

Qatari mountaineering legend Sheikhha Asma bint Thani al-Thani has successfully reached the summit of Gasherbrum II, one of the world's highest mountains, located in the Karakoram mountain range along the Pakistan-China border. The achievement marks the 11th 8,000m peak conquered by Sheikhha Asma, bringing her one step closer to her goal of summiting all 14 of the world's mountains exceeding 8,000m in elevation. The 14 peaks are among the most challenging mountains on Earth, rising into the area known as the "Death Zone", where oxygen levels are critically low and climbers face extreme weather, freezing temperatures and potentially life-threatening conditions. **To Page 3**



Amir sends cable of congratulations to Singapore's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Singapore's President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on the occasion of his country's national day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Shanmugaratnam. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on the occasion. - QNA

Amir leads farewell for Sultan Haitham

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani led well-wishers bidding farewell to Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and his delegation at the Amiri Hall at Hamad International Airport. Attending the farewell ceremony were HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Khulaifi, HE the Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida al-Kaabi, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Faisal bin Thani al-Thani, HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah al-Thani, HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, and several sheikhs. Also present were Qatar's ambassador to Oman Sheikh Mubarak bin Fahad al-Thani and Oman's ambassador to Qatar Sayyid Ammar bin Abdullah bin Sultan Albusaidi. - QNA



Qatar-Oman relations reflect a strong legacy and promising future

The fraternal relations between Qatar and Oman reflect a longstanding journey of co-operation and integration, founded on a deep-rooted historical legacy and strengthened by close bonds of faith, language and shared destiny.

These ties are underpinned by mutual respect and the unwavering commitment of the two leaderships and peoples to advancing their common interests.

The foundations of the modern relationship were laid in the early 1970s.

In 1973, an Amiri decree was issued appointing Qatar's first ambassador to Oman, while Oman's first ambassador to Qatar presented his credentials in Doha in 1974.

This diplomatic milestone was not simply a product of that era; rather, it represented an extension of longstanding popular, commercial and cultural ties shaped by geographical proximity and a shared Arab and Islamic identity.

The visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to Oman in October 2013, followed by the state visit of Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to Doha in November 2021, and the January 2025 visit to Muscat by HH the Amir, represented significant milestones in the evolution of relations between Doha and Muscat.

Those visits led to the signing of several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and executive programmes in the military, economic, tourism and transportation fields, and the mutual visits between leaders and senior officials of the two countries contributing to moving bilateral relations to broader and more firmly established horizons.

Political co-ordination between Qatar and Oman is characterised by stability and depth and remains one of the defining features of their strategic fraternal ties.

The two countries have been members of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) since its establishment in 1981, and Doha and Muscat remain committed to strengthening collective action within the Gulf framework and beyond.

The two sides regularly consult on efforts to reduce tensions in the region, including negotiations concerning Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, while playing constructive diplomatic roles grounded in wisdom and moderation.

Their positions also converge on major Arab and Islamic issues, foremost among them the Palestinian cause, as well as on the importance of dialogue and peaceful means in resolving regional and international disputes peacefully.

The reciprocal visits of the leaders and the joint statements issued on various occasions reflect a shared vision of the importance of strengthening Gulf cohesion and integration for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

Such co-ordination contributes to regional security and stability. At the international level, the two countries co-ordinate their positions at the United Nations and within regional organisations, reinforcing their role as moderate voices that support peace and sustainable development.

This co-ordination stands as a model of Gulf co-operation founded on common interests and mutual respect. Doha and Muscat have consistently reaffirmed the achievements made throughout the GCC's journey and stressed the importance of further strengthening cohesion and integration for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

This shared outlook contributes to enhancing the Arabian Gulf security and stability and demonstrates that strong bilateral relations can reinforce collective action within the Gulf framework rather than serve as an alternative to it. The distinctive fraternal relations between Qatar and Oman are, in many respects, an extension of a long and enduring tradition of engagement.

The Qatar-Oman Joint Committee was established in 1995, holding its inaugural meeting in Doha in April of that year. Its meetings have subsequently been held alternately in the two countries, reaching its 23rd session in December 2024.

The relationship between Qatar and Oman extends well beyond the political and economic spheres

The committee has played an important role in identifying opportunities and developing joint investment projects in agriculture, energy, communications, transport, tourism, education and banking.

In doing so, it has helped transform bilateral relations from diplomatic co-ordination into a practical and tangible partnership.

On the commercial and economic front, trade between the two countries has witnessed notable growth in recent years.

By the end of 2023, bilateral trade stood at approximately OMR1.113bn, equivalent to around \$2.89bn.

This included approximately OMR285mn in Omani exports to Qatar and OMR829mn in imports from Qatar.

During the first seven months of 2024, bilateral trade reached \$1.2bn, compared with \$1.4bn for the whole of 2023.

By the end of November 2024, trade stood at approximately OMR951mn, comprising OMR206mn in Omani exports and OMR755mn in imports from Qatar.

Qatari investments in Oman grew by 12% by the end of 2023, reaching OMR730mn, compared with OMR652mn in 2022.

Around 15 Qatari companies have investments in the Sultanate across manufacturing, services, tourism and real estate.

At the same time, hundreds of Omani companies operate in the Qatari market, some wholly Omani-owned and others through partnerships, spanning trade, contracting and services.

These figures reflect a genuine desire to build an integrated economic partnership that supports the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 and Oman Vision 2040, particularly in the fields of food security, renewable energy, logistics and tourism.

The relationship extends well beyond the political and economic spheres to encompass cultural, educational and social co-operation.

Exchanges continue across the fields of art, music, theatre, publishing and heritage preservation, while the two countries share the GCC Cultural Strategy 2020-30.

This cultural harmony is reflected in the signing of numerous memoranda of understanding and executive programmes aimed at promoting intellectual and artistic exchange.

Co-operation encompasses a wide range of fields, including authorship, translation and publishing, as well as theatre and music, alongside the preservation of intangible cultural heritage shared by the two countries.

Cultural diplomacy is also evident in the sustained reciprocal participation in exhibitions of visual arts and photography, as well as literary forums and seminars.

Cultural festivals and joint forums provide an important platform for the exchange of expertise among creative communities.

A notable example was the selection of the Sultanate of Oman as Guest of Honour at the 2024 Doha International Book Fair, a step that reflected the depth and centrality of the cultural ties between the two countries.

This vibrant exchange draws strength from the cultural strategy of the GCC countries.

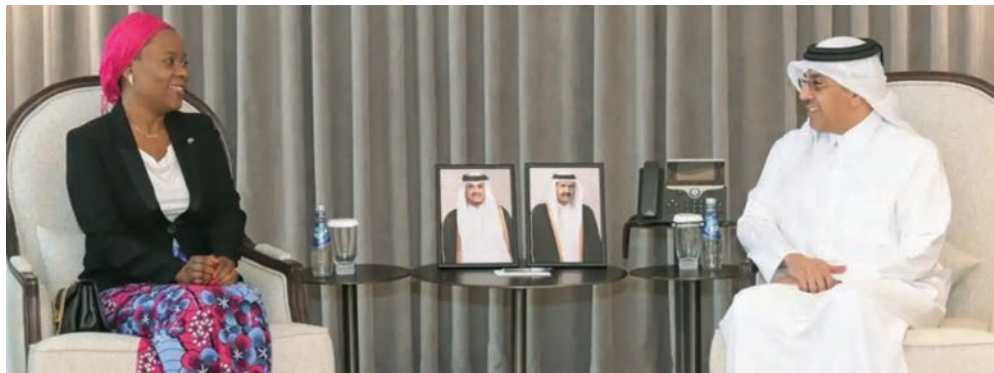
Through the activation of joint committees, Doha and Muscat continue to chart an integrated course that enriches the creative landscape, brings cultural perspectives closer together and safeguards the authentic Gulf heritage for generations to come.

Taken as a whole, Qatar-Oman relations represent a Gulf success story built on wisdom, moderation and shared interests.

From their historic roots and high-level reciprocal visits to growing trade figures and close co-ordination within the GCC, the relationship has demonstrated its ability to adapt to regional challenges while offering a model of stability and sustainable partnership.

With the continued support and guidance of the two leaderships, the years ahead are expected to bring further integration in investments and joint projects, serving the interests of both peoples and contributing to greater security and prosperity across the Gulf region. - QNA

Labour minister meets DR Congo's envoy



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Samikh al-Marri held a meeting yesterday with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo)'s ambassador to Qatar Valerie Lusamba Kabeya. HE Dr al-Marri and Kabeya discussed bilateral co-operation in the labour sector, exploring opportunities to strengthen and further develop the partnership between the two countries. - QNA

Minister holds meeting with Turkiye's envoy



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad held a meeting yesterday with Turkiye's ambassador to Dr Mustafa Goksu. The minister and the envoy discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. They also discussed a number of topics of common interest. - QNA

Al-Misnad meets with Swiss ambassador



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met yesterday with Switzerland's ambassador to Qatar Florence Tinguely. They discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them, as well as topics of common interest. - QNA

Iran links Hormuz reopening to US concessions

From Page 1

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said that the blockade would remain in place "until the enemy accepts all our conditions", describing the strait as "a theatre of war for us and not just a waterway".

Tehran says it is not negotiating directly with Washington while the US breaches an interim agreement signed in June.

Araghchi said messages were being exchanged through intermediaries.

US President Donald Trump, speaking to Axios, said Washington is "low-keying" its approach to Iran.

"We are only semi-negotiating with them," he was quoted as saying. "We are just watching Iran with its huge inflation and the fact they have no money. It will work out. It's like a chess game."

A US official said on Friday

that Washington would lift the blockade of Iranian ports once an agreement was announced to restore unobstructed commercial shipping.

The official said US action would be linked to Iran implementing its commitments, suggesting that the sequencing of any deal remained unresolved.

Oman's foreign ministry condemned repeated attacks on shipping without naming Iran and warned against actions that could jeopardise negotiations.

The June memorandum envisaged Tehran and Muscat discussing future arrangements with other Gulf states and in line with international law, which generally prohibits tolls on such waterways.

Meanwhile, Iran-backed Houthi forces in Yemen said that they had attacked Saudi Aramco's Jazan refinery and declared a parallel naval blockade against Saudi ports in the Red Sea.

Saudi authorities said a fire at the facility had been extinguished without injuries and did not identify its cause.

The refinery processes about 400,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

Medical sources in Yemen said Houthi strikes on the port of Mokha killed three civilians and eight military personnel and wounded 32 others.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said missiles and drones targeted Saudi troops and equipment.

Saudi Arabia, which backs Yemen's internationally recognised government, signed a joint defence pact with Turkiye and Pakistan on Friday.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said that Egypt could also join the arrangement, which he said was not directed against any particular country but aimed to strengthen collective deterrence.

From Page 1

Qatar was represented by the director of African Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali bin Ghanem al-Hajri, accompanied by Qatar's ambassador to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union (AU) Saad bin Mubarak al-Nuaimi, and Adviser at the Of-

Qatar mediation secures release of 15 in DR Congo

fice of the Minister of State Abdullah bin Hamad al-Nuaimi.

Al-Hajri reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting peace in eastern DR Congo, saying that it continues to work with the parties in close co-ordination with the United States and with Togo, in

its capacity as AU mediator, to reinforce the African-led process.

He set out the main strands under the Doha track: completing the steps needed to make the ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism operational, continuing co-operation with the ICRC on

detainee exchanges, and finishing negotiations on the remaining protocols under the Doha framework.

Dialogue, al-Hajri said, remains the only means of resolving conflicts and securing lasting stability, and Qatar would work with regional and interna-

tional partners with patience and responsibility.

Qatari mediation has defused crises across several continents, securing ceasefires, restoring diplomatic relations, facilitating hostage releases and prisoner exchanges, supporting national dialogues, resolving border disputes and underpinning humanitarian work. - QNA



Qatar's Sheikha Asma summits Gasherbrum II

From Page 1

In a post on Instagram, Sheikha Asma reflected on five days of waiting at Camp 1 for a weather window, the camaraderie within her team, and a breathtaking moonlit summit push.

"We reached the summit around 5am," she wrote." Just below it, Pasang Norbu and Lakpa had broken the route, but stopped and waited so we could arrive together. That was this team: always looking after one another."

From the summit, she looked towards

K2 and Broad Peak, unaware of the tragedy unfolding across the valley.

She later learned that contact had been lost with the Broad Peak team, including Wang, whom she had messaged shortly after reaching the summit.

"Only later did I understand it would be the last message I would ever send him," she wrote. "When I think back to Gasherbrum II, I'll remember the waiting, the coffee, the moon, the team, Broad Peak across the valley, and one ordinary message I never imagined would be the last."

Sheikha Asma also thanked Pakistan for welcoming her to the Karakoram, where she continues her quest to climb all 14 of the world's peaks above 8,000m.

Sheikha Asma's latest achievement forms part of her "Beyond Boundaries" journey, which combines her mountaineering ambitions with humanitarian causes.

Through the initiative, she aims to inspire women and young people across the region to overcome barriers, pursue their ambitions and reach beyond perceived limits.

MoECC releases report in Q2 achievements

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has issued its report on the achievements of the environmental sector during the second quarter (Q2) of this year, reviewing its technical and administrative efforts to preserve the environment.

The report showed a notable increase in regulatory, technical and organisational activities during the second quarter.

The number of laboratory analyses rose from 2,828 to 6,444, while permits and licences increased from 3,376 to 5,729.

Technical meetings rose from 603 to 1,039, and awareness events and activities increased from 18 to 78.

The report also said environmental sector departments carried out 1,666 field

and inspection visits, received 83 reports, issued 561 warnings to rectify conditions, and recorded 29 violations.

They also prepared 918 studies, reports and audits, organised 149 workshops and training courses, received 1,125 visitors, and conducted 2,882 customs inspections.

The ministry's Environmental Monitoring and Inspection Department carried out 610 field and inspection visits, compared with 509 in the first quarter.

It issued 143 permits and licences, received 73 reports, issued 25 warnings to rectify conditions, and recorded 21 violations.

The environmental sector conducted 6,013 laboratory analyses, compared with 2,194 in the first quarter.

These included 735 analyses under the monthly seawater quality monitoring programme, 3,273 analyses under various monitoring programmes covering coastal areas, beaches, soil and water outfalls, 606 analyses related to emergency reports involving sewage, water and sediment, asphalt spills and soil, and 1,399 analyses of emergency samples involving water and sediment, bacteria and heavy metals, and outfalls, bringing the total to 6,013 analyses.

It also prepared 574 studies, reports and audits, held 158 technical meetings, organised 75 workshops and training courses, participated in 44 awareness events and activities, and received 141 visitors.

For its part, the Radiation Protection Department carried out 223 field and in-

spection visits, compared with 100 in the first quarter.

It also conducted 246 visits to update the database of radiation devices, while the number of permits and licences it issued rose from 563 to 802.

The department conducted 542 customs inspections and cleared the same number of customs declarations.

It also carried out 404 laboratory analyses, including 51 analyses to measure radiation concentrations in samples and 353 analyses involving radiation measurements for individuals.

The department conducted 22 tests for personnel working in radiation protection, involving 91 workers, of whom 86 passed successfully.

As part of efforts to strengthen technical co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Qatar is participating in 11 national projects under the programme, with the involvement of seven relevant national entities.

The department also prepared 23 studies, reports and audits, and organised 55 workshops and training courses benefiting 800 participants from first-response teams across various entities.

The Radiation Protection Department held 37 technical meetings, participated in six awareness events, responded to three reports and carried out the necessary measures, issued 12 directives for certain facilities to rectify their conditions, and received 95 visitors. - QNA

Ministry launches second Financial Awareness Programme

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF), represented by the Family Empowered Department, has launched the second edition of the Financial Awareness Programme as part of initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of sound financial management among members of society, and establishing the concepts of planning, saving and rationalising spending, in order to contribute to supporting family stability and improving the quality of life.

The programme comes within the framework of projects stemming from the Third National Development Strategy (2024-30), and within the ministry's efforts to reach various segments of society by strengthening community partnership and co-operation with relevant entities.

The ministry organised a workshop on "The Family Budget" in co-operation with the Investment and Trade Court and the Qatar Association of Certified Public Accountants.

The workshop was dedicated to employees of the Investment and Trade Court with the aim of enabling participants to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to manage financial resources and the family budget efficiently and responsibly.

The workshop was presented by Abdulla Ahmed al-Mansoori, an accounting expert and board member of the Qatar Association of Certified Public Accountants.

The workshop reviewed topics related to family financial management, including family financial governance, budgeting, expense management, financial planning, financial education for children, and promoting a culture of saving and investment, which contributes to raising financial awareness and achieving financial stability for the family. - QNA

Alam Al Roum brings Qatar's investment vision to Egypt's Mediterranean coast: industry expert

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The growing Qatar-Egypt partnership is taking a new dimension through Alam Al Roum, a major development on Egypt's North Coast that reflects an ambitious vision for tourism, investment and sustainable urban development in the Mediterranean.

In an interview with *Gulf Times*, Qatari writer and media professional Moza Abdulaziz al-Ishaq described the project as more than a conventional real estate investment, highlighting its potential to become a fully integrated international tourism destination.

She has written a book on tourism in Qatar, titled *Qatari tourism innovations*.

"Alam Al Roum reflects a vision that views tourism destinations as engines of economic growth and powerful tools for reshaping the development and tourism landscape," she said.

"It represents a transition from traditional real estate investment towards

building a complete global destination," she added.

The project is among the largest Qatar-Egypt investment ventures in recent years, with an estimated investment of \$29.7bn, covering nearly 4,900 feddans (a feddan equals 4,200sqm) and extending along more than 7.2km of Mediterranean coastline.

Al-Ishaq said that the project's significance extends beyond its economic value, describing it as a model of Arab economic integration capable of encouraging further Gulf investment in Egypt.

"The project carries political and strategic dimensions alongside its economic importance," she stated. "It strengthens Arab economic integration and demonstrates how regional partnerships can create long-term value through tourism, innovation and sustainable development."

Developed by Qatari Diar, the project is envisioned as an integrated city combining residential, hospitality, entertainment, commercial and investment components.

Plans include international hotels, approximately 4,500 hotel rooms, luxury

resorts, a world-class yacht marina, commercial and administrative areas, educational and healthcare facilities, extensive green spaces and a wide range of marine, sporting and leisure activities.

According to al-Ishaq, the project reflects Qatari Diar's broader international strategy of developing sustainable urban and tourism destinations while diversifying investment beyond the energy sector.

"Qatari Diar does not view Alam Al Roum simply as a real estate project, but as an integrated destination bringing together living, tourism, entertainment, services and investment," she said. "Its ambition is to create a world-class destination capable of competing with leading international resorts."

Al-Ishaq noted that global tourism is increasingly defined by the quality of the overall experience, rather than natural beauty alone.

Accessibility, accommodation, services, entertainment and recreational opportunities have become key elements in determining a destination's competitiveness.

Al-Ishaq believes Alam Al Roum is well



Moza Abdulaziz al-Ishaq

positioned to respond to these changing expectations and strengthen Egypt's North Coast as a regional hub for luxury tourism and investment.

"This project reflects a new concept of Arab joint investment, where economic vision and tourism development converge in a single project, creating opportunities for sustainable growth and stronger regional partnerships," she added.

With its scale, strategic location and integrated development model, Alam Al Roum is expected to emerge as a major tourism and investment destination in the Mediterranean, while providing a prominent example of Qatar-Egypt co-operation built around shared economic interests and long-term development.

EAA, Al Sadd Sports Club renew collaboration for 2026-27 season

Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, a global foundation for education and development, and Al Sadd Sports Club have renewed their collaboration agreement for the 2026-27 sports season, reaffirming their shared commitment to leveraging sport as a powerful community platform to support education, inspire children and youth, and promote the values of participation, empowerment and social responsibility.

The renewal builds on the existing collaboration between the two organisations and reflects a shared belief that football extends beyond competition on the pitch.

With its ability to bring communities together, build trust, and inspire new generations to learn, aspire, and engage positively, football provides a unique platform to raise awareness of education-related issues and of the rights of children and youth to



access safe, inclusive, and quality learning opportunities.

Through this collaboration, EAA and Al Sadd Sports Club aim to harness football's broad public reach to highlight education as a fundamental right and a pathway to human development.

The partnership will also support the engagement of children and youth in activities that connect sport and learning, while promoting teamwork, discipline, resilience and equal opportunity.

"Renewing our collaboration with Al Sadd Sports Club repre-

sents an important step in using the power of sport to serve education and empower children and youth," said EAA chief executive Mohammed Saad al-Kubaisi.

"Sport is a universal language that can inspire and build bridges, and when connected with education, it becomes an effective tool to open new horizons for future generations," he said. "Through this partnership, we continue to raise awareness of every child's right to education and create opportunities for children and youth to learn, grow and participate confidently in their communities."

"We are proud to renew our collaboration with Education Above All Foundation," said Al Sadd Club Company chief executive Sheikh Khalifa bin Khalid al-Thani.

"This partnership reflects Al Sadd's belief that sport, and football in particular, carries a message that goes beyond the

boundaries of the pitch," he said. "Through its ability to inspire young people, promote positive values and support initiatives that create meaningful impact in society, football can play an important role in community development."

"We look forward to continuing our work with the foundation during the new season in a way that serves children and youth and strengthens the culture of social responsibility," Sheikh Khalifa added.

The renewal reflects the commitment of both organisations to build on previous progress and explore further opportunities that connect education, sport and community engagement.

It also strengthens the visibility of education issues in the public sphere.

It provides children and youth with positive role models who can inspire them to continue learning and realise their full potential.

Artificial Intelligence Centre explores future of aviation

The Digital Artificial Intelligence Centre at Qatar Museums (QM) is hosting an interactive workshop on "The Future of Navigation: Drones, Robots, and Digital Exploration" from August 12-13.

The workshop, aimed at young people aged 13-17, is part of a programme designed to introduce them to modern technologies and their practical applications.

The workshop, which runs from 10am to 1pm, offers a learning experience that combines theory and practice.

It invites youth to experience the technologies shaping modern navigation through hands-on drone simulation, LiDAR (light detection and ranging) mapping with Emesent Hovermap, and autonomous robot demonstrations using the ANY-

mal D to pilot virtual multirotor and fixed-wing drones, create 3D scans, and see how robots navigate complex environments.

Participants will be introduced to a range of technologies that are shaping the future of navigation and exploration, with a focus on drones, 3D scanning technologies, and autonomous robots.

The workshop will include live demonstrations of autonomous robots, allowing participants to learn how these robots navigate and navigate complex environments.

The workshop aims to present advanced technological concepts to young people in an interactive and accessible way.

The workshop attendance is free, with the necessity of prior registration on <https://mmoq.org.qa>

Qatar Charity, Mauritanian ministry sign pact to strengthen health sector

Qatar Charity (QC) and Mauritania's ministry of health have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen co-operation in the health sector, support the ministry's priorities, and address the population's basic needs, in line with Mauritania's health strategies and policies.

The agreement was signed on behalf of Qatar Charity by the director of its office in Mauritania, Omar Abdulaziz Mohammed, and on behalf of the Mauritanian ministry by Secretary-General Alia Yahya Meknous.

In a statement, Qatar Charity said that the MoU will establish a framework for co-operation between the two sides in key health areas, including training, professional development and capacity building, the construction and equipping of health facilities, and the organisation of medical campaigns and convoys.

It also covers support for financing and involving financing mechanisms, with the min-

istry responsible for operating and maintaining the health facilities benefiting from the co-operation.

Mohammed said that the new projects represent a significant advancement in terms of the groups and medical specialities they target, noting that Qatar Charity aligns its projects with the Mauritanian government's plans and strategies.

Meknous affirmed her ministry's readiness to co-operate and provide all the facilities required by Qatar Charity in the sector, highlighting the importance of the health initiatives that the QC's office is working to launch.

In a related development, Qatar Charity's office in Mauritania also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Cardiology Centre to establish a framework for relations between the two sides, strengthening co-operation in healthcare and cardiology, identifying opportunities for mutually benefi-

cial co-operation, supporting health services, and implementing specialised treatment programmes such as cardiac catheterisation procedures and the correction of heart defects.

The MoU also covers building the capacity of local healthcare personnel and organising medical campaigns and convoys.

Qatar Charity is currently implementing a number of specialised health initiatives in Mauritania, including the establishment of a new health centre, campaigns to perform open-heart surgery for 18 children, cochlear implants for children with hearing loss, treatment for people suffering from cataracts that cause blindness, and the distribution of life-saving medicines.

It is also implementing a malnutrition-prevention programme lasting several months across several Mauritanian districts, to improve the health and nutritional status of the most vulnerable groups. - QNA

Reyada Medical Centre successfully achieves JCI reaccreditation

Reyada Medical Centre has successfully achieved reaccreditation from Joint Commission International (JCI), one of the world's leading healthcare accreditation bodies, reaffirming its continued commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, and patient-centred healthcare services in line with globally recognised standards.

The JCI reaccreditation represents a significant milestone in Reyada Medical Centre's ongoing journey of quality improvement. It reflects the organisation's sustained efforts to maintain excellence in clinical care, patient safety, and healthcare operations.

Recognised as a global benchmark for healthcare quality, JCI accreditation evaluates healthcare organisations against rigorous standards for patient care, safety practices, clinical processes, governance, and operational effectiveness. The reaccreditation follows a comprehensive assessment

conducted by an international team of JCI surveyors, who evaluated Reyada Medical Centre's continued compliance across all areas, including patient assessment and care, medication management, infection prevention and control, quality improvement, patient safety, leadership and governance, training and academics, facility management, information management systems and medical record system, etc.

Having achieved its first JCI accreditation on May 25, 2023, within one year of commencing operations, Reyada Medical Centre has continued to uphold and strengthen the quality standards established from the beginning. The successful reaccreditation marks another significant milestone in the centre's journey, reflecting three years of sustained efforts in maintaining international benchmarks for patient safety, clinical excellence, and quality healthcare delivery.



Commenting on the achievement, Jamsheer Hamza, managing director and CEO of Reyada Healthcare, said: "JCI reaccreditation is a testament to the dedication and collective efforts of our entire team in consistently upholding international standards of healthcare delivery. This recognition reflects the strong systems, processes, and culture of quality that have been developed across Reyada Medical Centre. We re-

main committed to continuously enhancing our services and ensuring that our patients receive safe, accessible, and reliable healthcare."

Dr Abdul Kalam, executive director of Reyada Healthcare, added: "Maintaining JCI reaccreditation reflects our ongoing focus on patient safety, clinical excellence, and continuous improvement. It validates the effectiveness of our quality frameworks and reinforce-

es our responsibility to provide healthcare services that meet international benchmarks while remaining centred around the needs and wellbeing of our patients."

The reaccreditation reflects Reyada Medical Centre's continued efforts to enhance healthcare processes, strengthen quality improvement initiatives, develop its workforce, and implement practices aligned with international standards. Through collaboration among doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and support teams, the centre continues to foster an environment focused on safety, efficiency, and positive patient experiences.

The rigorous JCI evaluation process assessed the centre's adherence to internationally recognised healthcare standards. It acknowledged its efforts to maintain robust quality improvement initiatives, effective risk management practices, and a strong culture of patient-centred care.

As healthcare continues to evolve, Reyada Medical Centre remains dedicated to advancing its services through innovation, continuous learning, and the adoption of global best practices. The successful JCI reaccreditation reinforces the centre's position as a trusted healthcare provider in Qatar. It serves as a foundation for its continued pursuit of excellence in delivering comprehensive and compassionate care to the community.

Reyada Medical Centre, a JCI-accredited multi-speciality healthcare facility located on C-Ring Road, Doha, Qatar, stands as a beacon of excellence in medical care, offering 18+ specialities and a dedicated team of over 30 expert doctors. The centre offers an extensive range of services, including Radiology, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Optical, Physiotherapy, and more, all designed to provide patients with comprehensive, affordable, and quality care.

MCIT celebrates graduation of 10 firms of Scale Now programme

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has announced the graduation of 10 technology companies from the third cohort of the Scale Now programme.

Simultaneously, the MCIT launched the programme's fourth cohort with the participation of 12 new companies, reaffirming its commitment to accelerating the growth of promising technology ventures and further strengthening Qatar's position as a regional hub for innovation and digital entrepreneurship.

The graduating companies have developed innovative solutions across a range of strategic sectors, including industrial technologies, health technologies, media technologies, agricultural technologies, e-commerce, enterprise technologies, and logistics.

The diversity reflects the strength of Qatar's technology entrepreneurship ecosystem and the programme's role in supporting companies that develop innovative solutions to address the evolving needs of local and international markets.

The graduating cohort in the Industrial Technologies sector includes Syook, which operates as a no-code Industrial IoT and AI platform enabling real-time asset tracking, safety, and compliance. Alongside it, Digital Petroleum provides patented AI sensor technology designed to enable instant digitalisation of industrial plants.

Within HealthTech, Medica



Faraj Abdullah, director of Digital Economy Department at MCIT, addressing the graduates.

serves as a healthcare fintech platform automating insurance and revenue cycle management for hospitals and clinics, while Eshfaa functions as a digital healthcare and medical tourism platform coordinating care for local and international patients.

In MediaTech & Publishing, Aligator offers an AI media intelligence platform that monitors and improves organisational reputation in Arabic and English. Complementing this, Rawi is an Arabic audio platform producing audiobooks, educational programmes, documentaries, edutainment, and podcasts.

In Agritech, Growa delivers data-driven farming solutions through IoT, AI, GNSS, and agronomic expertise. Meanwhile, in e-commerce, Genio provides a cashless payment and nutrition-tracking system enabling parents to monitor their children's

spending and food consumption at school.

For Enterprise Tech, Byanat acts as an AI observability platform analysing telecom and data centre infrastructure performance and recommending optimisations. In Logistics, WareOne operates as an asset-light logistics orchestrator delivering on-demand, tailored supply chain solutions across the value chain.

Across its first three cohorts, the Scale Now programme has delivered tangible results that reflect its impact in supporting the growth of high-potential technology companies. Participating companies have collectively secured investments secured approximately \$13.8mn in funding, closed 388 B2B deals, and achieved an average 32% revenue growth.

In addition, entrepreneurs participating in the programme have

benefited from 569 hours of dedicated advisory support, while the programme achieved an overall participant satisfaction rate of 89%, underscoring the quality of the experience and value delivered to participating companies.

Faraj Abdullah, director of Digital Economy Department at MCIT, said: "The graduation of the third cohort of the Scale Now programme reflects the tangible outcomes the programme has achieved in supporting high-potential technology companies and enabling them to grow, expand, and access new markets."

Ali al-Mawlawi, director of Business Development Department at MCIT, said: "This initiative reflects our commitment to empowering startups, fostering innovation, and advancing the Digital Agenda 2030, further reinforcing Qatar's position as a leading hub for the digital economy."

The third cohort concluded with WareOne successfully expanding its operations into Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Khalifa al-Thani, founder and CEO of WareOne, said: "When we joined the Scale Now programme, our goal was to better understand the local market. However, the programme delivered far more than we expected."

Alongside the graduation of the third cohort, the MCIT also announced the launch of the fourth cohort of the Scale Now programme, welcoming 12 new technology companies.

QIB announces 2 new millionaires of ninth Misk Account edition



Representatives of the winners accept the ceremonial cheque on behalf of Mubarak Khalifa Mohamad and Maryam Jawad Abdulla, who won QR1mn each in the ninth Misk Account edition.

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has announced two new millionaires of the ninth Misk Account edition, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to rewarding responsible saving and empowering customers across Qatar.

Mubarak Khalifa Mohamad and Maryam Jawad Abdulla received the grand prize of QR1mn each, following a draw held under the supervision of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and QIB representatives. The draw for August marks the fourth millionaire announcement of this edition, with four more QR1mn winners still to be named throughout the year.

During this ninth edition, the Misk Account offers the largest prize pool in the country, totalling QR26mn, with opportunities for 1,124 QIB customers to win. Most notably, the number of QR1mn grand prize winners has doubled this year to 12, with the millionaire draw now taking place every two months to announce two winners simultaneously. In addition to the grand prizes, six customers win QR50,000 each on a monthly basis, while 20 customers win QR10,000 each on a weekly basis.

To qualify for the QR1mn grand prize draw, customers are required to open a Misk Account at least three months before the upcoming grand draw month and maintain a minimum monthly balance of QR10,000. For every additional QR10,000 customers earn an extra chance to win.

Mohamad Khalifa Mubarak received the prize on behalf of his grandfather, Mubarak Khalifa Mohamad, while Abdulla Ahmad al-Abdulla, husband of Maryam Jawad Abdulla, received the prize on her behalf.

Commenting on the occasion, they said: "The win came as an unexpected surprise to our families. We encourage customers to open a Misk Account and start saving for the opportunity to become one of the next Misk millionaires."

D Anand, QIB general manager - Personal Banking Group, said: "We are pleased to congratulate our two new millionaires of the ninth Misk Account edition. The continued excitement around the Misk Account reflects its success in encouraging customers to make saving a sustainable habit while giving them rewarding opportunities throughout the year.

"With twice the number of millionaires in this edition and the largest prize pool in Qatar, we remain committed to creating greater value for our customers and supporting their financial aspirations."

Existing and new QIB customers can open a Misk Account easily through the QIB Mobile App. Upon opening the account, customers receive a free debit card, become eligible to request a free credit card (free for the first year) against their Misk Account balance, earn profits on their savings, and enjoy frequent opportunities to win cash prizes.

For more information, visit www.qib.com.qa/en-miskaccount

NPC, QSC organise 2nd edition of Data Summer Camp 2026

The National Planning Council (NPC), in co-operation with the Qatar Scientific Club (QSC) of the Ministry of Sports and Youth and with the participation of Microsoft Qatar, organised the activities of the second edition of the Data Summer Camp 2026, from August 8-12, with the participation of about 40 high school students, male and female.

The camp aims to prepare a generation with future skills in data and digital transformation, in support of the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030), through an educational experience that combines theoretical knowledge and practical application over five days.

It also aims to raise awareness of the importance of data among high school students, introduce them to national and open data and the national data programme, and enable them to transform analytical results into applicable ideas and initiatives that contribute to addressing national challenges, and enhance their ability to employ digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) in supporting development and establishing a culture of data-driven decision-making.

The programme includes training participants on the basics of data, its processing, quality verification, analysis, and the extraction of indicators and insights from it, in addition to designing interactive dashboards using Power BI and AI techniques.

Regarding the organisation of the summer data camp, Director of the Statistical and Data Training Center at NPC Hessa Ali al-Malki said that organising the camp reflects the NPC's commitment to establishing a data culture among young people and preparing national cadres capable of using data to support development and decision-making.

She said that the Data Summer Camp is one of the quality initiatives that the NPC is keen to implement in co-operation with its partners, based on our belief that data has become a fundamental pillar in planning and public policy-making. The programme provides students with the opportunity to learn about the National Data Program, acquire data analysis skills, and build dashboards, enabling them to transform data into practical insights and initiatives that support national priorities and

contribute to achieving QNV 2030, she added.

For her part, the supervisor of the Data Summer Camp programme, Engineer Hessa al-Najjar, said that the Qatar Scientific Club's hosting of the camp comes within the framework of its efforts to build the capabilities of young people in the fields of science, technology and innovation, and to provide interactive educational environments that keep pace with the rapid changes in the digital world, stressing the importance of the partnership with the NPC and Microsoft Qatar in preparing a generation that possesses the skills of the future.

Microsoft Qatar provides practical experience with the latest data analysis tools and AI technologies, enhancing participants' ability to work with modern digital technologies and keep pace with global developments in data science.

The launch of the second edition of the camp continues the partnership among the participating entities to invest in young national talent, establish a culture of innovation and digital transformation, and support the move towards a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy. (QNA)

Qatar Cancer Society launches 3-month awareness campaign for workers

Qatar Cancer Society (QCS) has launched a three-month awareness campaign targeting workers throughout June, July, and August as part of its ongoing efforts to reach all segments of the community, raise awareness of the most common types of cancer, and promote a culture of prevention and early detection.

The campaign is being implemented at Al Jumaila Health Centre and Messaimeer Health Centre in collaboration with the Qatar Red Crescent. It focuses on raising awareness about skin, blood, and liver cancers through simplified health messages and educational activities designed to increase awareness of risk factors, symptoms, prevention methods, and the importance of early detection.

The initiative reflects QCS' commitment to reaching the worker population,



as they may be at greater risk of certain cancer-related factors due to the nature of their work, prolonged exposure to sunlight and other environmental and

occupational risks. The campaign also emphasises the importance of adopting healthy and preventive behaviours in the workplace, adhering to safety measures,

receiving recommended vaccinations, and undergoing regular medical check-ups to facilitate early detection, thereby improving treatment outcomes and survival rates.

The campaign includes interactive awareness sessions, as well as the distribution of multilingual educational materials to ensure that health messages are accessible to workers from diverse nationalities and cultural backgrounds, empowering them to adopt healthier lifestyles and preventive practices.

Nour Makkia, health educator at QCS, said: "This campaign reflects the vision of QCS in enhancing community awareness about cancer, with a strong focus on prevention and early detection as the cornerstone of reducing cancer incidence. We have made every effort to deliver our awareness messages in multiple languages

to ensure they reach all segments of society, particularly workers from different nationalities."

She added: "This campaign is part of a series of awareness programmes implemented by the QCS throughout the year to promote a culture of prevention and emphasise the importance of early screening. Through these initiatives, participants learn about cancer, its warning signs, associated risk factors, prevention strategies, and the value of early detection."

Qatar Cancer Society continues to implement awareness programmes and initiatives in partnership with various national health organisations, reaffirming its commitment to building a more informed community, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their health, and contributing to reducing the burden of cancer through prevention and early detection.

Israel is crippling transport system to push Gaza to famine: Rights watchdog

QNA
Geneva

Israel is deliberately crippling the transportation, storage, and freight system in the Gaza Strip by destroying trucks, targeting drivers, and preventing the entry of spare parts and operational materials, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor (Euro-Med Monitor) has warned.

It added that these actions obvi-

ously obstruct the delivery of food and medicine for humanitarian purposes and push the Strip back toward the risk of famine.

In a statement yesterday, Euro-Med Monitor said Israeli authorities are implementing an integrated policy to dismantle the supply chain from the moment aid crosses the crossings, stressing that Israel's mere permission for some trucks to enter presents a misleading picture as long as the logistical infrastructure for transportation

and storage remains destroyed or disabled by Israeli restrictions and practices. The Monitor cited Nahed Shuhibar, head of the Private Transport Association in the Gaza Strip, as saying that the Strip's transport fleet has fallen from around 1,200 trucks before the start of the war to only around 300 trucks currently fit for operation, equivalent to 25 % of its previous capacity.

This followed the destruction of hundreds of trucks and the

breakdown of an additional 100 trucks due to the arbitrary ban on the entry of tyres, oils, batteries, and spare parts, in addition to the enormous increase in the cost of scarce operational materials, Shuhibar remarked.

He noted that Israeli attacks have resulted in the killing of more than 20 truck drivers, the detention of 15 others, and the destruction of more than 150 trucks while they were carrying out their duties, particularly on roads leading to or

near the Kerem Shalom crossing.

The decimation of the headquarters and warehouses belonging to around 150 transport companies has also resulted in large quantities of frozen food and medical supplies spoiling before reaching those in need due to slow inspections and delays lasting between 24 and 72 hours, Shuhibar cautioned.

The rights watchdog pointed to assessments by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitar-

ian Affairs (OCHA), which project that more than 1.4 mn people, or around 67% of the enclave's population, are braced for acute food insecurity through the end of this year. It stressed that the humanitarian situation of the population remains extremely precarious and that any disruption to relief services could bring a famine redux.

The Monitor affirmed that Israel, as the de facto occupying power, is violating its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Syria inks deal with Moscow on the fate of Russian bases

AFP
Damascus

Syria said yesterday that it reached a deal with Russia on the fate of its two bases in the country, which Moscow once used to provide military support to ousted leader Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian civil war.

Russia was a key al-Assad ally during the 13-year conflict, helping to keep the former leader in power, and his ouster in 2024 dealt a major blow to its influence in the region.

President Vladimir Putin has since worked to build relations with the new Islamist authorities in Damascus to secure the future of Russia's only two official military bases outside the former Soviet Union.

Syria's official SANA news agency quoted the foreign ministry as saying that the Hmeimim air-base and Tartus naval base would be turned into "joint training and capacity-building centres, within new arrangements that preserve mutual interests".

The memorandum of understanding, which followed a year and a half of negotiations, "set a time limit of no more than three months to complete the process", SANA said.

In the meantime, civilian facilities at both bases will be handed over to Damascus.

Russia has yet to officially comment on the agreement.

Both the Hmeimim and Tartus bases had remained operational while talks were ongoing.

Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani visited the sites yesterday "to inspect the facilities and installations included in the historic memorandum of understanding", according to SANA.

Omar al-Hasri, head of Syria's Civil Aviation Authority, said the body was taking control of Latakia's international airport, a civilian facility adjacent to Hmeimim whose operations were closely linked to Russia's presence.

"The Authority's specialised teams have begun the technical and operational assessment of the



Syria's interim foreign minister Asaad Shaibani (2nd-R) touring the port of Tartus yesterday, to inspect facilities included in the memorandum of understanding between Syria and Russia. (SANA/AFP)

airport, its facilities and systems, in preparation for developing a plan to rehabilitate it," Hasri said.

He called the move "an important step towards restoring and operating Syrian airports and re-integrating them into the national civil aviation system".

Syria has expressed a willingness to cooperate with Moscow, and President Ahmed al-Sharaa has been received by Putin in Moscow twice since taking over.

During al-Sharaa's last visit in January, Putin said "much has been accomplished in terms of restoring our interstate relations", commending al-Sharaa for his "efforts to restore Syria's territorial integrity".

While al-Sharaa praised Russia's "historic role" in Syria and the region, Damascus has repeatedly demanded that it extradite al-Assad, who has been sheltering in Moscow with his wife since his ouster. Earlier this year, the Kremlin withdrew its forces from the Qamishli airport in Syria's northeast.



A satellite image shows a Russian naval facility, in Tartous, Syria. (Reuters/File Photo)



President Masoud Pezeshkian attending a press conference in the capital Tehran, on Saturday. (AFP)

Pezeshkian recently met Supreme Leader Khamenei: State media

Reuters
Dubai

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian met Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei around the start of the president's third year in office in late July, state media said on Sunday, and a paramilitary leader promised footage of Khamenei in the future.

Pezeshkian has given differing accounts in recent weeks about his access to Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since he succeeded his father in the role in March.

On July 21, the president said interactions with the supreme leader were "increasing day by day", but in early August he said communicating with Khamenei was "very difficult". The late July meeting covered military affairs and the economy, including securing resources, managing foreign exchange and energy use, as well as economic ties with foreign partners, according to state media.

In May, Iranian state media also reported that Pezeshkian had a meeting with Khamenei for several hours, in what was then the first publicly reported meeting between the two since Khamenei became supreme leader.

Khamenei was reportedly seri-

Basij Organisation deputy Qasem Qoraishi said yesterday that footage and other documentation showing Khamenei among the public and out in the streets, as well as in meetings with armed forces commanders, would be released in the future

ously injured in the February 28 strike that killed his father and predecessor, Ali Khamenei on the first day of the US-Israeli war on Iran. He had also generally kept a low public profile before becoming supreme leader.

Basij Organisation deputy Qasem Qoraishi said yesterday that footage and other documentation showing Khamenei among the public and out in the streets, as well as in meetings with armed forces commanders, would be released in the future.

Qoraishi said the footage would "once again bring disgrace upon the enemies and detractors of the Iranian people".

The comments appeared aimed at countering speculation about Khamenei's health and public appearances.

US must pressure Netanyahu to accept Gaza deal: Hamas official

The US must pressure Israel to accept the next phase of the Gaza plan, a Hamas official told AFP yesterday, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he rejected the US-backed agreement. "We expect the mediators and the American guarantor to pressure Netanyahu and his government to adhere to the roadmap and not obstruct the process for internal political and electoral reasons," Hamas political bureau member Bassem Naim told AFP.

Palestinian prisoner death toll in Israeli prisons rises

QNA
Jerusalem

The Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs said yesterday that the Israeli occupation authorities had acknowledged the death of Ihab Mohamad Abdul Qader Diab, 36, from the Gaza Strip, who had been detained since December 2023.

In a statement, the Commission stated it had received a response from the Israeli Occupation Prison Service confirming Diab's death. The response attributed his death to a health condition, a claim rejected by his family, who said he was in good health when he was arrested and had no illnesses. The Commission said he is believed to have died on September 2024.

The Commission said Diab's death brings to 328 the number of Palestinians who have died in Israeli prisons since 1967, including 91 since the Gaza war started, of whom 53 were from the Gaza Strip.

It stressed the urgent need for international intervention to end torture and ill-treatment in Israeli prisons and detention centers.

The commission stated such practices have resulted in the deaths of dozens of prisoners, particularly those detained from the Gaza Strip. It said it has numerous testimonies documenting the deaths of detainees under torture, which it said the Israeli occupation authorities have yet to acknowledge.

The commission further noted that the occupation authorities continue to pursue a policy of enforced disappearance and immoral, inhumane secrecy.

AFP
Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday rejected a US-led Gaza plan endorsed by Hamas, putting distance between himself and President Donald Trump as he tries to shore up his base ahead of close elections.

After more than a week of gradually escalating criticism of the plan, and despite receiving assurances that Israel would not need to start withdrawing in Gaza immediately, Netanyahu explicitly opposed the deal following pushback from his right-wing allies.

"Israel rejects the 15-point document," Netanyahu said, referring to the plan Hamas agreed to in late July.

The Israeli military "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed, and will continue to thwart threats against our forces and our citizens", he told a cabinet meeting.

Netanyahu described Trump, who had hailed the Gaza deal as a milestone for peace, as "our greatest friend in the White House" — but quickly made clear he was willing to challenge him, saying Israel was raising its objections with the United States.

"They have ideas; some of them are acceptable to us and some are not, and we know how to stand our ground on these matters," he said.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, is running even or



A view shows destruction in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza. (AFP)

trailing in some polls ahead of October 27 elections, the country's first since the Gaza war started in October of 2023.

Polls show that the Gaza plan is unpopular with Netanyahu's right-wing base, and far-right members of his cabinet have urged him to kill it.

Hamas, days after selecting a new leader, Khalil al-Hayya, announced it supported the Gaza plan.

Hamas in a statement said it was still committed to the plan.

Netanyahu until recently campaigned on the strength of his relationship with Trump, who has taken unprecedented steps to back Israel, including moving the US embassy to Jerusalem.

Trump joined Netanyahu in

late February in launching a war against Iran, but the two diverged when Trump sought a ceasefire and subsequent settlement to the conflict as it sapped his popularity and sent oil prices soaring.

Netanyahu told his cabinet that "with an agreement or without an agreement, as long as I am prime minister, Iran will not have nuclear weapons", a goal he has long alleged Tehran is pursuing.

Netanyahu last week also ordered fresh strikes on Lebanon in response to what Israel called a ceasefire violation by Iran-backed Hezbollah, just as Israel and Lebanon were holding US-mediated talks.

The Gaza plan was the latest stage in a US-brokered ceasefire announced in October that has

reduced, but not ended, Israeli operations there.

Hamas said it would surrender weapons to a nascent Palestinian governing body. The plan said Israel would begin pulling out forces in tandem with the disarmament, a timeline it adamantly rejected.

After meeting Netanyahu last week, Trump's body implementing the deal, dubbed the Board of Peace, backtracked and said Israel would only need to withdraw after "complete" disarmament, but it was apparently not enough for Netanyahu.

"We are talking about real disarmament, not fictitious disarmament," he said.

Egypt, a key mediator, called on all sides to "honour their commitments" and refrain from action that could jeopardise progress, in a call between Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and the Board of Peace's high representative for Gaza, Nickolay Mladenov.

Despite Netanyahu's stance, Israel appears to have decreased operations in Gaza since the deal was announced, but hasn't halted them completely.

Israeli gunfire yesterday injured a child who was taken to hospital in Khan Yunis, civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Bassal said.

Israeli operations in Gaza have killed 1,258 Palestinians since the ceasefire, according to the health ministry, which operates under the Hamas authority and whose figures are reliable by the United Nations.

Bodies found hanging from bridge in Mexico

AFP
Pozos de Gamboa, Mexico

Horrific drug violence plagued the Mexican state of Zacatecas for years, until relative calm set in. Then one morning in July this small town woke up to find five bodies dangling from a bridge – a grim calling card that showed the bloodshed never really left.

These days in Pozos de Gamboa, a Zacatecas town of 5,000 that is known for growing beans, people are terrified. No one goes out after dark and no one talks about that morning when the bodies showed up. Zacatecas is key to the drug trade because it links central Mexico with the north and west of the country and features routes that are key to smuggling cocaine and drugs north to the hungry consumer market in the US.

The state of 1.6mn people had become painfully used to narcotics-related violence as rival gangs fought each other, with bodies turning up almost on a daily basis and people going missing right and left. Then things calmed down, a lot. Killings in Zacatecas fell from around 1,300 in 2022 to 144 in 2025, according to government figures. The government has attributed the decline to better coordination between state and federal law enforcement officials.

The calm spell ended shockingly on July 18 with the spectacle of the bodies hanging from the bridge. The victims included a former mayor, civil servants and business people from other parts of the state. Five other bodies were found elsewhere in town that same day.

Mexico's two largest drug cartels – Jalisco New Generation and Sinaloa – have been fighting to control Zacatecas because of its



View of the vehicular bridge in the community of Pozo de Gamboa, in the municipality of Panuco, Zacatecas state, Mexico. (AFP)

strategic value in the US-bound drug trade.

Prosecutors opened a probe into the killings and the state government promised “an immediate and forceful response,” while noting that violence like this had been on the decline. It asked for help from the army and the National Guard to boost security in Zacatecas.

AFP visited Pozos de Gamboa and observed that on the road here from the state capital, also called Zacatecas, there were no roadblocks and just a few police patrol cars out and about.

One Pozos de Gamboa resident who declined to be named, fearing for his safety, described it as being like a ghost town – “as if no one ever lived here.”

“Here, you always used to see people,” this man said. But now, “at 9 in the evening there is no one out on the street.”

Indeed, in this town most people have lost a relative or an acquaintance – dead or missing – to all the drug violence. When people go missing they are routinely killed, this man said. “They make it so the

bodies do not smell.” “They killed a brother of ours,” he added. “They kill over nothing at all.”

The bridge where the bodies were found last month had been used in the past as a spot for the drug cartels to leave these grim messages. A woman who runs a food stall in the street saw the bodies hanging as early 4:00am.

The image recalled the worst years of Mexico's drug wars, when the government deployed federal forces in 2006 to fight the cartels and these crime gangs fought back, hanging bodies from bridges or dumping them elsewhere in public to intimidate rivals.

The Pozos de Gamboa killings drew the attention of leftist President Claudia Sheinbaum's government, which promised to arrest whoever was behind them.

She has deployed soldiers in violence-plagued states such as Sinaloa and Michoacan as she endures pressure from US President Donald Trump to intervene directly in Mexico against the cartels so as to keep drugs from crossing the border into the US.

Elections in Zambia



A billboard of Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema promoting the Constituency Development Fund is seen in the backdrop as a woman sits by the side of a road in Lusaka, yesterday. Zambians vote on Thursday in a closely watched presidential election that will test whether recent economic gains can offset frustration over the high cost of living in one of Africa's most stable democracies. Hichilema faces Brian Mundubile, a former ally of late president Edgar Lungu, who surged to the front of a fragmented opposition after being backed by a coalition of rival parties. Up to 8.7mn voters – a majority of them women – will decide whether Hichilema's economic reforms deserve another term or if the opposition can turn widespread discontent into a comeback. (AFP)

Rising lakes pose new dangers to Kenyans

A crocodile basks in the sunshine on the roof of a submerged conference hall at a holiday resort in central Kenya, in a visible sign of how rising lake waters are endangering thousands of families and local businesses.

Lake Baringo and other lakes in Kenya's Rift Valley have risen to levels not seen in at least half a century, with scientists attributing the surge to extreme rainfall linked to climate change.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced to higher ground, according to official data. In 2011, when the lake recorded its first significant surge, Mary Milka Tiren, 40, lost her husband after a hippo attacked him on his way home from his job at a popular tourist resort, which

is now completely submerged.

A decade later, her nine-year-old son spent three months in hospital after a crocodile attack, leaving a scar on his right arm. “It wanted to rip off his whole arm from the shoulder... but he was rescued by his peers after a long struggle,” Tiren said.

“We’ve seen a rise in crocodile attacks not because there are more crocodiles, but because the lake is now close to the home-steads,” Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) senior warden Jackson Komen told AFP. “We also have hippo attacks because when the lake expanded, the riparian ecosystem – where we used to have pasture – was lost.”

An AFP analysis of Copernicus Sentinel and Nasa Landsat satellite imagery shows Lake Bar-

ingo's surface area has expanded by 70% since 2010, from about 138sq km to 234sq km. Neighbouring Lake Bogoria, which is notable for its high sodium levels, has also grown by 21% over the same period.

As the waters of the two lakes – one freshwater and the other alkaline – rise, the distance between them has narrowed. “If the two lakes mix, then the fish, crocodiles and hippos may not survive... we may have an ecological disaster that we don't know how to deal with,” said Komen.

Lake Baringo provides vital drinking and irrigation waters, and supports fishing industry. “It may trigger a complete change... I don't know whether human beings will still be able to live here,” Komen said. (AFP)

Some progressive goals win support of independent US voters: Poll

Reuters
Washington

Progressive Democratic proposals including “Medicare for all” and new taxes on billionaires have powered insurgent candidates including Abdul El-Sayed to primary victories this year, shaking the party establishment and leading it to worry about how Democrats will perform in the upcoming November midterm elections.

But a Reuters/Ipsos poll concluded early this week found those ideas – though by no means all of the progressive agenda – are supported by independent voters who could be decisive in determining whether President Donald Trump's Republican Party maintains its congressional majorities for the next two years.

Some 64% of independent registered voters in the six-day nationwide poll said they support increasing taxes on corporations and billionaires, compared to 15% who oppose the idea.

And 60% of independents said they support government-provided healthcare coverage for all Americans, which progressives including Michigan US Senate nominee El-Sayed have pitched as “Medicare for all” – expanding the government-run health insurance program to cover all Americans.

The results suggest a path for-

ward for candidates like El-Sayed, who will face Republican Mike Rogers in what is expected to be a highly competitive contest that will play a key role in deciding Senate control.

Michigan, which Trump won in two of the last three presidential elections, presents a sharper challenge for El-Sayed than those faced by some other high-profile progressives who won primaries in heavily Democratic areas.

Republicans, led by Trump, have pounced on the rise of the democratic socialist movement, trying to paint all Democrats as extremists and sometimes inaccurately labeling them as communists.

They have also sought to tie Democrats to some adherents' more extreme views; when Democratic Socialists of America national co-chair Megan Romer advocated for abolishing the US Senate, erasing borders and defunding the Pentagon on Fox News last month, Republican leaders rushed to share it widely.

While El-Sayed is not a DSA member, he is backed by Democrats affiliated with the movement, including New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and US Senator Bernie Sanders. Sanders' 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns helped bring to the mainstream progressive policies – Medicare for all and higher taxes on the wealthy.



Abdul El-Sayed, Democratic candidate for US Senate, speaks during a Democratic unity rally in Detroit, Michigan on Friday. (Reuters)

“The label hurts him a lot more than the issues,” John Feehery, a Republican strategist, said of El-Sayed. “Republicans will call him a socialist, and he's endorsed by Bernie Sanders and AOC... El-Sayed is very exciting to the left, but he's scary to the middle.”

Republican operatives are divided on whether such attacks will be enough in the face of Trump's unpopularity and voter frustration with the cost of living.

“Just calling someone a name or trying to associate them with another political figure who's not as well known as the president or a party leader doesn't seem like it's going to be an effective strategy when people are so deeply dissatisfied with politicians and parties on both sides,” said Rob

Godfrey, a Republican strategist.

Despite their support for specific progressive policies, independents have a negative view of democratic socialists, though most say they don't understand the term very well. 43% of independents said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who identifies as a democratic socialist, compared to 22% who said they were more likely. The rest were unsure or did not answer the question.

More than one-third of independents said they believe “communist ideas and policies” have an influence on the Democratic Party, a finding that Adam Frisch, a former Democratic congressional candidate in Colorado, called a “huge warning sign.”

“Independents do not like extremism,” said Frisch, now the director of electoral programs for Welcome PAC, which backs centrist Democrats running in Republican-leaning House districts.

But Trump's Republicans have similar – and perhaps more severe – problems. Some 59% of independents said they were less likely to vote for a candidate who identifies with Trump's Make America Great Again “MAGA” movement. Independents were more split on the notion of making college tuition free – another progressive idea backed by democratic socialists – with 44% saying they would like college tuition to be free for all Americans, compared to 31% who opposed the idea.

Those voters skewed slightly in favour of issues some US conservatives now see as essential to their political ideology, such as reducing the level of immigration.

Some 40% say they want the US to allow fewer immigrants into the country, while 30% opposed the idea. 40% back reducing government regulations on business compared to 26% who are opposed, while 47% are for cutting foreign aid and 23% are against.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll, conducted online July 29 through August 3, gathered responses from 4,505 US adults, including 1,097 independents who were registered to vote. The results had a margin of error of 3 percentage points for the views of independent voters.

Guinean activist Bella Bah abducted

Guinean activist Bella Bah was kidnapped from a school where he teaches in the capital Conakry and his whereabouts are unknown, his wife said yesterday. On Saturday afternoon, “a teacher rang me to tell me that my husband had been abducted from his school”, Ami Bah said in a Facebook post.

Ami Bah told AFP yesterday that she had had “no news” of her husband since Saturday and that she was “traumatised”. A witness interviewed by AFP said that Bella Bah had been “kidnapped by men in uniform and wearing balaclavas who arrived in pick-up trucks”, and that he had been “dragged out and forcibly taken away”.

Bah's disappearance comes just a few hours after a controversial post in which he criticised the chief imam of the Faisal Grand Mosque, Mamadou Saliou Camara.

Bah is well known for his biting comments about politics and society in Guinea, where critics of the regime are increasingly abducted or disappearing. The authorities regularly state that they are unaware of these disappearances.

Since General Mamadi Doumbouya seized power in a coup in 2021, several political parties have been suspended, protests have been suppressed, and numerous opposition. (AFP)

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **SRI LANKAN FATHIMA AJEEFA**

holder of

SRILANKA Passport No. N9415682
QID No. 29214412949

hereby change my name

from

SRI LANKAN FATHIMA AJEEFA

to

FATHIMA AJEEFA ATHAMLEBBE
ABDUL LATHEF

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **NASIR AHAMMAD MOGRAB ALI**

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. A07320952
QID No. 28905036805

hereby change my name

from

NASIR AHAMMAD MOGRAB ALI

to

NASER AHAMED MOGRAB ALI

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Sierra Leone president pushes for contested electoral system reforms

AFP
Freetown

Sierra Leone's president yesterday urged Parliament to pass a disputed constitutional reform bill, after weeks of deadlock over plans to reshape the country's electoral system. “The bill before parliament is the product of years of consultation and engagement,” President Julius Maada Bio said in a televised address.

The reforms would overhaul election rules ahead of the 2028 presidential race, notably by lowering the threshold needed to win the presidency from 55% of the vote to 50% plus one vote. They would also introduce

“The bill before parliament is the product of years of consultation and engagement,” – President Julius Maada Bio

a proportional representation system for the legislature and a 30% quota for women in political leadership positions.

The proposals have divided lawmakers for weeks. The ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) argues the changes would strengthen democracy while reducing the costs, political tensions and security risks associated with elections.

But the main opposition All People's Congress (APC) wants to keep the current 55% threshold, arguing it encourages can-

didates to seek broader national support and gives the winner greater legitimacy.

Under the proposed law, a candidate would need to secure a simple majority nationwide and at least 20% of the vote in two-thirds of Sierra Leone's districts to avoid a runoff.

The reforms would also require the president to take regional balance, gender equality and minority inclusion into account when making appointments. “I therefore make a clear and solemn appeal: let this bill be passed now,” Bio said.

“Let Honourable Members vote ‘Yes’ not for a party, not for an individual, but for the people and the future of democracy in Sierra Leone.”

Wildfire forces 20,000 to evacuate in western Canada

AFP
Victoria, Canada

Canadian officials declared a state of emergency Saturday after a fast-moving wildfire in the western province of British Columbia forced the overnight evacuation of more than 20,000 people, including some who were airlifted to safety.

Winds fanned the Bald Range wildfire to grow rapidly late Friday, pushing flames into the Summerland area and affecting communities throughout the surrounding valleys.

“We know there have been significant losses of homes and property. We also know that some people became trapped as conditions changed quickly,” British Columbia Premier David Eby said in a statement Saturday.

“Air evacuations are underway for people who remain isolated behind the fire perimeter,” Eby said.

The Bald Range fire covered an estimated area of 10,341 hectares as of early yesterday and was considered out of control, according to the BC Wildfire Service website. Kelly Greene, the province’s Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, declared a state of emergency.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said it was “investigating to confirm” a possible fatality reported by a Meadow Valley resident.

Officials have yet to provide figures on casualties or damage.

CTV News reported more than 50 people had to be airlifted out of the community of Faulder as flames advanced.

Prime Minister Mark Carney



Smoke rises from the Bald Range wildfire over a residential street in British Columbia on Friday. (Reuters)

posted his gratitude to firefighters and first responders on X, thanking them for “working tirelessly to keep people safe.”

“The federal government stands ready to help and support the government of British Columbia in these efforts. I’m keeping everyone forced from their homes in my thoughts and hoping they can return safely soon,” Carney said.

The fire was first reported early Friday evening, and Eby warned Saturday it “remains extremely active and significant challenges remain.”

The BC Wildfire Service reported a total of 102 active wildfires in the province as of early yesterday, with nearly half of them deemed out of control. “Over the last 24 hours, extreme fire behaviour was seen in southern BC due to the continuous hot and dry condi-



Firefighters battling the Bald Range wildfire near Summerland in Canada’s western British Columbia province. (AFP)

tions,” the service said.

Emergency response efforts were hampered by “elevated fire behaviour coupled with severely poor visibility,” it added.

Human-induced climate

change doubled the likelihood of the extreme fire conditions behind this year’s Canadian wildfires, researchers at the World Weather Attribution group said this week.



Firefighters gather in a forested area during a recovery operation after a helicopter crashed near the Vista China lookout in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Saturday. (Reuters)

Four killed in helicopter crash in Rio de Janeiro

AFP
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Four people were killed in a helicopter crash Saturday in Rio de Janeiro, including three Colombian tourists from the same family, the country’s consul told AFP.

The helicopter went down in Tijuca National Park, a mountain-side forest, which has very dense vegetation.

Firefighters confirmed the pilot and three women “burned to death” and released images showing the smoking remains of the aircraft on a steep, hard-to-reach hillside.

Diana Paez, the Consul General of Colombia in Rio de Janeiro, told AFP the three women were part of a family group who had traveled to the Brazilian city to celebrate a girl’s 15th birthday.

The group of six had split up because the helicopter could only take three passengers.

The birthday girl’s grandmother, aunt and cousin died in the crash, and she was supposed to

take a second flight later on, with her father and his partner, Paez said.

The consulate provided support to Brazilian authorities in identifying the victims, a difficult task because of the condition of the bodies.

The aircraft went down near Vista China, a replica of a Chinese pagoda known for its high-altitude vantage point, with its views of Rio from the heart of the forest.

The monument appeared in the 2011 animated film “Rio.”

In June, two helicopters collided over Rio and left six people dead, including American singer Oliver Tree and Argentine YouTuber Gaspar Prim.

Helicopter rides are a popular attraction for tourists who want to see Rio de Janeiro’s famed sights and the natural splendor of the seaside metropolis.

Rio’s mayor Eduardo Cavaliere posted to X that he has asked Brazil’s National Civil Aviation Agency to immediately step up monitoring to ensure the safety of helicopter flights.

British Columbia gets federal assistance after wildfires

Reuters
Toronto

The Canadian federal government said yesterday it would assist British Columbia as raging wildfires forced people to evacuate by providing shelter and accommodation for residents displaced in regions around Summerland and Peachland.

The Bald Range wildfire, which prompted British Columbia to declare a provincial state of emergency and forced evacuation of tens of thousands residents living in the high-risk areas had spread to more than 10,300 hectares by Saturday night as firefighters continued to battle the blaze.

“Last night, I approved a request for Federal Assistance from British Columbia to provide shelter and accommodations for people who have been forced to leave their homes due to wildfires across the province,” Eleanor Olszewski, Canada’s minister of emergency management and community resilience, said in a social media post.

“I have tasked federal officials, led by the Government Operations Centre at Public Safety Canada, to

I have tasked federal officials, led by the Government Operations Centre at Public Safety Canada, to work with the province to ensure support reaches those who need it most,’ – Emergency Minister Eleanor Olszewski

work with the province to ensure support reaches those who need it most,” the minister said.

Over the past 24 hours, southern British Columbia continued to see fires spreading due to hot and dry weather, the province’s Wildfire Service said.

Poor visibility and increasing fires created new challenges to aviation and the ground crew response, it said.

Ten helicopters and a night vision helicopter were operating, but were hindered by thick smoke, turbulence and large fires.

The province had 34 personnel from Australia, five from New Zealand, and 214 from Mexico supporting hundreds of provincial firefighters and expects additional international resources to arrive over the coming days, it said.

Bombing attacks mark first day of Colombia’s new right-wing government; one officer dead

AFP
Santander de Quilichao, Colombia

Two bombing attacks in different parts of Colombia on Saturday marked the first day in office for new President Abelardo de la Espriella, leaving at least one police officer dead and several wounded.

The tough-talking hard-right leader campaigned on confronting “narcoterrorism without truce” and ending peace talks with armed groups following his inauguration Friday in the southwestern city of Cali.

Colombia’s army said FARC guerrilla dissidents used explosives to destroy a highway tollbooth near Cali in the early hours of Saturday, with two security guards suffering minor injuries.

Rebels under the command of Ivan Morodisco — one of the most wanted guerrilla commanders in the country — who operate in the area that surround the bombed tollbooth, which was under construction on the Pan-American highway in the Santander de

Quilichao municipality.

Morodisco leads dissidents who broke away from the historic 2016 peace agreement between the FARC and Colombia’s government. De la Espriella condemned the bombing on social media Saturday, saying “attacking the country’s infrastructure is attacking progress” in an X post.

“To those responsible, I send a clear message: there will be no refuge, no leniency and no impunity,” he added.

About 1,000 kilometers away, in the northern department of Cesar, an officer was killed in another bombing that took place early Saturday when an explosive-equipped drone struck a police station, officials there said.

Authorities there have not yet identified suspects, but De la Espriella vowed whoever is responsible “will not go unpunished.”

The confrontational style of the first-time political leader, who has not made any secret of his admiration for US President Donald Trump and El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele, now faces tough opposition from the guerrilla groups and



A damaged toll plaza in Santander de Quilichao, Colombia. (AFP)

drug traffickers operating in Colombia.

De la Espriella has promised to open mega-prisons like Bukele and to intensify bombing raids against guerilla groups and drug traffickers operating in Colombia, with support from the United States and Israel. His inauguration comes during the worst wave of violence the country has experienced in the last decade.

A decade after landmark peace accords, pockets of Colombia are still ruled by dissident armed

groups that dominate global cocaine production.

Roberto Sandoval, a firefighter who lives in the neighborhood next to the tollbooth, told AFP tensions were high following the bombing.

“We are all on edge, very tense and nervous.”

Elsewhere in the neighborhood, windows shattered and left glass strewn on the bed of Sonia Zapata, a 68-year-old housewife.

She said she feels “very nervous, very afraid.”

Flamboyant millionaire De la Espriella holds Colombia’s reins

AFP
Cali, Colombia

With a lucrative legal career and a variety of colourful business projects under his belt, Colombia’s incoming President Abelardo de la Espriella now has grand plans to crush armed insurgents, cozy up to the US and overhaul the system.

The millionaire lawyer with a taste for spectacle took office on Friday after a campaign focused on anger and fears about security.

Following a legal career that saw him represent drug-trafficking paramilitaries, fraudsters and football stars, he has promised to restore order with an iron hand.

During the campaign, he leaned heavily into his self-proclaimed nickname “The Tiger,” sharing AI-generated images of himself as a fanged tiger and the only candidate willing to wage war on crime and insurgency.

In his inauguration speech he pledged that “in the age of the Tiger,” the state “will be forceful and decisive against crime.”

“They will know how hard it bites when it comes to defending

the Colombian people,” he said from the military garrison in Cali, in front of hundreds of uniformed personnel, four tanks and two helicopters.

He swore to “rebuild the Republic” and defend democracy “by reason or by force.”

He didn’t always play the tough guy. He previously lived in Florence, Italy, where he dabbled in opera, travelled by private jet and promoted his rum, wine and fashion brand — “De la Espriella Style.”

He brought that flair, tailored clothing and a taste for provocation into public life.

The message resonated with almost half of voters. De la Espriella won the presidential runoff, albeit by less than a percentage point.

De la Espriella promised a sharp break with the outgoing leftist government in a headline program of “all-out war” on armed groups, the construction of “mega-prisons,” a military alliance with Washington and Israel and a drastically reduced state.

“People who have created wealth during their lives should run the country,” he once told AFP unapologetically.

His rhetoric has often been in-



Abelardo De La Espriella delivers his first speech as the country’s new president at the Pichincha Military Canton in Cali on Friday. (Reuters)

cendiary. He once called for the Colombian left to be “gutted,” a comment he later withdrew.

His campaign was also briefly tripped up by court rulings banning his use of national symbols like Colombia’s football jersey — decisions that were later overturned.

Despite railing against what he describes as the failed political establishment, De la Espriella’s in-

coming cabinet features a familiar cast of right-wing politicians.

“The horrible night is over,” he stated days before his inauguration, in reference to four years of leftist rule.

He has leaned into a more conservative cultural message.

Once openly atheist, De la Espriella now says he lives by “Judeo-Christian principles” and calls for a “cultural counterrevolution” to

return the country to God.

Supporters see a decisive leader prepared to confront Colombia’s entrenched violence.

Critics warn that his confrontational style — and admiration for figures such as US President Donald Trump, Argentina’s Javier Milei and El Salvador’s Nayib Bukele — could deepen divisions in a country where past polarisation has brought bloodshed.

Even his personal stories have stirred controversy. In one interview, he recalled tying fireworks to cats as a child, later insisting he was joking.

His hot temper, penchant for swearing and making sweeping statements have done nothing to dent his popularity.

For his base, those rough edges are part of the appeal.

From a childhood he describes as carefree, “in the style of Tom Sawyer,” to a jet-set legal career and now the presidency, De la Espriella has built a narrative of success and self-reliance — one he argues Colombia should follow.

Now, the “Tiger” faces the challenge of governing a country as divided as the campaign that brought him to power.

7 charged in 2023 murder of Ecuador presidential candidate

Ecuador’s Prosecutor’s Office formally charged seven people Saturday on suspicion of being the masterminds behind an assassination plot against a prominent presidential candidate in 2023.

Fernando Villavicencio, a legislator known for his anti-corruption investigations, was polling in second place when he was shot and killed at a campaign event in Quito 11 days before the 2023 presidential election. Ecuador’s Prosecutor’s Office announced on X that it “charges the seven defendants as indirect perpetrators for their alleged participation in the crime of #Murder.”

Among those charged were former Interior Minister Jose Serrano, former legislator Ronny Aleaga, businessman Xavier Jordan, and four people linked with the Los Lobos Gang, including its suspected leader Wilmer Chavarria, who went by the alias “Pipo.”

Jordan, who lives in the US, “financed and planned” the assassination, according to prosecutors. (AFP)



Japan nuclear debate unnerves proponents of pacifism

AFP
Tokyo

As Japan marks the anniversary of the 1945 atomic bombs, its leaders are pushing for a renewed debate on nuclear weapons in a challenge to the nation's long-time pacifist stance.

Japan's constitution renounces offensive military force, and successive governments have maintained a decades-old pledge not to possess nuclear weapons, produce them or permit their introduction into the country.

That commitment is now under pressure as East Asian neighbours – notably China – boost their military capabilities, while doubts persist about the reliability of Tokyo's biggest security backer, the US.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has refused to clarify whether she will maintain the stance known as the three non-nuclear principles, and Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi called last month for a "discussion without a taboo" on the subject.

In December, an unnamed senior administration official told local media in an off-the-record session suggesting that Japan should possess nuclear weapons.

The remark was widely reported by major Japanese outlets including national broadcaster NHK and Asahi Shimbun, sparking public criticism.

"If I look at it cynically, I can't help but think that maybe she really wants to change" Japan's anti-nuclear commitment, 82-year-old Satoshi Tanaka, a campaigner who survived the 1945 attack on Hiroshima, told AFP.

The country marked the 81st anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing on Thursday, and yesterday to commemorate the attack on Nagasaki.

The August 1945 assault by the US killed more than 210,000 people, including many from the effects of radiation exposure.

It remains the only time that atomic weapons have been used in warfare, and was one of the last major acts of World War II.

The Takaichi administration is undertaking a major update of the

national defence strategy this year in the face of China's expanding military ambitions.

The prime minister has already lifted Japan's self-imposed ban on weapons exports and expanded defence spending, while pushing to amend the constitution.

Those policies have drawn rebukes from China, which accuses Japan of "new militarism" and Takaichi of bending to the whims of the far right.

They have also unnerved survivors of the 1945 bombings, who have long helped shape Japan's post-war pacifist political culture.

Tanaka, the Hiroshima survivor, expressed frustration that current political leaders like Takaichi are focusing on military capacity at the expense of diplomacy.

"There is so much talk about national security. What about building peace through diplomacy?" he said.

Despite winning the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts, they are debating whether to continue their national association as their members grow older.

As of March, Japan recognised

just over 91,000 survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks, down from over 164,000 a decade ago. Their average age is 86.7.

The focus has turned firmly towards the future of the non-nuclear principles, which date to 1967.

Takaichi's supporters argue that the final clause needs to be changed to allow the US to bring nuclear arms to Japan and ensure regional deterrence.

Hirofumi Yoshimura, head of the Japan Innovation Party, a coalition partner of Takaichi's government, said the principle deserved discussion in the context of the US-Japan security alliance.

"Of course, we need to work toward building a world without nuclear arms," Yoshimura told reporters on the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

"But when considering how to ensure the effectiveness of extended nuclear deterrence within the framework of our alliance with the US, I believe we should...continue to adhere to the principle of 'neither possessing nor produc-



Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi places a flower wreath for the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing during a ceremony commemorating the 81st anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki at Nagasaki Peace Park in southwestern Japan, yesterday. (Reuters)

ing' nuclear weapons," he said.

"As for 'not allowing them to be brought in,' I do think there is some room for discussion on that point."

Critics argue that Takaichi's hawkish approach to defence increase the danger for Japan.

After Takaichi attended the annual ceremony in Hiroshima on Thursday, she sat down for a televised meeting with survivors.

When pressed, Takaichi declined to offer clarity on whether

she might change the country's nuclear course.

"Our nation currently adheres to the 'three non-nuclear principles,'" she said in response to a direct question from Tanaka, without discussing what she might do next.

"That," Tanaka told AFP on Friday, "only explains the current situation. It says nothing about the future."

"It only worries me more. I am concerned."



A person observes flames during wildfires on a hill slope in Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park in Probolinggo, East Java province, Indonesia, yesterday. (Reuters)

Indonesia closes national park as wildfire spreads

AFP
Jakarta

Indonesian authorities have closed access to a national park on Java Island as firefighters battle a wildfire raging there for nearly a week.

The blaze has razed 176 hectares (435 acres) since it broke out last Monday in the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, near the popular East Java tourist destination of Mount Bromo, a disaster official said.

Authorities barred access to visitors late Saturday until further notice. No injuries or property destruction have been reported, said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Abdul Muhari.

Two water-bombing helicopters have been deployed to douse the flames in areas difficult for firefighters to reach due to steep slopes and strong winds, he said

in a statement yesterday.

"These conditions make air operations important to reach areas that cannot be accessed optimally by land," the official said.

A blaze destroyed more than 500 hectares of land on Mount Bromo in 2023 when a couple lit a flare during a pre-wedding photo shoot.

Indonesia is projected to experience a more intense and prolonged dry season this year, raising the risk of wildfires and drought, due in part to the El Nino weather phenomenon, weather agency BMKG said.

More than 107,000 hectares of land burned in Indonesia in the first half of this year, over twice the area destroyed in wildfires in 2023.

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure and rainfall patterns. It usually causes drier conditions in Southeast Asia and India.

Indonesia seizes 1.3 tonnes of drugs

Indonesian authorities have seized 1.3 tonnes of ketamine worth tens of millions of dollars from a foreign-flagged vessel, a top anti-drug official said yesterday, in one of the country's largest drug busts. Authorities received intelligence in February that the MV King Sun was sailing east from Thailand towards Indonesia with "suspicious" cargo, prompting months of surveillance, National Narcotics Agency chief Suyudi Ario Seto said. A navy warship intercepted the vessel on Thursday as it entered Indonesian territory, he said. "The load of an estimated 1.3 tonnes was worth around 2.07tn rupiah (\$116.2mn), he said. Authorities were still searching the boat to see if there was more. (AFP)

Transport widely disrupted across east of the country

Reuters
Beijing

Typhoon Dolphin, the most powerful tropical cyclone to hit China this year, made landfall on the country's eastern coast yesterday, bringing torrential rain and strong winds and triggering warnings of flooding and landslides. The typhoon has already swept through Japan's southern Okinawa prefecture, injuring six people and cutting power to more than 50,000 buildings.

Typhoon Dolphin made landfall near Yuhuan in eastern Zhejiang province at about 5:30pm yesterday, China's meteorological authorities said. The storm packed maximum sustained winds of 42m per second (151kph) near its centre at landfall, equivalent to a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

Authorities had moved offshore workers to safety, ordered vessels back to port and increased checks at reservoirs, mountain streams, landslide-prone areas, construction sites and tourist locations.

Torrential rain is forecast through August 10 across Zhejiang, Shanghai, northern Fujian, northeastern Jiangxi, central and southern Anhui, and much of Jiangsu. Parts of central and eastern Zhejiang could receive 250-500mm (9.8-19.7 inches) of rain, according to forecasters.

After landfall, Dolphin is forecast to track westward before slowing over central and southwestern China and gradually losing strength, Wang Haiping, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Centre, told state broadcaster CCTV.



Empty check-in counters are seen after flights were cancelled at the Hongqiao International Airport ahead of the arrival of Typhoon Dolphin in Shanghai, yesterday. (Reuters)

That could prolong heavy rain and raise the risk of flooding and landslides, especially in mountainous areas and along smaller rivers.

Transport was widely disrupted across the east of the country and more than 1mn people were evacuated from their homes.

In addition to evacuating at least 30,300 people, Shanghai has cancelled about 1,500 flights, according to flight-tracking data provider Variflight.

A 42-year-old tourist from Guangdong, surnamed Chen, said he was stranded in Shanghai after his family's flight, scheduled to depart yesterday, was cancelled because of Typhoon Dolphin.

He said the family had been rebooked on a flight at 10 p.m. on Monday, although they were unsure whether it would be able to take off.

"To us Guangdong people, this typhoon is as ordinary as having a meal and feeling the wind. It's just part of everyday life," Chen said, adding that the storm did not appear particularly strong by the standards of China's southern coast.

In neighbouring Zhejiang province, the city of Wenzhou relocated more than 900,000 residents



A person holds a broken umbrella while people cross a road, as winds intensify ahead of the arrival of Typhoon Dolphin in Shanghai, China, yesterday. (Reuters)

and opened more than 1,000 emergency shelters.

In Fujian province, authorities evacuated 98,900 people from high-risk areas after raising the typhoon emergency response to Level III, according to Xinhua. Zhejiang, Shanghai and Jiangsu have also activated Level III emergency responses.

Fujian maritime authorities said 55 coastal passenger ferry routes had been suspended, all 115 offshore construction projects halted and 290 construction vessels moved to sheltered waters.

The water resources ministry

said the Qiantang, Yong, Jiao and Shuiyang rivers could see major flooding, while smaller rivers in the hardest-hit areas could rise above warning levels.

Authorities warned of a high risk of geological disasters in parts of Zhejiang, while residents in areas covered by a red mountain-torrent warning were told to follow local evacuation orders.

Shanghai's Yangshan port cleared ships from its berths and moved more than 500 small and medium-sized vessels to shelter ahead of Dolphin, the city's maritime safety administration said.

Korea promises truth over forced overseas adoptions

Korea's President Lee Jae Myung promised on Friday to "fully uncover the truth" about the nation's dark history of forced overseas adoptions, months after apologising for the state-sanctioned malpractice. Republic of Korea was once one of the world's biggest exporters of babies, sending more than 140,000 children overseas between 1955 and 1999, according to official figures. International adoptions began after the Korean war. It morphed into big business, generating millions of dollars for adoption agencies in South Korea's booming 1970s and 1980s.

Last year, the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission said the government was responsible for abuse in the practice by fabricating records and obtaining inadequate consent from birth parents. The commission recognised state responsibility in just 56 of the 367 overseas adoption cases flagged for investigation, sparking backlash from adult adoptees and a new probe to

revisit those cases, which started on July 21.

"We will thoroughly uncover the truth about... cases of forced overseas adoptions that were not fully investigated in previous inquiries," Lee said at an event with probe officials and victims of other state violence.

In May, five Korean birth mothers came forward to demand a state probe, saying their children were sent for overseas adoption without their consent.

One claimed she was told her daughter had died after birth, only to later learn she was adopted in the United States. "In some cases, unjust human rights violations occurred during overseas adoption procedures," Lee said in October.

"At such times, the state did not fully meet its responsibilities. On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I offer my heartfelt apology." Korean adoptees have advocated for their rights for years, many reporting that their birth mothers were forced to give them up, saying records were fabricated to meet legal requirements for adoption. (AFP)

Thai students, teachers mourn girl killed in shooting

AFP
Bangkok

Dozens of bereaved students, parents and teachers queued at a Buddhist temple in Thailand yesterday to pray over the body of a 12-year-old girl, one of eight victims of a home and school shooting two days earlier.

The 14-year-old assailant shot dead the grandparents who raised him at their home north of Bangkok on Friday before killing six others at his school, using his grandfather's handgun, and then turning the gun on himself, authorities said.

Investigators are still seeking a motive, but police said yesterday the boy had watched violent videos online and once brought a BB gun to school. Officials said earlier he faced academic-related stress and a classmate said he was bullied.

Mourners dressed in black gathered yesterday in the pavilion of Wat Lat Pla Duk in Nonthaburi province, bordering Bangkok, where the body of the slain



Mourners pray for 12-year-old school shooting victim Naphat Chaima during her funeral at the Wat Lat Pla Duk Buddhist temple in Nonthaburi province, north of Bangkok, yesterday. (AFP)

schoolgirl, Naphat Chaima, lay for a ceremonial bath.

She died in hospital on Saturday after suffering gunshot wounds at the school, police said. Five teachers and school staff were also killed on Friday.

"She was a good kid. A kid who loved to do every activity," said the girl's music teacher, who declined to give her name.

Several psychologists were available to consult with grieving children under the care of their

parents, an AFP journalist saw.

Another woman said her 12-year-old daughter was a classmate of the dead girl. They had done cheerleading together.

"This family lost their daughter. I came to support the mother" who lost her child too soon, she told AFP.

She said she wanted the school to tighten security, questioning how the teenage shooter could have brought a gun and bullets into the school.

Spectators watch balloon fiesta mass launch



Crowds watch near the Clifton Suspension Bridge as hot air balloons fly during a mass launch at the annual Bristol International Balloon Fiesta, Bristol, Britain. (Reuters)

UAE extradites suspected cartel boss to Ireland

AFP
Dubai

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates handed over alleged transnational cartel boss Daniel Kinahan to face trial in Ireland, the Gulf country's official media reported yesterday. The 49-year-old Irishman allegedly ran a group out of Dubai that has been linked by US and European authorities to a vast criminal enterprise dealing in drug smuggling and money laundering. The report published by the Emirates News Agency said justice ministers from the Gulf state and Ireland discussed Kinahan's extradition during a recent phone call. Kinahan "was extradited by the UAE to the Irish authorities at their formal request to face prosecution for offences related to transnational organised crime, including allegations of leading a criminal organisation, murder

and illicit drug trafficking," said the report. Kinahan was arrested in Dubai in April after a warrant was issued in Ireland for "alleged serious organised crime offences" and lost appeals against extradition. Irish national broadcaster RTE reported his extradition flight had departed the UAE earlier yesterday but did not specify what time it was due to land at Casement Aerodrome in Baldonnel. On arrival in Ireland, Kinahan was expected to be taken to the Special Crime Court in Dublin amid a large security operation, according to an earlier RTE report. The transnational group, known as the Kinahan Organised Crime Group (KOCG), is alleged to be the most powerful criminal organisation in Ireland with wealth estimated by Irish police at over 1bn euros (£856mn). Kinahan would be the second senior figure in the cartel to be extradited from Dubai.

Sean McGovern, described by a judge as "senior lieutenant in the cartel", was the first senior associate to be extradited after his arrest in 2024. In June, he was sentenced to 24 years in prison in Ireland after pleading guilty to directing organised crime and attempted murder. The case related to a long-running violent feud between the Kinahan cartel and the rival Dublin-based Hutch gang. The US government in 2022 imposed sanctions on Kinahan and other members of his family identified as leaders of the cartel. It designated them as running a narcotics trafficking organisation active in Ireland, the United Kingdom and throughout mainland Europe, and engaging in "money laundering, firearms trafficking, and murder". The US Treasury said Kinahan was believed to run the cartel's day-to-day operations, while his brother Christopher was also designated.

Air India pilot undergoes drug test after flight plunge

AFP
Mumbai

India's aviation ministry said yesterday that an Air India pilot whose flight plunged dramatically in turbulence injuring 17 passengers and crew is undergoing a "confirmatory" psychoactive drug test. The Airbus A320, carrying 137 passengers and eight crew, lost around 300 feet (91 metres) on August 4 while flying from Phuket in Thailand to New Delhi, before stabilising and landing safely, the civil aviation ministry said. Eight passengers and four cabin crew members were admitted to hospitals after landing in the Indian capital, whose conditions were described as "stable", after which both pilots were given a standard "psychoactive substance screening test", the statement read. "The screening test in respect of the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) indicated a result requiring confirmatory testing," it said.

"Samples have accordingly been sent to the designated laboratory for confirmatory analysis, and the final report is awaited." The ministry said the flight has been classified as a "Serious Incident", and that India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has launched an investigation. Both pilots have been removed from the flying roster pending outcomes of investigation. "Further action, as appropriate, will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation and confirmatory test results," it added. Videos of the incident's aftermath showed cabin baggage strewn across the aisle. Some of those injured were taken to hospital on stretchers. Air India, in a statement earlier yesterday, confirmed that a "post-flight screening test" had been conducted on the flight's pilots, but it said the results had not been shared with the company. The incident is the latest in a series of setbacks for the Indian carrier, which appointed a new executive on Wednesday. Since taking over Air India in 2022, India's Tata Group has embarked on an ambitious overhaul, ordering hundreds of aircraft and upgrading its ageing fleet. While the airline has managed to modernise operations and integrate the group's aviation businesses, it has faced persistent headwinds including aircraft delivery delays and airspace closures caused by the 2025 India-Pakistan conflict. But the biggest blow to the airline's image came in June 2025, when Air India Flight 171 – a London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner – crashed shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad, killing all but one of the 242 people on board and 19 people on the ground. The carrier has now turned to former Ethiopian Airlines chief Tewolde Gebremariam, widely seen as an industry veteran capable of righting the ship, as its new CEO as it seeks to execute a turnaround.

Report: Taiwan's 2027 defence spending to increase 16%

Reuters
Taipei

Taiwan's cabinet will propose a 16% annual rise in defence spending for 2027 which will for the first time exceed T\$1tn (\$31bn), the official Central News Agency reported yesterday, as Taipei bolsters its military. The move will come as China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has ramped up military and political pressure over the past few years to assert its claims, which Taipei strongly rejects. But Taiwan also faces calls from Washington to spend more on its own defence, mirroring pressure from the US on Europe, something President Lai Ching-te has enthusiastically embraced. The proposed budget of more than T\$1.1tn, to be unveiled on August 20, includes funding for the coast guard, veterans and special projects, and will – like this year – exceed 3% of gross

domestic product, the Central News Agency said. Detailed figures await the final cabinet meeting, it added. Taiwan's government has made military modernisation a key policy platform and has repeatedly pledged to spend more on its defences, including developing made-in-Taiwan submarines, given the rising threat from China. China's military operates almost daily around Taiwan, and holds periodic war games, the last in late December. China is also rapidly modernising its armed forces, with new aircraft carriers, stealth fighter jets and missiles. In March, China unveiled a rise of 7% in this year's defence spending, to 1.91tn yuan (\$283.08bn). China refuses to talk to Lai, saying he is a "separatist". He says only Taiwan's people can decide their future. Taiwan is currently in the middle of its annual Han Kuang military exercises.

HK weather observatory posts record high temperature

AFP
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's weather observatory posted a record high temperature of 36.9C yesterday as Typhoon Dolphin swept warm air over the city, the meteorological service said. The approaching storm has already triggered mass flight cancellations and evacuations along China's east coast ahead of its landfall and fuelled intense heat in the region. "The maximum temperature recorded at the observatory was 36.9C, the highest ever recorded since 1884," when records began, the Hong Kong Observatory said in the afternoon. The previous record was set at 36.6C on August 22, 2017, before Typhoon Hato hit the city. Figures recorded at the observatory's headquarters serve as one of the key references for Hong Kong, according to the weather service, although temperatures can vary significantly in the densely built Chinese finance hub. Temperatures elsewhere in the city topped 39C. The station in Sheung Shui, in the city's north, recorded 39.8C, the highest temperature logged in Hong Kong since automatic weather stations were introduced in the 1980s, the Observatory said. "With Tropical Cyclone Dolphin moving towards the vicinity of Zhejiang and moving inland, its outer subsidising air will persistently bring extremely hot weather to the territory today to Tuesday," the forecaster said. The Observatory issued a "Very Hot Weather Warning" yesterday, advising citizens to drink water and avoid vigorous outdoor physical activities. Typhoon Dolphin is approaching the Chinese mainland about 1,000km (620 miles) northeast of Hong Kong. It has triggered more than 1,000 flight cancellations, evac-

uations and a top-level alert from authorities as it approaches China's densely populated east coast. It is expected to make landfall late Sunday or early Monday in Zhejiang or its neighbouring province of Fujian. Scientists say human-driven climate change is making extreme heat events more frequent and more intense worldwide.



Children cool off in a water fountain at a public park amid extreme heat brought by Typhoon Dolphin, as the city recorded its hottest day in 142 years, in Hong Kong, yesterday. (Reuters)

Tourists chase high-octane thrill in China's trending biker capital

AFP
China

The roar of engines fills the night air in China's Chongqing city as tourists awkwardly clamber onto gleaming motorbikes and cling to muscular drivers to star in personalised videos. Teams of sellers hawk their filming services to passersby, many of whom have been drawn to the city and its cyberpunk image by motorbiking videos on social media shot against the neon-lit nightscape. "I flew from Shanghai to Chongqing this morning, and the first priority is this shoot," 30-year-old Liu Changqing told AFP, dressed in one of the heavy motorcycle jackets rented to customers, despite the sweltering heat. "They even have make-up artists to help you," she said as she mounted a crimson superbike, wrapped her arms around her driver and sped off with a videographer in pursuit. While many Chinese cities have restricted motorcycling, Chongqing has embraced it and become a biker's paradise. What began with local riders snapping each other to post online exploded last



A worker assembling a motorcycle at the ZXMoto factory in Chongqing, southwestern China. (AFP)

year as tourism to the mega-city of 23mn spiked. Videos using a hashtag related to the trend have racked up a cumulative 1.3bn views on Douyin – China's version of TikTok – helping to elevate Chongqing's motorcycle culture to national prominence

and even gaining recognition overseas. "There is a local saying that if you put a camera at an intersection in Chongqing, every 30 seconds you'll see a motorcycle pass by," said Zhang Yuanming, a 29-year-old motorbike enthusiast and instructor. Zhang attributes biking's popularity in

the city to the prevalence of manufacturers, the rugged terrain, and bad traffic. Chongqing has been an industry hub since 1979, when state-owned military equipment manufacturer Jialing began producing civilian motorcycles in the city. Motorbikes quickly became popular, and the city now accounts for more than a third of China's total motorbike production. While many Chinese cities are dominated by electric scooters, which face fewer regulations, Chongqing has remained open to petrol-powered two-wheelers. Zhang, who teaches students to race at a track on the outskirts of the city, hopes tourism will further burnish the city's biker reputation. "When (tourists) take photos and videos, they may come to like motorbikes and learn to ride, then buy a bike," he said. Zhang has also seen increased interest from students since March, when local brand ZXMoto made headlines by becoming the first Chinese manufacturer to win a race in the prestigious WorldSSP class in Portugal. "It's pushing young people to get in touch with motorcycles," he said. For the local bikers offering videos for tourists, Chongqing's motorcycle prowess is a business opportunity.

The packages of choreographed photos and videos – in which customers are swept off their feet by dashing riders and cruise past the city's landmarks in slow motion – cost upwards of 200 yuan (\$30). "We used to just make short videos of ourselves. Later other people saw that we looked pretty handsome so they started wanting to sit on the back," 26-year-old rider Li Yan told AFP, explaining how he now earns up to 1,000 yuan a night from customers. Li's team has grown to seven members working together to advertise online and to passersby, drive the bikes, and edit the footage, with each rider attracting around six to 12 customers a night. Domestic interest has cooled from the craze's peak last year, but foreign tourists – who now make up around a third of customers each evening – are helping fill the gap as the news spreads overseas. "I saw it was a 'must do' in Chongqing," said Alex Schodorowska, a tourist visiting from Britain, who saw the trend on Instagram. "There's nowhere with a view like this, with all the lights," the 29-year-old told AFP as she waited her turn for a ride. "I don't think many places could have the same effect for video."

How are Reuters/Ipsos US public opinion polls conducted?

Reuters/Ipsos conducts polls of national US public opinion on a variety of political, business and social topics including a regular reading on the approval of the president and on Americans' views of which party they want to run Congress.

Public opinion polls capture respondents' views at a particular moment in time. By reaching out to groups of people designed to represent the broader US population, they provide a snapshot of national opinion.

Ipsos uses its proprietary "KnowledgePanel", a representative sample of Americans aged 18 and over.

Participants are selected through a postal address-based sampling method that includes all US households. They are polled online.

Respondents who do not already have Internet access are provided with Internet service and a laptop at no cost.

The data is weighted to reflect US Census data on how the broader US population breaks down by factors including gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity (people of Hispanic descent are the

nation's second largest ethnic group), education, household income and census region.

Six times a year, Reuters/Ipsos conducts a poll of at least 4,000 respondents over a week.

These polls have a margin of error of about two percentage points for the full sample, with higher margins of error for smaller sub-groups of respondents.

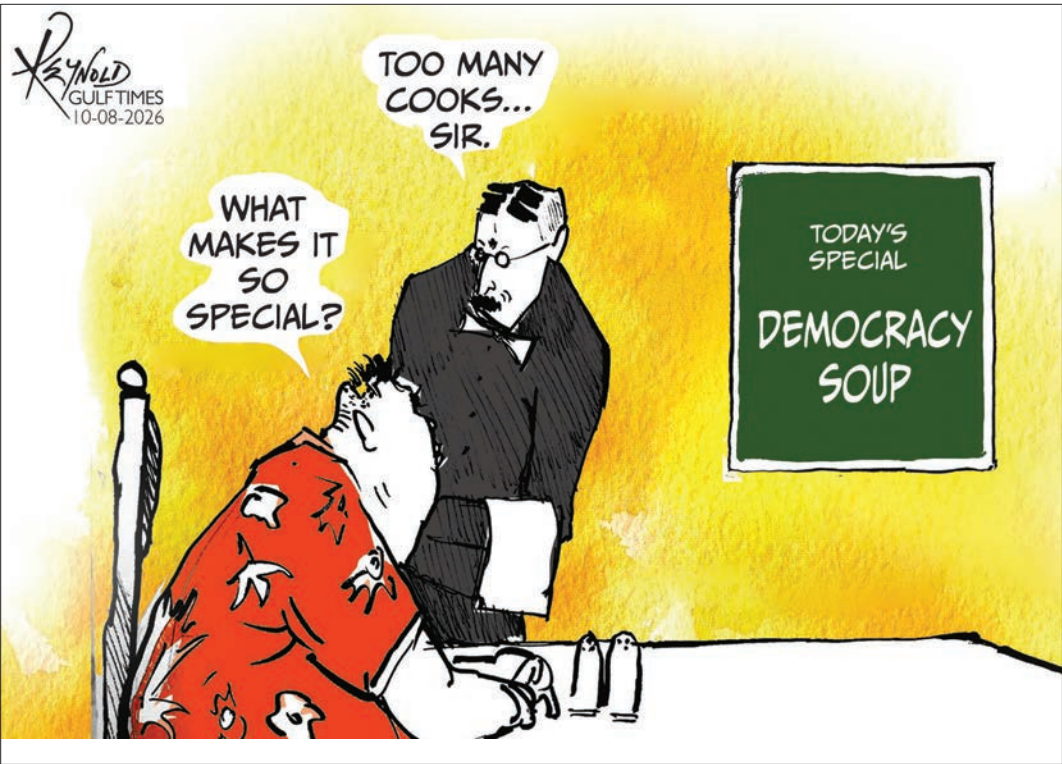
Over the course of the year, Reuters/Ipsos conducts at least 24 polls of presidential approval and other topics.

Those polls reach at least 1,000 people over a few days and typically have a margin of error of about three percentage points for the full sample.

Margin of error is a statistical term intended to express the possible variation between a poll's finding and what the result would be if the full population were polled.

Generic ballot polls are national polls that provide an overall view of which party poll respondents want to see in charge in Congress.

Reporting on polls will often refer to the findings from registered voters and likely voters, as these are the people who decide election outcomes. – Reuters



The architecture of occupation: Israel is building a permanent buffer in southern Lebanon

By Jasim al-Azzawi



There is a particular kind of violence that does not announce itself in a single strike.

It arrives in surveyors' pegs and concrete mixers, in the quiet laying of a road where a wheat field used to be.

This is the violence now unfolding in south Lebanon, where Israel is no longer conducting raids.

It is building.

For months, the pattern looked like the familiar rhythm of this conflict: incursion, withdrawal, incursion again.

That pattern has ended. Satellite imagery reviewed by open-source investigators shows at least seven new Israeli military bases and roughly 32km of freshly cut military roads carved into Lebanese territory since the ceasefire that supposedly ended the war.

Bellingcat's analysis found that of 54 towns and villages sitting inside what the Israeli military calls the "Yellow Line", 46 have been heavily damaged or entirely flattened.

This is not collateral damage. It is design.

Israel's own defence minister has said so plainly.

Israel Katz has stated that homes in Lebanese border villages will be destroyed "in accordance with the Rafah and Beit Hanoun model in Gaza", with the explicit aim to "remove, once and for all, the threats near the border".

The vocabulary is instructive. Katz is not describing a defensive perimeter.

He is describing the demolition of an entire way of life along the frontier, applying to Lebanon a template first perfected in Gaza: clear the land, then hold it.

The numbers behind that template are staggering.

Lebanese and international reporting puts the toll at 24 villages destroyed completely, 15,000-20,000 homes leveled, and more than 200,000 people displaced.

Some towns have suffered 90-100% destruction of their housing stock.

South Lebanon produces roughly a quarter of the country's agricultural output. Flatten the villages, salt the fields, and you do not just deny fighters cover. You make return uneconomical, then unthinkable.

Call this what it is: a policy of engineered depopulation, dressed in the language of security.

Nadim Houry of the Arab Reform Initiative has warned that this buffer strategy carries a built-in temptation toward perpetual expansion.

Once a state decides that safety requires an empty zone, the zone has a way of growing.

Kristine Beckerle of Amnesty International has documented the mechanism directly: sweeping evacuation orders across more than a hundred villages and towns, sowing panic, displacing hundreds of thousands, and producing what she calls a renewed humanitarian catastrophe for a population already exhausted by successive crises.

The geography being carved out, roughly 600sq km between the Blue Line and a new forward line that Israeli officers now treat as the operative frontier, is not incidental.

It mirrors the buffer architecture Israel has built in Gaza with uncomfortable precision. Fixed bases linked by hardened roads. Demolished settlements that remove concealment and civilian friction. Strongpoints anchored at symbolically loaded sites, including Khiam, where

Israel once ran a notorious detention facility during its earlier occupation, and Maroun al-Ras, now reportedly scarred by earthworks and fresh military construction.

When Beirut floated Khiam as a potential pilot area for phased Israeli withdrawal, Israel's own conduct on the ground, treating Khiam as an anchor node rather

than a bargaining chip, answered the question before it was formally asked.

Underneath the engineering lies a cruder strategic wager: that Israel can consolidate this buffer faster than Lebanon or Hezbollah can raise the cost of holding it.

The Lebanese army, meanwhile, is being asked to do the impossible.

Israel wants Beirut's forces to police the belt between the yellow line and the Litani River, disarming Hezbollah in territory the state barely controls, using an army that has neither the mandate nor the firepower to compel a movement that fought Israel to a standstill for decades.

When Israeli strikes have hit near or at Lebanese army positions, including one that wounded a soldier at a post in Mansouri, the message to Beirut is unambiguous. You will provide the enforcement. We will keep the leverage.

Hezbollah has not disappeared from this equation, whatever the rubble suggests.

Its capacity for infiltration and sabotage, the pre-2000 playbook of a movement built for exactly this kind of asymmetric attrition, has resurfaced in recent explosive incidents inside the supposedly secured buffer.

Whether that capacity can be sustained at a level that makes Israeli consolidation politically and financially unbearable, faster than Israel can normalise its presence, is the contest that will actually determine the buffer's fate.

Israeli officials speak of holding this ground for fifty years.

History suggests occupations rarely survive contact with their own arithmetic.

Israel's 1978-2000 occupation of south Lebanon ended not because Israel wanted it to, but because the cost, in soldiers and in domestic political patience, eventually exceeded what Israeli society was prepared to pay.

That earlier occupation is the ghost hovering over this one. It ended in a unilateral withdrawal that Hezbollah still commemorates as a strategic victory.

Israel's current leadership appears to believe that Gaza-style demolition and permanent infrastructure will produce a different outcome this time: a buffer that pacifies rather than radicalises, that empties rather than enrages.

That is, in my assessment, a wager against the entire history of the conflict it is trying to settle.

Land can be cleared. Roads can be paved. But a population stripped of its homes and its harvest rarely produces the quiet Israel is counting on.

It tends, instead, to produce the next generation of the resistance Israel says it is trying to eliminate.

The question now is not whether Israel can build this buffer.

It plainly can, and is. The question is whether it can hold it, and at what price, once the world stops watching a ceasefire that was declared but never quite arrived.

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



This picture taken on Saturday shows a Lebanese soldier on guard by his armoured vehicle in the southern Lebanese village of Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, which was previously badly damaged by the Israeli military. On the left are mounds of dirt put into place by Israeli troops at the eastern entrance of the village. – AFP

Jason Arday affair taps into a common perception about 'out-of-touch' academia



By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

The Jason Arday affair has shone an unusually intense spotlight upon academia, and the University of Cambridge, as scrutiny of the now former professor of sociology of education's work and life has revealed a pattern of fanciful and in some cases untrue claims.

An unsparing media onslaught has unravellled a life story that was inspiring to so many, but which now appears to have been based in part on fabrication.

Moreover, allegations of plagiarism and suggestions that Arday responded to inquiries into his work by reaching out to the police and libel lawyers have added to the sense of scandal that has unfolded.

Part of the reason the story has taken on such proportions is that it has something for everyone to get exercised about.

For those on the right, Arday's rapid promotion through a succession of academic positions between the award of his PhD at Liverpool John Moores University in 2015 and his appointment as the "youngest black professor" at Cambridge in 2023 is proof that universities have been penetrated by "wokery" and evidence for their indictment of DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) frameworks that have become a particular flashpoint.

It is certainly the case that Arday did progress with exceptional speed through a succession of university posts and his appointment at Cambridge was rightly celebrated as a milestone accomplishment and given widespread publicity in the media at the time.

For those on the left, the attack on Arday has been presented as a racist witch-hunt, fuelled by the fact that many (but not all) of the allegations of academic misconduct originated in a blogpost by an academic with views that many reasonable people would find objectionable.

Progressives instinctively defended Arday and saw the initial allegations as part of a long-running campaign to discredit the professor and the body of work that he had produced.

Commentary on social media by many outside the university system suggest that the affair has tapped into perceptions of academics as out of touch and operating within a bubble, while many within the academy are aware of the potential fallout of the scandal on a system which is already facing financial constraints as well as political attack from bad faith critics.

If the accusations of plagiarism and other academic discrepancies – including doubts about a master's degree that Arday reportedly completed at the University of London, visiting professorships at universities in Scotland, the United States, and South Africa, and a book that was seemingly never published – are proven, they risk going great reputational damage, not only to the institutions which employed Arday but also the academy more broadly.

Questions will be asked about the checks made by his PhD examiners, subsequent appointment committees and peer review processes which all ostensibly failed to identify any significant issues of concern.

While there are procedures in place to ensure the credibility of academic output and career progression, any suggestion that such safeguards did not perform as intended will be damaging to the institutions and individuals involved.

Arday resigned as professor of Sociology of Education and a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge on August 5, shortly after the University of Cambridge confirmed that it had started an investigation into his academic qualifications, after earlier defending him.

While many on the right took glee from his downfall, it is important not to lose sight of the human dimension and feel a measure of compassion at a person whose career has imploded in the most public manner imaginable.

As a neurodivergent person myself, I can attest that it is challenging enough to deal with navigating daily routines without the overwhelming pressure Arday and his family will doubtless be experiencing.

His career may be over at the age of 41.

The question of what happens next for the University of Cambridge and the other institutions and publications associated with Arday, including Simon & Schuster, the publisher of his forthcoming memoir, *Great and Unfortunate Things, is less clear-cut.

There is reportedly pressure from academics at Cambridge for an independent investigation into Arday's appointment in 2022 and 2023.

It may be that such an external process will be needed to demonstrate accountability and transparency in establishing the facts of the matter.

It will certainly be demanded by many who have fed the media frenzy over the past several weeks.

There is recent precedent for such an investigation in the form of Lord Woolf's report in 2011 into the links between the London School of Economics (LSE) and Libya and lessons to be learned.

The report arose from a donation from the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation led by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, one of Muammar Gaddafi's sons who was also a graduate of the LSE where he was awarded his PhD in 2008.

The following year, after much deliberation, the LSE Council approved a donation of £1.5mn over five years to establish a research programme at LSE Global Governance, a research centre that happened to be my first academic affiliation as a fellow from 2008 to 2013.

I therefore had a ringside view of the subsequent denouement as the Libyan revolution in February 2011 and Saif al-Islam's prominence in defending his father's rule put paid to notions entertained by advocates of the donation that he was a reformer and someone that the LSE could work with.

Just as the Arday story has dominated the front pages and Cambridge has found itself in the unrelenting glare of a media storm, so the Libya affair subjected the LSE to weeks of harsh and sometimes unfair criticism, including jibes about the "Libyan School of Economics".

It claimed the scalp of the director of the LSE, who resigned in early March 2011, but the spotlight eventually shifted elsewhere, Lord Woolf's highly critical report in October 2011 enabled the school to absorb relevant lessons and put in place measures around the handling of donations to avoid a repeat, and few today associate the LSE with Libya.

Cambridge will likewise be able to put the recent difficulties behind them.

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

Ukraine, Russia accuse each other of lethal drone attacks

Reuters
Moscow/Kyiv

Ukraine and Russia accused each other of lethal attacks yesterday, as President Volodymyr Zelensky said Moscow was targeting global food security by striking Odesa's seaport.

Three people were killed and 37 wounded in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, where a multi-storey apartment block was hit, while authorities in Russia's Belgorod said five were killed and 25 wounded by a Ukrainian drone attack.

Zelensky said Odesa's seaport had been damaged by a strike. Local authorities said dozens of drones and missiles hit the southern seaside city, wounding a dozen people.

"In this way, the Russians are at war with the world's food security," Zelensky said. Odesa's seaports are the artery for Ukraine's vast agricultural exports.

He said Russia also hit nine other Ukrainian regions yesterday. Russia has been bombarding



Ukrainian rescuers work in the courtyard of a damaged building at the site of a Russian air attack in Odesa yesterday. (AFP)

Odesa in an attempt to cut Ukraine off from the Black Sea.

"Everyone who lives in Odesa knows that the most common target is around the port area," said

67-year-old Ihor, a local resident whose apartment narrowly escaped destruction.

As Ukraine seeks to disrupt Russia's revenues for waging war,

it has hit Russian oil tankers and other cargo vessels in the Black Sea, claiming another three such strikes yesterday.

Both sides have launched a broader campaign against the other's logistics, with e-commerce warehouses on both sides and Ukraine's petrol stations coming under heavy attack during the summer months.

Ukraine's state oil and gas giant Naftogaz said attacks on its facilities had increased significantly over the last three days, including on oil extraction facilities overnight.

Ukraine's energy ministry said Russia had attacked power facilities in the Odesa region, causing a "significant amount" of the port city's residents to lose electricity overnight.

It said power had already been restored to 90,000 consumers.

Russia's Defence Ministry said it hit fuel storage facilities "used in the interests" of the Ukrainian military in the ports of Odesa and nearby Chornomorsk.

In the Vatican, Pope Leo yesterday renewed his calls for an end to the 4-1/2-year war.

WHO chief confirms Ukraine warehouse hit in strike

AFP
Geneva

A World Health Organisation warehouse stocking medical supplies in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro has been destroyed, the WHO chief said yesterday.

"Last Friday, the WHO humanitarian warehouse in Dnipro, Ukraine, was struck and destroyed. At this time, no casualties have been reported," the UN health agency's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X.

He said that a WHO staff member and drivers had been at the site earlier in the day, and "the team had succeeded in evacuating 130 of approximately 300 pallets and left the area before the attack".

He said the warehouse "held humanitarian medical supplies intended for frontline health facilities - primarily WHO emergency health supplies".

The WHO records attacks on healthcare around the world but, under its rules, does not attribute blame for them.

It has recorded 3,148 attacks on healthcare in Ukraine since the February 24, 2022 Russian invasion, with the vast majority involving violence with heavy weapons.

Of those, 2,567 attacks impacted facilities, 71 impacted warehouses and 645 impacted supplies.

The totality of the attacks have resulted in 240 deaths and 1,055 injuries.

"I cannot say loudly enough: attacks on healthcare MUST STOP. Otherwise, people are deprived of lifesaving healthcare," said Tedros.

"Even wars have rules. One of those is that health must be protected!"

Last month Doctors Without Borders (MSF) condemned what it called Russia's "deliberate strategy to destroy the healthcare system" in Ukraine, documenting a consistent pattern of attacks throughout the war.

Russia has launched "relentless attacks on healthcare facilities and medical staff in Ukraine", the medical humanitarian organisation said.

These "appear to constitute a deliberate strategy to destroy the healthcare system and collectively punish the population - rather than being an incidental consequence of Russia's invasion", said MSF.

More than four years after the start of Russia's full-scale offensive against Ukraine, the two warring countries are ramping up long-range strikes, causing a growing number of civilian casualties.

Germany warns of 'hybrid warfare' daily after suspected drone attack

Reuters
Berlin

Germany faces daily hybrid warfare attacks from abroad, Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt was quoted by a local newspaper as saying yesterday, following a suspected attack attempt involving an explosive-laden drone at Leipzig/Halle Airport.

Dobrindt told the newspaper *Bild am Sonntag* that foreign powers wanted to subdue Germany politically and socially by stirring up fear. The newspaper *Bild* said the government planned to boost Germany's anti-drone capacity to meet the threat.

"We're not at war, but we are the daily target of hybrid warfare," Dobrindt said. "Espionage, sabotage, cyberattacks, or covert operations by foreign powers aimed at destabilising Germany or inflicting direct harm are a constant reality!"

He did not identify particular countries.

After the drone loaded with explosives was discovered at the airport in eastern Germany on Tuesday, some German lawmakers pointed the finger at Russia, which has been at war with Ukraine since its military invasion of the country in 2022.

The Russian embassy in Berlin on Friday dismissed the Leipzig event as a "fabricated provocation", saying it was another example of unsubstantiated accusations against Russia.

Citing government sources, *Bild* said Dobrindt's ministry wanted to double Germany's federal team of anti-drone experts to 300 from 150 and its network of related bases to eight from four. The ministry did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Germany's armed forces on Saturday said two drones were spotted late on Thursday over a German military base site in Mechernich, in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Separately, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic told a German podcast Russia's "hybrid war" against European powers is "essentially the same as what Europe has done to Russia", arguing Europe had armed Ukraine and imposed sanctions on Russia, as well as given Kyiv financial support.

Still, he told the MD MEETS podcast hosted by Axel Springer CEO Mathias Döpfner that Ukraine had not started the war and that victim and aggressor should not be confused.

According to the German text of his comments, the Serbian leader said he did not see the war between Russia and Ukraine ending before next spring due to an unwillingness to compromise and noted: "I believe we are at the beginning of a major war."

Vucic's comments on the podcast came after he met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky this week. He pledged to support Ukraine's independence and improve bilateral economic ties.

Spain checks 200 Italy arrivals in border controls

Reuters
Madrid/Milan

Spain checked around 200 travellers arriving from Italy at the country's six largest airports on the first day of border controls reintroduced following a dispute with Italy over irregular migration.

Spain's Interior Ministry carried out checks on a total of 199 people on 12 flights from Italy to airports in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Bilbao, Alicante and Valencia, it said late on Saturday. Spain said on Friday border controls for flights and ships from Italy would remain in force until September 7 after Rome applied its own measures, which it said were motivated by the mass migration rush by 72,000 people to Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta on July 30.

Italy has suspended the European Union's border-free Schengen arrangements with Spain since August 1 and said it would maintain border controls until at least August 15.

Rome said the measure would not affect Spanish or other EU citizens travelling to Italy and would instead involve targeted checks on non-EU nationals arriving from Spain by air or sea.

"We hope to be able to lift the suspension soon, as soon as there is no longer any risk," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* in an interview published on Sunday.

The Schengen Area allows passport-free travel across 29 European countries, although member states can temporarily reintroduce border controls on security or public-order grounds.

Turkiye expects to see Egypt in joint defence agreement

AFP
Ankara

Turkiye's foreign minister said Saturday he expected Egypt to join a joint defence agreement with regional partners designed to stabilise the region that is grappling with the Middle East war.

Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan signed the agreement on Friday against the backdrop of war between the US and Iran, which has drawn in surrounding nations and disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.

The war has emboldened Iran and its Houthi allies in Yemen,

both of which have attacked Saudi Arabia, and a drone last month hit US assets at an Egyptian port on the Mediterranean.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told state news agency Anadolu he expected Egypt to join the "Makkah Joint Defence Agreement", calling the country a "natural partner on all issues".

"I believe that at the next stage Egypt will also be among us in the alliance. We already act toward one another as if we were alliance members," he said in an interview.

"There are a few technical issues. Once these are implemented, there is no reason for Egypt not to be part of it."

Fidan said the agreement does not target a specific country.

"There is no common threat that we have put in writing," he said, according to the news agency.

Pakistan's foreign ministry said Friday the pact meant an attack on any member would be regarded as an attack on all, adding it was "intended to strengthen collective deterrence".

In the interview, Fidan said the agreement was "the most important step toward bringing lasting stability to this region", and suggested the alliance could expand further.

"Under our president's vision, we should not remain limited to three countries. We should grow and, if necessary, bring all countries under this umbrella," he said.

Four arrested over \$300,000 watch theft

French police have arrested four Spanish suspects after a luxury watch worth around \$300,000 was snatched from a Brazilian tourist in the Riviera hotspot of Saint-Tropez, authorities said yesterday.

The watch, valued by its owner at \$300,000, was stolen on Friday but was later recovered and will be

returned to him, the gendarmerie in the Var region said. The suspects allegedly fled by car after the theft and were later arrested in the nearby town of Cogolin.

According to regional daily Nice-Matin, police caught them after a chase through the winding roads around the Gulf of Saint-Tropez.

Saint-Tropez, a magnet for celebrities, millionaires and luxury tourism, sees organised gangs descend every summer to target expensive watches and jewellery. Around 15 luxury watches have been reported stolen in the Saint-Tropez area since the start of the season, according to the gendarmerie. (AFP)

Several injured in Denmark shooting: police

Several people were wounded yesterday in a shooting in Denmark that police believed was linked to a settling of scores among criminals. Police said in a statement they were present at several locations in Holbaek, about 70 kilometres (45 miles) west of Copenhagen, following "a shooting in which multiple people have been hit". The incident was reported to police around 3:45pm (1345 GMT). "At this time, we cannot provide further information about their condition. The police presumption is that this is a settling of scores within the criminal milieu." The perpetrators were seen leaving the scene in a white car, according to preliminary information, police said, asking members of the public with information to come forward. (AFP)

Spain wildfire forces 470 evacuations

AFP
Barcelona

A wildfire that broke out in the Andalusian province of Huelva, in southwestern Spain, remained active yesterday, prompting the evacuation of 470 locals as a precaution.

Authorities expressed optimism that they are managing to control a blaze which has so far affected some 8,000 hectares, not all of which have been burnt.

"The fire remains complex. We still have work to do and a tough day ahead, involving a great deal of intervention, but today we are somewhat more optimistic," said the Andalusia region's minister for emergencies, Antonio Sanz.

Around 500 firefighters aided

by waterbombing planes have been deployed to keep the blaze at Niebla, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) from the border with Portugal, at bay.

Spain is enduring a tough summer for wildfires, with around three dozen blazes having forced the evacuation of thousands of people, especially in the centre of the country.

One that raged in July in the Avila region near Madrid was considered the biggest Spain had seen in recent history, laying waste to some 50,000 hectares.

Early in July, another sweeping blaze caused 14 deaths in Almeria province in Andalusia.

Europe has suffered a succession of heatwaves and drought this year, which scientists say have been aggravated by human-generated climate change.



A plane drops fire retardant over a forested area to slow the spread of a wildfire in Niebla, Huelva. (Reuters)

The Pearl steps up efforts to manage community cats

By Shaima Sheriff
Staff Reporter

The Pearl Island is tightening its approach to community animal welfare, moving from ad hoc feeding towards managed colonies, identification and sterilisation, backed by a growing network of residents.

The United Development Company (UDC), master developer of The Pearl and Gewan Islands, said that 29 cat colonies are monitored, with controlled feeding, water and regular care co-ordinated through an approved animal welfare group and registered volunteers.

The UDC said that abandoning

cats and dogs is prohibited across the Island, with monitoring and awareness measures in place, and violations may be subject to penalties or legal action.

“There is always a responsible alternative to abandonment,” the UDC said, pointing residents towards pet sitters, boarding facilities, rehoming assistance and welfare support when circumstances make pet ownership difficult.

The UDC said responsible ownership also includes ensuring pets can be traced if they go missing.

It has committed support for up to 2,000 microchips for cats and 2,000 for dogs for residents of The Pearl and Gewan Islands.

A major part of the programme

is Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR), through which community cats are trapped, neutered and returned to their managed colonies.

According to the UDC, 185 cats underwent TNR in 2025, and another 87 in 2026.

The company said the programme helps curb population growth, improve animal health and reduce distress.

A total of 157 residents of The Pearl and Gewan Islands have registered as volunteers, contributing to colony monitoring and feeding.

The UDC has provided 100 food and water bowls and introduced dry cat-food donation boxes at six retail locations across The Pearl.

Donations are collected and

distributed by welfare volunteers to designated colonies.

The company said only the approved welfare group is authorised to co-ordinate feeding, warning that “random or unstructured feeding” can create hygiene, environmental and health concerns and interfere with population monitoring.

The UDC said its approach centres on “responsible pet ownership” and “humane colony management”, with the aim of making animal welfare a shared responsibility.

While residents can contribute food through designated collection points, the emphasis remains on controlled feeding, sterilisa-



A donation box at The Pearl Island.

tion, identification and responsible ownership.

Donation boxes are available at Monoprix Tower 14, Medina Centrale and Floresta Gardens, SPAR Qanat Quartier, LuLu Giarmino Village and Mall 04, La Plage South.



Qatar animal rescuers urge stronger focus on sterilisation, adoption

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

For volunteers caring for Qatar’s community cats, rescue is often the final chapter of a much longer story.

By the time an injured cat reaches a veterinary clinic, it may already have survived months of hunger, disease, road accidents, or abandonment.

While rescuers devote countless hours to saving animals in distress, they share one conviction: many of those emergencies could have been prevented.

That belief has shaped a growing movement among volunteer groups and independent rescuers who argue that lasting change depends not on rescuing more cats, but on preventing more from ending up on the streets in the first place.

For independent rescuer Iryna Tymoshenko, the mission began seven years ago after discovering orphaned kittens whose mother had died near her home.

What started as an effort to save a handful of vulnerable animals gradually became a daily commitment to caring for 72 cats while rescuing sick and injured community animals whenever possible.

Her home has since become a temporary sanctuary where rescued cats recover, are sterilised and vaccinated, and eventually find permanent homes.

Some have even been adopted overseas.

“I do not just feed them; I rescue sick and injured cats,” Tymoshenko said.

Although she spends around QR1,500 each month on food and water, emergency medical care represents the greatest financial burden.

During the past two months alone, she spent approximately QR24,000 treating 13 critically ill or injured cats suffering from broken limbs, spinal injuries, severe infections, and other conditions.

Whenever possible, she treats minor wounds herself, but she turns to veterinary clinics whenever specialist care is needed.

More difficult than the financial burden, she says, is the emotional one: “I know that in 99% of cases, I am their last chance to survive.”

Despite the heartbreak of losing some animals, she continues because she believes every rescue offers another chance at life.

Yet Tymoshenko also believes rescue alone will never solve the problem.

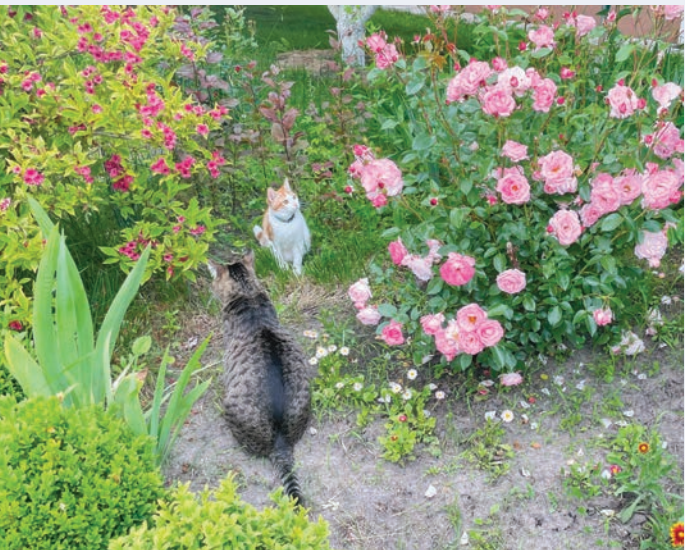
She advocates wider imple-



For independent rescuer Iryna Tymoshenko, the mission began seven years ago after discovering orphaned kittens whose mother had died near her home.



Sabina Huseynova says this kitten was taken from the street to a veterinary clinic for surgery.



“You cannot shelter or adopt your way out of this homeless cat crisis – but you can TNR,” says Charlottle from TNR Qatar.

Streets of Stray believes every resident can contribute, even without managing colonies.

Volunteering with rescue groups, fostering animals, reporting injured cats, sponsoring veterinary care, supporting adoption campaigns, or simply helping to keep feeding areas clean can all make a meaningful difference.

Residents who choose to feed community cats, the group says, should provide suitable cat food, ensure fresh drinking water is available – particularly during the summer months – and leave feeding sites clean afterward.

“Caring for animals and caring for our communities should always go hand in hand,” the volunteers said.

Although the organisations differ in size and approach, they

are united by a common vision.

Their goal is not to feed more cats every year; it is to create a future where fewer cats need rescuing at all.

That future, they believe, depends on responsible pet ownership, widespread sterilisation, adoption instead of abandonment and stronger community awareness.

Until then, volunteers know there will always be another injured animal needing treatment, another abandoned pet searching for food, and another emergency requiring immediate action.

However, they hope success will one day be measured not by the number of rescues they carry out or the amount of food they distribute, but by healthier community cat populations, fewer unwanted litters, and a society where prevention has replaced crisis as the foundation of animal welfare.