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6th Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians kicks off in Doha

QNA
Doha

The 6th Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians, organised by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Doha-based UN Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism in co-operation with the Shura Council, kicked off yesterday in Doha.

The opening session was attended by HE Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem and representatives of national parliaments, parliamentary unions, and relevant regional and international organisations participating in the conference.

The two-day conference aims to enhance the participation of women parliamentarians in formulating and implementing policies and legislation, exchanging experiences and good practices



The opening session was attended by HE Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem and representatives of national parliaments and other delegates.

between women parliamentarians from different countries, and promoting awareness and education about the importance of women's role in combating terrorism.

The conference also seeks to develop comprehensive and sustainable strategies to combat terrorism, encourage research

and studies related to the role of women in this field, and provide recommendations for developing national and international legislation and policies to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts made.

In her speech during the opening session, HE the Deputy Speaker of

the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti stressed the vital role that women parliamentarians play in developing, implementing, and monitoring legislation, policies, and strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

She pointed out that Qatar hosted the UN Programme Office on

Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism to unify and co-ordinate the efforts of parliaments in combating and preventing terrorism and violent extremism.

Her Excellency also praised the great efforts made by the UN Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism and the distinguished relations of co-operation and co-ordination between the office and the Shura Council.

She said that the office provided a platform for co-ordination between the efforts of parliaments regarding the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, and other resolutions related to combating terrorism, in addition to providing technical assistance and capacity-building support to parliamentarians in their efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism. **To Page 6**

WISH launches 2024 innovation contest

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), an initiative of Qatar Foundation, yesterday announced the launch of its 2024 Innovation Competition, inviting entrepreneurs and startups to showcase groundbreaking solutions that address the world's most urgent healthcare challenges. Entrepreneurs in the health sector and representatives from incubation centres are encouraged to apply via <https://wish.org.qa/innovation-competition-2024/>. The deadline for applications is July 15, 2024 and shortlisted projects will be announced by August 2024. **Page 3**

Russian pranksters dupe UK's Cameron

Russian pranksters released footage yesterday of a video call with British Foreign Secretary David Cameron after tricking him into thinking he was speaking to former Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko. The call, which lasted around 15 minutes shows Cameron talking on his mobile phone. Russian pranksters "Vovan and Lexus" have earlier duped a string of Western politicians including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and British defence minister Ben Wallace. **Page 11**

Stark UN warning if Gaza war spreads

The outgoing United Nations humanitarian chief warned yesterday that a spread of the Israel-Hamas war to Lebanon would be "potentially apocalyptic", as fighting raged in the southern Gaza Strip. Martin Griffiths described Lebanon as "the flashpoint beyond all flashpoints", especially its southern border with Israel which has seen daily cross-border violence since October 7. "It's beyond planning. It's potentially apocalyptic," warned Griffiths whose term as UN humanitarian coordinator ends this week. A war involving Lebanon "will draw in Syria... it will draw in others", he told reporters in Geneva. "It's very alarming." Germany on Wednesday echoed a Canadian warning from the day before, urging their citizens in Lebanon to leave the country. **Page 7**

Cabinet hails outcomes of Amir's visit to Netherlands

QNA
Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting at its seat at the Amiri Diwan yesterday.

At the outset of the meeting, the Cabinet hailed the outcomes of the official visit made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the friendly Kingdom of the Netherlands on June 23 and 24.

The Cabinet affirmed that His Highness the Amir's fruitful talks with King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Prime Minister Mark Rutte had elevated the relations between the two countries to a new stage of constructive co-operation in various fields for the benefit of their friendly peoples, and strengthened the existing strategic partnership, especially in light of the

Approves formation of Licensing Committee in the Real Estate Regulatory Authority

two memorandums of understanding (MoU) signed during the visit.

After that, the Cabinet considered the topics on its agenda as follows: First - Approval of the draft Cabinet decision to form the Licensing Committee in the Real Estate Regulatory Authority. This committee is responsible for issuing licences for real estate development, developers, and companies working in the field of property management and maintenance.

Second - Approval of the draft

decision of the Minister of Justice to issue the executive regulations of Law No 5 of 2024 regulating real estate registration.

Third - Approval of joining the International Date Council (IDC).

Fourth - Taking necessary measures to ratify: 1- The Partnership Framework Agreement between Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) in Qatar and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for 2024-2028.

2- The Core Contribution Agreement between QFFD in Qatar and the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) to support Unicef's regular resources for the year 2024.

3- The Agreement on the Transfer of Persons between the Government of Qatar and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Fifth - Approval of: 1- A Draft MoU for co-operation in the fields of social development between the Government of Qatar and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. **To Page 5**

MoCI reduces service fees by up to 90%

HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad bin Qassim al-Thani issued Ministerial Decision No 60 of the year 2024, reducing the fees for services provided by the ministry to commerce, industry & business development, and consumer protection sectors that reach up to more than 90% for certain fees.

The ministerial decision aims to support economic growth in the country, encourage national and foreign enterprises, and create an attractive business environment for investment. The ministerial decision will take effect the day after it is published in the official gazette.

These reductions encompass all the ministry sectors (Commerce, Industry & Business Development, Consumer Affairs), and include services like commercial registration, commercial licences, commercial agents' registry, corporate services, investment business services, auditors, copyright and neighbouring rights, patents, protection of designs and industrial models, industrial development



and quality licences.

A new commercial registration and/or licence, for example, has now been set at only QR500, which is designed to encourage and support the start of new commercial ventures in the country.

In a statement, HE Sheikh Mohamed emphasised that the issuance of the decision to reduce fees was part of the ministry's strategy aimed at enhancing the investment environment and developing the trade and industry sectors in Qatar.

It also aims to implement the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030), which seeks to achieve sustainable economic growth, economic diversification, and the development and enhancement of the business environment, in pursuit of achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030. **To Page 4**

Israel pounds several areas across Gaza

Heavy fighting in Rafah • 37,658 Palestinians massacred in Gaza since Oct 7

Reuters
Cairo

Israeli forces pounded several areas across Gaza yesterday, and residents reported fierce fighting overnight in Rafah in the south of the Palestinian enclave.

Residents said fighting intensified in the Tel Al-Sultan neighbourhood in western Rafah, where tanks were also trying to force their way north amid heavy clashes. The armed wings of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad said fighters attacked Israeli forces with anti-tank rock-

ets and mortar bombs.

Since early May, ground fighting has focused on Rafah, abutting Egypt on Gaza's southern edge, where around half of the enclave's 2.3mn people had been sheltering after fleeing other areas. Most have since had to flee again.

Medics said two Palestinians were killed in one Israeli missile strike in Rafah.

Later yesterday, an Israeli strike killed three Palestinians and wounded others near the northern Jabalia camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, medics said.



Palestinians fill containers with water in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

In Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, tank shells struck an apartment, killing at least five people and wounding others, medics said.

The Israeli offensive has so far killed 37,658 people, of them 60 in the past 24 hours, the Gaza health ministry said, and has left the tiny, heavily built-up Gaza Strip in ruins.

More than eight months into the war, international mediation backed by the US has failed to yield a cease-fire agreement. Hamas says any deal must bring an end to the war and full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in fighting. **Page 7**

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Interior minister meets US official



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met in Washington yesterday with Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technologies in the US Anne Neuberger. The meeting discussed ways to enhance co-operation between the two countries in security areas of common interest. (QNA)

PM bids farewell to Korean ambassador



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday at the Amiri Diwan with Korean ambassador to Qatar Lee Joon-ho, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. During the meeting, HE Sheikh Mohamed wished the ambassador success in his future duties, and bilateral relations further progress and prosperity. (QNA)

CMU-Q symposium showcases research projects in key areas

Research projects in some of the key areas that affect Qatar were showcased at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar's (CMU-Q) 2024 Meeting of the Minds research symposium, supported by National Planning Council (NPC) and Masraf Al Rayan. The 51 posters at the event touched on many of the key challenges facing Qatar, including precision medicine, sustainability, gender equity and artificial intelligence.

Michael Trick, dean, CMU-Q, a Qatar Foundation partner university, spoke about the university's unique approach to research: "Research is an integral part of Carnegie Mellon, and I believe it is critical for an undergraduate education," he said.

Projects included research in CMU-Q's four major programme areas, as well as projects in the arts and sciences and interdisciplinary inquiries. Dr Youssuf Abdul Rahman al-Mulla from the NPC, said: "Each year, we come to CMU-Q to learn about how student research is contributing to the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. This generation of researchers are building the skills and human capacity to transform Qatar into a knowledge-based economy. We are pleased to be part of Meeting of the Minds once again."

Eight awards were given by CMU-Q in the categories of 'Best Research Project', 'Most Promising Research' and 'Best Research Poster'. For the second year in a row, prizes were sponsored by Masraf al-Rayan, represented by Hasan al-Jaidah, AGM, Premier Banking, who joined dean Trick to present the awards.

Fahad bin Abdulla al-Khalifa, Group CEO, Masraf Al Rayan said: "It is our privilege once again to support student research at CMU-Q's Meeting of the Minds. The projects at Meeting of the Minds



show thoughtfulness, creativity and innovation, and we congratulate all of the participants for such an impressive showcase of research and inquiry." The first place project went to Adel Fergatova, who investigated the relationship between cancer cells and fibroblasts. Fergatova published related research earlier this year in the leading international journal, *frontiers in immunology*. She is advised by Nesrine Affara.

Most promising research went to Mariam Afifi's exploration of a novel genetic marker that could lead to more precise, personalized cancer treatments. Ihab Younis was the faculty adviser.

Best poster went to Malika Dixit's analysis of gender bias in academic job descriptions. Taeyong Park served as her advisor. The NPC awards were given to the best posters representing the Qatar National Vision 2030, covering the four pillars of human, social, economic, and environmental development. NPC awards were presented by Dr Youssuf A R al-Mulla. The award-winning projects included FEA car crash test analysis software, an interdisciplinary analysis of cancer representation and research funding in Qatar, optimising the supply chain processes of Gulf International Services, transthoracic echocardiography and mortality in sepsis, and gender bias in job descriptions in STEM fields.

Subject experts from across Qatar judged the poster presentations, as well as 15 faculty and staff representatives from CMU-Q. A total of 42 external judges participated in the event, including experts from Aman Hospital, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Georgetown University in Qatar, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Mada - Assistive Technology Center Qatar, Qatar University, Sidra Medicine, University of Doha for Science & Technology, VCUArts Qatar, and Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar.

WISH launches 2024 global healthcare innovation contest

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), an initiative of Qatar Foundation, has launched the 2024 Innovation Competition, inviting entrepreneurs and startups to showcase groundbreaking solutions that address the world's most urgent healthcare challenges.

Innovators can apply via <https://wish.org.qa/innovation-competition-2024/>. The deadline for applications is July 15. Shortlisted projects will be announced by August 2024.

Entrepreneurs in the health sector and representatives from incubation centres are encouraged to apply. Early to mid-stage health-focused startups and innovators selected through a judging process will be invited to exhibit at WISH 2024 international healthcare summit, set to take place on November 13-14 at Qatar National Convention Centre.

The WISH Innovation Competition comprises of two categories: "Young Innovators" for health startups led by founders 30 years and younger; and "Innovation Showcases" for health startups that have moved beyond the ideation phase and established their market presence for up to five years. The winner in each category will receive an investment award.

Proposals can showcase innovative solutions across all

spectrums of healthcare, with an emphasis on digital health. The judging committee will assess entries based on impact, novelty, and growth potential.

In addition to the investment award, key companion benefits of the WISH Innovation Award Programme, which incorporates the two competition categories, include networking opportunities with like-minded startups, health experts, investors, and local incubation centres; and access to sessions with industry experts to learn about marketing, social media, presenting, and pitching to investors. Winners will also receive an invitation to showcase their innovations at WISH 2024, which will bring together healthcare providers, ministers, insurers, investors, and industry experts.

Maha El Akoum, manager, Policy and Content, WISH, said: "The Young Innovators award seeks to discover, support and propel forward the next generation of healthcare innovators. WISH believes that young entrepreneurs are vital to transformative health solutions, and this competition aims to provide them with a platform to showcase their early-stage startups. In addition, the Innovation Showcases category provides a stage for established startups to exhibit their novel solutions and business models."



WISH 2022 grand prize winner, Katarina Hedbeck, receiving the award.

QRCS doctors in Gaza perform 18,927 medical interventions

Since the war on Gaza started in October 2023, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has made 18,927 medical interventions, including over 3,000 life-saving surgeries for patients under the Surgical Operations for Patients in Gaza 2023-2024 project, a statement said yesterday.

Dr Raed al-Armi, thoracic surgery consultant hired by QRCS, has performed more than 2,000 surgeries at several hospitals in central and southern parts of Gaza, in the face of nonstop warnings of hospital bombing, it was explained.

He has warned against a complete collapse of the health system, with many health services halted as a result of the bombing of hospitals and health workers.

At the same time, there are large numbers of critical injuries that require urgent interventions, while the doctors have insufficient medical supplies and equipment to save the patients.

Dr Akram Nassar, head of QRCS' representation office in Gaza, said they were closely coordinating with the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza to ensure continued healthcare services at the few hospitals remaining,



A Palestinian child recovering from a successful surgery.

despite scarcity of resources due to the war and closure of crossings. According to Dr Nassar, QRCS' interventions are currently focused on sustaining health services, with QRCS' doctors performing surgeries at Gaza hospitals, mainly thoracic surgery, emergency medicine, psychological support, and medical care for endocrine diseases and diabetes.

"Even though more health facilities are bombed across the blockade, humanitarian efforts would continue, in order to avoid the collapse of Gaza's health sector," Dr Nassar added.



A surgery in progress in Gaza.

QC renews 'CP' agreement with FMM

Qatar Charity (QC) has renewed the co-operation agreement with Facilities Management & Maintenance Company (FMM) and awarded it the 'CP' trademark under the bronze category of 'Charity Partner' programme.

The agreement was signed by Ahmad Yousef Fakhroo, QC CEO's assistant for the Resources Development and Com-

munication sector, and FMM CEO engineer Irene Vidal. Fakhroo expressed his gratitude and appreciation to FMM for its continued contributions, assisting those in need and supporting community development through the renewal of the 'CP' agreement.

He emphasised the importance of strengthening community partnerships within the 'CP'

programme, which includes gold, silver, and bronze categories. The QC official also encouraged companies and institutions in Qatar to join the programme to bolster collective efforts in supporting needy communities.

Vidal pointed out that through its four-year partnership with QC, FMM has contributed to a good cause that transcends borders.

Qatar committed to addressing humanitarian needs globally

Qatar has affirmed its unwavering commitment to supporting the UN, adding that it will remain a reliable and active partner in addressing humanitarian needs around the globe.

This was highlighted in a statement delivered by HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, during the humanitarian affairs segment of the UN Economic and Social Council at the UN headquarters in New York.

HE Sheikhha Alya noted the increasing humanitarian demands in various parts of the world, posing unprecedented challenges in responding to these needs. The inability to access basic survival necessities or the obstruction of humanitarian aid to those in need threatens numerous individuals



HE Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani

and communities. She emphasised that delivering humanitarian and medical assistance world-

wide, especially in crisis regions caused by natural disasters or armed conflicts, should be a top

priority, as the rights to food, water, and medicine are fundamental human rights.

She highlighted the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe faced by civilians in Gaza due to Israeli aggression. Qatar continues to provide diverse humanitarian aid, including food, shelter supplies, non-food items, medical supplies, hygiene products, water, a field hospital, ambulances, and evacuation operations for patients and other affected individuals. Qatar has pledged an initial \$50mn humanitarian aid package for refugees and displaced persons following the Israeli assault on Gaza.

Furthermore, HE Sheikhha Alya mentioned Qatar's ongoing efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Qatar's humanitarian and developmental assistance focuses on projects in

Sheikha Alya meets UN official



Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN, HE Sheikhha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani, has met with Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Virginia Gamba, at Qatar's Permanent Mission headquarters in New York. They discussed the existing co-operation between Qatar and the Office of the Special Representative of the UN secretary-general and highlighted the importance of strengthening efforts to protect children in conflict areas. (QNA)

education, healthcare, shelter, livelihood, food security, agriculture, and medical supplies.

She also referred to the third Doha meeting of Special Envoys for Afghanistan, hosted by Qatar in partnership with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs from June 30-July 1 to discuss humanitarian and developmental challenges in Afghanistan.

In addressing the humanitar-

ian crisis of the Sudanese people, she said that since the onset of the crisis, Qatar has operated an air bridge to deliver vital humanitarian aid, including 567.9 tonnes of food, health, and shelter supplies. She noted that this aid was provided by humanitarian organisations in Qatar, such as the Qatar Red Crescent Society and Qatar Charity, in partnership with the Qatar Fund for Development. (QNA)

Amir congratulates Madagascar president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Madagascar's President Andry Nirina Rajoelina on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable of congratulations to Prime Minister Christian Louis Ntsay. (QNA)

Farewell to Nepali envoy



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Nepal ambassador to Qatar Naresh Bikram Dhakal, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE al-Hammadi thanked the ambassador for his efforts to support and strengthen bilateral relations, wishing him success in his future duties. (QNA)

MoCI reduces service fees by up to 90%

From Page 1

Support for national enterprises: The minister noted the decision to reduce service fees will support national enterprises and entrepreneurs, both individuals and companies.

It will significantly facilitate investors obtaining high-quality services at reduced fees and enhance the competitiveness of individuals and companies to support new enterprises and encourage investors to expand their businesses in various sectors.

Attractive environment for foreign investments: A major part of the initiative announced by the minister aims at attracting more foreign investments to Qatar and enhancing the role of the private sector in achieving economic

diversification and a sustainable economy.

He added that the ministry will continue developing its service offering to provide an ideal and flexible experience for local and foreign consumers and investors with the goal of enhancing Qatar's position as an attractive investment destination.

This announcement comes after the Ministry of Commerce and Industry evaluated, analysed and conducted detailed studies of the business environment requirements and investors' needs.

It is expected that the decision will have a significantly positive impact on the market, specifically services related to company formation, issuance of commercial registrations, and licensing of commercial outlets.

Awareness exhibition on dangers of drugs opens

Under the patronage of HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, the awareness exhibition was opened yesterday at the Place Vendome mall.

Organised by the Ministry of Interior, the four-day event is part of the celebrations for the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, under the theme "The Evidence is Clear: Let's Invest in Prevention".

The exhibition, opened by Director of the Forensic Laboratory Brig Ibrahim Abdullah al-Binali features participation from the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, the General Authority of Customs, and the Behavioral Healthcare Centre. The event aims to disseminate educational messages and distribute informational pamphlets and brochures related to drug prevention and awareness to deepen public understanding of the issue and mitigate its impacts on individuals, families, and society.

Director-General of Drug Enforcement at the Ministry of Interior, Col Rashid Sareea al-Kaabi, emphasised that drug addiction is a global phenomenon with severe repercussions on health, mental well-being, social stability, and the economy. He pointed out that drug-related issues have worsened in recent years due to technological advancements and increased connectivity, making drug crimes transnational and organised.

Students' participation in scientific competitions reflects their excellence and the remarkable development witnessed by schools in Qatar



He underlined that Qatar is a leading nation in combating drug abuse, employing comprehensive strategies that include prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, alongside community awareness campaigns targeting all societal segments, especially the youth.

He pointed out that Qatar actively contributes to global anti-drug policies, sharing its successful experiences and learning from others through international conferences and seminars, in addition

to enhancing co-operation with relevant international and regional organisations.

Col al-Kaabi reiterated that Qatar's drug control authorities are continually improving training programmes for national personnel in various fields related to drug enforcement, ensuring their readiness to handle all forms of drug-related crimes.

He urged the community, particularly the youth, to avoid suspicious places while travelling, refrain from

carrying unknown individuals' luggage without verifying its contents, and not to bring any psychoactive medication from abroad without an approved prescription. He highlighted the role of every community member in combating drug abuse through collaboration with the relevant authorities.

Director of International Affairs and Studies at the General Directorate of Drug Control, Lt Col Mohamed Abdullah al-Khater, said that Qatar's participation in the International Day against Drug Abuse reaffirms its commitment to addressing this critical issue and supporting ongoing efforts to combat it. The occasion also serves to reflect on the national achievements in ensuring a secure and sustainable future for subsequent generations.

He added that Qatar diligently addresses drug-related challenges by adhering to the principles and provisions of international drug control agreements and actively participating in Gulf, Arab, regional, and international conferences and meetings on the subject. The state adopts a comprehensive drug control strategy encompassing enforcement, prevention, and treatment, aiming to establish a drug-free society.

He explained that this strategy underscores Qatar's belief in the importance of international co-operation to address this issue, forming a balanced and integrated approach in line with agreements on controlling dangerous drugs and psychotropic substances. (QNA)



Education ministry prepares students for international science Olympiads

In preparation for participating in the various international science Olympiads, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has trained students participating in the International Physics Olympiad to be held in Iran from July 21-29, the International Chemistry Olympiad in Saudi Arabia from July 21-30, the International Biology Olympiad held in Kazakhstan from July 7-14, as well as the International Junior Science Olympiad held in Romania from Dec 2-12.

This comes in light of the ministry's interest in developing education and achieving its strategy, which aims to build advanced educational systems and provide distinguished educational opportunities for students. It also aims to develop their scientific abilities and skills and enable them to compete in international competitions.

Students' participation in international scientific competitions also

reflects their excellence and the remarkable development witnessed by schools in Qatar. Student teams receive intensive training under the supervision of science mentors at the ministry to prepare them for advanced scientific competitions in these events.

In this context, Head of the Science Department at MoEHE Aisha al-Mesaifri expressed her pride in Qatar students' participation in the International Science Olympiad and the International Junior Science Olympiad competition. She stressed that their participation contributes to achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030, which focuses on building a knowledge-based economy and preparing the future generation to achieve sustainable development.

The ministry looks forward to increasing the participation of its students in international scientific com-

petitions by providing specialised and comprehensive training programmes in advanced scientific research skills and data analysis. It also looks forward to providing preparatory courses that include a larger number of talented students, organising specialised workshops under the supervision of international experts, and building partnerships with international educational and scientific institutions to exchange experiences and knowledge and enhance cooperation in science.

The International Science Olympiad is held annually and sees the participation of students from various countries. These competitions allow students to showcase their scientific and creative abilities on the international stage. They are a step towards building a generation of young scientists and researchers capable of leading innovation and development in the future. (QNA)

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HBKU, Nasa to collaborate on quantum technology solutions

QNA
Doha

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)'s mission to shape novel solutions for global impact has been strengthened by a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) and Nasa.

The MoU will be executed by CSE's recently established Qatar Centre for Quantum Computing (QC2) and will implement a feasibility study exploring potential collaboration on technology development for quantum communications and networking, as well as technology development for quantum sensors for applications in space-based science and observation. Such technology development may include the modelling and testing of systems and components for predicting the performance of various use cases and/or applications, such as blind quantum computing, distributed quantum computing, and Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI).

CSE's QC2 and Nasa will explore potential joint collaboration on the development of future space-based quantum missions for technology demonstration and testing of related quantum technologies and capabilities. Both parties will further explore potential joint efforts aimed at training, education and workforce development in these emerging quantum technologies.

These efforts will lead to the design and implementation of specialised educational programmes focused on cutting-edge technologies, contributing to local capacity building and at-



Dr Saif al-Kuwari

tracting talent from across the country and the region. Following the signing, Director of QC2 Dr Saif al-Kuwari said: "This MoU underscores our commitment to advancing the frontiers of knowledge by collaborating with world-renowned partners, which, in turn, facilitate high-impact research addressing the societal and economic needs of Qatar and the world. The scope of our collaboration with Nasa is extensive and ambitious, not to mention in line with the work and objectives of our quantum centre. We are eager to work with Nasa and push the boundaries of quantum technologies, driving innovation and progress in this cutting-edge field."

HBKU's CSE engages and leads in research disciplines of national and global importance. The College seeks to innovate and find solutions to pressing issues in Qatar and beyond, equipping students with the tools and skill-set to lead in their own fields and innovate.



Dr Javaid Sheikh, WCM-Q dean and Dr Khaled Machaca with some of the graduates and research team.

Aspiring scientists complete WCM-Q biomedical research training initiative

Eight aspiring scientists began building successful careers in research as they graduated from the Biomedical Research Training Programme for Nationals of Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar (WCM-Q).

Fatimah Alhussain, Hafsa Madni, Ruqaiya Shoheeduzzaman, Najla Ali Alkorbi, Lulwa Alhaddad, Dalia Hamdelneel, Omar Madani, and Sherouk Elnahla spent 10 months working alongside WCM-Q's scientists in the laboratories.

In addition to learning a comprehensive range of research competencies, including practical lab skills, how to conduct clinical research and knowledge of research administration, the interns

were also able to gain hands-on experience of biomedical research by contributing to ongoing scientific studies carried out at WCM-Q.

Dr Khaled Machaca, associate dean for research, innovations, and commercialisation, said: "These truly impressive young scientists and administrators have gained the skills and knowledge required to become key contributors to Qatar's thriving biomedical research sector."

This is the 12th annual cycle of the Biomedical Research Training Programme for Nationals, launched in 2011 and to date has helped 58 graduates take the first step on the path to a successful

career in research. All of the interns who completed the programme this year are graduates of leading universities in Qatar and the wider region. This year's cohort graduated from Qatar University, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Saudi Arabia, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, and the International University of Africa in Sudan.

Qatar University biology graduate Najla Ali Alkorbi spent her 10 months at WCM-Q interning in basic research. She said: "My practical experience has ignited a deeper passion for my chosen field, driving my anticipation to delve into the field of research I have long dreamed of."

QMC wraps up course on role of PR in building organisation's identity

The Qatari Media Centre (QMC) of the Ministry of Culture concluded yesterday a training course on the role of public relations in building an organisation's identity. The three-day course, which was presented by trainer Hassan Ali al-Anwari, featured a number of topics, through which the participants learned about the importance of public relations in the work of any institution or entity.

The course focused on the topic of public relations and its skills besides the most prominent modern methods in developing these skills and how to build relationships based on a vision and a strategic plan to promote the organisation to other parties, in addition to enhancing a set of skills and basics that must be available to public relations employees in any organisation, due to the great role in building the identity of that institution.

Director of the QMC Iman al-Kaabi, confirmed in her statement that the training course complements the centre's approach and plan to support and



enhance the qualification and training tools for participants in the various workshops and courses, contributing to enhancing the media process in Qatar.

She added that next week will witness the launch of the QMC's summer programme, which is a training and qualify-

ing event prepared in co-ordination with experts and specialists, through which the centre seeks to provide qualitative training in various media fields. The programme targets 14-20 age group, in order to make optimal use of the students summer vacation, she noted. (QNA)

Endangered wolves seized at border crossing

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has confiscated four wolves of the Canis lupus subspecies at Abu Samra border crossing because the owners did not possess the necessary documentation for importing them, according to Law No 5 of 2006 on the Regulation of Trade in Endangered Wildlife Fauna and Flora and their Products. The Wild Life Development Department affirmed through a X post that the owners of the endangered species of animals must obtain the necessary official certificates before entering or leaving the country with them.

Summer burial timing revised

The Ministry of Municipality in co-operation with the Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has specified certain timing for burial during the summer months to maintain public health and safety, it was announced on X. During June-September, the burial at cemeteries is limited between sunrise and 8am or after evening prayers. The move is meant to protect people taking part in the burial ceremonies against intense heat throughout the summer months.

Rawdat Al Suwairat fenced

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has announced through its X account the completion of the fencing and rehabilitating of Rawdat Al Suwairat, located south of the Al Guwairiya in the northern area of Qatar. The 168,209.7sq m area is rich in plant diversity, with permanent and seasonal plants, especially after the rain.

Cabinet clears draft accord on museums

From Page 1

2- A Draft Agreement on mutual exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, special, and service passports between the Government of Qatar and the Government of the Republic of Burundi.

3- A Draft Agreement on the encouragement and protection of mutual investments between the Government of Qatar and the Government of the Republic of Djibouti.

4- A Draft MoU for co-operation in the field of museums between the Qatar Museums in Qatar and the National Museum of China in the People's Republic of China.


5- A Draft MoU for legal and judicial co-operation between the Ministry of Justice in Qatar and the Ministry of Justice in the Kingdom of Thailand.

6- The first supplemental agreement to an agreement between the Government of Qatar and the UN regarding the establishment of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Qatar.

Sixth - The Cabinet reviewed the following topics and took the appropriate decisions thereon: 1- The 58th report on the results of the work of the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons from 1/1 to 30/4/2024.

2- A report on the results of the participation in the 68th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

3- A report on the results of the visit made by HE the Minister of Municipality to the Sultanate of Oman to strengthen co-operation in the field of fisheries.




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AAH/TC/09/2024	SALE OF USED PRINTERS	NIL	4th July 2024

- Full document for the above mentioned tender can be obtained by email as per your email request.
- Site visit for the above will be on the 30th June 2024 at 10:00am.
- The auction bid should submit in one sealed envelope.
- Tender must be addressed to the Chairman of the Tender Committee, clearly indicating the Tender Number and Subject.
- The closing time for submission of the auction bid should be no later than 2:00pm of the Closing Date.

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المؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

VENDOR PRE-QUALIFICATION INVITATION

Tender Reference	Description	PQ Closing Date
QF/PD/24/PQ/537	Vendor Pre-Qualification of Event Management and Production Companies for Small and Medium QF Events	25th July 2024

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting qualified companies to participate for the above Pre-Qualification (PQ) requirement. Interested companies shall request the Pre-qualification documents by providing clear copies of the following document to QF email: pdpq@qf.org.qa before **8th July 2024; 3:00 PM**.

1) A Covering Letter signed by authorized signatory that states Company's intent to participate and should list the following information:

- a. QF Pre-Qualification Reference Number and Title
- b. Company's Commercial Registration (CR) number
(For companies with other holding companies listed in their CR, the commercial registration number and name of corporate partner should also be mentioned in the letter)
- c. Name and contact details of the Company's focal person in charge of all correspondence related to the pre-qualification. All related correspondence will be issued to the provided email address only.

Note: It is also mandatory to mention the correct PQ reference number and title in the email subject.

QF Procurement Directorate will verify and issue the PQ documents to companies who have fully complied with above requirements.

Qatar Foundation Terms and Conditions shall apply as stipulated in the Pre-Qualification document.

QF-PD-PQA-01



Qatar's Permanent Mission in Geneva holds side event on family empowerment



The Qatar's Permanent Mission to the UN Office in Geneva and Doha International Family Institute (Difi) organised a side event on family empowerment and protection to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, on the sidelines of the current 56th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The event saw the participation of a number of ambassadors, diplomats, employees of international and non-governmental organisations, and international and

regional experts. During the event, participants' discussions focused on the main role that the family plays in promoting development, cohesion, social integration, and preserving values. They also focused on the strange concepts and patterns that contribute to changing the true and traditional image of the family and threaten its existence.

The discussion also addressed the challenges facing and threatening the family unit, such as climate change and migration, in addition to the negative and posi-

tive effects of new technology, and concluded with the need for joint action and efforts in the field of law and practice to enhance the role of the family and its contribution to the stability and security of society.

During the event, it was announced that Qatar would host an international conference to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family from Oct 29-31. The conference will be organised by the Difi under the title "Family and Contemporary Megatrends". (QNA)

Arab League, Difi to launch report on marital relations in Arab World

The General Secretariat of the Arab League, in collaboration with the Doha International Family Institute (Difi), a member of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, will host an event to launch the joint exploratory report on "Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World". The event will take place from July 2-4 in Cairo.

This report release follows the decision of the Arab Ministers of Social Affairs Council, No 1,014, in its regular 43rd session in Egypt, which approved the final report of the exploratory study on "Marital Relationship Assessment in the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World" as a guiding document for member states. The study aims to identify factors contributing to the success of marital relationships during the first five years, explore challenges and issues faced by couples, and to determine support mechanisms at the national and community levels for successful and stable marriages. It also investigates the causes of early marital breakdowns and explores support strategies from various stakeholders to sustain marriages.

Additionally, the study seeks to develop a plan for a guiding programme to prepare couples for marriage

in the Arab world. The study seeks to fill the existing knowledge gap regarding this type of research and to cover significant family-related topics in Arab countries. The report serves as a model and scientific resource for future studies in the Arab world, providing evidence for decision-makers and family professionals to support policy and intervention development. In a related context, the Arab League General Secretariat, in co-operation with Difi and the Qatari embassy in Egypt, will organise a side event during the report launch. This event is part of the preparatory activities for the conference on the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30), titled "Family and Contemporary Megatrends". The conference will be hosted by Qatar and organised by Difi from October 29-31.

In a statement yesterday, the embassy stated that the side event will discuss the preparations for this conference, including progress on global and Arab levels regarding the four major contemporary trends identified by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which are family and technological change, family and demographic change, family and urbanisation and migration, family and climate change. (QNA)

Qatar hosts first GCC Scouts and Guides panel meeting

Qatar is hosting the first meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states' Scouts and Guides Committee, which began yesterday and runs until tomorrow.

The meeting is discussing the technical committees' recommendations, approving the activity plan and schedule for GCC scout and guide activities for next year, as well as setting the committee's strategic plan, among other important topics. Commissioner General of the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association Jas-

sim al-Hardan emphasised the importance of implementing the decision issued by the 8th meeting of GCC education ministers that took place in Doha earlier this month, which calls for enhancing Gulf scout committee work, launching Gulf volunteer work projects, developing leadership training modules, and programmes that instil Islamic and cultural values among participants.

He also highlighted the integration of the Scout Committee and the Guide Committee of the GCC countries into one commit-

tee headed by the state that chairs the GCC session. In a press release, al-Hardan said that these matters are Qatar Scout and Guide Association priorities, as well as some of the key issues and programmes of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Al-Hardan stressed participating in joint Gulf Scout activities, noting that on the margin of the Doha meeting, workshops will be held on Scout supervision of national associations and the plan for GCC Scout associations. (QNA)

6th Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians gets underway in Doha

From Page 1

She noted Qatar's adoption of preventive diplomacy to prevent wars and conflicts, and its mediation and good offices to achieve a peaceful solution to various regional conflicts.

HE the deputy Speaker of the Shura Council praised the success of that strategy, which was embodied in Qatar's effective and notable efforts aimed at stopping the aggression against Gaza.

Her Excellency added that in recognition of the strategic role of preventive diplomacy, Qatar had previously proposed holding an international conference on preventive diplomacy, confirming its readiness to host it, because of that mechanism's important role, as the international community faces challenges that do not recognise dialogue as a binding means of resolving differences, which represents a genuine threat to global peace and security, placing the United Nations before a difficult test of its success in achieving international peace and security.

Speaking about the conference's theme, she praised the role of women parliamentarians in providing global peace and security "thanks to their effective participation and enthusiasm."

HE Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti stressed the need to develop frameworks and strategies to implement the recommendations of women parliamentarians conferences, calling for the reform of the UN, especially the UN Security Council, to achieve justice and prevent wars and conflicts.

She warned that the absence of the role of international organisations entrusted with maintaining international peace and security pushes young people to join the incubators of terrorism of extremist groups and embrace ideas and doctrines that pursue violence to repel injustice.

HE Dr Hamda al-Sulaiti called

on the attendees to discuss ways to stop human rights violations and massacres committed by the occupying entity in Gaza so that young people do not lose their confidence in international systems and laws that are concerned with achieving international peace and security.

She indicated that terrorism is considered the scourge of every era, and is a companion of injustice and the absence of security and justice. She pointed out that humanity has continued to suffer greatly from the waves of extremism that recur with the availability of appropriate conditions and the incubating environment for this terrorism, from poverty, ignorance, conflicts, civil wars, persecution of minorities, ethnic and sectarian strife, and contempt of religions. In this regard, she pointed out that the Israeli entity has been violating the rights of the Palestinian people for seven decades, which has led the region to instability and increased disagreement and discord.

HE Dr al-Sulaiti stressed the importance of the preventive role played by women parliamentarians in raising young people and working with female victims who have engaged in terrorist acts.

She also emphasised the Shura Council's appreciation for parliamentary attention to regional and international issues and threats posed by terrorism, and its awareness of the extent of the damage and destructive effects caused by terrorism and violent extremism, especially on women and children.

Regarding the role of parliamentarians, Her Excellency stressed that parliamentarians possess the necessary tools for prevention and control, which enables them to prevent the occurrence of terrorism and address its effects. HE Dr Hamda al-Sulaiti pointed to the ability of parliaments to enact procedural and preventive legislation and

monitor their implementation, in addition to influencing the allocation of resources to confront terrorism.

HE the deputy Speaker of the Shura Council urged women parliamentarians to use the media to clarify the danger of terrorism, hate speech, and extremism, encourage societal harmony, and work to curb social media that spreads hate speech and sows strife. She also stressed the importance of enhancing public participation and integrating civil society organizations into counter-terrorism efforts.

Her Excellency urged the attendees to come up with a recommendation demanding an end to the aggression and human rights violations, especially against women, girls, and children in the Gaza Strip, and a ceasefire in the occupied Palestinian territories. She also stressed the need for international organisations to have an effective and influential role in achieving this goal.

The conference addresses efforts to combat terrorism and prevent violent extremism from various aspects, by addressing the main issues related to definitions of combating terrorism, the conditions conducive to its spread, the motives of violent extremism, and the roles of women and men in extremist groups.

Participants will discuss the role of parliamentarians in combating terrorism and violent extremism, focusing on the necessary legislation, policies, and strategies and ensuring their alignment with national and international legal frameworks.

The sessions also focus on women's full and equal participation in combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism, reviewing the challenges and how to overcome them, and discussing increasing women parliamentarians' representation in parliamentary security and defence committees.

Iran's Rouhani supports sole reformist running for president

AFP
Teheran

Iran's former president Hassan Rouhani yesterday threw his weight behind reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian, two days ahead of a snap presidential vote to replace the late Ebrahim Raisi.

Rouhani, a moderate politician who preceded Raisi in office, said Pezeshkian — the only reformist on the ballot — could "remove the shadow of sanctions" that have battered the Iranian economy since the collapse of a landmark nuclear deal.

"On Friday, we should vote for someone who is determined to remove the shadow of sanctions from the Iranian people," Rouhani said in a video message published by the reformist Shargh daily, praising Pezeshkian's "honesty" and "loyalty".

The election was brought forward by Raisi's death in a helicopter crash last month.

Rouhani, whose government had negotiated the 2015 nuclear deal with the United States and other powers, said Pezeshkian appeared "determined to revive" the accord which fell through after Washington unilaterally with-



A banner of presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian is displayed at a campaign centre in Teheran, yesterday.

draw from it in 2018, reimposing biting sanctions. Diplomatic efforts have since faltered to revive the deal, which aimed to curb Teheran's nuclear activity in return for sanctions relief. Pezeshkian, 69, is an outspoken heart surgeon who has represented the north-western city of Tabriz in parliament since 2008.

He is among the leading contenders in Iran's six-way presidential race along with conservative parliament speaker Mohamed Bagher Ghalibaf and conservative former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

Reformist figures includ-

ing former president Mohamed Khatami and ex-foreign minister Mohamed Javad Zarif have endorsed Pezeshkian's candidacy.

On Tuesday, Khatami said the upcoming vote was "an opportunity" for "change", with Pezeshkian a "righteous, justice-seeking, anti-corruption and meritocratic" leader.

Other candidates in the running include conservative Teheran mayor Alireza Zakani, cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi, and incumbent vice president Amirhossein Ghazizadeh-Hashemi, the conservative head of the Martyrs' Foundation.

French court upholds warrant for Syria's Assad over chemical weapons

Reuters
Paris

A French appeals court yesterday upheld an arrest warrant issued for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad over the use of banned chemical weapons against civilians.

The warrant approved by French judges in November 2023 refers to charges of complicity in crimes against humanity and complicity in war crimes. It followed a French investigation into

chemical attacks in Douma and the district of Eastern Ghouta in August 2013 that killed more than 1,000 people.

Assad's government has denied using chemical weapons against its opponents in the civil war, which broke out in March 2011. Syrian authorities did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the Court of Appeal ruling.

Prosecutors, who would be responsible for asking the police to carry out the warrant, had challenged its validity, arguing that,

as a sitting head of state, Assad was immune from trial and prosecution in France.

The Paris Court of Appeal said in a statement confirming the validity of the arrest warrant: "Prohibiting the use of chemical weapons is part of customary international law as a mandatory rule, and the international crimes that the judges are looking at cannot be considered as being part of the official duties of a head of state. They can thus be separated from the sovereignty naturally attached to these duties."

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Spread of Mideast war to Lebanon ‘potentially apocalyptic’: UN aid chief

AFP
Geneva

The UN humanitarian chief voiced alarm yesterday at the prospect of Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza spreading to Lebanon, warning that it was “potentially apocalyptic”.

As the war in Gaza nears its tenth month, Israel’s top ally the United States has warned of the risk of a major conflict against the Iran-backed group Hezbollah in Lebanon, following an escalation in cross-border fire.

Israel’s military said last week

plans for an offensive in Lebanon were “approved and validated”, prompting fresh threats from Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

Martin Griffiths, the UN humanitarian co-ordinator, told reporters in Geneva that he saw Lebanon as “the flashpoint beyond all flashpoints”, pointing to southern Lebanon in particular.

Griffiths said he had been discussing with colleagues in Jerusalem about the prospects of what might happen there.

“We are worried about the potential for further tragedy and deaths,” he said.

“It’s potentially apocalyptic.”

Griffiths, whose term finishes this week, warned that a war involving Lebanon “will draw in Syria... it will draw in others”.

And “it will of course have an impact on Gaza; of course it will have an impact on the West Bank.

“It’s very alarming,” he said.

On Tuesday, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon said three contractors returning home from the peacekeepers’ base in the south Lebanon village of Shamaa “had their vehicle hit by gunfire”, reporting “no serious injuries”.

The UN’s peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix condemned the incident, saying there was es-

calation on the border. “Certainly we condemn the attacks against those contractors in the same way as we condemn attacks against civilians (and) certainly attacks against our peacekeepers as well,” Lacroix said at a briefing at UN headquarters in New York.

“What we’ve seen over... the last week is, if not a full-fledged sort of escalation, but certainly an increase, a gradual increase, in the intensity of these exchanges of fire.”

The bloodiest-ever Gaza war started with Hamas’ October first week storming of southern Israel.

Israel’s retaliatory offensive has

killed at least 37,718 people, also mostly civilians, Gaza’s health ministry has said.

Since the war began, “Gaza has taught us a new level of tragedy and cruelty”, Griffiths said.

“But we are all worried that it may only be the beginning.”

He said the UN humanitarian agency OCHA and other aid agencies were preparing for a broader crisis.

“There is a lot of preparedness on the aid side,” he said. But the kind of preparedness needed was “political”, he stressed.

“The problem is stopping this war from getting worse.”



Martin Griffiths



A displaced Palestinian woman, Amal Nsair, fans her children as they sleep in a school where they shelter, during hot weather and power cut, amid the Israel-Hamas conflict, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Summer heat brings new misery to Palestinians in Gaza campaign

Reuters
Khan Younis

Sweltering summer weather is worsening conditions in Gaza where nearly all the 2.3mn inhabitants have been driven from their homes by Israel’s military campaign and where there is almost no electricity and little clean water.

Families living in tents, in crowded shelters in UN schools or crammed into private homes, face the rising summer temperatures without air conditioning, showers or a functioning health system amid rising rates of malnutrition and disease.

In a school classroom shared as a shelter among different families in Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip, Amal Nsair, 38, is worried that the rising heat

and humidity and the increase in mosquitoes and other insects will harm their health.

Her son cannot sleep and she has nothing to cool him except a fan made from cardboard. The family’s home was in Beit Hanoun, in northern Gaza Strip, which they fled earlier in the conflict.

“My son’s body is full of heat. In the past I would wash him but I need water. I’m very worried about my husband’s health too. He has lost half his weight from carrying water,” she said.

Temperatures in Gaza this week are forecast above 30 degrees Celsius and recent years have brought a series of lethal heatwaves across the Mediterranean as the summer advances.

Gaza’s electricity was largely provided from Israel, but this

was cut off as soon as the war began along with fuel for the territory’s only power station. Diesel to supply private generators was largely exhausted soon afterwards. The war began when the Palestinian group Hamas sent fighters across the border from Gaza in the first week of October last year.

Israel’s military campaign began the same day and has levelled swathes of the enclave, destroying most infrastructure, and killing more than 37,600 Palestinians according to health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza.

“Insects and mosquitoes are biting us all night long. I don’t sleep so that I can apply cream on my child, any kind of ointment or cream so he does not get bitten by the mosquitoes. They are scratching all night,” said Nsair.

Erdogan accuses West of backing Israeli ‘plans to spread war’

AFP
Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday accused Western powers of backing what he said were Israeli plans to attack Lebanon and “spread war” throughout the region.

“Israel is now setting its sights on Lebanon and we see that Western powers behind the scenes are patting Israel on the back and even supporting them,” he told lawmakers from his ruling AKP party. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s plans to spread the war to the region will lead to a great disaster,” he said.

“It is ... pathetic that states that talk about freedom, human rights and justice are captives of a mentally-ill person like Netanyahu.”

His remarks came as concern soared over escalating threats and ongoing cross-border exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Lebanon’s Hezbollah, fuelling



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

fears it could descend into fully-fledged war.

The Lebanon border violence erupted after Hamas fighters stormed southern Israel, triggering a massive Israeli retaliatory operation, which is ongoing.

Netanyahu has said Israeli forces are now winding up the most intense part of the Gaza war and will redeploy to the northern border, casting the move as defensive.

Last week, Israel said its plans for an offensive in Lebanon were “approved and validated”.

The Turkish leader’s remarks came two days after Foreign Minister, Hakan Fidan warned Greece and Cyprus about getting involved in the ongoing Middle East conflict.

Speaking to Haberturk TV late on Monday, Fidan alleged there was “serious militarisation in southern Cyprus” which was being used as a base for “intelligence and military flights” towards Gaza, citing intelligence reports.

Turkiye, he said, had warned them against getting involved in the conflict.

“When you get involved in the ongoing war in the Middle East, when you take sides, this fire will come and find you too,” he said.

Last week, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah warned Cyprus against opening its airports and bases to Israel “to target Lebanon”, saying it would face retaliation.

But the Cypriot government in Nicosia swiftly denied any part in Israel’s Gaza war and said it would not “become involved in any military conflicts”.

Looting adds to logistical woes of Gaza aid delivery by sea

Reuters
Larnaca

A US-operated temporary pier delivering aid to war-ravaged Gaza faces a mountain of logistical challenges, the most recent of which is looting, officials said yesterday.

The 1,200-foot (370-metre) long floating pier, put into operation in May, receives aid pre-screened in Cyprus, which spearheaded an effort to open an additional route of humanitarian assistance by sea.

But operations have been disrupted several times by rough seas hampering or damaging the pier, as well as by security considerations on land. Despite the challenges, both Cyprus and the US vowed the delivery of aid would continue. Although the pier has allowed international aid to be brought to shore by skirting bottlenecks on land routes, supplies have been piling up in recent days in a marshalling area on the Gazan coast while the UN conducts a review of security arrangements.

“I have never seen a more challenging or more complex environment for the humanitarian community to work,” said Doug Stropes, Division Chief for the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, who cited his experience of working both in Latin America

and Africa. In addition to working in a conflict zone and the logistical challenges of the pier itself, looting aid trucks now “appeared to have expanded beyond just self-distribution”, he said. “It expanded recently beyond just those in need stopping the vehicles and getting the assistance out, and it appears to be organised – not in the sense of a large scale organisation but there are organised elements that are stopping and taking the commodities from the trucks,” he said.

Speaking at Larnaca Port, in Cyprus, where lorries carrying aid are X-rayed in the presence of Israeli and Cyprus customs before being loaded on to ships, US aid officials said that as of June 25, almost 7,000 metric tonnes of assistance had arrived in Gaza via Cyprus. Nearly 1,000 metric tonnes had been collected for further distribution within the territory by UN agencies before the security review started, keeping almost 6,000 tonnes now in a secure perimeter on the Gazan coast. US and Cyprus officials said there would be a constant flow of vessels to the pier, while discussions had already started on how to keep up deliveries of aid from Cyprus when the pier could no longer be used.

“What all of this effort represents is the commitment of the US to exhaust every possible avenue to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people who are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity,” said Julie Fisher, the US ambassador to Cyprus.

Houthis ‘used group based in Iraq to target ship in Haifa port’

Reuters
Cairo

Yemen’s Houthis said yesterday they targeted a ship in Israel’s Haifa port with a number of drones in a joint military operation with the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.

The operation targeted the Portuguese-flagged container ship MSC Manzanillo, the Houthi group’s military spokesman Yahya Saree said in a televised speech yesterday.

The Israeli military is not aware of any such incident, a spokesperson said, and there was no indication of anything unusual at Haifa port.

The Houthi group has been launching drone and missile strikes in shipping lanes since November, in what it says is in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

Kenya president backs down on tax hikes after deadly unrest

Reuters
Nairobi

Kenyan President William Ruto yesterday withdrew planned tax hikes, bowing to pressure from protesters who had stormed parliament, launched demonstrations across the country and threatened more action this week.

The move will be seen as a major victory for a week-old, youth-led protest movement that grew from online condemnations of tax rises into mass rallies demanding a political overhaul, in the most serious crisis of Ruto’s two-year-old presidency. But some demonstrators said on social media that despite Ruto’s climbdown they would go ahead with a rally planned for today, with many reiterating demands that he resign.

Ruto announced he would not sign a finance bill including the tax increases, a day after clashes



President of Kenya William Ruto addresses members of the media during a press conference at the State House in Nairobi, yesterday.

between police and protesters at the assembly and nationwide left at least 23 people dead and scores wounded, according to medics.

“Listening keenly to the people of Kenya who have said loudly that they want nothing to do with this finance bill 2024, I concede. And therefore, I will not sign the 2024 finance bill, and it shall subsequently

be withdrawn,” he said in a televised address with lawmakers, some clapping, seated behind him. Vice-President Rigathi Gachagua asked young people to call off the protests to avoid any further loss of life and destruction of property, and blamed the intelligence services for giving the government poor advice.

“There would have been no mayhem, but they slept on the

job,” Gachagua said in a speech, calling on the head of the National Intelligence Service to resign. Protesters were defiant, repeating calls for Ruto to step down and vowing further action in the streets.

Boniface Mwangi, a prominent social justice activist involved in the protests, called for a “1-million-people march”.

“The arrogance is gone, but the lies are still there,” he said on social media platform X. “Yesterday they unleashed goons and police to kill peaceful protesters. That will not stop us.” Other members of the protest movement continued to post on social media using the hashtag #tupatanethursday, or “see you on Thursday” in a mix of Swahili and English.

Kalonzo Musyoka, a senior opposition leader and former vice-president, wrote on X that pulling the bill did not go far enough and he called on Ruto to quit.

Congo approves mpox vaccines to try to contain outbreak

Authorities in the Democratic of Congo have approved the use of two mpox vaccines to try to tackle an upsurge in cases and a dangerous new strain spreading in the country, Reuters reported from London. Congo has seen 20,000 cases and more than 1,000 deaths from mpox, mainly among children, since the start of last year. The disease is a viral infection that spreads through close contact, causing flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions. Most cases are mild but it can kill. This week, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and scientists warned of a new, more deadly strain spreading in Congo’s South Kivu province. The regulator has issued an emergency use authorisation for both Bavarian Nordic’s Jynneos, and LC16, made by KM Biologics, according to documents and sources involved in the process. Congo saw the first human mpox case in 1970, but has never had access to vaccines or treatments to tackle the disease outside clinical trials. Both tools were widely available in European countries and the United States in 2022 when an outbreak of a less severe strain of mpox spread globally.



TRAGEDY

Heavy rains in Nepal claim 20 lives in two days

Heavy rainfall triggered landslides and flash floods in Nepal, killing at least 11 people, with another nine killed by lightning strikes over the past two days, officials said yesterday. Landslides swept away three houses overnight in Lamjung district, 125km west of Kathmandu, killing four people including two children. In Morang district about 500km southeast of the Nepali capital, flooding has taken the lives of four people since Tuesday, district official Tek Kumar Regmi said. Another three died in landslides in Kaski in the west and Okhaldhunga in east Nepal. Hundreds are killed every year in floods and landslides, which are common in Nepal during the monsoon season

CRIME

More than 40 Indonesian agencies hit by cyberattack

More than 40 Indonesian agencies, including the ministry overseeing immigration, were impacted by a cyberattack on the country's data centres, an official said yesterday. The latest cyberattack, the worst that the country has experienced in recent years, disrupted immigration services and affected operations at Indonesia's major airports for days. Forty-four government agencies, including key ministries, were targets of the ransomware attack, said an official from the communications ministry. Data at five agencies, including immigration services and the coordinating ministry of investment, have been restored, he said.

DATA

Four die on Mount Fuji ahead of climbing season

Four bodies were recovered near the summit of Mount Fuji, Japanese media reported yesterday, days before the summer climbing season begins. Authorities have long warned climbers to take care when attempting to scale Japan's highest mountain, where hiking trails officially open on Monday. The bodies of three people were found near the volcano's crater as rescuers searched for a Tokyo resident who did not come home after he climbed the mountain, national broadcaster NHK said. The man had snapped photos from the summit and sent them to his family on Sunday, it said. NHK also said the identities of the three bodies had yet to be confirmed.

VERDICT

New Zealand mum who killed daughters jailed for 18 years

A New Zealand judge yesterday sentenced a woman to 18 years imprisonment for murdering her three young daughters in 2021. Lauren Dickason will begin her sentence at a mental health hospital in the custody of the state, a court official at Christchurch High Court said of the triple killings. In a statement to local media after her sentencing, Dickason said she had "failed" her children and her husband, who has since moved back to South Africa. Dickason was found guilty last August on three counts of murder having smothered her two-year-old twins Maya and Karla and first daughter Liane, six.

N Korea test of likely hypersonic missile fails: Seoul military official

AFP
Seoul

North Korea yesterday test-fired what appeared to be a hypersonic missile, but the launch ended in a mid-air explosion, an official from Seoul's joint chiefs of staff said.

The early morning launch came just hours after Pyongyang sent another flurry of trash-bearing balloons southward, this time forcing a three-hour halt to flights in and out of South Korea's Incheon airport.

The missile took off from an area in or around Pyongyang at about 5.30am (2030GMT) and South Korean and US intelligence agencies were conducting a detailed analysis, Seoul's joint chiefs of staff said in a statement. The JCS official said the test of what appeared to be a hypersonic missile ended in failure after a journey of some 250kms.

More smoke than usual appeared to emanate from the missile, raising the possibility of combustion issues, the official said, adding it may have been powered by solid propellants.

Japan also confirmed the launch, with its coast guard saying the missile splashed down in the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

The test follows North Korea launching hundreds more trash-carrying balloons southward on Monday and Tuesday, the latest in a series of border barrages that have sparked a tit-for-tat propaganda campaign.

Late yesterday, South Korea's military said the North has again

floated another round of trash-carrying balloons southward for the third consecutive day, advising the public to report the balloons if spotted and refrain from touching them.

Seoul's military said the balloons were carrying "mostly paper waste" that posed no safety risk to the public.

But the latest batch of North Korean balloons disrupted takeoffs and landings at Incheon International Airport, an official said.

Both domestic and international flight arrivals and departures "were suspended ... from 1.46am (1646GMT) to 4.43am," an Incheon International Airport Corporation official said.

"At around 4.08am, it was confirmed that a trash-carrying balloon had fallen near Gate 248 of T2, and military authorities collected it. The airport is operating as normal since 4.44am," the official added.

Pyongyang has already sent more than a thousand balloons carrying trash in what it says is retaliation for balloons carrying propaganda criticising leader Kim Jong Un's rule floated north by activists.

In response, Seoul has fully suspended a tension-reducing military deal and restarted some propaganda broadcasts from loudspeakers along the border.

Late yesterday, South Korea's military revealed that it scrambled fighter jets the previous day as a Chinese unmanned aerial vehicle entered its air defence zone, an area wider than the country's airspace, and remained around 50 minutes before leaving.

K-pop group named Unesco Goodwill Ambassador for Youth

Unesco director-general Audrey Azoulay and members of South Korean boy band SEVENTEEN pose during a photocall before their nomination ceremony as Goodwill Ambassador for Youth at the Unesco headquarters in Paris, France, yesterday

Lanka inks debt deal with creditor nations

Reuters
Colombo

Sri Lanka yesterday signed agreements with creditor nations, including China, to restructure about \$10bn in bilateral debt, in a major step towards stabilising its crisis-hit economy.

The move brings Sri Lanka closer to finalising a debt restructuring process, which was kicked off in September 2022 after its reserves hit their lowest levels and forced the island nation to default on its foreign debt for the first time in history.

The deals will allow Sri Lanka to move forward with a \$2.9bn programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that is aimed at

helping the island nation recover from its financial crisis. Sri Lankan officials in Paris inked the agreement with the Official Creditor Committee (OCC), which has 17 countries that have lent a combined \$5.8bn to the nation and is co-chaired by Japan, India and France.

"This agreement grants significant debt relief, allowing Sri Lanka to allocate funds to essential public services & secure concessional financing for its development needs," the president's media office said in a statement.

The country also signed a separate agreement to restructure \$4.2bn in debt from China EXIM Bank in Colombo, it added.

The nation, however, still needs to convince bondholders to restructure about \$12.5bn in international bonds.

Sri Lanka's dollar-denominated bonds

slipped as much as 0.4 cents to trade around 60 cents, Tradeweb data showed.

However, its international bonds have rallied over the past two months, adding around 5 cents, with a few trading at their strongest levels since late 2021. Japan, which has backed the swift implementation of debt restructuring to underpin Sri Lanka's economic recovery, emphasised the importance of comparable treatment by non-OCC official bilateral creditors and private creditors in the latest Paris Club annual report.

"For future cases, we should encourage all official bilateral creditors to be a member of an OCC to achieve comparable treatment in a transparent and swift manner," said Daiho Fujii, deputy vice minister for international affairs at Japan's ministry of finance.

US envoy claims on Beijing hindering ties baseless, says China

China yesterday hit back at remarks by the US ambassador to the country that Beijing was making it "impossible" to boost ties between Chinese and American citizens, calling them "factually inaccurate". Ambassador Nicholas Burns told the *Wall Street Journal* that Beijing was trying to scupper engagement between people from the two countries, intimidating Chinese participants in embassy events and fuelling anti-American fervour online. "They say they're in favour of reconnecting our two populations, but they're taking dramatic steps to make it impossible," Burns told the paper. But China denied the American envoy's claims. "The relevant comments by ambassador Burns are factually inaccurate and deviate from the important consensus reached by the two countries' heads of state at their meeting in San Francisco," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

Vietnam prime minister visits China

Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (centre) arrives for a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.

S Korea battery maker's operations halted

Reuters
Seoul

South Korean authorities yesterday ordered a halt to the operations of a manufacturer of lithium batteries after a fire killed 23 people, as they investigate three company officials for suspected safety violations.

Monday's fire at unlisted battery maker Aricell was one of the deadliest industrial accidents of recent years. Dozens of South Korean workers lose their lives on the job each year, despite tougher laws and measures to improve safety.

The company in the industrial hub of Hwaseong, southwest of the capital Seoul, was told to shut its only factory for inspection, Min Gil-soo, an official of the labour ministry, told a brief-

ing. Police raided the company's offices yesterday, the Yonhap news agency said. Authorities did not identify the company officials being investigated. Safety code violations can lead to jail terms for fatal accidents.

Aricell chief executive Park Soon-kwan apologised on Tuesday for the fire, but said the company had followed all safety regulations and training requirements.

Flames quickly engulfed the factory, where 35,000 lithium batteries were stored, and the spread of toxic smoke probably rendered workers unconscious within seconds, fire officials have said.

Only three of the dead, all of them South Korean men, have been identified. The rest, including 17 Chinese, have yet to be identified as their bodies suffered severe damage in the fire.

Secretive talks led to Assange deal: Australia PM

AFP
Canberra

Australia's prime minister yesterday said a string of recent non-disclosed missions to the US helped to forge the plea deal that freed Julian Assange.

The 52-year-old WikiLeaks founder landed in Canberra hours earlier, after earning his liberty by pleading guilty to a single count of conspiracy to obtain and disseminate US national defence information.

He was sentenced by a court in the US Pacific territory of Northern Mariana Islands to time already

served in London's high-security Belmarsh prison - five years and two months - and allowed to walk free.

The US department of justice had to make a "range of decisions" for the plea deal to proceed, Anthony Albanese told a news conference in Canberra, stressing that the US department was independent and "not subject to political influence".

A "whole range of people" had visited the US as the deal was worked out, the Australian leader told reporters.

"I am surprised that some of it was missed by the people in this room - some of the visits - but it's

not up to me to indicate that," Albanese said.

He advised journalists to "go back and look at some diaries and who has travelled to the US in recent months".

Albanese said he had exchanged "directly" with Assange's lawyers during the negotiations.

Australia's high commissioner to the United Kingdom, Stephen Smith, also acted as a conduit for communication, visiting Assange in Belmarsh, the prime minister said.

"The details of the plea deal were worked through over a period of time," he said.

"This was the only way that

I could see a resolution being achieved - and the objective here was to conclude these matters."

Albanese said he had never met with Assange but spoke with him the moment his jet touched down in Canberra as part of a mutually agreed plan.

"I had a very warm discussion with him this evening. He was very generous in his praise of the Australian government's efforts," he added.

"The Australian government stands up for Australian citizens. That's what we do."

Assange was given an ecstatic welcome in Australia yesterday. Assange disembarked from a private jet at Canberra airport just after

7.30pm (0930 GMT), waving to waiting media and cheering supporters.

He embraced his father before entering the terminal building with his legal team.

Assange has not spoken publicly since being released and did not appear at a Wikileaks press conference at a hotel in Canberra, where his wife, Stella Assange, said it was too soon to say what her husband would do next.

"Julian needs time to recover, to get used to freedom," she said. "I want Julian to have that space to re-discover that freedom."

She added she believed her husband would one day be pardoned.

During a three-hour hearing held earlier in the US territory of Saipan, Assange pleaded guilty to one criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified national defence documents but said he had believed the US Constitution's First Amendment, which protects free speech, shielded his activities.

"Working as a journalist I encouraged my source to provide information that was said to be classified in order to publish that information," he told the court.

"I believed the First Amendment protected that activity but I accept that it was...a violation of the espionage statute."

LAW AND ORDER

Indian soldiers kill three suspected Kashmir militants

Three suspected militants were killed yesterday in Kashmir during a day-long firefight with soldiers, police said, the latest incident in an uptick of attacks in the territory. Indian police said the exchange of fire in the remote Doda area came after security forces launched a search operation based on intelligence about the presence of militants. Three "terrorists" were killed during the ensuing firefight, police said in a post on social media platform X. "Arms and ammunition have been recovered from their possession," the post said. Two suspected militants were killed in a residential area of northern Kashmir valley last week.

PEOPLE

Princess Anne 'recovering slowly' after horse accident

King Charles III's sister Princess Anne is "recovering slowly" in hospital, her husband said yesterday, after she suffered a concussion in an incident with a horse at her country estate. "She'll be out when she's ready," Tim Laurence also told reporters outside Southmead Hospital in Bristol, western England, where Anne was taken on Sunday. Anne, 73, suffered concussion and minor head injuries at Gatcombe Park on Sunday evening and was airlifted to hospital. It is believed she was struck by a horse as she was walking within the protected perimeter of the sprawling estate, which hosts equestrian events.

CRIME

UK police arrest man over political sexting scam

British police yesterday arrested a man in connection with a honeytrap sex-messaging scandal that targeted male lawmakers in the UK parliament earlier this year. A spokesperson for London's Metropolitan Police force said in a statement that the man was arrested at an address in Islington, north London, "on suspicion of harassment and committing offences under" online safety laws. British media reported that the suspect was aged in his mid-twenties and is a member of the main opposition Labour Party, widely expected to win next week's general election. He remains in custody, the police spokesperson said.

ANGER

Climate protesters target Tories for second day running

Demonstrators targeted the election campaign of the Conservatives again yesterday, with a Greenpeace activist climbing atop the party's "battle bus" to unfurl a banner demanding clean energy. Greenpeace UK said its activist staged the stunt, while the campaign bus was parked in Nottinghamshire to protest the Tories' "persistent failure to tackle the climate and nature crises". The NGO noted a joint analysis of the main parties' election manifesto plans for climate and nature placed the Conservatives "rock bottom". On Tuesday police arrested four people for suspected trespassing after they entered the grounds of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's property.

Interference claims by Canada politically motivated, stresses Indian ambassador

Reuters
Ottawa

India has said a report by Canadian legislators alleging interference by New Delhi is politically motivated and influenced by Sikh separatist campaigners. Already chilly bilateral ties cooled further last month when a group of parliamentarians, citing intelligence reports, alleged some elected Canadian officials had been "witting or semi-witting" participants in foreign interference operations.

India and China were the main foreign threats to Canada's democratic institutions, it said.

Sanjay Kumar Verma, India's envoy to Canada, said the report was biased, did not give a fair hearing to India and did not give an opportunity to cross-examine witnesses.

"It has been influenced by anti-India elements...you need to come out with infallible evidence. I don't see any hint of that," he said.

"This is all politically motivated...if Canadian institutions are bent upon harm(ing) bilateral relations with India, that will happen."

His remarks were the first formal response by India to the report, which triggered demands by opposition legislators for the government to name those under suspicion.

New Delhi accuses Canada of harbouring Sikh separatists who seek to create a homeland in India known as Khalistan.

Last year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau cited credible allegations

of Indian government involvement in the murder of a Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down in the Canadian province of British Columbia in June 2023.

"There is a lot of political space given to Khalistani terrorists in Canada and therefore I would expect them to have influenced the entire process through their representatives," Verma said.

The special committee of legislators, asked about Verma's criticism, said the "committee speaks to and through its reports" and noted it had spoken to the country's two intelligence agencies, the police service, the public safety ministry and studied 4,000 documents.

The offices of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Minister Melanie Joly referred queries to the public safety ministry, which said it would allow the committee to speak to the report.

The World Sikh Organisation of Canada, an Ottawa-based Sikh advocacy group, called Verma's remarks "baseless and unprofessional" and said the committee had operated with complete independence.

Canada is pressing India to cooperate with the investigation into the murder of Nijjar.

Verma said Canada had yet not shared any evidence with India, following media reports that Canadian intelligence agency officials visited India twice this year.

Last month, the Canadian police arrested and charged four Indian men on suspicion of Nijjar's murder.

Pro-Palestinian protest in India



Members of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) shout slogans during a pro-Palestinian protest against Israel in Kolkata, India, yesterday amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas.

Govt seeks report on Foxconn hiring practice

Reuters
Bengaluru

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government yesterday said it has asked Tamil Nadu state to submit a "detailed report" after a Reuters story revealed that Apple supplier Foxconn rejected married women from iPhone assembly jobs in the country.

In a statement calling for the probe, the ministry of labour and employment cited the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, saying the law "clearly stipulates that no discrimination (is) to be made while recruiting men and women workers."

The ministry said it has requested a detailed

report from the labour department of Tamil Nadu, site of a major iPhone factory where Foxconn's practice of shunning married women from jobs was revealed.

The labour ministry said it also directed the office of the regional chief labour commissioner to provide a "factual report."

Apple and Foxconn did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the government statement. The Tamil Nadu government did not immediately respond to request for comment outside office hours.

A Reuters investigation published on Tuesday found that Foxconn has systematically excluded married women from jobs at its main India iPhone plant near Chennai in Tamil Nadu, on the grounds they have more family

responsibilities than their unmarried counterparts.

Foxconn hiring agents and HR sources cited family duties, pregnancy and higher absenteeism as reasons why Foxconn did not hire married women at the plant.

The ministry of labour "takes note of media reports on married women not being allowed to work at Foxconn India Apple iPhone plant," the statement said.

Earlier, in response to questions, Apple and Foxconn acknowledged lapses in hiring practices in 2022 and said they had worked to address the issues. All the discriminatory practices at the Sriperumbudur plant, however, took place in 2023 and 2024. The two companies didn't address the 2023 and 2024 incidents.

India 'concerned about violence in Myanmar'

India's foreign minister said he voiced concern about the impact of continuing violence in Myanmar in a meeting yesterday with his counterpart from the southeast Asian nation.

Myanmar plunged into turmoil after a 2021 military coup seized power from an elected government, sparking a protest movement that has evolved into a full-blown civil war, in which the military has lost control of large swathes of territory.

India has maintained its relationship with the ruling junta, even as armed resistance to the military has expanded, and it has an infrastructure project in Myanmar's western Rakhine state where heavy fighting has raged in recent months.

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyaam Jaishankar said he sought a commitment to protecting India's ongoing projects in Myanmar in the meeting with counterpart Than Swe.

Glastonbury festival opens



Festivalgoers shelter from the heat in front of the Carhenge art installation on the opening day of the Glastonbury festival at Worthy Farm in the village of Pilton in Somerset, southwest England, yesterday. The festival, which began yesterday ends on June 30.

Police not to charge driver who killed two schoolgirls

AFP
London

The driver whose car ploughed into a school in London, killing two eight-year-old girls, will not face criminal charges after she was found to have suffered an epileptic seizure at the wheel, prosecutors said yesterday. Nuria Sajjad and Selena Lau were killed and several others injured when a Land Rover crashed into the private Study Prep girls' school in Wimbledon, in the southwest of the British capital, in July last year.

The parents of the victims said in response that they were "disappointed" in the justice system and that "Nuria and Selena deserved better."

The driver, Claire Freemantle, had an epileptic seizure behind the wheel, causing her to "lose control of the vehicle which then

drove into the school", Jaswant Narwal, from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said.

Narwal added that medical records and evidence from neurological specialists showed that it was the first time the driver had suffered such a seizure and "had no previously diagnosed medical condition". "Because there is nothing to suggest the driver could have done anything to predict or prevent this tragedy, it is not in the public interest to pursue a criminal prosecution," she added. The victims' parents said of the conclusion: "There are questions that remain unanswered. We are not assured that all doubt has been removed in reaching the conclusion the Crown Prosecution Service have reached.

"As long as these doubts remain, we remain unconvinced that a fair and thorough investigation was conducted," the parents added.

Cowell looks for UK's next megastar boy band again

Reuters
London

Fourteen years after launching One Direction on *The X Factor*, music mogul and television personality Simon Cowell is looking for the UK's next big boy band, embarking on a new project differing from the talent shows he is known for.

Cowell will hold auditions for 16 to 18-year-olds in Liverpool, Dublin and London over the summer in a bid to form megastars on levels not seen in Britain since the best-selling One Direction,

who found fame on his televised singing competition *The X Factor* before parting ways several years later.

"Weirdly since One Direction, there hasn't been a successful UK band, which I don't understand why," Cowell told Reuters in an interview.

"As an entry point into the music business, it's by far the best route. Diana Ross became Diana Ross because she was in the Supremes. Beyonce became Beyonce 'cos she was in Destiny's Child."

Unlike *The X Factor*, there will be no weekly televised shows or

vote but a potential documentary series.

"As a viewer, I'd find it more interesting, particularly if I was a performer, I'd really want to see why people get chosen and what is the process you go through," Cowell said.

"In my opinion, that's never really been shown, certainly since I've been making these shows...you see a side of it. I don't think you really see the interesting part...the highs and lows. And trust me, there are a lot lows."

The X Factor last aired in Britain in 2018. Once hugely popu-

lar, it had seen ratings fall over the years. "More people than you think watch these shows... Now, of course, in different ways as well - on YouTube, TikTok," Cowell said. "I think they're still very popular."

He said talent shows had a purpose, helping new artistes get noticed.

"Right now with the amount of songs that are being uploaded every day and the amount of artistes that are breaking globally ... I think it's something like two UK artistes in seven years have broken globally ... which is horrendous.

"...A lot of these artistes get their first break (on televised talent shows)... even their first audition if it goes out and goes viral, that is a step on the ladder."

Asked if he would do anything differently now compared to his work with One Direction, Cowell said he would not change much.

"I'm always very - 'do what you want ... have fun' ... I'm certainly not going to tell you what to wear. I might advise you as to what I think is the best record to put out," he said.

In the last few years, K-pop bands such as BTS have become

hit phenomena building global fan bases. "K-pop filled a void," Cowell said. "So when I look at BTS filling out Wembley Stadium, you say, well, then of course there's still a market for bands, possibly bigger than ever."

Cowell, who said his ideal boy band are "people who know who they are", started his search earlier this month. Asked what response he had received so far, he said: "You really don't know until you turn up on the day ... If not enough people turn up or that I just don't think they're right, then we're gonna have to keep going."



CHAIRMAN

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
- ☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
- ☎ 44350474
- 📘 facebook.com/gulftimes
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Dominance, data, disinformation: Europe's fight with the Big Tech

The European Union has warned Apple that its App Store is breaching its digital competition rules, placing the iPhone maker at risk of billions of dollars in fines.

It is the latest in a years-long battle between Brussels and giant tech firms, covering subjects from data privacy to disinformation.

Brussels has doled out over €10bn in fines to tech firms for abusing their dominant market positions.

The latest threat for Apple comes three months after the bloc hit the California firm with a €1.8bn (\$1.9bn) penalty for preventing European users from accessing information about cheaper music streaming services.

Among big tech firms, only Google has faced a bigger single antitrust fine – more than – €4bn in 2018 for using its Android mobile operating system to promote its search engine.

Google has also incurred billion-plus fines for abusing its power in the online shopping and advertising sectors.

The European Commission, the EU's executive, recommended last year that Google should sell parts of its business and could face a fine of up to 10% of its global revenue if it fails to comply.

The EU has had little success in getting tech companies to pay more taxes in Europe

Ireland issues the stiffest fines on data privacy as the laws are enforced by local regulators and Dublin hosts the European offices of several big tech firms.

The Irish regulator handed TikTok a €345mn penalty for mishandling children's data last September just months after it hit Meta with a record fine of €1.2bn for

illegally transferring personal data between Europe and the United States.

Luxembourg had previously held the record for data fines after it slapped Amazon with a €746mn penalty in 2021.

The EU has had little success in getting tech companies to pay more taxes in Europe, where they are accused of funneling profits into low-tax economies like Ireland and Luxembourg.

In one of the most notorious cases, the European Commission in 2016 ordered Apple to pay Ireland more than a decade in back taxes – €13bn – after ruling a sweetheart deal with the government was illegal.

But EU judges overturned the decision saying there was no evidence the company had broken the rules, a decision the commission has been trying to reverse ever since.

The commission is also fighting to reverse another court loss, after judges overruled its order for Amazon to repay €250mn in back taxes to Luxembourg.

Web platforms have long faced accusations of failing to combat hate speech, disinformation and piracy.

The EU passed the Digital Services Act last year, which is designed to force companies to tackle these issues or face fines of up to six percent of their global turnover.

Already the bloc has begun to show how the DSA might be applied, opening probes on Facebook and Instagram for failing to tackle election-related disinformation.

The bloc has also warned Microsoft that the falsehoods generated by its AI search could fall foul of the DSA.

Google and other online platforms have also been accused of making billions from news without sharing the revenue with those who gather it.

To tackle this, the EU created a form of copyright called "neighbouring rights" that allows print media to demand compensation for using their content.

France has been a test case for the rules and after initial resistance Google and Facebook both agreed to pay some French media for articles shown in web searches. – Reuters

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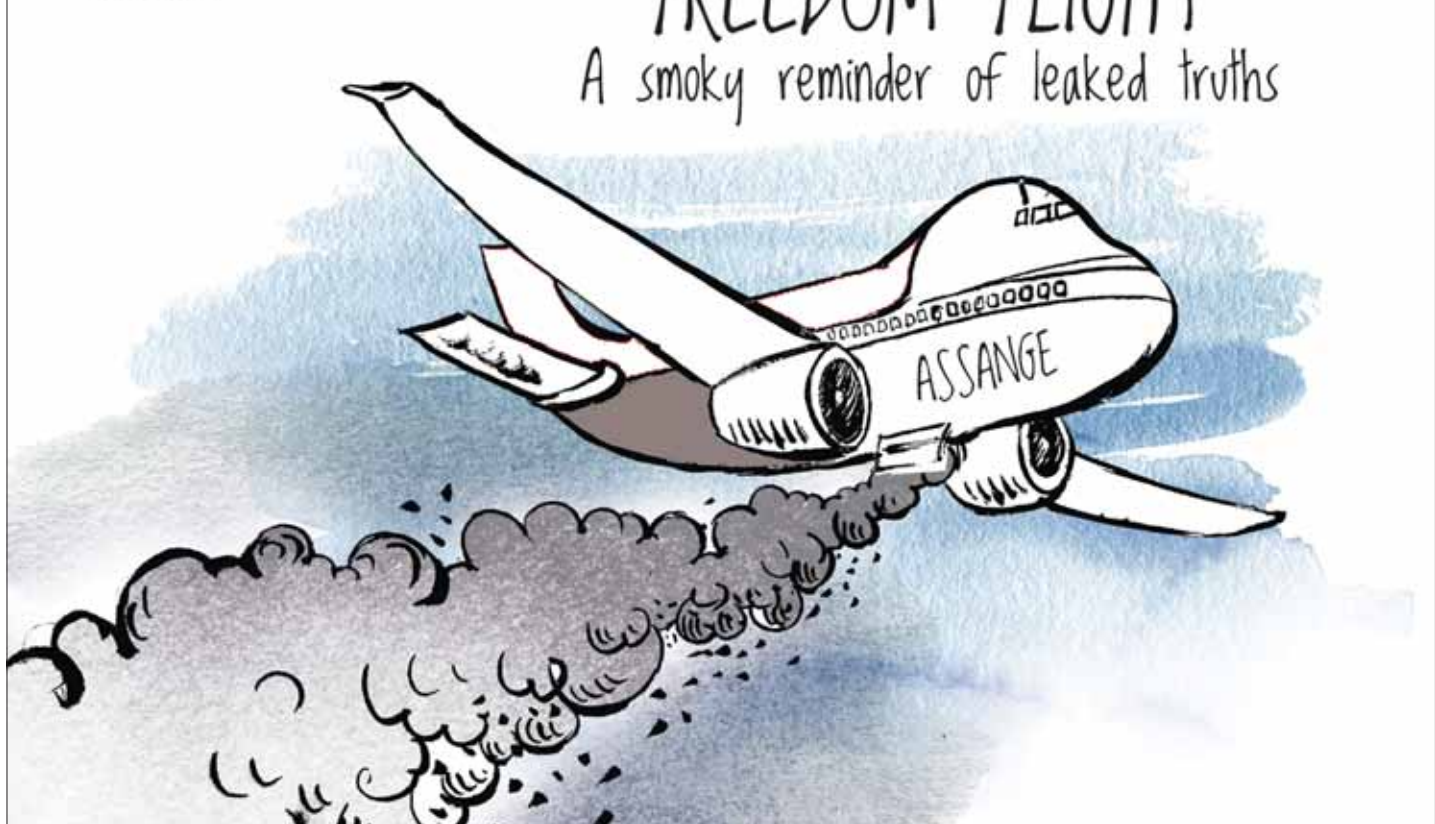
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REYNOLD
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It's simple: If democracy isn't pro-worker, it will die

By Daron Acemoglu
Boston

Even if the feared extremist wave did not quite materialise in the European Parliament election this month, the far-right performed well in Italy, Austria, Germany, and especially France. Moreover, its latest gains have come on the heels of major shifts toward far-right parties in Hungary, Italy, Austria, The Netherlands, and Sweden, among others.

In France, the resounding victory for Marine Le Pen's National Rally (previously the National Front) cannot be dismissed as a mere protest vote. The party already controls many local governments, and its success this month has induced President Emmanuel Macron to call early elections – a gamble that could give it a parliamentary majority.

At some level, there is nothing new here. We already knew that democracy was increasingly strained around the world, with intensifying challenges from authoritarian parties. Surveys show that a growing share of the population is losing confidence in democratic institutions. Nevertheless, the far-right's inroads with younger voters are particularly worrying. No-one can now deny that this latest election was a wake-up call. But unless we understand the root causes of the trend, efforts to protect democracy against institutional collapse and extremism are unlikely to succeed.

The simple explanation for the crisis of democracy across the industrialised world is that the system's performance has fallen short of what it promised. In the United States, real (inflation-adjusted) incomes at the bottom and the middle of the distribution have hardly increased since 1980, and elected politicians have done little about it. Similarly, in much of Europe, economic growth has been lacklustre, especially since 2008. Even if youth unemployment has declined recently, it has long been a major economic issue in France and several other European countries.

The Western model of liberal democracy was supposed to deliver jobs, stability, and high-quality public goods. While it mostly succeeded following World War II, it has fallen short on almost every count since around 1980. Policymakers from both the left and the right continued touting policies designed by experts and administered by highly qualified technocrats. But these not only failed to deliver shared prosperity; they also created the conditions for the 2008 financial crisis, which stripped away any remaining veneer of success. Most voters concluded that politicians cared more about bankers than workers.

My own work with Nicolás Ajzenman, Cevat Giray Aksoy, Martin Fiszbein, and Carlos Molina shows that voters tend to support democratic institutions when they have direct experience of democracies delivering economic growth, noncorrupt

government, social and economic stability, public services, and low inequality. It therefore comes as no surprise that a failure to satisfy these conditions would result in a loss of support.

Moreover, even when democratic leaders have focused on policies that would contribute to better living conditions for most of the population, they have not done a good job of communicating effectively with the public. For example, pension reform is obviously needed to put France on a more sustainable growth path, but Macron failed to secure public buy-in for his proposed solution.

Democratic leaders have increasingly lost touch with the population's deeper concerns. In the French case, this partly reflects Macron's imperious leadership style. But it also reflects a broader decline of trust in institutions, as well as the role of social media and other communication technologies in promoting polarising positions (on both the left and the right) and pushing much of the population into ideological echo chambers.

Policymakers and mainstream politicians were also somewhat tone deaf to the kinds of economic and cultural turbulence that large-scale immigration brings. In Europe, a significant share of the population expressed concerns about mass immigration from the Middle East over the past decade, but centrist politicians (particularly centre-left leaders) were slow to engage with the issue. That created a big opportunity for

fringe anti-immigration parties like the Sweden Democrats and the Dutch Party for Freedom, which have since become formal or informal coalition partners for ruling parties.

The challenges hampering shared prosperity in the industrialised world will become even more of an issue in the age of AI and automation – and this at a time when climate change, pandemics, mass immigration, and various threats to regional and global peace are all growing concerns.

But democracy is still best equipped to deal with these issues. Historical and current evidence make it clear that non-democratic regimes are less responsive to the needs of their population, and less effective at helping disadvantaged citizens. Whatever the Chinese model might promise, the evidence shows that non-democratic regimes ultimately reduce growth in the long term.

Nonetheless, democratic institutions and political leaders will need to make a renewed commitment to building a fair economy. That means prioritising workers and ordinary citizens over multinationals, banks, and global concerns, and fostering trust in the right kind of technocracy. It will not do to have aloof officials imposing policies in the interest of global companies. To address climate change, unemployment, inequality, AI, and the disruptions of globalisation, democracies need to blend expertise with public support.

This will not be easy, because many voters have come to distrust centrist parties. Even though the hard left – as represented by Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France – has greater credibility than mainstream politicians in terms of its commitment to working people and independence from banking and global business interests, it is unclear whether left-wing populist policies would truly deliver the economy that voters want.

This suggests one way forward for centrist parties. They can start with a manifesto that rejects blind allegiance to global business and unregulated globalisation, and offers a clear, workable plan for combining economic growth with lower inequality. They also should strike a closer balance between openness and allowing for reasonable limits on migration.

If enough French voters support pro-democracy parties against National Rally in the parliamentary election's second round, Macron's gamble may well work. But even if it does, business as usual cannot continue. For democracy to regain the public's support and trust, it needs to become more pro-worker and egalitarian. – Project Syndicate

• Daron Acemoglu, Institute Professor of Economics at MIT, is co-author (with Simon Johnson) of *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity*.



CONCERN: Democratic leaders have increasingly lost touch with the population's deeper concerns. In the French case, this partly reflects President Emmanuel Macron's imperious leadership style, says the author. (AFP file photo)

Lights, camera, action: First Trump-Biden debate today

AFP
Atlanta

Joe Biden and Donald Trump prepared yesterday for the biggest moment so far in the US election – the first of two high-stakes debates that could upend the race.

Today's showdown will raise the campaigning to boiling point, with both camps recently escalating their increasingly personal attacks.

"I think I have been preparing for it for my whole life...We'll do very well," Trump told right-wing network Newsmax in an interview on his debate preparation.

The 2024 election looks close, with Trump enjoying a slight polling advantage in the all-important swing states in an election likely to be decided by a few hundred thousand votes across a handful of battlegrounds.

The rivals both step onstage for the 90-minute clash, hosted by CNN in the southern city of Atlanta, seeking to allay fears about serious political liabilities.

Biden, 81, faces the most concern about his mental sharpness, with voters much more likely to bring up his age than Trump's, despite the Republican being just three years younger.

Both have faltered and ap-



In an aerial view, signage for a CNN presidential debate is seen outside of their studios inside the Turner Entertainment Networks yesterday in Atlanta, Georgia. (AFP)

peared muddled during public events, although Trump in particular has raised eyebrows over his rambling and occasionally bizarre campaign speeches.

Trump is also engulfed in controversy over his inflammatory rhetoric and a glut of criminal cases he faces, as well as fears that he would weaponise the presidency to settle personal scores.

Biden spent the week off the radar at the mountainside retreat of Camp David near Washington, preparing with mock debates.

Trump's preparation has been more relaxed, eschewing dress re-

Both have faltered and appeared muddled during public events; Joe Biden faces the most concern about mental sharpness, Donald Trump over rambling and occasionally bizarre campaign speeches

hearsals in favour of informal policy roundtables and workshoping debate strategy with rally crowds.

Aides have encouraged him to focus on his perceived strength on the economy and crime, while Biden will seek to paint Trump as unhinged and unfit for office.

The Biden campaign released



Biden looks out for them, while white-collar crook Donald Trump will only look out for himself," said DNC spokesperson Jackie Bush.

The Trump campaign has repeatedly characterised Biden as feeble and incompetent, but changed tack in recent days following warnings that setting low expectations for the Democratic president would only help him.

"We know that Joe Biden, that after taking an entire week off, will be ready for this," senior Trump campaign adviser Jason Miller told reporters. Backed by right-wing media

figures, Trump and his team has been pushing the baseless theory that Biden will be hyped up on performance-enhancing drugs.

The ex-president and his people have also been accused of "working the ref" and laying the groundwork for a poor Trump performance by repeatedly making insinuations of bias on the part of CNN.

Miller said Trump would emerge as the clear choice if "allowed" to set out his vision for America "without the blatant interference of CNN or the two moderators" of the debate – the first ever between two candidates who have already served in the Oval Office.

One of Biden's biggest vulnerabilities is border security, with Trump promising to combat an influx of undocumented migrants from Mexico with mass deportations and repeatedly bringing up killings by migrants.

US media reported that Trump is expected to invite family members of victims of migrant violence to Atlanta, although the debate itself will have no audience.

The Biden administration announced yesterday that new restrictions had brought illegal migrant crossings to their lowest levels in more than three years, undercutting immigration as an attack line.

Poland to press ahead with 'most modern Europe airport'

Poland will press ahead with the construction of a multibillion-euro airport project, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said yesterday, following years of delays. The airport, to be built in the centre of the country between the capital Warsaw and Lodz, "will be the most modern in Europe," Tusk said. According to the Polish leader, Baranow Airport is expected to cost around €10bn (\$10.6bn) while the entire project and accompanying infrastructure will require around €30.5bn.

It will be financed by treasury bonds, loans, European funds and private investors. The airport was initially expected to be opened in 2027, however, the project was delayed several times over government struggles to obtain land, accusations of mismanagement and lawmakers opposing the "enormity" of it. Tusk said the airport will be built under a new downsized plan. It is expected to open in 2032 and will handle 34mn passengers a year. Polish carrier LOT by then is forecast to have 135 aircraft of various sizes at its disposal, almost double the current number, and will be able to account for around 60% of the traffic at the new airport. A high-speed rail network will also be built by 2035 to link Poland's major cities and airports. Poland, a country of 38mn people, "will become a major megalopolis", with the possibility of reaching all the country's major cities in less than 100 minutes, Tusk said.

Colombian drug traffickers sink submarine with cargo off Spain

A group of Colombian drug traffickers sank their submarine off the coast of Spain after they were spotted by customs officers, police said in a joint statement.

Spain is one of the main entry points for drugs into Europe, due to its close links with Latin America and its proximity to Morocco. On Sunday, customs officers spotted a vessel 280 nautical miles off the southern Spanish coast.

It was a 20-metre semi-submersible – a type of boat increasingly used by traffickers who are redoubling their creativity to find new ways of concealing drug shipments.

When customs officers approached, the crew "opened the valves on the bottom of the submarine, before surfacing to safety," the statement said.

It added: "The semi-submersible was flooded within minutes, before sinking with its cargo to the bottom of the sea." The four Colombian crew members were rescued and then arrested.

20 hurt in Russia train derailment

At least 20 people were injured after a passenger train derailed in Russia's Far North yesterday, authorities said. The train was going from the city of Vorkuta, above the Arctic Circle, to the port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea in the south of the country. It derailed near the small town of Inta in the Komi Republic, which has a harsh climate and is scarcely populated. Vladimir Uyba, the head of the Komi republic, said there 215 passengers onboard the train, adding: "20 people were injured, three in a serious condition."

He said the five last carriages of the train derailed, but authorities did not immediately give a reason for the cause of the accident. Uyba said he was flying out to the scene of the accident. Images published by Russian state media showed several carriages lying on their side in a ditch by a forest. It takes almost five days for the Vorkuta-Novorossiysk train to complete its journey. Transport accidents are not uncommon in Russia, but less so on railways, with the country, the largest in the world, having a massive rail network. Since Moscow launched its Ukraine offensive, Russia has battled a wave of sabotage acts on its railways, used by the army to transport equipment to Ukraine.

US reporter's trial begins in Russia



Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich seen inside an enclosure for defendants before a court hearing in Yekaterinburg. (Reuters)

US reporter Evan Gershkovich's closed-door espionage trial in Russia began yesterday, 15 months after he was arrested on charges that he, his newspaper and the White House reject as false and baseless.

Hours after the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reporter was brought into court in the Ural city of Yekaterinburg, Washington said it was doing everything it could to secure his release. A senior Russian diplomat urged the United States to "seriously consider the signals" Moscow had sent its way over a possible swap deal.

Gershkovich, 32, became the first Western journalist to be arrested on spying charges in Russia since the Cold War when he was detained in March 2023 on a reporting trip to Yekaterinburg.

Yesterday, he was briefly shown to reporters in the city's Sverdlovsk Regional Court, smiling while standing in a glass cage with a completely shaved head. He was then taken away for the start of the trial, held in private as is typical for espionage cases in Russia.

The WSJ yesterday slammed the proceedings as a "sham trial", and his family called on the White House to push for his release. Russia's penitentiary service refused to disclose to AFP where Gershkovich would be held before the next hearing, set for August 13.

The Kremlin has provided no public evidence for the spying allegations.

Dutch PM Rutte next Nato boss

AFP
Brussels

Nato's 32 nations yesterday appointed outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the alliance's next chief, handing him the job at a crucial moment with Russia on the march in Ukraine and US elections looming.

Rutte will take over from Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on October 1 after major powers – spearheaded by the United States – agreed on his nomination ahead of a summit of Nato leaders in Washington next month.

"Mark is a true transatlanticist, a strong leader and a consensus-builder," Stoltenberg said on social media after Nato ambassadors approved the appointment.

"I know I am leaving Nato in good hands," he said. Rutte said it was a "tremendous honour" to take over from Stoltenberg once his decade at the helm of Nato ends.

"The alliance is and will remain the cornerstone of our collective security. Leading this organisation is a responsibility I do not take lightly," he posted online.

The seasoned Dutch leader, whose 14-year tenure leading the Netherlands is set to end within weeks, is seen as a safe pair of hands capable of stewarding Nato

through perilous times.

His appointment was welcomed by leaders across the 75-year-old alliance, including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who called it "a good choice for freedom and security".

The White House said US President Joe Biden believed Rutte "will make an excellent secretary-general".

While the 57-year-old faces the possibility of a possible return by former US president Donald Trump to the White House, who has long criticised the alliance, Rutte will also have to grapple with the threat posed by Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

After staking a claim for the Nato post following the collapse of his Dutch coalition government last year, Rutte had to use all his diplomatic skills to win over reluctant allies Turkey and Hungary.

He finally clinched the race last week when his sole challenger, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, dropped out. A staunch supporter of Ukraine, the straight-talking Dutchman has spearheaded a push to give Kyiv F-16 fighter jets to help beat back Russia's invasion.

As Nato chief he will play a key role in marshalling allies to keep backing the war-torn country – while treading a fine line over Kyiv's push to join the alliance.



Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg (right) welcomes Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte for the Nato Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, last year. (AFP)



Former Honduras president gets 45-year prison term on US drug conviction

Former Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernandez (pictured) was sentenced by a US judge yesterday to 45 years in prison for his conviction on drug and firearm offences. The sentence means Hernandez, 55, will likely spend the rest of his life behind bars, unless his expected appeal succeeds.

A Manhattan jury found him guilty in March of accepting millions of dollars in bribes to protect US-bound cocaine shipments belonging to traffickers he once publicly proclaimed to combat.

Prosecutors had sought a life sentence, while defence lawyers said a 40-year term, the mandatory minimum under federal law, was enough.

US District Judge Kevin Castel said the 45-year sentence should send a message to well-educated, seemingly personable defendants who may believe they are insulated from prosecution. He also said jurors saw through Hernandez's "polished demeanour" during the two-week trial, where he took the stand in his own defence. "They saw him for what he was: a two-faced politician hungry for power," Castel said in Manhattan federal court.

Hernandez led Honduras, a US ally in Central America, from 2014 to 2022. Prosecutors said he facilitated shipments of at least 400 tonnes of cocaine to the United States, fuelling addiction and violence. They also said Hernandez used drug money to bribe officials and manipulate voting during Honduras' 2013 and 2017 presidential elections.

Russian pranksters release Cameron hoax video on Ukraine

Russian pranksters who often target people the Russian state is interested in released footage yesterday of a video call with British Foreign Secretary David Cameron after tricking him into thinking he was speaking to a former Ukrainian president.

London's Foreign Office said earlier this month that Cameron had held a video call with someone purporting to be former Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko before realising he was the victim of a hoax.

The call, which appears to have lasted around 15 minutes and in which Cameron is shown talking on his mobile phone dressed casually somewhere outside, was carried out by Russian pranksters who use the aliases "Vovan and Lexus."

The duo is well-known inside Russia having duped a string of Western politicians over the years, including Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

and, in 2022, then British defence minister Ben Wallace. The Foreign Office said yesterday that the call looked like a Russian information operation designed to distract attention from Moscow's war in Ukraine. It did not answer a question about the video's authenticity.

Vovan and Lexus have in the past denied Western accusations that they have links to Russia's intelligence services, though they often ask their victims questions that would be of interest to the Russian state. In yesterday's video, the authenticity of which Reuters could not independently verify, Cameron is seen and heard talking about sensitive Ukraine-related topics.

In particular, he is heard talking about a private dinner he had with US presidential candidate Donald Trump in April during which he lobbied Trump to allow Republicans to vote in favour of US military aid for Ukraine. Cameron is heard saying that the



TAKEN FOR A RIDE: Britain's Foreign Secretary David Cameron. (Reuters)

Republican Party is split on Ukraine and that he had told Trump that he was wrong if he thought Putin just wanted Crimea and Donbas, two of five

Ukrainian regions Moscow now says are part of Russia.

The Washington Post reported in April that Trump had privately spoken about the option of allowing Putin to keep Crimea and Donbas in return for peace, something Trump's campaign has not confirmed. Cameron is heard saying such an idea is flawed. "Trump is convinced there's a deal to be made and that's not the case because Putin wants so much more," says Cameron, adding that he thinks Trump, if he wins the presidency, will support the winning side on the battlefield and that is why this summer's fighting is so important.

Cameron is also heard saying Ukraine will not be invited to join the Nato military alliance at a summit next month because Washington is opposed to the idea. Cameron also says he does not think a potential French plan to send troops to Ukraine is the right approach because they would become a target

for Putin. In another segment, he is heard recounting a conversation with the foreign minister of Kazakhstan who he said had told him the Central Asian nation feared Russia "wanted a slice" of northern Kazakhstan where many ethnic Russians live.

A spokesperson for Britain's Foreign Office said in a statement:

"...We made public the fact that this call happened weeks ago, to do the right thing and make sure others were warned of the risk at the earliest opportunity. The Foreign Secretary understood this was a private call with a Ukrainian politician.

"This is clearly Russian, and is standard practice for information operations. Disinformation is a tactic straight from the Kremlin playbook to try to distract from their illegal activities in Ukraine and the human rights abuses being committed there." Russia denies committing war crimes in Ukraine.



An excerpt from the film, *I Promise You Paradise* by Morad Mostafa.

QM brings 'expanded cinema' to Venice Biennale

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Qatar Museums (QM) is making waves at the prestigious Venice Biennale with its unique exhibition, "Your Ghosts Are Mine: Expanded Cinemas, Amplified Voices," which explores the fascinating interplay between cinema and visual art.

The unique show, on display at the Cavalli-Palazzo Franchetti until November 24 and curated by Matthieu Orlean, features the works of 40 filmmakers and artists from the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. It examines themes of community life, memory, transnational crossings, and exile through a powerful narrative told in moving images.

"The first idea of this exhibition was this question: 'How can we introduce film in the history of art, next to visual art, video art, experimental cinema,'" said Catherine Grenier, director of Concept at Art Mill Museum, in a video posted on QM's social media channels.

"Your Ghosts Are Mine showcases a diverse range of films and video works spanning genres, including fiction, documentary, animation, and memoir. The works often blend fictional narratives with real-life events, modernity with tradition, and spirituality with postcolonial sensibilities.

Zeina Arida, director of Mathaf, Arab Museum of Modern Art, highlighted the importance of dialogue, saying: "We were very interested in using film and putting them together because it is about a conversation, it is about these dialogues. Forty-four filmmakers and artists together was really a real narrative."

Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Alremalhi said: "This is a new platform to showcase these voices and to bring the underrepresented films and stories from our region to a huge and vast audience that is related to art."

The exhibition is presented across 10 galleries, each focusing on a distinct theme: deserts, ruins, women's voices, borders, exile, and more.

Exceptional Eid al-Adha footfall at MDD



Msheireb Galleria's Eid al-Adha programme attracted a large number of visitors.

Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD) welcomed more than 230,000 visitors during the Eid al-Adha celebrations, marking a 19% increase from 2023, Msheireb Properties said yesterday.

The festivities, held from June 16-22, also saw a significant increase in tram ridership compared to the previous year. Msheireb Galleria (MG) experienced an even more significant surge, with 99,352 visitors representing a 30% growth from 2023.

"We are thrilled to see such a positive response to our Eid al-Adha celebrations," said Dr Hafiz Ali Abdullah, senior director of corporate communications at Msheireb Properties.

The first day of Eid (June 16) saw the highest increase in footfall, with MDD experiencing a 53% rise and MG a 58% rise compared to 2023. Tram ridership peaked on June 16 with 1,932 passengers, the highest single-day count during the Eid period.

The total tram ridership during the Eid celebrations reached 9,302 passengers. Popular attractions included a treasure hunt, escape room, photo booths, and the 'Atlantis - The Immersive Odyssey' experience.

Families enjoyed a variety of entertainment options, including stage shows, competitions, interactive games, arts and crafts stations, henna artistry, balloon twisting, and face painting.

The area's three premier hotels - Mandarin Oriental, Park Hyatt Doha, and Alwadi Hotel Doha M Gallery - contributed to the festivities with special offers and activities.

"The significant increase in both footfall and tram ridership demonstrates the appeal of our Eid programming and the growing popularity of MDD as a destination," added Dr Hafiz. "We're particularly pleased to see the high utilisation of our sustainable tram system, which aligns with our commitment to eco-friendly urban living."



A film by Sophia Almaria.

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