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## 'Seatrade Maritime 2025' to make Qatar a major shipping hub

As one of the GCC's fastest evolving economies and with a clear eye on its National Vision 2030 objectives, Qatar is also poised for robust growth in its maritime and logistics sectors supported, in particular, with consistent surges in its port activity.

To help drive these sectors further, the 'Seatrade Maritime Qatar', which will take place on February 4-5, 2025 at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel, is putting the spotlight on Qatar and its burgeoning global presence as a maritime hub on the international shipping map.

The event will be organised by Seatrade Maritime, in partnership with Founding Strategic Partner, Mwni Qatar.

Mwni Qatar stated: "While Qatar strives to bolster its global leadership in the oil and gas sector, it also aims to boost the growth of its non-hydrocarbon economy. The goal is to reach an average per-annum real non-hydrocarbon growth of 4% through 2030, focusing on expanding manufacturing, tourism, logistics, education, health,



During the first half of 2024, Mwni Qatar ports collectively handled 706,983 20-foot equivalent unit containers, marking a 12% growth compared to the same period last year.

food and agriculture, financial services, and information technology and digital services in addition to future clusters around critical technologies and national assets.

"The maritime and its logistics sectors are integral to this growth and the latest statistics from Mwni Qatar underscore the pivotal role of the maritime sector in driving economic growth and supporting Qatar's vision for the future."

During the first half of 2024, Mwni Qatar ports collectively handled 706,983 20-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers, marking a 12% growth compared to the same period last year. The ports also recorded significant increases in livestock (22%), and roll-on/roll-off (RORO) units (39%), showcasing the diverse range of goods passing through the ports.

June 2024 witnessed a surge in port activity, with the three ports receiving 242 vessels, a 23% increase from June 2023. Mwni Qatar revealed that container handling saw a remarkable 51% increase, while livestock and general and bulk cargo volumes rose by 149% and 163%, respectively. These figures indicate a robust and dynamic trade environment in Qatar.

During the first half, Mwni Qatar stated that 1,323 ships called on Qatar's three ports. Moreover, the ports received 931,465 tonnes of general and bulk cargo shipments, 55,944 units of RORO vehicles, 358,201 heads of livestock, and 171,158 tonnes of building materials. **To Page 3**

## Amir receives message from Sultan of Oman



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of the Sultanate of Oman, pertaining to the close and fraternal relations between both countries and ways to enhance and develop them. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani received the message during a meeting yesterday at his Amiri Diwan office with the ambassador of Oman to Qatar Ammar bin Abdullah bin Sultan al-Busaidi. **(QNA)**

## MoCI launches complaint service through app



The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has announced the launch of a new complaint submission service through its mobile application, available on iPhone and Android devices, under the name 'MO-CIQATAR.'

The aim is to facilitate the complaint submission process, improve service quality, and ensure the effective meeting of user needs.

The initiative is designed to streamline the complaint submission process, enhance service quality, increase satisfaction among citizens and residents, and ensure that user needs are met efficiently.

The application allows users to report complaints related to prices, sales, products or services, misleading advertisements, and information. Additionally, it handles complaints concerning bills, payment methods, licensing, compliance, health and safety, public order, as well as complaints about exploitation, misuse, and other violations that consumers may encounter.

**The application allows users to report complaints related to prices, sales, products or services, misleading advertisements, and information**

Through the launch of this new service, the MoCI aims to ensure consumer protection by facilitating faster submission of complaints. This allows the relevant departments within the ministry to address these issues promptly, ensuring users receive the necessary assistance. It also contributes to improving the experience of citizens and residents and enhancing the quality of services provided.

The types of complaints are categorised under Prices and Sales, Product and Service, Advertisement and Information, Invoice and Payment, Licensing and Compliance, Health, Safety, and Public Order, Exploitation and Misuse.

## Qatar, US sign pact to boost aviation safety



Qatar and the United States of America signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) yesterday to enhance civil aviation security between the two countries. HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti witnessed the signing ceremony. The MoU was signed in the MoT offices by Mohamed Faleh al-Hajri, in charge of managing the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) and US ambassador Timmy Davis. Following the signing ceremony, HE the Transport Minister and the US ambassador discussed the two friendly countries' relations in transportation, and civil aviation, and ways to enhance and develop them. The meeting and the MoU signing ceremony were attended by several transportation officials from the two countries.

## 'Israeli PM hindering Gaza ceasefire talks'

AFP  
Doha/Gaza

The Palestinian Resistance Movement Hamas yesterday accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of obstructing negotiations for a truce and hostage release in Gaza as mediators again push for a deal.

The devastating war in the Palestinian territory is nine months old but back-and-forth negotiations, which have lasted nearly as long, have failed to end it.

In a statement, Hamas said the Israeli prime minister "continues to place more obstacles in front of the negotiations".

The movement accused Netan-

yahu of escalating "his aggression and crimes against our people" in what it said were "attempts to forcibly displace them in order to thwart all efforts to reach an agreement".

Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh said that Israel's military actions in Gaza could push mediated ceasefire talks back to square one.

In a call with mediators, Haniyeh said he held Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's army fully responsible for the potential collapse of negotiations, Hamas said.

As heavy battles raged in Gaza City yesterday, the Israeli military expanded its evacuation order in the territory's north, leaving thousands of Palestinians on the move.



Palestinian mother Ghaneyma Joma sits next to her malnourished son Younis Joma, at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

## US, Israeli spy chiefs due in Doha for talks

US and Israeli intelligence chiefs will travel to Doha tomorrow for discussions on a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, a source with knowledge of the talks told AFP yesterday.

CIA director William Burns and the head of Israel's Mossad David Barnea "are travelling to Doha on Wednesday", the source said.

Qatar has been engaged in months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, with support from Egypt and the United States, in efforts to reach a truce in Gaza and a hostage release deal.

### Chip giant joins trillion-dollar club

Taiwanese semiconductor titan TSMC briefly joined a rarefied club of companies valued at more than \$1 trillion yesterday. MIT and Stanford graduate Morris Chang founded TSMC in 1987 after an extensive tech industry career in the United States. TSMC has become one of the world's most important companies in the nearly four decades since - a leader in producing the chips that help run everything from smartphones to advanced robots.

### US expands security review of land deals

The US Treasury yesterday announced a major expansion of its security review authority over foreign purchases of real estate near American military bases, adding a net total of 56 facilities across 30 states to its review list. The expansion to about 227 military installations comes less than two months after a previous CFIUS review handed a Chinese-linked company and its partners 120 days to sell property they had purchased near a US Air Force Base in Wyoming.

### Russia hits children's hospital in Kyiv



Rescuers carry the body of a child found at a site where an apartment building was heavily damaged during a Russian missile strike, in Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday.

Russia blasted the main children's hospital in Kyiv with a missile in broad daylight yesterday and rained missiles down on other cities across Ukraine, killing at least 36 civilians in the deadliest wave of air strikes for months. Parents holding babies walked in the street outside the hospital, dazed and sobbing after the rare daylight aerial attack. The government proclaimed a day of mourning today for one of the worst air attacks of the war, which it said demonstrated that Ukraine urgently needs an upgrade of its air defences from its Western allies. Fifty civilian buildings, including residential houses, a business centre and two medical facilities were damaged in Kyiv. **Page 11**



# Ministers underline significance of summer centres for students

**H**E the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi hailed the diverse activities of summer centres and the engagement of students with their peers in there, which would promote the students' positive behaviours and advance their various skills and talents.

This came during HE the minister's inspection visit to the summer centre at Khalifa Secondary School for Boys to review the activities and programmes offered to students during summer vacation in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

She lauded the strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Sports and Youth in running these centres,

highlighting that the sublime objective of these centres is to encourage students to invest in their leisure time during summer vacation to optimally engage in beneficial activities.

For his part, HE the Minister of Sports and Youth Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani underlined the importance of summer activities and their role to help young people flexibly handle the current requirements and diligently address the challenges, affirming that youth institutions in Qatar are proud of their records that abound with many supporting tools for the Qatari youth and empowering them through a social approach that includes them in the society and offers training opportunities, as well as support for summer and public activities.

The summer centres began their activities on July 1 and featured 1,109 participants from both genders in the first week activities, held in seven public schools. The events included a multitude of programmes that best suited their diverse age groups, foremost of which were intellectual, physical, kinetic, art, social, awareness-raising, and technological activities.

In addition, such activities help build students' balanced personalities and hone their wide-ranging skills, in addition to training them on engagement, shouldering the responsibility and serving the society.

The school centres were equipped with highly trained administrative and educational crews to efficiently operate them during their full swing from July 1-August 8. Each centre accommodates 300 students aged between 6 and 18 years old daily for four hours, from 9am-1pm,

Twenty-three centres and youth organisations distributed nationwide are witnessing significant participation from our students. The centres and organisations offer various activities and programmes provided by various entities, including Friends of the Environment Centre, Qatar Scientific Club, Social Protection and Rehabilitation Center (Aman), and the Ministry of Interior. The activities held in these centres and organisations aim to cater to all interests and guide our students to invest their vacation in activities that enhance their talents and creative skills. (QNA)



# NHRC wraps up 'Healthy Workers for Sustainable Development' campaign

**T**he National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) wrapped up the workers' right to health campaign held under the slogan "Healthy Workers for Sustainable Development".

The campaign was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) office in Qatar, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Country Office in Qatar.

During the closing ceremony held at the NHRC premises, HE Secretary-General of NHRC Sultan bin Hassan al-Jamali and Executive Director of the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund Kholoud Saif Abdullah al-Kubaisi handed the campaign's honorary shields and certificates to partners, stakeholders, participant company owners, and diaspora communities' representatives.

Al-Jamali stressed that protecting and enhancing workers' rights in the country is a continuous and an ongoing process, due to it being closely linked to achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030, which puts in place a comprehensive system of strategies, in which workers constitute the cornerstone.

He added that the state's endeavour to safeguard workers' rights is not limited to a certain event nor a limited timeframe, rather it is an embodiment of a message and future vision of ensuring a decent life and protecting human dignity, adding that workers who enjoy their right to health form the foundation for achieving sustainable development and are the catalysts to a nation's development and a people's civilisation.

He expressed pride in NHRC partners' effective participation in the campaign, adding that it is a step towards establishing an intensive joint action strategy together with the UN House in Doha, which will be set in upcoming weeks through round-table meetings involving all UN House in Doha-affiliated offices.

Al-Jamali extended gratitude to partners for their contributions to NHRC's supreme mission of protecting and promoting human rights, praising their voluntary initiatives as indicative of openness towards co-operation and fostering comprehensive societal rights.



He also thanked all stakeholders, including owners of companies, large factories, small industries, and diaspora communities with high shares in Qatar's labour market, stressing that their positive participation reflects their deep understanding of the importance of educating their workers, part of their fundamental rights.

In turn, Assistant Director of Occupational Safety and Health Department at the Ministry of Labour Saad Rashid al-Nabit emphasised the ministry's commitment to participate and contribute to the campaign's success, with the aim of enhancing occupational safety and health, and raising both employer and employee's awareness of the need for a safe and healthy work environment, calling for further co-ordination on this constructive partnership.

For his part, senior legal adviser at PHCC Dr Abdulhadi Hazaa Abdulhadi Derah praised the NHRC campaign raising employer and employee's awareness of workers' right to health and its impact on sustainable development. Derah affirmed that the establishment of NHRC reflects

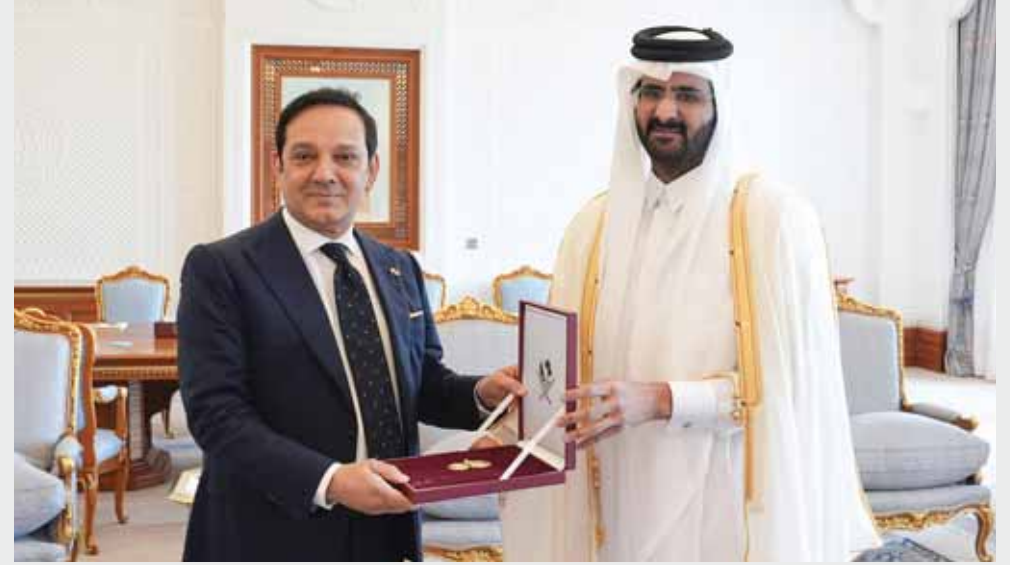
Qatar's commitment to consolidating and enhancing rights and freedoms.

WHO Representative in Qatar Dr Rayana Bou Haka said that the campaign highlighted specific programmes such as that on occupational health and safety, in addition to bolstering health for all, particularly for workers.

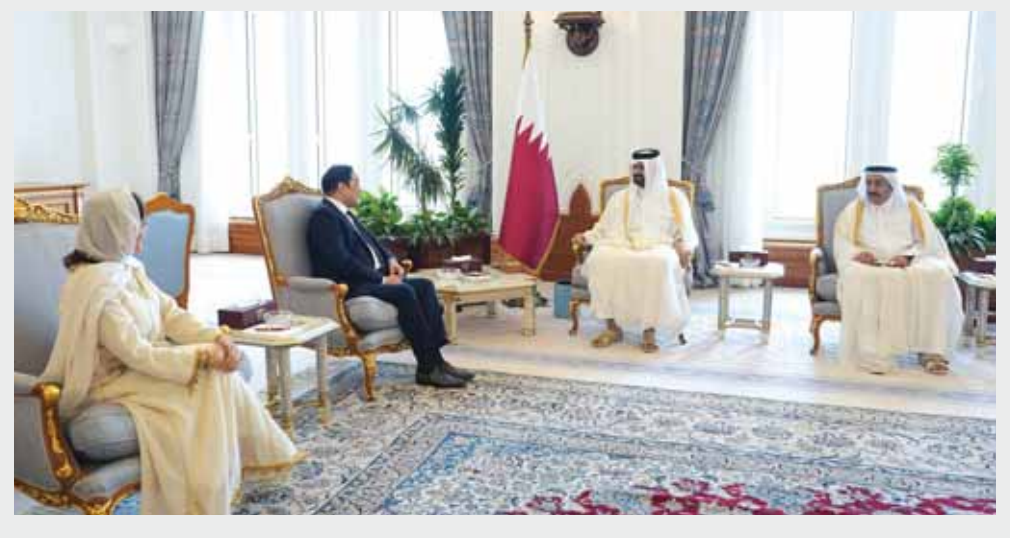
Dr Bou Haka emphasised that the campaign's success hinges on its ability to raise workers and employers' awareness of rights and responsibilities, noting plans for executable future strategies to reinforce the right to health.

She added that the WHO office in Qatar, together with health sector partners, focuses on the significance of occupational health and workplace safety to enhance health and mitigate risks that could impact workers. QRCS-affiliated Al Hemaillah Workers' Health Centre Director Mohamed Morhaf al-Akshar said that this campaign is only a part of a series of efforts carried out by Qatar to enhance workers' rights and maintain society's health as a whole. Al-Akshar also praised the efforts of all parties involved to ensure the campaign's success. (QNA)

# Deputy Amir grants Al Wajbah Decoration to Panama's ambassador



His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at his Amiri Diwan office with Panama's ambassador to Qatar Mousa Abdelhae Asvat Kasu, who called on His Highness to greet him on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country. The Deputy Amir granted Al Wajbah Decoration to the ambassador in recognition of his role in contributing to enhancing bilateral relations between Qatar and Panama, wishing him success in his future missions, and the relations between the two countries further development and progress. For his part, the ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Deputy Amir and the state officials for the co-operation he received that contributed to the success of his work in the country. (QNA)



# Qatar slams racism against migrants, Muslim minorities in some countries

QNA  
Geneva

**Q**atar affirmed its stance rejecting and opposing all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

This came in a statement delivered by Second Secretary at the Permanent Delegation of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva Sheikh Sultan bin Khalid al-Thani during the Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, part of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

Sheikh Sultan said that racism and racial discrimination remain among the worst human rights violations known to humanity, due to their direct impact on human dignity, life, and security, adding that hate speech and discrimination, which incite hostility and violence against those belonging to ethnic or religious minorities, remain the most



dangerous in terms of impact on society and individuals enjoyment of all human rights.

He expressed Qatar's condemnation in the strongest terms of the continued racist practices toward the refugees, migrants, and Muslim minorities in some countries, and the harassment against them by various means, including legislative measures and government policies, done solely on the basis of their ethnic origin and religious affiliation.

Fuelled by hate speech from some politicians and far-right party leaders, social media and various digital platforms, these

practices, he explained, would fuel feelings of hostility and violence against these groups and lead to their social alienation, which in turn result in further violation of their rights and freedoms.

Qatar's statement called on the Human Rights Council and all governments and relevant stakeholders to counter these discriminatory and racist practices by all means and take the necessary effective measures to eliminate them, along with holding those responsible accountable, and ensuring that such practices are never repeated.

# MoI advisory on how to report cybercrimes

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Cybercrimes can be reported by calling 2347444, the hotline 66815757, through the Metrash2 app or via e-mail to cccc@moi.gov.qa, the Ministry of Interior said in a X post.

# 'Doha sees noticeable increase in biodiversity'

By Santhosh V Perumal  
Business Reporter

The Green Up project, undertaken by Veolia Qatar, has transformed Doha's landscape, making the country greener with a "significant embellishment" of the urban environment, according to the top official of the French environmental services company.

"A noticeable increase in biodiversity has been observed, and the environmental forest that we maintain at the Doha North Plant is its emblematic representation," Veolia Qatar chief executive Laurent Gestin told *Gulf Times* in an interview.

He said that the more than 90,000 trees

it represents (28 species planted on 750 hectares) have become a sanctuary where natural life has resumed its rightful place, welcoming more than 30 different species of birds each year, many of which are migratory.

He said that the sustainable solutions, which are deployed every day in Qatar, are directly contributing to the circular economy, highlighting its 10-year framework agreement signed in 2020 between Veolia and the public works authority (Ashghal).

On the agreement, he said this (Green Up) project aligns with the desire and ambition of Qataris for increased sobriety and frugality, as Veolia's ongoing efforts in energy efficiency and operational excellence have already allowed for substantial reduc-

tions in the carbon footprint.

Gestin said that Veolia's sanitation services, available 24/7, allow for the complete depollution and regeneration of valuable water resources (99.7% of the municipal wastewater) and avoid the very significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that would have been generated if the same volumes of water had been produced by desalination of seawater.

"This project has already profoundly transformed the landscape of Qatar, making the emirate greener with a significant embellishment of the urban environment," he added.

On solid waste management, Gestin said that it aims to accelerate the development of alternative energy sources, and thus,

the production of low-carbon local energy, through the capture and recovery of biogas from landfills, and the conversion of municipal and hazardous waste into energy resources.

"In a virtuous circular waste economy, it is possible to consider the conversion of municipal and hazardous waste into energy resources; generally steam for local industrial use and electricity to power the national electricity grid," he noted.

Qatar has already deployed impressive photovoltaic projects, the official said, but the further development of additional alternative energy sources would definitely position the country among the pioneering countries mobilised against climate change.



Laurent Gestin

## 'Seatrade Maritime 2025' to make Qatar a shipping hub

From Page 1

With growth expected to continue, Seatrade Maritime Qatar will look at how international companies can do business in Qatar, whilst companies in Qatar will look to promote its visibility in the global arena by showcasing opportunities with local companies.

Taking place over two days, the event will include an exhibition and a world-class conference programme.

Highlighting some of the focus areas, the conference will deep dive into sustainable and green shipping, including green fuels, emission controls, and eco-friendly practices; digital transformation in maritime, including the overall role of digitalisation, IoT (Internet of Things), artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain in transforming maritime operations; supply chain management and trade facilitation; and AI in maritime operations, including AI in autonomous shipping, predictive maintenance, smart ports and weather forecasting/route optimisation.

Chris Morley, the group director of Seatrade Maritime, the organisers of the event, said: "With more than 50 years in the maritime industry, Seatrade Maritime is well placed to launch this event in Qatar."

"With other international events in Dubai and Saudi Arabia, as well as the Philippines, the US, the UK, and Singapore, we know that Seatrade Maritime Qatar will help increase Qatar National Vision 2030 objectives and are proud to be part of this journey," he said.

For more information, visit [www.SeatradeMaritime-Qatar.com](http://www.SeatradeMaritime-Qatar.com)



## Kahramaa holds workshop on CRA services

The Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa) held a workshop yesterday to introduce employees to the general services provided by the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA). Titled *Know Your Rights and Responsibilities*, the workshop was held in co-operation with the CRA.

According to a post by Kahramaa on X, it aimed to raise awareness of their rights and responsibilities as telecommunications consumers.



## Mol: Failure to complete residence permit procedures within 30 days may draw fine

**Completing Residence Permit Procedures**

**Responsibility (of the Employer and the Expatriate)**

Based on the provisions of Article (10) of Law No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit, and residence of expatriates (Paragraph 1)

The employer must facilitate the expatriate to contact the competent authorities within 30 days from the date of entry into the country to complete the procedures for obtaining a residence or visit permit. The expatriate is not allowed to refuse to complete these procedures.

**Failure to comply by either the employer or the expatriate** exposes them to penalties from the judiciary, including a fine that may reach up to 10,000 Qatari Riyals, according to clause 2 of Article (40) of the same law.

The law, as stipulated in Article (42), also allows the competent authority of the Ministry of Interior to accept reconciliation with the accused in this violation by paying an amount of 10 Riyals for each day of delay, with a maximum of 6,000 Riyals, in accordance with the reconciliation amounts specified in the table attached to this law.



Communicate with us service - Metrash2  BPEA@moi.gov.qa  2360000 



Failure to complete residence permit proceedings by the employer or expatriate within 30 days of entry to Qatar may attract a fine of QR10,000, the Ministry of Interior (Moi) has reiterated.

"The employer must facilitate the expatriate to contact the competent authorities within 30 days from the entry into the country to complete the procedures for obtaining a residence or visit permit," the Moi said in an advisory on its X account. "The expatriate isn't allowed to refuse to complete these procedures."

This is based on the provisions of Article 10 of Law No 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit, and residence of expatriates (Paragraph 1).

The fine is imposed according to clause 2 of Article 40 of the same law.

The law, as stipulated in Article 42, also allows the competent authority of the ministry to accept reconciliation with the accused in this violation by paying an amount of QR10 for each day of delay, with a maximum of QR6,000, under the reconciliation amounts specified in the table attached to this law.

## HIA in partnership with Siemens to optimise district cooling infrastructure

The Hamad International Airport (HIA) has partnered with Siemens to optimise its district cooling infrastructure, aimed at conserving and reducing energy consumption, and supporting the airport's growth plans, a statement said yesterday.

Completed in November last year, the project is in line with the HIA's environmental sustainability goals, which include improving carbon efficiency by 30% by 2030.

There are five district cooling plants, with a production capacity of 62,000 tonnes, to cater to the cooling requirement for the airport.

With Phase B of the HIA's expansion underway and to reduce the consumption of electricity required for cooling, the airport partnered with Siemens to leverage its patented "Demand Flow" technology from the Siemens Xcelerator portfolio, which enables digital transformation in industry and infrastructure faster and at scale.

Since adopting the new Siemens



solution, the HIA reduced its CO2 emissions by over 5,000 metric tonnes, since 2021.

This reduction is expected to reach 16,000 tonnes per year from 2024.

"As the 'World's Best Airport', Hamad International Airport also needs to be the best airport for the world by growing responsibly," said HIA senior vice-president (Facilities Management) Michael McMillan. "This collaboration with Siemens strongly aligns with

our environmental sustainability goals by adopting innovative solutions and our commitment to investing in the latest technology that will reduce our environment footprint."

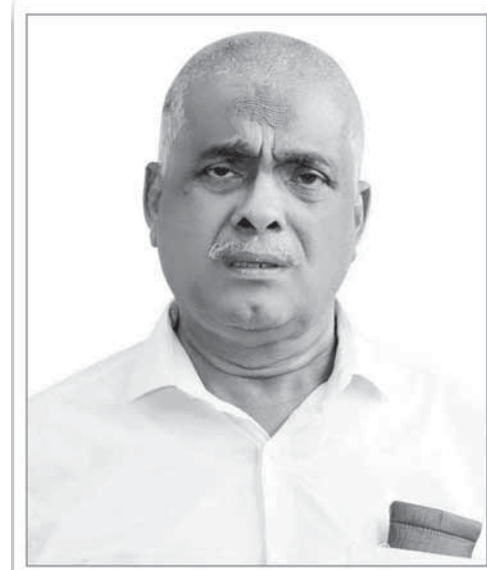
Hakan Ozdemir, chief executive of Siemens in Qatar, said: "This partnership set a benchmark in energy efficiency, showcasing the pivotal role of innovative technologies and strategic partnerships in realising Qatar's sustainability goals."

## CONDOLENCES

The Management and Staff of



extend their heartfelt condolences to the Family & Friends on the sad demise of



**Bekal Mohammed Shali**  
Chairman

**Bombay Silk Center, Lexus Tailoring & Stores, Dana Center, Panda Hyper Market, Luxor Store & Century Tailoring**

May Allah rest the departed soul in peace and give fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this great loss.

# Real estate trading volume exceeds QR1.1bn in June

The volume of real estate trading in sale contracts registered with the Real Estate Registration Department at the Ministry of Justice in June, amounted to QR1,118,975,109.

The data of the real estate analytical bulletin issued by the Ministry of Justice revealed that 285 real estate transactions were recorded during the month, as the number of properties sold index recorded an increase of 8%.

Al Dhaayen, Al Rayyan, and Doha municipalities topped the most active transactions in terms of financial value in June, according to the real estate market index, followed by Umm Salal, Al Wakra, Al Khor and Al Dhakira, and Al Shamal. The real estate market index for June, revealed that the financial value of Al Rayyan municipality's transactions amounted to QR358,693,071. The financial value of Al Dhaayen municipality's transactions amounted to QR290,170,508 while the financial value of Doha municipality's transactions amounted to QR288,984,702. The financial value of Umm Salal municipality's transactions amounted to QR93,532,996. Al Wakra municipality recorded transactions

with a value of QR42,190,858, while Al Khor and Al Dhakira municipality recorded trading with a value of QR31,534,209. Al Shamal municipality recorded transactions with a value of QR13,868,765.

In terms of the traded space index, indicators revealed that Al Rayyan, Doha, and Al Dhaayen municipalities recorded the most active municipalities, in terms of traded real estate spaces during June, with 40% for Al Rayyan Municipality, followed by Doha with 24%, and Al Dhaayen with 17%, with Umm Salal recording 8%, while Al Wakra and Al Khor and Al Dhakira recorded 4%, and Al Shamal 3%, of the total traded spaces.

In regard to the index of the number of real estate transactions (sold properties), trading indices revealed that the most active municipalities during June were Al Rayyan with 24% followed by Doha with 31%, then Al Dhaayen with 20%. Umm Salal recorded traded transactions with 9%, Al Wakra and Al Khor and Al Dhakira with 7%, and Al Shamal with 4% of the total real estate transactions.

An average per square foot prices for June ranged between QR390-682 in Doha, QR263-

472 in Al Wakra, QR292-488 in Al Rayyan, QR284-526 in Umm Salal, QR280-489 in Al Dhaayen, QR221-347 in Al Khor and Al Dhakira, and QR144 in Al Shamal.

The trading volume revealed the highest value of 10 properties sold in June with Al Dhaayen recording six properties, three in Al Rayyan and one in Umm Salal.

As for the volume of mortgage transactions in June, the number of transactions amounted to 78 transactions, with a total value of QR4,581,635,139.

Al Rayyan recorded the highest number of mortgage transactions with 28 transactions, equivalent to 35.9% of the total number of mortgaged properties, followed by Doha with 24 transactions, equivalent to 30.8% of the total number of mortgaged properties, followed by Al Dhaayen with 15 transactions equivalent to 19.2% of the total number of mortgaged properties, then Umm Salal with seven transactions, equivalent to 9.0%, Al Wakra with three transactions, equivalent to 3.8%, along with Al Khor and Al Dhakira with one transaction, equivalent to 1.3% of the total number of mortgaged properties during June.

As to the value of mortgages, Doha Municipality came

in the lead with a value of QR3,268,481,670, with Al Khor and Al Dhakira recording the lowest value of QR1,175,000.

Considering the indicator of the movement of mortgage transactions by studying the ratio of the number of mortgaged properties to the ratio of their financial value, the ratio of the number of mortgaged properties was greater than the ratio of the amounts of mortgage transactions in all municipalities that witnessed mortgage transactions except Doha Municipality, where the amounts of mortgage transactions achieved higher ratios compared to the average number of mortgage transactions.

In terms of the movement and volume of mortgage transactions during June, Doha Municipality recorded six of the top 10 mortgaged properties, with Al Rayyan recording four mortgaged properties.

The volume of mortgage transactions for the top 10 properties reached 80% of the total value of all mortgage transactions during June.

Additionally, the residential unit trading movement during June reached 52 transactions with a total value of QR122,648,720. (QNA)

## Amir condolences with Saudi King, Kuwaiti Amir

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cable of condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud of Saudi Arabia on the death of Princess Sultana bint Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Kuwaiti Amir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah on the death of Sheikh Ali Abdullah al-Salem al-Mubarak al-Sabah. (QNA)

## Sheikha Alya meets UN official

HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani met with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Peacebuilding Rosemary DiCarlo, at the UN Headquarters in New York. During the meeting, they praised the fruitful co-operation between Qatar and the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The two sides welcomed the outcomes of the Third Doha Meeting of Special Envoys to Afghanistan, and considered it a good opportunity to involve all parties in order to improve the humanitarian conditions of the Afghan people. (QNA)

## Tunisian FM receives credentials of Qatar envoy



Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad Nabil Ammar received a copy of the credentials of Zayed Saeed Rashid al-Kumait al-Khayareen as Qatar's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Tunisia. (QNA)

## Climate talks in Baku



Assistant to the Azerbaijani President and member of the organising committee of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Anar Alakbarov, met in Baku with Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Climate Change and Sustainability, Bader bin Omar al-Dafa. The meeting discussed co-operation ties between the two countries and ways to strengthen them, especially in the areas of climate change and sustainability, in addition to the preparations for COP29 slated to be convened in Baku in November. (QNA)

## QCDC takes part in career development conference in US



Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) concluded its participation in the annual National Career Development Association (NCDA) conference held in San Diego, California.

QCDC actively engaged with conference participants and career development professionals by offering a detailed brief on QCDC's programmes and services as a leader in career guidance and development regionally and in Qatar.

Saad al-Kharji, QCDC's Career Programmes and Services



Manager, emphasised the importance of the centre's presence on international platforms, stating, "Engaging with international experts enables us to adopt up-to-date knowledge and exchange global best practices, adapting them locally to enrich our programmes and services."

Al-Kharji added: "The exchange of ideas and innovation is more prevalent than ever. Engaging with the global community and making our mark internationally have become crucial to youth empowerment in order to advance sustainable human

capital development goals."

NCDA's annual conference gathered career development practitioners, facilitators, educators, counsellors, specialists, and a diverse array of career development professionals.

QCDC's participation in international career development forums aims to enhance collaboration with global partners, adapt specialised knowledge locally, pioneer innovative career development strategies, and highlight Qatar's progress in cultivating a skilled workforce. (QNA)

## Four face prosecution for inciting hatred online

Competent authorities have arrested four people on charges of inciting hatred among community members, according to a X post by the Ministry of Interior (MoI). They have been referred to the Public Prosecution to complete further proceedings.

"Referring to what has been circulated on a social media platform regarding four individuals inciting hatred and spreading discord among members of the community, the competent authorities have arrested and referred them to the Public Prosecution to complete its procedures on this matter," MoI said.

The ministry explained that it will take legal action against anyone who is proven to be involved in inciting sedition, hatred, racism or undermining the fabric of society threatening its security and stability.

It warned against using social media platforms in ways that violate the law, stressing the importance of not insulting any component of society and its unity, based on the principle that the bonds of Qatari society and its stability are a responsibility for everyone.

## QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY INVITATION TO TENDER

### QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-6000001072	CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES	500/- (Non-refundable)	180,000/- (one hundred eighty thousand riyals only)	09-July-2024 10-July-2024 11-July-2024 14-July-2024 15-July-2024	08.08.2024

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)
  - Account Number : 0013-025828-058
  - IBAN : QA51QNBAA00000000013025828058
  - Bank Name : QATAR NATIONAL BANK
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at 'purchase@qafco.com.qa' or on 44227797
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Tender Office, between 09:30 - 11 :00 hours during the Holy month of Ramadan and 09:30 - 11:30 hours and 12:30 - 14:00 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".



## The Transport Company MOWASALAT (KARWA)

### Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:

Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC-026-EGS-2024	AMC for Cleaning and Disinfection Services of Potable Water Tanks at Mowasalat Facilities	QAR 1,000	9 July to 15 July 2024	QAR 26,000	14 August 2024
TC-024-EGS-2024	Upgradation, Maintenance & Repairing of GRP and Steel WaterTanks on Call Off Basis	QAR 1,000	9 July to 15 July 2024	QAR 20,000	14 August 2024

#### CONDITIONS:

- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
 

Beneficiary Name	MOWASALAT-KARWA COMPANY
A/C No.	0013 - 011272 - 060
IBAN	QA07 QNBA 0000 0000 0013 0112 7206 0
Swift Code No.	QNBAGQA
Branch Address	Corporate Branch, P.O Box 1000, Doha - Qatar
Currency	QAR
CR No.	26887
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: [tenders@mowasalat.com](mailto:tenders@mowasalat.com)
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested (i.e., 14 July 2024)
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. *Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.*
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (IN RED WAX) envelopes addressed to Secretary - Tender Committee clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - Envelope 1# must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - Envelope 2# must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - Envelope 3# must include the Tender Bond (1 Original)
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is 12.00 noon Doha Local Time as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel.: 4458 8724 Fax: 4458 8850



# Prestige Cars wins again at World Travel Awards

Prestige Cars has announced its recognition as Qatar's Leading Chauffeur Car Rental Company for the second consecutive year at the World Travel Awards 2024 in Dubai, a statement said.

Specialising in vehicle rentals, chauffeured cars, long term leasing, and conference and events transportation, Prestige Cars sets the standard for luxury mobility, it was explained.

"The World Travel Awards, recognised as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence, honours exceptional performance in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors.

"Prestige Cars, established in 1997 as a subsidiary of Alfaridan Group, has been Qatar's trusted leader in luxury mobility, offering high-end vehicles, expert chauffeurs, and services that consistently exceed client expectations. With a focus on quality and luxury, the company incessantly raises the bar for premium performance in the industry."

Marwan El Khazen, general manager of Prestige Cars, said: "We are really honoured to receive this prestigious award for



the second year in a row. It is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of our entire team at Prestige Cars.

This recognition motivates us to continue raising higher benchmarks for luxury mobility services in Qatar."

# Registration opens for NCSA's Cybersecurity Summer Bootcamp

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) announced the opening of registration for the Cybersecurity Summer Bootcamp 2024, which will run from July 21-August 15.

This dynamic programme stems from a sense of social responsibility and is designed to enhance the cyber skills of the young, deepen their understanding of cybersecurity and digital safety concepts, and to improve their ability to navigate the Internet and modern technology safely and effectively. The summer camp targets 200 male and female students between the ages of 13 and 17 years old. Held for an average of five hours a day over 20 days, the camp will include theoretical and practical training conducted in both Arabic and English.

Encompassing a wide range of activities, the camp will include theoretical lectures, intensive practical exercises, visual presentations, training packages and printed brochures, interactive games, information competitions, a cybersecurity consultation corner, cybersecurity penetration testing, an open entertainment day, graduation projects and field visits. Graduates will receive professional certification of qualification.

The NCSA has indicated the conditions for joining the camp and these are: students must be enrolled in a public or private school in Qatar, receive a passing grade on a basic test on cybersecurity principles, and show full commitment to participate in the camp and its activities. (QNA)

# QIFF Elects new office bearers



Sharaf P. Hameed, President



Ashiq Ahmed, General Secretary



Muhammad Haneef, Treasurer

The Qatar Indian Football Forum (QIFF) has elected new office bearers. Sharaf P Hameed, the CEO of City Exchange, known for his significant contributions to Qatar's sports, social, and cultural fields, has been elected as the president.

Other newly elected office bearers are Ashiq Ahmed as General Secretary, Muhammad Haneef as Treasurer, Suhail Santhapuram as Vice President of PR & Media, and Muhammad Shameen as Vice President of Team Coordination. All of them have made notable

contributions to sports, social, and cultural activities, bringing valuable experience to their respective positions.

Additionally, Adv. Muhammed Iqbal has been appointed as Media Secretary, Hamza Peringathur as Admin and Social Media Secretary, and Nistar Patel as Refereeing and Ruling Secretary, K Muhammad Issa as the Coordinator, and Muhammad Basheer as Facilities Incharge. The members of the Technical Committee, Rahim, Rizwan, and Naseer, are also actively involved in sports and community services.

Other appointed members include Dr. Hussain Kadannamanna for Community Relations, Abdul Samad for Guest Management and Sponsorship, Muhsin for Guest Management, and Rasheed Ahmad for Protocol. The election was presided over by QIFF's former president, K. Muhammad Issa. The newly appointed committee members have declared that the 15th QIFF inter-district football tournament is scheduled to kick off in the second week of October. The objective is to draw teams from all districts of Kerala to participate in this prestigious tournament.

# QIB, Visa reveal winners of Paris Olympics packages

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) and Visa have announced the winners of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 promotion. Three customers - Ali Khamis al-Sulaiti, Sultan Shabeeb al-Merekhi and Khalid Hassan al-Obaidli - received a fully paid trip to Paris for two, courtesy of Visa. QIB Visa Signature and Infinite credit cardholders were eligible to enter the draw by making purchases using their Visa credit cards, whether for domestic or international point-of-sale (POS) transactions or online shopping. Each transaction had to meet a minimum spend threshold of QR1,000 to qualify for a draw entry. The three packages grant the winners exclusive access to the games with the first package providing the winners access to the swimming and tennis events



from July 28-31. The second package features swimming and athletics competitions from July 31-August 3, and the third grants access to final events and the closing ceremony from August 9-12. "This unforgettable experience,

provided to our customers, celebrates their loyalty and underscores our mission to foster a cashless society and streamline transactions for everyone," said D Anand, QIB's general manager (Personal Banking Group).

# NCSA, Qatar Media Center launch course on cybersecurity awareness

A cybersecurity course organised by the Qatar Media Center in co-operation with the National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) began yesterday.

The course addresses enhancing cyber awareness in light of digital transformation and the use of social media and the resulting increase of cyber threats in their many and various forms.

The course aims to enhance cyber-safety procedures for young people, develop participants' skills in preserving personal data, and to develop cyber capabilities.

Ishraq al-Hazbi, a cybersecurity trainer at the NCSA, theoretically presented the concept of cybersecurity and protecting systems,

networks, and programs against digital attacks.

She noted that the most important impacts of cyberattacks such as loss of credibility, unavailability of services, financial losses, data theft, and digital identity theft. She stressed the importance of keeping personal or institutional data confidential. Al-Hazbi also presented several applied programs on how to identify accounts that have been hacked, unlock passwords, and more.

Director of the Qatar Media Center Iman al-Kaabi stated to Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the course, which suits people aged 18-22, is part of the programmes offered by the centre

during the summer. Al-Kaabi explained that it holds great importance in keeping up with the use of social media, protecting accounts and privacy, and not falling for links coming from suspicious sources that can lead to accounts being hacked.

She said that the centre will offer a specialised three-day course on the art of public speaking starting July 15, followed by a training workshop on professional phone photography from July 23 to 25.

The summer season is set to conclude with a training course on the role of creating visual content on social media platforms from July 29 until the end of the month. (QNA)



Some of the participants in the course on cybersecurity awareness.

# QU partners with UK, HBK universities to launch argumentative writing corpus

Qatar University, in partnership with the University of Exeter (UoE) in the UK and Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has launched the Qatari Corpus of Argumentative Writing.

This innovative research project is part of Qatar National Vision 2030, which emphasises human development. This three-year National Priorities Research Programme funded by the Qatar National Research Fund from 2019-2022, has culminated in a comprehensive bilingual writing corpus. The Qatari Corpus of Argumentative Writing focuses on the argumentative writing skills of Qatari university students in their first language, Arabic and second language, English.

The primary goals of this project were to build the Qatari Corpus of Argumentative Writing and analyse students' use of metadiscourse and voice markers in both Arabic and English. It also aims to understand students' metalinguistic awareness of their usage of these rhetorical devices. Metadiscourse and voice markers refer to the linguistic methods writers use to project themselves into



Dr Abdelhamid Ahmed

their writing, signal their stance, and to engage readers.

By examining texts from a diverse academic background, the corpus provides rich insights into the bilingual writing process, revealing patterns in language use. This invaluable resource aids researchers, Arabic and English educators, and corpus linguists in informing teaching methods and cross-linguistic studies in a bilingual environment.

The project involved experts from QU, UoE, and HBKU. It was led by Dr Abdelhamid Ahmed, an assistant professor in English Language Education at the core curriculum programme at QU. The Qatari Corpus of Argumentative Writing was developed in partnership with an expert team comprising Prof Debra Myhill, Professor Emerita of Language and Literacy Education, and Dr Esmaeel Abdollahzadeh, senior lecturer in language education from the School of Education at UoE. Additionally, Dr Wajdi Zaghouni, an associate professor in Digital Humanities at HBKU, contributed his expertise.

The Qatari Corpus of Argumentative Writing consists of approximately 200,000 tokens of argumentative writing by Qatari university students in Arabic and English. The corpus contains 195 argumentative essays in Arabic and 195 in English, written by the same group of students (159 females and 36 males) on diverse topics. The students, native Arabic speakers proficient in English as a second language, provide a unique bilingual data set.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, DIANNA MAYE ESPERIDA LAMBINICIO  
holder of

PHILIPPINES Passport No. P6787869B  
QID No. 29160815989

hereby change my name

from

DIANNA MAYE ESPERIDA LAMBINICIO  
to

DIANNA MAYE LAMBINICIO LATOJA

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

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, AHMED MOHAMMAD USAMA SIDDIQUI  
holder of

INDIA Passport No. W6059165  
QID No. 30435600996

hereby change my name

from

AHMED MOHAMMAD USAMA SIDDIQUI  
to

AHMAD MOHAMMAD USAMA SIDDIQUI

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

## ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MUKESH JANAK RAJ  
holder of

INDIA Passport No. T6002454  
QID No. 28635612327

hereby change my name

from

MUKESH JANAK RAJ  
to

MUKESH VERMA

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



# For Palestinian prisoner, return to Gaza brings anguish, shattered dreams

Reuters  
Deir Al-Balah

During more than two decades in an Israeli prison, Palestinian Youssef Mikdad dreamed about one day returning to a prosperous Gaza Strip where he could make up for lost time with his children.

But when Mikdad finally tasted freedom and set foot in Gaza last week, he found his house destroyed and his homeland reduced to rubble, dust and twisted metal by Israeli bombardments.

Walking through neighbourhoods laid waste by air and artillery strikes, he came to Gaza's Mediterranean shoreline, where Palestinians displaced many times over by the Israeli offensive were living in tents on the beach.

Like every Gazan parent, he has to find a way to feed his family in a territory suffering shortages of food, fuel, power and medicine. Schools which would have provided an education to his grandchildren have been destroyed and few hospitals are functioning.

Mikdad's daughter Haya — his favourite child, he says — was just four years old when he was imprisoned. She perished in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza City in March, one of more than 38,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since



Youssef Mikdad (third left), a former Palestinian prisoner recently released by Israel, meets with people, in Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza Strip.

the start of the war. "I have five children, three sons and two daughters, this girl was the youngest and the best," he said.

He received the devastating news during the holy month of Ramadan — which he observed behind bars for years — that Haya had been killed along with her husband and four children.

"I didn't see her as a bride when she was married, but I longed to see her with her chil-

dren. Every time I see a woman with young children, I think to myself this must be her," he said.

Mikdad, 63, was seized by Israeli forces from his house in a Gaza City suburb during a raid in 2002. He was sentenced after he was convicted of being a member of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the fighters' wing of the Fatah Palestinian faction.

He served time in several Israeli prisons. He recalls how at

one point Palestinian prisoners were allowed to run their own affairs in jail, as each side learned to respect the other.

But the atmosphere changed radically after fighters led by the Palestinian group Hamas stormed communities in southern Israel in the first week of October last year. "Even animals have rights, but we humans for them didn't (have any rights). We have seen all forms of torture, even hunger," said Mikdad.

"There was no food, water, papers or any ways of communication, there was nothing. Prisoners were humiliated and crushed for 24 hours (a day)."

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment about prison conditions. Widespread reports of mistreatment of detainees in Israeli prisons have added to international pressure on Israel for its conduct of the Gaza war, now in its tenth month. In May, the US State Department said it was looking into allegations of Israeli abuse of Palestinian detainees.

Hamas, like other Palestinian factions, has long called for the release of the roughly 6,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, an issue that has been part of talks aimed at ending the war.

## Iran's president-elect reaffirms policy towards Israel

Reuters  
Tehran

President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's anti-Israel stance yesterday, saying resistance movements across the region will

not allow Israel's "criminal policies" towards the Palestinians to continue.

"The Islamic Republic has always supported the resistance of the people of the region against the illegitimate Zionist regime," Pezeshkian said in a message to Hassan Nasrallah,

leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah group.

The comments signalled no change in the regional policies of the incoming government under the relatively moderate Pezeshkian who defeated his conservative rival in last week's runoff election.

"I am certain that the resistance movements in the region will not allow this regime to continue its warmongering and criminal policies against the oppressed people of Palestine and other nations of the region," Iranian media quoted Pezeshkian as saying.

### ATROCITY

## Three Gazans found dead after release from custody

The handcuffed bodies of three Palestinian men freed from Israeli custody have been found near Gaza's border with Israel, and an uncle of one of them and a witness said they had been attacked by Israeli forces shortly after their release, Reuters reported from Gaza. Abdel Hadi Ghabayen, an uncle of one of the detainees, Kamel Ghabayen, said he set out at 5am on Sunday looking for his nephew following his arrest by Israeli forces on Saturday. "I found him left on the ground along with the other two martyrs. They were without clothes, and their hands had plastic cuffs put on them by the Israeli army," Ghabayen said. The bodies were found near the Israeli border fence on Sunday in the vicinity of the Karam Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) crossing in southern Gaza, he said.

### STRIFE

## Ugandan officer killed by bomb in Somalia

A Ugandan military officer serving in Somalia was killed and six other soldiers were wounded when their convoy triggered a roadside bomb, Uganda's military said yesterday, blaming fighters from the militant group Al Shebaab. Reuters reported from Kampala. Uganda has about 5,000 troops serving in Somalia under the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) peacekeeping mission. Major Patrick Opio Awany was killed by the explosion in the village of Ceel-Werigow, around 70km southwest of the capital Mogadishu on Sunday, said Ibrahim Kasule Sekitto, a spokesman for the Ugandan troops.

### APPEAL

## Call for dialogue with Sahel military juntas

Senegalese President and West Africa's Ecowas "facilitator" Bassirou Diomaye Faye called yesterday for dialogue and peaceful reconciliation with three countries that recently split from the bloc, AFP reported from Dakar. The military leaders of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso broke away from the Economic Community of West African States earlier this year and formed a confederation of their own on Saturday. Ecowas heads of state met in Abuja on Sunday and deplored the "lack of progress in interactions" with Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigerien authorities, who came to power in a series of recent coups.

### JUSTICE

## Military court sentences 22 soldiers to death

A military court in DR Congo's volatile east sentenced 22 soldiers to death yesterday for "fleeing the enemy" during fighting with M23 rebels, a lawyer said, AFP reported from Beni, DR Congo. Sixteen soldiers were handed death sentences in one case in the North Kivu province, and six others in a separate case, just days after 25 soldiers received a similar judgement. The latest sentences were handed down as M23 rebels, last week seized new terrain on the northern front of the conflict that has been ongoing for two-and-a-half years in the North Kivu province.

### LEGAL

## Cult leader goes on trial on terror charges

The leader of a Kenyan cult went on trial yesterday on charges of terrorism over the deaths of more than 400 of his followers in a macabre case that shocked the world, AFP reported from Mombasa. Self-proclaimed pastor Paul Nthenge Mackenzie appeared in a packed courtroom in the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa along with 94 co-defendants, accused of promoting an "extremist ideology" and running a well-organised criminal enterprise. Mackenzie, a former taxi driver who was arrested in April last year, is alleged to have incited his acolytes to starve to death.

## Healing from within: Nutrition-Enriched Retreats to Support the Second Brain



Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som highlights the importance of nutrition in nurturing the body's second brain for optimal wellbeing.

At Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som, the first and largest immersive wellness destination in the Middle East, the culinary experience is underpinned by the belief that healthy eating sustains a wholesome way of life, and that nutrition is the key to healing the body's second brain.

As a pioneering wellness resort dedicated to inspiring positive and sustainable lifestyle changes, Zulal Wellness Resort adheres to the philosophy that food serves not only as fuel but also as medicine. In line with this ethos, the resort offers two distinct retreats: the Therapeutic Cleanse Retreat and the Natural Slimming Retreat.

Each retreat follows a carefully structured and guided process aimed at effectively cleansing, detoxifying and rejuvenating the gut. Both programmes are complemented by a nutrient-rich, anti-inflammatory diet and incorporate a wide range of physical activities, spa treatments, and holistic therapies to enhance physical and mental well-being from within.

The Therapeutic Cleanse Retreat includes a sequence of treatments and therapies that assist with reducing inflammation, regulating stress and anxiety, and increasing immunity by treating the gut environment where

important microbes exist. Benefits of this retreat programme include detoxification, stress relief, weight management, improved digestion, enhanced mental clarity — all of which contribute to overall wellness, leaving guests feeling revitalized and rejuvenated during and after their stay.

Similarly, the Natural Slimming Retreat facilitates healthy and sustainable weight loss through a lifestyle-oriented approach that promotes long-term weight management via dietary guidance, physical activities, spa treatments, and holistic therapies. This retreat aims to help individuals achieve their weight loss goals while focusing on overall health and wellness. The Natural Slimming Retreat works best when digestive function is optimized, which is where Zulal's signature wellness cuisine comes in.

The award winning dining outlets at Zulal Wellness Resort — Aizoon, Al Sidra, Acacia, Casuarina, and Malbu — are all unique. Their menus feature purposeful ingredients which are anti-inflammatory, high in fibre, low in fat, contain heart healthy antioxidants; promote heart health; support digestion; offer a source of high energy; and an elevated sense of satiety.

With sustainability and longevity at the heart of Zulal Wellness Resort's ethos, and the recipes for longevity begins with a dash of nutrition and pinch of mindfulness. The culinary concept follows an ingredient-focused approach where

each ingredient serves a purpose, is fresh, seasonal, locally sourced and organic in line with the ancient principles of Traditional Arabic Islamic Medicine (TAIM), that Zulal Wellness Resort is renowned for.

The Therapeutic Cleanse Retreat and Natural Slimming Retreat programmes feature:

- Three wellness cuisine meals per night of stay.
- Full board accommodation.
- Tailormade treatments and therapies dedicated to the individual wellness goals of the guest, and depending on which retreat is selected.
- Choice of one additional daily treatment per night of stay, choose from: invigorating massage, oriental scalp massage, signature full body Tadleeek massage, signature relaxing Al Qadam foot massage.
- Access to the resort's state-of-the-art gym and serene wellness centre facilities
- Daily group activities and exercise classes.
- Complimentary laundry services for up to three pieces of sportswear per night of stay.

For more information or reservations, please email Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som at [reservations@zulal.com](mailto:reservations@zulal.com), call/WhatsApp +974 4477 65555 or visit [www.zulal.com](http://www.zulal.com).



## Stranded aid trucks in Egypt deepen Gaza's humanitarian crisis

Reuters  
Al-Arish

Hundreds of trucks loaded with food and water have been stranded on a scorching Egyptian road, some for nearly two months, awaiting permission to deliver the much needed humanitarian supplies to war-torn Gaza.

About 50 kilometres from the Gaza border, trucks carrying flour, water and other aid line a dusty road in both directions. The drivers say they have been waiting for several weeks in the searing Egyptian summer heat.

The standstill is exacerbating Gaza's dire humanitarian crisis after nine months of war between Israel and Palestinian group Hamas. Aid groups warn there is a high risk of famine across the besieged coastal territory.

The truck drivers, parked on the outskirts of the Egyptian city of Al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, say they have been unable to deliver humanitarian supplies ever since Israel expanded its offensive on the Gaza-Egypt border in May.

Some food has had to be discarded, they said.

"I swear to God, before this load, we came here and stood for more than 50 days and eventually the load was returned because it had expired," said truck driver El-sayed el-Nabawi.

"We had to turn around and return it. We loaded another batch, and here we are standing again and only God knows if this load will make it before it expires or what will happen to it."

The Israeli military started its assault on the southern Gaza city of Rafah in May. The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt, a lifeline to the outside world for Gazans, allowing the delivery of aid and the evacuation of patients, has been shut since then.

Talks involving Egypt, the United States and Israel have failed to reopen Rafah, where Egypt wants a Palestinian presence restored on the Gazan side of the border. Israeli flags now fly over Gazan buildings destroyed along the border with Egypt.

"We've been stranded here for over a month waiting to deliver



Truck drivers sit near lines of aid trucks for Gaza waiting to be deployed, in Al-Arish, Egypt.

this load. We've waiting for our turn but nothing yet" said Ahmed Kamel, another of the truck drivers, who sit by their vehicles drinking tea and smoking cigarettes.

"We don't know our fate — when will we be able to enter? Today? Tomorrow? The day after tomorrow? Only God knows. Will the stuff we're carrying hold up or most of it will go bad?"

Aid and commercial supplies have still entered Gaza through other land border crossings, through air drops and by sea, but aid groups and Western diplomats say the supplies are far below needs. The drivers say they are waiting for Israeli permission.

### 'DIFFICULTIES'

Distribution of aid in Gaza was difficult even before Israel's assault on Rafah. Israel has enforced restrictions on goods entering the enclave, saying it wants to prevent them reaching Hamas. Some aid convoys have also been hit in Israeli military strikes, resulting in deaths of aid workers.

Palestinian gangs inside Gaza have also reportedly sought to steal aid and commercial supplies entering the territory of some 2.3mn Palestinians.

Desperate Palestinians have also overwhelmed trucks, taking much needed humanitarian supplies.

A senior official at the Israeli

foreign ministry said the backlog of aid in Egypt was due to humanitarian aid that has piled up on the Gazan side of the Kerem Shalom crossing point, creating a backlog of around 1,200 truckloads worth of aid.

The official said that while Israel continued to facilitate the entry of supplies into Gaza, the distribution network inside Gaza run by international groups had been "disrupted" in recent months, blaming local gangs.

The Israeli military, which oversees co-ordination of aid in Gaza, has said that it is letting in enough food in from Israel and Egypt for the entire population.



It has also acknowledged that aid agencies face "difficulties" in transporting food once it has entered through crossing points, including from Israel.

Maha Barakat, an assistant minister in the United Arab Emirates foreign ministry and a trained medical doctor, said Palestinians who were able to leave Gaza were malnourished.

The UAE has been involved in medical evacuations from Gaza.


"They are becoming thinner and thinner," Barakat told Reuters aboard a UAE government chartered flight to Al-Arish, and that the lack of nutrition meant wounds were unable to heal.


"It is becoming more than just injuries of war," she said.

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## TRAGEDY

**Landslides kill 10 on Indonesia's Sulawesi island**

At least 10 people have died and 40 are missing after torrential rain caused a landslide in a gold mine in Indonesia's Sulawesi island at the weekend, officials said yesterday, with bad weather hampering the rescue effort. The landslide on Sunday morning in Suwawa district, Gorontalo province, killed miners and residents living nearby, said Heriyanto, head of the Basarnas rescue agency. "We have deployed 164 personnel to search for the missing people," Heriyanto said. Earlier yesterday, the agency said at least 12 people had died and 18 were missing, a toll which was updated later in the day to 10 deaths and 40 missing.

## CRIME

**Dad held over children's deaths in Sydney fire**

Australian authorities have accused a Sydney father of trying to stop rescuers from saving his own family in a "horrifying" home fire that killed two boys and a baby girl. Flames engulfed the home in western Sydney's Lalor Park in the early hours of Sunday morning while the 28-year-old man, his female partner and seven children were inside, New South Wales state police said. Three children - two boys aged three and six, and a 10-month-old girl - were killed. The four other children aged between four and 11 and their mother, 29, were being treated at hospital for fire-related injuries but were all expected to recover, police said.

## DECISION

**S Korea not to suspend striking doctors' licences**

South Korea said it would drop a plan to suspend the licences of striking trainee doctors, offering a concession to end a months-long walkout prompted by the government's decision to increase medical school admissions. Thousands of trainee doctors walked off the job in February, forcing hospitals to cut back non-emergency services and turn back patients at emergency rooms. Health Minister Cho Kyoo-hong said the government had decided not to suspend the licences of the striking doctors, whether they return to work or not. Cho said the decision was necessary because ending the current shortage in medical services is "more urgent".

## ANGER

**Kim Jong-un's sister slams S Korea live-fire border drills**

The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un slammed Seoul for recent military drills near the border, saying the South must be "suicidal" and warning of a "terrible disaster". After Pyongyang sent multiple barrages of trash-carrying balloons across the border, Seoul last month fully suspended a military deal and resumed live-fire drills on border islands and by the demilitarised zone that divides the Korean Peninsula. Kim Yo-jong, who is a key regime spokesperson, said this was "an undisguised war game (and) an inexcusable and explicit provocation that aggravates the situation," according to a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

# Philippine warships 'damaged' reef at atoll in South China Sea, claims Beijing

**The Philippines has soldiers living aboard a warship at the Second Thomas Shoal, which was deliberately grounded by Manila in 1999**

Reuters  
Beijing

China yesterday said "illegal" beaching of Philippine warships at the Nansha islands in the South China Sea had "gravely damaged" the coral reef ecosystem in the area, as both countries tussle over disputed territory at atolls in the vast waterway.

China's ministry of natural resources, in a comprehensive report, said Philippine warships have been "illegally beached" around Second Thomas Shoal near Nansha Islands for a long time, "and it has seriously damaged the diversity, stability and sustainability of the reef ecosystem."

There was no immediate comment from the spokespersons of the Philippine Coast Guard and Philippine Navy on China's claims or the China's report.

The countries have bickered extensively over the Spratly Islands - called Nansha Islands by China - the Second Thomas Shoal and Sabina Shoal. These small islands are located in the vast waterway, a conduit for more than \$3tn of annual ship-borne commerce.

The Philippines has soldiers living aboard a rusty, ageing war-

ship at the Second Thomas Shoal, which was deliberately grounded by Manila in 1999 to reinforce its maritime claims.

The report proposes that the Philippines should remove the "illegal" beached warships to eliminate the source of pollution and avoid continuing to cause sustained and cumulative harm to the coral reef ecosystem.

China claims most of the South China Sea as its own territory. Beijing has rejected a 2016 ruling by The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration which said its expansive maritime claims had no legal basis.

Both sides have reported coral reef damage from ships and fishing vessels operating at certain atolls.

China's report said that from 2011 to 2024 coverage of reef-building corals at the Second Thomas Shoal reef platform declined about 38.2%.

Last year, the Philippines said it was exploring legal options against China accusing it of destruction of coral reefs within its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

Over the weekend, the Philippines said China's largest coast-guard vessel had anchored in Manila's exclusive economic zone in the waterway, a move meant to intimidate.

Despite ongoing altercations, both countries last week agreed for the need to "restore trust" and "rebuild confidence" to better manage maritime disputes.



Japan's Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Philippine's Defence Minister Gilberto Teodoro shake hands after signing the reciprocal access agreement, at the Malacanang Palace in Manila, Philippines, yesterday.

# Philippines and Japan sign key defence pact

AFP  
Manila

The Philippines and Japan signed a key defence pact yesterday that will allow the deployment of troops on each other's territory, as they boost ties in the face of China's growing assertiveness.

The Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) was finalised in Manila, where Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa held talks with their Philippine counterparts Gilberto Teodoro and Enrique Manalo.

The accord, which Tokyo and Manila began negotiating in November, provides the legal framework for Japan and the Philippines to send

defence personnel to each other's territory for training and other operations.

Teodoro and Kamikawa signed the agreement at the presidential palace. It will take effect once ratified by lawmakers in both countries.

The signing was "another milestone in our shared endeavour to ensure a rules-based international order, to ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and particularly in our region", Teodoro said.

The Philippines and Japan are longtime allies of the US, which has been strengthening its alliances from Canberra to Tokyo to counter China's growing military might and influence in the region. Chinese officials have accused the US of trying to create an Asia-Pacific version of Nato.

The signing of the RAA comes as China's sabre-rattling towards Taiwan and over the South

China Sea fuels fears of a potential conflict that could drag in the US.

There have been escalating confrontations at sea between Chinese and Philippine ships as Beijing steps up efforts to push its claims to nearly all of the strategic South China Sea.

The most serious happened on June 17 when Chinese coast guard personnel wielding knives, sticks and an axe surrounded and boarded three Philippine navy boats during a resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands.

A Filipino sailor lost his thumb in the incident.

Tokyo and Beijing are also at loggerheads over disputed islands, controlled by Japan, in the East China Sea.

Kihara said Japan was "gravely concerned" about the "escalation of regional tensions".

**Chinese scientists identify super moss able to 'survive' in Mars**

Scientists have identified a super resilient desert moss species in China's western region of Xinjiang that could help sustain possible colonies on Mars, a study by the Chinese Academy of Sciences showed. When subjected to conditions that simulate the environment on Mars, the moss - *Syntrichia Caninervis* - was found to be able to withstand extreme dryness, ultra-low temperatures and radiation, the academy said in a research paper published in *The Innovation* journal last week. The moss could serve as the "basis for the establishment and maintenance of the ecosystem by contributing to oxygen production, carbon sequestration, and soil fertility", the researchers said in the study, published on July 1. "(It) can help drive the atmospheric, geological, and ecological processes required for other higher plants and animals while facilitating the creation of new habitable environments conducive to long-term human settlement," the paper added.

**Samsung workers strike in pay row**

The National Samsung Electronics Union (NSEU) workers shout slogans during a general strike to disrupt production in front of the Samsung Electronics Nano City Hwaseong Campus in Hwaseong, South Korea, yesterday. The head of a union representing tens of thousands of employees warned that the three-day general strike over pay and benefits could impact memory chip production.

# Australia imposes night curfew in outback town

Reuters  
Sydney

Australian police ordered three nights of curfew yesterday in the outback tourist town of Alice Springs after several incidents of violence, including an alleged assault on four off-duty police officers.

Northern Territory police commissioner Michael Murphy said "significant harm and civil disturbances" had occurred over the last 72 hours in Alice Springs.

The officers were attacked when they were walking home and it was not immediately known if the offenders identified them as police, Murphy told reporters. The curfew will be in force from 10pm to 6am local time.

Under new laws introduced in May, the police commissioner has

the power to impose lockdowns for three days to control any violent incidents, and can ask the government for an extension.

"If I believe an extension is required I will put that in writing ... about the reasons why I think that should occur," he said.

A two-week youth curfew was declared in March in Alice Springs after a mass brawl involving 150 people. Community leaders have long identified alcohol abuse as a major factor behind violence.

"The offending in Alice Springs over the last few days has been unacceptable," the territory's chief minister, Eva Lawler, told a news conference yesterday.

"The curfew will provide police extra powers to get on top of the situation on the ground in Alice Springs.

"This is exactly why my government passed curfew legislation in May?"

# Yoon to discuss N Korea 'threat' to Europe at Nato

Reuters  
Seoul

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said he would discuss with Nato leaders the distinct threat North Korea poses to Europe by deepening military ties with Russia, warning that Moscow must choose between the two Koreas where its true interests lie.

It "depends entirely" on Russia where it wants to take future ties with South Korea, Yoon said, adding that Seoul would make a decision on weapons support for Ukraine based on how a new military pact between Moscow and Pyongyang plays out.

"Military co-operation between Russia and North Korea poses a distinct threat and grave challenge to the peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in Europe," Yoon said.

The remarks came in a written response to Reuters' questions ahead of a visit to Washington for a Nato summit. Yoon, who became the first South Korean leader to attend a Nato summit in 2022, departed yesterday for the Washington event, his third time attending such a meeting.

Together with Australia, Japan and New Zealand, South Korea makes up the four Asia-Pacific partners joining in the talks on July 10 and 11. Relations between South Korea and Russia have soured as Moscow re-

ceives shipments of ballistic missiles and artillery from Pyongyang for its war against Ukraine. Both Russia and North Korea deny such deals. Russia has called South Korea "the most friendly among unfriendly countries"; with President Vladimir Putin saying it would be making "a big mistake" if it decided to supply arms to Ukraine.

South Korea protested when Putin visited Pyongyang in June and signed a treaty with leader Kim Jong-un that covers mutual defence.

"North Korea is clearly a menace to the international society," Yoon said in his comments. "I hope that Russia will sensibly decide which side - the South or the North - is

more important and necessary for its own interests."

He added, "The future of ROK-Russia relations depends entirely on Russia's actions," referring to South Korea by its official name, the Republic of Korea.

Yoon has pushed for greater security ties with Europe and other US allies to deter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

At the same time, he has looked to boost the South's role in global security, on issues such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rivalry between China and the US.

When asked if he would authorise weapons for Ukraine, Yoon said South Korea would look at "the

level and substance of military co-operation between Russia and North Korea."

That would include areas such as arms dealing, transfers of military technology and assistance with strategic materials, he added.

Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council which approved sanctions resolutions until 2017, has engaged in an "illegal" military partnership with North Korea, Yoon said, adding that it was troubling to consider what help it might be giving Pyongyang in return.

There will be a clear "negative" impact on South Korea's ties with Russia if it continues to violate UN resolutions, he added.

Before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, it was South Korea's fifth-largest export destination, while Russia was a key supplier of energy to South Korea, the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies says.

South Korea will take its partnership with Nato to a new level in September, through a cyber defence exercise in which it plans to host Nato member states, organised by the country's intelligence agency, Yoon said.

Leaders are gathering in Washington for the summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation that will also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the military alliance.



# Modi lands in Russia for first visit since Ukraine offensive

**AFP**  
Moscow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Russia yesterday, as the Indian leader treaded a fine line between maintaining a longstanding relationship with Moscow

and courting closer Western security ties.

The visit is Modi's first since Russia launched its campaign in Ukraine and since he was returned to power last month as leader of the world's most populous country.

"I look forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral co-operation with my friend President Vladimir

Putin and sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues," said Modi in a statement. "We seek to play a supportive role for a peaceful and stable region."

Moscow remains a key supplier of cut-price oil and weapons to India, but the Kremlin's isolation from the West and blooming friendship with Beijing have im-

pacted its time-honoured partnership with New Delhi.

Western powers have in recent years also cultivated ties with India as a bulwark against China and its growing influence in the Asia-Pacific, while pressuring it to distance itself from Russia.

Modi last visited Russia in 2019 and hosted Putin in New Delhi two

years later, weeks before Russia began its offensive against Ukraine.

"Indian Prime Minister Modi arrived in Russia on an official visit," state media agencies confirmed yesterday afternoon.

India has shied away from explicit condemnation of Russia ever since and has abstained on United Nations resolutions censuring

Moscow. But Russia's fight with Ukraine has also had a human cost for India.

New Delhi said in February it was pushing the Kremlin to send back some of its citizens who had signed up for "support jobs" with the Russian military, following reports some were killed after being forced to fight in Ukraine.

# Jobs, rural India 'likely to be focus of new Modi govt's first budget'

**Reuters**  
Mumbai

The first budget by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new government may tilt towards, but not pivot to welfare spending, with a focus on rural economy and job creation, economists at Goldman Sachs said in a note yesterday.

The budget proposal for the financial year ending March 2025 will be presented on July 23, the government said over the weekend.

Goldman economists expect the government to stick to its fiscal deficit target of 5.1% of GDP set in the interim budget but said it will likely make an "overarching statement" about long-term economic policy.

"We see an emphasis on job creation through labour-intensive manufacturing, credit for micro, small and medium enterprises, continued focus on services exports by expanding global capability centres, and a thrust on domestic food supply chain," Santanu Sengupta, chief India economist at the Wall Street bank wrote.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party failed to win a majority on its own in national elections this year and returned to power with the help of allies. Post-poll surveys showed that unemployment and inflation were key concerns among voters, particularly outside of urban areas.

While the Indian economy

is seen growing at a fast clip of 7.2% this year, job creation has lagged.

"Even 7% GDP growth might not be able to fulfil the job requirement over the next decade," Citi's chief India economist Samiran Chakraborty said in a note last week, adding that growth of close to 7% will generate 8mn to 9mn jobs per year, short of the 11mn to 12mn needed.

The federal labour department, yesterday, countered this to say its estimates suggest an average of over 20mn employment opportunities per year were created between 2017-18 to 2021-22.

Goldman expects the budget to push labour-intensive manufacturing through fiscal incentives across sectors like toys, textiles and apparel manufacturing, along with commercial aircraft manufacturing.

Citi, in a report, said the government could consider extending its flagship production-linked incentive scheme with a focus on "more domestic value addition and explicit employment targets."

Almost two-thirds of manufacturing jobs are in low-skilled labour-intensive sectors, Citi said, without specifying whether these announcements would be made in the budget.

Goldman also expects a focus on agricultural infrastructure and incentives to increase domestic production of key crops as a way to target high food inflation, which has been running close to 8% for many months.



People walk on a waterlogged street after heavy rains in Mumbai, India, yesterday.

# Heavy rains in Mumbai hit transport and shut schools

**Reuters**  
Mumbai

Heavy rains flooded roads and railway lines yesterday in India's financial capital Mumbai, disrupting flights and forcing the closure of schools and colleges.

Just ahead of the morning rush hour, more than 11.8 inches of rain lashed the city of 12mn in the six hours through 7am (0130 GMT), civic officials said in a statement. More heavy showers were forecast, accompanying a high tide of 14ft in the coastal city.

"There is heavy traffic on the roads and rail lines too have been affected," Eknath Shinde, chief minister of Maharashtra, the western state whose capital is Mumbai, said on X, urging people to stay indoors.

Mumbai commuters waded through knee-

deep water that partially submerged vehicles in many areas, while traffic clogged the city's Eastern and Western Express highways.

Water on the tracks forced railway authorities to cancel some long-distance trains. Television images showed some suburban passenger trains halted on inundated lines and some commuters walking on tracks to reach their destination.

"Mumbai and rain-induced flooding is an annual occurrence. My BMW car is stuck in the floodwater," Anil Bore told ANI news agency.

India's seasonal monsoon rains, which start at the end of May, bring respite after a scorching summer but have also triggered widespread flooding in recent years.

In Bihar state in the east, separate cases of lightning strikes killed 12 people, taking the toll from such incidents to 20 since the start of

July, a state government official said.

More than 2mn people have also been affected by rivers flooding in northeastern Assam, where the Kaziranga National Park, home to the rare one-horned rhinoceros, was inundated. Six of the animals drowned, authorities said on Sunday.

Assam authorities said 66 people have died in floods and rain-related incidents since May. Flooding has also affected 31 villages in Uttar Pradesh state on the Nepal border, the state government said.

Torrential monsoon rains have triggered floods and landslides in Nepal, where at least 11 people were killed.

In Bangladesh, more than 2mn people were affected by the third wave of flooding since May, with 300,000 stranded in the north, officials from the disaster management ministry said.

## Amazon protest in UK



TUC assistant general secretary Kate Bell carries a box containing a petition against union busting, during a protest outside the Amazon headquarters, as voting begins in a workers' rights ballot, in London, Britain, yesterday.

# India government's new criminal laws opposed

**Reuters**  
New Delhi

Indian lawyers and activists are urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to put on hold three sets of new criminal laws, arguing they will increase litigation in an already overburdened justice system and give excessive powers to police.

India this month replaced its criminal justice system - the Indian Penal Code of 1860, the 1973 Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 - with new laws. The new laws, in force since July 1, expand police powers on pre-trial detention of an accused and introduce the death penalty for gang-rape of women aged under 18, among other provisions. They also mandate judges to issue written rulings within 45 days after a trial

ends and for charges to be framed within 60 days of the first court hearing. Indian lawyers fear old cases could continue to drag on as the ruling deadlines apply only to new cases after July 1. And there is confusion which laws - old or new - will apply to cases registered after July 1 for a crime committed before that date. "It only increases and complicates work for lawyers," said Delhi-based lawyer Shadan Farasat, adding that many provisions will need to be interpreted afresh by courts which could increase litigation.

India says thousands of judiciary officials, public prosecutors and police officers have been trained in how to apply the new laws. Modi's government says there are "various misconceptions" being spread about the laws which are "victim-centric" and will make the system "most modern" in the world.

## UK court hears tax evasion case against influencer Andrew Tate

A UK court yesterday heard a civil fraud case alleging that controversial influencer Andrew Tate and his brother are "serial tax evaders", in the latest legal issue for the US-born Britons. Tate and his brother Tristan are awaiting criminal trial in Romania, over accusations they formed an organised criminal network in early 2021 there and in the UK. The former professional kickboxer and his brother face charges of human trafficking, rape and forming a criminal group to sexually exploit women. In the new civil case in London, Westminster Magistrates' Court is weighing claims that the siblings failed to pay any taxes on £21mn (\$27mn) of revenue from their online businesses. Devon and Cornwall Police, in southwest England, have lodged the case against them and a third person - referred to only as J - over the allegedly unpaid tax from earnings between 2014 and 2022.

# UK premier says economy is 'in a bad state'

**Reuters**  
London

Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday described the British economy as "in a bad state", saying his new government would make the decisions needed to bring about change.

"The economy is in a bad state, I think the whole country knows that. That's why there was such a strong mandate for the incoming Labour government for change," Starmer, who led his party to a landslide election win last week, said.

"What we now have to do is to get

on and deliver that change."

Earlier, Finance Minister Rachel Reeves set out plans to increase house building, unblock infrastructure projects and attract private investment as part of a new "national mission" to drive economic growth.

Reeves and Prime Minister Keir Starmer agreed at the weekend on first steps to show they were moving quickly to tackle deep-seated problems.

"We know we can't turn things around overnight. We face a dire inheritance. But this is our downpayment," Britain's first female finance minister said in a speech in Westminster.

Reeves said the government

would restore mandatory house-building targets for local authorities, fund the hiring of more planning officers, speed up planning approval for infrastructure projects and prioritise unresolved planning decisions.

To boost the green energy sector she said the government would accelerate the development of large projects by assessing them nationally and not locally, and end an effective ban on onshore wind farms.

"There is no time to waste," she said. Reeves and Starmer face one of the toughest to-do lists of any incoming government, needing to drive growth to help finance in-

creased spending on public services without breaking a pledge not to raise the main taxes paid by working people.

That is a challenge given Britain's economy has been the second-weakest in the G7 since the Covid pandemic, with British economic growth this year set to be below 1%.

Living standards have stagnated since 2010, public debt is at almost 100% of national economic output and tax as a share of GDP is on track to rise to the highest level since just after World War II.

Reeves said she was willing to take difficult decisions to reignite growth even where there may be local opposition to projects.

"We will not succumb to a status quo which responds to the existence of trade-offs by always saying no, and relegates the national interest below other priorities," she said.

"Those difficult decisions have been ducked and dived and deferred for the last 14 years. I think you can see today that I mean business."

Reeves said she had ordered a report on the state of the country's "spending inheritance" and would present the results before parliament's summer break, before holding a full tax-and-spend budget later in the year.

Raoul Ruparel, who advised former Conservative prime minister Theresa May, said the report

was likely to show the budget plans inherited by Labour were not credible, with their reliance on more spending cuts for stretched public services.

"So (it) will pave the way for some more radical changes to tax and spending plans potentially," Ruparel - now director of the Boston Consulting Group's Centre for Growth - said.

Reeves, a former Bank of England economist, said Britain would once again be able to offer business a sense of stability, after many international investors were put off by the 2016 vote to leave the European Union and the rapid succession of prime ministers that followed.



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Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

**Deputy Managing Editor**

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
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**GULF TIMES**

## Italy firms bridge skills gap with own schooling

After years of informal work as a farm labourer, Federico Olivieri, 29, could not believe it when a huge building site appeared next to his home in Sicily with training on offer for the numerous specialised jobs required.

The programme by Italy's largest construction group Webuild is among a growing number of 'academies' run and financed by companies frustrated by many job-seekers lacking the know-how.

"We are being proactive about the problem. If the skills aren't there, then we will create them ourselves," Webuild's Chief HR, Organisation & Systems Officer Gianluca Grondona told Reuters of the group's programme, which it launched in November.

Skill mismatches are an international problem but for Italy, with the lowest employment rate in the EU and productivity that has stagnated for more than two decades, it is acute.

Despite a large pool of people seeking work or outside the labour market, vacancy rates stood at 2.5% in the first quarter of 2024, in line with the EU average, data from European Union statistics agency Eurostat shows. This compares with 2.8% in France and 0.9% in Spain in the same period.

Vocational schools and colleges are fewer and less popular in Italy than in most European countries, think-tank Prometeia highlighted in a June report, and even those that there are fail to produce students with the right expertise.

### Italy faces a problem not only of skills but also of numbers

infrastructure projects as part of its post-Covid recovery plan, worth about €200bn (\$214bn).

Big firms like Webuild, shipbuilder Fincantieri, and state railway group Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) are taking matters into their own hands.

On top of its apprenticeships, FS liaises with universities and schools to offer students more targeted courses.

"As the company changes, skills change and we need specific capabilities, particularly when it comes to digital and artificial intelligence-based jobs," said Adriano Mureddu, its Chief Human Resources Officer.

Olivieri, who trained as an agronomist, was frustrated by a succession of temporary, underpaid contracts in a Sicilian agricultural sector undercut by cheap imports of citrus fruit.

He joined Webuild's programme this year and now works with tunnel-boring machines at its site on Sicily's eastern coast.

"The courses are an incredible opportunity for those who are willing to learn something new ... you can't miss a chance like this," he said.

Webuild aims to source from its work academies some 3,000 people out of 10,000 new hires it envisages over the next three years. The academies are close to its infrastructure work sites, mainly in southern regions where unemployment is high.

Lorenzo Esposito Corcione, a 19-year-old who studied at nautical school in Genoa, is one of 80 people hired by Fincantieri after being trained under its 'Masters of the Sea' programme launched eight months ago. The programme drew 17,000 applicants.

"Without the course I wouldn't be here," Esposito Corcione told Reuters at the end of his shift as an electrician fitter in the shipyard of the north-eastern port of Monfalcone.

"There is a world of difference between what I studied in school and what is actually being done here in the yard."

Italy faces a problem not only of skills but also of numbers. It has one of the world's oldest populations and lowest fertility rates at 1.2 children per woman and meanwhile, the baby-boomers of the 1960s are now retiring. This means in the next five years Italy will need 3.1m to 3.6m new workers, business group Unioncamere estimates.

By 2050, Italy will have almost 5m fewer people, and more than a third of them will be over 65, national statistics office ISTAT predicts. Younger blood is badly needed in a host of industries, from construction and tourism to agriculture.

Despite its anti-immigration rhetoric, Giorgia Meloni's right-wing government last year quietly raised quotas for work visas for non-EU citizens to 452,000 for the period 2023-2025, an increase of nearly 150% from the previous three years. Italy has attracted workers from elsewhere in the EU, despite its wages being relatively low, but this has not helped resolve its skills mismatch. For now, the academies and training offered by big firms are alleviating the problem, providing priceless opportunities to people like Pasquale Infante, 28, who has just starting work as a pipe fitter at Fincantieri's Marghera plant near Venice.

"These programmes are good for workers and good for companies... they are teaching people the skills they need," he said. — Reuters

## In the heat of the moment



A demonstrator is detained during a protest against fossil fuels outside the Citi Bank headquarters in New York City, US, yesterday. (Reuters)

## Economics of philanthropy, now a mass phenomenon

By Michael Spence  
Fort Lauderdale

The biggest election year in history is unfolding at a time when rising wealth and income inequality are fuelling polarisation and undermining social cohesion in many countries. Average income levels and overall economic performance seem to make little difference; widening gaps between haves and have-nots are becoming a practically universal phenomenon, and they increasingly translate into sharply divergent visions of what constitutes economic and social progress. This makes governance difficult, at best.

If formal governance mechanisms are impaired by seemingly intractable political polarisation, how can we address important challenges, like improving equality of opportunity, building sustainable economies, and delivering critical public goods? One answer is philanthropy.

Once considered a preserve of the wealthiest few, philanthropy today is a mass phenomenon. Crowdfunding platforms enable small donors to support all kinds of people and projects, and volunteers of all income levels devote their time and energy to charitable organisations. But if wealth is accumulating rapidly at the top of the distribution, it would make sense to tap the wealthiest cohort to fund universally beneficial projects.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates offers one model of such philanthropy: the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, of which he is co-chair, has had a far-reaching

impact in a range of areas, from global health to sustainability. Large investors are also playing an increasingly important role in basic research, which can also be considered a kind of philanthropy, depending on how the results are shared and used.

In the 1970s, more than 70% of funding for basic, non-proprietary research came from government. That number has declined steadily as business and philanthropic funding has expanded. But when it comes to research into digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence in the United States, government accounts for just one-third of funding. The rest comes from tech giants like Microsoft and Google (one-third) and philanthropists and philanthropic organisations (the remaining third).

In other words, the private sector now accounts for two-thirds of funding for basic research – most of which is open-source and open-access – into transformative technologies like AI. There is precedent for such corporate involvement in basic research. AT&T's Bell Laboratories was responsible for a range of critical innovations, from transistors to photovoltaic cells, before antitrust action dismantled its parent company. At a time when regulators are attempting to determine how best to regulate Big Tech, the fate of Bell Labs is worth remembering.

Philanthropy is often viewed as an expression of individual empathy, but it is more complex than that. In fact, philanthropy is a complex social phenomenon shaped by a range of considerations and incentives, including direct financial incentives. In the US and elsewhere, charitable giving is

encouraged by making donations tax-deductible. But other benefits – say, to the philanthropists' reputations – also carry considerable weight.

As Jonathan K Nelson and Richard J Zeckhauser show in their 2008 book *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art*, this was as true in the fifteenth century as it is today. At the time, Italy's wealthy wished to advance the arts and, to a lesser extent, science; signal their wealth and the achievements they created it; and demonstrate their piety in a society dominated by the Catholic Church.

The Church provided a way for the wealthy to achieve all of these goals: it built cathedrals with numerous chapels around the central nave, and then sold rights to decorate and name the chapels to wealthy families, who would commission great artists to produce paintings, frescoes, and sculptures. With that, the Church was funded, art flourished, and the wealthy advanced their philanthropic agendas, enhanced their reputations, and even gained a degree of immortality.

This experience highlights the importance of signalling mechanisms, networks, and recognition not only in encouraging but also in directing philanthropic activity. There is a reason why major donors to top universities, for example, get their names emblazoned on buildings and attached to major research initiatives: like the art patrons of the Renaissance, they want to support human advancement and enhance their personal status, especially in a network they care about. As philosophers from Aristotle to Hegel have argued,

recognition – especially for helping others – is a fundamental human desire.

Like universities, other elite institutions – such as art galleries, libraries, museums, orchestras, and opera houses – attract philanthropic giving partly by ensuring that donors get the recognition they crave. But many vital causes, including support for those who are struggling to make ends meet and to create opportunities for their children, lack similarly powerful mechanisms for attracting donor funding.

While philanthropy is not a substitute for government action in areas like health, education, and the distribution of income and wealth, it can certainly help – if the right incentives are put in place. To this end, we must design institutions that deliver reputational and network benefits to donors supporting causes like poverty reduction and public health. The key missing ingredient appears to be an intermediary that acts as a respected impact investor and forms the core of the signalling mechanism.

More fundamentally, we need to stop applauding wealth for its own sake. While wealth can signal certain kinds of achievement, it becomes worth celebrating only when it is deployed in the service of human well-being. — Project Syndicate

• Michael Spence, a Nobel laureate in economics, is Emeritus Professor of Economics and a former dean of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University and a co-author (with Mohamed A El-Erian, Gordon Brown, and Reid Liddow) of *Permacrisis: A Plan to Fix a Fractured World*.



IMPACT: They may be no longer together but the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has had a far-reaching impact in a range of areas, from global health to sustainability. (Reuters)

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# Le Pen, Orban far-right groups unite in EU parliament

Marine Le Pen's party yesterday united with the camp of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to form a new far-right bloc in the EU parliament, a day after suffering a surprise defeat in French elections.

Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 28-year-old lieutenant and chief of her National Rally (RN) party, will take the reins of the Patriots for Europe group, French lawmaker Jean-Paul Garraud said at its public launch in Brussels.

With 84 members from 12 countries – the largest contingent being the RN with 30 lawmakers – the new group overtakes Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's far-right bloc to become the third-biggest force in the European Parliament.

"Our long-term goal is to change European Union policymaking," Kinga Gal, a member of Orban's Fidesz party named as Bardella's first vice-president, told reporters. "Our new group will work to preserve Europe's Indo-Christian roots, will strive for the strongest protection of Europe's external borders... and will work for a strong and competitive Europe," she said.

Founded by Orban just over a week ago, the group becomes the parliament's third-largest bloc, after the conservative European People's Party (EPP) of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and the Socialists & Democrats.

French voters relegated the anti-immigration RN to third spot in

legislative elections on Sunday despite opinion polls and a first-round vote suggesting it was on track to come first.

France's left-wing New Popular Front came top but failed to win enough seats for an overall majority.

Bardella, who sits in the EU parliament, had vowed late Sunday that his party's lawmakers would "play fully their role in a big group that will weigh on the balance of power in Europe".

One of his six vice-presidents of the new grouping is an Italian general, Roberto Vannacci, who was suspended from the army in February after writing a book claiming gay people were not "normal" and saying a black Italian volleyball player's features

"do not represent Italian-ness". The RN has also had past financial and ideological ties with Russia, to which Orban remains defiantly friendly.

"Maybe they should call it the Russian Patriots, seeing the support Viktor Orban's party gives to Vladimir Putin," said Greens MEP Terry Reintke.

Far-right parties did well in several countries in EU parliament elections a month ago, with the RN trouncing French President Emmanuel Macron's centrist camp by such a margin he felt compelled to call a snap election.

But in the EU legislature, the far-right remains splintered. Previously, the biggest faction was the European Conservatives

and Reformists, dominated by the Brothers of Italy party of Meloni, who has toned down her previous euroscepticism in power.

The other previous main grouping was the Identity and Democracy party, which the RN held sway over and which took a more anti-EU stance.

Hungary's Fidesz, which left the EPP in 2021 just before it was about to be kicked out, had been seeking alliances to promote its nationalist and populist policies.

On June 30, Orban announced the launch of his Patriots of Europe vehicle to build such a grouping.

Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the centrist ANO of former Czech prime minister Andrej Babis signed up

immediately.

Five other parties – the Party for Freedom (PVV) of Dutch anti-Islam firebrand Geert Wilders, Portugal's far-right Chega party, Spain's Vox, the Danish People's Party and the Flemish nationalist pro-independence Vlaams Belang – subsequently followed suit.

Matteo Salvini, who heads Italy's League, announced yesterday his party too was ready to join, hailing the formation of the Patriots for Europe as "determinant to change the future of this Europe".

"It's a patriotic movement that we brought to life, and I think it is going to do a lot of good for Europe," Harald Vilimsky of Austria's FPÖ told the launch event.

## France in limbo after Macron gamble deepens deadlock

AFP  
Paris

Emmanuel Macron refused his prime minister's resignation yesterday, as the president scrambled to maintain France's credibility after his snap election gamble failed to break political deadlock.

The left-wing New Popular Front (NFP) won most seats in Sunday's second-round parliamentary vote, defying polls to beat both Macron's centrists and Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN).

But no group wields an outright majority and no obvious candidate for prime minister has emerged.

Many in France were joyously relieved by the outcome, and cheering crowds gathered in Paris to celebrate Le Pen's defeat, but potentially divisive talks on forming a new government were just beginning, three weeks before

Paris hosts the Olympics.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal visited the Elysee Palace to submit his resignation to Macron, but was asked to remain in power in a caretaker capacity to see out the Games – and reassure the international community and the markets that France still has a government.

Macron's office said he had thanked Attal for leading the centrist alliance in European and legislative elections and asked him to stay "for the time being in order to ensure the stability of the country".

In a sign of concern about the financial impact of a political crisis in the EU's second-largest economy, business leaders' group Medef urged any new government to offer "clear and stable economic policy".

Meanwhile, ratings agency S&P warned that France's credit score would be "under pressure" if Paris does not "reduce its sizeable public deficit", less than two

months after its latest downgrade. The Paris stock exchange opened 0.49% down, rebounded and then closed in negative territory as France digested the situation, unprecedented in recent history.

International reaction was muted and mixed.

France's EU partners are relieved that Le Pen's eurosceptic outfit will not come to power, where they could endanger future European integration and Western support for Ukraine.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters he was "relieved", adding that "we hope that the president and the elected MPs will manage to bring about a constructive government".

Moscow, meanwhile, tried to mask its disappointment.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia would have preferred a win by a party "ready to make the efforts to restore our bilateral relationships" but now harboured neither "hope nor particular illusion on this matter".

## Democrats uncertain but Biden won't abandon campaign

President Joe Biden vowed to push on with his reelection bid yesterday, dismissing the concerns of some fellow Democrats on Capitol Hill and donors that his persistence could cost their party the White House and Congress in the November 5 US election.

Biden, 81, said any candidates who doubt his ability should challenge him at the Democratic National Convention in August – an effort that stands no chance of success unless he lets the delegates he won in primaries this year consider other candidates.

"The bottom line here is that I am not going anywhere," Biden said in a phone call he placed to MSNBC's *Morning Joe* programme. He repeated that message to donors on a private call later in the day, according to a source on the call.

Biden faces a critical week as he tries to shore up a campaign that has been on defence since a shaky June 27 debate against Republican Donald Trump, which raised questions about his ability to do the job for another 4-1/2 years.

Several congressional Democrats have called for him to drop out. Senator Dick Durbin, the chamber's No. 2 Democrat, told reporters Biden's candidacy "will be thoroughly discussed this week, as it should." He said he had spoken with about a dozen of his colleagues, who held a range of views.

A growing number of Democratic lawmakers have voiced concern that Biden's poor public approval ratings, plus concerns about his age and ability, could hurt the party's prospects for retaining the Senate, which they control by a 51-49 majority, and winning back the House, where Republicans have a 219-213 majority.

Biden's halting debate performance has prompted some to question whether he was suffering from a neurological disorder such as Parkinson's disease, which can cause slurred speech and halting movement.

White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden was evaluated and given a clean bill of health in February and is not being treated for the disease. Biden's doctor has said further testing is not warranted, she said.

## Russia missile attack kills 36

Reuters  
Kyiv

Russia blasted the main children's hospital in Kyiv with a missile in broad daylight yesterday and rained missiles down on other cities across Ukraine, killing at least 36 civilians in the deadliest wave of air strikes for months.

Parents holding babies walked in the street outside the hospital, dazed and sobbing after the rare daylight aerial attack. Windows had been smashed and panels ripped off, and hundreds of Kyiv residents were helping to clear debris.

"It was scary. I couldn't breathe, I was trying to cover (my baby). I was trying to cover him with this cloth so that he could breathe," Svitlana Kravchenko, 33, told Reuters.

The government proclaimed a day of mourning today for one of the worst air attacks of the war, which it said demonstrated that Ukraine urgently needs an upgrade of its air defences from its Western allies.

Air defences shot down 30 of 38 missiles, the air force said. Fifty civilian buildings, including residential houses, a business centre and two medical facilities were damaged in Kyiv, the central cities of Kryvyi Rih and Dnipro and two eastern cities, the interior minister said.

An online video obtained by Reuters showed a missile falling from the sky towards the children's hospital followed by a large explo-

sion. The location of the video was verified from visible landmarks. The Security Service of Ukraine identified the missile as an Kh-101 cruise missile.

Twenty-two people, including two children, were killed in Kyiv and 82 more were wounded in the main missile volley and another strike that came two hours later, officials said.

Eleven were confirmed dead in the Dnipropetrovsk region and 64 were wounded, regional officials said. Three people were killed in the eastern town of Pokrovsk where missiles hit an industrial facility, the governor said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine would retaliate and called on Kyiv's Western allies to give a firm response to the attack. "We will retaliate against these people, we will deliver a powerful response from our side to Russia, for sure. The question to our partners is: can they respond?" Zelensky who is visiting Poland said during a joint press conference with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Diplomats said the UNSC would meet today at the request of Britain, France, Ecuador, Slovenia and the US.

The Russian Defence Ministry said its forces had carried out strikes on defence industry targets and aviation bases in Ukraine. Ukraine's Prosecutor General said he discussed the attacks with International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan, adding that his office would be sharing evidence with the ICC.

## Playwright, director jailed for 'justifying terrorism' by Russia

AFP  
Moscow

A Russian military court yesterday sentenced a playwright and a theatre director to six years in prison on charges of "justifying terrorism" in a play about women marrying jihadists in Syria.

The judge sentenced director Yevgeniya Berkovich and writer Svetlana Petrychuk after moving their trial behind closed doors.

The women's arrest in May last year sent shock waves through Russia's artistic community, which has faced unprecedented pressure from the Kremlin since Russia sent troops to Ukraine.

The length of the sentence announced by the judge yesterday was the same as requested by prosecutors last week and one year less than the maximum possible.

Berkovich, 39, has written poems criticising Russia's military offensive in Ukraine and her supporters said they believed the court case could be linked to this.

Rachel Denber, deputy director for Europe and Central Asia at Human Rights Watch, wrote on X that the women were sentenced



Director Zhenya Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petrychuk, who were arrested in May 2023 over the play *Finist the Bright Falcon*, attend a court hearing in Moscow yesterday. (Reuters)

"on utterly absurd charges, in an unfair trial that is blatant retaliation against Berkovich for speaking out against Russia's war on Ukraine".

Human rights group Amnesty International said the pair were "being targeted simply for exercising the right to freedom of expression" and called for their immediate release.

The two women were brought in for the sentencing wearing handcuffs and sat in a glass-walled dock in a courtroom heavily guarded by police with masked faces, AFP journalists saw.

Berkovich, wearing a white shirt, tried to smile and show a victory sign to supporters, while Petrychuk, 44, in a blue dress,

looked tense. Defence lawyer Ksenia Karpinskaya said after the sentence that "today was an absolutely illegal, unfair hearing" and that the women were "absolutely innocent", to applause from those present.

"Of course we will appeal against this decision," Karpinskaya said, condemning the "cruel sentence".

"Today at the court hearing, Svetlana said that she... will never plead guilty for something she did not do. Yevgeniya said the same," the lawyer said.

When the judge read out the women's sentence, Berkovich's husband, Nikolai Matveyev, who works for an independent theatre company, burst into tears.



A woman touches a patient near Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital that was damaged during Russian missile strikes in Kyiv yesterday. (Reuters)

# Kenyan court declares Pak journalist's fatal shooting unlawful

## Rejects police story, orders compensation pending state appeal, widow hails 'justice'

AFP, Reuters  
Nairobi/Islamabad

A Kenyan court yesterday found police acted unlawfully over the 2022 killing of an award winning Pakistani journalist following a complaint by his widow, who welcomed finally getting "justice" in the long-running case.

Arshad Sharif, a strident critic of Pakistan's powerful military establishment, was shot in the head when Kenyan police opened fire on his car in October two years ago.

His widow Javeria Siddique and two journalist groups in Kenya filed a complaint last year against top police and legal officials over the "arbitrary and unlawful killing" of Sharif and the respondents'

"consequent failure to investigate".

A two-member fact-finding team from Pakistan, who reconstructed the crime scene and examined the deceased's phones and computers, said in a 600-page report that Sharif's killing was a pre-planned murder.

Last October his widow, Javeria Siddique, sued Kenya police's paramilitary General Service Unit for her husband's wrongful death.

Yesterday, the High Court in Kajjado, a town south of Nairobi, rejected a police claim that the killing was a case of mistaken identity and that officers believed they were firing on a stolen vehicle involved in an abduction.

"The use of lethal force against Sharif by shooting him in the head was unlawful and unconstitutional," Judge Stella Mutuku ruled.

"Authorities violated Sharif's fundamental right to life."

Siddique, who followed the trial from Islamabad in Pakistan, expressed gratitude over the court's decision. "I cannot fully express my emotions, and I cannot



SPOTLIGHT: Arshad Sharif

bring Arshad back. However, I have set a precedent that those who kill a journalist cannot escape justice," the 36-year-old told AFP. "Today, hired killers are being punished."

The judge also awarded 10mn shillings (\$78,000) in compensation but granted the state's application to suspend the compensation decision for 30 days to al-

low it to file an appeal.

Siddique's lawyer Ochiel Dudley described the decision as a "great precedent for police accountability". He told AFP the judge found "Kenya violated Arshad Sharif's right to life, dignity, and freedom from torture, cruel, and degrading treatment".

In her ruling, Mutuku ordered Kenya's legal and police authorities to conclude their investigations into the case.

These respondents must "take responsible actions, including to punish and prosecute police officers who killed Arshad Sharif, if found culpable", she said.

Sharif fled Pakistan in August 2022, days after interviewing a senior opposition politician who said junior officers in Pakistan's military should disobey orders that went against "the will of the majority". He had several treason cases registered against him after a string of programmes challenging the merit of Imran Khan government's ouster in April, 2022.

The country has been ruled by the military for several decades of its 75-year history and criticism of the security establishment has long been seen as a red line.

Pakistan is ranked 152 out of 180 countries in a press freedom index compiled by Reporters without Borders, with journalists facing censorship and intimidation.

"In my country today, there is no press freedom whatsoever," said Siddique, adding that she was "not optimistic" about receiving justice in Pakistan.

But she added: "I finally feel that some form of justice has been achieved."

Police in Kenya are often accused by rights groups of using excessive force and carrying out unlawful killings.

The Ulster-educated Sharif specialised in investigative journalism and reported on many political events in Pakistan for national and international news organisations.

He was awarded the Pride of Performance – an official recognition from the government – for his outstanding contribution as a journalist. He was also a recipient of Agahi Award; Asian Investigative Media Award and War Correspondent Award. For his daring prowess, Sharif was a popular figure on the television circuit with his signature show *Power Play*.

# Qatar agriculture research finds success

The Agricultural Research Department at the Ministry of Municipality has succeeded in using gamma rays to produce new varieties of vegetables suitable for the environmental conditions in Qatar.



Hamad Sakit al-Shemmari

Hamad Sakit al-Shemmari, director of the Agricultural Research Department at the ministry, told local Arabic daily *Arrayah* that this modern technique has achieved high research and production results.

He also expected that a new variety of tomato produced through this technique will be revealed soon.

The department is making serious efforts to develop the meat and dairy production sector in the country by carrying out advanced research to select the best fodder that suit local conditions.

Accordingly, improved fodder have been developed, leading to a noticeable increase in meat and dairy production compared to the use of traditional fodder.

Further, the Plant Research Section at the Agricultural Research Department has successfully produced Al Labid fodder, which is rich in protein and fibre, consumes less water, and is tolerant of salinity and hot climate.

This is considered an important step towards achieving sustainability in the livestock sector and reducing the load on the country's scarce water resources.

The research stations under the department have undergone considerable development in employing modern technology, which yielded excellent results in various related fields.

For instance, the climate-controlled greenhouses were employed in agriculture, besides the use of automated and centralised fertilisation systems and the clean ag-

riculture methods.

Further, sophisticated irrigation methods have been used such as the open and closed hydroponics systems, which help in reducing the consumption of water and fertilisers.

Al-Shemmari further stressed the department's efforts to establish Qatar's position as a leading regional centre for date production and preservation, enhancing the quality and value of this product, and supporting efforts to diversify the national economy.

The official also pointed out that the department has sold 5,000 tissue-culture date palm saplings of the best varieties, such as Khalas, Khunaizi, Nabat Saif, and Barhi, since the start of the initiative a few months ago, and expects to sell 15,000 by the end of this year.



# Training on public health skills for action in emergencies held in Doha

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has hosted a training course on *Public Health Skills for Action in Complex Emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*, alongside experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The event welcomed 60 participants from 24 countries and four regions to Doha.

Dr Soha al-Bayat, the director of the MoPH's Health Emergencies Department, emphasised that Qatar fully supports the vision of the Global Health Emergency Corps (GHEC), and is keen to inspire broader participation in this crucial initiative.

"The GHEC initiative represents a shared commitment to building

surge capacity, emergency leadership, and a well-trained public health workforce," she said. "This training is not only intended to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to tackle public health challenges but also to foster a spirit of collaboration and partnership."

"The Eastern Mediterranean Region, like other regions worldwide, has faced increasingly complex public health threats, from infectious disease outbreaks to natural disasters and conflicts," Dr al-Bayat said. "The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and increasing complex health emergencies have brought to light significant challenges and highlighted the importance of a co-ordinated, global response."

"To effectively respond to these

challenges, we need a skilled and co-ordinated regional health workforce," she stressed.

The course is a critical investment in building surge capacity, fostering regional collaboration, and strengthening the regional health emergency workforce.

It aims to empower the next generation of leaders, ensuring that communities around the world are better prepared to face future health crises.

The intensive training course equips emergency responders and leaders with the knowledge, skills, and leadership capabilities needed to navigate complex emergencies.

The course is recognised as one of the best globally and involves a combination of theoretical learning and practical simulations.

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg



Participants of the training course.

School of Public Health took primary responsibility for developing the online modules and practical application.

They worked closely with The WHO in all design, content, and delivery matters. The course participants gained

crucial expertise to design and implement effective public health interventions in challenging emergency environments.



Philippine embassy officials at the opening of the *Xpressions* exhibition at M7. (Supplied picture)

# Xpressions at M7 highlights Qatar's thriving art scene

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

Qatar's thriving art scene is on full display at Msheireb Downtown Doha's M7, featuring an exhibition that showcases the works of eight Doha-based Filipino artists.

The show, titled *Xpressions* and organised by the Filipino Arts Society (FAS), highlights the range of styles and mediums employed by the artists, offering a glimpse into the vibrant nature of Filipino creativity.

On view until December at M7's Workinton (5th floor), the exhibition features the works of Alice Deleonio, Joan Ambi-Espinosa, Cecilia Galang, Wilma Lazaro, Arsenio Nido Jr, Adrian Aleluya, Rommel Lopena, and Eugene Espinosa.

Deleonio, a graphic designer and photographer, blends his fine arts degree and advertising arts background in his work in Qatar.

Ambi-Espinosa, inspired by her late father's artistic legacy, embraced her passion during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, transitioning from construction to a full-time art career.

Nido Jr, known as Arsenic Jr, specialises in scribble art, while Aleluya's watercolour scenes have earned her international recognition.

Her triumphs include winning in competitions at both the International Water Colour Masters and the Venice International Water Colour Festival.

Lopena, a multimedia artist with 10 years of experience, blends

photography, videography, and motion graphics to create compelling narratives.

Espinosa, adept in Realist and Impressionist styles, showcases his talent in portraiture and large-scale murals across various mediums.

Galang, a barista in Doha, transformed her artistic hobby into a burning passion.

Lazaro, after a career in banking and facilities management, also made a bold move to pursue her artistic calling.

Attending the recent opening (June 27) of the exhibition were officials from the Philippine embassy in Doha, led by vice-consul Monica Remy Calangian and cultural attaché Camille Manlapaz, underscoring the importance of this cultural event.

The styles showcased at *Xpressions* reflect the distinct journeys and artistic voices of each participating artist.

From Deleonio's dark surrealism and Galang's lively anime to Lazaro's introspective realism and Nido Jr's energetic scribble art, the exhibition is a celebration of the Filipino artistic spirit.

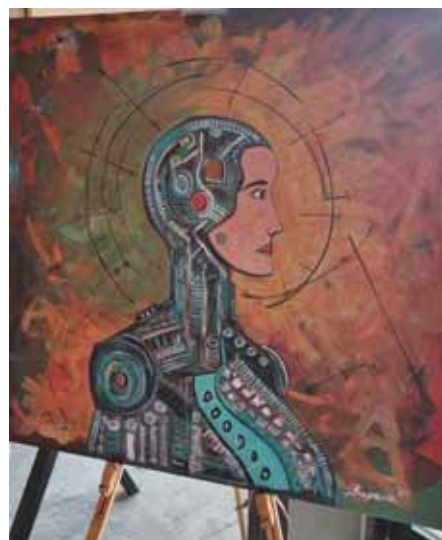
The FAS, a community of passionate artists, has created a unique cultural enclave in Doha.

It strives to showcase the richness of Filipino talent and creativity to the international community, offering a platform for cultural exchange and dialogue.

According to the FAS, the artists aim to bridge cultural divides by engaging the local community in a shared artistic exploration through exhibitions, workshops, and public murals.

Their works invite audiences to journey through diverse landscapes of human emotion and thought expressed through various crafts.

The exhibition provides a platform for these artists to share their unique perspectives, artistic journeys, and individual stories, offering a glimpse into the diverse and vibrant world of Filipino art.



The *Xpressions* exhibition at M7 displays the works of eight Doha-based Filipino artists, offering a glimpse into the vibrant nature of Filipino creativity. PICTURES: Joey Aguilar

