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The ship was hit by an unknown projectile, according to a report received by the British navy-affiliated agency UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO). The incident occurred while the ship was at anchor northeast of Perim Island, Yemen, British maritime security group Ambrey said.

Separately, the Panama-flagged container ship Vela Nova was struck by a missile in an attack off Pakistan while sailing into the Gulf of Oman, maritime security sources told Reuters.



Shura Council Speaker meets Korea's envoy

HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanim met yesterday with Republic of Korea's ambassador to Qatar Hong Jeepio. They discussed co-operation and relations between Qatar and Korea, particularly in the parliamentary field, and ways to strengthen and develop them. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Chad's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Deby Itno. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Chad's Prime Minister Allamaye Halina on the occasion. - **QNA**

MoPH detects 27 fraudulent attempts for healthcare licences

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has detected 27 individuals who submitted falsified experience certificates to obtain healthcare practice licences in Qatar during the first half of this year.

The individuals have been permanently blocked from working in the country's healthcare sector.

The director of the MoPH's Department of Healthcare Professions (DHP), Dr Saad al-Kaabi, said that verification of applicants' credentials takes place at the initial stages of the registration and licensing process, adding that the preliminary screening of applicants serves to identify fraudulent applications at an early stage.

The MoPH is committed to maintaining the highest standards for licensing international healthcare practitioners, ensuring that only highly qualified professionals are authorised to provide safe and high-quality medical services in Qatar.

The rigorous verification process for applicants' academic qualifications and practical experience is conducted in collaboration with specialised institutions to verify the authenticity and reliability of the information provided. - **QNA**



Minister meets Romania's envoy

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie met yesterday with Romania's ambassador to Qatar Daniel Tanase. Their talks focused on bilateral co-operation between Qatar and Romania in the areas of environment and climate change, as well as ways to advance them. - **QNA**

Amir condoles with Colombia's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Colombia's President Abelardo De La Espriella over the victims of the earthquake that struck the western part of the country.

HH the Amir wished the injured a speedy recovery.

HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent similar cables of condolences to De La Espriella. - **QNA**

Minister meets ICS chief via video call

HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani held a meeting yesterday through video conference with International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Secretary-General Thomas Kazakos. They discussed Qatar-ICS co-operation in shipping and maritime navigation safety, and ways to enhance them.

The two sides also discussed the current regional situation and its impact on maritime transportation and supply chains sustainability. - **QNA**



65% of Rumailah Hospital upgrade project complete

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has announced the completion of more than 65% of the Rumailah Hospital Safety and Security Systems Upgrade Project.

Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the project aims to modernise the hospital's life safety systems, enhance the operational readiness of its facilities and improve overall operational efficiency, extending the service life of the hospital buildings, the authority said in a press release yesterday.

Project manager Eng. Ahmed al-Obaidli stated that Ashghal has fulfilled more than 65% of the project and that all works are scheduled to be completed during the first quarter of 2027.

He said that the project includes upgrading and replacing fire detection and fire alarm systems, fire-fighting and fire suppression systems, as well as emergency lighting



and emergency exit signage.

It also encompasses architectural works required to enhance fire safety, such as the installation of fire-rated walls and doors and the upgrading of escape staircases.

Al-Obaidli added that the project covers comprehensive structural studies and assessments of Rumailah Hospital buildings to evaluate their structural condition, and that based on laboratory testing and detailed engineering stud-

ies, structural strengthening and rehabilitation works will be carried out where required.

As part of Ashghal's commitment to supporting local industry, the official highlighted the authority's continued efforts to maximise the use of locally manufactured products across its projects, with approximately 62% of the materials used in this project being locally manufactured, therefore, supporting Qatar's economy while increasing local content.

Regarding the technologies used, al-Obaidli said that the project utilises Building Information Modeling (BIM) throughout the design and construction phases to improve co-ordination among engineering disciplines and enhance overall project management efficiency.

He noted that the use of digital models has reduced Requests for Information (RFIs) by 80%, thanks to improved co-ordination between project teams and greater design and construction accuracy.

Al-Obaidli further noted that the use of 3D visualisation tools within the BIM environment has improved planning and safety management while reducing material waste by 15%.

In addition, integrating BIM with Reality Capture technologies has strengthened co-ordination among project teams and contributed to higher-quality, more efficient project delivery. - **QNA**



MoFA secretary-general meets top Kenyan ministry official

HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Kenya's Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Dr Abraham Korir Sing'Oei and his accompanying delegation, who are visiting the country. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation and discussed ways to strengthen and expand it, particularly in the areas of economy, investment, energy, education, labour, and aviation. - **QNA**

QRCS launches project for kidney patients in Yemen

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has publicly inaugurated a dialysis centre at Ibn Khaldoun Hospital in Al-Hawtah, in Yemen's Lahej Governorate.

The governorate's first specialised dialysis facility, the centre was constructed and equipped at a cost of nearly \$1.5mn.

Its units offer dialysis services and medical consultations for patients with kidney failure in Lahj and neighbouring districts.

During the inauguration ceremony, Yemen's Minister of Public Health and Population Dr Qasim Mohamed Bahibab stated: "This is a major infrastructure asset that would provide high-quality services for patients with kidney failure, al-

leviate their suffering, and save them the need to travel to other governorates for medical care."

Lahej Governor Murad Al-Halimi praised the humanitarian and developmental role played by the QRCS in backing health and services projects.

"Today, we are reaping the fruits of an effective humanitarian partnership that helped upgrade the governorate's health services," he said.

The director of Public Health and Population - Lahej Office, Dr Khaled Gaber, described the centre as a "quantum leap in the governorate's specialised healthcare services" noting that it would give the beneficiaries easier and regular access to dialysis services. - **QNA**



Tasweer to mark World Photography Day with awards, artist residency

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Photography Festival (Tasweer) will mark World Photography Day on August 19 with an evening celebrating creativity, recognising outstanding visual works and highlighting opportunities for emerging photographers in Qatar.

The celebrations will culminate with "Together in Photography: World Photography Day", organised by Tasweer in collaboration with the Fire Station at the Fire Station Cinema from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

The event will bring together photographers, artists, and members of the public for an evening exploring photography's role in preserving memory and shaping contemporary visual narratives.

A highlight will be the announcement of the winners of the

2026 Tasweer Awards for photographic projects and individual photographs, recognising outstanding works selected from this year's submissions.

The ceremony will also be streamed live across Tasweer's digital platforms, enabling audiences beyond Qatar to follow the celebrations.

Beyond the World Photography Day programme, Tasweer continues to strengthen its support for contemporary photographic practice through its 2026-27 Artist in Residency Programme, with applications for its second edition open until September 3.

The five-month residency will take place at Bait Al Wakra Studios in Al Wakra and will target photographers and visual storytellers aged 21 and above residing in Qatar.

Three artists will be selected, each receiving a private studio, a monthly stipend of QR4,000, and professional mentorship and



File photo of an artist at work.

training from experienced photographers.

The programme invites participants to develop projects examining the relationships between people, cultures, memory and the environment, both within Qatar and beyond.

It welcomes a broad range of approaches, including documentary, experimental and conceptual photography.

The residency will culminate in the exhibition "When the Image Unfolds - The Language of Impact", presented as part of the 2027 Tasweer Festival.

A digital magazine will also document the participants' creative journeys and showcase the out-

comes of their artistic exploration. Tasweer director Khalifa al-Obaidli stressed the enduring importance of photography in contemporary life.

"Photography has become an integral part of our daily lives. Images remain among the most powerful ways of preserving the details of time and place in our collective memory," he said.

Al-Obaidli added that the residency offers photographers a dedicated creative environment where they can develop their ideas with expert guidance and transform artistic concepts into completed projects, while drawing inspiration from Al Wakra's distinctive cultural landscape and heritage.

Math, logic skills key to preparing Qatar’s digital leaders, says educator

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar’s focus on mathematics and logical thinking can help prepare students for scientific and technology-driven careers of the future, educator and parent Fahad Mohammed al-Meer said following the achievement of Qatari students at an international competition in Milan.

In an statement to *Gulf Times*, al-Meer said the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE)’s focus on mathematics and logic reflects an understanding of the importance of these fields as foundations for developing students’ logical-thinking skills.

“Strengthening these skills

Interview with educator Fahd al-Meer on the impact of Qatari students shining at the International Mathematics and Logic Championships

from middle school through Grade 12 opens broader horizons for students in university education and future scientific careers,” he said.

Al-Meer stressed that the younger generation will play a central role in driving Qatar’s digital transformation, mastering artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and keeping pace with the country’s rapid technological development.

Drawing on his own experience, he emphasised the importance of guiding students towards scientific fields and specialisations that can help develop the digital leaders Qatar will need in 2030 and beyond.

His comments followed the achievement of Qatari students at the 2026 International Mathematics and Logic Games Championships in Milan, where they earned eight honorary certificates, highlighting their ability to compete successfully on the global scientific stage.

“In the next competition, we will see more Qatari students willing to hone their mathematics skills and receive training through logical-thinking workshops,” al-Meer said.

He described the achievement as “an eye-opener for parents” and urged them to help guide their children towards educational

paths and future specialisations that will support Qatar’s digital transformation and the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The students’ achievement followed a structured preparation programme conducted by a team of local and international coaches under the supervision and follow-up of mathematics specialists within the MoEHE’s Educational Affairs Sector.

The championships brought together hundreds of young mathematics enthusiasts from around the world at Milan’s Bocconi University on July 25-26.

The 2026 event marked the 40th international edition of the

competition and the 33rd edition organised in Italy by Bocconi University, which has co-ordinated the Italian edition since 1994.

This year’s championship attracted 595 competitors representing 23 countries, selected from a much larger international pool.

During the competition, students tackled mathematical and logical challenges designed to test their reasoning, creativity and ability to develop innovative solutions.

The competition has grown significantly since its launch.

In Italy alone, its first edition attracted just over 400 partici-



pants, while registrations for the 2026 edition exceeded 35,000.

The latest achievement further strengthens Qatar’s presence in global academic and scientific forums, while highlighting the potential of its young talents and the effectiveness of programmes designed to transform mathematical ability, logical thinking and creativity into internationally recognised excellence.



Sherif Kasseb named as managing director of Rixos Premium Qetaifan Island North

Rixos Hotels has announced the appointment of Sherif Kasseb as managing director of Rixos Premium Qetaifan Island North.

Bringing more than 30 years of international hospitality experience, Kasseb returns to Qatar with an extensive track record of leading luxury resorts, driving commercial performance and developing high-performing teams across the Middle East.

His appointment marks an exciting new chapter for the destination as it continues to strengthen its position as a leading tourism and leisure hub in the region.

A familiar face within the Rixos family, Kasseb has played a pivotal role in the success of several flagship properties across the brand’s portfolio.

His Rixos journey includes senior leadership positions at Rixos Sharm El Sheikh, Rixos Premium Seagate Sharm El Sheikh, Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha and most recently, Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah.

Throughout his career, he led hotel pre-openings, brand transformations and award-winning properties, including the launch of Qatar’s first all-inclusive resort.

Most recently, he spearheaded the repositioning of Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah, delivering record-breaking commercial performance and securing various recognitions for the resort in UAE and abroad.

Renowned for his people-centric leadership style, Kasseb has consistently delivered exceptional guest and colleague satisfaction scores whilst developing high-performing teams and nurturing future hospitality leaders.

Prior to joining Rixos Hotels, Kasseb held senior leadership positions with Marriott International, including Sheraton Grand Hotel Dubai and Sheraton Doha Resort & Convention Hotel, where he gained extensive experience in luxury hotel operations, pre-openings, stakeholder relations and strategic business management.

In his new role, Kasseb will oversee the strategic direction and operations of Rixos Premium Qetaifan Island North, Meryal Waterpark, and Azure Beach Doha, leading one of the region’s most distinctive destination ecosystems where luxury hospitality, entertainment, lifestyle and leisure experiences come together under one vision.

Leveraging his strong commercial expertise and strategic leadership, he will focus on driving sustainable business growth, operational excellence, exceptional guest experiences, talent development and stakeholder engagement, while further strengthening Qetaifan Island North’s position as a leading tourism and entertainment destination in the region.

“I am honoured to return to Qatar and take on the leadership of such a unique destination,” Kasseb said.

“Having previously been part of the journey that introduced Qatar’s first all-inclusive resort, this opportunity holds special significance for me,” he said. “Rixos Premium Qetaifan Island North represents an exciting evolution of hospitality, bringing together luxury, entertainment and unforgettable experiences in one destination.”

“His extensive experience across several of our flagship properties, combined with his strong commercial understanding and passion for developing people, makes him ideally suited to lead Rixos Premium Qetaifan Island North, Meryal Waterpark and Azure Beach Doha,” said Rixos Hotels and All Inclusive Collection chief operating officer Cenk Unverdi.

Wifaq organises 47th edition of programme for intending couples

The Family Consulting Centre (Wifaq), one of the centres operating under the Qatar Social Work Foundation, has concluded the 47rd edition of its premarital qualification programme, in co-operation with the General Directorate of Endowments.

The three-day programme was attended by a large number of young men and women preparing for marriage, as part of the centre’s ongoing efforts to raise family awareness and promote family stability in Qatari society.

The programme, which equips couples with the knowledge and skills that contribute to building stable and balanced families, is based on the belief in the importance of informed preparation for married life, which is considered one of the key foundations for reducing family problems and enhancing the quality of family life.

The programme covered a range of topics focusing on the religious, psychological, social, and health aspects of married life, as well as developing effective communication and dialogue skills, managing differences, and building a marital relationship based on

affection, mercy, and mutual understanding.

The programme featured educational and interactive workshops delivered by specialists.

It opened with a workshop by Dr Abdulrahman al-Harami on “Fulfilling Half of Your Faith”, which addressed the religious foundations and values underpinning a successful marriage.

Dr Mohammed al-Anzi then presented a workshop on “Marital Compatibility and Harmony”, focusing on the foundations of compatibility between spouses and its importance in building a strong and stable marital relationship, while also enhancing communication and mutual understanding between partners.

The programme concluded with a workshop by Dr Hassan al-Breiki on “A Healthy Marital Relationship”, in which he highlighted key skills and behaviours that contribute to building a stable marital relationship and enhance couples’ ability to deal with challenges and disagreements in positive and mindful ways. – QNA

Indonesian minister meets Qatar’s envoy



Indonesia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Sugiono met yesterday with Qatar’s ambassador Dr Sultan bin Mubarak al-Dosari. During the meeting, they reviewed co-operation and relations between the two countries. – QNA

QC implements sanitation, water projects in Senegal

Qatar Charity (QC) has handed over a series of water and sanitation projects across several regions of Senegal, as part of the organisation’s ongoing efforts to improve access to safe drinking water and strengthen sanitation services for vulnerable communities.

Representatives of administrative and local authorities, community institutions, and local partners attended the handover ceremonies.

The water and sanitation projects were implemented in several cities and regions, including Touba, Kaolack, Saint-Louis, Dakar, Matam, Ziguinchor, and Kolda, under an integrated water and sanitation initiative that was valued at more than QR4mn.

The initiative seeks to expand access to drinking water, benefit families in need, and improve

health conditions in underserved areas.

The Qatar Charity initiative included the distribution and installation of 49 water tanks for vulnerable families in neighbourhoods facing limited access to water services in Touba.

The initiative also included the construction and handover of 246 wells in targeted areas, helping improve access to drinking water and enhance health and living conditions for more than 70,000 beneficiaries.

Local authorities stated that the projects directly address community needs in the water sector and support local development efforts to improve essential services and enhance the quality of life in beneficiary communities.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Daouda Mbow, the deputy administrative governor of Touba,



lauded the preparations that preceded the project’s implementation.

The official noted that a joint committee comprising representatives of Touba Municipality and officials from various local and social entities, in co-ordination with neighbourhood and village representatives, identified beneficiaries through a precise and transparent mechanism to ensure that assistance reached those who are most in need.

Mbow said that the participatory approach adopted by local stakeholders contributed to the initiative’s success and helped achieve its humanitarian and development objectives.

He expressed his appreciation to the committee members and all parties involved in the project’s implementation.

The official also commended Qatar Charity’s continued support for the local communities in Sen-

egal, noting that the organisation’s humanitarian and development interventions have improved living conditions and have had a tangible positive impact on the people’s lives.

Mbow urged beneficiaries to preserve the equipment, use it responsibly, and maintain it properly to sustain its benefits and maximise its long-term value for local communities.

The projects reflect Qatar Charity’s commitment to advancing humanitarian and development programmes in Senegal, particularly in the water and sanitation sector, which plays a vital role in promoting public health, social well-being, and sustainable development.

At the conclusion of the handover ceremonies, beneficiaries and local authorities expressed their appreciation to the QC and its partners for implementing the projects.

MoEHE interviews nominees for nuclear engineering scholarships

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) interviewed yesterday students nominated to join the National Scholarship Initiative to pursue a bachelor’s degree in nuclear engineering.

The interviews were conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) as part of the state’s efforts to advance home-grown professional workforces that support scientific advancements and radiological security in line with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The MoEHE has so far interviewed more than 30 applicants.

The acting director of the ministry’s Scholarships Department, Noura al-Ansari, said that the nuclear engineering programme, launched as part of the government scholarship programme for the 2026-27 academic year, offers incredible benefits and incentives designed to attract students.

She highlighted the strong demand for the programme, noting that the number of students interested in enrolling in the nuclear engineering scholarship programme far exceeded all expectations.

The programme will count the student’s years of study toward their period of government service, with the student receiving a salary of QR20,000 during the scholarship period at Grade 9 with MoECC, al-Ansari told the Qatar News Agency (QNA).

She noted that the programme has received a record turnout, demonstrating the incredible awareness in society of labour market requirements.

The official assured that nominations for this programme remain open until August 15, 2026, to ensure that the selection process aligns with the MoECC’s requirements.

Meanwhile, the assistant director of the MoECC’s Radiation Protection Department, Eng. Hamad Salah Ibrahim, told the

QNA that this national initiative is dedicated to providing scholarships for Qatari students to support the programme to develop the technical and human workforce in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The official said that the programme is aimed at attracting Qatari students to study this field and integrate them into the workforce in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly at the MoECC, represented by its Radiation Protection Department, whose work covers radiation licensing, inspection and safety, as well as technical co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in

addition to the country’s central radiation laboratories.

The initiative underscores the nation’s commitment to strengthening its radiation safety and security framework and fostering a knowledge- and competency-based institutional culture.

It also comes amid the need to strengthen specialised national capabilities in regulatory oversight and supervision, reinforce the principles of prevention and sustainability, and provide students with opportunities to develop stable and distinguished career paths, thereby supporting the country’s readiness to address specialised challenges in this vital field. – QNA

Sidra Medicine, The View Hospital partner to expand access to cord blood banking services

Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has signed an agreement with The View Hospital to offer its umbilical cord blood banking services to expectant families.

The partnership expands access to one of Qatar's most advanced cord blood banking programmes, giving parents in the country the opportunity to preserve their newborn's stem cells for potential future medical use.

Eligible maternity patients at The View Hospital can now register to access Sidra Medicine's cord blood banking service as part of their care. After collection, samples will be transported to Sidra Medicine's Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) facility

for processing, testing, and long-term cryogenic storage under internationally recognised quality standards.

Cord blood contains stem cells which are used in the treatment of a range of blood, immune, and genetic disorders with ongoing research to explore their potential in regenerative medicine for diseases like cerebral palsy, autism and type 1 diabetes. The collection of the cord blood is painless and risk-free for both mother and baby – done after the cord is clamped and cut. It is a one-time collection opportunity and is not possible to harvest the tissue later in life.

Mohammad al-Mana, acting chief executive officer and

Member of the Board of Governors at Sidra Medicine, said: "At Sidra Medicine, we are committed to making advanced healthcare services more accessible to families across Qatar. Our partnership with The View Hospital reflects a shared vision of delivering seamless, patient-centred maternity care while expanding access to Qatar's only cord blood banking services. By combining clinical expertise with advanced laboratory capabilities, we give expectant parents greater choice and confidence. Preserving this biological resource may support future treatment opportunities for their children and families."

Yannis Angouras, hospital di-

rector at The View Hospital, said: "We are committed to providing families with access to world-class quality care throughout every stage of life, beginning at birth. This collaboration with Sidra Medicine complements our unique enriched services to woman and child, connecting expectant parents with Qatar's leading cord blood banking capabilities."

The agreement reflects both organisations' shared commitment to advancing maternal and newborn care through innovation, collaboration, and patient-centred services. By integrating cord blood banking into the maternity pathway, the partnership gives fami-



Mohammad al-Mana with Yannis Angouras during the signing of the collaboration agreement.

lies greater access to advanced healthcare options while supporting informed decision-making during pregnancy.

The GMP facility at Sidra Medicine is the only facility in Qatar to provide local cord blood storage; offering families the unparalleled advantage of keeping

the samples in the country. This ensures their optimal quality and immediate access when needed most. The GMP facility also prepares bone marrow stem cells for transplantation and advanced cell and gene therapy products for the paediatric treatment of patients at the hospital.

Cyber Security Youth Camp fetes teams for best projects

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) yesterday held the closing ceremony of the third edition of the Cyber Security Youth Camp, with the participation of around 400 male and female students aged 13-17, representing a number of public and private schools across Qatar.

NCSA President Engineer Abdulrahman bin Ali al-Farahid al-Malki, in the presence of HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi along with agency partners and cybersecurity experts, honoured the camp's partners, expert speakers, winners of the Consultation Corner competition, and the teams that developed the best projects.

The Agency explained that the camp, organised in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and hosted by Qatar Science and Technology Secondary School for Boys, forms part of its efforts to build a highly capable and cybersecurity-conscious generation, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030's focus on human development and strengthening digital capabilities across society.

Over 20 days, participants received more than 50 hours of intensive practical and applied training covering 15 cybersecurity topics, including web fundamentals, attack analysis, networks and systems, cyber defence, and ethical hacking.

The Agency also noted that more than 1,000 students from different countries joined the camp remotely each day, expanding its impact beyond Qatar's borders and strengthening the country's role in promoting cy-



bersecurity awareness and digital inclusion.

Field visits to Ooredoo gave students first-hand exposure to cybersecurity applications in real-world work environments, as well as insights into specialised careers and skills in the sector. Discussions also addressed emerging threats driven by artificial intelligence and ways to prevent them.

The camp featured dialogue sessions with seven leading ex-

perts in cybersecurity and education, who shared their expertise in digital protection. It also included 15 diverse recreational and interactive activities that strengthened teamwork, renewed participants' energy, and created a safe and inspiring learning environment.

The programme further featured six challenges through the Consultation and Cybersecurity

Corner, in addition to a Capture The Flag (CTF) competition, allowing participants to apply their skills in a genuine competitive environment and sharpen their ability to think under pressure and solve problems creatively.

The participants concluded their experience by developing 80 graduation projects aimed at addressing real-world cybersecurity challenges. (QNA)

Qatar: Israel stalling on Gaza accord

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Any delay in reaching an accord does not serve stability, he said, adding that Qatar, as a contributing party to mediation, wants the Strait reopened immediately, while leaving official remarks on the negotiations to the parties themselves.

On the Gulf position regarding Iranian statements about the Strait, he said it amounted to a call for restoring the situation to what it had been before the crisis. What mattered most was ensuring freedom of maritime navigation, and Qatar's support for regional understandings would help protect both the security of the Strait and navigation rights under international law.

Any future arrangements on managing the Strait, or on related

matters, should rest on regional concurrence and full respect for international law in order to safeguard the security and stability of the region, he said.

Turning to the Makkah joint defence agreement between Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan, al-Ansari welcomed any regional co-operation that strengthens security and stability. He recalled Qatar's close strategic ties with the three countries and said Doha viewed positively any defence framework built on co-operation and good-neighbourly relations.

Regional security is a collective responsibility requiring further bilateral and regional co-ordination, he said, noting the several regional platforms in which Qatar participates to foster closer co-operation. (QNA)

Qatar overhauls rental law to ease registration

From Page 1

The ministry said the provision resolves a long-standing practical problem: such tenants had no documented lease to present to government agencies and service providers that require one. Registration will also yield more accurate data on leased units, feeding into real estate policymaking and urban planning.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Municipality Ali bin Mohammed bin Ali al-Ali said the amendments were intended to build a more flexible and efficient regulatory environment, shore up confidence in the market and optimise the business climate, supporting the sector's stability

and sustainable growth.

He urged stakeholders to study the changes and use the grace period to bring their arrangements into compliance before the law takes effect.

The lower registration fee would ease financial burdens, encourage registration and strengthen the stability of rental transactions while safeguarding the rights of landlords and tenants, he said.

The ministry said in a statement yesterday that the amendments form part of a continuing effort to modernise the legislative and regulatory framework governing the real estate sector, improve investment attractiveness and lift the efficiency of dispute resolution.



The Transport Company MOWASALAT (KARWA)

Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-028-MTS-2026	Supply & Installation of Wheelchair Lifts for Accessible Vans	QAR 500	12 to 18 August 2026	QAR 16,000	8 September 2026
TC-023-STR-2026	Provision of Records Management and Archival Services	QAR 800		QAR 20,000	

CONDITIONS:

- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + A Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: tenders@mowasalat.com
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., 19th August 2026).
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. *Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.*
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separately sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
 - Envelope 1# must** include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
 - Envelope 2# must** include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
 - Envelope 3# must** include the Tender Bond (1 Original) + 3 years Audited Financial Statements.
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.



Supplier Registration

Mowasalat Location

Tel.: 4458 8724

Fax: 4458 8850



كافو

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خدمات كرو

مركز مواصلات الطبي

أكاديمية كافو

تكنولوجيا كافو

Daam signs funding accord with QCDC to support career readiness initiative

The Social and Sport Contribution Fund (Daam) and the Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) – founded by Qatar Foundation (QF) – have signed a funding agreement to support the centre's Career Readiness Program.

Through this partnership, Daam will provide financial support to the programme, which comprises several initiatives and platforms aimed at establishing an integrated system for developing the career paths of public school students from grades nine through 12.

The Career Readiness Program helps students identify their interests and abilities and prepares them to enter the labour market.

The programme includes creating a national, AI-powered career guidance platform tailored to Qatari society, to help students explore their interests and learn about the academic tracks available to them at the university level.

The agreement also includes supporting Al Dileela: QCDC's specialised,

one-on-one career counselling programme, delivered by qualified experts to help students make informed, confident decisions and move forward with clarity.

Al Dileela offers students preparatory training programmes and work-experience that allow them to gain exposure to professional environments, help them develop their skills, and acquire practical experience.

QCDC Executive Director Saad Abdulla al-Kharji said that preparing young people for the labour market requires creating stronger links among students' ambitions, their skills, together with the country's future needs.

He noted that the agreement with Daam would contribute to developing QCDC's programmes, expanding their impact, and improving access to career guidance services in line with Qatar's long-term priorities for human capital development.

For his part, Director of Programs at Daam Hassan Yousef al-Obaidli said the

agreement is an extension of the Fund's efforts to support national programmes aimed at developing the youth's capabilities and enhancing their readiness for the future.

He added that this is an important step toward empowering young talents and equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to transition confidently into the labour market.

This partnership reflects Daam's commitment to supporting initiatives with a sustainable social impact and yielding a generation capable of making an effective contribution to Qatar's advancement, al-Obaidli noted.

The agreement highlights both sides' commitment to investing in young Qatari talent and supporting the objectives of the Qatar National Vision 2030 through human capital development.

It also underscores the role of Daam and companies listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange in supporting national initiatives with sustainable impacts, thus, supporting QCDC's mission. (QNA)

At least 60 killed in South Sudan cattle raid

Armed attackers have killed at least 60 people in central South Sudan, according to local officials and media, in the country's latest deadly cattle raid. The young nation has long been plagued by violent cattle raids but is now also seeing clashes between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and forces loosely allied with the opposition. Two simultaneous attacks in Tonj North County, Alabek Payam in Warrap State, around 4am on Sunday morning, resulted in the death of at least 60 people

including 15 attackers, according to a local official. Last year, Kiir declared a six-month state of emergency in the state after a surge of violent inter-communal cattle raids. "The senseless act of violence is a direct violation of peace and stability efforts," said War-rap spokesperson William Wol Mayom Bol in a statement on Monday, promising "immediate action to bring the perpetrators to justice". He said around 50 people were wounded, including 17 trans-

ferred to Wau town for treatment, and an unspecified number of cattle had been looted. Bol added that the South Sudan People's Defence Force had been deployed to "restore order, protect civilians, prevent further retaliatory attacks". The incident was also reported by the United Nations Radio Miraya, which gave the death toll as "at least 60 people". It said dozens more were wound-ed, hundreds of cattle had been looted, leaving people to flee into the bush. - **AFP**

Haftar intel chief assassinated in east Libya

The head of military intelligence for the Libyan National Army (LNA), which controls the east and parts of southern Libya, has been killed in a car bombing, the army said in a statement yesterday. Fawzi al-Mansouri was assassinated on Monday

after an explosive stuck to his car detonated when he was leaving a local mosque at night, the statement said. Reports said the killing occurred in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi. - **AFP**

18 die in Egypt workers' pick-up crash

At least 18 people, many of them children aged 13-14, were killed yesterday in northern Egypt when two pick-up trucks carrying agricultural day labourers crashed, a local medical source told AFP.

Egypt's health ministry had earlier said that there were 47 casualties, including some 30 injured, in the crash in the Dawawis

area of Ismailia governorate.

Dangerously overcrowded pick-ups are a regular mode of transport for millions of Egyptian informal workers, despite the danger, including to child labourers.

"Most of the dead are children 13 and 14 years old," the medical source told AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not

authorised to brief the media.

The medical source could not provide immediate figures.

Local media Al-Masry Al-Youm reported the youngest victim was 10 years old.

The workers, mostly from two villages in the Nile delta governorate of Sharqiya, were "on their way to work on an Ismailia farm", a local security source said. - **AFP**

Israeli strikes on south Lebanon injure two

Israeli twin strikes on southern Lebanon wounded two people yesterday and damaged an ambulance, the Lebanese health ministry said, condemning the "continued targeting" of rescuers. The incident is the latest Israeli strike despite an ongoing truce in the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the strike targeted a vehicle in the city of Nabatieh, while the health ministry reported two wounded. The ministry said the Israeli military struck again when rescuers from the Risala Scouts Association, linked to the Hezbollah-allied Amal movement, came to the scene, damaging the ambulance. - **AFP**

Syrian court sentences al-Assad to death

AFP/Reuters
Damascus

A Syrian court has sentenced former ruler Bashar al-Assad to death after a trial in absentia, convicting him of atrocities committed during the country's nearly 14-year civil war.

It is the first such ruling under Syria's transitional leaders who ousted Assad in December 2024, vowing to provide justice and accountability for crimes committed under his rule.

Al-Assad fled to Moscow as Islamist-led forces closed in on Damascus after a lightning offensive.

At a court in Damascus yesterday, Judge Fakhri al-Din al-Aryan convicted al-Assad of crimes including "premeditated murder, the intentional killing of more than one person, the intentional killing of children under 15 years... torture, torture leading to death, and deprivation of liberty on multiple occasions - classified as crimes against humanity and war crimes".

"He is therefore sentenced to death," the judge said.

In April Syria began proceedings against al-Assad and other officials accused in person and in absentia of atrocities during the country's civil war, which erupted with brutal repression of pro-democracy protesters by the former authorities.

More than half a million people were subsequently killed and millions displaced, while tens of thousands disappeared, many into the country's prison system.

The court also sentenced six former military and security officials in absentia to death, including al-Assad's brother Maher, who ran the army's elite Fourth Division.

Those convicted included former defence minister Fahd al-Frej and Louay



Syrians carry the pictures of their relatives, who were killed during the country's civil war, in front of the Palace of Justice in Damascus after the court proceedings that ended with al-Assad being sentenced to death after a trial in absentia. - **AFP**



This picture taken in 2023 shows Bashar al-Assad speaking during a press conference in Damascus. - **AFP**

al-Ali, who headed military intelligence in Daraa province in 2011.

The court convicted the officials of crimes including murder, incitement to murder, torture leading to death and repeated deprivation of liberty, also considered "crimes against humanity" and "war crimes".

Former security official Atif Najib - the only one in the dock - was sentenced to death for "crimes against humanity" committed when he was head of political security in Daraa province, the cradle of Syria's uprising.

A cousin of al-Assad who was arrested last year, Najib was convicted of crimes including "the intentional killing of children under 15"; and "torture leading to death".

Judge al-Aryan said Najib had denied

the charges and showed "no remorse".

An AFP correspondent saw dozens of people gathered at the courthouse for the ruling, many from Daraa province and some holding pictures of loved ones they said had disappeared or were imprisoned under those on trial.

Ramzi Abu Naboud was carrying a picture of his brother Ahmed, who was killed when al-Assad's authorities broke up a sit-in at Daraa's Al-Omari mosque in 2011.

"Thank God and thanks to the judiciary, today we have obtained a judgment that has warmed our hearts," even if it will not bring back those who were killed, he said.

Noha al-Masri, a prosecutor present at yesterday's sentencing, lost her own brother in a crackdown on a Daraa protest in 2011.

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo kills more than 2,000

Reuters/AFP
Dakar/Kinshasa

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) said yesterday that confirmed Ebola deaths had reached 2,011, the latest grim milestone in what health officials have described as the fastest-spreading outbreak on record.

The latest data from the DR Congo's public health institute, seen by Reuters, also reported 4,381 confirmed cases across five provinces.

Delayed detection, conflict and strained health services have helped the virus spread more rapidly than in previous outbreaks.

The current outbreak, the DR Congo's 17th, is caused by the Bundibugyo species of Ebola, for which there are no approved vaccines or treatments.

It is already considered the largest in the country's history "and could well become the largest outbreak ever", Sania Nishtar, chief executive of the Gavi global vaccine alliance, has said.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the outbreak, which has also led to cases in neighbouring Uganda, a public health emergency of international concern.

A study published last month in the journal *Science* found that transmission may have begun in January or earlier in Ituri province, identifying more than 500 suspected cases between mid-January and May 15.

Shortages of medical supplies and insecurity in affected areas have complicated efforts to trace contacts, isolate patients and curb transmission.

DR Congo government data shows that the current outbreak is dwarfed only by West Africa's 2014 to 2016 Ebola outbreak in which 28,616 cases and 11,310 deaths were recorded across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, according to the WHO.

It took nearly five months from the declaration of that outbreak to hit 1,000 deaths, whereas the DR Congo's current outbreak has hit 2,000 deaths in less than three months.

In an Ebola outbreak in the DR Congo from 2018 to 2020, it took a little over 12 months to hit 2,000 deaths.

In the current outbreak, deaths have jumped from 1,000 to 2,000 in less than a month, further underscoring how quickly the virus is spreading.

As in past outbreaks, community resistance and persistent mistrust have complicated the containment effort, at times putting response workers at risk during disputes over burial practices.

Congolese virologist Jean-Jacques Muyembe, who helped discover Ebola in 1976, said in an interview with yesterday's *Le Monde* newspaper that the response had been "slow and ineffective".

"There is an internal problem at the level of the national coordination of the response," he said. "Everyone wanted to show they were doing something, even though nothing had actually been organised."

"We are only seeing 30% (of infected people), where 70% of people are dying at home. This is why this Ebola is different," Mohamed Yakub Janabi, the WHO's regional director for Africa, told reporters in Ituri's provincial capital, Bunia, on Monday.

On Monday, local officials in North Kivu province launched a government-backed task force in the city of Butembo that brings together pro-government militia fighters and civil society groups to help protect Ebola responders as they carry out their duties.

The task force will assist authorities in protecting health workers and treatment facilities and enforce quarantine measures for people suspected of having been exposed to the virus.

At a press conference on Mon-



This picture taken in June shows a child returning from school stopping to look at Ebola awareness illustrations displayed on the signboards of the Ebola Treatment Centre (ETC) in Munigi, in the DR Congo's North Kivu province. - **AFP**

day, one of its leaders, Guy Ngavo, said people found handling the bodies of Ebola victims or refusing quarantine orders could be forcibly taken to Ebola treatment centres and, in cases of repeated non-compliance, subjected to whipping.

The case fatality rate of the current outbreak is estimated by Congolese health authorities to be 45.9%.

"We haven't reached the peak yet," Health Minister Samuel Roger Kamba said in an interview shared on X by his ministry yesterday. "Within the next three months, we expect to have already brought the spread under control and to start seeing it decline," he added.

On Friday, WHO vaccine experts recommended a full-scale human trial of the only existing approved

Ebola vaccine to see if it offered cross-protection against the strain of Ebola currently spreading in the DR Congo against which no specific vaccine currently exists.

The Ervebo vaccine has proved safe and efficacious against the more common Zaire strain of Ebola virus and WHO experts said that early data, notably from animal trials, showed it may also give some protection against the rare Bundibugyo strain exploding in the DR Congo.

The Gavi global vaccine alliance - set up in 2000 to help developing countries acquire affordable vaccines - maintains a stockpile of 500,000 Ervebo doses.

It said doses from the stockpile were to be made available for the trials, with some already in the DR Congo.

Mossad ex-chief says spies 'toured' Iran nuclear site

A former head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency said yesterday that its spies had visited Iran's Fordow nuclear site "many times" in the past in order to better understand the facility.

In June last year, Israel launched a war against its arch-foe Iran with the stated goal of degrading its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, which it said posed an "existential threat".

The United States military briefly joined Israel during the 12-day conflict, and used its advanced aircraft to bomb three Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan.

"We toured the Fordow nuclear site many times to understand the site," Yossi Cohen, who led the Mossad between 2015 and 2021, said during a conference of local authorities yesterday, Israeli media reported.

He did not elaborate on when exactly the visits took place or who made them.

Iran's nuclear programme has long been a major point of contention between it and the West, including in negotiations aimed at ending the current war that Israel and the US launched against it in February.

Tehran has denied that it is seeking to produce a nuclear bomb.

Cohen, who is close to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was linked to Israel's killing in 2020 of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, although Israel has not commented on the incident.

After finishing his term at the helm of the agency, he has remained in the public eye, giving frequent interviews to Israeli media and repeatedly hinting at a possible foray into politics, which has not yet occurred. - **AFP**

Lebanon abolishes death penalty in first for region

Lebanon's parliament has abolished the death penalty and replaced all existing death sentences with life imprisonment, the speaker's office said in a statement.

The move makes it the first country in the Middle East to formally end capital punishment, after maintaining a de facto moratorium on executions since 2004, although dozens of people had remained technically on death row.

Crimes that were punishable with a death sentence included murder and treason.

Last year, Lebanese lawmakers submitted a law to abolish capital punishment.

Justice Minister Adel Nassar called the abolition "historic", and said the spectre of capital punishment had previously prevented Beirut from obtaining the extradition of suspects from countries where it has been outlawed.

"Lebanon's decision to abolish the death penalty marks a major milestone and a victory for human rights in the country," said Amnesty International's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa Heba Morayef.

Ramzi Kaiss, Lebanon researcher at Human Rights Watch (HRW), told AFP that the move was "a monumental step for human rights in the country, representing a clear break from a cruel and arbitrary sentence that should never be imposed". - **AFP/Reuters**

Colombia quake toll tops 250 as rescuers race to find survivors

Reuters
Pereira, Colombia

Rescue crews dug through mountains of shattered concrete in western Colombia yesterday to find survivors after a powerful earthquake killed more than 250 people. Families waited beside the rubble for signs of life. The 7.4-magnitude earthquake, the most powerful to strike the South American country in decades, tore through Colombia's coffee-growing heartland early on Monday, leaving apartment blocks, homes, schools and health centers cracked, leaning or flattened.

In the hardest-hit cities, rescuers worked through the night with cranes, excavators and, at times, their bare hands, cutting through twisted steel and passing buckets of debris in desperate searches for those still trapped.

"We are... focused on the immediate task of saving lives, guaranteeing the arrival of rescue teams, bringing in medical supplies and field hospitals," Interior Minister Rodrigo Lara said.

Almost 5,000 homes were damaged, while dozens of buildings collapsed and hundreds of residences were destroyed, OCHA said. In Cali, residents gathered in the streets after parts of homes and apartment blocks gave way. Families cooked outside, salvaged what they could and braced for another day away from home. Several of the top floors of one of the city's hospitals — some dedicated to pediatric care — collapsed, leaving some patients trapped and 600 others tended to on a street strewn with rubble, Irne Torres Castro, the hospital's director, told Caracol television.

In Pereira, one of the cities hit hardest, whole sections of residential neighborhoods were reduced to broken slabs of concrete and exposed rooms. Resi-



Emergency personnel work at the site of a damaged building in Pereira, Colombia. (Reuters)



dents and volunteers formed human chains, while others stood silently nearby, listening for tapping sounds or cries from below.

"They've already pulled several people out, some alive and some dead. I still can't believe it — yesterday at this same time I said hello to them, and today they're gone. It's very painful," said Fernanda Gaviria, 33, who spent the night in the park.

Authorities activated command centers as emergency workers, volunteers and humani-

tarian agencies rushed in shelter supplies, drinking water, hygiene kits, food and medical support.

International assistance was beginning to arrive. The US said it had allocated \$15.5mn for emergency shelter, food, protection and damage assessments, while the Inter-American Development Bank said it had made \$50mn immediately available for reconstruction support if requested by the government.

With communications still patchy, officials cannot ascertain the full extent of the damage.

British academic accused of plagiarism publishes his memoir

AFP
New York

Black British academic Jason Arday, who has been at the centre of a row over alleged plagiarism and racism, published his memoir in the US yesterday, days after resigning from Cambridge University.

Allegations against Arday have been seized on by British right-wing newspapers and commentators, who say he unfairly benefited from diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) policies.

The scandal erupted after some academics and media reports accused Arday, who became Cambridge University's youngest Black professor in 2023, of plagiarising parts of his doctoral thesis.

His memoir *Great and Unfortunate Things* has also attracted scrutiny. Diagnosed with autism, Arday says he was non-verbal until age 11 and only learnt to read and write at 18, before becoming Cambridge's professor of sociology of education at 37.

"Miraculously, just a few days shy of my 12th birthday, I spoke," he writes in his memoir, excerpts of which were published by *The New York Times*.

The British publisher of the memoir has insisted that "no allegations of plagiarism have been made with respect to" the book.

"What if I have completely overestimated my capabilities? What if my story ends up being a cautionary tale like Icarus about flying too close to the sun?" he writes in the book.

On Friday, Cambridge University said that it would continue to investigate Arday's appointment and tenure after he resigned citing pressure over the bitter dispute.



President Donald Trump disembarks Marine One at the Ellipse near the White House, in Washington, DC. (Reuters)

US rights groups litigate Trump over ICC sanctions

AFP
New York

Rights groups yesterday sued US President Donald Trump over his sanctions targeting the International Criminal Court, saying the measures block victims of war crimes from pursuing justice.

The Trump administration, which rejects the ICC's authority, has imposed travel bans and asset freezes on several judges and prosecutors, primarily over their investigations into key US ally Israel.

In a New York court filing, four groups including Human Rights Watch said the sanctions should be struck down as they violate laws including First Amendment free speech protections.

"This is an unlawful abuse of power constituting a frontal attack on the rule of law, the independence of judges, prosecutors, and lawyers, basic precepts undergirding the international legal order, and the principle of equal access to justice," the lawsuit states.

The 101-page complaint says the restrictions "cause grave damage to the ability to bring to justice the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity."

The US sanctions, issued under an executive order Trump signed in February 2025, have targeted eight judges, three prosecutors, a UN expert and three human rights organisations.

The UN and the European Union previously urged Trump to reverse penalties against ICC officials.

Many of the measures were directly linked to an arrest warrant that The Hague-based court issued for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the war in Gaza.

Washington has also criticised ICC probes into alleged abuses during the US-led war in Afghanistan.

Yesterday's complaint, filed by HRW, American Friends Service Committee, Center for Constitutional Rights and Open Society Institute, says the sanctions have caused "profound and irreparable harm."

It states that the four groups have been forced to stop fully engaging with the ICC due to fears of civil or criminal penalties, and of being designated for sanctions themselves.

Alongside Trump, the lawsuit names Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Attorney General Todd Blanche, and Bradley Smith, director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

Established in 2002, the ICC prosecutes individuals accused of the gravest atrocities and acts as a last resort when countries do not have adequate legal systems to ensure accountability.

US reservations about the court predate Trump. The US, like Israel, has not ratified the international treaty that established the ICC, which is backed by nearly all Western democracies.

Russia is also not a member. Its President Vladimir Putin has been the subject of an ICC arrest warrant since March 2023.

Secret switch: Iran threat compelled Trump to board flight via catering truck

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump took a secret military flight from Türkiye last month in an operation that involved him being moved between aircraft in a catering truck, an extraordinary deception prompted by an Iranian assassination threat, the *Washington Post* reported.

The White House said at the time that the president was flying aboard Air Force One from Türkiye, where he had attended a Nato summit, to Britain. But moments after Trump had boarded the plane, he left it in secret via the catering truck and boarded another aircraft for the flight to Britain, the *Post* said on Monday, quoting unnamed sources.

The *New York Times* carried a similar report, quoting unnamed US officials.

Trump had taken a newly renovated Qatari-donated jet to Ankara for the Nato summit but unexpectedly announced he would use an older Air Force One when departing the country, a move that prompted questions about the

newer plane's security.

The trip to Nato was the first international travel for the new plane, whose speedy upgrades triggered questions over its cost and security, and took place as hostilities escalated with Iran, which borders Türkiye.

Before departing Ankara, Trump said on Truth Social that he would use an older baby blue Air Force One plane "for old time's sake" to RAF Mildenhall in Britain while the new plane stopped at the same base so US service members stationed there could tour the aircraft.

After Trump boarded the old Air Force One in front of cameras in Ankara, he was secretly shuttled by the airport catering truck to a smaller plane, an Air Force C-32A, the *Post* reported citing a US official familiar with the operation and corroborating material it reviewed.

The deception operation was triggered by a credible threat to Trump, the *Post* reported. A similar operation had taken place in 2000, when President Bill Clinton used an unmarked executive jet to fly into Pakistan while sending his formal Air Force One as decoy.

On this occasion, the journalists who thought they were travelling



A catering truck is parked next to Air Force One, before President Donald Trump's departure from Ankara en route to Washington after his participation in the Nato leaders' summit in July. (Reuters)

with Trump on the older Air Force One, which was effectively used as a decoy, reported being advised to keep their window shades in the press cabin closed. The *Post* said aside from reporters, some White House staff also believed that the president was on board.

When asked later by reporters

why they had to keep their shades shut during the flight, Trump said it was because they were "probably on a dangerous flight." He went on to say: "But if I go, you go. Right?"

The C-32A carrying Trump flew to Britain and arrived at around 10:20pm with the older Air Force One and media arriving minutes

later, the *Post* reported. It was not clear, the paper said, how Trump was moved from the C-32A back to the older Air Force One.

Trump's travelling press pool reported he climbed down the stairs of the older Air Force One at 10:56pm.

He gave the press a peace sign

but didn't walk over to talk to them. He then spent some time greeting service members before walking to the new, Qatar-donated plane.

When asked for comment on the revelation of a secret flight on a third plane, the White House provided a statement from Communications Director Steve Cheung saying the Qatari-donated jet has been fitted with high-level security protocols that ensure the safety of the president and his staff.

"As the President has said recently, there are many enemies of America who have their sights on him, and we use every tool at our disposal to address those threats," Cheung said. It was the same statement provided to the *Post*.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The new plane, with red, white, dark blue and gold livery chosen by Trump, is a Boeing 747 gifted to the US by Qatar last year and refitted by defence contractor L3Harris Technologies. It was intended to serve as a temporary replacement while Boeing struggled to deliver long-delayed next-generation Air Force One planes.

Syria slams quake-stricken Colombia's recognition of Israeli claim over Golan

AFP
Damascus

Syria yesterday slammed the decision to recognise Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights by the new hard-right government of Colombia, which became only the second country to do so after the US.

Syria "expresses its categorical rejection and condemnation of this position and affirms that the Golan is an inseparable part of its territory", a foreign ministry statement said a day after Colombia made the announcement on the move.

Israel captured most of the Golan from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and later annexed the areas under its control, in a move not recognised by most of the international community.

Colombian President Abelo de la Esperiella took power on Friday following a bombastic campaign during which he promised tight relations with the US and Israel as a way to combat armed groups in his own country.

"Colombia recognises that maintaining Israel's control and sovereignty over the Golan Heights is an essential component of its national defence," the foreign ministry said.

Syria called Colombia's announcement "a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations", recent statements by UN chief Antonio Guterres, and a UN Security Council resolution.

Visiting Syria last month, Guterres said that "violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable",

adding: "I'd like to remind the international community that the Golan Heights are Syrian territory."

De la Esperiella's leftist predecessor Gustavo Petro had ardently criticised Israel's offensive in Gaza, severing diplomatic relations and halting Israeli arms imports into Colombia.

The US-backed millionaire now in office has promised to re-store ties.

After the December 2024 overthrow of longtime Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad, Israel sent troops into the UN-patrolled buffer zone that had separated Israeli and Syrian forces in the Israeli-occupied Golan since 1974.

It has also carried out strikes and repeated incursions into southern Syria, where it seeks an expanded demilitarised zone.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MD JOSIMUDDIN KHORSHED ALOM

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. EG0725075
QID No. 29105011127

hereby change my name

from

MD JOSIMUDDIN KHORSHED ALOM

to

MD JASIM MD KHORSHED ALOM

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

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holder of

INDIA Passport No. P5328649
QID No. 28135661900

hereby change my name

from

PRASAD KUDIPUDI

to

PRASAD KUDUPUDI

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

Typhoon Dolphin floods central China, parts of Beijing

Reuters
Xiangyang, China

Typhoon Dolphin churned deeper inland to the central Chinese province of Hubei yesterday, flooding streets, forcing the closure of tourist areas and halting construction projects, as forecasters warned of extreme rainfall across a broad swathe of the country. Parts of Beijing, including its Shunyi district, north-east of the main financial area, also saw severe flooding by Tuesday evening with rains forecast to intensify overnight.

The strongest typhoon to hit China this year, Dolphin packed an unusually resilient storm system that travelled nearly 6,000km (3,700 miles) before making land-fall over the weekend, drenching the country's eastern coast and bringing with it a sprawling cloud field. Downgraded to a tropical depression on Tuesday afternoon, the storm's reach extended as far as Beijing, more than 1,000km north of Hubei. Four districts on the capital's outskirts activated the highest level of emergency flood responses, as the city braced for the expected onset of more than

one-third of its annual rainfall over 24 hours starting late on Tuesday.

Beijing's highest hourly rainfall occurred in Houshayu in Shunyi District, authorities said, with 88.5mm of rainfall from 3pm-4pm local time. Images shared on China's Rednote showed large buses and cars partially submerged in Shunyi by flood waters. One image showed a delivery man wading through water with only the handles of his motor bike and the top of his delivery box visible.

The National Meteorological Center renewed an orange alert for heavy rain, the second-highest warning level, with Hubei expected to receive as much as 250mm of rain in a 24-hour period. Hubei, a major auto and high-tech electronics manufacturing hub and home to more than 58mn people, was just recovering from two rare tornadoes last month in the wake of Typhoon Maysak, which killed at least 11 people.

In the city of Xiangyang, where Hubei authorities issued a yellow warning for landslides and floods, pedestrians waded through water-covered streets as shared electric scooters were partially submerged.

At one crossroads in heavy rain, drivers slowed down to get their



A person holds an umbrella as he wades through floodwaters on a street, amid heavy rainfall brought by Typhoon Dolphin, in Xiangyang, Hubei province yesterday. (Reuters)

vehicles through water that was more than 30 cm deep while others turned around.

Sixty-year-old Huang, who had delayed her trip to buy groceries earlier in the morning due to the rain, looked at the water-logged roads with concern. She was worried the floods could reach the compound of her apart-

ment building a few hundred metres away. "This area always gets flooded when it rains. If it continues like this, the waters could reach my home," she said.

Nearby, rainwater gushed onto a lower-lying highway from the elevated motorbike paths on either side of the road. Authorities deployed workers in neon safety gear

to remove some of the concrete and allow the water to drain faster.

Hubei authorities also issued yellow warnings for cities including Huanggang and Suizhou.

As of Tuesday morning, water levels at 35 reservoirs in Xiangyang had exceeded flood-control thresholds, prompting authorities to relocate 9,705 people.

Scenic areas across the province have announced temporary closures, including the popular Three Gorges Dam tourist area in Yichang. All but two of Xiangyang's 59 major scenic spots were shut.

Of 107 major highway and waterway construction projects underway in the province, 26 projects deemed high-risk have been suspended.

Dolphin's peripheral airflow will be forced to rise when it encounters the mountains in Hubei's western region, causing rainfall to intensify several times over, Wang Xiaoling, deputy director of Hubei's provincial meteorological observatory, told local newspaper Hubei Daily.

In neighbouring Henan province, authorities issued a red flash-flood alert as the storm continued to channel moisture northward. Forecasters said some areas could receive up to 350mm of rain through Wednesday afternoon.

Japan, which was battered by Dolphin before the storm reached China, was also preparing for landslides, flooding and strong winds after the Japan Meteorological Agency said Typhoon No 15, Chan-hom, could move across Japan's mainland later on Tuesday.

China says rocket launch failed after flight anomaly

Reuters
Beijing

China said a Long March 7A rocket carrying the ChinaSat-4B satellite failed after an in-flight anomaly following liftoff from the Wenchang space launch site in the southern island province of Hainan on Monday.

The rocket blasted off at 8:02pm Beijing time, state news agency Xinhua said, adding that the mission was unsuccessful and the cause was under analysis and investigation.

China's National Space Administration did not immediately respond to a request for comment. SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk, commenting on a post about the failed launch on X, wrote "rockets are insanely hard". Many private and state-owned Chinese firms are racing to close the gap with SpaceX. "I hope they have a speedy recovery," he added. Jonathan McDowell, an honorary professor at Durham University and a member of the Center for Space Environmentalism, said launch video showed the rocket was completely destroyed at relatively low altitude and speed, meaning neither the satellite nor debris reached orbit.

Monday's failure was the Long March 7A's first since its maiden flight in March 2020, when an in-flight malfunction caused the mission to fail.

The rocket returned to flight successfully a year later and completed over a dozen successful flights before Monday's mission, based on Chinese launch records.

A report by China National Radio, later removed from a page hosted by the Baidu search engine, identified the payload as Zhongxing-4B, or ChinaSat-4B, and the launcher as the Long March 7 modified rocket, another name for the Long March 7A.

The satellite is part of the same series as ChinaSat-4A, launched in 2024, according to an assessment by Reuters of the available evidence. China described that satellite as providing voice, data, radio and television transmission services.



China's Long March 7A rocket appears to break apart after it exploded during liftoff from the Wenchang space launch site, in the southern island province of Hainan, China, on Monday, in this still image obtained from a video. (Reuters)

Such high-orbit communications satellites can relay broadcast programming and telecommunications over large areas, including remote locations beyond the reach of terrestrial networks, but it was not immediately clear whether ChinaSat-4B had the same role, customers or capabilities.

The Long March 7A is a medium-lift rocket designed for high-orbit missions.

The findings of the investigation will determine whether the failure is confined to the Long March 7A or prompts wider checks of shared components, manufacturing or launch-site operations. Blaine Curcio, founder of Orbital Gateway Consulting, called the accident "not a great development" for the Long March 7A programme, but said "the damage seems limited" based on the information publicly available. The vehicle is used mainly to send communications satellites to high orbit, rather than to deploy China's large groups of satellites in low Earth orbit, meaning the failure should not meaningfully affect the pace of those launches, he said.

Indonesia battles wildfires as haze spreads across region

AFP
Surabaya

Dozens of Indonesian schools were shuttered for a second day yesterday to protect against the spreading haze from wildfires at the start of a long and intense dry season worsened by El Nino.

On the island of Borneo, the mayor of the city of Pontianak ordered schools closed due to the smoke wafting over the city from fires elsewhere.

Public records show there are tens of thousands of public school pupils in the city, which is in Indonesia's West Kalimantan province.

Indonesia shares the island of Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei. Children will learn from home for as long as the air quality remains poor, mayor Edi Rusdi Kamtono said in a statement Monday, without stating how many schools were affected.

"We have started to feel it, especially at night and in the morning, as haze has already blanketed the city of Pontianak," he said.

The haze also affected Malaysia.

The air pollution index for Malaysia's small eastern town of Serian, Sarawak, showed an "unhealthy" level of 190 yesterday.

The Malaysian Meteorological Department urged locals to stay indoors, with director-general

Mohd Hisham Mohd Anip blaming a "cross-border haze phenomenon from Kalimantan."

In 2015, schools in Malaysia were ordered to close for two days because of health concerns caused by severe haze from Indonesian fires.

On the Indonesian island of Java, firefighters battled flames for a ninth day at a national park where a blaze has scorched 900 hectares, or 2,200 acres — equal to two % of the park's total area.

The wildfire at the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, a major tourist attraction closed to visitors since Saturday, is one of several that have drawn in nearly 50,000 firefighters countrywide.

Indonesia is forecast to experience an unusually tough dry season this year with high risk for drought and wildfires due in part to the El Nino weather phenomenon, the BMKG weather agency has said.

More than 107,000 hectares of land have burnt countrywide so far this year.

Authorities insist that food stocks remain adequate.

Firefighters were in an all-out battle to control the flames in East Java's Bromo park.

"We're making our best effort and mobilising everything... to extinguish and wet-down the area," local disaster official Satriyo Nurseno told AFP.

"We hope that today we can put out the fire in all areas, then carry



A drone view shows a tug boat pulling a coal barge along the Musi river as smog covers it due to recent wildfires in Palembang, South Sumatra province, Indonesia, yesterday. (Reuters)

out soaking so that the fire does not reignite."

Three water-bombing helicopters and fire trucks were providing support to about 200 firefighters, forest rangers, police and soldiers helping to put out the blaze.

According to the BNPB disaster agency, more than 48,000 personnel have been deployed to fight fires in six provinces.

Security Minister Djamari Chaniago said Monday Indonesia had deployed 43 helicopters and up to 15 fixed-wing planes for cloud seeding where needed.

The process involves spraying particles such as silver iodide and salt from aircraft to produce rain-

fall, but depends on clouds being present.

As Indonesia braces for the worst effects of El Nino, the BMKG said the average air temperature in July was 27C — well above the 26.2C average for the month.

El Nino is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that brings worldwide changes in winds, air pressure and rainfall patterns.

In India and Southeast Asia, it typically causes drier conditions.

The last El Nino helped make 2023 and 2024 the two hottest years globally on record.

The land razed by wildfires in Indonesia so far this year is double the area burnt in 2023.

China, Indonesia navies to hold drills in sensitive waters

The Chinese and Indonesian navies will hold a drill together in the sensitive waters to the east of Taiwan this month, China's defence ministry said yesterday, where Beijing has been seeking to assert its sovereignty claims. China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, and in June began coast guard patrols off the island's east coast, causing anger in Taipei and concern in Washington and some other Western capitals.

In a brief statement, China's defence ministry said that in mid-August, a Chinese navy warship will conduct a joint "navigation exercise" with an Indonesian navy ship in the waters east of Taiwan, though it did not give an exact location.

"The exercise will focus on communication drills and at-sea replenishment, aiming to enhance the joint operational capabilities of the two navies, deepen practical cooperation, and jointly safeguard regional peace and stability," it added.

either Taiwan's defence ministry nor Indonesia's

navy immediately responded to requests for comment. China recognises no sovereignty claims by Taiwan's government and its military operates around the island on an almost daily basis.

Like most countries, Indonesia has no formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but the island is home to more than 300,000 Indonesian migrant workers. Taiwan's government says only the Taiwanese people can decide their future and has repeatedly denounced Chinese military pressure. (Reuters)

Philippine VP hit with criminal charge over Marcos 'threat'

AFP
Manila

Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte was hit with a criminal charge yesterday over an alleged death threat against the country's president, a key part of the case against her at her ongoing Senate impeachment trial.

The charge of "grave threats" was filed Tuesday afternoon in a Quezon City courtroom, Department of Justice spokesman Polo Martinez said.

It stems from a National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) criminal complaint filed in February 2025, months after a late-night news briefing in which Duterte claimed to have hired an assassin to kill President Ferdinand Marcos, his wife and a former congressman cousin should he have her cut down first.

Lawyers for Duterte yesterday argued the case could not be pursued while she was being impeached.

"As a sitting impeachable officer, the vice-president may not be prosecuted for an alleged offense that is also the subject of an impeachment case," defence lawyer Paul Lawrence Lim said in a statement.

Asked if the justice department believed the case could be pursued simultaneously alongside the impeachment trial, Martinez told AFP: "That's correct", adding it was now in the court's jurisdiction.

"That's for the prosecutors in that ongoing trial to present," he said, adding they had met a "high threshold" before moving forward with the case.

Professor Dante Gatmaytan, of the University of the Philippines College of Law, told AFP there was nothing to prevent the cases from proceeding independently of each other.

"This is not unconstitutional," he said in a phone interview.

"There might be theories that can be applied later on, but right now, nothing will stop the DOJ from proceeding with the criminal case."

Under the Philippine legal code, a conviction on the charge of "grave threats" carries a jail term of between one and six months.

An additional complaint of "inciting to sedition" included in the original NBI complaint was dismissed.

Duterte was impeached in May on charges that also included graft and corruption.

Yesterday marked Day 14 of a Senate im-



Prosecution counsel Lorna Kapunan questions a witness during the impeachment trial of Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte at the Philippine Senate in Pasay City, Metro Manila, yesterday. (AFP)

peachment trial where her political career — and planned 2028 presidential run — hangs in the balance.

A guilty verdict would see her removed from office and permanently barred from elective politics.

Thai PM suspends gun licences after shooting

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul yesterday suspended the issuance of permits to buy firearms and said existing licences would be reviewed, days after a 14-year-old gunman killed nine people.

Anutin directed a deputy prime minister overseeing legal affairs to expedite a new gun control law, with stronger controls and significantly harsher penalties.

Police were ordered to stop renewing permits that enable people to buy firearms.

Registered firearms must be kept at home and cannot be carried in public, Anutin said, reiterating the current law.

For illegal firearms, studies are underway to enact legislation re-

quiring their return to the state within a specified period, he said.

Last week, a teenage student killed six people and himself at a school outside Bangkok after fatally shooting his grandparents in the Southeast Asian nation's worst mass killing in nearly four years.

Thailand had an estimated 10.3mn firearms in civilian possession, equating to around 15 guns per 100 residents, the highest rate in the region by a wide margin, according to a 2017 estimate by the Small Arms Survey.

The education minister proposed new school safety measures to cabinet, including screening everyone who enters education premises for illegal objects and weapons. (Reuters)

UK ‘on course’ to record warmest summer

AFP
London

Britain is “on course” to chalk up its warmest summer on record for the second year running, the UK’s Met Office weather agency said yesterday as the country braced for its fifth heatwave of the season.

“The UK is on course to record its warmest summer on record for mean temperature, with only average conditions needed for the remainder of August to surpass the record set only last year,” the Met Office said in a statement.

Britain last year sweltered through its hottest summer on record with a mean temperature of 16.10C, surpassing the previous record of 15.76C set in 2018.

The current average temperature for the summer, from June 1 to August 10, was already at 16.48C, the Met said.

“Another record-breaking summer now looks increasingly likely for the UK, following the second-warmest June, and second-warmest July on record and yet another heatwave imminent,” said Met senior scientist Mike Kendon said.

“These statistics are a clear reminder – if one were needed – of the stark changes that we are seeing in the UK’s climate.”

High temperatures and low rainfall in swathes of the country, which is built for more temper-



An aerial view shows the dirt paths and scorched grass of Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath looking towards the central London skyline, yesterday, following weeks of hot, dry weather. (AFP)

ate weather, have also plunged almost three-quarters of England and all of Wales into drought.

England and Wales also experienced their driest July on record this year.

Scientists say climate change is making extreme weather events like heatwaves and droughts more intense, and resulting in records tumbling more frequently.

Heatwaves and record temper-

atures in May and June disrupted schools, transport and hospitals, leading to an estimated 2,877 excess deaths in England – almost double the total of the whole of summer 2025.

Drought declared in ‘almost three-quarters’ of England

Some 71.3% of England is in drought, the UK government said on Monday, after the nation experienced its driest July on record, with a fifth heatwave and scant rain forecast for the week ahead.

Parks and fields that are usually green at this point in the year were parched and yellow, according to AFP photos, as river levels dwindled and farmers battling low crop yields warned of possible food shortages.

“Almost three-quarters of England is now in drought as conditions worsen following a dry start to August,” the environment department said, as parts of the central Midlands and northeast England joined other areas of the country experiencing prolonged dry weather.

“All regions of the country are experiencing pressure on their water resources,” the department said, with “nowhere” in the UK having a “normal” status.

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) said most of England is experiencing a “flash drought”, which develops quickly and is the result of very low rainfall and high temperatures.

It is the third drought Britain – usually known for its unpredictable wet weather – has experienced in five years.

More than 50% of England was

declared to be in drought at the end of July.

Britain was also facing its fifth heatwave of the 2026 summer that has seen multiple temperature records being broken.

As much of Europe braces for another heatwave and prolonged dry conditions, scientists warn climate change is making extreme weather events more intense and frequent.

England and Wales both experienced the driest July on records, the UK’s Met Office weather agency announced earlier, with England recording just 10% of its usual longterm average rainfall.

“There are warnings of more dry weather and another heatwave on the way, with temperatures tipped to reach the mid-30s in some places,” DEFRA said.

The government has imposed irrigation restrictions on farmers and introduced a hosepipe ban in some regions, with more than 27mn people living under water-use restrictions.

There are now 45mn people living in a drought area, according to official figures.

“We know the hot and dry weather is taking a real toll on farming and there will be long-lasting impacts on our environment,” said the Environment Agency’s Tony Grayling, who heads the National Drought Group. (AFP)

Australia, Vietnam agree to boost military ties

AFP
Sydney

Australia and Vietnam said yesterday they would expand co-operation between their militaries as the middle powers face down Beijing’s expanding reach in the Pacific and the South China Sea.

Following talks between Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Vietnamese leader To Lam in Canberra, the two countries said their defence forces would work more closely together on maritime security and conduct joint training.

“Our defence industries, as well as our defence forces, are cooperating more and more,” Albanese said in opening remarks as he met with the Vietnamese leader.

“Today’s uncertain world means that it is more important than ever that friends engage with each other on all levels – economic, social, environmental – to meet the challenges that are before us,” he added.

The Vietnamese leader’s visit to Australia comes as both countries chafe against a growing military build-up by China in the region.

Vietnam is one of a number of nations with competing claims in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims in nearly its entirety despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Australia is also overseeing a once-in-a-generation expansion of its defence forces and a growing US military footprint on its territory in a bid to counter Beijing’s build-up of forces.

Australia’s defence minister Richard Marles said yesterday the deepening co-operation with Vietnam would “directly contribute to the stability and security of our region”.

Yesterday’s announcement came alongside a slate of deals between Canberra and Hanoi, including a commitment to deepen “economic resilience” as well as restart market access for Australian game meat – including kangaroo – to Vietnam.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (right) and Vietnam President To Lam exchange documents after a bilateral meeting at Parliament House in Canberra yesterday. (AFP)

Vietnam starts building largest homemade anti-submarine frigate

Reuters
Hanoi

Vietnam has begun construction on what it describes as the country’s largest and most advanced domestically made anti-submarine frigate, a military-owned newspaper reported.

The vessel, being built at the defence ministry’s Song Thu Shipyard in Danang City, will also have most of its weapons and military equipment developed or assembled in the country, the *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* newspaper said late on Monday.

Vietnam, which has long been involved in maritime disputes with China and other claimants to the South China Sea, has been seeking to expand its domestic defence manufacturing capabilities while reducing reliance on imported military hardware sourced largely from Russia.

The project underscores Vietnam’s policy of developing a defence industry that is “autonomous, self-reliant, self-strengthening, dual-use and modern”, according to a government statement.

Military-run telecoms and technology group Viettel, along with other defence research and manufacturing units, would work closely with the navy and Song Thu during the construction of the vessel, including the development and installation of weapons and equipment, the report said.

Vietnam’s navy has undergone a major modernisation drive over the past decades, with the purchase of Russian-built Kilo-class submarines and Gepard-class frigates, alongside a growing fleet of domestically built missile boats and patrol vessels.

Vietnam is due to host the Vietnam International Defence Expo in Hanoi in December, the third edition of the biennial event.

Airbus joins probe into Air India Phuket-New Delhi flight plunge

AFP
New Delhi

Airbus is sending experts to New Delhi yesterday to assist investigators probing an Air India flight that plunged dramatically, injuring 17 in terrifying mid-air ordeal, the company said.

Air India captain’s confirmatory drug test positive, source says

The captain of an Air India Phuket-Delhi flight that suddenly lost about 300 feet of altitude last week has tested positive in a confirmatory drug test, a source familiar with the matter said.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said the captain’s initial screening for psychoactive substances produced a result requiring confirmatory laboratory testing.

Air India had said that it had not been informed of the results. (Reuters)

The probe into the flight comes as “confirmatory” psychoactive drug test results are awaited for the chief pilot.

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.

Air India said in a statement after the plane landed that it had “experienced a sudden loss of altitude”, adding that it was “fully co-operating with the investigation, and the aircraft manufacturer has also been notified”.

India’s civil aviation ministry said that the “occurrence has been classified as a Serious Incident and is under investigation by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau”.

An Airbus spokesperson said the jet manufacturer was providing technical assistance to Indian investigating authorities.

Indian newspapers have widely reported that the flight experienced several technical snags just before it experienced a sudden loss in altitude – but neither the carrier, Indian authorities, or Airbus have provided official confirmation.

“A team of specialists is being dispatched to assist with the investigation,” an Airbus spokesperson said on Monday.

“Airbus is providing technical assistance to the relevant investigating authorities. We are actively supporting the airline and will provide further information as it

becomes available.”

France’s civil aviation safety agency, the BEA, said it was taking part in the probe but not attending on site.

“The BEA is involved in this investigation but is not travelling to the site for the time being. Airbus’s visit was coordinated with us,” a statement from the agency said Tuesday.

Air India has said it “cannot comment on any findings or observations related to the investigation”.

Eight passengers and four cabin crew members were admitted to hospitals after landing in the Indian capital.

India’s aviation ministry said

Sunday that after the flight landed, both pilots were given standard “psychoactive substance screening test”.

It said that the screening test of the pilot-in-command “indicated a result requiring confirmatory testing”, with samples sent for analysis.

The final report is yet to be publically released.

Both pilots have been taken off the flying roster during the investigations.

The probe into the Phuket-New Delhi flight is the latest in a series of challenges for Air India, which has struggled to execute a turnaround following multiple setbacks.

It has been hit hard by disruptions caused by war in the Middle East crisis.

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 Indian carrier last week appointed former Ethiopian Airlines chief Tewolde Gebremariam as its new chief executive.

India’s monsoon to weaken over west, south in next fortnight

Reuters
Mumbai

A monsoon in India is expected to bring below-average rainfall to the country’s western, central and southern regions over the next fortnight, threatening newly planted cotton, soybean, corn and pulse crops, two senior weather officials said.

The monsoon delivers about 70% of India’s annual rains to replenish crucial water sources in the nearly \$4tn economy, where nearly half of farmland lacks irrigation and about half the population earns its livelihood from agriculture.

Rainfall is expected to ease across most parts

of India over the next fortnight, with the exception of some eastern and northern states, said a senior official with the India Meteorological Department, who declined to be named as he was not authorised to speak with media.

“The rainfall deficit could be quite significant in western and southern states during this period,” he said.

India has received 12% less rainfall than average so far this monsoon season, which began on June 1, with some states, including southern Andhra Pradesh, recording deficits of as much as 34%.

The rainfall deficit is likely to widen by the end of the month as a strengthening El Nino is expected to reduce rainfall in the coming weeks, said another weather department official.

“Minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to rise and remain above normal in the coming weeks,” he said.

Farmers stepped up planting of summer-sown crops, including soybeans, cotton, corn, pulses and paddy, after near-normal rainfall in July boosted soil moisture.

The roots of newly planted crops have yet to penetrate deep into the soil, leaving them vulnerable to damage from a prolonged dry spell, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trade house.

Farmers had planted summer-sown crops on 96.8mn hectares as of August 7, nearly 2% lower from a year earlier, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare.

China warns Pacific Islands diplomat not to sour ties

AFP
Beijing

China warned a top Pacific Islands diplomat to “avoid affecting the healthy and stable development of ties” on Tuesday, after he said Taiwan would attend an annual meeting of the regional bloc’s leaders.

The island was barred from the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting last year after protests from Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory.

Baron Waqa, the forum’s secretary-general, told reporters last Friday that Taipei would attend this year.

“China urges the Pacific Islands Forum secretary to strictly adhere

to the one-China principle, properly handle Taiwan-related issues and avoid affecting the healthy and stable development of ties between China and the Forum,” Beijing’s foreign ministry said Tuesday in response to an earlier AFP question about the matter.

China opposes the self-governed island’s participation in international organisations and exchanges with other countries.

Forum members Nauru, Kiribati and Solomon Islands have all cut diplomatic ties with Taipei since 2019, with the latter blocking Taiwan from attending the meeting when it hosted last year.

That resulted in all external countries being disinclined to the meeting, despite the island states’ reliance on foreign aid and invest-



The headquarters for the Pacific Islands Forum in Suva, Fiji. (Reuters/File photo)

ment. Palau, host of this year’s event from August 30-September 4, is among Taiwan’s 12 remaining diplomatic partners.

“Taiwan is a very important development partner. It is not a dialogue partner, however it engages

with members of our forum family,” Waqa told a news conference last week after ministers met in Fiji.

Along with Palau, forum members Tuvalu and Marshall Islands are also diplomatic partners of Taiwan.



Volcanic material and fumes rise from Mount Etna during an eruption under a starry sky in Sicily, Italy. (Reuters/File Photo)

Sicily’s Mount Etna volcano disrupts Malta flights

Reuters
Sicily

An ash cloud from Sicily’s Mount Etna volcano drifted over Malta yesterday, forcing airlines to cancel some flights to the Mediterranean island at the height of the tourism season.

“We’re currently experiencing flight disruptions due to volcanic ash clouds over the Maltese Islands following recent activity at Mount Etna,” Malta International Airport said in a Facebook message.

A spokesperson said 19 flights had been cancelled by mid-afternoon yesterday and several other

flights had been significantly delayed.

Malta airport is some 220 km south of Mount Etna, the most active volcano in Europe, which started erupting again last week, forcing the closure of Sicily’s main airport in the city of Catania for several days.

Catania airport, Italy’s fifth busiest by passenger traffic, said on yesterday it had extended the halt to all arrivals and departures until 11:00am of the next day.

Passengers with flights scheduled both out of Catania and Malta were advised to check the status of their journey before travelling to either airport.

Orban-critic, ex-judge Baka becomes Hungary president

AFP
Budapest

Andras Baka, a former supreme court chief and critic of Viktor Orban who was fired during the ex-premier’s time in power, yesterday, became Hungary’s next head of state.

The post became vacant following the contested removal last month of the previous president, an Orban ally, as pro-EU conservative Prime Minister Peter Magyar pushes to loosen his predecessor’s lingering hold over state institutions.

Parliament, where the ruling Tisza party holds a two-thirds majority, approved Baka, who served 17 years as a judge on the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Baka, 73, was sworn into the largely ceremonial post right after the vote, which Orban’s Fidesz party boycotted, and called for unity. “There is one thing we certainly cannot do: we cannot build the new Hungary on revenge,” he told parliament.

He vowed to “encourage public and professional debate, uphold its openness and impartiality, and consistently insist that constitution-making must never again



President Andras Baka at the parliament in Budapest. (AFP)

become the exclusive project of a single political force.”

Tisza on Saturday nominated Baka after the previous president, Tamas Sulyok, saw his mandate cut short by a constitutional amendment, adopted as part of Magyar’s reform push, who said Baka’s life served “as an example of commitment to the democratic rule of law and constitutional principles” as the Hungary needs to be “guided back onto the path of the rule of law and constitutional governance”.

Rights watchdogs criticised Sulyok’s removal, comparing the tinkering to the methods Orban

used himself to build his self-styled “illiberal” system.

Orban’s Fidesz party said Sulyok’s ouster was “tyrannical” and “illegitimate”. Baka has not been critical of Sulyok’s removal, even though his tenure as a supreme court judge was terminated in 2012 by a similar legislative act.

“In a country governed by the rule of law, such extraordinary measures cannot be used, but Hungary became a captured state under Orban,” he said last month.

State officials like the president “were appointed not to restrain the government’s power, but to ensure the political survival of the

former system even after an electoral defeat”, Baka added.

Baka’s installation signals a “guarantee that the restoration of liberal democracy will proceed along a clearly defined path”, Bulcsu Zsiga, from the Centre for Fair Political Analysis, told AFP.

Besides a brief stint as a law-maker, elected from the party list of the conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) in 1990 after the democratic transition, Baka did not hold any political positions. He was a judge at the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) from 1991 to 2008.

In 2009, he was nominated as the head of the Supreme Court, but was dismissed after he condemned a move under Orban to reduce the age of mandatory retirement for judges from 70 to 62, calling it a judicial purge.

The EU and the US both called the age-limit reduction illegal, and in 2016 the ECHR ruled that Baka’s removal amounted to a violation of his free speech.

Last month, Magyar offered the nomination as president to chess legend Judit Polgar, but she declined after the prime minister faced mounting outrage for not consulting the public.

Meta, TikTok to boost fact-checking after Ceuta rush

AFP
Brussels

The EU said yesterday Meta and TikTok had agreed to voluntary steps to boost fact-checking of harmful disinformation linked to the Ceuta migrant rush — but did not rule out compelling the tech giants to do more.

Experts say social media disinformation helped drive the deadly rush of 72,000 migrants from Morocco into Spain’s north African territory late last month — with for instance a rumour that “the Ceuta border is open” spreading like wildfire online.

The European Commission said it had increased coordination with Meta and TikTok alongside the European police force Europol, and set up a mechanism helping the platforms to better co-operate with local fact-checkers.

“The platforms confirmed that they activated their crisis protocols and... it was decided that an ad-hoc escalation and cooperation mechanism would be put in place,” a spokesman for the bloc’s executive, Balazs Ujvari, told reporters.

“For now, we think that this is an effective tool. But of course, if needed, we are ready to go further,” he added.



Moroccan security forces clash with migrants attempting to cross into Ceuta in this file picture. (AFP)

The mechanism can be launched in times of crisis under the EU’s online content rules known as the Digital Services Act (DSA), and was done so on a voluntary basis “under the coordination of the Commission,” Ujvari said.

It aims to help “platforms get better information from the fact-checkers” tasked with flagging “harmful disinformation related to, for example, a potential new mass crossing of the border,” he said.

The move came after the EU held talks with Meta and TikTok Friday and Monday, and the spokesman said Brussels remained in contact with the platforms. AFP is among third-party media outlets paid by some online platforms including Meta for work to tackle disinformation, and is one of the group’s fact-checking partners in Spain.

A Meta spokesperson said a team was “monitoring the situation in Ceuta in real time and removing content that violates our

policies — including content that offers to provide, facilitate or seek human smuggling services”.

TikTok also underlined it has strict rules against content that encourages or enables human smuggling and illegal border crossings. TikTok said it was working with journalism and fact-checking organisation Newtral in Spain and MapExpress in Morocco, pushing them to be vigilant when looking at content during any rapidly-evolving situation.

Hungary files criminal complaint over Orban’s social media spending

AFP
Budapest

Hungary yesterday filed a criminal complaint over millions of euros of public funds spent under former prime minister Viktor Orban on his social media communication.

The move is one of the most direct so far targeting Orban’s inner circle since pro-EU Prime Minister Peter Magyar won April elections on promises of “system change”.

Magyar’s office filed a criminal complaint on suspicion of mismanagement of public funds and abuse of office, following a review of contracts under the former government, it said in a statement sent to AFP.

Orban’s office concluded a contract in 2022 with Triton Communications, a company owned by Fanny Kaminski, who acted as the press adviser to the nationalist ex-leader, the government said.

Tasked with producing photos, videos and social media monitoring reports, the company received 4.23bn forints (€11mn) in public money over 44 months, it said.

The contract was increased four times without substantial change to the services requested, which were billed at least three times above international market prices, it added.

Kaminski addressed the matter in a post on his social media account dismissed allegations of abuse, saying Triton Communications “completed all the tasks under the contract, and it is able to account for the work performed item-by-item”.

Since taking over as prime minister, Magyar has launched several initiatives to scrutinise the state’s management under Orban, whose government he has accused of graft.

The central European country of 9.5mn ranks as the EU’s most corrupt country in Transparency International’s corruption perception index.

300 French newspapers target Google over its AI-generated summaries

AFP
Paris

A federation of nearly 300 French dailies said yesterday that it filed a complaint with the country’s competition authority over Google’s new AI-generated summaries of search results, fearing the feature will erode traffic to their own websites. It is the latest salvo by media companies against the US tech giant’s use of their articles and other content as they grapple with ad revenue declines. Google launched its AI Overviews in France in late July, which appear above regular links to search results and compile information from a wide array of sources. But the APiG association of newspapers wants the country’s competition regulator to ensure “Google’s respect of commitments made in 2022” as part of a compensation deal with French media groups. Information “has considerable value”, APiG president Marc Feuillie, also managing director of the centre-right *Le Figaro* newspaper, said in a statement. “The editors are not seeking to halt innovation. They are asking for this value to be shared, and for compensation of the use of

their content,” the association said in its statement. It said Google had sprung the new artificial intelligence (AI) summaries without their consent, an alleged violation of the 2022 deal. The competition authority had already fined Google €250mn (\$290mn) in 2024 for not respecting parts of the agreement. Many media groups have seen their revenue dwindle over the past two decades as newsrooms working for print struggled and advertising moved increasingly online, where tech firms take a big share of the profits. Critics say AI summaries cause further harm by leading to a drop in internet traffic to newspapers’ articles — with many users no longer clicking through to read the original source of the information. Google contends they let people ask more complex questions and discover new content, and says it provides controls to help publishers manage their content. The EU announced in December 2025 that it was investigating whether Google breached competition rules by using content put online by media and other publishers to train and provide AI services without appropriate compensation.

Heatwave hits families in Rome sleeping rough

AFP
Rome

For hundreds of people recently kicked out of a social centre in Rome, extreme heat is proving an added strain on top of a dispute highlighting the Italian capital’s housing crisis.

The centre, occupied since 2013 despite an eviction order and threats from far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni’s government, was evacuated last month following a minor fire and seized by police.

Now, families, elderly residents and pets are sleeping in tents and on camp beds outside the chained gates of Spin Time Labs, as temperatures in Rome near 40C. “As the days go by, we are seeing increasing psychological distress; people are at their limit, they are exhausted,” Anastasia Destro, a 33-year-old doctor helping the evictees, told AFP.

“We’ve seen all the health issues associated with living on the street and spending the entire day exposed to the sun,” said Destro, part of a team offering medical and psychological aid.

The fate of the building and its 400 or so residents, including children and disabled people, has generated a groundswell of support.

Volunteers from across Rome have donated clothing, food and toys, while the left-wing city council has supplied tents, air-conditioning units, portable toilets and a drinking water truck. Film directors from Italy’s Paolo Sorrentino to Britain’s Ken Loach have called for the residents to be allowed back, while Matteo Garrone put on a showing of his film *Pinocchio* for the children.

Spin Time, which over a decade grew to include a food bank, canteen, carpenter studio, newspaper and theatre, became a high-profile



People use umbrellas to shelter from the sun while visiting the Roman Forum as temperatures near 40C during a heatwave, in Rome. (Reuters)

symbol of solidarity towards the marginalised.

It even won the support of the pope: in 2019, Pope Francis’s charity czar — a cardinal — climbed down a manhole to restore electricity after it was cut off.

The community has provided sanctuary for those who found themselves “in an emergency situation”, said Marco Perilli, a 60-year-old Italian construction worker who has lived there since 2013. “The building was home to 27 different ethnic groups, cultures, and religions” who found a way to get along as “one big family”, said Perilli, who moved in after separating from his partner.

Perilli said it pained him to see residents “forced into unsanitary conditions, facing major health issues and serious illnesses”.

The evictions have thrown a spotlight on the Italian capital’s housing emergency.

More than 17,000 households are on the waiting list for council accommodation in Rome, almost half of whom applied at least a decade ago, according to city data.

Mayor Roberto Gualtieri — who wants the city to buy the building — hoped the residents

could be allowed back in while negotiations were underway.

But the owner, the privately owned asset and investment management company Investire SGR, has so far refused. And Meloni’s far-right Brothers of Italy party has accused Gualtieri of wasting public money and rewarding illegal behaviour in offering to buy the squat.

Supporters say Spin Time has provided essential support to hundreds of vulnerable people. While the most vulnerable residents have been moved into alternative accommodation, others keep waiting outside, hoping they’ll be allowed back in.

Among them was Patience Sare, a 40-year-old from Nigeria, who ran a restaurant in Libya before fleeing to Europe when the war broke out in 2011.

“Spin Time has taken me in, my kids in,” said Sare, who has two children and tried to make a life in France, Switzerland and Malta before coming to Spin Time.

“My life changed. It was as if I found my home,” she said with tears in her eyes.

“I wish we could stay”

Towards trillions: Korea’s big-ticket plans for AI giga projects

Republic of Korea has embarked on a close to \$1tn aggressive national artificial intelligence and semiconductor investment strategy driven by a coordinated effort between the administration of President Lee Jae Myung and tech giants like Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

The government has enacted a special law to create fast-tracked AI investment zones, bypassing standard bureaucratic delays. At the ‘San Francisco AI Declaration’ on July 24, Lee outlined Korea’s AI ambitions for technological cooperation with the US. “I’d like to present a vision for the future of AI and propose global cooperation to make it happen,” he said.

In San Francisco, Korea announced \$950bn in new AI initiatives involving Samsung Electronics, SK Group and US tech firms.

SK Group signed deals worth \$750bn, including SK Hynix’s partnership with Nvidia valued at more than \$500bn. Samsung Electronics signed a memorandum

of understanding with Broadcom covering up to \$200bn across memory chips, foundry services and advanced packaging.

Lee also separately met with Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and Broadcom CEO Hock Tan. The deals are the latest moves by US AI firms hoping to lock in supply as demand for chips and computing infrastructure outpaces supply, driving tech companies into closer partnerships with Korea’s semiconductor and memory leaders.

SK Group Chairman Chey Tae-won has said AI customers are seeking far more memory than previously anticipated, pointing to discussions with Nvidia, Anthropic, OpenAI and Broadcom.

On Monday, Korea announced a 5tn won (\$3.52bn) semiconductor fund targeting promising chip materials, parts, equipment and fabless companies, as Seoul seeks to accelerate plans for new chip

manufacturing hubs across the country. Speaking at the San Francisco AI Summit on July 25, President Lee outlined plans for Korea to serve as a stable supply base for AI infrastructure even amid a global chip shortage. The country has also become an important barometer for the AI stock trade, according to market experts, as swings in Seoul increasingly reflect shifts in technology sentiment that are playing out across markets from Tokyo and Shanghai to Wall Street.

The shift reflects the unusual structure of the Korean market. The KOSPI’s heavy weighting towards semiconductor companies, combined with its sensitivity to foreign capital flows, means changes in expectations for AI investment can be reflected in Korean share prices quickly, and sometimes more sharply than elsewhere.

Korea’s total exports jumped 57.3% year-on-year to reach \$275.5bn in the second quarter, driven by the strong performance of technology products, led by

semiconductors, according to latest official data. The mind-boggling global AI spending spree is projected to cross \$2.5tn in 2026, a 44% increase year-over-year.

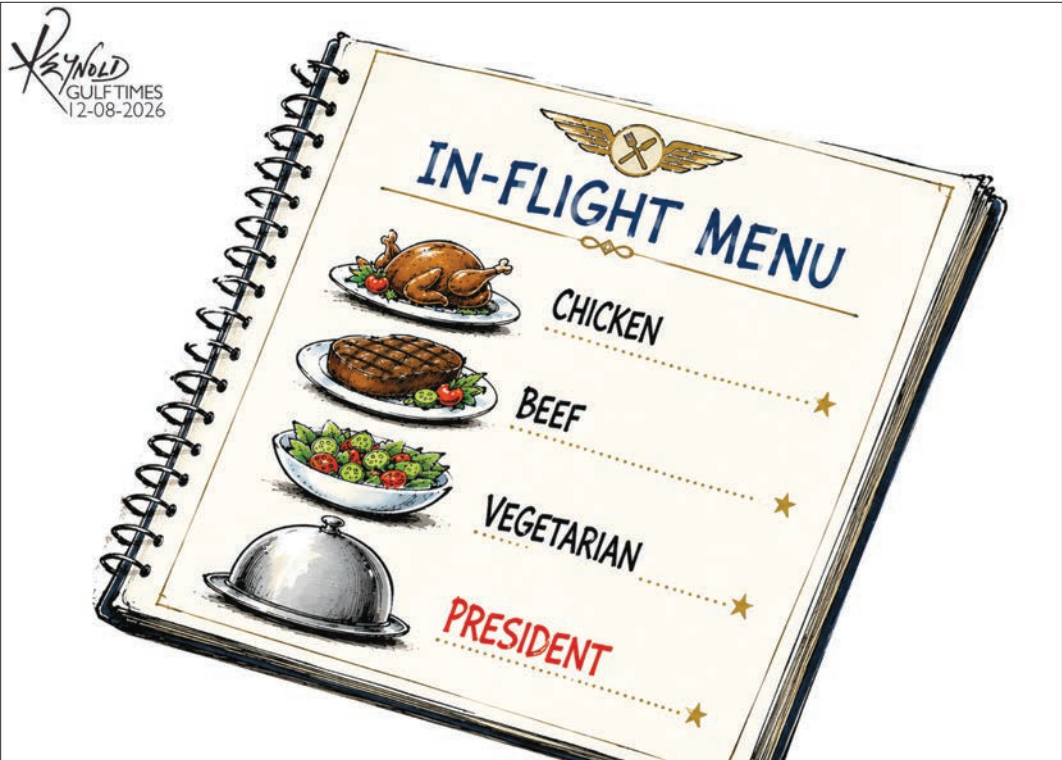
President Lee has said Korea would lead the way to a new era of AI in partnership with global technology companies, making available its “dynamic AI ecosystem” to expand the global market for industrial and personal AI use. His semiconductor megaproject initiatives seek to establish Republic of Korea as a trusted production base for advanced AI infrastructure, memory chips and build cooperative networks with diverse nations — extending beyond traditional tech superpowers — to share AI opportunities and foster new global markets.

The projects also aim to bolster domestic frameworks aimed at utilising AI to improve public access to basic rights, education, and healthcare while shielding small businesses and vulnerable demographics from displacement.

Mission solar eclipse



Cary Klemm, sensor equipment operator at Nasa’s Johnson Space Center, poses in front of a WB-57 Canberra aircraft ahead of a Nasa-supported mission to fly a high-altitude aircraft above the clouds during a total solar eclipse to study the Sun and changes in the Earth’s atmosphere, in Keflavik, Iceland, yesterday. (Reuters)



Trump’s Gaza plan hinges on Hamas disarmament and Israeli withdrawals

Reuters
Jerusalem

Donald Trump’s latest plan to end the Gaza war calls on Hamas to lay down its arms as Israel withdraws from the territory, terms endorsed by the Hamas but rejected by Israel, which says it will not pull back until the group’s disarmament is complete.

The US president on July 30 hailed what he described as a breakthrough in talks to advance a 2025 ceasefire plan, saying that Hamas and other Gaza freedom groups had accepted a 15-point roadmap by his so-called “Board of Peace” to give up their weapons.

That 2025 ceasefire plan has reduced violence but failed to end Israeli attacks in Gaza or secure the disarmament of fighters, both the focus of months of painstaking negotiations between the Board of Peace and Hamas in Cairo.

The roadmap is meant to move the original plan forward, with Israel withdrawing from the territory and Gaza, devastated by two years of full-scale Israeli military assault, being rebuilt under a new US-backed Palestinian technocratic government.

The roadmap says Israel and Hamas would immediately cease “all military operations” in Gaza, according to text of the plan published by the Board of Peace. It links Israeli withdrawal from Gaza to the disarming of all armed groups, including Hamas.

The new technocratic government - known as the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza - would assume civil governance and oversee a process to “decommission and store heavy weapons, military production sites, depots of weapons, and tunnels”, the roadmap says.

The roadmap also says that a temporary peacekeeping body known as the “International Stabilization Force” would

deploy to Gaza to secure areas from which Israeli forces withdraw. The ISF would also train new Palestinian police forces and support aid deliveries. Israel has scaled back its attacks in Gaza since Trump announced his plan, with Israeli officials saying that in compliance with it, the military would act against immediate threats but would no longer carry out targeted assassinations.

Despite the October 2025 truce, Israel had been carrying out near-daily air strikes in Gaza - attacks that Gaza health authorities say have killed more than 1,200 Palestinians, most of them civilians. Four Israeli soldiers were killed in that time. Hamas does not disclose figures on its war dead.

Israel says its attacks were aimed at addressing threats to its forces in Gaza or killing who took part in the 2023 attacks that precipitated the war. The October ceasefire left Israeli forces in control of over half of Gaza, since expanded to around two-thirds. There, they have bulldozed

remaining buildings, destroyed tunnels and ordered people out.

Gaza’s nearly entire 2mn population is confined to a tiny strip of land under Hamas control along the coast, most in makeshift tents or damaged buildings. Despite the deadlock on the ground, the Board of Peace has been setting up a base in Israel, near the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza, that would function as a logistics and staging area for ISF troops if and when they are deployed into Gaza.

Diplomats say the ISF is still likely months away from deployment. So far, only Morocco and Uganda have pledged troops. Kosovo, Albania and Kazakhstan have committed military planners and medics. Indonesia, which previously offered to send thousands of military personnel for medical and reconstruction roles, says its talks are on hold.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Trump’s new plan was unacceptable as it stands but that Israel was exchanging ideas on the subject with Washington. He

restated that Israel would not pull out of Gaza until disarmament was complete.

Hamas endorsed the roadmap but protested when the Board of Peace later posted on X that it should give up light weapons such as guns and that Israel would only withdraw once disarmament was complete. The roadmap’s text calls for the two to be linked, in phases.

In an interview with Israel’s Channel 12 News on Sunday, Nikolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace’s Gaza envoy, confirmed the process would be phased and carried out “sector by sector”.

Each time a designated area of Gaza has been verified to be effectively weapon-free, with arms stored and rendered unusable, Israel would be required to withdraw, eventually all the way, Mladenov said. Hamas says it is bound only to the original roadmap text, which allows 14 days to work out a disarmament timeline. That deadline can be extended, and Mladenov said in the interview that talks were ongoing.



US soldiers stand next to military vehicles at LSA Endurance, a logistical support and staging facility designed to support the International Stabilization Force (ISF) under the direction of the Board of Peace (BoP), near the Israel-Gaza border in the Kerem Shalom area, southern Israel. (Reuters)

How N Korea is buttressing Russia’s war against Ukraine

North Korea has deployed troops, weapons and now, according to a Ukrainian intelligence official, a military unit to support Russia’s war against Ukraine, marking Pyongyang’s most significant involvement in a war since the 1950s.

A North Korean missile unit has begun deploying to western Russia and could be equipped with up to 120 ballistic missiles and six launchers for attacks on Ukraine, an official at Ukraine’s GUR military intelligence agency said.

The unit comprises about 90 North Korean personnel and is expected to be based in Russia’s Voronezh region, the official said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in July that Russia wanted to bring in another 30,000 North Korean troops and was preparing facilities in Voronezh to receive them. Reuters could not independently verify the claims.

Ukrainian, US and South Korean assessments initially put the deployment at 10,000 to 12,000 troops in late 2024. In January 2025, the US deputy ambassador to the United Nations said more than 12,000 North Korean soldiers were in Russia. Later Ukrainian and South Korean estimates put the number of troops in Russia’s Kursk region at about 14,000 to 15,000. The Ukrainian official said this month that around 9,500 North Korean troops remained in Kursk, but were not then directly involved in operations against Ukraine.

Russia and North Korea confirmed in April 2025 that North Korean troops had fought Ukrainian forces in Kursk. Russia’s top military commander praised their role after Moscow said it had retaken Kursk territory, while Pyongyang said the deployment was ordered by leader Kim Jong-un. In June 2025, Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu said North Korea would send 1,000 sappers and 5,000 military construction workers to Kursk to clear mines and help rebuild infrastructure damaged in the fighting.

That same month, South Korean lawmakers, citing a briefing by the National Intelligence Service, said that North Korea appeared to have begun recruiting personnel for an additional deployment to Russia, while continuing to supply Russia with artillery ammunition and missiles in exchange for economic cooperation and technical assistance. It remains unclear how many engineers, deminers or additional troops have arrived in Russia, or whether they have been used in combat roles.

North Korea has supplied Russia with millions of artillery and mortar rounds, ballistic missiles, long-range artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, according to Ukrainian and independent assessments. A Reuters analysis with the UK-based Open Source Centre found four Russian-flagged cargo ships made 64 voyages to North Korea’s Rajin port between September 2023 and March 2025, transporting nearly 16,000 containers of ammunition to Russian ports. Ukrainian officials said North Korea was supplying about half of the munitions Russia needed on the front lines.

Ukraine’s GUR military intelligence agency said that North Korea had delivered 4mn artillery shells from mid-2023, excluding mortar rounds. It said North Korea had supplied 148 KN-23 and KN-24 ballistic missiles by the start of 2025. Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim signed a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty during Putin’s June 2024 visit to Pyongyang. The pact includes a mutual assistance provision if either country faces external aggression. Analysts say Pyongyang stands to gain hard currency, oil and other economic support, as well as access to Russian military technology and battlefield experience for its forces and weapons. — Reuters



A Ukrainian firefighter puts off the fire in a car next to a damaged residential building at the site of a Russian airstrike in Zaporizhzhia. (AFP)

Ukranian factory struck, 7 killed

Reuters
Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

Seven workers were killed at a Ukrainian steel plant yesterday during a Russian attack on the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia in which President Volodymyr Zelensky said Moscow used North Korean Zircon hypersonic missiles. The Zaporizhstal plant was forced to suspend production after being hit.

“The ballistic missile strike hit as employees were making their way to a shelter immediately after the air-raid alert was sounded,” parent company Metinvest Group said in a statement that put the death toll at seven.

At least 24 people were injured. No damage was reported at the nuclear power plant.

Russia’s defence ministry said Russian forces had struck a metallurgical plant in Zaporizhzhia that produces flat-rolled steel which it said was used by the Ukrainian military.

The ministry also said Russian forces had struck the Nova Poshta sorting complex in Kyiv, which it described

as used to distribute dual-use goods, including components for drones and electronic warfare equipment.

Moscow did not immediately say whether it had used North Korean missiles in the attack on Zaporizhzhia. There was no comment from Pyongyang.

A Ukrainian military intelligence official said last week that a North Korean missile unit had begun deploying to western Russia and could be equipped with 120 ballistic missiles and six launchers for strikes on Ukraine.

Russia has fired scores of North Korean ballistic missiles at Ukraine since late 2023, but the deployment of North Korean missile forces would be an expansion of the already extensive military co-operation between Moscow and Pyongyang.

Zelensky said on Saturday that “a decision has been made for 30,000 to 50,000 North Koreans to be deployed on the territory of Russia” to fight for Moscow.

Zelensky called on allies to respond without hesitation, saying “all of this shows that Moscow is preparing not for peace, but for escalation.”

Russia frees ailing ex-US Marine Robert Gilman from prison

Moscow yesterday freed a former US Marine jailed in Russia since 2022 after Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a pardon for the ailing American based on humanitarian reasons, US officials said. The White House and the State Department had urged Moscow to release Robert Gilman, 32, so he can receive medical treatment in the US.

Gilman was being held in a prison in Voronezh, about 550 km south of Moscow. The exact circumstances of his health are unclear. But Eric Lebson, chief strategy officer of Global Reach,

an advocacy group representing Gilman’s family, told Reuters last week that Gilman was moved in late June from the prison hospital to the psychiatric ward of a civilian emergency hospital in a catatonic-like state assessed as a “dissociative stupor.”

The US officials said Gilman yesterday was on a State Department plane carrying him from Russia to Washington Dulles Airport. A US official who spoke to Gilman said he was walking and talking. “All things considered he seems to be in good shape,” the official said. Gilman will be

evaluated on the flight by four doctors, said the US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. His mother, Nina, was also on board. The US officials said Gilman, upon arrival at Dulles, will be greeted by US envoy Steve Witkoff and deputy national security adviser Sebastian Gorka, both of whom had sought Gilman’s release along with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, US special envoy for hostage response Adam Boehler and other officials. After that, Gilman is likely to be flown to San Antonio, Texas. (AFP)

Over 80 miners arrested outside Turkiye’s ministry

AFP
Istanbul

More than 80 miners demanding unpaid wages were detained in front of the gates of the Turkish Ministry of Energy on Tuesday, their union said.

The independent miners’ union, which announced the arrests on X, had called on employees of two coal and silver mines in central and eastern Turkiye to protest.

“No bread, no peace,” it wrote earlier in the day, calling on officials at the Ministry of Energy to “find a solution”.

About 100 miners from one of the two mines staged a nine-day hunger strike in the Turkish capital in April to demand that their employer pay their salaries.

Some 110 workers were arrested and taken into custody for 14 hours after calling for a meeting with energy ministry officials. The strike ended after an agreement with their employer.

But the miners, who say they have received their back pay and/or severance, are still demanding compensation for a forced leave that lasted months.

There was no immediate response from the energy ministry when contacted by AFP.

5 years’ rule: Afghan Taliban government builds diplomacy

AFP
Kabul

Five years after returning to power, Afghanistan’s Taliban authorities have built working relationships with a slate of countries, despite a lack of formal recognition.

Russia remains the only nation to officially recognise the Taliban government, and many Western countries have demanded to see domestic reforms on human rights before considering doing the same.

But many states are nevertheless engaging with Afghanistan’s leaders — including Britain and European Union members — driven largely by practical considerations.

Beyond the high walls of the foreign ministry in central Kabul stand embassies, rows of travel agencies, and an airline billboard promising: “We’re all connected.” While few Afghans have the means to go abroad, their government “seeks relations with all countries,” according to Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

The authorities’ diplomatic strategy has involved hosting envoys in Kabul — and frequently publishing the photos — including those from China, Japan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia and Britain. “The countries of the region and our neighbouring states have particular importance, because our economic ties and interests are closely linked,” Mujahid said last month.

This year officials from Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan gathered in Kabul, as landlocked Central Asia seeks trade routes through Afghanistan to access the sea beyond.

Erica Gaston, who was part of a team mandated by the UN Security Council to identify strategies for addressing the challenges in Afghanistan, said regional nations were “always more pragmatic” in dealing with the Taliban authorities.

“You had much more receptivity among regional member states to say, ‘this is the reality that we have in our region and engagement is inevitable,’” said Gaston, who heads the Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace Programme at the UN University Centre for Policy Research.

As well as coordinating on security, Taliban officials have been touting cross-border infrastructure projects to boost the country’s fragile economy while Afghans are hit hard by interna-



Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid (C) speaks to the media in Kabul after the US pulled all its troops out in 2021. (AFP)

tional aid cuts. Seeing potential in untapped natural resources, the government has expanded the mining sector, attracting firms from neighbouring China and elsewhere. But foreign funds have been scarce as investors remain wary of the Taliban government’s limited official recognition, with rumours that Iran would follow Russia falling flat.

Despite this, many Taliban officials travel abroad, including a delegation that flew to Brussels in June for talks with 15 EU nations about returning failed asylum-seekers to Afghanistan.

A spokesperson for the bloc told AFP: “Those who have no legal right to stay in Europe must be returned.” Germany has been at the forefront, and deported an Afghan not convicted of any crime for the first time since the Taliban’s 2021 return to power, Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said in July.

For Gaston, the passage of time has meant “more and more countries accept that this is the reality, even if it’s a reality that they don’t like or condone.”

But many have restricted further ties until they see changes in Afghanistan, particularly on rules that stop girls’ education at age 12. Yet no policy shift is expected. Accusing Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada and chief justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani of crimes against humanity over the persecution of women and girls, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for them last year.

Afghan women remain banned from a host of places including UN premises, a rule still in force despite a visit last month by the heads of two of its agencies. A UN source in Kabul, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject, said the ability to exert influence on the authorities remains



The flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan on the Afghan embassy in Moscow. (AFP)

“highly issue-dependent”.

“Some of these issues are kind of fairly impenetrable, but then you have other issues on which you are able to make progress,” they told AFP, citing positive relations in some parts of Afghanistan on counternarcotics and humanitarian access.

Multiple nations stepped in this year when Afghanistan and Pakistan went to war, with China hosting talks after hundreds of civilians were killed. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iran, Turkiye, Uzbekistan and Malaysia were also engaged in trying to stop the fighting, according to the UN.

Pakistan’s neighbour India has strengthened its ties with the Taliban government, with New Delhi securing a sanctions waiver last year so that Foreign Minister Amir Khan Murtazaqi could travel there. In June, India’s UN envoy suggested a rethink was necessary on sanctions — a travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo.

“The political reality of Afghanistan has changed in the last five years, and the current UN sanctions regime must take that into account,” said Harish Parvathaneni. The diplomat stopped short of detailing what the new approach should be.

Torment of Afghan fathers as daughters live deprived of education

AFP
Kabul

Father after father AFP spoke to in Afghanistan about the education ban that stops their daughters going beyond primary school choked up in despair.

The Taliban authorities justify the ban — the only one of its kind in the world — on their interpretation of Islamic law. But “you will never find in the Quran that education is only for men,” said one devout father, while another — who praised the Taliban government for restoring security and reducing corruption — said he couldn’t “find any proper justification for this”.

All the men — whose identities AFP is protecting — described the emotional turmoil the ban is causing, with fathers losing sleep over what to do to help their bright and frustrated daughters. Nine out of 10 Afghan men questioned in a UN survey last year said it was important for girls to go to secondary school, with nearly two thirds considering it “pious” for a father to support his daughter’s education.

Some men have gone to prison for protesting the ban.

Engineer Ahmad — whose wife is a secondary school maths professor who is no longer allowed to teach — said he never imagined that “one day my daughters would be illiterate”.

The father of four girls said “stopping at the sixth grade” will leave them effectively “illiterate” for the demands of “the 21st century”.

“Every day and every night, my wife and I... are getting closer to the moment when our daughters will have to stay home,” he said.

With his eldest nearing the end of her time in primary school — and clandestine courses in their northern city costing more than

2.4mn girls banned from Afghan schools after Taliban return

Around 2.4mn girls in Afghanistan have been denied access to secondary education since the Taliban returned to power in 2021, the UN said yesterday, urging an end to such “discrimination”.

The Taliban administration, recognised solely by Russia, has imposed a series of restrictions on women that the UN has characterised as “gender apartheid”. Girls cannot study beyond primary school, a policy the Taliban authorities justify based on their interpretation of Islamic law. The number of girls denied access to secondary school has risen by 200,000 since last year and could reach nearly 4mn by 2030 if the ban persists, said Unesco.

The UN agency called for the immediate restoration of their right to education and condemned the “discriminations against women and girls”.

The Taliban government — who



Afghan girls walking to their school along a road in Gardez in Afghanistan’s Paktia province Afghanistan in 2022. (AFP)

promised a softer rule after retaking power in August 2021 — have imposed sweeping restrictions on women, banning them from universities, parks, gyms and beauty salons. Girls were barred from secondary schools and universities in 2022. “These restrictions are reversing two decades of progress in

expanding access to education: while access to schooling for girls was severely limited in 2001, by 2021 nearly 1mn girls were enrolled in secondary education,” Unesco said. “Afghanistan girls and women have the right to learn, that’s a basic human right,” said Hoda Jaberian, Unesco’s programme coordinator. (AFP)

that secretly teaches general subjects alongside religious curriculum. “It’s a private school” that charges higher fees of “around 10,000 Afghanis (\$153)” a month for the two girls because “they are taking more risk”. And there is no graduation certificate.

But Mohammad is afraid officials might inspect the school and “take my daughters into custody”. “The most important... is that they go on learning,” the 42-year-old said, adding that he told his daughters: “While I’m alive, I will find a solution for your education.”

N is from Kandahar province in the south, a bastion of the Taliban movement, where he said girls can be excluded from school even before the end of primary if they are tall.



An Afghan man looks on as girls walk towards a madrasa. (AFP)

He has three sons and a 12-year-old daughter. She “is very interested in astronomy. The other day, she did a collage of the solar system. She asked me a lot of questions, on gravity for example, and I told her that... ‘You will learn.’”

“How can I learn... if I cannot go beyond grade six,” she told me.”

He moved his family to Kabul to find work and told AFP that “we have to be patient” and explore ways around the “poison” of the ban, like underground schools and online design or computer courses.

“Now I am working, I can afford the education of my children. But the opportunities are decreasing day by day and I may not be able to support that,” with international aid also dwindling, he said.

In the meantime, he tries to shield his daughter, with her school days already numbered. “She does not know that there is this other stress on us,” he said.

It was a feast day and everyone was celebrating, but M’s daughter stayed in her room crying. At 13 she could no longer go to school.

He tries to take her to a restaurant once a week just to get her out.

A devout logistics manager from a poor background, he worked hard

to educate and improve himself. He praised Taliban authorities for restoring security and fighting corruption. But he finds no “proper justification for” barring girls from secondary education. “Sometimes when she gets so disappointed at home,” he cannot bear it, “I go to another room and... I hide to cry.”

M wants his daughter to go to university, and saved every cent so they could move to Iran so she could study there. But the war put an end to that. So she could have some “social interactions”, he enrolled her in a Quranic school.

However, recently she has refused to go. “Even if I continue, there will be no future for me,” she told him. The trophies the girls won for excellence at school sit alongside the books on the shelves at home. They tutor their daughters at home with secondhand high school textbooks, making them stick to a strict weekday routine.

But alone in the living room, Nasir, 47, confided that his younger daughter “is depressed and does not always have strong morale to continue learning on her own at home.”

He gives her novels to soften the blow, as she loves to read.



Back-to-school preparations should go beyond books, uniforms: expert

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

The back-to-school countdown often focuses on buying uniforms, books and stationery, but a paediatrician says one of the most important preparations cannot be bought: ensuring children are emotionally ready to return to the classroom.

“Parents should give as much attention to their children’s emotional and social wellbeing as they do to academic preparation,” said Prof Dr Mohamed A Hendaus, head of paediatrics and senior consultant at The View Hospital, in affiliation with Cedars-Sinai, and professor of clinical paediatrics at Qatar University.

While the first day of school brings more than a new academic year, he told ‘Gulf Times’ that chil-

dren must also adjust to new teachers, classmates, expectations and routines, which can trigger excitement as well as anxiety or stress. Dr Hendaus said parents should start by talking openly with their children about how they feel about returning to school, including their excitement about seeing friends, concerns about new teachers or classmates, worries about academic expectations, or experiences of exclusion or bullying.

He added that the goal should be to encourage children to talk instead of making them feel as though they are being questioned. Children should know they can discuss their worries without fear of judgment or punishment. According to Dr Hendaus, parents should also pay attention to changes in behaviour, as children may not always be able to say that they are anxious. Persistent changes in sleep, mood,

eating habits or school attendance could signal that a child is experiencing emotional difficulties and may need additional support.

Bullying is another issue parents should discuss before the school year begins, he added. Children should understand that bullying can involve physical aggression, hurtful language, social exclusion and online harassment.

Parents can encourage children to treat classmates with respect, include those who may feel lonely and seek help from a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying, Dr Hendaus said. Children, he underlined, should also be discouraged from retaliating or responding aggressively. Instead, they should understand that bystanders can play an important role by seeking help or supporting a child who is being bullied.

With children’s social lives in-

creasingly extending into the digital world, he said parents should also keep an eye on online interactions and recognise that bullying does not necessarily end when the school day does. The return to school can also provide an opportunity for families to reset technology habits developed during the summer, according to Dr Hendaus.

He advised parents to ensure screen use does not displace sleep, homework and reading, physical activity, family meals or face-to-face conversations.

Apart from focusing on the number of minutes a child spends on a device, Dr Hendaus said parents should consider what that screen time is replacing. He stressed that families can establish clear rules, including keeping phones and tablets away during homework and family meals, switching off screens before bedtime and keeping

devices out of children’s bedrooms at night. Parents should also lead by example, as children are more likely to accept technology limits when the same expectations apply to the whole family, he added. For children who are particularly nervous about returning to school, especially younger children or those starting at a new school, Dr Hendaus said preparation before the first day can help ease anxiety.

He said parents can visit the school with their children and familiarise them with important places such as the classroom, bathroom, cafeteria, and playground. Such familiarity can make an unfamiliar environment feel more manageable and give children greater confidence when the school year begins. According to Dr Hendaus, preparing children for school involves more than ensuring they have everything they need in their



Prof Mohamed A Hendaus

backpacks. Helping them feel safe, supported, and emotionally prepared can give them a stronger foundation for learning and adapting to the demands of a new school year.

‘Placemaking evolves as people’s relationship with spaces changes’

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The concept of placemaking has evolved as human interaction with the environment has changed over time, highlighted a panel discussion organised by Doha Design District yesterday.

The panel featured Sheikha Reem al-Thani, deputy CEO, Exhibitions, Public Art, and Rubaiya, Qatar Museums; Dr Hamed Youssef Janahi, assistant professor, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Qatar University; and Dr Samie Kayani, sustainable urbanism specialist at Earthna, Qatar Foundation.

The session was moderated by Abdulrahman al-Mana, city and regional planner at the Ministry of Municipality.

The panellists said space is fundamentally physical, but it is through people’s interaction with and use of space that it becomes a place.

“As designers, planners, and architects, we approach the design of public spaces. And perhaps, our role as cultural institutions and policymakers has played a role in transforming physical space into a place,” al-Mana said, setting the tone for the discussion.

Sheikha Reem said placemaking has become something of a buzzword.

“There are certain things that are planned for, but then there is also all the neighbourhoods that

we originally had. We had the housing, and then we had to come back to that and create the green project around it, create a new market space, and so instead of it being something that was created originally, people just settled in and now it has become a live location and has a real need for it,” she explained.

Dr Janahi said placemaking, as a practice, has deep roots in the Arab and Islamic traditions. She highlighted the relationship between the built environment and society, with cultural identity, resilience, heritage and people-centred urban development playing important roles.

“The Islamic urban concept is very much layered and this allows for a very interesting experience in the way that different segments of society interact with. If we look at the way that all of the values, physical values, the design, philosophies we have in the traditional Arab-Islamic World, there are a lot of elements that deliver public spaces and create a place that is very, very interesting and fascinating to us,” she continued.

Dr Kayani said understanding what constitutes a place today is increasingly important as people’s relationship with their surroundings continues to evolve. “It is really important to understand what we mean by place today because the way we understand and interact with the environment is changing over time. And that in itself is being reflected by the



The panellists concurred space is fundamentally physical, but it is through people’s interaction with and use of space that it becomes a place. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen.

buildings and the artwork that we are seeing around us. So, it is an evolution of ideas,” he said.

Al-Mana also highlighted traditional approaches to placemaking, noting how ancient urban design incorporated environmental considerations such as wind direction and shade.

“The FIFA World Cup 2022 to me is one of the most interesting examples of a thriving public space in the world, particularly when we think about what happened during the event. There was a huge building, master-plan exercise that happened all across the country, whether it is in the central part of Doha to the north or any other part,” he said.

However, despite the scale of development across the country, Souq Waqif emerged as a major



A section of the audience.

magnet for tourists and visitors, he noted. “I think it is really interesting. Souq Waqif has been rebuilt to look like its original shape,

but it continuously existed as a marketplace for over centuries. So the Souq, to me, is very much a champion,” he added.

7 scholars selected for NUQ’s Global South research programmes

Seven scholars from leading universities around the world will join the Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South at Northwestern University in Qatar (#IAS_NUQ) during the 2026–27 academic year, strengthening the university’s role as a global hub for research, dialogue, and knowledge production on the Global South.

Jowel Choufani, Aya Labanieh, and Osman Osman will join as Global Postdoctoral Scholars, while Larissa Buchholz, Geraldo Campos, Ozge Calafato, and Teddy Workneh will be in residence as Global Fellows.

The #IAS_NUQ Global Fellowship and #IAS_NUQ Global Postdoctoral Scholars programmes are central to the Institute’s efforts to build a sustained, interdisciplinary community of researchers working on the Global South. The Global Postdoctoral Scholars programme supports early-career researchers through long-term appointments, allowing them to advance historically grounded, theoretically informed research and mediamaking while contributing to program development, teaching, public scholarship, and publications with #IAS_NUQ_Press.

By contrast, the Global Fellowship programme brings established and emerging scholars for shorter residencies up to one academic term, providing dedicated time and space to develop ongoing projects while engaging with the wider intellectual community at Northwestern Qatar. Both are residential programmes that place sustained collaboration at the center of the scholars’ experience.

“Universities have a responsibility not only to generate



knowledge, but also to expand the types of knowledge that matter,” said Marwan M Kraidy, dean and CEO of NUQ. “Many of today’s most consequential intellectual questions are being asked from, and answered within, the Global South. This cohort reflects our commitment to bringing together scholars whose work challenges conventional thinking, advances interdisciplinary research, and broadens global understanding.”

Choufani is an anthropologist whose work examines state abandonment, community-based infrastructures of solidarity, and the moral and political economies that shape them.

As an #IAS_NUQ Global Postdoctoral Scholar, Choufani will develop the dissertation into a monograph by expanding its historical scope to trace ruptures and continuities in the constitution and circulation of wajej across key moments in Lebanon’s history.

She will also begin a new

project on how traditional food preserves, or mouneh, are transformed into politically charged commodities through markets that combine humanitarian relief, cultural heritage, and corporate infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Labanieh’s research examines the intersections of conspiracy, memory, and power across Anglophone and Arabophone literature and media, from dystopian fiction and internet subcultures to the memoirs of agents and spies. Labanieh’s project uses conspiracy as both an object of study and an analytical lens for examining the relationship between colonial history and cultural memory in the 20th-century Middle East. While in residence, she will develop her dissertation into a monograph and add a final chapter on how the conspiracy trope evolved during the transition from colonial subjecthood to state citizenship and the rise of autocratic Arab security regimes.

Osman’s research lies at the

intersection of critical security studies and the sociology of news production, examining how journalistic fields in postcolonial contexts construct narratives of conflict and politics and how African media represent themselves. Osman’s project, “Manufacturing Empire: Journalistic Construction of Somalia in Postcolonial Kenya,” introduces the concept of “client journalism” to explain how news institutions in both authoritarian and liberalised media environments remain structurally tied to state power.

At #IAS_NUQ, Osman will develop his dissertation into a book manuscript that examines the relationship among journalism, state power, and security discourse in postcolonial Kenya.

“What makes this community distinctive is the opportunity for scholars at different stages of their careers to work alongside and learn from one another,” said Clovis Bergère, director of #IAS_NUQ. “By bringing together undergraduate fellows, postdoctoral scholars, and visiting Global Fellows, we create sustained exchanges across generations, disciplines, and regions. These collaborations strengthen individual projects while building a wider intellectual community around research on and from the Global South.”

Alongside the Global Postdoctoral Scholars, the four Global Fellows joining the Institute for shorter-term residencies bring expertise across cultural markets, cinema, photography, archives, and global communication. Buchholz, an associate professor of communication studies and sociology at Northwestern University, will examine how contemporary art markets

emerge across China, Qatar, and Mexico, with particular attention to the collectors and cultures of valuation that sustain them.

Campos, a professor of international relations at the Federal University of Sergipe, will advance a book project on cinematic relations between Latin America and the Arab world, tracing the networks of political solidarity that connected filmmakers and anticolonial movements during the 1960s and 1970s.

Calafato, a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, will study how vernacular photographs circulating on social media shape transnational memory and diasporic belonging in Qatar and the UAE. Workneh, an associate professor of global communication at Kent State University, will develop a project on digital memory and urban erasure in Addis Ababa, examining how displaced communities preserve social networks, document disappearing neighbourhoods, and negotiate state-led urban restructuring.

As #IAS_NUQ approaches its fifth anniversary, the 2026–27 cohort reflects the Institute’s ambition to build a global scholarly community in which ideas move across disciplines, regions, and cultures. Collectively, the scholars engage its four research themes: Genealogies and Epistemologies of the Global South; Arab Media, Culture, and Politics; Southern Digitalities; and Critical Security Studies. Their work further strengthens Northwestern Qatar’s role as an international centre for research on and from the Global South.

Ehsan event combined learning, recreation for seniors

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Centre for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly (Ehsan), affiliated with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, has concluded its “Our Summer is a Blessing” programme, offering senior women a summer experience that combines learning, recreation, exploration, and social engagement.

The programme was designed as part of Ehsan’s efforts to develop community initiatives that promote the active participation of older persons and contribute to their quality of life.

Instead of focusing solely on conventional recreational activities, “Our Summer is a Blessing” placed participants at the centre of a range of experiences designed to encourage discovery, interaction and continued engagement with the wider community.

The programme included a series of themed days covering tourism and exploration, heritage and national identity, and aviation and smart travel. These were complemented by workshops and recreational and skills-based activities aimed at providing participants with varied opportunities for learning, communication and entertainment.

Besides, the programme was structured around the interests of senior women, with activities intended to diversify their experiences, encourage social interaction and knowledge exchange, and provide opportunities to break from daily routines and create new memories.

Partnerships with national institutions, community organisations and private-sector entities were a central component of the initiative. Ehsan collaborated with the Qatar Documents House, Hamad International Airport, Mada Centre, Hamad Medical Corporation, the Ministry of Interior, Doha Bus and Cup of Joy Cafe.

The partnerships provided participants with a combination of educational visits, interactive and awareness activities, recreational programmes and exploratory experiences. The centre said such cooperation demonstrates the value of integrating the efforts of government institutions, community organisations and the private sector to develop programmes that directly impact the lives of older persons.

Meanwhile, the participant feedback highlighted the social and experiential aspects of the initiative. Kulthum al-Sulaiti, one of the programme participants, said she particularly appreciated the variety of activities and the attention given to participants throughout the programme.

“We enjoyed the programme greatly, and every day brought us a new experience. What made me happiest was the variety and attention to detail, as well as feeling that we were an important part of every activity, rather than simply participants,” she said.

She added that the programme enabled participants to discover new places and experiences, while praising Ehsan for organising activities that combine benefit and enjoyment and provide older women with greater opportunities for interaction and participation.