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BUSINESS | Page 1

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SCAN TO SHOP

PHCC expands physiotherapy reach to 15 health centres

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has expanded access to physiotherapy services across Qatar, offering treatment at 15 health centres through a specialised team of around 69 physiotherapists, in a move aimed at bringing care closer to patients. In a statement yesterday, PHCC said the distribution of services has been aligned with population needs across the northern, central and western regions. Patients referred from centres without physiotherapy clinics are redirected within the same region or scheduled for the earliest available appointment, in accordance with approved procedures. Head of Physiotherapy Services at PHCC, Dr Thajiba Mubarak al-Bader, said clinics operate throughout the week with both morning and evening shifts depending on each centre's schedule, enhancing accessibility and flexibility for patients. Services are also available on Saturdays. Saturday clinics run from 7am to 2pm at Abu Bakr Al Siddiq, Gharafat Al Rayyan, Leabaib, Muaitheer and Rawdat Al Khail health centres. Separate facilities are provided for male and female patients to ensure ease of access and continuity of care.

Qatar startup grows hydroponics for a hotter, drier future

By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Development and deployment of agricultural solutions engineered for arid environments are underway within Qatar's premier technology hub, driven by growing demand for localised food security measures. What began as a simple family gardening activity during the Covid-19 pandemic has evolved into a structured agricultural enterprise, accountant-turned-entrepreneur Jeacim Francis Adaya told *Gulf Times* in an exclusive interview. He founded Hydrovest Technology, which has scaled up its operations from a home hydroponics hobby into a dedicated research project based at the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP). Adaya, who has lived in Qatar for more than 15 years, discovered the potential of soilless cultivation while looking for meaningful ways to spend time with his family during the global health crisis. The success of producing fresh food at home prompted him to share his experience through social media and small community workshops, he said. "We started growing vegetables through hydroponics at home, and I was amazed that we could produce fresh, healthy food without soil. As I shared our journey on social media and through small community workshops, I realised many people in Qatar were eager to learn about modern farming but didn't know where to begin," he explained. This localised interest led to the launch of the 'Future of Agriculture – Hydroponics' advocacy, noted Adaya, adding that the initiative aims to make modern farming practices accessible to families, schools, and local entrepreneurs. The transition from financial services to agricultural technology proved natural for Adaya, who explained that his finance background provided critical perspective in data analysis, risk management, and the formulation of sustainable business models. **To Page 2**



Accountant-turned-entrepreneur Jeacim Francis Adaya inspecting lettuce grown via hydroponics.

Burnham becomes 7th British PM in a decade

Reuters
London

Andy Burnham (pictured) became Britain's seventh prime minister in a decade yesterday, pledging to reshape its politics to deliver a new economic model and revive a nation "fed up" with a revolving door of leaders. In front of dozens of supporters outside his new office and residence at 10 Downing Street, Burnham said politicians had failed to bring the stability needed to raise living standards, something he said he would change, with both immediate measures and a longer-term plan to be drawn up later this year. Speaking without notes, Burnham delivered a domestic-focused speech aimed at offering hope to a nation that has, like many European countries, struggled for years with soaring prices



and anaemic economic growth. He did not touch on foreign affairs. And with his first appointment as finance minister, Burnham pressed home his decision to rip up politics as usual. He appointed former defence minister John Healey to the second most powerful position in Britain, promoting a man who resigned under Keir Starmer in protest at the inflexibility of the Treasury. **Page 11**

Houthis declare maritime blockade against Saudi

Reuters
Riyadh

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said yesterday they would impose a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, opening a potential new front against the United States in its war with Iran and raising the threat to global energy supplies and trade beyond the Gulf. The Houthis made their announcement despite signs that Tehran and Washington want to resume diplomacy to halt a worsening cycle of attacks that has all but wrecked a fragile interim agreement signed last month. Iran's Foreign Ministry said mediators had presented "proposals" to Tehran, signalling

that diplomatic contacts remain active, but gave no details. Oil prices rose briefly after the Houthi statement but later fell back as traders held out hope of a diplomatic breakthrough. The insurance cost of shipping goods through the Red Sea rose on the increased risks for merchant shipping. Iran had been pressing the Houthis to close the Bab el-Mandeb gateway to the Red Sea if the US continued to attack Iranian power infrastructure. The full closure of the Bab el-Mandeb strait would reduce global oil supply by 7% as it would leave most of Saudi oil exports unable to leave the region. The disruption would add to the huge cut to oil flows from the war in the Gulf, which has already re-

duced shipments by 10% of global supply. In their statement, the Houthis' armed forces said they were declaring "a maritime embargo" based on the equation of 'an eye for an eye' effective immediately. There was no immediate response from Saudi Arabia. A senior Iranian official told Reuters yesterday that Tehran had received a proposal from mediators for a 10-day ceasefire in efforts to salvage the interim deal, intended to pave the way to a lasting agreement to end the war that began on February 28 with US-Israeli attacks on Iran. Neither the ministry nor the official who spoke to Reuters gave any details on the putative ceasefire discussions.

Business education in Arab world 'must reinvent itself'

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Arab business schools must undergo a fundamental transformation if they are to remain relevant in the age of artificial intelligence (AI) and the digital economy, according to Professor Dr Mohammed Abdulwahab al-Azzawi, an international expert in Total Quality Management and former adviser to the erstwhile Qatar's Ministry of Administrative Development and the Institute of Public Administration. Al-Azzawi, who is also a professor at the College of Administration and Economics at the University of Baghdad and former

dean of the Institute of Accounting and Financial Studies, believes that updating curricula alone is no longer sufficient. Instead, universities must adopt a comprehensive institutional transformation that reshapes academic thinking, teaching methodologies, and the way future business leaders are prepared. Speaking to *Gulf Times*, al-Azzawi said the vision emerged from his involvement in a feasibility study for establishing a private university, followed by extensive visits to leading universities across Europe and the Arab world. Those experiences, he explained, exposed a widening gap between the traditional business education model still prevalent

in many Arab universities and the innovative approaches adopted by internationally competitive institutions. His experience leading business administration departments at universities across Iraq and the Gulf further reinforces the need for a practical roadmap to modernise business education and align it with the demands of the Fifth Industrial Revolution. According to al-Azzawi, the transformation should begin with a comprehensive assessment of existing knowledge and technological gaps, followed by the re-design of academic programmes around emerging disciplines such as Business Analytics, Financial



Professor Dr Mohammed Abdulwahab al-Azzawi

It should begin with a comprehensive assessment of existing knowledge and technological gaps, says expert

Technology (FinTech), Cybersecurity, and Artificial Intelligence in Management. Equally important, he said, is equipping faculty members with the digital competencies needed to lead this transition. He argued that business education must move beyond traditional lecture-based instruction toward experiential learning built on applied projects, digital simulations, and virtual business environments that mirror real-world corporate operations. Such an approach, he noted, would enable students to develop critical thinking, data-driven decision-making, and problem-solving skills essential for modern organisations. **To Page 2**



Minister bids farewell to US charge d'affaires

HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met US Charge d'Affaires ad interim of the US embassy in Doha, Mo Barghouty, yesterday on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE al-Muraikhi extended thanks to Barghouty for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, and wished him success in his future duties. - QNA



Trainer development programme launched to boost youth sector

Qatar's Ministry of Sports and Youth has launched a trainer development programme aimed at boosting national expertise, improving the quality of training and preparing qualified trainers in line with international professional standards. The initiative, which runs until July 23, forms part of the ministry's efforts to strengthen the youth sector by equipping participants with the skills to design, deliver and evaluate training programmes. The initiative also supports the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030 by helping to develop a skilled national workforce. The director of the Youth Affairs Department, Fa-waz al-Musifri, said that the programme reflects the ministry's commitment to investing in human capital, describing the preparation of professional trainers as a strategic step towards improving the quality and impact of training across different sectors. He said the ministry aims to provide specialised training that keeps pace with developments in the field, enabling participants to acquire the practical and theoretical skills needed to transfer knowledge effectively and promote continuous learning within the youth sector.

Mayada al-Jabr, the director of the Guidance and Practice Development Project in the youth sector, said the initiative is designed to establish a national pool of qualified trainers capable of leading training programmes according to international best practice. She said that the programme also supports the project's strategic objectives, including improving the performance of youth centres and strengthening their compliance with organisational standards, leading to higher-quality services and programmes for young people. The curriculum includes practical modules on designing training programmes, managing training sessions, engaging with different learning styles, developing training materials and delivering effective presentations. It also covers the use of artificial intelligence (AI) applications in designing and developing training content. Participants will receive intensive practical and theoretical instruction, specialised training materials and an accredited certificate on completion of the programme. - QNA

Qatar Charity begins life-saving surgeries for more than 800 patients in Syria

Qatar Charity (QC) has begun implementing more than 800 specialised surgical procedures in Syria as part of its global "Defaa Balaa" campaign, launched on the 27th night of the holy month of Ramadan. The initiative is being carried out in co-operation and co-ordination with the Syrian ministry of health, beginning at Al-Mouwassat Hospital in Damascus, in the presence of Qatar's ambassador to Syria Khalifa bin Abdullah al-Mahmoud. The medical interventions are in response to growing health needs in Syria and form part of the QC's efforts to ease the suffering of patients who cannot afford treatment. The project provides specialised surgeries designed to save lives, restore sight and hearing, and help patients recover their health and return to normal life.

The current phase includes 750 cataract surgeries, along with medical eyeglasses for beneficiaries; 70 surgeries to treat congenital heart defects in children; 10 open-heart surgeries; and six cochlear implant procedures. More than 830 patients from the governorates of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Idlib are expected to benefit from the project. "What Qatar Charity is providing today, in co-operation with the Syrian ministry of health, through specialised surgeries that restore hope to hundreds of patients and their families, is an extension of a well-established humanitarian approach and a model of Qatari charitable work whose impact reaches the most vulnerable groups wherever they are," said al-Mahmoud. Issam Dabbab, director of Qatar Charity's office in Syria, noted that many of the



surgeries planned under the project represent the only hope for saving patients' lives or improving their quality of life.

Wael Daghmarsh, director of the Damascus Health Directorate, said: "At the ministry of health, we believe that effective humanitarian partnerships are a key pillar in strengthening health services, especially under the current circumstances." "We highly value this generous support, which helps ease the burden on patients unable to afford treatment and strengthens the health system's capacity to respond to citizens' needs," he said. The surgeries are part of the "Defaa Balaa" campaign, which the QC launched globally on the 27th night of Ramadan. Through this initiative, Qatar Charity reaffirms its commitment to advancing its humanitarian work in the health sector by providing specialised treatment for the most vulnerable groups and strengthening partnerships with national health authorities.

Qatar startup grows hydroponics for a hotter, drier future

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"People often think finance and agriculture are completely different fields, but I see many similarities. My background in finance taught me how to analyse data, manage risks, create sustainable business models, and make informed long-term decisions," he pointed out. "Agriculture today is no longer just about planting crops," Adaya said. "It involves technology, resource management, innovation, and sustainability. Financial discipline helped me understand how

to build solutions that are both environmentally sustainable and economically viable." Operating within Qatar, he said, requires navigating specific environmental constraints. "Qatar's climate presents unique challenges. The extreme summer temperatures, limited freshwater resources, and high cooling requirements make farming difficult," Adaya said. "In the beginning, we experienced crop failures, equipment issues, and many trial-and-error experiments. Instead of seeing those as failures, we treated every chal-

lenge as valuable research." "Those experiences convinced me that Qatar doesn't need to copy farming methods from other countries," he added. "We need technologies specifically designed for desert environments. That belief continues to drive our research and development today." According to Adaya, the establishment of Hydrovest Technology was intended to address an identified gap in the domestic market. While large-scale public investments have enhanced national food security, affordable

technology and technical guidance remained scarce for smaller, community growers. "I noticed that while Qatar has made remarkable investments in food security, there was still a need to make advanced farming technologies more accessible to the wider community. "Many people were interested in hydroponics but lacked practical knowledge, affordable solutions, and technical guidance," Adaya said. "Hydrovest Technology was created to bridge that gap by combining education, research, and innovation."

He said the company focuses on a broader definition of commercial success, emphasising that leadership in sustainability must balance financial metrics with societal value, focusing on inspiring local communities to adopt independent food production. "Success should not be measured only by financial performance but also by the positive impact we create for society," Adaya added. "If our work inspires one child to love agriculture or helps one family grow their own food, then we are already making a meaningful difference."

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Al-Azzawi also stressed that universities cannot achieve meaningful transformation in isolation. Instead, they should establish strategic partnerships with industry leaders and technology companies, create centres of research excellence, and expand collaborative programmes with internationally recognised universities. These partnerships, he said, would help ensure that graduates possess the practical skills demanded by today's labour market while providing students with internationally benchmarked educational opportunities. Faculty development, he added, remains the cornerstone of successful digital transformation. Continuous professional training in artificial intelligence (AI) applications, data analytics, cloud computing, and emerging digital technologies is essential if academic staff are to effectively prepare students for the rapidly evolving business landscape. Likewise, universities must invest in smart infrastructure, including ad-

vanced digital laboratories, simulation platforms, and real-time data visualisation systems that replicate contemporary business environments. To facilitate this transition, al-Azzawi's study proposes a five-stage implementation framework beginning with institutional assessment and strategic gap analysis, followed by curriculum redesign, faculty capacity building, pilot implementation of new academic pathways, and continuous evaluation through measurable performance indicators. Graduate employability, employer satisfaction, research quality, and international accreditation should serve as key benchmarks for measuring success. The future of business schools, he said, will not be determined by the number of courses they offer, but by their ability to produce graduates capable of analysing complex data, managing crises, leveraging AI responsibly, and leading organisations through the challenges of the knowledge economy. "The universities that begin this transformation today," he said, "will be the ones best positioned to lead tomorrow's knowledge-driven economy."

Amir congratulates UK's new premier

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of congratulations to Andy Burnham on the occasion of his appointment as prime minister of the United Kingdom. HH the Amir wished Burnham success in his new role and expressed hope for continued progress and prosperity in relations between Qatar and the UK. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent cables of congratulations to Burnham on the occasion. - QNA

32 e-services launched through Bee'ah app

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has launched 32 new electronic services through its "Bee'ah" mobile application, covering radiation protection, chemical substances, hazardous waste, and wildlife protection, raising the total number of services available on the app to 128. The ministry said the new package is part of its ongoing digital transformation efforts aimed at simplifying procedures, accelerating transaction processing, enabling users to submit and track requests electronically, and reducing the need for in-person visits while maintaining approved regulatory requirements. The package includes 20 radiation protection services, including issuance, renewal, and cancellation of licences related to radioactive materials and radiation devices, approval for additional radiation activities, and accreditation of companies providing testing, consultancy, calibration, and maintenance services in the radiation field. It also includes services for approving radiation measurements in oil wells and natural radioactive waste storage sites, quality control of diagnostic X-ray devices, individual dose measurements for radiation workers, licensing for storage of naturally occurring radioactive materials, and approvals for their export outside the country. In the field of chemicals and hazardous waste, the package offers 11 services, including permits for disposal of hazardous waste and hazardous healthcare waste, permits for hazardous waste transport vehicles, export permits for hazardous waste disposal, temporary storage permits, and issuance and extension of maritime transit permits for hazardous waste shipments.

Qatar joins IAEA meeting in Austria

Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), took part in the International Technical Meeting (INT7021), hosted in Vienna. The event was part of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s NUTEC Plastics Initiative to strengthen global efforts to track microplastic pollution in marine environments and coastal areas. Convened at the Vienna International Centre, the meeting delved into scientific methodologies and technologies to monitor plastic pollution, with experts, specialists, and representatives of member states participating. The event explored the mechanisms of compiling and analysing samples, alongside outlining ideal international practices to unify approved technical criteria and protocols in this respect, thereby helping to elevate the efficiency of environmental monitoring programmes and foster the credibility of scientific data. - QNA

Al Rawabi Wholesale Division launches 'Shop & Win QR100,000 Worth Gifts' campaign

Al Rawabi Wholesale Division, the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) wholesale arm of Al Rawabi Group of Companies, has launched its "Shop & Win QR100,000 Worth Gifts" campaign, a three-month customer reward initiative offering shoppers the opportunity to win 100 prizes worth a total of QR100,000.

The campaign was inaugurated at Wholesale Plus – Al Rayyan by associate director Mohammed Jaseel in the presence of heads of departments and department managers.

Al Rawabi Wholesale Division is one of Qatar's leading FMCG wholesale businesses, serving B2B (business to business), and B2C (business to consumer) customers with a wide range of international and regional brands.

Importing more than 1,800 SKUs (stock keeping units) from 43 countries, the division ensures a reliable supply of quality products across Qatar.

With a growing portfolio of over 200 brands and a strong customer-focused approach, Al Rawabi Wholesale Division continues to be a trusted wholesale partner for businesses nationwide.



The "Shop & Win QR100,000 Worth Gifts" campaign will run from July 15 to October 17, rewarding customers who spend QR500 or more at Al Rawabi Wholesale Division with an electronic raffle coupon.

Throughout the campaign, 100 lucky winners will receive prizes, including 10 Apple iPhone 17 Pro 256 GB phones, 20 gold coins, and 70 gift vouchers.

The winners will be selected through two monthly lucky draws, followed by a grand Mega Draw on the third month, providing customers with multiple opportunities to win throughout the promotional period.

"At Al Rawabi Group, our customers remain at the heart of everything we do," said Al Rawabi Group of Companies managing director Mohammed Abdulla. "We

continuously strive to create greater values through quality products, exceptional service, and rewarding shopping experiences."

"Our Wholesale Division has grown into one of Qatar's most trusted FMCG wholesale partners by consistently meeting the needs of retailers, businesses, and the HoReCa (hotel, restaurant and café) sector," he said. "The introduction of

Wholesale Plus marks another important milestone in strengthening our wholesale network and enhancing convenience for our customers."

"The 'Shop & Win QR100,000 Worth Gifts' campaign is our way of expressing sincere appreciation for the trust and loyalty our customers have placed in us over the years," Abdulla added.

Further strengthening its wholesale presence, Al Rawabi Wholesale Division has introduced Wholesale Plus, a modern Cash & Carry concept with branches at Al Nayef Building, Al Rayyan, and Ain Khaled Souq.

Wholesale Plus offers a wide range of groceries, dairy products, non-food items, health & beauty products, frozen foods, beverages, and household essentials at competitive wholesale prices for both B2B and B2C customers.

Al Rawabi Wholesale Division is also available on Tasveek, allowing businesses to place wholesale orders online through www.tasveek.com, which enables customers to browse a wide range of products and enjoy a fast, convenient, and seamless wholesale shopping experience anytime, anywhere across Qatar.

Shura Council's permanent committees play a key role in legislative body's work

The six permanent committees of the Shura Council play an important and pivotal role in the Council's exercise of its legislative and oversight powers.

This includes studying draft laws and proposals, considering proposals with interest, following up on topics referred to it by the Council, and submitting reports and recommendations.

These committees, according to the organisational structure of the Shura Council, are the Social Affairs, Labour and Housing Committee; the Health, General Services and the Environment Committee; the Internal and External Affairs Committee; the Education, Culture, Sport and Information Committee; the Economic and the Financial Affairs Committee; and the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee.

The Shura Council's first regular session of the second legislative term, corresponding to the 54th annual session, which recently concluded its work, witnessed many important achievements and remarkable activity by the committees, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030 and the interests and aspirations of the citizens.

In statements to the Qatar News Agency (QNA), the committee chairs confirmed that the diligent and intensive work undertaken reflects the Council's interest in the state's priorities and the diverse needs of society.

Social Affairs, Labour and Housing Committee chairman Dr Sultan bin Hassan al-Dhabib al-Dosari said that the committee held 20 meetings during the past session, during which it discussed topics that affect the quality of life of various segments of society.

He noted that the request for a general discussion regarding the importance of the parents' role in raising children, which was referred to the committee for study, occupied the largest share of the committee's work during the aforementioned session.

Dr al-Dosari said that the committee held 12 meetings to study this topic with feedback and consultations from officials, stakeholders, interested parties and educators in various governmental and private entities.

Health, General Services and the Environment Committee chairman Abdullah bin Nasser bin Turki al-Subaie said that the committee considers topics related to public health, transportation, municipal affairs and infrastructure, information and communication technology, electricity and water, environment and climate change, and draft laws submitted by the government and proposed laws submitted by members that fall within those areas.

He told the QNA that the committee held 19 meetings dedicated to discussing and studying the topics referred to it by the Council in detail.

Meanwhile, the draft law promulgating the Traffic Law, which was approved by the Shura Council in its amended form in its final session of the last legislative term, is one of the most important and prominent topics studied by the Council's Internal and External Affairs Committee during this term.

Committee chairman Yousef bin Ali al-Khater stressed the importance of the Traffic Law, especially in light of the rapid and significant development in the country's infrastructure.

He drew attention to another important topic studied by the committee during the previous session, which is the draft law on drones, which the Council approved in its amended form in its regular session on April 14, and referred to the government to take the necessary legislative measures.

Al-Khater noted that the committee held 10 meetings during the current session to study the topics referred to it.

Regarding the country's interest in youth development, as part of Qatar National Vision 2030, the Shura Council reviewed a request in December 29, 2025 for a general discussion submitted by a number of members regarding the enhancement of the social,

cultural and ethical role of sports clubs and their activities, and referred it to the Education, Culture, Sport and Information Committee for study.

Committee chairman Khalid bin Ahmed al-Obaidan told the QNA that the committee placed this issue at the top of its priorities and held a series of meetings to study it in depth.

The meetings discussed the best ways to develop the social, cultural and ethical role of sports clubs.

He said the meetings were attended by representatives from the Ministry of Sports and Youth and sports clubs, along with administrators, activists and former athletes.

Al-Obaidan added that the committee considered topics related to various disciplines, including scientific research, education at various stages, culture and media, sports and youth, and heritage and antiquities.

He said that two statements from the government were referred to the committee, the first of which relates to the proposal expressed by the Shura Council regarding the role of teachers in instilling the values of national identity, and the other regarding the proposal submitted by the Council concerning the cultural legacy project for hosting the FIFA 2022 World Cup Qatar.

During the Shura Council's first regular session of the second legislative term, corresponding to the 54th annual session, the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee completed its review of eight important draft laws.

The most notable was a proposed law on the digital protection of children, submitted by a number of Council members.

Committee chairman Khalid bin Ghanim al-Maadheed emphasised the importance of the proposal, noting that the rapid digital transformation and the increasing use of digital tools and online platforms by children make it essential to enact effective legislation that protects them and safeguards their well-being from online risks.

He added that the committee held 14 meetings during the session and conducted comprehensive and in-depth reviews of all draft laws referred to it, with the participation of specialists and officials from the various relevant authorities.

Meanwhile, the Shura Council's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee examined six matters within its jurisdiction.

In a statement to the QNA, committee chairman Mohammed bin Yousef al-Mana said that approving the State's General Budget is one of the Council's principal constitutional responsibilities, as stipulated in the country's Constitution.

He noted that the draft State General Budget and the accompanying draft law approving it are among the first items considered by the Council at the beginning of each annual session.

Al-Mana said that the committee held 11 meetings during the session.

These began with dedicated meetings to review the draft State General Budget for the 2026 fiscal year and the accompanying draft law approving it.

He also reviewed the other draft laws examined by the committee during the session, including a draft law amending certain provisions of Decree-Law No. (24) of 2019 on the Regulation and Management of the Strategic Stockpile of Food and Consumer Goods.

Al-Mana stressed the importance of this draft law, noting that it serves as a fundamental pillar in strengthening the State's food security and ensuring the sustainable and proactive availability of essential goods under all circumstances, particularly during emergencies and crises.

Regarding the committee's review of the government's response to the Shura Council's recommendation on supporting national and foreign investment, al-Mana said that the recommendation included a number of proposals and observations. – QNA

The Social Affairs, Labour and Housing Committee held 20 meetings in the past session, with 12 meetings devoted to the topic of the parents' role in raising children

The most notable of the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee's reviews of draft laws was related to the digital protection of children, with 14 meetings held to discuss it

QCB grants first licence to insurance price comparison platform

The Qatar Central Bank (QCB) has issued the country's first licence for an insurance policy price comparison website, marking a further step in its efforts to expand the financial technology (fintech) sector.

In a post on X, the QCB said that it had granted the licence to Ammen, allowing the company to operate insurance

price comparison website services in Qatar.

The central bank said the move forms part of its strategy to strengthen the country's fintech ecosystem.

With the addition of Ammen, the number of financial technology companies operating under the QCB's supervision and regulatory oversight rises to 16. – QNA

Doha Debates youth programme helps to shape a generation

Young people from around the world are learning the skills to listen, question and engage in constructive dialogue and actively applying them in their communities, careers and areas of study through the Ambassador Programme by Doha Debates, a production of Qatar Foundation.

This online educational programme teaches young people from across the globe to debate differently.

Rather than engaging in a Western-style battle of ideas, participants take an approach to dialogue that is grounded in the Majlis – a welcoming social space to discuss community issues.

Each year, more than 400 youth from over 80 countries come together to learn to listen to one another, understand points of view, and collaborate on solutions to complex problems.

The programme is open for application till August 24 to fluent English speakers between the ages of 18–24.

Algoori Maki, 19, an engineering student at Qatar University, joined the programme with a clear intention: to be part of a space where ideas translate into impact.

However, she also came away understanding how to channel convictions into thoughtful exploration.

"I used to see debating as a way to prove your point and win an argument," Maki said. "But my perspective has changed. Today, I see debate as a way to explore ideas, challenge assumptions and understand different viewpoints. It's about listening with intention."

For Mohammed al-Qassabi, a 26-year-old Doha-based cybersecurity engineer with a Master's of Science in artificial intelligence (AI) and



Doha Debates has opened applications for its Ambassadors Programme.

cognitive cybersecurity, meaningful dialogue has always been tied to the way people collaborate, lead and create impact.

That belief led him to the ambassador programme, where his understanding of debate began to shift.

"I saw debate as presenting arguments and trying to convince others," he reflected. "Over time, I realised that discussions are less about winning and more about understanding."

Across continents, participants have experienced similar transformations.

For Maria Emilia Zapata, a 24-year-old lawyer from Quito, the programme provided a framework for values she had long held but had not articulated.

"The idea of using dialogue to foster understanding and find common ground really resonated with me," she said. "Being part of the programme made me feel understood, and like I had found a community."

With a background in law and human rights, Zapata had been trained in competitive environments.

"I've come to see debate as a way to

listen, embrace different perspectives and build mutual understanding," she said.

This kind of transformation is one of the programme's primary goals.

While Doha Debates programming reaches millions globally, its impact is measured not only in audience numbers, but in participants' ability to articulate ideas, listen across differences and engage in constructive dialogue.

These skills – the building blocks of healthier public discourse – extend far beyond the programme.

For Elijah Man'Ishimwe, a 31-year-old refugee leader and international relations student based in Nairobi, such skills are essential.

Having grown up in Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda, he witnessed firsthand how misunderstandings can escalate into conflict, and how important it is to amplify under-represented perspectives.

"I saw this programme as an opportunity to bring those voices into global conversations," he said, "while strengthening my own ability to lead dialogue with empathy and structure."

Ooredoo continues to support Barshim as Official Telecom Sponsor of 'What Gravity Tour'

Ooredoo, Qatar's leading telecommunications provider, has announced its partnership as the Official Telecom Sponsor of the "What Gravity Tour", the international high jump series founded by Qatar's sporting icon and Ooredoo brand ambassador Mutaz Barshim.

More than a sporting competition, the What Gravity Tour is a global platform that brings together elite athletics, culture, and community, celebrating the unique identity of each host city while inspiring the next generation of athletes.

The tour is expanding the global appeal of high jump and establishing itself as a premier fixture on the international athletics calendar.

Following its launch in Doha, the tour now continues its international journey with events in Heilbronn, Germany; Monaco; and Banská Bystrica, Slovakia.

"Our partnership with the What Gravity Tour is a testament to Ooredoo's unwavering commitment to championing initiatives that celebrate excellence, foster opportunity, and showcase Qatar on the global stage," said senior Ooredoo Qatar director of marketing communications Sabah Rabiah al-Kuwari. "We are especially proud to support Mutaz Barshim, whose achievements continue to inspire and whose bold vision is redefining the future of high jump."

"The What Gravity Tour was created to elevate the sport of high jump while inspiring young athletes around the world to dream bigger," Barshim said. "Having Ooredoo as the Official Telecom Sponsor is particularly meaningful because we share a commitment to empowering communities and creating opportunities for future generations."



"Together, we look forward to taking the tour to new audiences and making every event a memorable experience," he said.

WCM-Q bolsters evidence-based medicine skills

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) is strengthening expertise in evidence-based medicine by promoting the critical analysis and synthesis of scientific research through initiatives led by its Institute for Population Health (IPH).

According to IPH officials, the strongest scientific evidence comes from systematically analysing and synthesising all relevant studies rather than relying on individual research alone. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses provide robust evidence that underpins evidence-based healthcare, supporting safe, effective and patient- and community-centred care.

Dr Sohaila Cheema, associate professor of clinical population health sciences and assistant dean of IPH, said: “Systematic reviews play an important role in helping health professionals identify, se-

lect, appraise and synthesise primary study data extracted from published literature in an unbiased way to answer a specific research question. This produces reliable scientific evidence essential to ensuring evidence-based healthcare practice and patient-centred care.”

As part of these efforts, IPH recently organised a regional workshop, ‘Introduction to Systematic Review and Meta-analysis: Principles and Practice’, which attracted more than 35 participants from across the region. The programme was designed for physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, allied health practitioners, researchers, educators and healthcare administrators seeking to strengthen their understanding of evidence-based healthcare.

Dr Cheema noted that the level of interest received in the workshop from participants within Qatar and across the region is very encouraging.

The workshop introduced participants to the principles of evidence-based medicine and



Some of the participants and WCM-Q officials at the event.

the methods used to conduct and interpret systematic reviews and meta-analyses. It also provided practical guidance on designing and conducting systematic reviews. Participants explored key

concepts including primary and secondary research, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and the step-by-step process of conducting systematic reviews.

The programme also covered

formulating research questions using the PICO/PICOTS framework, literature searching and screening, data extraction, and assessing study quality and risk of bias. The PICO/PICOTS framework is a structured approach used to formulate clear, answerable research questions and establish eligibility criteria for systematic reviews and clinical trials.

The workshop also examined methods for synthesising and reporting systematic reviews, highlighting the differences between qualitative and quantitative synthesis and providing an overview of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. These internationally recognised reporting standards promote transparent and comprehensive reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Additional sessions focused on the critical appraisal of systematic reviews with and without meta-analysis, principles of meta-analysis and meta-regression, and approaches to evaluating the

strength of evidence. Participants also gained practical experience in appraising published systematic reviews and developing review protocols.

The workshop featured presentations by Dr Karima Chaabna, assistant professor of clinical population health sciences and manager of population health research at IPH; Dr Amit Abraham, assistant professor of clinical population health sciences and assistant director of IPH; Dr Sonia Chaabane, epidemiologist, senior specialist in population health research at IPH and instructor in population health sciences; and Anupama Jithesh, research projects coordinator at IPH.

IPH, a dedicated institute within WCM-Q, was created to advance education, research, community, and related matters. It aims to advance public health and community wellness through education, evidence-based health research and lifestyle medicine initiatives aimed at addressing chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity across the region.

Liquidation Announcement (Second)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Umm Laqhab LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

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Commercial Registration No. (39259)

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within the remaining legal period of 25 days.

Digital transformation at HMC boosts precision medicine

Qatar’s already efficient healthcare sector is investing heavily in digital transformation and the latest smart health technologies, marking a new phase for laboratory diagnostics and genetic testing.

Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) has adopted advanced digital systems to manage laboratory operations and integrate analytical instruments with medical records electronically, delivering test results securely and immediately while reducing turnaround times and improving accuracy and quality.

This digital transformation aligns with Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to build an integrated digital healthcare system driven by innovation, data, and advanced technologies to support faster clinical decision-making, improve the patient experience, and enhance resource efficiency. Digital transformation has become a cornerstone of healthcare development in Qatar, with expanding use of artificial intelligence and data analytics strengthening the sector’s readiness for future challenges.

Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Chairman, Dr Einas al-Kuwari, revealed that the department has achieved significant advances through qualitative achievements, record numbers, and large-scale digital transformations that reinforce the role of medical laboratories as a key pillar of Qatar’s modern healthcare system. She said HMC laboratories perform more than 20mn diagnostic tests annually, including approximately 153,000 genetic tests conducted by its Genetic Diagnostics Laboratory. These include testing for inherited disorders, genetic mutations linked to blood can-

cers and lymph nodes and other diseases, as well as premarital and newborn screenings.

She said the current phase of digital transformation has focused on improving operational efficiency, accelerating reporting of results and enhancing service quality. As part of developing its precision medicine services, HMC has launched an in-house Clinical Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) for the first time, alongside new pharmacogenomics and thrombophilia testing services, expanding its ability to deliver personalized diagnosis and treatment, she said.

In terms of blood transfusion services, Dr al-Kuwari said Qatar has achieved self-sufficiency in blood and blood components through strong donor participation. HMC has also secured international accreditation for 11 sites and introduced the use of Low Titer O Whole Blood for critically injured trauma patients, improving survival rates through faster treatment of severe bleeding. She added that HMC has introduced cryopreservation technology for rare blood group red blood cell units, allowing them to be stored for up to 30 years, strengthening preparedness for complex cases.

In the organ transplantation field, Qatar’s only histocompatibility laboratory continues to support kidney and bone marrow transplant programs using advanced technologies that reduce the risk of immune rejection and improve transplant outcomes. The laboratory also offers advanced tests, including cell-free DNA (cfDNA) and immune cell function testing to support monitoring of transplant patients.

Dr al-Kuwari said the Cell Therapy

Laboratory continues to provide stem cell-based bone marrow transplant for adult cancer patients, with an increase of 19% compared to last year.

In clinical biochemistry, she said, HMC has introduced therapeutic drug monitoring, lipoprotein(a) testing to support early cardiovascular disease detection, expanded zinc and preeclampsia screening, and deployed advanced polymerase chain reaction (PCR) systems for respiratory virus testing.

The anatomical pathology laboratory receives more than 60,000 tissue samples annually, with cancer or suspected cancer cases accounting for around 13% of total cases. The growing volume reflects increasing demand for histopathology services and their central role in early cancer detection, supported by advanced diagnostic technologies that improve accuracy and speed clinical decision-making, enhancing the quality of care provided to patients.

Meanwhile, the microbiology department, she added, continues to strengthen efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance by developing national surveillance profiles, implementing the One Health approach, and expanding diagnostic supervision and infection prevention programs that improve diagnostic efficiency, safety and reduce costs.

On medical education, Dr al-Kuwari said the department organised Qatar’s first pathology conference and was accredited as a venue for the Royal College of Pathologists Fellowship (FRCPath) examinations, postgraduate and fellowship training programs, and strengthened academic collaboration with Qatar University. (QNA)

CRA boosts access to global connectivity through its cable network

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has issued Decision No. (12) of 2026 on the Regulation for Offer of Access to Submarine Cable Landing Station (SCLS) International Connectivity Services, together with accompanying guidelines. The move aims to enhance transparency, predictability, and fairness in access to international connectivity services, while supporting competition and investment in Qatar’s information and communications technology (ICT) sector.

Submarine cable landing stations are key gateways linking Qatar to global communications networks.

Under the regulation, licensed service providers operating in Qatar are required to prepare and submit Offers of Access to CRA for approval within specified timelines. These offers must set out the available services, applicable charges, and relevant terms and conditions.

Once approved by the CRA, they must be published, providing greater transparency and giving access seekers clearer visibility of available services, pricing, and access conditions through a published regulatory framework. The regulation also establishes clear procedures for access requests, negotiations, and dispute resolution. (QNA)

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QAFco ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ 6000005868	Tender for fabrication of new condenser coils, supply and dismantling of existing coils, installation, testing, commissioning and handing over of HVAC systems in full operational condition.	500/- (Non-refundable)	48,480 (forty-eight thousand four hundred eighty Qatari Riyals)	21.07.2026 22.07.2026 23.07.2026 26.07.2026	31-08-2026

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
 - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFco)**
 - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
 - IBAN : **QA51QNB00000000013025828058**
 - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to rpodila@qafco.com.qa on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the submission Tender Fee receipt, you may contact at rpodila@qafco.com.qa or on 44227786.
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.

The Tender shall be strictly submitted using the QAFco's Supply Chain Portal – SAP / Ariba, on or before the "Tender Closing Date". Tenderers who fail to adhere to this requirement will result in the disqualification of their Tender.



Qatar Red Crescent – Medical Affairs Division

Tenders Announcement: -

Sr. #	Tender No.	Description	Temporary Tender Bond	Documents Fees (Non-Refundable)	Closing Date
1	QRC/WHC/11-2026	Supply of drinking water Gallons with Dispensers Including Comprehensive Maintenance Services on call off basis	4,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	11/08/2026
2	QRC/WHC/12-2026	Supply & Installation (four locations) of Palo Alto Firewall (MOI-SSD requirement's for connectivity of CCTV)	4,000 Q.R	500 Q.R	04/08/2026

The documents can be collected from Medical Affairs Division, Ain Khalid Area, Sunday to Thursday from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm till the closing date or by sending email along with the requested documents below.

Required Documents:

- Authorization letter to receive tender documents + ID copy of the person will be receiving the documents.
- Company's Commercial registration copy with the business activity clearly specified therein.
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**For more information: please call: (50044554), or
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US attacks deepen hardship, not dissent, in Iran’s south

Opposition to Iran’s clerical rulers has long simmered in the country’s impoverished south. But after bearing the brunt of US strikes this month, many residents are directing their anger at President Donald Trump and an air campaign they say has upended their lives.

“Trump has ruined our lives more than the rulers did,” said Amin (name changed), who runs a small boarding house for tourists in the south, blaming the US strikes for worsening economic hardship. Despite long-running hostility towards Tehran in many southern provinces, including among some of Iran’s marginalised ethnic minorities, none of those Reuters spoke to said the conflict had generated support for renewed anti-government protests. “I feel like I’m suffocating,” added Amin.

Such frustration with the



Vehicles wait in traffic near a heavily-damaged bridge connecting Roudan and Bandar Abbas in southern Iran that was hit by US. (AFP)

strikes’ impact helps explain why, even in provinces known for anti-government protest, the war has not triggered further unrest — something Trump had hoped for

at the start of the conflict. Reza, 62, a veteran of the 1988-89 Iran-Iraq war, said his son had been detained during mass protests in January and he had

little time for Iran’s theocratic system. But he was still willing to fight against the US, he said. “If my country needs me I’ll take up arms again, not for this regime but for the soil beneath my feet. It’s the least I owe it,” said the retired teacher.

The clerical leadership fears prolonged economic hardship could further anger its core base among middle- and low-income Iranians, particularly if a peace deal remains out of reach.

Southern Iran’s provinces of Hormozgan, Bushehr, Khuzestan and Sistan-Baluchistan form a large, diverse region stretching along a humid, rugged coastline from Iraq to Pakistan. Iran’s minorities have been opposed to the ruling clerics for decades. Grievances include the right to use native languages in schools, courts to policies that have damaged their local environments. (AFP)

Gaza negotiator Khalil al-Hayya elected as the new chief of Hamas

For months, veteran Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya spearheaded the group’s indirect ceasefire negotiations with arch-foe Israel in an effort to halt the war in Gaza. Yesterday, the Palestinian movement named him as its new chief, favouring him over longtime leader Khaled Meshaal. “Khalil al-Hayya was elected by an overwhelming majority,” a senior Hamas official told AFP, adding that he is expected to formally assume the role next week.

“The election process was conducted through a highly complex and secretive mechanism because of the difficult security situation and the occupation’s assassination of several political and military leaders,” another source in Hamas said. A former official from the Muslim Brotherhood and one of the founders of Hamas, al-Hayya is viewed as a moderate, and will replace slain leader Yahya Sinwar. Along with Meshaal, he survived an Israeli assassination attempt in Doha in September 2025 that left several dead, including one of his sons and his chief of



Senior Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya. (Reuters/File Photo)

staff. Al-Hayya is known to have good relations with Lebanon’s Hezbollah, with Arab countries such as Qatar, Egypt and Algeria, as well as with Iran, his movement’s main financial and military backer, a Hamas official close to him told AFP. The official highlighted al-Hayya’s pragmatic and conservative temperament. “He doesn’t get carried away easily, and is respected by all members of the political bureau as well as by military commanders,” the official said. Al-Hayya was raised in a religious and conservative family in Gaza. (AFP)

Liquidation Announcement (Second)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Al Wukir LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

Al Wukir LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
Commercial Registration No. (39260)

Any party that has any claims with this Company should send a registered letter, including all supporting documents to
P.O.Box: 431, Doha – Qatar
within the remaining legal period of 25 days.

Bahrain accuses Iran of targeting navigation systems

Bahrain said Iranian drones targeted its air navigation systems on yesterday, though traffic remained unaffected, while Kuwait also reported attacks as the United States and Iran traded strikes.

A shaky US-Iran ceasefire has all but collapsed as Iran began attacking vessels using an Omani route in the Strait of Hormuz.

In response, the US has attacked Iran, which has responded with strikes on the Gulf and other Arab countries.

“As a result of a hostile Iranian act of aggression against the Kingdom of Bahrain, civil air navigation systems... were targeted by hostile drones,” Bahrain’s aviation authority said.

“However, air navigation operations remained unaffected,” it added.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards later said they targeted American assets at two air bases in Bahrain and the main port in the island kingdom.

Yesterday afternoon, air raid sirens blared once more in Bahrain, and AFP correspondents in the capital Manama heard explosions.

Bahrain’s military had said in the morning that it “intercepted and destroyed a number of Iranian aerial attacks” (AFP)

Lebanon army begins taking over southern ‘pilot zones’

The Lebanese army began taking charge of security in three southern villages yesterday, the US said, as a deal to secure an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and the disarmament of Hezbollah faced its first test on the ground.

The US State Department said operations had started in “pilot zones” in Froun, Srifa and Zawtar al-Gharbiya “in accordance with the Trilateral Framework and under the auspices of the Military Coordination Group for Lebanon.”

State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott described the step as “a direct outcome” of talks held between Israeli and Lebanese delegations in Rome last week, adding that Washington would keep working with both sides “to implement the framework to a successful conclusion.”

The framework, signed by Lebanon, Israel and the United States on June 26 after several rounds of direct negotiations, envisions a phased Israeli pull-back from positions in south.

In exchange, the Lebanese Armed Forces are to assume sole security control of vacated areas and certify that they have been cleared of Hezbollah weapons and infrastructure.

The pilot zones are intended to trial the approach in a handful of villages straddling the Litani River before it is extended to other areas. Hezbollah has rejected the framework. (AFP)

Liquidation Announcement (Second)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Gulf LPG Transport Company W.L.L
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

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Liquidation Announcement (Second)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Bu Sidra LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

Bu Sidra LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
Commercial Registration No. (38672)

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Liquidation Announcement (Second)

Based on the Extraordinary General Assembly Resolution

to Liquidate

Lubara LPG Shipping Company W.L.L.
(Voluntary Liquidation)

The Liquidator – Rami Mohammad Ali Qudah
Deloitte & Touche – Qatar Branch

Announce the liquidation of

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Summer Food Poisoning: The Hidden Risk of Asymptomatic Food Handlers and the Need for Advanced Screening



Every summer, as temperatures rise across Qatar and the Gulf region, so does the incidence of foodborne illnesses. The combination of high ambient temperatures and improper food handling creates ideal conditions for bacteria, viruses, and parasites to multiply rapidly, leading to an increase in cases of food poisoning. Healthcare facilities often experience a seasonal surge in patients presenting with vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever, and dehydration. While maintaining the cold chain and proper food storage remain essential, one of the most overlooked contributors to foodborne disease is the **asymptomatic food handler**.

Food poisoning occurs when contaminated food or beverages are consumed. The contamination may be caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, or the toxins they produce. Common foodborne pathogens include *Salmonella* spp., *Shigella* spp., pathogenic *Escherichia coli*, *Campylobacter* spp., *Vibrio* spp., *Yersinia enterocolitica*, *Clostridioides difficile*, *Clostridium perfringens*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*. Viral pathogens such as Norovirus, Rotavirus, Adenovirus, Astrovirus, and Sapovirus are frequent causes of outbreaks, while parasites including *Giardia lamblia*, *Cryptosporidium* spp., *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Blastocystis hominis*, and *Dientamoeba fragilis* continue to contribute significantly to gastrointestinal infections.

Perhaps the greatest public health concern is that many individuals carrying these pathogens **do not exhibit any symptoms**. These **asymptomatic carriers** continue to shed infectious

organisms while feeling completely healthy, unknowingly contaminating food through inadequate hand hygiene or unsafe food handling practices.

The risk extends far beyond restaurants and hotels. In the Gulf region, a significant proportion of meals are prepared not only by restaurant staff, catering personnel, institutional kitchen workers, and food manufacturing employees, but also by **housemaids, domestic workers, home cooks, nannies, and caregivers** who prepare food daily for families. An asymptomatic carrier working in either a commercial kitchen or a private household can unknowingly transmit foodborne pathogens to children, elderly family members, pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals, and the wider community. A single carrier has the potential to initiate an outbreak affecting dozens or even hundreds of people.

For this reason, **routine health screening of all individuals involved in food preparation should be considered a fundamental component of preventive healthcare**. Food handler screening should not be limited to commercial food establishments alone but should also include domestic workers responsible for preparing meals within households. Early identification of asymptomatic carriers protects both public health and individual families while reducing healthcare costs and preventing avoidable outbreaks.

Traditional laboratory investigations such as stool culture, microscopy for ova and parasites, and serological testing remain valuable diagnostic tools. However, recent advances in molecular diagnostics have dramatically improved the speed, sensitivity, and accuracy of pathogen detection.

Recognizing this growing need, **Micro Health Laboratories** has introduced the **MicroPlex Gastrointestinal (GI) RT-PCR Panel**, an advanced syndromic molecular diagnostic assay capable of simultaneously detecting **27 clinically important gastrointestinal pathogens** directly from a single stool specimen. The panel detects a comprehensive range of bacterial, viral, and parasitic pathogens responsible for foodborne illness, acute gastroenteritis, infectious diarrhoea, healthcare-associated

diarrhoea, and traveller's diarrhoea, including *Salmonella* spp., *Shigella* spp., shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC), *Campylobacter* spp., *Vibrio* spp., *Clostridioides difficile*, Norovirus, Rotavirus, Adenovirus, *Giardia lamblia*, *Cryptosporidium* spp., *Entamoeba histolytica*, and many others. Using multiplex RT-PCR technology, the assay provides rapid, highly sensitive, and simultaneous detection of multiple pathogens from a single sample, offering a significantly faster turnaround time than conventional stool culture and microscopy. This makes it particularly valuable for diagnosing symptomatic patients, investigating foodborne outbreaks, and identifying asymptomatic carriers among food handlers before transmission occurs.

Laboratory screening, however, should always be complemented by robust food safety practices. Regular hand hygiene, proper cooking temperatures, prevention of cross-contamination, safe storage of food, routine health education, and immediate exclusion of symptomatic food handlers from food preparation remain essential measures in preventing disease transmission.

As Qatar continues to strengthen its food safety framework and public health infrastructure, incorporating advanced molecular screening for food handlers including domestic workers and housemaids involved in household food preparation would represent a significant step towards preventing foodborne diseases before they occur.

Food safety is a shared responsibility. Through collaboration between regulatory authorities, healthcare professionals, employers, households, diagnostic laboratories, and consumers, supported by innovative molecular diagnostic technologies, we can substantially reduce the burden of foodborne illness and ensure that every meal served whether in a restaurant, workplace, school, hospital, or home is prepared safely and consumed with confidence.

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AFP
Port Sudan, Sudan

The US State Department imposed a new round of sanctions on the Sudanese government yesterday, accusing it of using chemical weapons in its war against rival paramilitaries. Though Washington has not provided details on the chemical weapons used, international media have reported two chlorine gas barrels dropped in 2024. Since April 2023, the war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces has drawn widespread reports of war crimes, with the US also sanctioning paramilitary commanders for committing genocide in Darfur. The State Department last

month announced a second round of sanctions on the army-aligned government, after last year's determination that "the Government of Sudan used chemical weapons in 2024", in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which Khartoum ratified in 1999. Washington has not provided details on where or when the chemical attacks occurred. Sudan's army-aligned government has repeatedly denied the US allegations, calling them "baseless" and "political blackmail". The latest round of sanctions, effective Monday, further limit Sudan's access to financing and US exports, and ban Sudan-owned carriers from using US airspace. Last year, the New York Times and France 24 reported the Sudanese army had used chemical

weapons at least twice in the war. The American outlet, citing four anonymous senior US officials, said the chemical agent used, with the direct approval of army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, was chlorine. In an October investigation, the French media outlet reported the army dropped two chlorine barrels in September 2024 around the al-Jaili oil refinery north of Khartoum. It used open source data, social media footage and five experts to confirm two barrels of chlorine gas had been dropped by aircraft. The RSF controlled the area and Sudan's largest oil facility at the time. The army, which has been in control of Sudan for most of its post-independence history since 1956, has been accused of carrying

out chemical attacks before. In 2016, an Amnesty International investigation accused the army — then allied with the RSF — of using chemical weapons on civilians in the western region of Darfur. Khartoum denied the accusations. In 1998, the US claimed that the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum was producing chemical components for Al Qaeda, before destroying the factory in a missile attack. Relations between the US and Sudan were strained for decades under the rule of Omar al-Bashir, who came to power in 1993 and whose military rule was long accused of supporting Al-Qaeda. US sanctions imposed in the early 1990s were tightened in 2006 following accusations of genocide

in the Darfur region, carried out on behalf of Khartoum by the RSF's predecessor militia, the Janjaweed. After a popular uprising ousted al-Bashir in 2019, the US removed Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and began to lift sanctions. Some were reintroduced following a 2021 coup, led by Burhan alongside his then-deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, before the allies' power struggle erupted into all-out war in April 2023. By January 2025, the US had imposed sanctions on both Burhan and Daglo, who is commonly known as Hemeti. Sudanese civilians have long borne the brunt of sanctions on their country. Both Burhan and Hemeti's

camps built considerable wealth while under a decades-long sanctions regime, finessing transnational financial networks while the country was left underdeveloped. Today, the country is suffering what the UN calls the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with nearly 20 million people suffering acute food insecurity. The war has killed over 200,000 people, according to some estimates by aid workers, and has unleashed atrocities on civilians. Washington has attempted to play peacemaker for years. Early in the war, it co-hosted truce talks with Saudi Arabia, which failed to yield a ceasefire. More recently, it has tried to push for a three-month humanitarian truce, but failed to bring the two sides to the table at all.

Ontario wildfires expand to 1.8mn acres of forest

Reuters
Toronto

Wildfires burning across Ontario have grown to 1.8mn acres over the weekend, Premier Doug Ford said yesterday as air quality from smoke improved in much of the province but remained unhealthy in parts of the US Midwest. Ford said at a press conference in Toronto that the province is battling 190 active blazes and around 1,800 residents had been evacuated from sparsely populated communities in northwestern Ontario. "We will not spare a penny fighting these fires and keeping people safe," Ford said. The wildfires, which are mostly in difficult-to-access areas, have increased tensions between Canada and the US, where some politicians have criticised Canada's response. Heavy smoke from fires in northern and western Ontario as well as northern Minnesota brought the world's worst air quality to Toronto last week, which then spread to New York and Washington. Air quality has since improved in southern Ontario as well as the US Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, although it remained poor in several US states in the Midwest. By the morning, the US Environmental Protection Agency's AirNow site rated the air quality as "unhealthy" or "unhealthy for



Smoke rises from the Matthew Creek wildfire (N11Q20) west of Kimberly, British Columbia, Canada on Sunday. (Reuters)

sensitive groups" in an area covering parts of Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. US President Donald Trump said that he told Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney that Canada must do better at controlling Ontario wildfires. Trump said he spoke to Carney about the issue at the FIFA World Cup final that both of them attended on Sunday, two days after threatening to levy additional tariffs on Canadian goods. Carney has not directly responded to Trump, though he has said all countries including the US must do more to address climate change. Ford said it's "unacceptable"

that Trump has chosen to criticise Canada's wildfire response and threaten tariffs rather than sending help. He cited Ontario sending hydro workers to the US in 2024 to help with the response to Hurricane Helene and water bombers to California to fight wildfires in 2025 as evidence of Canadian support for its neighbour during natural disasters. "Rather than criticise and threaten Canada, your closest friends, maybe one day you're going to need our help," Ford said. Major forest fires have become a regular occurrence in Canada, home to some of the world's largest forests. Experts say rising temperatures have led to drier timber and increased fire risk.

Chile declares state of emergency after rains

Heavy rainfall in Chile has killed five people and destroyed or severely damaged over 1,000 homes, pushing the government to declare a state of emergency yesterday. Rain has lashed the northern arid regions of Coquimbo and Atacama since last Wednesday, where such intense levels of precipitation are highly unusual. Five people have died, four people are missing and over 1,100 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged due to the extreme weather, according to official figures. The "increasingly serious" conditions prompted President Jose Antonio Kast to declare a state of emergency in the affected areas on Monday, he announced to the press. The measure allows the government to deploy the military, restrict freedom of movement and quickly mobilise aid.



Members of the Chilean Army rescue residents stranded in a rural area of the Coquimbo region following severe weather conditions. (AFP)

Rising rivers have blocked roads and isolated communities, while mud and power cuts have disrupted drinking water supplies in Coquimbo. "What normally rains in a month fell in an hour" on Sunday,

deputy interior minister Maximo Pavez told reporters, calling the rainfall "abnormal and extreme." Chile has not witnessed this much rainfall in two decades, Arnaldo Zuniga of the national meteorological service told AFP.

US accuses Cuba of sweeping spy infiltration campaign

The US yesterday accused Cuban spies of infiltrating the highest levels of government in Washington, as President Donald Trump pushes to end communist rule of the island while reviving anti-leftist rhetoric at home. The US State Department released a report containing little new information, but adding pressure on Cuba amid a campaign that has seen Washington impose an effective oil embargo and new sanctions while indicting its former president, Raul Castro. It comes as Trump leads a revival of Cold War-style rhetoric portraying left-wing US

political figures as a communist "menace" that must be cut out "like a cancer." The US will vote in midterm elections later this year. The State Department report alleged that Cuba "has infiltrated the highest reaches of the US government, recruited and cultivated generations of American activists (and) backed an unprecedented wave of left-wing terrorism on American soil." While the allegations represent an escalation in US-Cuba tensions, espionage between the two countries has long been known. Since the Cold War, the US has made high-profile arrests of Cuban intelligence officers,

including the "Cuban Five" who were convicted of infiltrating civil society groups in Florida in the 1990s, and Ana Montes, who spied from a senior position within the Defense Intelligence Agency. In more recent cases, State Department intelligence analyst Walter Kendall Myers and former US ambassador to Bolivia Victor Manuel Rocha pled guilty in separate cases to spying for the communist country. Meanwhile, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Cuban exiles tried to assassinate late Cuban president and revolutionary leader Fidel Castro more than 600 times. (AFP)

East Africans find fragile solace and refuge in Kenya as repression soars

AFP
Nairobi

Tanzanian opposition official David Djumbe fled to Kenya after a crackdown on dissidents in his country, but now lives in constant fear of a cross-border abduction. Dozens of Ugandans and Tanzanians are thought to be hiding in neighbouring Kenya after recent elections in their countries triggered mass arrests, kidnappings, and murders. Five refugees agreed to speak to AFP. Each said they knew between 20 and 40 others who had fled to Kenya in recent months. Djumbe was personal assistant to Tanzania's opposition leader

Tundu Lissu, who was jailed ahead of October's election. Tanzania's security forces unleashed a ruthless crackdown on protests sparked by alleged rigging of the vote, with rights groups and the opposition saying thousands were killed. The government says it was 518. After the vote — in which President Samia Suluhu Hassan winning 98% — Djumbe received a warning by phone call, saying: "You only have three days before you disappear." "Once they've extracted all the information from you through torture, they'll kill you and dump your body on the roadside so everyone knows your story has ended," he told AFP. Djumbe said his home was then raided twice by men who identified

themselves as police officers, forcing him to flee the country under cover of darkness. "I entered Kenya secretly... I had to cross the border without following formal procedures," he said. He spent six months in a safe house in Kenya before returning home in May, believing the threat had eased. But just three days later, he was grabbed off the street and bundled into a car. By chance, some local motorbike taxi drivers saw his abduction and followed the car, creating enough of a commotion to allow him to escape. He fled for a second time to Kenya. Ugandan rights activist Eriza, who asked to give a fake name for fear of reprisals, said he was on an army hit-list during elections

in January in which President Yoweri Museveni won a seventh straight term. The president's son, army chief Muhoozi Kainerugaba, openly boasts on social media of kidnapping and torturing opposition figures in his "basement" and spearheaded a crackdown during the election, saying on X that security forces had killed 30 opposition supporters and arrested 2,000. The main opposition candidate, Bobi Wine, was forced into hiding and has now fled to the US. "There was no point in waiting... I had seen threats against comrades materialise in a very dangerous way," Eriza told AFP. Luka, a lawyer for a prominent Ugandan rights organisation who also gave a false name, fled to the Kenyan coast after a tip-off that he

was at risk of arrest. "The environment in Uganda is very rough for doing human rights-related work. Not the worst of the worst, but it's getting there gradually," he said. The interviewees said they only feel "relatively safe" in Kenya. Kenyan security forces have been accused of dozens of abductions targeting government critics — which they deny — especially since mass protests against President William Ruto in 2024. But it remains a relative safe-haven compared to the extreme repression in its neighbours. "In Kenya, although systems are intentionally being weakened and eroded, there still is a stronger civil society, a stronger media presence and judiciary," said Mwanase

Ahmed, of the Pan-African Solidarity Network. Its neighbours do not always respect national boundaries, however. In 2024, Ugandan opposition leader Kizza Besigye was abducted in Nairobi and forcibly returned to Uganda, where he is facing treason charges that he says are a farce. Two months later, well-known Tanzanian activist Maria Sarungi was abducted in Kenya, though an immediate outcry by rights groups secured her release before she was smuggled over the border. Eriza says Ugandan operatives "are here... They wait for you. They go to clubs and cafes." He only meets people in public places and during the day, so that if he is "seized in broad daylight", there will be witnesses.

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Sao Tome's president wins re-election

Sao Tome and Principe's incumbent president Carlos Vila Nova was re-elected outright in this weekend's ballot, the national electoral commission of the small African archipelago announced yesterday. Vila Nova won 56% in the first-round presidential vote on Sunday, against 41% for party rival Nito Viegas D'Abreu, who was backed by former prime minister Patrice Trovoada. Abstention was high at 59% in the former Portuguese colony in the Gulf of Guinea, which is viewed as a model of African parliamentary democracy. "These results are valid and no irregularities were detected," National Electoral Commission head Jeudiger Nascimento said when the official results were announced.

After independence in 1975, the island nation in equatorial Africa saw several attempted coups, including in 2022 that was promptly thwarted by the military. The country of just 200,000 people — which derives most of its revenue from growing cocoa, coffee, vanilla and pepper — has since stabilised. The president has a largely ceremonial role, while most executive powers lie with the prime minister. Vila Nova, 66, began his career as a civil servant, then managed two major hotels in Sao Tome city before serving as a minister from 2010 to 2018. He became president in 2021 with the backing of the centre-right Independent Democratic Action party (ADI). He was criticised in 2025 for dismissing then prime minister

Patrice Trovoada, also of the ADI, a decision that was ruled a year later to be unconstitutional. Trovoada, now head of the ADI and vying to regain the prime ministerial post from incumbent Americo Ramos in legislative polls in September, had thrown his support behind Vila Nova's rival Viegas D'Abreu. Sao Tome and Principe's unique landscapes make it a prime tourist destination, especially for the ultra-wealthy. Major international oil firms including TotalEnergies have acquired licences to explore for oil and gas off its shores. Yet it remains heavily dependent on international aid, with a large majority of its population living below the poverty line. (AFP)

China, Philippines trade barbs over sea encounter

Reuters
Manila

China and the Philippines yesterday traded accusations after an encounter between vessels in contested South China Sea waters, with Manila saying one of its navy personnel was struck on the head and Beijing saying Manila provoked the incident.

The Philippines said Chinese Coast Guard personnel aggressively struck one of its navy staff on the head with a wooden baton during an encounter in the Second Thomas Shoal yesterday in which a navy rubber boat was damaged.

Southeast Asian foreign ministers will gather in Manila for high-level meetings this week, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also in attendance. Tensions in the South China Sea are expected to feature in the discussions.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said a Chinese Coast Guard rigid-hull inflatable boat

with eight personnel approached to within close range of its grounded warship on the Second Thomas Shoal and took photos and videos.

When two Philippine navy boats moved to drive the Chinese vessel away, its personnel “reacted violently and aggressively by striking Philippine navy personnel with a wooden baton.”

In a 25-second video clip released by the Philippine armed forces, one of the eight could be seen hitting a navy crew member in a rubber boat that was close to the Chinese vessel.

“We call on the People’s Liberation Army and the China Coast Guard, including their maritime militia, to put a stop to their illegal, coercive, aggressive and deceptive actions within the West Philippine Sea and adhere to the 2016 Arbitral Award that affirms the Philippines’ lawful maritime rights under international law,” the Philippine military said.

In response, China’s Coast Guard accused the Philippine vessels of ignoring repeated warn-

ings, approaching and ramming a Chinese patrol boat in a dangerous manner and said the Philippine personnel were the first to attack, a statement showed.

“Philippine personnel first used paddles, wooden poles and other implements to aggressively attack Chinese law enforcement officers,” the statement read, noting the Chinese forces exercised the utmost restraint in the handling by issuing warnings, making manoeuvring operations around the boats and taking proportionate countermeasures.

China’s Coast Guard also accused the Philippines of distorting facts and levelling false accusations against China on the incident, demanding “immediate cessation of infringement, provocation and false hype.”

In a 49-second video clip released late yesterday by China’s state-backed tabloid *Global Times*, Chinese officers can be heard shouting “This is China Coast Guard, please leave immediately” as personnel from both sides wielded paddles and batons during a confrontation.

Southeast Asian ministers are gathering in Manila this week for high-level meetings, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also in attendance. Tensions in the South China Sea are expected to be discussed.

Manila’s foreign ministry said the “act of violence” against its navy personnel was “unacceptable” and warranted diplomatic action. The shoal is within the Philippines’ 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone and is 1,300 km (808 miles) from mainland China, which refers to it as the Renai Reef.

The Philippines has accused China of disrupting resupply missions to troops on the grounded vessel. A June 2024 incident also turned violent, with one Filipino sailor losing a thumb. The 2024 confrontation later led to a provisional understanding with China to allow resupply missions to the grounded ship.

China has denied allegations of aggressive conduct during encounters in the South China Sea and has accused the Philippines of trespassing in its waters.

Chinese rescuers use explosives to clear boulders trapping landslide victims

Reuters
Beijing

Rescue teams in southwestern China used explosives yesterday to blast through heavy boulders hampering efforts to reach 34 people reported missing for three days after a landslide during torrential rain in an area famed for natural beauty.

China is one of the most landslide-prone countries in the world, and eight died in Friday’s disaster in the county of Penghui some 270km (168 miles) from the high-rise urban centre of the sprawling municipality of Chongqing.

Yesterday’s blasting operation shattered a massive boulder in television images shown by state broadcaster CCTV, which added that the mission had entered a “deep rescue phase”, although it gave no immediate details.

The effort followed President Xi Jinping’s call for scientific search and rescue operations for the missing as well as a swift investigation into the cause of the landslide.

Authorities evacuated more than 1,100 people after the landslide in the county home to about 500,000 people, where many communities cling to steep hillsides that hug the Wujiang river.

In the aftermath, video clips

and photographs showed a portion of the collapsed mountain-side cascading into the river, cutting off the main street of the narrow, hillside township.

Authorities have sent teams to investigate hidden geological dangers and monitor the risk of secondary disasters, the official news agency Xinhua said on Saturday.

With heavy to torrential rain forecast through Monday across multiple provinces, authorities have called for stronger safeguards in high-risk areas made vulnerable by abundant groundwater, and intensive construction.

Eight small and medium-sized rivers in Yunnan, Guangxi, Guangdong, Anhui, and Shanghai are currently above flood warning levels, CCTV said yesterday.

Intense summer rainfall, coupled with rapid urbanisation and construction, as well as frequent tectonic activity, are key contributing factors to disasters in China, where mountains, hills and plateaus make up two-thirds of the landmass.

Over the past decade, a total of about 294 people have been killed nationwide in at least five major, deadly landslides.

The worst such incident killed more than 70 after the December 2015 collapse of a massive pile of construction debris at an industrial park in the southern tech hub of Shenzhen.

People brave simulated typhoons to prepare for the real thing in China

Reuters
Hangzhou

Huang Zhen, 34, shut his cafe for a day last week to be buffeted by surging waters and powerful winds that knocked him off his feet – training for extreme weather events that are increasingly afflicting China.

Huang was one of a dozen people attending a session at the Lvxing Disaster Simulation Training Center in Hangzhou, eastern China. For 1,599 yuan (\$235) per day, it offers a realistic experience of what it is like to be caught up in a typhoon or a flash flood, albeit with the advantage of wearing a wet-suit, a helmet and having a safety instructor to guide you.

The centre says it the first of its kind in the world to provide typhoon training, with its simulated experi-



Participants brace for surging water in a flash flood simulator during a typhoon survival training session at the Lvxing Disaster Simulation Training Center in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. (Reuters)

ence generating wind speeds of up to 165kph alongside torrential rain.

In a separate section, 900 metric tonnes of surging water are unleashed to mimic mountain flooding, while in another, participants must wade – sometimes thigh-deep, sometimes shoulder-deep

– through 400 tonnes of water in a mock urban environment.

“Over the last two years, the weather has become increasingly unpredictable,” Huang said. “An opportunity like this ... gives us a better idea of what different levels of disasters might actually be like,

and helps raise our awareness of disaster preparedness.”

Climate change is increasingly exposing the world’s second-largest economy to destructive weather events, scientists say. This year is of particular concern due to the emergence of the El Nino weather pattern, which can drive up temperatures and fuel more intense typhoons. China’s National Climate Center has said it expects up to six typhoons to form in the Northwest Pacific and South China Sea in July, more than the average of 3.8.

One of those was Typhoon Bavi, which brought severe floods and forced millions of Chinese to evacuate.

“Typhoon Bavi hit just a couple of days ago, making people realise that typhoon hazards are far more of a threat than we thought,” said Wu Zijian, a 44-year-old freelance worker who travelled from nearby Shanghai to attend.

India’s ‘cockroach movement’ leaders say minister promises talks on demands

Reuters
New Delhi

India’s youth-led Cockroach Janta Party movement said yesterday a federal minister had promised the government would weigh its demands as thousands of protesters marched on parliament despite police efforts to scatter them with tear gas and cane charges.

The months-old movement and the protest are seen as the biggest public challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his third term, drawing millions of supporters on social media before broadening its appeal to opposition parties. A police decision to forcibly move hunger-striking activist Sonam Wangchuk to hospital on Saturday galvanised a movement demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over examination paper leaks.

Members say the leaking of the papers for a national entrance test to medical school in May – which forced some 2mn students to resit, and led to some taking their own lives – was a sign of deep-seated corruption in education.

Thousands of young supporters gathered through the night at the protest site of Jantar Mantar in New Delhi for the march on the opening day of parliament’s monsoon session.

“Quit, quit,” the protesters chanted. “Dharmendra Pradhan quit,” “Narendra Modi quit,” they said in Hindi.

Scores of police and paramilitary personnel turned out across the capital, stopping protesters as they chanted and waved the national flag.

Protests also took place in Bangalore and in Mumbai, where police detained demonstrators and took them away in vans, witnesses said.

In Goa, scores of people held a candlelight vigil shouting slogans demanding Modi’s resignation.

Health Minister JP Nadda has asked for time to discuss the BJP’s demands within the government, Ashutosh Ranka, the movement’s national spokesperson, said in a post on X yesterday.

The demands include the release of Wangchuk – who is staging his hunger strike in solidarity



Police members use batons to disperse supporters of the Cockroach Janta Party as they march toward parliament on the opening day of its monsoon session, in New Delhi, yesterday. (Reuters)

with the movement – Pradhan’s resignation and compensation of 10mn rupees (\$104,000) for each student who died by suicide following the leak.

Around 12 people have taken their own lives, according to media reports. Nadda said the leaders of BJP had submitted a memorandum to the government after verbal discussions.

“I appealed to all the protesters to end their sit-in and help the administration restore normalcy,” he said in a post on X.

The Cockroach Janta Party’s surge in popularity reflects frustrations among young Indians including job shortages as well as exam leaks, which they say happen frequently.

Reuters reporters saw scores of young people streaming towards the protest site, as police barricades on routes to central Delhi snarled traffic.

“All these leaders in power are illiterate and I am here to protest because we do not want question papers to leak,” said Adi Nathan, 21, a student from Meerut city, about 100km (60 miles) from the capital.

“This should come to an end.”

Television images showed police cane charges on some protesters in one area, although Delhi police denied use of force, saying the protest was “being handled professionally”.

Reuters journalists also said se-

curity officers fired rounds of tear gas near parliament to disperse the protesters, while elsewhere, some protesters hurled stones at police.

Mohammed Tabrez, 22, a student preparing for competitive examinations that are the gateway to professional courses or jobs, said he had come from Amroha in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, about 165km away.

“We want this corruption to end,” he said.

In a post on X, Delhi’s police force appealed to the protesters to maintain peace, exercise restraint and co-operate with officers in ensuring peace and public order.

BJP founder Abhijeet Dipke and his supporters began a sit-in last month seeking Pradhan’s resignation. Wangchuk joined them on June 28, launching an indefinite hunger strike.

Wangchuk asked hospital authorities in a handwritten note to let him join yesterday’s march, even if temporarily.

Earlier yesterday, he offered to end his hunger strike if the government agreed to three conditions including taking responsibility for what he said were recent failures in the education system and the exam leaks.

He said he would also end his protest if lawmakers and leaders of political parties met him in hospital and assured him the conditions would be met.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT NOTICE

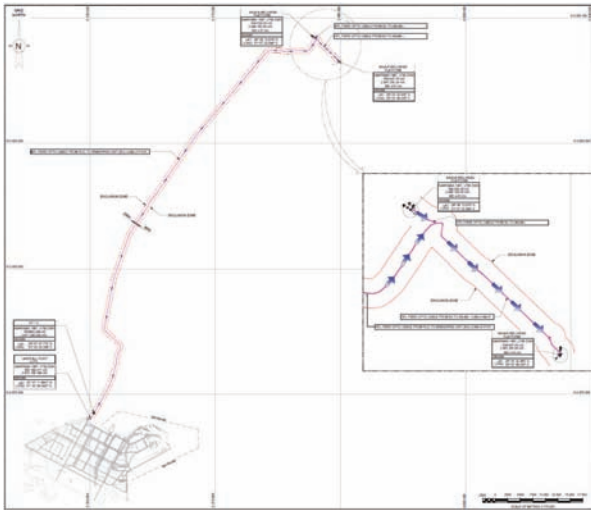
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ID	Easting [m]	Northing [m]	Latitude [N]	Longitude [E]
At KP 1.3	550 854.248	2 871 282.092	25° 57' 47.770"	51° 30' 32.306"
At KP 6.0	553 170.961	2 875 371.898	26° 00' 00.415"	51° 31' 56.213"
Branching Unit	595 417.428	2 945 717.363	26° 37' 58.951"	51° 57' 34.555"
At Al Shaheen AB	599 647.050	2 941 230.240	26° 35' 32.065"	52° 00' 06.240"
At Al Shaheen BA	594 530.050	2 946 162.050	26° 38' 13.619"	51° 57' 02.584"



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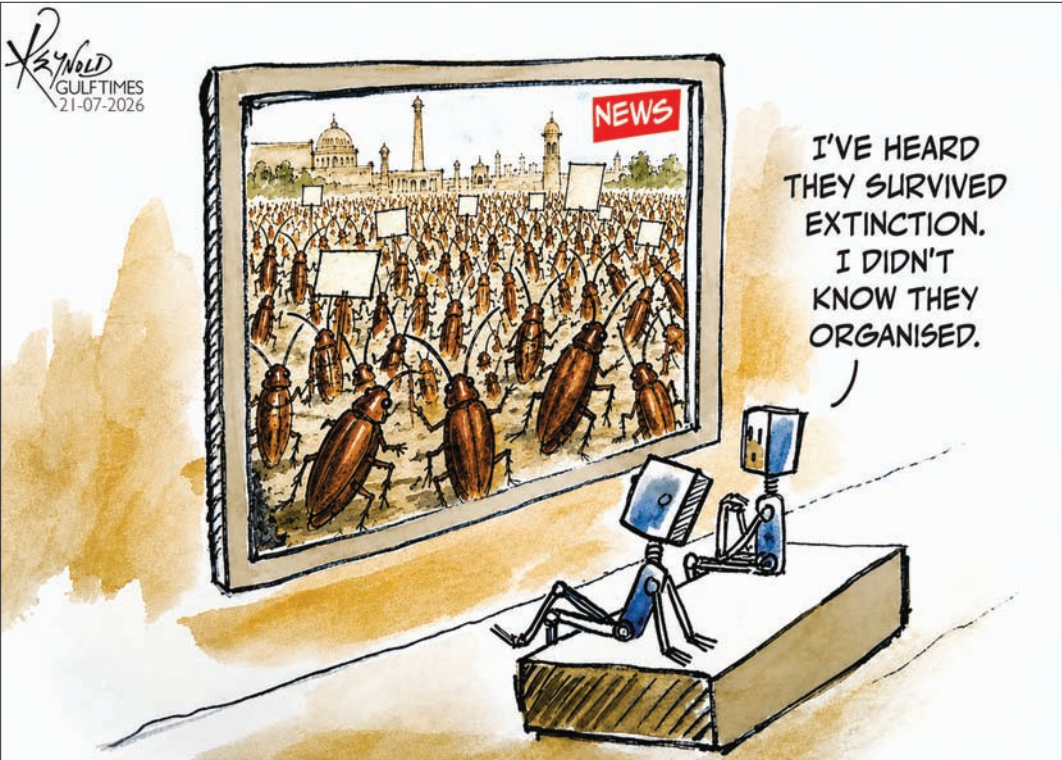
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Of Spain’s quiet conquest and the seismic celebrations

Spain did not so much win this World Cup as quietly, methodically close the argument. In a tournament drenched in stardust – Lionel Messi chasing legacy, Kylian Mbappe hoarding goals, and a galaxy of elite forwards lighting up scoreboards – it was a team built on restraint, structure and collective discipline that walked away with the prize. Spain, efficient to the point of austerity, dethroned Argentina 1-0 after extra time and, in doing so, delivered a reminder that football still has room for the unspectacularly brilliant. The final itself felt almost subversive. This was meant to be Messi’s encore, perhaps even his coronation as the first man since 1962 to lead a defending champion to back-to-back titles. Instead, it became a masterclass in suffocation. Argentina did not manage a single shot on target. Messi, so often the author of footballing poetry, drifted through the night like a ghost in boots.

At the heart of Spain’s triumph was not a prodigy or a headline-grabber, but Rodri – the tournament’s player of the competition, and a symbol of what this team represents. Control over chaos. Intelligence over impulse. Where others dazzled, Spain dictated. There is delicious irony in the fact that a World Cup boasting nearly three goals per game – the most prolific in over half a century – was ultimately decided by a team that scored just 14 times in eight matches. Spain did not chase the spectacle. They edited it. And yet, for all their restraint on the pitch, the celebrations off it were anything but measured. Spain quite literally shook. Seismometers across the country recorded tremors triggered not by tectonic shifts, but by Ferran Torres’ 106th-minute strike and the eruption that followed. In cities from Barcelona to Cadiz, fans jumping in unison generated measurable seismic activity – a scientific footnote that feels almost too perfect for a

nation rediscovering its footballing heartbeat. By last morning, Madrid told its own story: streets glazed with confetti, glass and the residue of a night that refused to end. Some supporters had not slept; others simply surrendered where they stood, smiling into the pavement. A million were expected to gather again, because once was never going to be enough. There is, of course, a deeper significance to Spain’s victory. This was not a fleeting success or a fortunate run. It was the continuation of a footballing identity that has evolved without losing its core. Echoes of 2010 are unmistakable – a team anchored in defensive certainty, trusting that control would eventually yield opportunity. But this version of Spain is less romantic, more pragmatic. They no longer need to enchant to win. Even the much-hyped Lamine Yamal, the teenage sensation burdened with expectation, played a peripheral role. Spain did not depend on him – or anyone – to rescue them. That, perhaps, is their greatest strength. For Argentina, the night will linger as a quiet unravelling. Reduced to ten men, outplayed, and ultimately outlasted, their dream of defending the title dissolved not in drama, but in absence – of chances, of rhythm, of answers. For Spain, however, the future feels as compelling as the present. They are now both European and world champions once again, with youth embedded in their spine and a chance, tantalisingly, to defend their crown on home soil in 2030. And if this triumph proved anything, it is that football’s loudest stories are not always written by its brightest stars. Sometimes, they are written by the team that concedes almost nothing, waits for its moment, and when it arrives – makes the whole country jump at once.



Starring Burnham: What to make of his ‘circuit breaker’ promise

The seventh PM since 2016 inherits an economy in the doldrums, a fraying alliance with the US and a diary full of landmines



By Kamran Rehmat

Britain now changes prime ministers at roughly the rate other nations lose patience with a long-running television series. Six of them in a decade; seven since 2016, if you start the tally at the referendum that blew the fuses on the entire arrangement. The lectern outside No 10 has been wheeled out and folded away so many times that it must qualify as the most well-travelled item of furniture in Whitehall: a small wooden monument to a governing class that keeps promising stability and then providing the opposite. The removal vans have practically worn a groove in the tarmac. Into this carousel steps Andy Burnham, the former mayor of Greater Manchester who engineered his own return to the Commons through a byelection whose only real purpose was to prise Keir Starmer’s fingers off the door of Downing Street. He stood on that over-familiar spot, watched by his wife and a scattering of allies, and did something none of his five immediate predecessors had

thought to attempt. He opened not with a victory lap, but with a confession.

The anatomy of an apology

Take the scalpel to the speech and the first thing you notice is the tone. Most incoming premiers arrive drunk on their own momentum, eager to tell the country how much better everything is about to become. Burnham began instead by counting himself into the long line of failure. “I am acutely conscious that I am the sixth person in the last 10 years to walk up this street, the seventh prime minister since 2016,” he said, framing his arrival not as a coronation but as a symptom. Then the admission proper: “We have not been good enough, and we need to be better.” This is calculated humility, and it is shrewd. A public that has watched the revolving door spin until it is dizzy does not want another saviour; it wants someone who will at least acknowledge the mess. By naming the rot up front, Burnham inoculates himself against the charge that he is simply the next in the queue. He also lowers the bar he will later have to clear – always sensible for a man who has just inherited a fiscal straitjacket. The centrepiece is the phrase he clearly wants stitched onto the era: a “circuit breaker” for Britain, promising “the biggest changes in the last 40 years. A new political model and a new economic model.” It is an Attlee-sized ambition dressed in the language of an electrician. He reaches back to the 1980s – “Britain took some wrong turns,” he says – and lays the blame on power centralised in Westminster, industry privatised, whole regions hollowed out and never rebuilt. The remedy, in his telling, is to push authority out

of the capital and “into every postcode in the land.” For a man who built his brand on Manchester devolution, this is autobiography as manifesto. Then comes the boldest move of the morning: his first instruction in office is to end rough sleeping. It is brave to the point of recklessness, and the reason is written into his own record. Burnham set precisely this target as mayor and missed it; rough sleeping in his city rose across four consecutive years. Confronted with that awkward arithmetic, he did not duck. He argued that a single city cannot solve the problem alone – “you won’t be able to get the numbers down if you’re the only place and people are coming to Manchester” – and that the answer is everyone pulling together, as, he insists, the country managed during the pandemic. Most politicians, caught out by a failure, quietly change the subject. Burnham has chosen to double down on his in front of the nation. There is a ghost hovering over that pledge, too. Jeremy Corbyn once revealed that had he won in 2017, ending rough sleeping would have been his day-one order. Burnham has, in effect, discovered his inner Corbyn – a signal to the Labour left that will land warmly, and one he may need if, as expected, the party’s harder-edged home affairs instincts are about to be rewarded with the great offices of state. **The list he cannot talk his way out of** Contrition is cheap; the in-tray is not. Burnham takes charge of an economy that has been treading water since the 2008 crash, its ankles further weighted by Brexit and the pandemic. He has boxed himself in by

honouring Labour’s promise not to touch the main rates of income tax, National Insurance or VAT – which leaves him the narrowest of ledges from which to fund anything transformational. His first concrete offerings, trailed for this week, are cushioning measures on energy bills and bus fares: breathing space now, the ten-year plan later. Abroad, the map is no kinder. The war in Ukraine grinds on, the Middle East smoulders, and the “special relationship” is fraying at the seams. Starmer cultivated the American president assiduously before infuriating him by declining to fully endorse the US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Washington remains Britain’s indispensable security partner; the current occupant of the White House remains deeply unloved on British streets. Squaring that circle – how much charm to expend on a mercurial ally – is now Burnham’s problem, and the retention of Starmer’s national security adviser suggests continuity rather than reinvention. Defence is its own trap. A predecessor’s defence secretary resigned over spending judged too meagre, only for a belated £15bn uplift to be announced with the crucial question – where the money comes from – left conveniently unanswered. That bill has now landed on Burnham’s desk, and someone’s budget will have to bleed to pay it. On immigration, the politics are treacherous precisely because the facts have moved. Net migration has fallen sharply, yet polling shows voters neither know it nor much care; the anxiety persists regardless. Burnham has signalled he will keep the tough line, even as it grates against his own backbenchers. And then there is welfare, where an ageing population, a rising tide



Britain’s newly appointed Prime Minister Andy Burnham delivers a speech outside 10 Downing Street after taking office, in London, yesterday. (Reuters)

of working-age mental-health claims and the sacred triple lock on pensions combine into a cost curve no one wants to bend in public. Starmer tried, and his own MPs mutinied. **Where the money will actually come from** So how does a man forbidden from raising the big three taxes find the cash for social housing and hope? By hunting where the manifesto still permits. Burnham has already declared that Britain “overtaxed labour and undertaxed” wealth – a sentence that points like a compass needle towards capital gains, council tax reform, and a rebalancing of business rates away from the beleaguered high street and onto the out-of-town sheds. The

overall tax take is already forecast to reach its highest share of the economy since 1948, which tells you how little slack remains and how creative the Treasury will have to be. The confession at the door bought Burnham a moment of grace. The nation, weary and cynical, may even want to believe him when he says this is the moment “Britain starts to believe again.” But belief is the easy part to promise from a lectern. The hard part – the funding, the trade-offs, the backbench rebellions – is exactly where his six predecessors came unstuck. The street has seen this walk before. What it has not yet seen is anyone finish it. **• The writer is Deputy Managing Editor, Gulf Times.**

Andy Burnham becomes PM vowing 10-year plan for UK

AFP
London

New UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham yesterday promised to set out a 10-year-plan for Britain, to ease the cost of living crisis and out-lined policy goals including an end to sleeping on the streets.

Accompanied by his wife Marie-France van Heel, Burnham earlier met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace to become the head of government after Keir Starmer resigned.

Burnham, 56, arrived at Downing Street to resounding applause from supporters and acknowledged he was the country's seventh prime minister since the start of 2016.

Britain needed to show the world it could "regain stability", he said, vowing to offer "a new political model" and "build a new economy".

In foreign policy goals, he told broadcasters earlier his first calls would be to US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky, to whom he will offer reassurance that "I will be with him 100 percent".

In his brief speech outside Downing Street, the new Labour leader said he would "bring forward a new plan for Britain, a 10-year plan", without giving specifics.

Naming short-term goals, he promised to "give people some breathing space now, some help with the cost of living."

He also said his first instruction



Staff applaud as Britain's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham and his wife Marie-France van Heel walk into 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday. (AFP)

would be a pledge to "end rough sleeping", a measure he attempted to implement as a regional mayor in northern England, although it was not fully successful.

Other announcements included a pledge to reindustrialise Britain through public procurement and to build more public housing.

Starmer departed Downing Street earlier, insisting his short time in office had made Britain a better place.

"I am confident that Britain is now stronger and fairer than it was two years ago," Starmer told reporters in his farewell speech outside Downing Street.

"I go with good grace, I go with a smile, and I go proud of everything that we have achieved," he added.

Burnham will face an in-tray

overflowing with challenges with little time to make his mark with a nationwide election due in 2029.

In an interview with *The Times* published late Sunday, Burnham said he wanted to draw a line under a decade of political turmoil.

"What we've been doing hasn't been working. That's the way I see it," he said.

"I am going to try and do things in a different way."

The focus now turns to his senior cabinet appointments, with all eyes on who will replace Rachel Reeves as finance minister.

The former mayor of Greater Manchester, nicknamed the "King of the North", has been parachuted in by the Labour Party, after Starmer resigned last month, with MPs viewing him as the party's

best chance of reining in Nigel Farage's anti-immigration Reform UK party.

Among Burnham's most urgent challenges will be a tepid economy, high government borrowing costs, a ballooning welfare bill and irregular migrants arriving in small boats that have fuelled support for Reform.

Unpredictable energy prices due to the US-Iran war and volatile relations with the US under Trump also threaten to buffet his premiership.

Burnham told *The Times* he would take a "different approach to public spending, and to running the economy — more focused on early investment, early intervention, setting people up for success, and much less paying for failure."

Starmer led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024 after 14 years of Conservative rule.

He announced that he would resign as prime minister and Labour Party leader in June after a string of scandals, missteps and policy U-turns blighted his leadership.

But Burnham, who only returned as a member of parliament four weeks ago, has little room to manoeuvre amid sluggish economic growth, high public debt and strict financial rules requiring him to balance government spending against tax revenue.

Burnham was an MP between 2001 and 2017, serving as a minister in the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

He has since reinvented himself as a man of the people, melding a relaxed, folksy style with slick social media videos.

Burnham names Ed Miliband as FM, John Healey as finance minister

AFP
London

Britain's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham yesterday appointed former Labour party leader Ed Miliband as UK's next foreign minister, while interior minister Shabana Mahmood was reappointed to her post.

After several years in the political wilderness after he resigned his role in 2015, Miliband, who was energy secretary under Keir Starmer, has staged a gradual political comeback.

Tough-talking Mahmood was reportedly keen to stay in her post as she shepherds through reforms to Britain's immigration system, aimed at cutting the number of irregular immigrants.

John Healey, who was defence secretary under his predecessor, to the top cabinet job of finance minister, Downing Street said.

Healey piled pressure on former prime minister Keir Starmer last month when he announced he was stepping down as defence secretary in a stinging criticism of the government's defence budget — and the Treasury, which he will now oversee.

He will be tasked with boosting Britain's sluggish economy amid strict financial rules set by Reeves to balance government spending with revenue, and promises by the previous administration not to raise taxes.

Markets showed some signs of unease yesterday before Healey was appointed.

UK government bond rates rose



Britain's newly appointed Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband walks on Downing Street after Britain's newly appointed Prime Minister Andy Burnham took office, in London, yesterday. (Reuters)

after Burnham told British media there could be some "flexibility" allowed under the government's balance-budget rules — which he insists he intends to uphold.

Healey will also face the daunting challenge of finding £4.7bn (\$6.3bn) over the next four years to fill a funding gap in Starmer's Defence Investment Plan and further boost defence spending to match Nato ambitions.

The 66-year-old politician was well-regarded as a defence secretary, conducting high-profile visits to Ukraine and Nato allies.

Blunt in his assessment of the state of Britain's armed forces, Healey was a vocal advocate for overhauling the military infrastructure, boosting defence spending and tougher responses to Russian aggression.

Italy says Russia expels Italian military attache in retaliation

AFP
Rome

Italy's foreign minister said yesterday that Russia has expelled an Italian military attache and one of his aides from Moscow "without cause" in an escalating diplomatic rift.

Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani called it a "blatant act of retaliation" following Italy's expulsion of two Russian military attaches earlier this month, who he said had been caught spying against Rome.

There was no immediate official comment from Moscow.

Italy's July 9 order to expel the

Russian military attaches came after police announced they had arrested two former Italian intelligence agents for what media reports said was giving Moscow secrets on military aid to Ukraine.

At the time, Tajani said that Moscow "continues to use hybrid warfare to attack the West and Italy," and calling them "serious and unacceptable" acts.

One of the Italians arrested, a 59-year-old former intelligence officer, gave his Russian handler information via six different sources "including four serving military personnel assigned to posts marked by a high level of confidentiality", according to police in Rome.

Media reports said the Italians had delivered details about an Italian-French air defence system, the SAMPT, which is due to be delivered to Ukraine this year, and on Aster missiles that have already been sent to Kyiv.

Russian handlers had also sought details on a Nato mission in Bulgaria and the Italian company Avio that makes motors for drones and supersonic missiles, reports said.

Italy's Defence Minister Guido Crosetto earlier this month said the case was "just the tip of the iceberg" in Russia's so-called "hybrid war" in Europe as it pursues its invasion of Ukraine.

Hungarian chess legend Judit Polgar declines nomination for president

Reuters
Budapest

Hungarian chess legend Judit Polgar said yesterday that she will not accept the nomination for president, only a day after Prime Minister Peter Magyar said he would ask her to take up the largely ceremonial role.

Electing a new president and drafting a new constitution are key elements of Magyar's plan to dismantle former premier Viktor Orban's bastions of power, for which Magyar says he received a strong mandate from voters.

Magyar ended the 16-year rule of Orban's nationalist Fidesz par-

ty with a landslide election victory in April.

On Saturday, Hungary's former president Tamas Sulyok signed a constitutional amendment passed by Magyar's ruling Tisza party that ended Sulyok's term as head of state.

Magyar said on Sunday that he would ask Polgar, widely regarded as the greatest ever female chess player, to take up the role of president until a new constitution is passed.

Polgar said in a Facebook post that she was grateful to be asked.

"However, I do not feel enough strength within me to take on the historic responsibility of uniting a divided nation, so I am unable to accept the request," she wrote.

Polgar, subject of the documentary *Queen of Chess* released in February, is the only female player to have been ranked in the world's top 10 of what is a male-dominated sport.

She is the only woman to have crossed the rating of 2700, the threshold that many consider the definition of a "Super Grandmaster".

Hungary's parliament will elect a new president who will be in office until a planned new constitution takes effect, or for a maximum of five years.

"The president of the republic must be a person who guards the unity of the nation and constitutionality," Magyar told parliament earlier yesterday.

Anger after Moroccan dies under police restraint in Italy

AFP
Rome

Human rights campaigners and Italy's opposition parties demanded answers yesterday after a man died under police restraint as he pleaded for help, while government leaders defended the police.

The incident has been likened to George Floyd's murder in the US six years ago, and also prompted comparisons with tactics used by the US's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under President Donald Trump.

Abderrahim Fakir, a 42-year-old from Morocco who moved to Italy when he was five, died Sunday in Bologna while being forcibly held down by two police officers, according to a video shared widely on Italian media.

In the video, Fakir — who reportedly suffered from heart issues and asthma — repeatedly calls out "aiuto, aiuto, basta" ("help, help, that's enough") as the officers sit on him and ambulance workers look on.

After he stops moving, the police bind his ankles together.

Only after a moment or two do they and the ambulance workers check his vital signs, the video shows.

Called to the scene by local residents concerned by Fakir's erratic behaviour, the police officers had told the ambulance personnel that he was "having a psychiatric episode", according to media reports.

"You can't die like this," Fakir's



People gather near the scene where Abderrahim Fakir, a Moroccan-born entrepreneur who ran a small moving and cleaning business, died on Sunday while being held to the ground by police trying to arrest him, in Bologna. (Reuters)

sister Khadija told the *Corriere della Sera* daily.

"The police have to protect us. If someone is agitated, you have to calm them down... not kill them like a dog," she said.

Italy's far-right Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini defended the police, while Galeazzo Bignami — head of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party in parliament's lower house, praised the officers' "professional conduct".

But Senator Ilaria Cucchi, whose brother died in custody in 2009, told AFP she was sickened by the "solidarity and thanks" expressed to police after such an "inhumane act".

Cucchi, a member of the opposition Greens and Left alliance (AVS) party, slammed far-right Meloni and her coalition government, saying their "policies seeped in hatred and racism" have fostered a climate of violence.

Francesco Boccia, head of the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) in the Senate, told the *Repubblica* daily that "if the right wants to import the ICE model, this is the wrong country for it. We have democratic antibodies".

Prosecutors in Bologna have opened a probe and have requested the officers' body cam footage.

Lawyer Barbara Spinelli told the ANSA news agency that she had met Fakir last year, when he applied to renew his permit to stay.

He was "a very kind, well educated, respectful person" who was in Italy legally, but who worried about being expelled.

"I told him: 'We are in Italy, a democratic country. Here the police respect the rules'" she said.

"I don't know how I will ever again manage to tell someone they don't need to be afraid", she added.

Zelensky meets commanders as street protests mount

Reuters
Kyiv

President Volodymyr Zelensky met some of Ukraine's top military commanders yesterday to try to ease growing discontent with the defence leadership that has triggered the largest street protests since Russia's invasion in 2022.

Thousands of people in Kyiv and other cities took to the streets for several days in a row, defying martial law, to protest against last week's removal of young reformer Mykhailo Fedorov as defence minister and to demand the dismissal of Commander-in-Chief Oleksandr Syrskyi. The protests, led by young people, also exposed deep divisions in the defence leadership on how to stop Russia's battlefield advances, as the war's overall momentum has swung in Kyiv's favour.

Syrskyi, 60, faces criticism from civil



This handout photograph taken and released by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Service yesterday shows Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and Ukraine's Joint Forces Commander Mykhailo Drapaty shaking hands during a meeting in Kyiv. (AFP)

society, soldiers and lawmakers for his Soviet-style command culture and high casualty tactics.

Zelensky met five generals and one colonel, viewed by political analysts as potential replacements for Syrskyi, one after another to discuss the battlefield situation as fighting rages along more than 1,200kms (746 miles) of the frontline.

The six most well-known and respected military commanders, including Commander of the Joint Forces Mykhailo Drapaty and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Volodymyr Horbatiuk, represent a younger generation of Ukrainian officers whose careers were shaped in combat against Russian troops.

Oleh Apostol, commander of the air assault forces, and commanders of the three army corps — Andriy Biletsky, Ihor Obolenskyi, and Denys Prokopenko also met Zelensky, who posted pictures from his study following each meeting.

Zelensky's chief of staff, Kyrylo Budanov, called for unity and restraint in the wake of the protests, promising a constructive response.

"The public's views have been heard," he said. "Work is underway. Results will follow."

A poll from Gradus research company showed that 61% of Ukrainians were against the dismissal of Fedorov.

Zelensky said he spoke with Fedorov, 35, "at length" over the weekend.

A source close to Fedorov told Reuters that he had discussed "other roles" with Zelensky, but that he was only ready to return as defence minister. Ukrainian media reported that Fedorov had been offered roles overseeing military technology and innovation.

Dmytro Koziatynskyi, a war veteran and one of the organisers of the protests, called on supporters to launch a "general, indefinite protest" unless Syrskyi is removed and Fedorov reappointed as defence minister by July 24.

Polish president pays tribute to Father Amir as ‘architect of modern Qatar’

Polish President Karol Nawrocki has extended his deepest condolences to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on the passing of HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, paying tribute to him as an outstanding statesman and visionary who played a pivotal role in shaping modern Qatar and strengthening the country’s standing on the global stage.

In a message addressed to His Highness the Amir, the Polish president highlighted HH the late Father Amir’s enduring contributions to Qatar’s economic

and social transformation, as well as his commitment to dialogue, peace, stability and development.

The message reads:

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

Your Highness,

Please accept my deepest condolences on the passing of Sheikh Hamad bin Kha-

lifa Al Thani, Your Highness’s Father.

Sheikh Hamad will be remembered as an outstanding statesman, a visionary, and one of the principal architects of modern Qatar. He will go down in history as a leader who played a pivotal role in building the country’s prosperity and strengthening its position on the international stage. He was also a steadfast advocate of dialogue and mediation and one of the most influential figures in the Arab world.

During his reign, the State of Qatar underwent a profound economic and social transformation, becoming one of the

world’s leading exporters of liquefied natural gas and a major global investor. The ambitious development projects implemented under his leadership contributed significantly to the country’s prosperity and to improving the quality of life of its people.

As Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani demonstrated remarkable foresight, unwavering commitment to the achievement of strategic objectives, and a deep sense of responsibility for the future of the country and the well-being of its citizens. In all his endeavours, he was guided by a commitment to peace,

stability, and development.

The passing of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani is a profound loss for the entire Qatari nation. On behalf of the citizens of the Republic of Poland and myself, I extend to Your Highness, the members of the Al Thani family, and the people of Qatar in mourning my sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy.

Please accept, Your Highness, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Karol Nawrocki
President of the Republic of Poland

Young voices honour Father Amir in Mathaf condolence book

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

Children visiting Mathaf have added their voices to Qatar’s national mourning, writing messages that combine prayers for HH the late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani with gratitude for the country he helped build.

Their words show how HH the late Father Amir’s legacy is being carried forward by a younger generation.

Jassim Mohammed al-Salahi described HH the late Father Amir as “a protective shade that sheltered his people and a light that illuminated their path.”

“He was a wise and visionary leader who devoted his efforts to serving the State of Qatar and laid the foundations of its modern development,” Jassim wrote.

He said HH the late Father Amir was known for his loyalty to Qatar, his dedication to the advancement of its people and his commitment to



strengthening the country’s standing. His life and achievements, Jassim added, would remain in the memory of generations through the national legacy he left behind.

Jassim thanked Mathaf for giving visitors an opportunity to express their feelings through the condolence book.

Turki Hassan al-Malki offered a prayer for HH the late Father Amir

and reflected on Qatar’s loss.

“With his passing, Qatar has lost a leader who left an enduring mark on the country’s journey of development and progress,” Turki wrote.

He said HH the late Father Amir’s achievements would remain in the hearts of his people and all those who witnessed his generosity and contributions. Turki thanked the museum for



Fahad Yousuf al-Ghanim

providing a space where the community could record its condolences.

Khalid Mohammed al-Salahi’s message centred on prayer. He asked Allah Almighty to envelop HH the late Father Amir in boundless mercy, place his contributions in the balance of his good deeds and grant him the highest level of Jannat Al-Firdous.

Khalid also prayed that Allah grant patience and strength to HH the late Father Amir’s family,



Jassim Mohammed al-Salahi



Khalid Mohammed al-Salahi



Turki Hassan al-Malki



Qatar’s leadership and its people, while preserving the country’s security and stability.

“May Allah have abundant mercy on HH the late Father Amir and reward him with the greatest reward for all that he gave to his nation,” he wrote.

Through these handwritten tributes, the condolence book has become more than a formal record. It offers young people a quiet way to participate in national remembrance, express gratitude and carry HH the late Father Amir’s memory into the future.

Ghanim al-Muftah: Qatar’s inspiring voice of resilience, learning, humanity

Goodwill ambassador inspired the creation of the Ghanim al-Muftah Excellence Scholarship at the UK’s Loughborough University

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

In a moment that remains etched in global memory, Qatari youth Ghanim al-Muftah emerged as one of the most inspiring figures to represent Qatar during the opening ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. His appearance was far more than a symbolic role in a sporting spectacle; it was a powerful statement of humanity, celebrating coexistence, mutual understanding and respect for diversity while demonstrating how determination can transform adversity into a source of inspiration.

Watched by millions around the world, al-Muftah shared the stage with acclaimed actor Morgan Freeman in one of the ceremony’s defining moments. By reciting a verse from Surah Al-Hujurat, he delivered a timeless message that humanity’s diversity is not a cause for division but an invitation to know one another and build bridges of respect across cultures. The segment stood out as one of the most memorable highlights of



Ghanim al-Muftah next to Loughborough University fountain.

the opening ceremony, seamlessly blending the universal appeal of football with values that transcend sport.

His message of perseverance continues to resonate. In a post shared on his X account yesterday, al-Muftah urged young people to remain steadfast in pursuing their dreams, emphasising that true success is measured not by the

absence of challenges but by the determination to overcome them. He reaffirmed that faith, education and resilience remain the foundations of meaningful achievement, encouraging his followers to transform every obstacle into an opportunity for growth.

Yet, al-Muftah’s story extends well beyond the World Cup stage. His journey is equally defined by



Ghanim al-Muftah hoisted on the shoulders of his supporters.

academic ambition, discipline and an unwavering belief in the transformative power of education. Pursuing higher studies at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, he has demonstrated that academic excellence is achieved not through favourable circumstances but through perse-

verance and hard work.

His commitment to education has also inspired the creation of the Ghanim al-Muftah Excellence Scholarship, offering talented Qatari students new opportunities to pursue their aspirations.

Al-Muftah has become a role model for young people because

his message is rooted in lived experience rather than rhetoric. Through his achievements, he shows that ambition can overcome even the greatest obstacles when paired with knowledge, discipline and self-belief.

His public appearances and continued accomplishments have inspired a generation searching for authentic examples of resilience, reminding them that success is built through patience, determination and sustained effort, not ideal conditions.

His appointment as a Goodwill Ambassador and active participation in humanitarian initiatives further underscore a mission that reaches beyond personal achievement. Al-Muftah embodies a vision of social responsibility, encouraging young people to embrace education, perseverance and service to others.

His journey is more than an individual success story; it is compelling proof that resilience can challenge stereotypes, inspire hope and help build a more inclusive future, one in which obstacles are not the end of the road, but the beginning of extraordinary possibilities.

3rd Hamba Pakistani Mango Exhibition concludes



Visitors flock to the 3rd Hamba Pakistani Mango Exhibition and Its Products at Souq Waqif, where a wide selection of Pakistani mangoes, seasonal fruits and mango-based products attracted large crowds. The event, which concluded yesterday, recorded its largest participation since its launch, bringing together more than 30 Pakistani and local companies as well as over 30 restaurants and food exhibitors. Visitors sampled and purchased popular mango varieties including Sindhri, Chaunsa, White Chaunsa, Anwar Ratol and Dusehri, alongside desserts, juices, ice cream, pickles and Pakistani cuisine. The exhibition was organised by the Celebrations Committee at the Private Engineering Office in co-operation with the Embassy of Pakistan.

PICTURES: Thajudheen

