANY
P.O. Box 4455

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُسْتَأْجَرَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكَ رَبِّكَ وَأَمْرِؤَادِ حَيْتَىٰ عِبَادِكَ وَأَزْجَانِي

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**DARWISH
INTERSERVE**
Darwish Interserve Facility Management W.L.L.
الدرويش انترسيرف لإدارة المرافق ذ.م.م

الدرويش انترسيرف لإدارة المرافق ذ.م.م

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُسْتَأْجَرَةُ اجْعِي إِلَىٰ بَرِّكَ رَبِّكَ وَأَمْرِؤَادِ حَيْتَىٰ عِبَادِكَ وَأَزْجَانِي

We extend our sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

and

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to the honorable members of the Al Thani family and the people of Qatar
on the sad demise of the nation’s leader

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and grant him a place in his spacious paradise.

"إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ"

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صدق الله العظيم

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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ رَحِمِي إِلَى رَبِّكَ الرَّحِيمِ خُذِي عِيَارِي وَالْأَيْمَانِي جَنَّتِي

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Public institutions, events halt as Qatar observes national mourning

By **Joey Aguilar**
Doha

The passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani has prompted widespread schedule changes across Qatar, with museums, libraries, festivals, government services, maritime activities and community events closing or suspending operations during the four-day national mourning period declared by the Amiri Diwan.

Following the announcement, public institutions, cultural organisations and event organisers swiftly adjusted their schedules in line with state protocol and as a mark of respect for HH the late Father Amir.

Qatar Museums (QM) announced the temporary closure of all museums, galleries and creative hubs nationwide from July 12-16.

The facilities are scheduled to reopen on July 17.

The Qatar National Library also suspended operations from July 13-16 and will resume regular opening hours on July 17.

Several public events have also been postponed.

The Third Hamba Exhibition for Pakistani Mango and Its Products at Souq Waqif, a popular commercial and cultural showcase, was suspended from July 12 and is scheduled to resume on July 16.

The Qatar Toy Festival at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre also announced a four-day closure in observance of the national mourning period.

Official celebrations, public entertainment programmes and ceremonial activities organised by ministries and government institutions have also been put on hold, while cultural venues, including Katara Cultural Village, have suspended festivities and musical performances.

The Ministry of Transport also announced the suspension of all recreational and non-commercial maritime activities until further notice.

The directive covers leisure boats, fishing vessels, jet skis and other recreational watercraft, while vessels operating under international maritime conventions remain exempt.

Meanwhile, temporary traffic closures have been implemented on key roads, including Lusail Stadium Street, to facilitate funeral processions and official condolence

gatherings at Lusail Palace.

Work in all ministries, government agencies and public institutions has been suspended from July 13-18, with employees expected to return to work on July 19.

Hamad Medical Corporation has postponed all outpatient clinic appointments scheduled between July 13-16, assuring patients that new appointments will be arranged.

Emergency medical services continue to operate without interruption.

FAHES vehicle inspection centres have also announced temporary changes to their operating schedules in line with the national directives.

In addition, community organisations have also cancelled or postponed activities out of respect.

The organisers of SEAsterns-in-Action 2026 announced the cancellation of this Saturday's event, which was set to mark the 12th PADI Women's Dive Day, citing the national mourning period and the current situation in Qatar.

"With heavy hearts and after careful consideration, we have made the difficult decision to cancel this Saturday's SEAsterns-in-Action 2026 in observance of the national

mourning period," organisers Margaux De Pauw, Anusha Kandaiah and Michelle Anne del Carmen said in a joint statement.

They said the decision was made out of respect and solidarity with the people of Qatar, while emphasising that the safety and security of participants, volunteers, partners and supporters remained their highest priority.

Although the annual gathering has been called off, the organisers stressed that the initiative's mission remains unchanged, highlighting their commitment to marine conservation and community engagement under this year's PADI Women's Dive Day theme, "Celebrate Community. Create Change".

The organisers also extended their heartfelt condolences to the people of Qatar during the mourning period, expressing hope for comfort, peace and strength for the nation.

While many private organisers have adjusted their schedules or postponed activities, a number of malls, attractions, and businesses remain open, but with scaled-back entertainment and celebratory programmes in observance of the national mourning period.

Tax authority's services uninterrupted via Dhareeba



The General Tax Authority has confirmed that all of its services will continue to be available electronically to taxpayers throughout the period of national mourning declared in the State following the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, may Allah have mercy upon him, commencing yesterday July 13 for a period of four days.

The Authority stated that its services will remain fully available through the Dhareeba platform without interruption, enabling taxpayers to complete their transactions at any time.

This reflects the Authority's commitment to ensuring business continuity and providing uninterrupted access to its digital services.

Qatar slams repeated Iran attacks on Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait



Qatar has condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the repeated Iranian attacks on Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait.

It considered them a brazen violation of the brotherly nations' sovereignty, the international rules-based order, and the United Nations Charter.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) stressed the importance of shielding the region from the consequences of these unwarranted attacks and lending impetus to the path of dialogue and diplomacy, as well as de-escalation, thereby contributing to consolidating the pillars of security and stability on both the regional and global stages.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's absolute solidarity with Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait in all measures they take to safeguard their sovereignty, security, and stability.

The MoFA also condemned the continued attacks targeting the premises of the consulate general of Kuwait in the Iraqi city of Basra, and the accompanying violation of the inviolability of consular missions.

The ministry affirmed that targeting consular premises constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed in a statement issued yesterday the necessity of respecting the inviolability of consular missions and providing them and their staff with full protection.

The ministry reiterated Qatar's full solidarity with Kuwait and emphasised the importance of taking the necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of consular missions and prevent the recurrence of such attacks. – QNA

Doha draped in mourning in tribute to Father Amir

By **Tawfik Lamari**
Staff Reporter

Doha's skyline, public spaces and national landmarks have taken on a solemn appearance as Qatar continues to mourn the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, in scenes that reflect the profound sense of loss felt across the country and the enduring place he holds in the hearts of Qataris and residents.

Throughout the capital, symbols of remembrance have transformed familiar landmarks into expressions of national grief.

Buildings, public institutions and major roads have displayed portraits of HH the late Father Amir framed in black, while national flags have flown at half-mast in accordance with the official period of mourning.

Across the Corniche, the Pearl sculpture seemed to drip in an unusual way, traditional wooden dhow boats remained motionless at their moorings, their lowered flags adding a poignant maritime tribute to a leader whose vision helped shape modern Qatar.

The scenes captured across the country illustrate more than ceremonial mourning; they embody widespread appreciation for a statesman whose leadership laid the foundations of Qatar's remarkable transformation.

Under his stewardship, the nation witnessed unprecedented economic growth, rapid infrastructure development, advances in education and healthcare, and the emergence of Qatar as an influential regional and international player.

The atmosphere of remembrance has extended beyond public spaces.

Mosques across Qatar, as well as throughout the Gulf and several Arab countries, held absentee funeral prayers in honour of HH the late Father Amir, invoking God's mercy upon his soul and recognising his steadfast support for Arab and Islamic causes throughout his public life.

The sense of loss has also resonated deeply among Qatar's expatriate community.

Many long-term residents who



built their lives in the country during HH Sheikh Hamad's reign describe him with deep affection, with some referring to him simply as "Papa Hamad" in recognition of the stability, security and opportunities they experienced while living in Qatar.

For many, he was the leader they knew throughout their childhood, accompanying the nation's extraordinary journey of economic prosperity, cultural renaissance, social peace and the expansion of free education and comprehensive public healthcare.

Across shopping malls and commercial centres, recitations from the Holy Qur'an filled the air as prayers were offered for the departed leader.

The atmosphere was marked by an uncommon stillness, with quieter streets, fewer families in public parks and playgrounds, and a subdued rhythm to daily life that underscored the nation's collective grief.

Although Qatar is officially observing a period of state mourning, the emotions visible across the country transcend protocol.

The silence of its streets, the solemn appearance of its skyline and the heartfelt tributes offered by citizens and residents alike speak to a legacy that reaches far beyond public office.

As Qatar bids farewell to HH



The writing on the skyscraper on the left reads 'To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return'. PICTURES: Thajudheen

the late Father Amir, the nation honours not only a former ruler but the architect of a trans-

formative era whose vision reshaped the country and whose legacy will remain deeply woven

into its institutions, its development journey and the collective memory of its people.

Qatar high quality of life reflects success of human-centred development model

By **Ayman Adly**
Staff Reporter

Qatar rose to 12th place worldwide among the top 15 countries in the Mid-2026 Quality of Life Index, climbing six positions from the previous ranking.

The country's latest achievement reflects the success of its comprehensive development model built on investing in people, strengthening security and stability, and continuously improving healthcare, education, infrastructure, and public services, a number of experts and academics have pointed out.

They described the achievement as the result of years of strategic planning and effective government policies that have enhanced public services, accelerated digital transformation, promoted sustainable development, increased the country's attractiveness to investors and global talent, and advanced the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Dr Muna al-Muslemani, member of the Shura Council and its Health, Public Services and Environment Committee, said that the ranking demonstrates the success of Qatar's development policies, which have prioritised people through investments in infrastructure, essential services, security, and living standards.

She noted that the healthcare sector has been a major contributor, citing the expansion of hospitals and specialised medical centres, the adoption of advanced technologies, the recruitment of skilled professionals, and an emphasis on primary healthcare, prevention, and early detection.

"Qatar today has an integrated healthcare system comparable to the world's best, thanks to sustained investment in healthcare services, scientific research, and medical education," Dr al-Muslemani said.

She added that maintaining this position requires continued investment in health innovation, digital transformation, and preventative medicine.

Economist Dr Abdullah al-Khater said the ranking reflects the success of Qatar's development model in creating a stable, secure environment supported by high-quality services, economic stability, and a high standard of living.

He stressed that security and stability, reliable availability of essential goods and services, relatively stable prices, low inflation, a stable currency, and sound economic policies all contribute to public confidence.

Dr al-Khater also highlighted advances in digital government services, education, healthcare, transport, and infrastructure, saying citizens and residents experience these improvements daily.

He added that the rule of law, social discipline, and a culture of solidarity and mutual support further strengthen people's sense of security and belonging.

Education expert Dr Saleh al-Ibrahim, principal of a Preparatory School, said the achievement underscores the success of Qatar's integrated development approach, which places people at the

centre of development through investments in education, healthcare, and public services.

He stressed that quality education is fundamental to building a knowledge-based society capable of innovation and competitiveness.

Dr al-Ibrahim added that Qatar has established an advanced education system based on modern curricula and technology while promoting citizenship, innovation, and excellence.

He said sustaining progress in international indicators requires continued investment in human capital and stronger integration between education, healthcare, and the economy.

Economist Dr Hashem al-Sayed said the ranking confirms that years of investment in infrastructure and public services are translating into tangible results in international quality-of-life indicators.

He noted that the index measures a broad range of factors, including security, healthcare, transportation, infra-

structure, and public facilities.

Beyond its social impact, Dr al-Sayed said the achievement enhances investor confidence, strengthens Qatar's appeal to global talent, and supports its ability to attract foreign investment, as quality of life has become a key consideration for international companies when selecting business locations and recruiting employees.

Writer Abdullah al-Sulaiti said that Qatar's rise to 12th globally reflects the country's success in providing a high standard of living through a comprehensive development vision that places people first.

He attributed the achievement to the continuous improvements in healthcare, healthy food, environmental quality, clean air, modern housing, roads, bridges, and infrastructure, while emphasising that the country's security and psychological, social, and economic stability remain among the most important factors supporting residents' well-being, productivity, and quality of life.



Amir meets world leaders

HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani heads of state and senior leaders from across the world at Lusail Palace yesterday, as they offered condolences on the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. Pictured here are HH the Amir (clockwise from above) with the Moroccan delegation, Syria's President Ahmad al-Sharaa, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, and FIFA President Gianni Infantino. **See also Page 33**



World leaders join Qatar in mourning Father Amir

From Page 1

From the UAE, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lieutenant-General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed al-Nahyan offered condolences, accompanied by Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al-Nahyan, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan al-Nahyan and Minister of State Khalifa Shaheen al-Marar. HH the Amir also received the Crown Prince of Ajman and Chairman of the Executive Council Sheikh Ammar bin Humaid al-Nuaimi. Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh

Sabah Khaled al-Hamad al-Sabah conveyed his condolences, accompanied by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud al-Sabah, Minister of Defence Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, along with a number of Sheikhs. From Saudi Arabia, the Governor of the Eastern Province Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud offered condolences, accompanied by Member of the Council of Ministers Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd al-Saud, Deputy Governor of the Riyadh Region Prince Mo-

ammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef al-Saud. HH the Amir also received Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, his brother and former premier Nawaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also conveyed their sincere condolences to HH the Amir during their meeting at the Lusail Palace. Iraq's President Nizar Amidi conveyed his condolences, accompanied by Minister of Education Abdul Karim Abtan, Minister of Justice Khalid Shawani, Minister of Water Resources

Muthanna al-Tamimi and several high-ranking officials. HH the Amir went on to receive President Ahmad al-Sharaa of Syria, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, Morocco's Head of Government Aziz Akhannouch, Prime Minister of Libya's Government of National Unity Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibeh and the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani. Condolences were also offered by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, President Mohamed Muizzu of the Maldives and FIFA President Gianni Infantino.

High-ranking Saudi delegation departs Doha



A high-ranking delegation from Arabia, including Eastern Province Governor Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Council of Ministers member Prince Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd al-Saud, Riyadh Region Deputy Governor Prince Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, and Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud al-Saud, departed Doha yesterday after offering condolences on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. The Saudi delegation was seen off Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani and Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Qatar Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. Pictured is the delegation being welcomed upon arrival earlier yesterday at Hamad International Airport by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani and Saudi ambassador Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud. - QNA



Crown Prince of Bahrain and delegation leave Doha

Bahrain's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa departed Doha yesterday after offering condolences on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. The Crown Prince and his accompanying delegation were seen off upon departure at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani and Bahrain's ambassador to Qatar Mohammed bin Ali al-Ghatam. Pictured is the Crown Prince being welcomed earlier yesterday upon arrival at Hamad International Airport by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, and Bahrain's ambassador al-Ghatam. - QNA

Father Amir's vision and leadership transformed the nation

Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani has described the passing of His Highness the late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani as the loss of the leader of Qatar's modern renaissance. Sheikh Khalifa extended his deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, the members of the ruling family, and the government and people of Qatar on the passing of HH the late Father Amir. "I pray to Almighty Allah to bestow His abundant mercy and forgiveness upon HH the Father Amir, grant him the highest place in Paradise, and reward him generously for his distinguished service to Qatar, its people and the wider Arab and Islamic nations," said Sheikh Khalifa.



Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani.

Sheikh Khalifa said that Qatar had lost an exceptional leader and a great statesman who devoted his life to serving his country and people and led a historic transformation that laid the foundations of the modern State of Qatar and strengthened its regional and international standing. He noted that HH the late Father Amir's far-sighted vision and strong belief in the capabilities of the Qatari people launched an ambitious national development journey that brought significant progress across the economic, social, educational, healthcare, cultural, and infrastructure sectors. Sheikh Khalifa highlighted the major economic transformation achieved during HH the late Father Amir's reign, particularly the strategic development of the energy sector, which enabled Qatar to become one of the world's leading producers and exporters of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and provided a strong foundation for national growth and prosperity. He stated that HH the late Father Amir's vision extended beyond the oil and gas sector to the development of a diversified and open economy, the strengthening of the private sector, the encouragement of local and foreign investment, and the advancement of industry, trade, transport, services, telecommunications, and infrastructure. Sheikh Khalifa stressed that the Qatari people remained at the heart of HH the late Father Amir's vision, with education, healthcare, and human development receiving particular attention. These efforts contributed to building a knowledge-based society and enhancing Qatar's position as a regional centre for education, research, and innovation. He also praised HH the late Father Amir's role in strengthening Qatar's international presence through balanced relations, dialogue, co-operation, mediation, and support for the peaceful resolution of disputes, helping establish Qatar as a respected and trusted partner on the regional and global stages. Sheikh Khalifa said that among HH the late Father Amir's greatest achievements was the establishment of a strong state with modern institutions, a prosperous economy, and an educated and ambitious society, as well as the historic transfer of leadership to HH the Amir in a transition that reflected wisdom, foresight, and a commitment to the continuity of development. He stated that the progress, prosperity, and distinguished international standing enjoyed by Qatar today represent a natural continuation of the vision whose foundations were laid by HH the late Father Amir and further strengthened under the leadership of HH the Amir. Sheikh Khalifa said Qatar's private sector and business community would always remember with deep appreciation the support given to the national economy during HH the late Father Amir's reign and the major projects and reforms that expanded opportunities for trade, investment and industry and strengthened the role of national companies. "No words can fully express the stature of HH the Father Amir or the magnitude of his contributions to Qatar and its people," Sheikh Khalifa said. "He was a wise leader, a great national symbol, and the architect of Qatar's modern renaissance," he continued. "His vision, achievements and enduring legacy will remain a source of pride and inspiration for generations to come."

"I pray to Almighty Allah to grant HH the Father Amir His mercy and the highest place in Paradise, protect HH the Amir, and preserve the blessings of security, stability, dignity, and prosperity for the State of Qatar," he added.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MAANVI ABHINAND PUTHUSSERYholder ofIndia Passport No. V4008357QID No. 31235605956hereby change my namefromMAANVI ABHINAND PUTHUSSERYtoMAANVI ABHINAND

Any objection, please contactTHE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRSwithin 15 days from the publication of this notice.

US strikes Iran again, reimposes naval blockade, eyes toll

From Page 1

In posts on Truth Social, Trump declared the United States would henceforth be known as "the guardian of the Hormuz Strait" and would be "reimbursed, at the rate of 20% on all cargo shipped" to keep the route safe. Iranian ports would again be sealed off, he said, while "all other countries will have fair and open use of the strait". Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi mocked the threat, saying Tehran — the strait's true guardian "forever" — would charge a fairer rate. "20% is of course too much," he wrote on X. Iran's joint military command said the United States had no role in the waterway's future and would not be allowed to interfere in its management, warning that any collaboration by Gulf states with Washington would be treated as "an act of war". The UN's shipping agency pushed back against the toll plan, saying it opposed fees on straits used in international navigation and that there was no legal basis for mandatory charges. A 20% levy could generate around \$250mn a day. The competing claims came amid a sharp escalation in the pace and reach of the fighting. US Central Command said its forces struck a submarine and ship-maintenance facility in Iran using attack drones, and Iranian media reported strikes on Qeshm, Bandar Abbas and Abadan,

where two people were killed. At least 25 people have been killed in Iran since hostilities resumed on Wednesday. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had hit US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait, destroyed radar systems in Oman and struck fuel tanks and ammunition depots at Prince Hassan Air Base in Jordan. Bahrain said its air defences intercepted several missiles and drones, Kuwait said its forces were downing "hostile aerial targets", and Jordan reported intercepting four missiles. The exchanges have thrown into doubt an interim agreement signed last month to reopen the strait and halt the war, which Trump now considers over though he has left the door open to talks. "We had a deal... and then they broke it," he told Fox News, vowing to "hit them very hard". Tehran said the June memorandum was "in crisis" but confirmed it was continuing to engage mediators from Qatar, Pakistan and Oman to prevent further escalation. Pakistan expressed "deep concern" at the rising tensions. Analyst Bader al-Saif of Chatham House said the renewed strikes would only delay a settlement, with each side seeking to break the impasse on its own terms. The war, launched by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28, has killed thousands and rippled across the region. (Agencies)

Liquidation Announcement"2"

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

To LiquidatePARADISE BEAUTY LOUNGE(The Company)(under Voluntary Liquidation)

The LiquidatorLinsar Karuppamveetil ShamsudheenKreston SVP Chartered Accountants

Announce the liquidation ofPARADISE BEAUTY LOUNGECommercial Registration No. (I38264)

Any party who has any claims from this Company should send a registered letter, including all supporting documents, to P.O Box 82297, Doha - Qatar7712 9898 or 6668 8575 or info@krestonsvp.comWithin the remaining legal period of 20 days.

In loving memory of HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani

By Haydar al-Nassery
Doha

A number of people emerge as leaders, yet very few leave a legacy that would become a part of the history of a country.

One of those rare people was His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. He was not merely a leader who managed Qatar through a transformation era, but he was a visionary man who viewed what Qatar would be before the world realised it had potential.

Real vision does not entail seeing what already exists.

It is about having faith in things that others may be unable to see.

It involves boldness, patience and a strong sense of obligation towards the citizens served.

HH Sheikh Hamad took that vision with him in his leadership. He had faith in a future that was yet to be seen and he labored with zeal to assist in making it a reality.

HH Sheikh Hamad had a vision of Qatar as it is today.

In the era when many people were doubtful about what a small country could do, he believed in himself, in Qatar, and most importantly, in the people of Qatar.

It was his trust in the country and the citizens that many of the accomplishments of Qatar were based on.

His leadership was unique not just in the sense that he could see opportunities, but in that he understood that the real power of a country lay in its people.

He understood that the most valuable asset of a country was not oil and gas, but the willingness to learn and work hard, which was what was under the soil.

The best investment he made was thus to invest in the people of Qatar.

He has helped to provide an opportunity, through education, a chance and empowerment that allowed Qataris to harness their talents, follow their aspirations and shape the future of their nation.

In his opinion, making people ready was one of the greatest tasks of leadership.

He was fondly known as “The Poverty Undertaker” by many Qataris.

The use of this title had a strong sense, in that it expressed the perception of many people regarding the change that had occurred during his era.

It marked the cessation of a time of restrictions and the start of a time with more possibilities, respect, and promise of better times ahead.

Nevertheless, the real gauge of the legacy of HH Sheikh Hamad cannot merely be an economic advancement, institutions, or even developments.

Those are significant, but the best accomplishment he made was the trust that he had established in Qatar itself.

He made a nation believe in its possibilities to do what seemed impossible.



Personally, His Highness Sheikh Hamad displayed to my family acts of kindness and bravery that I will never forget.

Certain memories are highly personal and it is not the time to publicly share a lot of those moments.

Nevertheless, those moments are always imprinted in our hearts and they remind us of the kind of person he was.

Outside of being a leader, I will never forget the humanity behind the title.

I will keep in mind his humbleness, his warmth and his ability to get people in contact with him.

These are the personal attributes that we usually carry with us the most since they bring out the human aspect of a job.

The only thing I can tell you is that I

have two personal memories that I will hold on to until I die.

The last time I saw His Highness was in February of last year, shortly before his health began to deteriorate.

He was in a wheelchair, but that did not affect his spirit.

He was still making his little jokes, and it was the same warm smile that had always characterised him as we walked together.

His character, his humbleness and warmth were not affected.

The other memory brings me back to June 25, 2013, the historic day of the transfer of the leadership of the State of Qatar to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

My late father and I were at the Amiri Diwan to congratulate the new Amir.

I even recall the people who were in the office: HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim, HH Sheikh Hamad, HH Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, and HE Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, the then-prime minister of Qatar, my late father, and myself.

On our way out, my father shook hands with both HH Sheikh Tamim and HH Sheikh Hamad.

Then I went forward, and shook the hand of HH Sheikh Hamad, and said: “Your Highness, nothing has changed. You are, and will always be, our Sheikh and our leader.”

He smiled, gave me a hug, shook my hand, and said: “Thank you, my son.”

As we passed through the corridors of the Amiri Diwan, my father approached me and inquired what I had told HH Sheikh Hamad.

And when I said to him, he tapped me on the shoulder, smiled proudly and said: “That’s my son. Well done.”

That has been one of the proudest moments of my life.

Today, Qatar has lost one of the finest statesmen of modern times.

However, great men never really go away.

Their vision is continued in the countries they create, institutions they create and individuals they inspire.

Your Royal Highness, thank you. I believe you saw in Qatar what others could not at that time.

Thanks to you for believing in your people.

And, thank you, you left us behind us a nation stronger, prouder and more confident, through the vision that you had.

May Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta’ala) cover you with His boundless mercy, forgive your failures, compensate your lifetime of services and give you the highest ranks in the Jannat Al Firdous.

And when you see my father, do say to him that I miss him dearly.

• The writer is a prominent Qatari businessman, investor, and researcher. He is an alumnus of the University of Oxford, Pembroke College, where he conducted research on LNG marketing strategies

Former envoys pay tribute to Father Amir’s global legacy

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Former ambassadors from the Philippines, Sweden, Republic of Korea and Indonesia have paid tribute to His Highness the late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, describing him as a visionary statesman whose leadership transformed Qatar into a modern nation and strengthened its standing on the global stage while fostering closer ties with countries around the world.

Crescente Relacion, who served as Philippine ambassador to Qatar from 2009 to 2015, said that HH Sheikh Hamad’s reign marked Qatar’s unprecedented rise to global prominence not only in the energy sector but also in international politics.

“He was a steady hand steering the development of the country, a father figure who is dearly loved by his people and admired by everyone who has been touched by his dynamic leadership,” Relacion told *Gulf Times*, extending his deepest condolences to the Qatari leadership and people.

The envoy recalled significant milestones in Philippine-Qatar relations achieved during HH Sheikh Hamad’s reign.

He noted that bilateral ties reached greater heights following HH the late Father Amir’s state visit to Manila in April 2012, when the leaders of both countries held talks on trade, investment and cultural co-operation.

Among HH Sheikh Hamad’s enduring legacies for the Filipino community in Qatar, Relacion highlighted the allocation of 1.4 hectares of land for the Philippine School Doha and another one hectare for the Evangelical Churches Alliance Qatar as a place of worship for Filipino evangelicals and other nationalities.



Crescente Relacion



Ewa Polano



Chung Keejong



Deddy Saiful Hadi

The grants fulfilled commitments made during then-Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo’s visit to Qatar in 2008, with Relacion saying that he worked to expedite their implementation during his tenure.

Former Swedish ambassador Ewa Polano, who headed Sweden’s mission in Doha from 2014 to 2019, described

HH Sheikh Hamad as the leader who laid the foundations for Qatar’s remarkable transformation through his vision and determination to modernise the country.

She said that HH the late Father Amir’s leadership created the platform upon which Qatar has continued to flourish under the leadership of His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, becoming an internationally respected hub for diplomacy, innovation, entrepreneurship, education, healthcare and sports.

Polano, Sweden’s first ambassador to Qatar, said it had been an honour to witness the country’s dynamic development both domestically and internationally, adding that she would always cherish her memories of serving in what she described as an extraordinary nation.

Former ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Qatar Chung Keejong, who served in Doha from 2012 to 2015, also expressed deep condolences, recalling his audience with HH Sheikh Hamad when he presented his credentials in April 2012.

He said that relations between Qatar and Korea grew deeper and stronger during HH Sheikh Hamad’s reign, attributing this to HH the late Father Amir’s leadership, which drove Qatar’s rapid domestic development while contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East.

“He set a valuable example of peace-making for the world that is becoming increasingly inhumane and dangerous,” Chung said, adding that HH Sheikh Hamad projected Qatar’s true spirit to the international community.

Former Indonesian ambassador Deddy Saiful Hadi, who served in Qatar from 2012 to 2016, said he would always remember HH Sheikh Hamad’s warmth, wisdom and sincere commitment to strengthening the friendship between Indonesia and Qatar.

“Qatar has lost a visionary leader and the architect of its modern state. I have lost a respected figure whom I deeply admired,” Hadi said as he extended condolences to His Highness the Amir, the al-Thani family and the people of Qatar.

Republic of Korea conveys message of condolence

The ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Qatar Jeepio Hong has expressed his profound sorrow over the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

“We vividly remember His Highness’s first visit to Korea and his vision to raise the relationship between the two nations to new heights,” Hong said. “We extend our deepest condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the members of the royal family, the government, and the people of the State of Qatar in this hour of immense grief.”



Korean ambassador Jeepio Hong.

Philippine envoy extends condolences to Amir

The embassy of the Philippines in Qatar has conveyed its condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and the people of Qatar on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

“Highly regarded by his peers and constituents, HH the late Father Amir will perhaps be best remembered for his outsized role in bringing Qatar to global prominence,” said ambassador Mardomel Celo D Melicor emphasised. “Under his leadership, Qatar also became second home to many of our nationals who found in this country a sense of comfort and belonging.”

“His historic visit to Manila in 2012 – the first by a Qatari leader – lent greater depth and meaning to the ties that bind our two nations,” the envoy said. “Our thoughts are with the people of the State of Qatar during this difficult period, and we wish them solace and strength to withstand the severity of their loss.”



Philippine ambassador Mardomel Celo D Melicor.

The passing of the nation’s revered leader, His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, dominated the editorials and front pages of newspapers in Qatar, which reflected profound national grief over the loss of a statesman who shaped one of the most transformative periods in the country’s modern history.

The newspapers said that HH the late Father Amir symbolised an extraordinary chapter in Qatar’s national journey and exemplified leadership defined by vision, determination, and an unwavering commitment to nation-building.

They said that he dedicated decades of service to advancing Qatar and strengthening its regional and international standing, leaving behind achievements that defined a pivotal era in the country’s history.

To the people of Qatar, they added, HH Sheikh Hamad was not only a leader, but also a father, brother, friend, mentor, and teacher who guided the nation through a historic period of transformation, turning it from a small Gulf state into a modern, influential country that today ranks among the world’s leading nations on a wide range of development and competitiveness indices.

The editorials said that HH the late Father Amir’s leadership ushered in a period of profound transformation, laying the foundations of the modern Qatari state and strengthening its regional and international standing.

They said that while the leader had passed away, his legacy lived on through a vision and achievements that remain

Newspapers in Qatar pay tribute to the enduring legacy of Father Amir

deeply rooted in the nation’s collective memory.

His conviction that a nation’s standing is earned through determination, strategic vision, and sustained effort, they added, left a legacy that continues to shape Qatar’s development.

Under the headline *The Father Amir... The Nation’s Enduring Legacy*, *Al-Raya* said in an editorial by its editor-in-chief that HH the late Father Amir would be remembered as the architect of modern Qatar, saying his enduring legacy laid the foundations for the country’s comprehensive development, strengthened its standing among nations, and set it on a transformative path that continues to shape every sector today.

The newspaper said his legacy would remain a source of pride for future generations and a lasting testament to the transformative power of visionary leadership.

It added that although the statesman had passed away, his achievements and record of public service would continue to inspire future generations and stand as a lasting reminder of a leader who shaped a defining chapter in Qatar’s history through wisdom, foresight, and an unwavering commitment to nation-building.

Al-Raya said that HH the late Father Amir was far more than a ruler whose 18-

year reign was marked by sweeping transformation and landmark achievements.

It described him as a visionary leader who looked to the future and believed that nations are built through determination, sound planning, and hard work rather than aspirations alone.

HH Sheikh Hamad realised, the newspaper said, that lasting national progress depends on strategic vision, unwavering resolve, and the ability to translate ambition into reality.

The newspaper further said that HH the late Father Amir believed that a nation’s strength is determined not by its size or population, but by its ability to harness its resources, invest in its people, and build institutions capable of shaping the future.

That vision, it added, underpinned a comprehensive national development project that transformed modern Qatar and made development a cornerstone of national policy across all sectors.

Under the headline *A Leader History Rarely Produces*, *Al-Sharq* said in an editorial by its editor-in-chief that HH the late Father Amir laid the foundations of modern Qatar and charted the course for its prosperity and development.

Although his reign lasted less than two decades, the newspaper said, it marked a defining turning point in the country’s

history and became an era in its own right.

From modest beginnings, he pursued his vision of nation-building with unwavering determination and an unshakable conviction that no ambition was beyond reach.

Al-Sharq added that HH the late Father Amir pursued ambitious reforms across multiple sectors with a sense of urgency, as though racing against time to realise his vision for modern Qatar.

It said he placed human development at the centre of his national agenda, viewing the country’s people as its greatest asset.

The newspaper also said that support for Arab causes remained one of HH the late Father Amir’s highest priorities, reflecting his belief that the Arab world shares a common destiny and that standing by Arab peoples is both a moral obligation and a strategic imperative.

Al-Arab newspaper, in an editorial by its editor-in-chief titled *The Father Amir... The Statesman Who Reshaped Qatar*, affirmed that Qatar had bid farewell to one of its greatest national figures.

It described HH Sheikh Hamad as a leader whose legacy was defined not only by the years he spent in office, but by the enduring national vision he established, one that continued to shape the country well beyond his tenure.

The newspaper added that HH the Amir

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has carried that vision forward, leading the nation toward new horizons of development and comprehensive state-building.

The newspaper said HH the late Father Amir had a clear vision for Qatar’s future, centred on building a modern state capable of making its own sovereign decisions while investing its resources in building a strong economy and resilient institutions equipped to meet future challenges.

He recognised, the newspaper continued, that wealth alone could not secure a nation’s standing unless it was transformed into quality education, advanced healthcare, strong institutions, and a highly skilled population capable of driving national development.

Al-Arab said that HH the late Father Amir made what it described as one of the most significant decisions in Gulf political history when he handed over the reins of leadership to his son HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim at the height of his political influence.

The decision, the newspaper stated, reflected his conviction that a nation’s strength lies in the strength of its institutions and that the timely renewal of leadership is essential to ensuring continuity and long-term national progress.

The newspaper concluded that, since then, HH the Amir has continued to build on the foundations laid by HH the late Father Amir, guiding Qatar into a new phase of development marked by the advancement of a knowledge-based economy, the expansion of strategic projects, and the further strengthening of the country’s regional and international standing. – **QNA**



Sheikh Hamad: an extraordinary man and his legacy

By Roudi Baroudi
Doha

All of Qatar is in mourning following the passing of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, but the sense of loss reverberates far beyond any borders.

During his time as Amir, HH Sheikh Hamad not only laid the foundations for a modern state and a flourishing economy, but also transformed his tiny country into a highly influential player on the world stage and a source of hope for the less fortunate.

It was thanks to HH Sheikh Hamad's visionary leadership that Qatar almost singlehandedly created the global market for liquefied natural gas (LNG), then became the world's leading LNG

exporter, unlocking a cleaner alternative to oil that has helped dozens of countries to meet their energy demands and grow their economies.

HH the late Father Amir used the revenues wisely by, inter alia, investing in still more LNG capacity, greater economic self-sufficiency, world-class health and education systems, effective social programmes, and a thriving cultural scene.

These and other decisions made Qatar one of the wealthiest states in the world, giving it influence out of all proportion to its small size and population, and HH Sheikh Hamad used that power for good.

He adopted an ambitious foreign policy designed to make sure Qatar would always have more friends than enemies: Doha radically expanded its overseas devel-



opment programmes, made itself a respected international trouble-shooter, and served as a trusted

broker in negotiations between actors who would otherwise never interact off the battlefield.

Simultaneously, the world learned to appreciate and respect the contributions and professionalism of serious institutions like the Qatar Foundation, Al Jazeera, Qatar Petroleum (now QatarEnergy), Qatar Airways, and many others.

In addition to all these accomplishments, it was on HH Sheikh Hamad's watch that Qatar became a safe haven for people fleeing war, persecution, and/or economic ruin in their own homelands.

This generosity of spirit has been particularly fortunate for the Lebanese community in Qatar, of which I am a member.

Qatar has exerted enormous efforts to help stabilise Lebanon over the years, and it also has provided a welcoming environment for Lebanese businesspeople, investors, and other expatri-

ates seeking to build new lives and new careers.

Both the government and the people make a habit of following HH Sheikh Hamad's lead: they are genuine, hospitable, and boundlessly enthusiastic about creating new partnerships.

These and other achievements constitute a legacy of truly historic dimensions.

Few men in history have lived such consequential lives, and fewer still have done so much positive work for so many people in so many ways in so many places.

For all of these blessings and countless others, we all owe a debt of gratitude - to HH Sheikh Hamad, to the people he guided so wisely, and to the son, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, who has followed so capably in his father's footsteps.

Longtime residents remember Father Amir

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Indian community leaders, organisations and longtime residents have paid rich tributes to His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani for his great contributions and visionary leadership.

Some of them, who have lived in Qatar for more than 40 years, recalled the transformation of the country they witnessed over several decades under the rule of HH the late Father Amir.

Manikantan AP President, Indian Cultural Centre

On behalf of the Indian community organisations, I offer our deepest condolences on the passing of HH Sheikh Hamad.

HH the late Father Amir was a visionary statesman whose extraordinary leadership transformed Qatar into one of the world's most progressive, prosperous, and respected nations.

His Highness will always be remembered with profound gratitude by the Indian community in Qatar.

Through his vision of inclusiveness, tolerance, and opportunity, generations of Indians found Qatar to be a welcoming second home where they could live, work, and contribute meaningfully to the nation's remarkable development.

The trust, respect, and dignity extended to the Indian expatriate community under his leadership fostered a deep and lasting bond between the people of India and Qatar.

HH the late Father Amir also laid the foundation for the strong and vibrant strategic partnership between India and Qatar.

His commitment to strengthening bilateral co-operation elevated relations across energy, trade, investment, education, healthcare, culture, and people-to-people exchanges.

His leadership encouraged closer collaboration between the two nations, creating a partnership built on mutual respect, shared prosperity, and enduring friendship that continues to flourish today.

Dr Mohan Thomas Leading physician, Indian community leader and philanthropist

Behind Qatar's proud rise on the world stage stands a name that can never be forgotten - HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

For more than forty years, Qatar has been an important part of my life.

On the sands of this desert, I witnessed not only the growth of a nation, but also the fulfilment of a visionary leader's dream.

I was privileged to accompany HH the Father Amir as part of the business delegation during his visits to India in 2005 and 2012.

During the April 2005 visit, he also held a special meeting with then-Chief Minister of Kerala Oommen Chandy.

In the many warm and friendly conversations I had with him, his deep affection for Kerala was always evident.

For expatriates like us, Qatar was never merely a place of work.

It became a second home - a land that gave us hope, dreams, opportunities and a life of dignity.

Today, I offer my heartfelt tribute to the great leader who laid the foundation for that remarkable journey.

Time will pass, and rulers will change.

Yet some leaders live forever, not only in the pages of history, but also in the hearts and lives of millions.

An era may have come to an end, but the legacy of this great leader will never end.

Dr Abdul Samad President, KMCC Qatar

With hearts heavy with grief, we join the State of Qatar, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the entire al-Thani family, and the people of Qatar in mourning the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

HH the late Father Amir was a visionary leader whose rule transformed Qatar from a modest Gulf state into a nation of global stature - in diplomacy, media, education, and economic development.

His legacy of progress, generosity, and statesmanship will be remembered not only by the people of Qatar but by all who have called this country home, including the vast expatriate community he welcomed with warmth and opportunity.



AP Maniukantan



P N Baburajan



Dr Clarence Joseph

MI Farid Social activist and longtime resident

We offer our deepest sorrow on the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who will be missed by this nation and the countless people all over the world who have been touched by the growth and generosity of Qatar.

Some people are born to lead and leave a legacy which is a testament of their achievements and HH the late Father Amir will be remembered for this legacy.

His wise use of power and wealth for the growth of Qatar has left a lasting impression on the worldwide community.

It would take pages to record the numerous achievements but the development of Qatar and its presence felt in the world is in the legacy.

The hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2022 is something which cannot be matched.

A tiny nation has carved a niche in world history thanks to the vision and foresight of this legendary leader who will not be forgotten!

PN Baburajan Social worker and former president of ICC, ICBF

With profound sadness I offer deepest respects on the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Ever since I arrived in Qatar in 1986, I have witnessed the remarkable turnaround in the progress of the nation.

Now, every person living in Doha can testify that HH the late Father Amir's name is forever engraved in golden letters on Qatar's remarkable journey of development and progress.

We all witnessed firsthand the tremendous success of the 2006 Asian Games.

The opening ceremony was truly spectacular.

As one of the media persons,



Dr Mohan Thomas



Mashood V C



Joy Antony

we were seated in the gallery adjacent to the VVIP section, where HH the Father Amir with his family witnessed the inaugural ceremony of the games with great satisfaction.

I also cherish the unforgettable memories of the excitement and celebrations surrounding the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

On one of the match days during the FIFA World Cup, we were fortunate to see HH the Father Amir seated in the VVIP gallery, enjoying the football with great enthusiasm.

It was HH the Father Amir's vision and determination that secured the hosting rights for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Today, I pay my heartfelt tributes to HH the late Father Amir a great leader who elevated Qatar's growth and prestige to extraordinary heights and made it possible for people like us to live peacefully on the soil of Qatar.

It is a great loss and we will always remember his leadership and vision

towards the development of Qatar.

Mashood VC General Convenor, Pravasi Co-ordination Committee Chief Adviser, Chaliyar Doha & Diaspora of Malappuram Qatar

The passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani has created a great void.

His vision, humility and commitment transformed Qatar into one of the world's most respected and progressive nations.

I have been privileged to witness this remarkable transformation.

One of my most memorable experiences was serving as a volunteer with the Media Wing during the 2006 Asian Games.

That opportunity allowed me to witness firsthand the meticulous planning, professionalism, and ambition that reflected HH the Father Amir's vision.

He rarely sought the spotlight, yet every milestone bore the imprint of his foresight and leadership.



Dr Abdul Samad



Sidheek Purayil



Dr Amnauila Vadakkangara

His Highness laid the foundations of modern Qatar through strategic investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, sports, culture, and economic diversification.

His vision also paved the way for Qatar to host the FIFA World Cup.

His commitment to education and human development is reflected in Qatar Foundation and Education City, which have positioned Qatar as global centres of learning, research, and innovation.

Equally transformative was the establishment of Al Jazeera Media Network, giving Qatar a respected voice in international journalism and reshaping the global Arab media landscape.

Sidheek Purayil President, Incas Qatar

On behalf of INCAS Qatar, I express my profound sorrow and deepest condolences on the passing of His Highness the Father

Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the visionary leader who laid the foundation for the nation's remarkable transformation and progress.

His Highness, major architect of modern Qatar, played a pivotal role in transforming the country into one of the world's leading developed nations through his visionary leadership and exceptional statesmanship.

Qatar's remarkable achievements under his leadership in the fields of education, healthcare, science and technology, infrastructure development, economic growth, sports, and international diplomacy will remain an enduring part of history.

John Gilbert Longtime resident and social activist

HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani was a torchbearer for Qatar as he led the country from the forefront to realise



M I Farid



John Gilbert

many of the dreams for his beloved nation.

The passing of HH the Father Amir is a great loss for the nation and the international community as he was a stalwart among the global leaders.

As an expatriate who has lived in this beautiful country for over four decades, I have personally witnessed the tremendous progress Qatar has made under his leadership.

During his reign, Qatar became a major hub of education, sports, diplomacy, culture and many other fields.

His extraordinary contributions and lasting legacy will forever be remembered by Qatar and the international community.

Alongside Qatar's extraordinary progress, his commitment created a safe, stable, and dignified environment for the hundreds of thousands of expatriates to live and work in the country.

His leadership also made a significant contribution to strengthening the enduring friendship and strategic partnership Qatar and India.

With deep sadness, I join the nation and its leadership in mourning the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Dr Clarence Joseph Longtime Resident

When I arrived in Qatar in 1977, I could never have imagined that over the next five decades I would witness one of the most extraordinary transformations of any nation in the world.

As someone who has lived through those years in Qatar, I pay

tribute to the visionary leader who shaped much of modern Qatar - HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Qatar's modern infrastructure, world-class healthcare and education, a diversified economy, and international recognition did not happen by chance.

They were the result of bold vision, careful planning, and courageous leadership of HH the Father Amir.

When HH Sheikh Hamad assumed leadership in 1995, he envisioned a nation that would confidently take its place among the world's leading countries while preserving its identity and traditions.

Under his leadership, Qatar became a global energy powerhouse, invested heavily in education and research, strengthened its diplomatic role, and earned worldwide respect.

As I reflect on nearly fifty years in Qatar, I know that HH the late Father Amir's legacy is etched not only into Qatar's skyline but also into the lives of millions whose opportunities and aspirations grew alongside this nation.

Joy Antony President SMCA Qatar

The visionary leadership of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani transformed Qatar into one of the world's most respected and influential nations.

Our organisation, established in Qatar in 1999, has had the privilege of witnessing the remarkable transformation of this nation under his leadership.

Through wisdom, foresight, and dedicated commitment to progress, His Highness laid the foundation for the modern Qatar that is admired around the world today.

His Highness believed that true progress was built on investment in people.

Under his leadership, Qatar became an internationally recognised country for excellence in education, healthcare, infrastructure, diplomacy, culture, and humanitarian initiatives.

His vision also laid the foundation for Qatar's successful journey to hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022, an achievement that showcased the nation's capability, hospitality, and global outlook.

On behalf of our organisation, we extend our deepest condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the royal family, and the people of Qatar on the passing of HH the Father Amir, a visionary leader.

Dr Amanulla Vadakkangara Social activist

I had the rare privilege of meeting His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani on more than one occasion at the Amiri Diwan.

My first meeting was during the historic announcement of Qatar's Constitution.

It was a moment that reflected His Highness's vision for a progressive, modern, and inclusive nation.

His Highness will always be remembered as a transformative leader whose foresight laid the foundation for Qatar's remarkable journey to becoming a globally respected nation.

Beyond his extraordinary achievements, he was admired for his humility, warmth, and genuine concern for people.

He earned the love and respect not only of the people of Qatar but also of the countless expatriates who proudly called Qatar their second home.

His leadership touched millions of lives and created opportunities for generations to come.

PARAMOUNT'S MERGER

Several US states sue to block Warner Bros takeover

Several US states yesterday sued to block Paramount Skydance's \$110bn takeover of Warner Bros Discovery, calling the largest merger in Hollywood history a threat to competition in film and television. The lawsuit, filed in federal court in northern California, marks a dramatic turn in the regulatory battle over the deal — and a direct challenge to the Trump administration's Justice Department, which approved the merger last month without requiring any divestitures or concessions. California Attorney General Rob Bonta, said the combination of two major film distributors would lead to “higher prices, lower quality”. **(AFP)**

WEEKEND SHOOTING

Gunmen kill at least 18 people in Nigeria's Benue state

Gunmen killed at least 18 people in Nigeria's northern Benue state in a weekend attack, residents and local officials said, triggering a march by angry locals who blocked roads in protest at the violence. Benue has been the frequent scene of clashes involving farming communities and cattle herders, as well as attacks by armed groups, in conflicts often driven by competition over land and resources. Benue police spokesperson Udeme Edet gave a lower death toll for the attack, which took place early on Sunday, saying eight people had died and five were wounded. The incident occurred in the Otukpo Local Government Area. **(AFP)**

HORMUZ TRAFFIC

Ships still crossing Hormuz despite security threat

A small number of vessels crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, despite the heightened security threats as Tehran and Washington battle for control of the strategic waterway. Just 14 vessels — half of which were commercial ships — crossed on Sunday, according to data from maritime tracker Kpler, suggesting the waterway is not completely closed as Iran had announced. At least three commodity vessels crossed so far yesterday, according to Kpler. However, traffic is significantly disrupted by security risks after Iran attacked another ship on Saturday and exchanged strikes with the US near the waterway. **(AFP)**

PERSISTENT TARGETING

Kuwait condemns attacks targeting its consulate in Basra

The State of Kuwait yesterday expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the continued attacks targeting its consulate general in Basra, Iraq. These attacks constitute an unacceptable violation of the sanctity of the consulate and undermine the Iraqi government's efforts to fulfill its international obligations under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that despite the Iraqi government's efforts to address these attacks, Kuwait emphasises the need for decisive action to hold all those involved in hostile acts accountable. **(QNA)**

Attack on Sanaa airport revives fear of conflict

AFP
Sanaa

Yemen's internationally recognised government said it struck Houthi-controlled Sanaa airport yesterday, its biggest flare-up in years with the rebels.

The government said it had wanted to prevent an Iranian plane from landing in the capital, after failing to convince a Houthi delegation that went to Tehran for the late Iranian supreme leader's funeral to board a Yemenia flight instead.

Yemen's defence ministry accused the Houthis of “allowing an Iranian plane to violate Yemeni territory; consequently, the airport runway was targeted”.

Following the strikes, the head of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad al-Alimi, said he had “ordered that the scope of the confrontation not be expanded”.

Mohammed al-Basha of the US-based risk advisory Basha Report told AFP there was a risk of the 2022 ceasefire failing.

“If this cycle of action and retaliation continues, it could effectively mark the collapse of the April 2022 ceasefire framework and signal a return to a much more intense phase of the conflict,” he said.

“The coming days will likely show whether both sides are prepared to move back towards sustained military escalation and ground war,” he noted, adding that the next move of the plane, which the rebels said had landed, will likely determine how things will go.

For more than a decade, aircraft entering Yemeni airspace have



Smoke rises after an airstrike at Sanaa International Airport in Sanaa, Yemen. **(Reuters)**

needed prior clearance from the Saudi-led coalition that backs the government.

The Houthis appeared to have challenged this arrangement by organising direct flights from Iran to Sanaa, angering the government. Yesterday, the government briefly ordered all airports in the country shut.

Since the coalition entered the war in 2015 to back the government, it has been the one to conduct air strikes on Houthi targets.

A 29-year-old homemaker in the Houthi-held city of Hodeida, where rebel media said the plane had landed, said she was worried more conflict lay ahead, “without producing any results, just making the current crises worse”.

The UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, urged the parties to turn to diplomacy, saying his office has “contacted mili-

tary representatives from all sides”.

Earlier in the day, the Yemeni government accused the rebels of preventing an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) aircraft from leaving Sanaa airport and holding the pilot and co-pilot “hostage”.

“All ICRC staff and the crew of the plane are safe and accounted for,” ICRC spokesman for the Middle East Hachem Osseiran told AFP.

The Houthis have been at war with Yemen's government since 2014, in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis.

The rebels control Yemen's capital Sanaa and much of the north, including most population centres, while the internationally-recognised government holds much of the south.

US judge voids ‘improper’ Trump-IRS tax deal

AFP
Washington

A US judge yesterday voided a settlement between Donald Trump and the Internal Revenue Service giving the president and his allies sweeping protections from audits, ruling that his lawsuit over leaked tax returns had been filed for an “improper purpose”.

Trump, his two eldest sons and the Trump Organisation sued the IRS for \$10bn over the disclosure of confidential records by a former agency contractor to news organisations.

The case ended in May with a hugely contentious agreement granting Trump, his family and affiliated businesses sweeping protection from existing tax examinations and claims.

It also established a \$1.8bn taxpayer-funded program to compensate people who alleged they had been targeted by politically motivated government investigations, although the measure — derided as a “slush fund for criminals” — was later abandoned.

District Judge Kathleen Williams said there had never been a genuine legal dispute between Trump and the IRS because, as president, he effectively controls the agency and the Treasury Department.

“And because this fact was so obvious and so insurmountable, the court finds that this matter was brought for an improper purpose — to gain the imprimatur of judicial legitimacy for a ‘settlement’ that had no viable basis in law or fact,” Williams wrote.

She accused the government



President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington, DC. **(AFP/File Photo)**

of abandoning its duty to defend the public interest, saying Justice Department officials had disregarded policies and pursued objectives that exceeded — and in some cases violated — their legal authority.

The judge referred one of Trump's private attorneys involved in approving the settlement to legal disciplinary authorities.

She also ordered that a copy of her ruling to be sent to the State Bar of New York and District of Columbia Bar, of which acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward are members, respectively. And she limited the ability of another Trump lawyer to appear in her South Florida court for one year.

There was no immediate response from Trump or the Justice Department to a request for comment.

But a spokesman for Trump's private legal team said the president would continue to “hold those who wrong America and Americans accountable,” according to CNN.

Trump administration launches effort to isolate ICC

The Trump administration is launching an effort to dismantle what it calls the threat to US sovereignty by the International Criminal Court (ICC), a State Department official said yesterday.

President Donald Trump and other US officials, such as former President George W Bush, have long said the ICC should not have the authority to investigate and prosecute Americans, particularly members of the military.

Reuters earlier this year found the Trump administration backed sanctions against ICC officials in part to head off any future attempts to hold him or his officials accountable for US military action overseas.

The State Department official,

speaking on condition of anonymity, said a wide range of options is under consideration to target the ICC, including travel bans, visa revocations, increased sanctions against the ICC and affiliated organisations, and diplomatic pressure on other nations to withdraw from the ICC, the official said.

The ICC was established in 2002 by the international community to prosecute war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

It asserts jurisdiction only if a member state is unable or unwilling to prosecute atrocities itself.

The US has never been a member of the court. Trump's hostility towards the court goes back to his first term. It manifested again with a plan to punish ICC officials, an idea hatched in November

2024 when Trump was re-elected and the ICC indicted his ally, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel.

Last month, three International Criminal Court judges sued Trump and his administration over sanctions imposed on them last year, arguing the measures were unlawful.

The State Department official yesterday said Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other top US officials are pressuring other countries as part of a campaign “to diplomatically isolate the International Criminal Court and ensure it cannot target Americans”.

In March 2020, ICC prosecutors opened an investigation in Afghanistan that included looking into possible crimes by US troops,

but since 2021, it has deprioritised the role of the US and focused on alleged crimes committed by the Afghan government and Taliban forces.

The official said nations that partner with US law enforcement, host a US military presence, or benefit from the broader US security umbrella “are being called upon to reject the ICC's purported authority to prosecute American officials and servicemen.”

Nations that refuse to reject the ICC while relying on US assistance are likely to come under increased scrutiny, the official said. “We will watch with interest which nations join ranks with us against this threat to Americans who are willing to risk their lives to protect others,” the official said. **(Reuters)**

EU and partners launch \$1bn scheme to help Gaza recover from war

The European Commission and more than a dozen countries launched an initiative yesterday to deliver €883.6 mn (\$1bn) in aid projects to help Gaza recover from war. The small coastal enclave remains in ruins more than two and a half years after the conflict began in October 2023. A fragile ceasefire has been in place since last October, and the UN has estimated the cost of rebuilding work in Gaza at around \$70bn.

The “Team Gaza Initiative”, launched at a meeting of aid donors in Brussels, will support projects such as restoring water and sanitation, removing debris and re-establishing health systems, the Commission said in a statement.

Spain, Denmark, Britain, Germany, Norway, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Japan, Switzerland, Sweden and Belgium, the World Bank and the European Investment Bank are taking part in the initiative, along with the Commission itself, the statement said. Australia and Canada are also expected to join. “Our objective is clear: to help build hope, resilience and a better future for the Palestinian people,” said Dubravka Suica, the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean.

The European Commission did not provide a breakdown of how much each partner would contribute to the new initiative. **(Reuters)**

Palestinian worker killed by Israeli forces at barrier

AFP
Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

Israeli forces yesterday shot dead a Palestinian worker as he attempted to climb over a barrier separating Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said.

The Ramallah-based ministry reported that 30-year-old Naser Kaabneh “was killed by Israeli gunfire this morning near the apartheid wall in the town of Bir Nabala, northeast of Jerusalem”.

Israeli police and border forces did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment.

The Jerusalem Governorate, a Palestinian regional authority for the area, confirmed the details of the incident.

“He was struck by a direct bullet to the heart while trying to reach his workplace inside the city to support his family,” the governo-

rate's media office said.

Israel has imposed several movement restrictions on the three million Palestinians living in the West Bank, which it has occupied since 1967. Israeli security officials say a significant number of Palestinians from the West Bank attempt to enter Israel illegally, often by climbing over the barrier.

Israel began building the barrier at the height of the second Palestinian intifada that erupted in 2002, saying it was needed to maintain security amid suicide bombings in Jerusalem and other Israeli cities. Thousands of Palestinians workers must obtain permits to pass the barrier to Israel or annexed east Jerusalem through military checkpoints.

Israel drastically reduced the number of work permits for Palestinians since October 2023, causing the number of Palestinians crossing the barrier without permits to rise.

ICE agents involved in another fatal shooting: Official

AFP
New York

A person was killed yesterday in a shooting involving Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in the northern US state of Maine, an official said.

“This morning a shooting occurred in Biddeford. A person was killed. ICE was involved,” Maine House Speaker Ryan Fecteau wrote on Facebook, adding that state police and the FBI would investigate.

The incident comes after an ICE agent last week shot dead a Mexican man during an operation in Houston, Texas, sparking outrage against the agency chiefly responsible for President Donald Trump's immigrant crackdown.

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees ICE, did not immediately comment on the Maine shooting.

Maine Governor Janet Mills put out a brief statement saying



FBI investigators work the scene of an alleged ICE involved shooting in Biddeford, Maine yesterday. **(AFP)**

she had been briefed “on the fatal shooting in Biddeford this morning involving Federal law enforcement.”

State authorities were on the

scene “working co-operatively” with federal agents to determine the facts of the incident, she added.

One eyewitness, Lucas Scott,

told local media that he heard at least four gunshots after seeing several ICE agents surrounding a white sedan.

Images from local media showed a police cordon in place on a residential street, with a crime scene unit vehicle parked next to a red tent.

Anti-ICE protesters were also gathered at the scene and planned a rally later yesterday in response to the shooting.

Chellie Pingree, a congresswoman representing Maine, said on Facebook that she was “deeply disturbed and angry.”

“My sympathy to the individual and their family, and to the entire community of Biddeford, and for all of us in Maine, we will be mourning yet another victim,” she said.

Tasked with enforcing Trump's mass deportation campaign, ICE's heavily armed agents have faced nationwide criticism for aggressive tactics, and for the shooting deaths of two US citizens this year in Minneapolis.



Philippine VP's impeachment hearing at Senate



The impeachment hearing of Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte at the Senate in Pasay City, Philippines, yesterday. (Reuters)

Ex-Korean leader sentenced to 2 years over illegal polling

A South Korean court sentenced former president Yoon Suk-yeol yesterday to two years in prison for illegally receiving free opinion polls in exchange for political support, adding to his growing legal woes.

Yoon, 65, is already in detention while appealing against a separate life sentence for leading an insurrection through his declaration of martial law in 2024.

In a separate case, a court handed Yoon a 30-year prison sentence for sending drones into North Korea to “manufacture” a crisis ahead of his martial law bid.

Monday's ruling was unrelated to the martial law decree.

It concerned allegations that he received free opinion polls between 2021 and 2022 in exchange for supporting a candidate seeking his party's nomination in a parliamentary by-election.

“The court today found him guilty of violating the political funds act and sentenced him to two years,” a representative of the Seoul Central District Court told AFP.

In its ruling, the court found that Yoon — in collusion with his wife Kim Keon-hee — received 14 free opinion polls from the power broker Myung Tae-kyun in return for supporting a candidate whom Myung backed.

Korean navy recovers body of seaman missing near North Korea

The Republic of Korea's navy early yesterday morning recovered the body of a seaman who went missing at sea over the weekend near the maritime border with North Korea, the navy said in a statement. The navy had been conducting a search and rescue operation after the seaman was missing from a patrol vessel that was operating off Korea's eastern coast and found him about 52km (32 miles) east of the coast, it said. It did not provide any circumstances surrounding his disappearance. Korea had asked North Korea for help and the possible return of the seaman if he had drifted across the so-called Northern Limit Line (NLL) maritime border.

The militaries of the two Koreas remain in a tense standoff along the sea and land border drawn up at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. In 2020, a fisheries ministry official drifted across the sea border after going missing from a patrol vessel off the west coast and was shot dead by North Korean soldiers.

North Korea later issued a rare apology over the incident. Ties between the two have turned sharply hostile in recent years and Pyongyang has cut off all lines of communication with the Korea. (Reuters)

“Yoon's conduct significantly intensified public distrust in politics and undermined the people's expectations for the sound development of democratic governance,” the court said in a statement shared with AFP.

“The defendant's culpability is therefore exceptionally serious,” it added.

The court also convicted Myung and sentenced him to 18 months in prison.

Yoon's lawyers said they would appeal, arguing that the guilty verdict was “based solely on inference”.

The latest ruling comes as former first lady Kim awaits a Supreme Court ruling in the same case on Thursday.

She was acquitted in two previous rulings.

Kim is already serving a seven-year prison term in a bribery case involving jobs allegedly provided in exchange for gifts.

She is also serving a four-year sentence in a separate case involving stock manipulation and graft.

Yoon plunged South Korea into a political crisis when he declared martial law in December 2024. The decree was swiftly voted down by opposition lawmakers, and he was later impeached and removed from office. (AFP)

Thailand probes Bangkok fire that killed 28 people

AFP
Bangkok

Investigators combed yesterday through the wreckage of a huge fire at a Bangkok bar that killed at least 28 people, as relatives began the grim task of identifying the dead.

More than 70 people were injured following the blaze on Sunday evening on the outskirts of the Thai capital, officials said, the country's worst such incident for almost two decades.

Flames ripped through the Rong Beer Na Lat Phrao bar and restaurant and burst out of the entrance, sending people fleeing, several with their clothing burned or ablaze.

“Everybody was running, squeezing into each other,” recalled Athipat “Ice” Wijarn, whose bandmates were on stage when the fire broke out around 11:00pm on Sunday.

The lights went out and he noticed smoke come from the circuit board behind them, he told Thai talk show Hone-Krasae.

As he crawled towards the exit, he said, “there was an explosion, and I got hit at the back of my head”. The keyboardist, Kwang, and the band's singer, Breeze, both died.

Kaew-udon Pongppany fought back tears as he described his desperate attempts to reach his younger brother, Phonepaseut Pongppany, 21, who died in the fire.

“I grabbed a fire extinguisher and sprayed it at the door... but I couldn't go any further. I heard people screaming,” the 24-year-old of Laotian nationality told reporters.

The bodies of the victims were taken away early yesterday morning, before forensic police began picking their way through the devastated venue.

“The fire spread very quickly, reaching up to the ceiling. Smoke was likely the main cause of death,” Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt told reporters at the scene.

It was the deadliest fire in Thailand since a blaze tore through Bangkok's Santika club during New Year celebrations in 2009, killing 67 people and injuring more than 200.

AFP reporters saw blackened stools and tables inside the bar, while shoes were scattered on the floor near the back door of the venue.

National police chief Kitrat Pamphet said his investigators were hoping to speak to the owner of Rong Beer Na Lat Phrao, who is currently in intensive care.

“Most of the people who died were found in the toilets. When the fire broke out, they panicked. There were no lights,” he told reporters.

Police are examining if the exit doors were accessible, he said, noting that one was obstructed by a shelf, meaning only one person at a time could pass through.

They are also looking at the electrical wiring in the 50-year-old building and whether any decorations may have fuelled the fire, he said.

“We presume it is carelessness,” Kitrat said.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who earlier visited the scene, said initial inquiries suggested there were “blind spots” without a visible fire escape route.

He urged everyone to wait for the official findings, but added: “There will be no leniency if any laws have been broken.”

The injured were taken to hospitals across Bangkok, where relatives gathered in hopes of finding relatives — or to identify the bodies.

An elderly woman who gave her name as Nid lost her daughter,

Japan says must better counter foreign intelligence on its soil

AFP
Tokyo

Japan said yesterday that it recognised the need to counter foreign intelligence better after the *New York Times* reported that Russia had turned the country into a “den of spies” and key source of weapons components.

The NYT, in an investigation published Sunday, reported that thanks to “weak espionage laws”, Moscow was using Japan as a key hub for intelligence gathering and procurement of dual-use technology needed for its war in Ukraine.

“We recognise that in a rapidly changing security environment there is a growing need to counter foreign intelligence activities — such as the acquisition of critical information — that threaten Japan's national security,” chief government spokesman Minoru Kihara said yesterday.

Declining to comment directly on the US newspaper's report, Kihara told reporters that Tokyo “must address this issue with even greater rigour”.

The report cited Ukrainian government estimates that 90% of Russian missiles and drones contain Japanese components.

It said that Russia's operations in Japan were being run by Maksim Vladimirovich Filchenkov, a Russian intelligence operative working under cover at the Tokyo office of Russian airline Aeroflot.

Because direct exports to Russia are restricted, procurement networks use intermediary companies and third countries like Vietnam, Uzbekistan and Sri Lanka to move components into Russia, the NYT added.

Kihara added that Japan's parliament this year approved legislation paving the way for the creation of a new national body to coordinate its fragmented intelligence activities.



Bangkok Metropolitan Administration officials work outside the charred building after a fire in Bangkok yesterday. (AFP)

Namtip Tubsook, and son-in-law, Suwittha Sirililung, and is left caring for their children, aged four and five.

“Now I don't have any of them, only my two grandchildren who lost their parents,” she said, her eyes brimming with tears.

The force of the blast stunned observers, as did the carnage it caused.

“I never experienced anything like this before,” Laotian tourist Kan Kutirat, who filmed a fireball explode out of the front entrance, told AFP.

“The images are still stuck in my mind.”

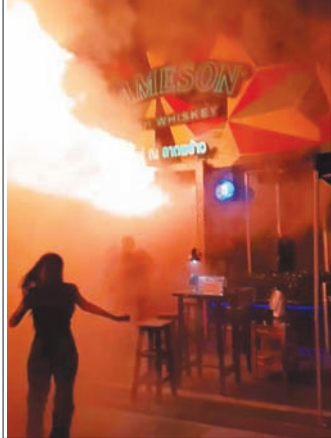
Some motorbike taxi drivers stepped in, including Surin Jaiharn, who helped about five people fleeing with burnt and blistering skin.

“I feel depressed. I saw many deaths and I do not know the fate of the people I helped,” Surin, 45, told AFP.

Thailand's approach to health and safety regulations has long raised concerns.

In 2022, 25 people died after a fire ripped through the Mountain B nightclub in Thailand's eastern Chonburi province.

The government has promised financial support for the victims of Sunday's fire.



This screen grab taken from a video released by Kan Kutirat on Sunday shows people fleeing the fire. (AFP)

But for Kanlayawat Banruangthong, 34, “no amount of money” will soften the blow of losing her cousin, Sittipong Chaiyo.

She said the 23-year-old's mother is travelling from the family home in Ubon Ratchathani, near the eastern border with Laos, to confirm his identity through DNA.

Meanwhile, Kaew-udon waited to take his brother's body home.

“My parents are waiting for their son to return so the family can be together again,” he said.

Heavy floods submerge roads, vehicles in northern China

Reuters
Hong Kong

Severe flooding in China's northern Hebei province and northeastern Liaoning province submerged roads and swept away cars, while people swam, paddle-boarded and wake surfed along neighbourhood streets, videos on social media showed.

Water levels rose to more than two metres on roads in Kuancheng, a county in Hebei, according to a resident's account that was broadcast by local official media.

Kuancheng is home to around 240,000 people and is located on the banks of the Luan River. Several cars were filmed crashing into each other in Kuancheng as they bobbed up and down a waterlogged road before being carried away by the strength of the current. The floods came after Typhoon Bavi, the most powerful storm to strike mainland China this year, brought heavy rain to the eastern coast and violent winds to the area's densely populated cities, testing the country's ability to cope with extreme weather.

Authorities warned the storm would dump torrential rain across the provinces of Jilin, Liaoning,

Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Anhui, exacerbating flood risks in areas that had already been soaked by earlier downpours.

Around 1,800 villagers in Kuancheng were stranded, state broadcaster CCTV reported, while authorities said that relocating and resettling residents was their top priority. In Liaoning, authorities raised the red alert for flash floods, warning of very high risks.

“During a red alert for heavy rain, all work stoppages, business closures, and gatherings must be fully implemented,” Hebei authorities said in a statement on WeChat.

Videos on RedNote, known in China as Xiaohongshu, showed a person swimming backstroke down a road in Shenyang, Liaoning, with the rows of parked cars on the side of the street almost completely submerged by the water. Another clip on RedNote showed someone standing on a paddleboard to navigate the flooded streets. A man was also filmed wake surfing behind a car on a wide road that had been inundated with water in Shenyang, a video on China's WeChat showed. In a separate clip, police could be seen pushing a submerged car through the city's floods. Many train services in Shenyang were



Vehicles are swept away by floodwater on a street in Chengde, Hebei Province, China, in this screengrab taken from social media video released on Sunday. (Reuters)

also suspended, China Railway said on Monday, with more than 30 railway sections affected.

Schools have also been closed across many areas including the northeastern province of Jilin.

Some areas in northeastern

China will experience thunderstorms or hailstorms of Force 8 or above, CCTV reported, citing the country's Central Meteorological Observatory.

“In some areas of central and northern Jiangsu, thunderstorm winds of level 10 or above will occur, with maximum winds reaching force 11 or above, and tornadoes may occur locally,” it said. Force 11 winds can reach speeds of up to 117kph (73mph). Bavi, covering an area the size of France, formed in the Pacific Ocean 13 days ago. Its structure remained largely intact on Monday even after making landfall in eastern China on Saturday night, making it the longest-lasting tropical cyclone in the Asia-Pacific region this year. Its longevity is largely due to its unusually well-preserved warm core, Chinese meteorologists say, allowing Bavi to retain much of its moisture as it churns north towards the Korean peninsula. Intense rainfall is expected when Bavi, currently classified as a tropical storm, slows further and starts to release all the moisture that it has been holding.

Forty-six rivers nationwide are experiencing flooding above warning levels, CCTV reported, citing China's Ministry of Water Resources.

Malaysia PM's coalition routed by key partner in Johor state poll, testing federal ties

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's coalition suffered a crushing defeat to a key partner in a regional poll on Saturday, raising questions over the strength of the bloc's alliance at the federal level amid talk of an early general election. While the result in Malaysia's southern Johor state will not directly impact Anwar's majority in parliament, it could deepen strains between Anwar's Pakatan Harapan grouping and the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition - rivals that joined forces to form a government after a hung general election in 2022. While Pakatan and BN insist their federal partnership can withstand differences at the state level, Anwar said in May he would consider calling a snap poll if internal divisions continued to widen. BN, the incumbent in Johor, secured a commanding victory on Saturday, winning 48 of 56 state assembly seats, according to the Election Commission's official tally on Sunday. Pakatan won the remaining eight, down from 12 previously. “Hopefully, this win will trigger a blue wave across other states,” BN Chairman Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said at a briefing late Saturday, referring to the coalition's banner colour.

The Johor outcome will likely embolden BN, led by the once-dominant United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), and fuel concerns that Anwar's coalition is losing ground among ethnic Chinese voters and reform-minded supporters who helped propel him to power. Frustration has mounted among progressive allies over the slow pace of promised reforms, while coalition partners have frequently clashed over the handling of sensitive racial and religious issues in the multi-ethnic, Muslim-majority country. The predominantly Chinese Democratic Action Party, the largest party in the ruling alliance, has said it would review its role in the government pact, a move that came after Pakatan was similarly defeated in the Sabah state elections last year.

The Johor vote came just weeks before an election in Negeri Sembilan state on August 1 that will serve as another test of federal stability. Pakatan is expected to contest all 36 seats, having won 17 seats in the last state poll. Opposition bloc Perikatan Nasional, which includes former Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's Bersatu group and the Islamist party Pas, was wiped out in Johor, losing all 33 seats it contested, including the three it previously held. The fledgling Bersama party, led by Anwar's protégé-turned-rival Rafizi Ramli and supported by a wave of defectors from Pakatan, was similarly trounced. (Reuters)

EU, UK hit Russia with joint sanctions over cyber attacks

AFP
Brussels

The European Union and Britain targeted Russia yesterday with co-ordinated sanctions over cyber attacks in Europe, accusing Moscow's FSB intelligence agency over involvement in digital strikes.

The move comes as Western officials warn Russia has stepped up its "hybrid" campaign to destabilise Europe over four years into the war on Ukraine.

Brussels said it was imposing sanctions on nine people and four entities, while London said it was adding 24 names to its blacklist.

The British government said

the sanctions — the first joint cyber package with the EU — "target the Russian state's persistent and increasingly reckless attempts to sow chaos and division across Europe".

Among those subjected to asset freezes and visa bans were officers of Russia's GRU military intelligence agency, and alleged "cyber-criminals" working together with the Russian state.

In addition, the EU and Britain also said a recent attempted cyber attack targeting critical infrastructure in Poland, including the power grid, was the latest in a raft of such moves by the FSB's Centre 16 spying hub.

"This reckless attack failed but could have caused 500,000

citizens to lose electricity in the depths of winter," the British foreign office said.

"It is another example of the Russian state's irresponsible attempts to sow chaos across Europe."

The EU and several of its member states said they were summoning Russian diplomatic representatives to complain about the cyber attacks.

France's foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the attacks targeted government ministries, companies, and service operators, with the aim "either of capturing information or sabotaging operations, for example rail infrastructure, as was the case in Poland".

The French foreign ministry

added that among the sanctioned targets was "a group that claimed destabilising actions against the Paris 2024 Olympics."

The EU said that "among others, France, Germany, Poland, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia, Romania and Finland have been targeted" in a campaign stretching back years.

The FSB's Centre 16 has previously been accused by Western intelligence agencies of using malware for decades to try to gain access to spy on countries around the globe.

Britain and the EU — which London left in 2020 — have been at the forefront of trying to punish Moscow with sanctions since its invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Britain joins EU's \$103bn support loan for Ukraine

AFP
Brussels

Britain yesterday signed up to participate in the EU's 90-billion-euro (\$103bn) support loan for Ukraine, meaning UK firms will be able to provide more weapons paid for by the funds.

"This agreement will help ensure Ukraine gets the support it needs to defend itself against Russian aggression, while backing British defence companies, supporting skilled jobs and strengthening our national security," British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in a statement.

"Working alongside our European allies, we are stepping up support for Ukraine and stepping up pressure on Russia."

Brussels and London said that

Britain will provide "a fair and proportionate contribution to the costs arising from borrowing, commensurate with the value of contracts awarded to UK companies."

The move is the latest push by the EU and Britain — which quit the bloc in 2020 — to work more closely together.

The EU last month started paying out the mammoth two-year loan to Ukraine that will go towards buying weapons for Ukraine's forces and plugging budget blackholes.

An initial six bn euros from the loan will go towards helping bolster the production of drones for Kyiv's forces.

The desperately needed funds come as Ukraine appears to be turning the tide in the four-year war by stabilising the front line and striking deep inside Russia.

Ukraine's allies meet in Paris to boost air defence

AFP
Paris

Ukraine's allies gathered in Paris yesterday to ramp up support for Kyiv, particularly in air defence, and increase pressure on Russia to end the war, which is well into its fifth year.

Representatives of the 37 coalition members, including Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky, arrived at Les Invalides in the French capital for the summit of the Coalition of the Willing, launched by France and the United Kingdom to provide military support to Ukraine after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The coalition is expected to announce the first joint exercises of the Multinational Force for Ukraine, to demonstrate its readiness to deploy once the fighting has ended, military sources said.

Leaders are also expected to focus on co-operation on air and missile defence with Ukraine, whose air defences have come under strain from repeated Russian ballistic missile strikes in recent weeks.

The meeting is "to make sure that the commitment is still there from all nations", Sweden's top



From left: European Council President Antonio Costa, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, French President Emmanuel Macron, British PM Keir Starmer, Polish PM Donald Tusk, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen attend take part in a summit of the Coalition of the Willing to support Ukraine at the Hotel des Invalides in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

military commander Michael Claesson told journalists.

Before the summit, nine European countries and Ukraine announced the formation of a coalition to develop "purely defensive" anti-ballistic capabilities for Europe, citing a growing threat from such missiles.

"We do this not against any people, but in defence of our own," said the joint declaration by Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

"We are stepping up our support for Ukraine. Strengthening its defences, increasing the pressure on Russia and building the security

guarantees of tomorrow," added French President Emmanuel Macron on X with a photo of assembled attendees.

The meetings come the day before France's national public holiday Bastille Day, which includes a military parade that this year will highlight support for Ukraine.

During the traditional speech delivered to the armed forces before Bastille Day, Macron said Europe was "in the process of becoming a power" ready to "defend itself".

"The message we send to the world is this: Yes, peace is our goal. Yes, we cherish freedom and the rule of law. And yes, we stand ready to fight to defend them. Always,

and at the cost of blood if necessary," Macron said.

Macron in his speech also called for more European defence industry partnerships, despite France and Germany last month abandoning a joint fighter jet programme.

— 'Coalition of warmongers' — Moscow yesterday dismissed the summit as a gathering of leaders who "do not want peace".

"This is a coalition of warmongers," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The summit comes at a "powerful moment of renewed transatlantic convergence and unity," but also of "more favourable developments on the ground" for Kyiv, the Elysee said.

Hungary parliament passes law to oust president in Magyar's power shake-up

Reuters
Budapest

Hungary's parliament has approved a constitutional amendment yesterday to oust President Tamas Sulyok, who Prime Minister Peter Magyar says is a "puppet" of former premier Viktor Orban.

The legislation is part of Magyar's drive to dismantle Orban's bastions of power, for which he says he received a strong mandate from voters. Magyar's centre-right Tisza Party ended the 16-year rule of Orban's nationalist Fidesz party with a landslide election victory in April. "It would be a betrayal of the Hungarian nation if we did not touch this constitution," Magyar told parliament ahead of the vote on the amendment, which passed with 139 votes, and six against in the 199-member parliament.

"They (Fidesz) arranged the country in such a way that one

man's will became the source of legislative work... The Tisza Party won a clear, huge two-thirds mandate to dismantle this system."

The amendment would end Sulyok's term immediately, citing society's "serious loss of confidence" in him. Parliament would elect a new president until a new constitution takes effect, or for a maximum of five years. Magyar said that in the autumn, a "huge joint project" with the Hungarian people would begin to draft a new constitution.

If Sulyok does not sign the new constitutional amendment within five days, Magyar added, parliament will launch an impeachment procedure against him.

Under Hungary's constitution, the president is a largely ceremonial head of state with only limited powers to veto legislation or have it reviewed.

Magyar's party Tisza has a supermajority in parliament, which enables it to modify the constitu-

tion and roll back changes by Orban that it says eroded democracy.

It has taken swift action, suspending news broadcasts on public service television and radio last week as part of an overhaul to make public media independent. Sulyok, who served for 10 years as a Constitutional Court judge until parliament appointed him president in 2024, said he has no political agenda and has so far refused to step down.

He has asked for an assessment of the government's amendment from the Venice Commission, a panel of the Council of Europe human rights body, which gives advice on whether constitutional changes are democratic. The Venice Commission has declined comment.

The amendment stipulates that lawmakers can only serve a maximum of 12 years, and it also sets an age limit of 70 for judges at the Constitutional Court. This would require its current head, Orban ally Peter Polt, to retire.

Sri Lanka's Tamil minority parties unite to seek greater autonomy

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's Tamil-speaking minorities launched a united front yesterday to demand a new constitution granting greater autonomy, reviving long-standing grievances two decades after the end of the island's long ethnic war.

The alliance brings together six parties representing Tamil and Muslim communities, who make up more than a quarter of Sri Lanka's 22 million people.

It comes as President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's leftist government faces renewed calls to deliver on promises to devolve power to Sri Lanka's regions and address unresolved issues stemming from the decades-long conflict.

Moderate Tamil parties have abandoned separatist demands and accepted regional autonomy instead, but successive Sinhalese-majority governments have failed to fully implement power-sharing measures promised since the conflict.

"We are asking the president to deliver on what is already in his election manifesto," Tamil National Alliance spokesman M.A. Sumanthiran told reporters in Colombo.

The alliance also demands long-overdue provincial council elections, which have not been held for more than a decade.

The councils were established under a 1987 devolution plan intended to grant limited autonomy to Tamil-majority regions, but key provisions were never fully implemented.

Sumanthiran said Dissanayake's government had pledged to hold the elections within a year of taking office in September 2024, but had yet to do so.

The parties are also seeking the return of privately owned land still occupied by security forces in former war zones.

"To make our country more inclusive, the government must deliver on its own promises," opposition Tamil lawmaker Mano Ganesan said. He said the parties in the new alliance were committed to Sri Lanka's sovereignty and opposed any separation based on ethnic lines.

Wildfire rages near Paris as heatwave scorches Europe

Reuters
Noisy-sur-ecole

A wildfire tore through a historic forest near Paris yesterday, forcing highway closures and mobilising water-bombing aircraft, while Spain's death toll from one of its deadliest wildfires rose to 13, as much of western Europe simmered in a string of heatwaves.

The region is enduring its third heatwave of the summer, with tinder-dry vegetation and high temperatures fuelling blazes from the Iberian Peninsula to France. Many scientists say climate change is making wildfires more frequent and difficult to combat.

France deployed hundreds of firefighters to tackle a fast-moving blaze that broke out alongside a motorway near Fontainebleau, home to one of France's best-known royal palaces. The death toll from last week's devastating wildfire in Spain's southern province of Almeria reached 13 after a

93-year-old British woman died from burns on Sunday, with 10 people still missing as of yesterday, according to authorities. Visiting Almeria yesterday, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called to reinforce fire prevention in the country. But the impact of the summer scorchers could be more grim. Scientists monitoring so-called excess deaths said there were thousands more fatalities recorded than normal during a heatwave that swept through Europe and Britain at the end of June.

Just 70 kilometres (43.5 miles) from Paris, the Fontainebleau wildfire forced the closure of the A6 highway linking Paris with Lyon and the south, and, for the first time in the Greater Paris area, the dispatch of air assets to contain the blaze which turned the skies black. Smaller fires in the area also disrupted high-speed train services.

For the first time, Canadian water-dumping aircraft skimmed over the river Seine filling their tanks. Up to 800 people were evac-



A fire truck sprays fire retardant into the Fontainebleau Forest on the outskirts of a wildfire near Noisy-sur-Ecole in France's Ile-de-France region, yesterday. (AFP)

uated from their homes.

Although the fire was largely contained by yesterday afternoon, wind gusts made the task challenging, authorities said.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said the circumstances of the fire were suspicious: "There were

around ten points where the fire started within a 1,000-metre radius, which suggests it may have been started deliberately."

French authorities say an estimated 32,000 hectares of land — roughly the size of Orlando, Florida — have burned so far this year,

more than in the whole of 2025.

Some 26 million people in France were under a red heatwave warning yesterday, including the greater Paris region. Forecasters say the heatwave is expected to continue until the middle of the week.

A new heatwave, expected to

last at least a week, is about to hit neighbouring Italy, bringing high humidity and tropical nights, meteorologists say. Thermometers in inland areas of Sardinia could reach 42-43 degrees Celsius (108-109 Fahrenheit) today.

The current bout of hot weather follows scorching temperatures at the end of May and the end of June, which broke several daily records. Extreme weather gripping the region has damaged crops, affected power output from nuclear plants and increased freight transport costs along the Rhine river in Germany, where lower water levels have prevented cargo vessels from sailing fully loaded. In Italy, farmers in the Emilia-Romagna region are forced to deploy more resources to ensure proper livestock management and maintain constant production of dairy products such as Parmesan cheese.

European countries reported some 10,650 excess deaths during the record-breaking heatwave that engulfed the west of the continent in late June, official data showed.



Qatar musings: Where the riyal – and the good life – go further

There is a particular pleasure in watching the sceptics run out of arguments. For years, the wisdom about Gulf states held that oil could buy skylines but not liveability – that wealth measured in barrels never quite translated into the quieter arithmetic of a good day: a safe walk home, a doctor within reach, a salary that stretches to the end of the month with something left over. Qatar's latest ascent up the global Quality of Life ladder quietly dismantles that assumption.

The country has vaulted six places to rank 12th in the world in the mid-2026 Numbeo Quality of Life Index, lifting its score from 182.7 to 188.6 and settling among the planet's top 15 nations – second only to Oman across the Gulf. The numbers, as ever, are the least interesting part of the story. What matters is the company Qatar now keeps, and the company it has left behind.

Consider the table. Qatar sits ahead of Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Spain – nations that have long served as the world's shorthand for the good life. Further down, the United Kingdom and France trail by a full fifteen points and more. A generation ago, the notion of a Gulf state outscoring Scandinavia on liveability would have been dismissed as a rounding error or a rounding up. Today it is simply a line in a database, printed in black and white, requiring no defence.

Look closer and Qatar's particular strengths come into focus. Its purchasing power score of 173.5 ranks among the highest anywhere on earth, bettered only by Kuwait – which is to say that a riyal earned here does what a euro or a pound can only dream of doing in Europe's squeezed capitals. Its safety score of 84.8 is likewise world-class, edged only by the UAE, and that figure is not an abstraction. It is the

confidence of a parent whose child walks to the shop unaccompanied, the calm of a woman crossing a car park at midnight. And a property price-to-income ratio of 4.5 – against the double digits routine in London, Paris or Hong Kong – means a home remains something a working family can realistically own, not merely rent in perpetuity.

None of this is accidental, and that is the deeper point. The National Planning Council rightly frames the leap as the dividend of a long game – sustainable infrastructure, deepened public services, a strengthened healthcare system, and, underpinning it all, the safety and stability without which every other metric is hollow. This is the visible harvest of Qatar National Vision 2030: the conviction, held patiently across two decades, that a nation is measured not only by what it exports but by how well its people live.

There is a regional story here too. That two Gulf states now sit inside the global top 12 – Oman a remarkable third, Qatar close behind – signals a transformation larger than any single country. Across the peninsula, quality of life has become a marker of national ambition as potent as GDP once was, a friendly competition in which the ultimate beneficiary is the ordinary resident.

Qatar should savour the moment without mistaking it for a destination. Twelfth is not a finish line; the Netherlands, on 205.6, shows there is altitude yet to climb, and the metrics that lag – commuting, climate, the eternal work on pollution and cost of living – are the next frontier. But a country that has climbed this far, this fast, has earned the right to a moment's quiet pride.

The riyal goes further here. So, increasingly, does the good life. That is no small thing to be able to say.

Dinner time for Coalition of the Willing



Unwinding: How allies learned to live without America



By Kamran Rehmat

For three decades, the architecture of international politics rested on a single assumption so deeply embedded that few bothered to state it: that dependence on the United States was an asset. Access to its markets, shelter under its security umbrella, integration with its technology – these were the dividends of alignment, and nations competed for them. That assumption is now dead. What is remarkable is not that it died, but how quickly its funeral has been organised – and by whom.

The mourners, it turns out, are the allies themselves. Across Europe, Asia and the Middle East, governments that once measured their standing by proximity to Washington are methodically engineering distance from it. The vocabulary is instructive. “De-risking” – a term Ursula von der Leyen coined in 2023 to describe Europe’s careful disentanglement from Chinese coercion – has been turned around and applied to the relationship with Washington itself, deployed openly by leaders and panellists at the Munich Security Conference. When the language designed for managing a rival is repurposed for managing a patron, something fundamental has shifted.

The shift did not arrive from nowhere. Allied resentment had been accumulating for years – over extraterritorial sanctions,

over the industrial favouritism of the Inflation Reduction Act, over semiconductor export controls that treated partners as afterthoughts. But the second Trump administration converted a grievance into a strategy. Tariffs against friends, musings about annexing Canada, designs on Greenland, the public berating of Spain and Denmark at the Ankara Nato summit, and above all the Iran war – fought without the diplomatic or military alignment of a single major ally – persuaded capitals from Ottawa to Tokyo that the problem was not a policy to be waited out but a structural condition to be insured against.

The insurance policies are now being written at speed. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney told the World Economic Forum that allies must “diversify to hedge against uncertainty” amid a rupture in the global order – and received a standing ovation. His government has translated the applause into paper: a journey to Beijing to

unfreeze Sino-Canadian trade, followed within days by Britain’s Keir Starmer arriving in the Chinese capital to negotiate deals of his own.

Europe’s defence industrial strategy is deliberately routing the continent’s swelling military budgets away from American contractors; even as European defence spending surged, purchases from US firms fell by nearly half. France has ordered officials off American video-conferencing platforms; Britain’s major banks have opened talks on a home-grown card payments company to loosen the grip of Visa and Mastercard. Piece by piece, the plumbing of American primacy is being rerouted.

Two rival readings of this moment are now contending, and both deserve a hearing. The first – the view from anxious quarters of Washington itself – holds that the unwinding is a self-inflicted catastrophe for the United States. The ledger of costs is already filling. The

Iran war’s disruption of energy and fertiliser markets landed a blow on American consumers that Moody’s put at \$132bn. Four million fewer visitors arrived in 2025 than the year before; foreign student enrolment has slumped, draining both university revenues and the pipeline of future skilled labour. Most corrosively, allies now plan their American relationships in four-year electoral increments rather than generational bets. The Australian submarine deal of 2021 – a multi-decade wager on American constancy – belongs to a category of commitment no capital is willing to repeat. A superpower whose word is discounted at four-year maturities is a superpower operating with a fraction of its former leverage.

The second reading, gaining currency in allied capitals, is more unsettling for Washington precisely because it is more cheerful. On this view, the anticipated catastrophe of American abandonment has

turned out, on inspection, to be survivable – even liberating.

Canada’s worst-case tariff modelling suggested a painful but absorbable blow to growth; in the event, collapsing exports to the American market were almost entirely offset by new demand elsewhere. Commodities, it transpires, find buyers regardless of who is threatening whom. The chess maxim beloved of the hypermoderns – that the threat is stronger than the execution – has proved apt: once the feared rupture actually arrived, the paralysis of avoidance gave way to the energy of adaptation. On this reading, the United States has become a power that can still lash out but can no longer organise, and the rational response is not appeasement but exit.

Both readings, it should be said, have their sceptics. James Lindsay of the Council on Foreign Relations notes that the depth of allied dependence on American technology makes de-risking a daunting, years-long prospect,

with Europe’s atrophied defence industry unable to meet internal demand and neither Russia nor China acceptable as alternative suppliers.

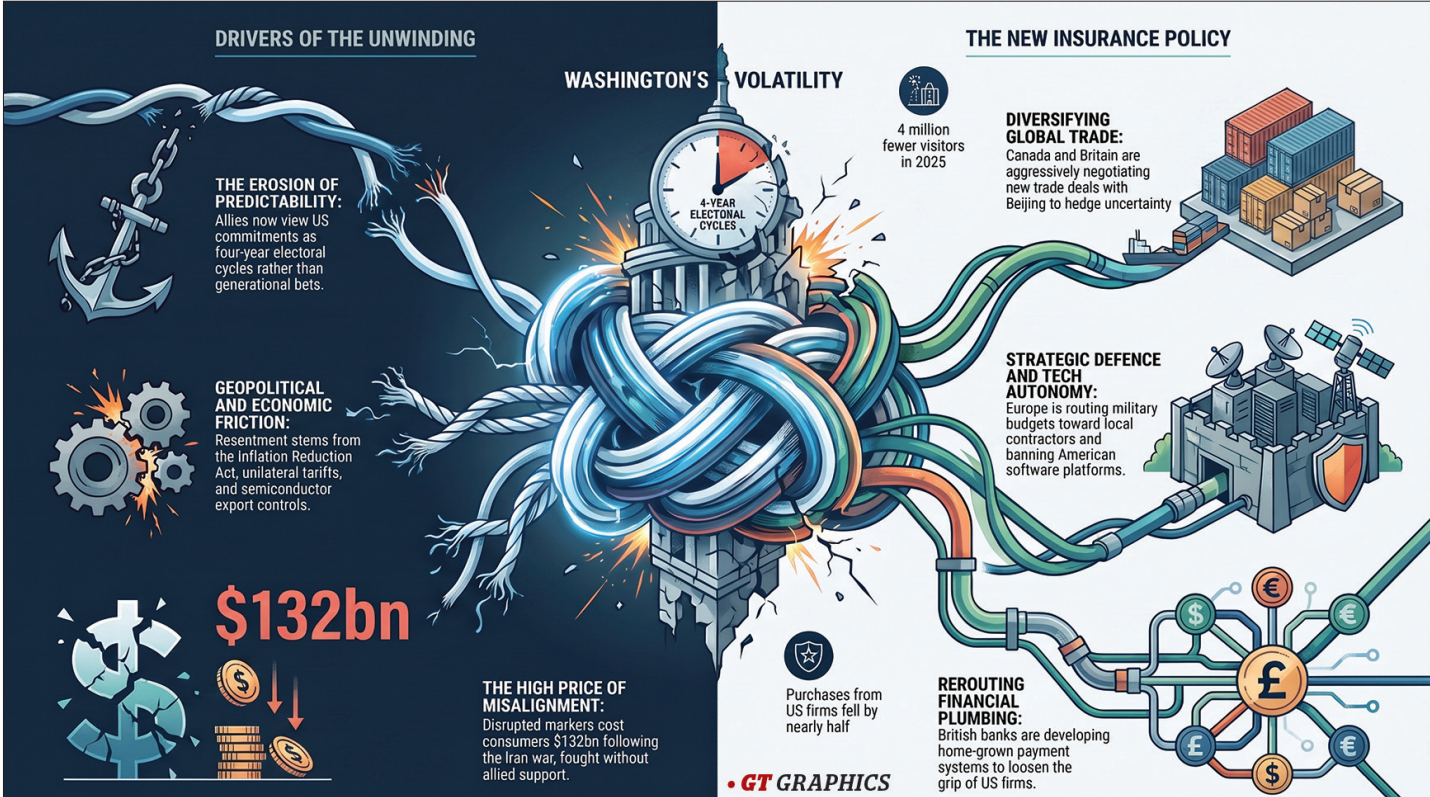
Alina Polyakova, an expert on transatlantic relations, European security, Russian foreign policy and technology policy, and Alexander Gray, chief executive of American Global Strategies, the advisory firm he co-founded with former Trump national security adviser Robert C O’Brien, have pressed the point further, warning that de-risking from America leads in only one direction – dependence on China – citing Beijing’s swift mineral-export retaliation against Japan as a preview of what political strings attached to Chinese investment look like. The hedgers, in other words, may simply be trading a capricious patron for a colder one.

Yet even the sceptics concede the direction of travel. The question is no longer whether allies will reduce their exposure to the United States, but how far, how fast, and at what cost to both sides. And here the deepest change is psychological rather than material.

What has been lost is not capability but predictability – the belief that American commitments outlive American elections. Many abroad have concluded that no successor administration, Republican or Democratic, can restore it; the volatility, they judge, is now in the system rather than the man. That belief may be wrong. But in international politics, as in banking, confidence once withdrawn is not restored by assurances. It is restored – slowly, expensively, if at all – by decades of boringly consistent behaviour.

Whoever next occupies the White House will inherit a world no longer asking what America can do for it, but calculating, with new-found composure, how much it can do without America altogether. That calculation, once begun, is very hard to stop.

• The writer is Deputy Managing Editor, Gulf Times.





Amir receives world leaders

HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received heads of state and senior leaders from across the world at Lusail Palace yesterday, as they offered condolences on the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

((يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي))

صدق الله العظيم

CONDOLENCES

We extend our sincere condolences and
deepest sympathy to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

and to

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to the honorable members of the Al Thani family
and the people of Qatar
on the sad demise of the nation's leader

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

May Allah envelop the deceased in His vast mercy and
grant him a place in His spacious Paradise

((إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ))





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يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّكَ رَأْسُ الْفَتْحِ وَرَحْمَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ
وَأَنْتَ أَمِيرُ الْإِيمَانِ وَتَحْتَ ظِلِّكَ رِجَالُ الْإِيمَانِ وَتَحْتَ أَمْرِكَ
أُمَمٌ بَالِغَةٌ فِي الْإِيمَانِ وَتَحْتَ رِجَالِكَ رِجَالُ الْإِيمَانِ وَتَحْتَ
أَمْرِكَ أُمَمٌ بَالِغَةٌ فِي الْإِيمَانِ وَتَحْتَ رِجَالِكَ رِجَالُ الْإِيمَانِ

صَلَاةُ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمَةِ

We extend our sincere condolences and
deepest sympathy to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

and

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to the honorable members of the Al Thani family
and the people of Qatar
on the sad demise of the nation's leader

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

May Allah have mercy upon the deceased and
grant him a place in his spacious paradise.

"إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ"

Ferit F. Şahenk & Şahenk Family

