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SPORT | Page 4

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QF project to nurture girls' sporting talent

Sporting talent among girls is to be nurtured through Qatar Foundation's Creating Pathways Programme - the first focus of which will be on track and field, as announced at its launch yesterday in partnership with programme ambassador and Olympic gold medallist Sifan Hassan.

The Creating Pathways Programme, launched as part of Qatar Foundation's (QF) FIFA World Cup legacy plans, aims to encourage activity in sports for girls aged 12-16. Local mentors and trained coaches will lead the sessions, driving home to young people the importance of exercise, nutrition, and overall well-being.

Led by Olympic medallist Elizabeth McColgan, Director of Athletics at QF's CEO Office, the Women's Track and Field Programme, which is being rolled out this month, is the first of five elite sports programmes to be launched through this new sporting pathway. Initially targeting high-potential Qatari girls in a female-only training environment, the programme will later expand to af-



Sifan Hassan speaking at the launch of the programme yesterday.

ter-school and community-based sports initiatives.

Hassan, a Dutch middle- and long-distance runner who recently won one gold and two bronze medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics - and who has six Olympic medals in total - was praised for wearing the hijab when she stood on the podium in the French capital dur-

ing the games to receive her marathon gold medal. Speaking at the launch event at the Education City Stadium, she said: "As a refugee, I have been in difficult situations, but running helped me conquer my fear.

"Because of running, I am not afraid to fail, not afraid to take up challenges, and not afraid to make

mistakes, and that is what I would like pass on to the young girls in Qatar and the region. Girls everywhere hold a lot of promise - they just need some encouragement to believe in themselves, and that is what I will help them do."

McColgan said: "We are committed to promoting the participation of women and girls in sports and to providing a safe and welcoming environment for female athletes of all ages and skill levels. The Creating Pathways Programme has been designed with women in mind - healthy you, healthy body, healthy mind."

Explaining the purpose of the Creating Pathways Programme, Alexandra Chalot, Executive Director of Partnerships and Strategic Alignment, QF, said: "At Qatar Foundation, we promote and enable involvement in sports through the provision of accessible sporting opportunities to everyone, with our programmes reflecting different needs and cultural considerations.

"QF is harnessing the post-FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 excite-

ment to offer more opportunities for women and girls to engage in physical activity, contributing to the legacy vision of a healthier nation."

Working in partnership with the Qatar Olympic Committee, and in alignment with QOC's National Federation Development Strategy, the Creating Pathways Programme is the precursor to QF creating a Women's Sports Academy, which will launch in 2026/2027 and will aim to serve as a feeder into national team selection across a range of sports. The academy will be based at the Education City Stadium, a FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 venue, which, following the tournament, is now becoming a sporting hub for women and girls. The stadium's new role is central to QF's World Cup legacy programme, offering tailored sporting amenities and housing female sports clubs and organisations.

To register for the Women's Track and Field Programme, please visit: <https://educationcity.qa/feed/creating-pathways-track-and-field>

N Korea arms pose 'biggest' threat to Kyiv

The military aid North Korea provides to Russia, including large amounts of ammunition, is the most damaging for Ukraine, its intelligence chief Kyrylo Budanov said yesterday. "Our biggest problem from all these allies of Russia is from North Korea. Because with the volume of military products that they supply, they actually affect the intensity of the fighting," Budanov said. "There is a direct correlation. They are supplying huge volumes of artillery ammunition, which is critical," he said. **Page 8**

Trump vows to deport Haitians in Ohio city

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump pledged on Friday to conduct mass deportations of Haitian immigrants from the Ohio city of Springfield. "We will do large deportations in Springfield, Ohio," Trump said. The majority of the 15,000 Haitians in Springfield are there legally.

Switzerland unveils supercomputer 'Alps'

Switzerland yesterday inaugurated its new supercomputer called Alps - one of the world's fastest - which it hopes will help place the country first for trustworthy artificial intelligence solutions. The ETH Zurich university officially inaugurated Alps at the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS) in Lugano, southern Switzerland. In June, Alps was ranked as the world's sixth most powerful supercomputer.

UK PM breached rules governing donation

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has breached parliamentary rules by not declaring a wealthy businessman and Labour Party donor bought high-end clothes for his wife Victoria, the *Sunday Times* reported. According to the *Sunday Times*, Starmer, in power since July, faces an investigation after "neglecting to disclose" that major Labour donor Waheed Alli covered the cost of a personal shopper, clothes and alterations for his wife. The *Sunday Times* said the donations were declared but the clothes given to his wife were not.

EAA-ministry of finance-WB partnership to drive education



EAA, Ministry of Finance, World Bank Partner Up to Drive Impact for Global Education.

QNA
Doha

The Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, the Ministry of Finance, and the World Bank have announced

a transformative partnership to expand access to quality education globally.

In a press release issued by EAA, the foundation said that this collaboration comes in response to the urgent global challenges that have signifi-

cantly increased the number of out-of-school children and the pervasive learning deficits worldwide.

The partnership will see the development of innovative financial tools, including the potential design of education investment swaps. This novel approach will allow the conversion of debt in low- and middle-income countries into tangible education outcomes, offering a sustainable solution to both the global learning crisis and the heavy debt burdens these countries face.

It added that the trio will collaborate on designing and implementing co-financed programmes to retain children in schools and combat the alarming post-Covid learning poverty rate, estimated to affect 70% of the global student population. The focus will be on enhancing access to quality education in developing countries and fostering job creation for youth, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa region. **To Page 4**

Funeral held for Turkish-American activist killed in West Bank

Hundreds of people waving Turkish and Palestinian flags gathered for the funeral yesterday for Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, a Turkish-American activist killed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Turkiye's Vice-President Cevdet Yilmaz, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Parliament Speaker Numan Kurtulmus and main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Ozgur Ozel were among mourners at the ceremony in the Turkish Aegean coastal city of Didim. A guard of honour carried the 26-year-old's coffin, which was

draped with a Turkish flag. "The blood of Aysenur Eygi is as sacred as that of every Palestinian martyr, and we will follow it until the end. As the Turkish nation, we are fully committed. As a state, we are fully committed," Kurtulmus told reporters.

Eygi was killed on Sept. 6 as she took part in a protest against settlement expansion in the West Bank. Israel has acknowledged that its troops shot the activist, but says it was an unintentional act during a demonstration that turned violent. - **Reuters Page 6**



A relative of Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, mourns over her Turkish flag-draped coffin during the funeral ceremony at a cemetery in Didim, Turkiye.

21 killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza houses, school

AFP
Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency said yesterday that an Israeli air strike hit a house in Gaza City where displaced Palestinians had taken refuge, killing 11 people.

"We have recovered the bodies of 11 martyrs, including four children and three women, after an Israeli warplane hit a three-storey house of the Bustan family," agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said.

"Several families had taken refuge in the house targeted with a single missile without any prior warning," Bassal said, adding that many others were wounded.

Bassal said rescuers were con-

tinuing to search for people still missing.

The Israeli military said its forces had carried out a strike in the area overnight.

Bassal said Israeli forces carried out similar strikes in other parts of the Hamas-run territory overnight, killing at least 10 people.

Five people were killed in north-western Gaza City when an air strike hit a group of people near Dar Al-Arqam school, he said.

Further south, three others were killed in a strike in the Al-Mawasi area, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge, Bassal added.

Israel's military campaign has killed at least 41,182 people in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah's sec-



Displaced Palestinians line up to fill their containers with water in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

ond-in-command warned that an all-out war by Israel aimed at returning 100,000 displaced people to their homes in areas near the Lebanon border would displace "hundreds of thousands" more.

Naim Qassem, number two in the Iran-backed Lebanese group, was speaking after Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel was determined to restore security to its northern front.

Gallant told Israeli troops last week that "we are preparing for anything that may happen in the north".

In a speech in Beirut, Qassem said: "We have no intention of going to war, as we consider that this would not be useful.

"However, if Israel does unleash a war, we will face up to it - and there will be large losses on both sides," he said.



Qatar's environmental sustainability efforts highlighted at Rio forum

QNA
Rio De Janeiro

Qatar participated in the One Planet Network Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with a delegation chaired by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie (pictured above). The forum was held under

the theme "Reducing inequalities and achieving just transitions for all through sustainable consumption and production, including circular economy." HE Dr al-Subaie participated in the opening session and two ministerial panels, where he highlighted Qatar's significant efforts in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, contributing to the nation's achievements in sustainability.

HE the minister emphasised that these milestones are the result of forward-thinking strategies under Qatar National Vision 2030, which has driven initiatives like the National Climate Change Action Plan and the recently launched Third National Development Strategy. These frameworks focus on sustainable development through circular economy initiatives, research, innovation, and the responsible management of water

resources, waste, air quality, and biodiversity. On the sidelines of the forum, HE Dr al-Subaie met with Nepal's Minister of Forests and Environment Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, head of the forum Jorge Laguna-Celis, and several international officials to discuss topics of common interest, particularly in the environmental conservation and combating the effects of climate change. (QNA)

Private sector awarded 'waste recycling' deals

The Ministry of Municipality has awarded several waste management contracts to the private sector, aimed at enhancing companies' role in recycling and waste treatment as part of its strategy to promote sustainability efforts and achieve the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030.



Eng Hamad Jassim al-Bahr

Director of the Waste Recycling and Treatment Department at the Ministry of Municipality Eng. Hamad Jassim al-Bahr said that the contracts include the privatisation of all waste transfer stations in Qatar, the construction of a new engineered landfill, the rehabilitation of old landfills, and the operation of the Al Khor waste sorting station, which is designed to recover recyclable materials and differs technically from other transfer stations. Additionally, all cleaning operations in the northern region will be handed over to private companies.

He pointed out that handing these recycling projects to the private sector underscores the ministry's commitment to sustainable waste management and the circular economy, aiming to improve waste management efficiency in Qatar. He also highlighted that these

projects cater to a comprehensive waste management system, ensuring safe disposal. He noted the increasing interest from Qatari private companies in waste management, as evidenced by their participation in international exhibitions focused on the latest technologies and systems in order to applying them in Qatar.

Successful collaborations between the public and private sectors in waste management have already yielded significant results, including achieving "zero waste" during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and the complete removal of discarded tires across the country by private sector factories. These efforts have significantly reduced waste sent to landfills and increased the recovery of recyclable materials, in line with Qatar's national development goals. (QNA)



Qatar takes part in IIIC centenary celebration

QNA
Paris

Qatar took part in an international conference held at the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) headquarters in Paris, marking the centenary of the establishment of the Interna-

tional Institute of Intellectual Co-operation (IIIC).

Qatar was represented at the event, titled "Celebrating a Centenary of International Intellectual Co-operation: From Legacy to Future Action," by HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to Unesco Dr Nasser bin Hamad al-Hanzab and Assistant Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of

Culture Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak al-Ali.

The conference featured films from Unesco's archives, restored in collaboration with France, as well as an exhibition organised in partnership with Japan.

The International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation was established after the founding of the League of Nations in 1920, follow-

ing World War I. The institute was tasked with developing international standards, organising conferences, and publishing works on topics such as the future of culture, European spirit, humanism, and cultural relations between Europe and Latin America. The founders of Unesco later drew upon the institute's experiences when establishing the organisation.



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Rumailah Hospital opens new Spinal Decompression Clinic

Hamad Medical Corporation's Male Physiotherapy Department at Rumailah Hospital recently opened its new Spinal Decompression Clinic for chronic neck and back pain management.

The clinic is located in Rumailah Hospital's Outpatient Department and provides the necessary treatment for physiotherapy patients using advanced technologies and cutting-edge devices. The Spinal Decompression Clinic was opened under the supervision of Dr Hanadi al-Hamad, deputy chief of the Department of Geriatrics and Long-

Term Care at HMC and the CEO and medical director of Rumailah Hospital. Noora al-Madahka, assistant executive director of Clinical Services and Rehabilitation at HMC, confirmed that the technologies introduced in the new clinic help to improve the recovery rate for chronic neck and low back pain for patients.

Spine decompression technology is considered the most advanced and non-invasive used in physiotherapy by extending the spine using a mechanical stretching table to relieve neck, back and leg pain. This procedure reduces pressure

on the nerves and vertebrae and allows blood and oxygen to flow to the spine, enhancing recovery rates.

Kamil Zarour, supervisor, Physiotherapy OPD at HMC, stated: "The treatment is non-invasive and does not cause any complications for the patient. We use this type of treatment with patients who suffer from chronic neck or leg pain, including sciatica caused by spinal nerve compression, spinal trauma that affects the nerve roots and herniated disk conditions.

"Patients might feel some mild pains or temporary spasms following the treatment in the affected

area, but it quickly disappears with time. The treatment duration usually takes 30-50 minutes and patients typically require several sessions over five to seven weeks depending on the patient's condition."

Zarour added: "In some cases, the physical therapist may recommend the use of a complementary set of therapeutic procedures that will help speed up the healing rates, such as heat or cold therapy, electrical stimulation to release muscle contractions, and high-frequency ultrasound to warm the affected area."



Officials at Hamad Medical Corporation's Male Physiotherapy Department at Rumailah Hospital at the new Spinal Decompression Clinic.

Tobacco Control Center takes awareness drive to S'hail 2024

Hamad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Tobacco Control Center, a World Health Organisation (WHO) collaborating centre for treating tobacco dependence, has participated in the Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail 2024).

Under the slogan 'Catch It Before It Catches You', the centre set up an educational booth to raise awareness among exhibition visitors about the harms of tobacco use, particularly new tobacco products, and to highlight the centre's role in supporting smokers who wish to quit. During the exhibition, according to an official statement, the centre distributed informational brochures, emphasising the importance of quitting smoking to prevent serious and chronic diseases and lead a healthier lifestyle.

The team at the booth also addressed visitor enquiries about effective smoking cessation methods and the services offered by the centre. Additionally, carbon monoxide level testing was available for smokers attending the exhibition.

The booth highlighted the



harmful effects of nicotine pouches, also known as Sweika or European snus, which are small white pouches placed inside the mouth between the gums and inner lip.

These pouches contain nicotine and added flavours with a higher concentration of nicotine than other tobacco products. It is important to note that nicotine pouches have not been approved as a smoking cessation aid.

Studies indicate that high concentrations of nicotine can impair certain areas of the brain,

and excessive use of nicotine pouches can lead to nicotine poisoning in some cases.

Health issues associated with the use of these pouches include difficulty concentrating, lethargy, gum irritation, mouth ulcers, nausea, hiccups, and insomnia.

The Tobacco Control Center's awareness activities at the S'hail 2024 exhibition were well received by the public, with many expressing an interest in learning more about the centre's efforts and the safe, effective methods available for quitting smoking.

Ooredoo partners with Suffix to organise Doha Marathon

Ooredoo has signed a partnership agreement with Suffix to manage the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo 2025 slated on January 17, 2025. The agreement was signed by Sabah Rabiah al-Kuwari, director of Public Relations, Social Responsibility, and Sponsorships at Ooredoo Qatar, and Suffix general manager Ahmad al-Majed.

Under this agreement, Suffix will be responsible for all aspects of managing the marathon, from overseeing the major sports event on the ground to timing and online registration. Suffix boasts extensive experience in organising major marathons in the region, including managing the Gulf Bank Marathon in Kuwait for 10 years, the Riyadh Marathon for three years, and the Jeddah Half Marathon, in addition to over 480 sports events since its founding in 2007.

Al-Kuwari said, "We are pleased to sign this agreement with Suffix due to their extensive experience in organising sports events, including marathons. The Doha Marathon by Ooredoo is the largest community sports event in Qatar, and we have entrusted Suffix to manage such major events.

"This agreement reflects Ooredoo's commitment to attracting



The agreement was signed by Sabah Rabiah al-Kuwari, director of Public Relations, Social Responsibility, and Sponsorships at Ooredoo Qatar, and Suffix general manager Ahmad al-Majed.

top talents to deliver an exceptional edition of the marathon, which has reached advanced levels of excellence. We work on developing it annually in all aspects, and we will collaborate with Suffix, leveraging their extensive expertise to achieve this." Al-Majed thanked Ooredoo Qatar for its trust and confirmed that the company will work closely with Ooredoo to organise an exceptional marathon. He pointed out that Suffix's expertise will enable it to deliver a unique race edition that guarantees an enjoyable experience for all athletes. He also lauded the Doha Marathon by

Ooredoo, describing it as one of the most prominent and successful sporting events in the region.

Since its inception, the Doha Marathon by Ooredoo has grown significantly, reflecting Qatar's thriving health and fitness sector and its reputation as a host for major sporting events.

Today, it is recognised as one of the premier marathon events worldwide, celebrated for its vibrant atmosphere, festive spirit, and iconic route that highlights the best of Qatar. For more details, visit www.dohamarathon.ooredoo.com

QNA partakes in Brics Media Summit

The Brics Media Summit kicked off in Moscow yesterday with the participation of leading media entities from countries that have expressed interest in expanding co-operation with the group.

Brics, founded in 2009 with Brazil, Russia, India, and China, added South Africa in 2011, with its acronym formed from the first letters of the member countries' names. The summit will continue until Sept 17. Qatar News Agency (QNA) is taking part with a delegation headed by QNA Director-General Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi. HE al-Rumaihi said: "Lately, the QNA has broadened the use of AI technologies in the work of its departments in co-operation with the Microsoft

Corp. This has been done in order to meet global trends for the use of such technologies, and also with regard to their active use in the media sphere."

Al-Rumaihi pointed out that the QNA delegation will discuss the use of AI technologies in the media and said that the QNA has many ideas on how to improve media work through wider use of AI technologies, adding that this will make news and analysis more accessible and attractive for a large audience. The QNA director-general noted that the QNA had received a Microsoft award for innovations in the use of AI technologies during a Microsoft summit in Qatar earlier this year, adding that the Brics Media Summit will provide

broader opportunities to discuss most pressing matters and their media coverage and allow sharing experience regarding present-day technologies.

On Qatari-Russian co-operation in the media field, he said that the QNA's tie-up with Russian media outlets is developing within the framework of bilateral agreements on exchange of information, adding: "These agreements present an important milestone in the process of boosting media co-operation between Qatar and Russia, because they encourage sharing of information, news stories and analytical materials, bolstering mutual understanding and informing the public in both Qatar and Russia with major events." (QNA)

QRCS inaugurates first-aid training courses in collaboration with QSL

In collaboration with Qatar Stars League (QSL), the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) began a series of training courses marking World First Aid Day, celebrated annually on September 14.

Held under the slogan 'Get ready, Stand by, Give First Aid', three training courses on common first aid for sports were held yesterday, targeting a number of international Qatari referees, as well as several QRCS employees and volunteers, with 15 trainees from each target group.

Head of training at QRCS's

Training and Development Centre Khalid Mohammed al-Merisy stressed the importance of these courses, particularly in enhancing the capabilities of international Qatari referees, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to save lives in relation to common sports injuries. He added that this initiative aims to create a safe and informed sporting community that possesses a firm understanding of first aid fundamentals.

Al-Merisy praised the collaboration with Qatar Stars League,

noting that the programme will be held in various sporting associations and clubs and will last for a week. He added that various seminars and activities will target school students, with training courses wrapping up with an awareness-raising exhibition for parents, families, children, visitors, and sports enthusiasts.

Al-Merisy said that QRCS marks this day due to its role in raising social awareness of the importance of first aid, calling on community members to partake in these activities. (QNA)



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GCC stresses commitment to tackle climate change with int'l partners

The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) has reiterated its commitment to collaborating with international partners to address the impacts of climate change, develop strategies that enhance climate action, and to exchange ideas, experiences and viewpoints on these climate issues.

This is in accordance with the international paths agreed upon within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, stressing that the call to create new mechanisms outside the framework of climate agreements will not serve the climate change financing path.

This statement was delivered by HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva, Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah, on behalf of the GCC states, in the capacity of Qatar as head of the Gulf group, during an interactive dialogue on the Secretary-General's analytical study concerning the impact of climate-related losses and damages on the full enjoy-



HE Qatar's Permanent Representative to the UN Office in Geneva, Dr Hind Abdulrahman al-Muftah.

ment of human rights. The discussion took place as part of the 57th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The GCC underscored the pressing priority of climate change due to its widespread impact, which result in significant losses and damages affecting individuals' lives and their ability to fully enjoy their rights in various areas.

The statement highlighted that the unequal effects of climate change, as outlined in the report under discussion, necessitate collective and equitable action to protect the most vulnerable populations, particularly in de-

veloping nations suffering from poverty and inequality. The GCC countries emphasised their ongoing national and collective efforts to address climate change, noting their active participation in international and regional initiatives, including the Climate Conference, which provides an ideal platform to address the challenges posed by climate change.

The statement pointed out that the GCC countries are implementing various measures, plans and programmes to combat the negative effects of climate change, including adopting a circular carbon economy approach, which focuses on reducing, reusing, recycling and removing greenhouse gas emissions.

The GCC also highlighted its goal of achieving a balanced and equitable transition in the fight against climate change, emphasising three equally important pillars: ensuring energy security, promoting economic prosperity, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (QNA)

Sheikh Hamad Translation Award marks 10 years of achievement in Berlin

QNA
Berlin

The Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation and International Understanding marked its 10th anniversary with a special event at Al Diwan, the Arab Cultural House in Berlin.

Dr Hanan al-Fayyad, the award's media adviser, delivered a lecture titled "Sheikh Hamad Translation Award: A Decade of Achievement," highlighting the award's journey, including its impact and reach.

Since its inception in 2015, the award has recognised 214 winners from 48 countries, spanning 37 languages.

Dr al-Fayyad provided insights into the award's objectives, nomination process, and the range of languages covered each year, emphasising the award's commitment to transparency and professionalism, which has earned it international credibility.

The event also celebrated the contributions of German and Arab translators, particularly those honoured in the 2018 edition, which focused on Arabic-German translation. Notable winners included Stefan Weidner, Samir Grees,

Hartmut Fahndrich, Ibrahim Abu Hashish, Hassan Saqr, Faris Yawakim, Ali Misbah, Nabil al-Haffar and Berenike Metzler.

Dr Imtenan al-Smadi, a member of the award's media team, added historical context, discussing the role of translation in Arab-Islamic civilisation and its importance in fostering intellectual freedom and cultural exchange.

Launched by Qatar in 2015, the Sheikh Hamad Award for Translation aims to bridge the gap between the Arab world and other cultures, recognising the critical role translation plays as a source of knowledge and cultural understanding.

EAA-ministry of finance-WB partnership to drive education

From Page 1

Commenting on the partnership, Qatar's Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs, at the Ministry of Finance Dr Saud Abdulla al-Attiyah said: "The signed agreement is part of Qatar's ongoing initiatives to reinforce its commitment to multilateral work with the goal of contributing to the

development of financial sustainability, as well as enhancing joint co-operation. Which reflects Qatar's deep interest in education as a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development." For his part, CEO of EAA Foundation Fahad al-Sulaiti emphasised the critical role of innovative financing in sustainable development, particularly in education saying,

"Innovative financing has lightened the debt load for low- and middle-income countries, allowing for more funds to be devoted locally to education. Through strong partnerships, we are driving innovative solutions that will transform the lives of communities and impact millions of children worldwide." Vice-President of the People Vice Presidency at the World Bank Mamta Murthi

expressed enthusiasm about the partnership. "The rewards of education extend vastly across individuals and societies, enhancing economic opportunities and aiding in eradicating poverty. We are thrilled to partner with the Education Above All Foundation to bolster the human capital of young people globally, especially those most vulnerable."

MoECC takes steps to protect marine biodiversity, environment across Qatar

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has retrieved and removed some fishing nets and cages stuck at one of the northern marine areas, which could destroy the coral reefs and their marine life.

Further, as part of its continuous efforts to maintain marine biodiversity, the teams concerned at MoECC have removed fishing nets kept to catch king fish, from an area in the north of the country in violation of the applicable laws and regulations.

The MoECC had earlier renewed its annual ban on catching king fish throughout the local waters using fishing nets, from August 15 until October 15. The ban, meant to enhance the local stock of king fish by allowing it to naturally grow and breed, also stipulates strict penalties for the violators.

The MoECC spotted a number of tanker drivers emptying their cargo of sanitary drainage water at undesignated areas in the open outskirts of the country. The Wildlife Protection Department has taken legal action against the violators. Such violations fall under Law No 30 for 2002 regarding environment protection.

The MoECC has been active in monitoring the status of environment protection across the country, including the natural meadows, sand dunes, deserts and the natural reserves and protected areas. The protection extends to the endangered species of animals, birds and plants through various projects to guarantee their breeding. There are wildlife inspection teams with highly qualified personnel that maintain regular and surprise patrols, who are specially on the lookout for violators and intruders.

Recently, MoECC's Wildlife Development Department concluded a process of surveying 1,273 wild meadows across the different areas of the country, by recording the plant species and noting the potential dangers threatening their growth and survival. Some of these meadows were completely closed for the public to enhance the protection of some rare and endangered varieties of plants and fauna, while others were partially closed to allow them to regrow. There is also a plan by the department to restore 100 wild meadows within the next five years.

The MoECC has successfully planted 17,463 seedlings of wild plants at a number of these restored wild meadows, in addition to transplanting 4,980 wild trees from construction project sites to the designated meadows.

The MoECC also has made great success in the hawksbill turtles protection project and there are ongoing efforts to combat the invasive myna bird.



28 international students to receive Awqaf scholarships

The Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has announced that a total of 28 students from across the world will benefit from the ministry's scholarship programme this year.

These students are supervised by the Scholarships Department at the department. Malallah Abdulrahman al-Jaber, director of the department, said there are 160 beneficiaries for the scholarship programme and 28 students will join them this year, taking the total number of beneficiar-

ies to 188 students from 25 countries. The students are from the seventh to the twelfth grade. Al-Jaber added that 11 outstanding students who graduated from high school were selected and nominated to complete their studies within the scholarships for mission students sponsored by Awqaf at the College of Sharia at Qatar University. They are provided with all the educational facilities at the college.

Youssef Hassan al-Hammadi, head of the Scholarships Section at the department, said Awqaf is keen and interested in implementing the scholarship programme.

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RFQ-6000001609	Design Engineering, Supply, manufacturing, inspection testing commissioning and Installation for Control system Upgrade of Urea-3 lift	500/- (Non-refundable)	42,000/- (Forty-Two Thousand Only)	15.09.2024 16.09.2024 17.09.2024 18.09.2024 19.09.2024 22.09.2024 23.09.2024	09.10.2024

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 - IBAN : QA51QNBAA0000000000013025828058
 - 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 on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (non-refundable).
- 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".

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT

- ✔ Warehouse for rent in Industrial area
- ✔ Warehouse 600 Sqm/1200 Sqm
- ✔ Municipality Approved
- ✔ Civil Defence Approved
- ✔ Secure Boundary Wall
- ✔ 24/7 Security

 6672 2989



Msheireb Downtown Doha set to host charitable art display 'Echo of Lost Innocence'



Msheireb Properties, Qatar's leading sustainable real estate developer, in co-operation with Qatar Charity (QC) and White Event company, has announced an upcoming opening of a charitable art installation.

Titled 'Echo of Lost Innocence', the installation is designed by multidisciplinary artist Bachir Mohammad. The artwork will be displayed at Barahat Msheireb in Msheireb Downtown Doha from September 16-26 serving as a symbol of deep empathy and solidarity with the children of Gaza and as a call for global solidarity with their suffering. The installation will be open to the public daily from 4pm to 10pm, with free admission.

Eng. Ali al-Kuwari, CEO of Msheireb Properties, commented on hosting this charitable artwork: "Msheireb Downtown Doha serves as a platform for cultural and artistic expression, social impact, and interaction."

"We consider the art project 'Echo of Lost Innocence' a reflection of this role and our ongoing commitment to providing spaces that support humanitarian causes and encourage positive societal change while addressing pressing global issues," he said.

Yousef bin Ahmed al-Kuwari, CEO of QC, emphasised the humanitarian aspect of the project. "This collaboration with our partners at Msheireb Properties and artist Bachir Mohammad allows us to harness art to provide tangible support for Gaza's children. The proceeds from this initiative will directly contribute to our ongoing efforts in the region, providing essential aid and planting hope for victims of conflicts and wars. This joint effort demonstrates the positive impact that institutional co-ordination and co-operation can achieve in addressing regional and global humanitarian challenges and crises, and alleviating

their severity," he said. The art installation contains over 15,000 small teddy bear sculptures, each symbolising a child's life lost during the war up to the start of this project. The bears wear black T-shirts with the message: "I'm not just a number. I'm human. With an identity. With a homeland. I am Palestine."

Artist Bachir Mohammad, who designed and envisioned this artwork, spoke about his inspiration. "As an artist and designer, I believe in the immense power of visual storytelling to evoke empathy and encourage action to make a tangible difference in reality. The idea for 'Echo of Lost Innocence' emerged from a deep sense of responsibility towards the suffering and plight endured by children in conflict zones, and the duty to highlight this in the public sphere. In this work, the teddy bears embody the lives of thousands of children who had dreams and were nurtured by families, only to find themselves facing a lost future consumed by war."

"Through this installation, I want to remind the world of their suffering and call for action to help them, hoping to ignite in visitors a spark that drives them to contribute to making a real positive change by supporting the children of Gaza," he said.

Following the installation of the artwork at Barahat Msheireb, a group exhibition titled "For the Children of Gaza" will be held at Msheireb Museums in Bin Jelmood House. The museum exhibition is designed to expand the impact of "Echo of Lost Innocence" and present multiple voices advocating for action by featuring works and designs by local artists.

The event is supported by Msheireb Museums, Msheireb Downtown Doha, Msheireb Galleria, almarkhiya Gallery, The Local Context, Bluribbon Design Atelier, iPrint and Salamis.

Doha Bank signs MoU with Estithmar Holding for exclusive privileges to Himyan cardholders

Doha Bank has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Estithmar Holding to provide exclusive discounts on several entertainment facilities and outlets when paying using the Himyan Card.

The discounts apply in several hotels including Katara Hills Resort LXR, and Maysan Doha Resort LXR, among others, in addition to dozens of restaurants spread across The Pearl Island, Lusail Boulevard, Mall of Qatar, Souq Waqif. Himyan cardholders also enjoy discounts on Lusail Winter Wonderland packages, the world-class amusement park on Al Maha Island.

Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad al-Thani, CEO of Doha Bank Group, stressed that the bank is keen to provide the best competitive advantages to its Himyan customers.

He said: "This national initiative, supervised by the Qatar Central Bank and supported by Doha Bank, aims to provide a safe and easy-to-use digital payment method, which enhances the shift towards non-cash payments by taking advantage of modern technologies. We are keen to provide the best offers and features to Himyan holders, and we are pleased to have Estithmar Holding and



Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Fahad al-Thani, CEO of Doha Bank Group, and Engineer Mohammed bin Badr al-Sada, CEO of Estithmar Holding, during the signing ceremony.

its distinguished projects join the list of providers of exclusive offers to our customers."

Engineer Mohammed bin Badr al-Sada, CEO of Estithmar Holding, said: "This step comes in response to the national initiative supervised by the Central Bank and we have launched this programme, in co-operation with Doha Bank. "We invite Himyan card customers to benefit from these exclusive offers in our world-class hotels and facilities, and we hope that through these offers we will contribute to supporting the card, which is a remarkable step towards digi-

tising payment systems in Qatar."

The Himyan debit card is a national payment card issued under the supervision of Qatar Central Bank and is available upon request to all Doha Bank customers. Customers can use the Himyan Card locally for financial transactions carried out at Point of Sale (POS) devices, ATMs, and e-shopping sites within Qatar through the National ATM and Point of Sale (NAPS) network, and the QPay payment gateway.

Doha Bank is the first bank to offer these exclusive benefits and discounts on the Himyan debit card.

Kahramaa holds awareness on energy auditing tech

The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), represented by the Conservation and Energy Efficiency (Tarshedd) Department, in co-operation with the Gulf Organisation for Research and Development (Gord), organised a workshop on September 11-12.

Titled 'energy auditing for specialised practitioners', the two-day workshop was held with the aim of raising awareness of modern energy auditing techniques and providing the necessary knowledge and tools to evaluate electricity and water consumption in buildings to contribute to a more sustainable future. The workshop, according to a statement from Kahramaa, included a practical application of energy and water auditing in a building through a

specialised team of experts. The workshop targeted a number of engineers from GCC working in the field of electricity and water efficiency. The workshop is one of the activities of the Electricity and Water Conservation and Subscriber Services Committee within the efforts of Qatar in the group. The workshop topics also included the impact of energy efficiency on the environment and the economy.

It provided participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to apply the latest methods and technologies in the field of energy. The most important topics included an introduction to energy basics and an introduction to energy auditing in buildings, in addition to preparing for energy audits, actual measurements, and data analysis. The focus was also on building mate-

rials, insulation, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting systems, other equipment, building controls and energy audit reports.

As part of Kahramaa's commitment to promoting education and professional development in the field of energy efficiency and the objectives of the National Programme for Conservation and Energy

Efficiency (Tarshedd), a field visit was prepared to the Gord Energy Efficiency Laboratory. The laboratory provided participants with the opportunity to see the latest technologies used to improve energy efficiency. During the visit, experts reviewed the practical experiments and research conducted in the laboratory.



Qatar Charity builds shelter for Pakistan flood victims

Qatar Charity (QC) has completed around 40% of a residential village project for those affected by the 2022 flash flood in the Naseerabad district of Pakistan's Balochistan province.

The project, according to an official statement from QC, comes with the support of donors in Qatar. It's part of QC's ongoing efforts to provide shelter for the vulnerable in disaster-stricken and crisis-hit regions. The project is expected to provide safe housing for 125 affected families upon its full completion in March next year.

This project is part of a series of model villages and towns that QC aims to establish for disaster and crisis victims worldwide to provide dignified living conditions and to alleviate their suffering through essential shelter and services. This residential village will consist of 125 housing units. Each unit, covering 90 square metres, will have two rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen.

QC selected Naseerabad for the construction of the residential village, recognising it as the district hardest hit by the floods that ravaged Balochistan. The floods inflicted severe damage on infrastructure and homes, displacing hundreds of families.

Local authorities have praised the project. Abid Hussain, deputy director of Social Welfare, Naseerabad, Balochistan, visited the project site and highly appreciated QC's project. "It is a blessing as it provides safe shelter for families displaced by the 2022 floods," he said.

Earlier this year, QC constructed 12 homes in the Khairpur district of Pakistan's Sindh province for the families affected by the 2022 floods.


COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)
KOCHI - 682015, India

Date: 10/09/2024

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF
INTERNATIONAL SHIP REPAIR FACILITY
OF COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED**

Cochin Shipyards Limited (CSL) invites proposals from reputed International Ship Repair entities to associate with CSL for the Operation and Maintenance of its International Ship Repair Facility at Kochi, India. The proposal is to be submitted on or before 1500 Hrs. IST on 05.11.2024. For further details, please visit following links - Cochin Shipyards Website: <https://cochinshipyards.in/Tender> or Govt. of India Central Public Procurement portal: <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> Tender Reference No. CSL/SRP/126/2024.

Sd/-
Assistant General Manager (SRP)



TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

ORYX GTL Limited is pleased to announce the following tender(s):

S. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender Title:	Tender Bond QAR	Bid Closing Date & Tender Bond Validity Period
1	TC-CN-024-24-MC	Call-off Contract for ATR Burners Repair	45,500/-	16 Oct 2024 at 12:00 noon & 180 days

Companies wishing to register their interest and obtain Tender Document(s) for the above Tender(s) must pay a non-refundable registration fee and register with ORYX GTL as detailed below:


Tender Registration Fee	QAR 500/- (Non-refundable) per Tender
Payable to	ORYX GTL Limited
IBAN (29 Digits)	QA23QNBA00000000013010705001
Bank	Qatar National Bank - HQ or any branch (cash only)
Registration Dates	From 15 th September 2024 to 19 th September 2024 8:00 am to 1:00 pm
Registration Process and Requirements:	Write an e-mail to oryxgtltenders@oryxgtl.com.qa with the following attachments: 1. Copy of Commercial Registration (CR) 2. Copy of bank deposit slip of the Tender Registration Fee. 3. Copy of ICV Certificate

COMPANIES WHO HAVE PAID THE NON-REFUNDABLE REGISTRATION FEE BUT FAILED TO FORMALLY REGISTER AT THE DATE AND TIME STATED ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED AS ACCEPTABLE TENDERER.

TENDER BOND SHALL BE ISSUED BY A BANK REGISTERED IN THE STATE OF QATAR.

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids from Local Suppliers and Contractors (companies established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Tender Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa/US>

For more information about ORYX GTL and its tenders, please visit our website: <http://www.oryxgtl.com.qa>



INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
HBKU-RFQ-370	Supply of High-Performance Systems with Multi-GPU Acceleration for QCR1	1000.00	100,000.00	15-Oct-2024 2:00 PM
QF-RFQ-615	Supply, Installation, and Commissioning of GYM Equipment's at QF Sites	1000.00	Nil	15-Oct-2024 2:00 PM
CO-RFQ-189	Supply of Energy Efficient LED Lamps for Various QF Facilities	500.00	Nil	09-Oct-2024 2:00 PM

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

- Supplier Registration** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

Tender Fee: Interested bidders can Sign in by visiting this link <https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract> and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee online.

All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from 15th September until 22nd September 2024.
- All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
 - The commercial bid must be valid for 180 days from Bid Closing Date.
 - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 180 days from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
 - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
 - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>



Iran says new research satellite launched into orbit

AFP
Teheran

Iran yesterday blasted a new research satellite into orbit, state media said, in the latest such development for an aerospace programme that has long faced Western criticism.

"The Chamran-1 research satellite was successfully launched and put into orbit by the Ghaem-100 carrier," state television said.

The satellite, which weighs around 60 kilograms, is designed to test hardware and software systems for orbital manoeuvre technology, the TV report said.

The device was designed and

built by Iranian Electronics Industries affiliated with the defence ministry, state TV said.

Western governments including the United States have repeatedly warned Iran against such launches, saying the same technology can be used for ballistic missiles, including ones designed to deliver a nuclear warhead.

Iran has countered that it is not seeking nuclear weapons and that its satellite and rocket launches are for civil or defence purposes only. The Ghaem-100 rocket which carried the latest satellite is manufactured by the aerospace organisation of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, an arm of the military. The carrier is the coun-

try's first three-stage solid-fuel satellite launcher, and official media reported its use in January to send a satellite for the first time into an orbit above 500 kilometres.

Iran has for years been advancing its aerospace activities, insisting they are peaceful and in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions.

In February, Russia put into orbit an Iranian remote sensing and imaging satellite, drawing condemnation from the United States.

At the time, Iran's telecommunications minister said Iran had carried out a dozen satellite launches over the previous two years. Iran in January said it si-

multaneously sent three satellites into orbit, nearly a week after the launch of a research satellite by the Guards.

The Islamic republic has struggled with several satellite launch failures in the past.

Iran has suffered years of crippling Western sanctions, especially after the United States, under then-president Donald Trump, in 2018 unilaterally abandoned a landmark nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers.

Iran on Thursday summoned four European ambassadors after they imposed new sanctions over its alleged supply of ballistic missiles to Russia for use in Ukraine, which Tehran denies.



This handout photo provided by the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) yesterday, shows the Chamran-1 research satellite at an unknown location in Iran.

UN official says staff fear they are 'a target' as Israel hits Gaza shelters

AFP
Jerusalem

A senior UN official said yesterday that teachers and other UN staff working in Gaza fear they are now targets after an Israeli air strike hit a school-turned-shelter in the territory this week.

Wednesday's strike on the UN-run Al-Jawmi School in central Gaza, which is housing displaced Palestinians, killed 18 people, including six employees of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

It was the deadliest single incident for the agency in more than 11 months of war and drew international condemnation.

"One colleague said that they're not wearing the UNRWA vest anymore because they feel that that turns them into a target," UNRWA senior deputy director Sam Rose told AFP yesterday after visiting the shelter in Nuseirat.

"Another one said that that morning, their children had stopped them from coming into

the shelter," he said in an online interview from Gaza.

The colleagues were gathering for a post-work meal in a classroom when the strike flattened part of the building, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

"A son of one of the staff had brought a meal into the building," Rose said, adding the group then debated whether to eat it in the principal's office before settling on what appeared to be a classroom decorated with pictures of scientists.

"They were eating when the bomb hit." The Israeli military said it had conducted a "precise strike" on Hamas fighters within the school grounds and had taken steps to reduce the risk to civilians.

The Israeli military published what it said was a list of nine fighters killed in the Nuseirat strike, including three it said were employees of UNRWA.

An Israeli government spokesman said the school had become "a legitimate target" because it was used by Hamas to launch attacks. Rose said such statements

further battered morale among UN staffers still at the school, where thousands have sought shelter from a war that has displaced nearly all of Gaza's 2.4mn population at least once.

"They were particularly angry by the allegations that had been made as to the involvement of their colleagues in extremist activities," Rose said.

"They felt that this really was a stain on the memory of dear colleagues, dear friends," he added, describing the mood as "bereft" and "desperate".

UNRWA has said at least 220 members of the agency's staff have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas's unprecedented storming of southern Israel in the first week of October.

Israel's retaliation has killed at least 41,182 people in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

On Friday, UNRWA announced one of its employees was killed during an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank, the first such death in the territory in more than a decade.

Turkiye buries activist shot in West Bank

AFP
Didim

Mourners gathered in southwest Turkiye yesterday for the funeral of a US-Turkish activist, who was shot dead while protesting Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

The killing last week of 26-year-old Aysenur Ezgi Eygi has sparked international condemnation and infuriated Turkiye, further escalating tensions over the war in Gaza that began with Hamas's October first week storming of Israel.

Eygi's body, wrapped in the Turkish flag and carried by uniformed officers, arrived at its final resting place in the Aegean town of Didim.

A picture of Eygi was placed near the coffin during the funeral at the local mosque.

A large crowd gathered during the prayers including Eygi's family, members of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP party, and activists advocating the Palestinian cause. Protesters chanted slogans near the mosque showing their support for Palestinians.

Eygi was shot while taking part in a demonstration on September 6 in the northern part of the occupied West Bank, near Nablus.

She was a human rights activist and volunteer for the International Solidarity Movement, which calls for resisting the oppression of Palestinians using non-violent methods. Her family wanted Eygi to be buried in Didim, where her grandfather lives and her grandmother has been laid to rest. She was a frequent visitor to the seaside resort. Ankara said this week it was probing her death and pressed the United Nations for an independent inquiry.

Turkiye also urged the US to probe her death, with Erdogan's chief press aide Fahrettin Altun saying Istanbul had already launched its own investigation



Mehmet Suat Eygi (centre), father of late US-Turkish activist Aysenur Ezgi Eygi shot dead by Israeli forces while protesting against illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, mourns in front of a portrait of his daughter during her funeral ceremony at the cemetery in Didim, Aydin Province, yesterday.

and calling for an "international investigation". "Since Aysenur was a dual Turkish-American citizen, the US must do the same and pressure the Israeli authorities for answers and full accountability," he wrote yesterday on X, formerly Twitter.

Turkiye said it was also planning to issue international arrest warrants for those responsible for Eygi's death, depending on the findings of its investigation.

Erdogan — who has become one of the most strident critics in the Muslim world of Israel's offensive in Gaza — has vowed to ensure "that Aysenur Ezgi's death does not go unpunished".

The Israeli military has said it was likely Eygi was hit "unintentionally" by forces while they were responding to a "violent riot", and said it is looking into the case.

President Erdogan himself did not show up in Didim but he sent his vice-president, foreign, interior and justice ministers.

Opposition CHP party chief Ozgur Ozel attended the funeral.

The United Nations said Eygi had been taking part in a "peaceful anti-settlement protest" in Beita,

the scene of weekly demonstrations. Israeli settlements, where about 490,000 people live in the West Bank, are illegal under international law.

The young woman's body arrived in Istanbul Friday from Tel Aviv, before being transferred to Turkiye's third-biggest city Izmir, for an autopsy.

Initial findings revealed a bullet hit her in the head, and the cause of Eygi's death was defined as "skull fracture, brain haemorrhage and brain tissue damage," state-run TRT television reported.

The report overlapped with an initial autopsy carried out by three Palestinian doctors, which concluded that a bullet passed directly through the victim's skull.

Her mother, Rabia Birden, on Friday urged Turkish officials to pursue justice.

"The only thing I ask of our state is to seek justice for my daughter," she was quoted as saying by Anadolu news agency.

Her father, Mehmet Suat Eygi, paid tribute to his daughter in Didim, telling AFP that she was a "very special person" who was "sensitive to human rights".

CONFLICT Sudanese city pounded as analysts report 'unprecedented' combat

Heavy fighting yesterday shook a Sudanese city besieged by paramilitaries, witnesses said, as US researchers reported unprecedented and escalating combat in the North Darfur state capital. AFP reported from Port Sudan. El-Fasher is one of five state capitals in Sudan's western Darfur region and the only one not in the hands of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who have been battling the regular army since April 2023. The United Nations says the war across much of Sudan has created the world's largest displacement crisis, with millions uprooted, and has led to famine at a displacement camp near El-Fasher. Darfur has seen some of the war's worst atrocities, and the RSF has besieged El-Fasher since May. "Neighbourhoods are completely deserted and all you can hear are explosions and missiles," said Ibrahim Ishaq, 52. "The central market area has become unliveable because of the intensity of the explosions," said Ishaq, who fled westward from the city on Friday. Witnesses reported army bombardment south and east of the city yesterday and said they heard air-defence batteries firing. The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab said in a report Friday that its analysis confirmed "unprecedented large-scale combat operations" in El-Fasher within the previous 10 days.

Tunisia fisherwomen battle inequality and climate change

AFP
Kerkennah

Off a quiet Tunisian island, Sara Souissi readies her small fishing boat.

As a woman in the male-dominated trade, she rows against entrenched patriarchy but also environmental threats to her livelihood.

Souissi began fishing as a teenager in a family of fishers off their native Kerkennah Islands near the city of Sfax, defying men who believed she had no place at sea.

"Our society didn't accept that a woman would fish," she said, hauling a catch onto her turquoise-coloured boat.

"But I persisted, because I love fishing and I love the sea," said Souissi, 43, who is married to a fisherman and is a mother of one.

A substantial portion of Tunisia is coastal or near the coast, making the sea an essential component of everyday life.

Seafood, a staple in Tunisian cuisine, is also a major export commodity for the North African country, with Italy, Spain and Malta top buyers, and revenues nearing 900mn dinars (\$295mn) last year, according to official figures.

Tunisian women have long played a major role in this vital sector.

But their work has been undervalued and unsupported, a

recent study by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) found.

The study said that while women were actively involved throughout the fishing value chain, they remained "generally not considered as an actual worker" by their male counterparts.

Fisherwomen also have less access to administrative benefits, training and banking services, where they are viewed as "high-risk borrowers" compared to men, the study said.

As a result, many don't own their own boats, and those working with male relatives are "considered as family help and therefore not remunerated", it added.

In Raoued, a coastal town on the edge of the capital Tunis, the Tunisian Society for Sustainable Fishing launched a workshop in June for women's integration into the trade.

But most of the women attending the training told AFP they were only there to help male relatives.

"I want to help develop this field. Women can make fish nets," said Safa Ben Khalifa, a participant.

There are currently no official numbers for fisherwomen in Tunisia.

Although Souissi is formally registered in her trade, many Tunisian women can work only under the table — the World Economic Forum estimates 60% of



Tunisian fisherwoman Sara Souissi prepares her net in a boat along the coast of Kerkennah Islands in the Mediterranean Sea.

workers in informal sectors are women.

"We want to create additional resources amid climate change, a decrease in marine resources, and poor fishing practices," said Ryma Moussaoui, the Raoued workshop coordinator.

Last month, the Mediterranean Sea reached its highest temperature on record at a daily median of 28.9 degrees Celsius (84 Fahrenheit), Spain's leading institute of marine sciences said.

The strain on sea life and resources has been compounded in countries like Tunisia by pollution and overfishing.

Rising temperatures make the waters uninhabitable for various species, and unsustainable fish-

ing like trawling or using plastic traps indiscriminately sweeps up the dwindling sea life and exacerbates pollution.

"They don't respect the rules," Souissi said about fishers using those methods.

"They catch anything they can, even off-season."

'UNFAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT'

In 2017 in Skhira, a port town on the Gulf of Gabes, 40 women clam collectors formed an association to enhance their income — only to see their hard-won gains later erased by pollution.

Before its formation, the women earned about a tenth of the clams' final selling price in Europe, said its president, Houda

Mansour. By cutting out "exploitative middlemen", the association helped boost their earnings, she added.

In 2020, however, the government issued a ban on clam collecting due to a severe drop in shellfish populations, leaving the women unemployed.

"They don't have diplomas and can't do other jobs," Mansour, now a baker, explained.

In hotter, polluted waters, clams struggle to build strong shells and survive. Industrial waste discharged into the Gulf of Gabes for decades has contributed to the problem.

It has also forced other species out, said Emna Benkahla, a fishing economics researcher at the University of Tunis El Manar.

"The water became an unfavourable environment for them to live and reproduce," undermining the fishers' revenue, she said.

"Because they couldn't fish anymore, some sold their boats to migrants looking to cross the Mediterranean illegally," she added, calling for more sustainable practices.

Souissi, who only uses relatively small nets with no motor on her boat, said she and others should fish responsibly in order to survive.

"Otherwise, what else can I do?" she said, rowing her boat back to shore.

"Staying at home and cleaning? No, I want to keep fishing."

Ex-president in surprise return to Botswana

Botswana's former president Ian Khama returned to his country on Friday for the first time in nearly three years, as the nation gears up for October elections.

He made a surprise appearance in court to answer charges of unlawful possession of firearms.

An arrest warrant had been issued for him in December 2022, while he was in self-imposed exile in South Africa.

Asked by journalists how he arrived in Botswana, Khama said: "I crossed into Botswana from South Africa, driving myself."

His lawyer Unoda Mack said that as soon as Khama arrived in the country, he went to apply for bail at the Magistrate Court in the capital Gaborone.

"We were taken by surprise" by his appearance, said State Prosecutor Ambrose Mubika.

Khama's legal team had informed prosecutors that he would be returning to the country to appear in court, but the former president showed up 10 days earlier than expected.

Magistrate Mareledi Dipate granted Khama an interim bail order. Khama is expected to return to court on November 23.

"I'm happy with the magistrate's ruling," Khama said, looking calm and collected as his security detail whisked him away.

As he left the court, his supporters chanted, "The general is back", referring to his role as former commander of the Botswana Defence Force.

Addressing journalists outside court, Mack said: "The state wanted him back in the country and now he is back. He is in the country for as much as he likes."

Botswana holds general elections on October 30.

President Mokgweetsi Masisi is running for re-election as head of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party.

Masisi succeeded Khama as party leader, but the two quickly fell out once Masisi became president. - AFP

Slain Olympian buried with full military honours

AFP/Reuters
Kampala/Bukwo, Uganda

Ugandans paid tribute yesterday to Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei, who died after her partner set her on fire in Kenya, finally burying her near her family village.

The 33-year-old debuted this summer in the women's marathon at the Paris Olympics.

Cheptegei returned to her home in the highlands of western Kenya, an area popular with international runners for its high altitude training facilities, after coming 44th in the marathon at the Paris Olympics on August 11.

It would be her final race. Three weeks later her former boyfriend, Dickson Ndiema Marangach, allegedly attacked Cheptegei as she returned from church with her two daughters and younger sister in the village of Kinyoro, Kenya police and her family said.

Her father Joseph Cheptegei told Reuters that his daughter had approached police at least three times to file complaints against Marangach, most recently on August 30, two days before the alleged attack by her former partner.

She suffered burns to 80% of her body and succumbed to her injuries four days later.

"I don't think I am going to make it," she told her father while being treated in hospital, he said. "If I die, just bury me at home in Uganda."

The brutal assault shocked the East African region and prompted a global outpouring of tributes, with activists condemning another act of gender-based violence in Kenya.

Residents, officials and relatives waited in the cold morning light yesterday to pay their respects in the village of Bukwo, some 380km (240 miles) northeast of Uganda's capital Kampala.

"We are extremely saddened," said her estranged husband Simon Ayeko, with

whom she had two daughters. "As a father it has been very difficult," he told AFP, explaining he had not been able to break the news to their children. "Slowly we will tell them the truth."

The service to honour Cheptegei, a sergeant in the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF), started around 10am (0700 GMT), with officials and relatives gathering at the local council office.

The coffin, swathed in the Ugandan flag, was saluted by officers from the UPDF, who carried her body into the room overlooking the remote rolling hills of her childhood.

The athlete was a "heroine", local presidential representative Bessie Modest Ajilong told AFP, describing her as "out of ordinary".

"As leaders, we saw Cheptegei as an inspiration," she said.

Her body was moved from the local council headquarters to a nearby sports stadium where hundreds gathered to pay their respects.

Cheptegei was finally laid to rest among the trees in the mountains, lowered into the ground with a gun salute - a tribute usually reserved for senior Ugandan officers - and prayers by the local clerics.

Uganda's Sports Minister Peter Ogwang condemned the "barbaric and cowardly" attack that had taken her life, and said the government would give roughly \$13,000 to each of Cheptegei's children.

Scores of athletes, among them Kenyan athletes Mary Keitany and Daniel Komen, travelled to the small village to attend the ceremonies.

Coach Alex Malinga, who trained her as a teenager, told AFP: "Cheptegei was one of those who inspired the talented young that one day they will be like her."

Police said Marangach sneaked into her home to hide while she was at church with her children.

The couple had argued over ownership of the property where she lived with her sister Dorcas Cherop and daughters, according to her family.

"I think at that time, their relationship



Soldiers from Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) stand near the flag-draped coffin of the slain Ugandan Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei, who died after her former boyfriend doused her in petrol and set her ablaze. The coffin was received at the local council for a special sitting before her burial at the Bukwo District, Uganda. - Reuters

Right: Dorcas Cheptegei, sister of the Ugandan slain Olympian, holds Rebecca's athletics medals at their home in Kitum village near Endebess, within Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. - Reuters



had become sour," Cheptegei's brother-in-law, Moses Kipsiro, told AFP.

"I didn't know then something was wrong," said Kipsiro, who previously trained with Cheptegei and also hails from Bukwo.

Her attacker later died from injuries sustained in the assault.

The vicious assault has thrown yet another spotlight on what activists have called a femicide epidemic.

Kenya reported 725 femicide cases in 2022 alone, according to the latest UN figures.

A report the following year by Kenya's National Bureau of Statistics found 34% of women had experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

At least two other athletes, Agnes Tirop and Damaris Mutua, have lost their lives in domestic violence incidents since 2021.

Rights groups say female athletes in Kenya are at a high risk of exploitation and violence by men drawn to their prize money, which far exceeds local incomes.

Cheptegei's sporting successes include winning the 2021 World Mountain and Trail

Running Championships in Thailand, and a year later earning first place in the Padova Marathon in Italy and setting a national record for the marathon.

Born in eastern Uganda in 1991, she met Marangach during a training visit to Kenya, later moving to the country to pursue her dream of becoming an elite runner.

The circumstances of Cheptegei's death shocked the world, but her name may yet inspire future athletes, with the French capital planning to name a sports facility in her honour.

"She dazzled us here in Paris. We saw her. Her beauty, her strength, her freedom," the city's mayor Anne Hidalgo told reporters. "Paris will not forget her."

South African anti-corruption minister Gordhan dies at 75

Reuters/AFP
Johannesburg

South African politician Pravin Gordhan (pictured), who served as finance minister twice, overhauled the tax service and waged a battle against corruption under a former president, died on Friday from cancer aged 75, his family said.

Gordhan, whose career in politics and public service spanned five decades, retired as cabinet minister a few months before the general elections in May this year to focus on his health and family.

He had been suffering from cancer, his family said in a statement.

The statement revealed that before his death, Gordhan said: "I have no regrets, no regrets ... we have made our contribution."

He is also remembered for his efforts in fighting what South Africans called "state capture" by private interests under former president Jacob Zuma. Gordhan had repeatedly warned about state corruption during his tenure as finance minister.

"Mr Gordhan passed away peacefully in hospital surrounded by his family, closest friends and his lifelong comrades in the liberation struggle in the early hours of this morning," Gordhan's family said in a statement.

Gordhan's long-time party, the African National Congress (ANC), reveres him for his role as an anti-apartheid activist.

He was also involved in the negotiations that led to the end of white minority rule in 1994.

President Cyril Ramaphosa recounted Gordhan's personal sacrifices and achievements in serving South Africa.

"In the latter years of this service to the nation ... Pravin Gordhan stood up to derision and threats emanating from ... those who sought to undermine our democracy and raid our public resources and assets," Ramaphosa said in a statement.

Zuma faces several court proceedings over alleged corruption before and after his 2009 to 2018 presidency, charges he has vehemently denied.



A judicial inquiry in 2022 highlighted systemic graft during his rule.

Gordhan held several ministerial positions in addition to his role as finance minister, including minister of co-operative governance and traditional affairs and minister of public enterprises.

He announced his retirement in March.

He served as commissioner of the South African Revenue Service from 1999 to 2009, and is credited with conceptualising a modern tax and customs administration.

Born in the eastern port city of Durban in 1949, Gordhan's political life began as a pharmacy student at the University of Durban-Westville, then an Indians-only institution.

There he joined the anti-apartheid Natal Indian Congress and became involved with the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

Throughout the 1980s, Gordhan was repeatedly arrested for his political activities that challenged white-minority rule.

He played a pivotal role in talks that steered South Africa to its first democratic elections in 1994, before becoming an ANC member of parliament.

Unity govt is S Africa's only option: president

AFP
Pretoria

South Africa's 10-party government of national unity is the best option for the country and the costs of failure would be "very high", President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Friday.

The alliance, forged after the African National Congress (ANC) lost its majority in May elections, brings together diverse centrist or conservative parties, including some of the ANC's fiercest critics.

A dispute over an education bill that Ramaphosa signed on Friday, despite objections led by the second-largest party in the unity government, the Democratic Alliance, has underscored the challenges facing the alliance.

"Prior to the elections, people were concerned about where the country was going to, investors were holding back, and our economic growth trajectory seems to be at a stall," Ramaphosa said.

However, he said the unity government had bolstered confidence and opened opportunities for growth and development.

"It is for this reason that I say the risks would be very, very high of the failure of the government



President Cyril Ramaphosa.

of national unity," he said. "We, therefore, have no option but to move forward and consolidate the government of national unity and bring about stability."

Ramaphosa said the parties in government had reiterated to him their commitment to stay in the alliance, even if they expressed disagreement over certain issues.

"That is what gives me confidence about not only the stability but the durability of the government of national unity," the president said. "That is the best thing that we now have to move the country forward."

Until the 2024 elections, the ANC had governed South Africa with a majority for 30 years, taking power in the first all-race elections in 1994.

However, the party won only 40% of votes in the May election, its poorest showing ever and a reflection of anger about corruption, mismanagement, unemployment, crime and inequality.

Ramaphosa said there had been mistakes over the past 30 years, "but that does not detract from the fact that there has been progress in the lives of South Africans".

African UNSC seats also need veto rights, says S Africa

AFP
Pretoria

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has welcomed Washington's support for two permanent seats for African nations on the UN Security Council (UNSC), but said that refusing them veto rights would make them "second-class citizens".

The United States said on Thursday that it supported creating two permanent seats for Africa but they should not wield veto power over council resolutions, unlike the current permanent members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Not having a continent of 1.3bn people represented on the Security Council diminishes the role of the UN, Ramaphosa said.

However, refusing them the same rights as the other permanent members "means that we become second-class citizens once again", he said.

"We demand and require that we should have serious participation on the UN Security Council," he said. "We cannot have a second-class participation as Africa on the UN Security Council."

The decision on which nations should hold the two seats would need to be up to the African Union, he added.

African nations already have three non-permanent seats on the Security Council, allocated on a rotating basis for two-year terms. Any change in membership would first require adoption and ratification by two-thirds of the 193 member states.

Reform of the Security Council, long-stalled because of differences among its permanent members, would also need to be ratified unanimously among the five top-tier powers, which are all nuclear-armed.

Zimbabwe to cull 200 elephants amid food shortages

AFP
Harare

Zimbabwe will cull 200 elephants as it faces an unprecedented drought that has led to food shortages, a move that will also allow it to tackle a ballooning population of the animals, the country's wildlife authority said on Friday.

The country has "more elephants than it needed", Zimbabwe's environment minister said in parliament on Wednesday, adding that the government had instructed the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority (ZimParks) to begin the culling process.

The 200 elephants will be hunted in areas where they have clashed with humans, including Hwange, home of Zimbabwe's

largest natural reserve, ZimParks director-general Fulton Mangwanya told AFP.

Zimbabwe is home to an estimated 100,000 elephants, and has the second-biggest elephant population in the world after Botswana.

Thanks to conservation efforts, Hwange is home to 65,000 of the animals, more than four times its capacity, according to ZimParks.

Zimbabwe last culled elephants in 1988. Neighbouring Namibia said this month that it had already killed 160 wildlife in a planned cull of more than 700 animals, including 83 elephants, to cope with its worst drought in decades.

Zimbabwe and Namibia are among a swathe of countries in southern Africa that have declared a state of emergency because of drought.

About 42% of Zimbabweans live in

poverty, according to UN estimates, and authorities say about 6mn will require food assistance during the November to March lean season, when food is scarcest.

The move to hunt the elephants for food was criticised by some, not least because the animals are a major draw for tourists.

"Government must have more sustainable eco-friendly methods to dealing with drought without affecting tourism," said Farai Maguwu, director of the nonprofit Centre for Natural Resource Governance. "They risk turning away tourists on ethical grounds. The elephants are more profitable alive than dead."

"We have shown that we are poor custodians of natural resources and our appetite for ill-gotten wealth knows no bounds, so this must be stopped because it is unethical," he added.

However, Chris Brown, a conservation-

ist and chief executive of the Namibian Chamber of Environment, said that "elephants have a devastating effect on habitat if they are allowed to increase continually, exponentially".

"They really damage ecosystems and habitats, and they have a huge impact on other species which are less iconic and therefore matter less in the eyes of the eurocentric, urban armchair conservation people," he said. "Those species matter as much as elephants."

Namibia's cull of elephants has been condemned by conservationists and the animal rights group PETA as short-sighted, cruel and ineffective.

However, the government said the 83 to be culled would be only a small fraction of the estimated 20,000 elephants in the arid country, and would relieve pressure on grazing and water supplies.

London Fashion Week



Designer Patrick McDowell appears at his catwalk show during London Fashion Week in London.



A model gets ready backstage ahead of the MASHA POPOVA Spring/Summer 2025 collection at London Fashion Week.



A model looks on during a rehearsal on the day of the Patrick McDowell catwalk show.

Myanmar junta makes rare request for foreign aid to cope with deadly floods

AFP
Taungoo

Myanmar's junta chief made a rare request yesterday for foreign aid to cope with deadly floods that have displaced hundreds of thousands of people who have already endured three years of war. Floods and landslides have killed almost 300 people in Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand in the wake of Typhoon Yagi, which dumped a colossal deluge of rain when it hit the region last weekend.

In Myanmar, more than 235,000 people have been forced from their homes by floods, the junta said Friday, piling further misery on the country where war has raged since the military seized power in 2021.

In Taungoo — around an hour south of the capital Naypyidaw — residents paddled makeshift rafts on floodwaters that reached the roofs of some buildings.

Around 300 people were sheltering at a monastery on high ground in a nearby village. "We are surrounded by water and we don't have enough food for everyone," one man said. "We need food, water, and medicine as priority."

Outside another temple, Buddhist nuns in pink and orange robes waded through knee-deep water.

"I lost my rice, chickens, and ducks," said farmer Naing Tun, who had brought his three cows to higher ground near Taungoo after floodwaters inundated his village. "I don't care about the other belongings. Nothing else is more important than the lives of people and animals," he told AFP.

The rains in the wake of typhoon Yagi sent people across Southeast Asia fleeing by any means necessary, including by elephant in

Myanmar and jetski in Thailand. "Officials from the government need to contact foreign countries to receive rescue and relief aid to be provided to the victims," junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said on Friday, according to the *Global New Light of Myanmar* newspaper. "It is necessary to manage rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures as quickly as possible," he was quoted as saying. Myanmar's military has previously blocked or frustrated humanitarian assistance from abroad.

Last year it suspended travel authorisations for aid groups trying to reach around a million victims of powerful Cyclone Mocha that hit the west of the country. At the time the United Nations slammed that decision as "unfathomable."

The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in Myanmar said it could not currently comment on the junta's request for foreign aid.

"It is estimated that thousands of people have been forced to flee, but numbers are difficult to verify amid telecommunications blockages and a challenging operational context," a spokesperson told AFP. A spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Myanmar said it had no comment on the request.

After cyclone Nargis killed at least 138,000 people in Myanmar in 2008, the then-junta was accused of blocking emergency aid and initially refusing to grant access to humanitarian workers and supplies.

The junta gave a death toll on Friday of 33, while earlier in the day the country's fire department said rescuers had recovered 36 bodies. A military spokesman said it had lost contact with some areas of the



Flood-affected residents wait for a rescue boat to arrive in Taungoo, Myanmar's Bago region yesterday.

country and was investigating reports that dozens had been buried in landslides in a gold-mining area in the central Mandalay region.

Local media reported that six people had been killed in a landslide Friday in Tachileik in eastern Shan state. Military trucks carried small rescue boats to flood-hit areas around the military-built capital Naypyidaw on Saturday, AFP reporters said. "Yesterday we had only one meal," farmer Naing Tun said. "It is terrible to experience flooding because we cannot live our lives well when it happens," he added.

"It can be okay for people who have money. But for the people who have to work day to day for their meals, it is not okay at all."

More than 2.7m people were already displaced in Myanmar by conflict triggered by the junta's



Flood-affected residents ride a bamboo raft in Taungoo.

2021 coup. Vietnam authorities said Saturday that 262 people were dead and 83 missing. Images from

Laos capital Vientiane, meanwhile, showed houses and buildings inundated by the Mekong river.

N Korea pledges deeper ties with Russia as security chief visits

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un pledged to deepen ties with Russia as he held talks with visiting security chief Sergei Shoigu, state media reported yesterday. Western powers have accused cash-strapped North Korea of selling ammunition to Russia in defiance of sanctions over the more than 30-month war in Ukraine.

North Korea has recently bolstered military ties with Russia, with President Vladimir Putin making a rare visit to Pyongyang in June, where he signed a mutual defence agreement with Kim. Pictures in North Korean state media showed Kim and Shoigu hugging and smiling at the end of their visit, with the North Korean leader "wishing the respected President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin good health and success in his work". The pair were described as having had "constructive" talks in "a friendly and trustworthy, warm atmosphere".

The exact location of their meeting was not disclosed, but experts suspect it was the Kumsusan Guest Palace in Pyongyang, which has hosted both Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping. "There was a wide exchange of views on the issues of steadily deepening the strategic dialogue between the two countries and strengthening co-operation to defend the mutual security interests and on the regional and international situation," North Korean state media said.

Kim "affirmed that the DPRK government would further expand co-operation and collaboration" with Russia based on the treaty they signed in June, it added, using the country's official name. Russia's security council said on its website that Shoigu's meeting with Kim will "make an important contribution to the implementation" of the defence pact. Shoigu heads Russia's Security Council after stepping down as defence minister in May. He last met with Kim in July 2023, during a celebration in Pyongyang for the 70th anniversary of the 1953 Korean War armistice. Their latest meeting comes two days after North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula. — AFP

Manila blaze



A military helicopter drops water to put out a raging fire in an informal settlers area in Manila.

Chinese military slams German navy's crossing of Taiwan Strait

China's military yesterday condemned the transit of two German navy ships through the Taiwan Strait saying it increased security risks and sent the "wrong" signal, adding that Chinese forces monitored and warned the vessels.

China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own, says it alone exercises sovereignty and jurisdiction over the strait. Both the United States and Taiwan say the strait — a major trade route through which about half of global container ships pass — is an international waterway. The People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command said the passage of the two ships — a frigate and a supply vessel — was "public humping", and that its navy and air forces monitored and warned them throughout. "The German side's behaviour increases security risks and sends the wrong signal. Troops in the theatre are on high alert at all times and will resolutely counter all threats and provocations," it said in a statement.

China's embassy in Germany said in a separate statement it had lodged "representations" with Berlin, saying Taiwan belonged to China, a position the democratically elected government in Taipei strongly rejects. "The question of Taiwan is not a matter of 'freedom of navigation', but of China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said. The Taiwan Strait is Chinese waters "and there are no so-called 'international waters' at all", the embassy added. China urges Germany to avoid any "interference" that would jeopardise the healthy and stable development of bilateral relations, it added. Taiwan's government says only the island's people can decide their future. — Reuters

India accuses Samsung, Xiaomi of colluding with Amazon, Flipkart

Samsung, Xiaomi and other smartphone companies colluded with Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart to exclusively launch products on the e-commerce firms' Indian websites in breach of antitrust laws, according to regulatory reports seen by Reuters.

Antitrust investigations conducted by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) have found that Amazon and Flipkart violated local competition laws by giving preference to select sellers, prioritising certain listings, and steeply discounting

products, hurting other companies, Reuters reported this week.

The CCI's 1,027-page report on Amazon also said the Indian units of five companies — Samsung, Xiaomi, Motorola, Realme and OnePlus — were "involved in the practice of exclusive" phone launches in "collusion" with Amazon and its affiliates, breaking competition law. In Flipkart's case, a 1,696-page CCI report said the Indian units of Samsung, Xiaomi, Motorola, Vivo, Lenovo and Realme conducted similar practices. The inclusion of smartphone makers

like Samsung and Xiaomi in the case could increase their legal and compliance headaches.

"Exclusivity in business is anathema. Not only is it against free and fair competition but also against the interest of consumers," CCI's additional director general G V Siva Prasad wrote in the Amazon and Flipkart reports, in identical findings. Reuters is first to report the smartphone companies have been accused of anticompetitive behaviour in the CCI's reports which are dated Aug 9 and are not public. Xiaomi declined

to comment, while the other smartphone makers did not respond to requests for comment.

Amazon, Flipkart and the CCI did not respond, and have not so far commented on the reports' findings. Both the CCI reports said that during investigations Amazon and Flipkart "deliberately downplayed" allegations of exclusive launches, but officials found the practice was "rampant". Counterpoint Research data shows that South Korea's Samsung and China's Xiaomi are two of India's biggest smartphone players, togeth-

er holding an almost 36% market share, with China's Vivo at 19%.

India's e-retail market is set to exceed \$160bn by 2028, up from \$57-60bn in 2023, consultancy firm Bain estimates. The investigation findings are a major setback for Amazon and Flipkart in a key growth market where they have faced the ire of small retailers for years for hurting their offline businesses. The CCI has also said both companies used their foreign investments to provide subsidised rates for services like warehousing and marketing to

a select number of sellers. Some of the smartphone companies — Xiaomi, Samsung, OnePlus, Realme and Motorola — have been ordered to submit their financial statements for three fiscal years to 2024, to the CCI, according to an internal CCI document dated Aug 28, also seen by Reuters. The investigation into Amazon, Flipkart and their sellers was triggered in 2020 by a complaint from an affiliate of the country's biggest retailer association, the Confederation of All India Traders, which has 80mn members. — Reuters

Salvage operation for stricken Red Sea tanker underway



Flames and smoke rise from the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion on the Red Sea yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Athen

An operation to tow an abandoned tanker struck by Yemen's Houthi rebels in August, threatening environmental disaster, began yesterday and is ongoing, a Greek defence ministry source told AFP.

The Greek-flagged Sounion is being towed northwards under military escort, the source said.

The tanker was hit last month by Iran-backed Houthis off the coast of Hodeida while carrying 150,000 tonnes of crude oil.

"(The tugboat) Aigaion Pelagos has begun to gradually tow the tanker northwards, escorted by military vessels," the defence source told AFP, adding that the ships' radars had been turned off for security reasons.

The official added that a rescue team had boarded the tanker and attached tow cables, overcoming "adverse conditions."

Once the tanker is safely out of the area, the source said that an update would be given on the operation.

Greek state news agency ANA said the tugboat was escorted by three frigates, helicopters and a special forces team, without disclosing the states of origin.

A Greek fire ship also stood ready to lend assistance if required, ANA said.

The tanker had been anchored west of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, midway between Yemen and Eritrea.

The European Union's Red Sea naval mission, Aspides, earlier yesterday said that the salvage operation of the Sounion "is essential in order to avert a potential environmental disaster in the region."

"To achieve this, several public and private actors are working together," it added.

The Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion was hit by missiles off the coast of Hodeida on August 21.

After the initial strike, the Houthis returned and detonated charges on the ship's deck, setting off new fires.

Damage to the vessel had threatened a Red Sea oil spill four times the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska.

The Sounion's crew — made up of 23 Filipinos and two Russians — was rescued the day after the attack by a French frigate serving with the EU mission.

The EU naval force was formed in February to protect merchant vessels in the Red Sea from attacks by the Houthi rebels, who have waged a campaign against international shipping that they say is intended to show solidarity with Hamas in its war with Israel in the Gaza Strip.

Since November, the Houthi attacks have resulted in the sinkings of two ships and the deaths of at least four crew members.

The Houthis have been firing drones and missiles at ships in the vital commercial route, saying they are targeting vessels linked to Israel, the US and Britain in a show of solidarity with Palestinians over the war in Gaza.

A salvage operation had been attempted earlier this month, but Aspides at the time had said that "the private companies responsible for the salvage operation have concluded that the conditions were not met to conduct the towing operation and that it was not safe to proceed."

On Friday, the mission said it stood ready "to facilitate a new salvage operation in the coming days."

The vessel was still on fire on September 12 but there were no signs of an oil spill from the main cargo hold, Aspides said Friday.

Pak apex court rebukes poll commission over PTI certifications delay

The Supreme Court of Pakistan yesterday dismissed a request by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for clarification on its earlier verdict regarding reserved seats in the national and provincial assemblies.

The court labelled the request as "misconceived" and ordered the immediate enforcement of its July 12 decision, which grants reserved seats to the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

In a major ruling on July 12, a full bench of 13 judges ruled that the PTI was eligible to claim reserved seats for women and non-Muslims, a verdict that significantly impacted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's ruling coalition. This decision positioned PTI as the largest party in both houses of Parliament.

The ECP, tasked with implementing the Supreme Court's decision, had raised concerns about how to verify candidates' affiliations with PTI, citing confusion over the party's internal structure. It sought further directions from the court, particularly regarding who in the party should provide the necessary certifications.

However, in its written order, the Supreme Court dismissed these concerns as unfounded, criticising the ECP for delaying the implementation. The court noted that the ECP had previously recognised Barrister Gohar Ali Khan as PTI's chairman and said that this recognition should suffice for verifying certifications.

"The commission cannot approbate and reprobate," the order read, accusing the ECP of trying to obstruct the court's decision. The court emphasised that the PTI remains a valid, registered political party, and the reservations raised by the ECP were inconsistent with established legal principles.

The court also highlighted that even dissenting judges had acknowledged the legitimacy of PTI's leadership and directed the ECP to act on

the July 12 decision without further delay. The ECP's failure to implement the court's orders, the ruling warned, could lead to constitutional and legal consequences.

The court reiterated that the PTI candidates should be recognised as members of the parliamentary party, and no further delays would be tolerated. "The attempt by the commission to confuse and cloud what is otherwise absolutely clear must be strongly deprecated," the court stated.

This verdict comes against the backdrop of growing political tensions in Pakistan, with the ruling coalition and opposition embroiled in a legislative battle over election laws.

The government recently passed controversial legislation seemingly aimed at diluting PTI's strength in Parliament by revising rules related to reserved seats. PTI has challenged the law in the Supreme Court, setting the stage for a protracted legal confrontation.

PTI lawyer Ali Uzair Bhandari commented on the court's latest order, asserting that it clarified the status of independent MNAs as PTI members.

He warned that any MNAs who vote for the government's constitutional amendments could be disqualified under Article 63(A), which prevents lawmakers from voting against their party line.

Meanwhile, government spokespersons have indicated confidence in their ability to pass the constitutional amendments despite PTI's objections. However, the ruling coalition currently lacks the necessary two-thirds majority to push through the amendments.

As legal experts anticipate further clashes between the executive, judiciary, and legislature, the Supreme Court's ruling on the reserved seats is expected to have long-lasting effects on Pakistan's political landscape. The ECP now faces mounting pressure to act swiftly and implement the court's decision without further obstruction.

Russia, Ukraine swap 206 war prisoners in UAE-brokered deal

AFP
Kyiv

Moscow and Kyiv swapped 103 prisoners of war each yesterday in a deal brokered by the United Arab Emirates, a rare moment of coordination between the two warring sides as Russia pushes ahead in east Ukraine.

The Russians released in the swap were captured during Ukraine's incursion into the Kursk region, Moscow said, while some of the Ukrainians freed had been held prisoner since Moscow seized the Azovstal steel plant in May 2022.

"Another 103 soldiers were returned to Ukraine from Russian captivity," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Telegram.

Among the freed were 82 privates and sergeants as well as 21 officers, Zelensky said.

"The defenders of Kyiv, Donetsk, Mariupol and Azovstal, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and the Kharkiv regions," he added.

Russia confirmed it had "handed over" 103 Ukrainian army prisoners, and received 103 Russian servicemen captured by Kyiv in its Kursk offensive in return.

"At present, all Russian servicemen are on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, where they are being provided with the necessary psychological and medical assistance, as well as an opportunity to contact their relatives," the Russian defence ministry said.

Despite ongoing hostilities, Russia and Ukraine have managed to swap hundreds of prisoners throughout the two-and-a-half-year conflict — often in deals brokered by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia or Türkiye.

The announcement comes a day after Zelensky said 49 Ukrainian POWs had been returned from Russia, and three weeks ago both sides swapped 115 prisoners each in a deal also mediated by the UAE.

The UAE's foreign ministry hailed the deal as a "success" and thanked both sides for their cooperation yesterday.

The prisoner swap came as Russia pushed ahead in east Ukraine, where it claims to have



Ukrainian prisoners of war pose for a picture after a swap at an unknown location in Ukraine yesterday. Right: A video grab shows Russian prisoners sitting in a bus following the swap. (Reuters, AFP)



captured a string of villages in recent weeks.

The Russian defence ministry said in a daily briefing it had "liberated" the village of Zhelanne Pershe, less than 30km from the key Ukrainian-held logistics hub of Pokrovsk.

Pokrovsk lies on the intersection of a key road that supplies Ukrainian troops and towns across the eastern front and has long been a target for Moscow's army.

More than half of the city's 60,000 residents have fled since the invasion began in February 2022, with evacuations ramping up in recent weeks as Moscow's army closes in.

Ukraine had hoped its major cross-border incursion into the Kursk region last month would

slow down Russia's advances in the east.

On Friday, Zelensky said Moscow had been slowed down somewhat but conceded the situation on the eastern front was "very difficult". Russia meanwhile claimed this week to have clawed back a swath of territory in the Kursk region, as it mounted what appeared to be a counter-offensive.

Tensions between Russia and the West over the conflict reached dire levels this week over UK and US discussions about letting Ukraine use longer-range weapons to strike targets inside Russia.

The discussions came after a visit to Kyiv by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and British counterpart David Lammy.

President Vladimir Putin

protection of state sovereignty, it is human rights that must prevail in our fortunately democratic system," he said.

The ship was stuck at sea for nearly three weeks before the migrants were finally allowed to disembark on the island of Lampedusa following a court order.

Members of Open Arms have testified that the migrants' physical and mental well-being reached a crisis point as sanitary conditions onboard became dire, including a scabies outbreak.

Salvini, head of the anti-immigration League party and interior minister at the time, testified in January that he had understood that "the situation was not at risk" onboard the ship.

"The POS (safe port) should have been provided immediately and without delay," prosecutor Marzia Sabella said Saturday, according to Italian media reports.

"Refusing to do so was breaking the rules, not being in line with a government plan," and Salvini's "choices" had given rise to "chaos", she said.

A populist known for an "Italians first" policy, Salvini has repeatedly used attacks against illegal immigration to boost his political capital.

In 2019, serving under prime minister Giuseppe Conte, he implemented a "closed ports" policy under which Italy refused entry to charity ships that rescue migrants stranded while crossing the Mediterranean.

He cast it as a tough measure against traffickers who operate boats between North Africa and Italy and Malta, the deadliest migrant crossing in the world.

4 dead in Romania floods as rain batters central Europe

At least four people died and thousands of homes were damaged by flooding in eastern Romania yesterday, officials said, as surging river levels put authorities on alert in much of central and eastern Europe following days of torrential rain. Tens of thousands of households were left without power in Romania and the Czech Republic, where more rainfall is forecast in the coming days. Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, southern Germany and parts of Austria are also expected to see more heavy rain.

Residents of some towns along the Czech-Polish border were evacuated as rivers rose past alert levels while the Czech capital, Prague, which suffered catastrophic floods in 2002, put preventative anti-flood measures in place.

In Romania, flooding affected eight counties, the country's emergency unit said, and Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu visited



Local residents rescue an elderly person from the rising flood waters in the Romanian village of Slobozia Conachi. (AFP)

hard-hit Galati county, where the four people were found dead, about 5,000 homes were damaged and 25,000 were without power.

Television images from the area showed streets flooded with muddy water, silt and debris as rescuers led residents to safety. "The priority is obviously to save

lives. At this moment we have all the necessary logistics to intervene quickly," Ciolacu said. In the Czech Republic, northern and northeastern areas bore the brunt of the deluge and 51,000 households had their electricity supply cut off, the CTK news agency said. Forecasters warned that some

parts of the country could see more than a third of average annual rainfall by Sunday, with Environment Minister Petr Hladik urging people in the worst-hit areas to prepare to leave their homes.

In the village of Visnova, 140km north of Prague, local resident Roman Christof said his cottage had escaped damage because it was built on higher land. Others were less fortunate, he added. "I feel sorry for the neighbours," he said as he surveyed the floodwaters.

In Prague, a city of more than 1.3mn people that sits on the banks of the Vltava river spanned by the picturesque 14th century Charles Bridge, flood barriers were put in place.

The city heavily invested into preventive measures after the 2002 floods, which swept into the subway system and forced tens of thousands of people from their homes. Prague Zoo, which is located along the Vltava, was

closed to visitors and Czech Railways said services on dozens of routes were disrupted. In the country's second-biggest city, Brno, a hospital evacuated patients as a precaution.

In Glucholazy, a historic town in southwestern Poland near the Czech border, firefighters piled hundreds of sandbags alongside a swollen river and some residents were evacuated.

Polish Interior Minister Tomasz Siemoniak said weather forecasts looked unfavourable, with very heavy rainfall to fall around the Czech border area over the next 24 hours, feeding rivers into Poland.

"We are facing a critical night, full mobilisation is required," Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on the X platform.

Officials in neighbouring Slovakia warned of the threat of flooding in the capital, Bratislava, from the swollen Danube, while Hungary expects the river to near record-high levels in the coming days.



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Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

- 📍 P.O.Box 2888, Doha, Qatar
- ✉ editor@gulf-times.com
- ☎ 44350478 (News),
- ☎ 44466404 (Sport),
- ☎ 44466636 (Home delivery)
- ☎ 44350474
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GULF TIMES

Pollution chokes global economies and heats up the planet as well

Climate change, wildfires, and air pollution have significant and interconnected impacts on human health.

These exacerbate existing health problems and pose new challenges due to changing weather patterns, rising temperatures, and extreme events like heatwaves, floods, and storms.

Air pollution has found to be a leading environmental health risk, responsible for millions of premature deaths worldwide each year. It includes particulate matter, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide.

Ninety-nine per cent of humanity breathes polluted air – leading to an estimated 8mn premature deaths – including more than 700,000 children under five, according to the United Nations (UN).

Pollution is also choking economies and heating up our planet, adding fuel to the fire of the climate crisis. And it disproportionately affects those most vulnerable in society, including women, children, and older persons.

99% of humanity breathes polluted air - leading to an estimated 8mn premature deaths - including more than 700,000 children under five

Yet, pollution is a silent killer that can be stopped!

In the context of this year's International Day for Clean Air and Blue Skies on September 7, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said pollution is a silent killer that can be stopped and urged the world to "invest now, so we can breathe easy".

He stressed how harmful pollution

can be, noting that 99% of humanity breathes polluted air which leads to millions of global premature deaths.

"Pollution is also choking economies and heating up our planet, adding fuel to the fire of the climate crisis," the UN chief said. "And it disproportionately affects those most vulnerable in society, including women, children, and older persons."

The Secretary-General said investing in clean air will take action from governments, businesses, development organisations and more at a regional and global level.

The United Nations is also encouraging the relevant stakeholders to decrease their use of fossil fuels, transition to clean cooking and increase air quality monitoring.

"Investing in clean air saves lives, combats climate change, strengthens economies, builds fairer societies, and advances the Sustainable Development Goals," he said. "...let's invest now so we can breathe easy knowing we are securing a healthier planet for all."

The message marking the international day highlights some of the challenges outlined in a new report from the UN World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), which details the impacts of climate change, wildfires and air pollution on human health.

The report noted that both the northern and southern hemispheres experienced "hyper-active wildfire seasons" in 2023, which caused numerous deaths and damaged livestock.

Wildfires, which are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change, release large amounts of particulate matter and toxic gases into the atmosphere.

"The 2023 wildfire season set a multi-decade record in Canada in terms of total area burned, with seven times more hectares burned than the 1990-2013 average, according to the Canadian National Fire Database," the report said.

The wildfires also worsened air quality in eastern Canada and the north-eastern United States.

For that reason, the WMO Deputy-Secretary-General Ko Barrett said climate change and air quality cannot be treated separately.

Undoubtedly, environmental threats are creating a growing public health crisis, which requires co-ordinated global action to mitigate their impacts and protect vulnerable populations.

REYNOLD
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15-09-2024



How to work Kursk gambit

By Samuel Charap and Charles A. Kupchan
Washington, DC

Ukraine's bold incursion into Russia's Kursk region gives the country a much-needed breakthrough on the battlefield, and represents yet another setback for the Kremlin. Yet the operation is not a military game-changer. Even as Ukrainian forces have occupied more than 400 square miles of Russia, the Russian military has been making significant advances along the front line in Ukraine's Donbas region and pummeling the country from the air. Neither Russia nor Ukraine is in a position to achieve an absolute military victory; this war will be concluded at the negotiating table, not on the battlefield.

It is at the negotiating table that Ukraine's push into Kursk may well end up working to its advantage. By successfully demonstrating that it can take the fight to Russian territory, Ukraine has strengthened its hand in future negotiations. The United States and its allies should now work with Ukraine to put this newfound leverage to good use by charting a course toward a ceasefire and diplomatic endgame.

Even before Ukraine's incursion into Kursk, a window of opportunity for diplomacy had already opened. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had long insisted that talks could come only after the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity. But this past summer he warmed to the prospect of a diplomatic push, emphasising the need to negotiate an end to the war "as soon as possible." Just after a peace summit in Switzerland in June, he said that he wanted to invite Russia to the next gathering. And despite his own decree banning direct talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, he stated that he was

open to engaging with the Russian leader.

This shift in Zelensky's stance cleared the way for quiet diplomacy between Ukraine and Russia. A few months ago, the two countries almost reached a deal to secure civilian shipping lanes in the Black Sea. Moreover, before the Kursk operation disrupted the effort, talks had been planned in a Gulf country to negotiate a ban on strikes against civilian infrastructure.

Ukraine's tentative pivot to diplomacy is entirely understandable. It has steadily lost territory to Russian forces over the past 20 months, and its people are tiring, with opinion surveys now showing that close to 50% of Ukrainians favour negotiations.

Despite passing legislation in June that broadens the country's military mobilisation, securing manpower remains a challenge. The economy continues to suffer from regular Russian strikes against its infrastructure, with around 50% of Ukraine's electricity-generating capacity knocked out. And Ukrainian leaders are justifiably worried that political support for further aid packages could wane in the US and Europe alike.

The Kursk operation could be interpreted as a sign that the window for diplomacy has closed in Kyiv, or that Zelensky's talk of negotiations was only a cover for the surprise strike. But the opposite appears to be the case. Top Ukrainian officials, including Zelensky, have explicitly linked the Kursk operation to efforts to increase Ukraine's leverage at the negotiating table. Wars often escalate soon before talks to end them begin, which may well be what is now unfolding.

A window of opportunity for diplomacy has also opened in Washington. Now that President Joe Biden is not running for re-election, he could burnish his legacy by helping Ukraine move toward a diplomatic endgame. Securing a deal that allows the

80% of Ukraine still under the control of the government in Kyiv to thrive – despite nearly three years of relentless aggression from a much larger neighbour – would qualify as a success by any reasonable measure.

Whenever the fighting ends, the US can and should continue working to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity using diplomatic, political, and economic tools, including by making the Kremlin pay a price for its occupation, for however long it lasts.

For its part, Ukraine would do well to embark on negotiations sooner rather than later, capitalising on the increased leverage afforded by its military advances in Kursk. Undue delays are likely to weaken, not strengthen, Ukraine's hand, because its forces in Kursk could be forced to retreat. Russian forces could make additional gains in Donbas, or both.

The US should help Ukraine map out effective steps to de-escalate the conflict, building on the aborted talks to open Black Sea shipping routes and limit strikes on civilian infrastructure. Further measures could involve designating rear areas – such as Crimea and all Ukrainian urban centres – as off-limits for deep strikes. Eventually, Ukraine and Russia could forge disengagement zones along the 600-mile front line, which would effectively serve as trial areas for a broader ceasefire.

The Ukrainian and Russian governments could also agree to end future incursions across the undisputed sections of the international border, such as Russia's invasion of the Kharkiv region last spring and Ukraine's more recent Kursk operation. These measures could lay the groundwork for negotiating a durable peace.

To be sure, Russia's own willingness to take initial steps toward de-escalation, let alone a ceasefire, is highly uncertain; Putin responded to the Kursk incursion by declaring that

negotiations are now impossible. But it is worth testing the waters. With the Kursk operation having demonstrated Ukraine's ability to impose further costs on Russia, Putin has a greater incentive to engage. And whatever his illusions were when he began this brutal invasion, after two and a half years of limited battlefield gains at exceptionally high cost, even Putin must now understand that negotiations are a question of when, not if.

Should the Kremlin reject offers to de-escalate, at least then the next US president will know that Russia has no interest in peace. Such clarity would not only help maintain the current international coalition in support of Ukraine; it also could pull in more countries from the Global South, most of which have so far refused to take sides despite Russia's unambiguous aggression against its neighbour. Russian intransigence might even convince China to distance itself from Putin's war, and to lean on him to seek a diplomatic off-ramp.

Given the high intensity of the current fighting, finalising a ceasefire before a new US president takes office is unlikely. But the US can still pursue incremental steps that would appreciably mitigate the death and destruction. Such steps would be valuable in themselves, and they would set the stage for the next US president to work toward bringing this devastating conflict to an end. — Project Syndicate

• Samuel Charap, Distinguished Chair in Russia and Eurasia Policy and Senior Political Scientist at RAND, served at the State Department under president Barack Obama.

• Charles A Kupchan, Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, served on the National Security Council under presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.



US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin (left) applauds Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a Ukraine Defence Contact Group meeting early this month at the US air base in Ramstein, southwestern Germany. (AFP)

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How fake Ozempic batch numbers help criminal groups spread dangerous drugs

• Counterfeit pharmaceuticals kill around a million people each year, according to WHO
• Overall, Ozempic faked in a variety of ways has been found in nearly 30 countries

By Patrick Wingrove

In December, Drew, a 36-year-old man from San Antonio, Texas, drove more than 250 miles to Mexico to buy cheap Ozempic to help him lose weight. Going home, he checked the pens. They looked unusual, so he shared photos on social media. The verdict: They were fakes.

Three people on Reddit said Drew's product looked like insulin. "If so, it would be dangerous to use," said one. A surge of insulin can cause a sharp drop in blood sugar that can lead to dizziness, seizures and death. The incident sheds light on a wider problem in the manufacturing of highly sought-after drugs, one that lets criminal organisations circulate potentially lethal fakes: forged drug batch numbers.

Pharmaceutical companies, including Ozempic-maker Novo Nordisk, authenticate batches of drugs with combinations of letters and numbers printed on the packaging, which are then used to track the product in a given country.

The fake pens Drew bought carried the batch, or lot, number MP5B060 to make them look authentic. To Novo, that represented a shipment of the diabetes drugs destined for Egypt.

The fact Drew bought them in Mexico showed something was wrong — although as a consumer, he did not realise that.

The flaw, which is rooted in an effort to ensure the drugs are traceable and safe, is exacerbated by patchy regulation by health authorities globally.

By the time Drew made his purchase, fakes with batch number MP5B060 had turned up in at least 10 countries from Azerbaijan to North Macedonia, according to a Reuters review of drug regulator announcements and documents obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests. The World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a warning in July 2023 about products with batch number MP5B060 and Interpol also warned last year that insulin pens were being relabelled and repackaged to look like Ozempic. Some countries banned products with the number. Others did not.

Mexico's drug regulator did not respond to a request for comment for this story.

In at least four countries, the fakes have resulted in hospitalisations.

In the US, Nigeria and Iraq, the fake Ozempic shots looked like insulin pens, according to Reuters' review of the documents and regulator announcements. In Iraq, a man fell into a coma after his blood sugar dropped to half normal levels after using one, before later recovering, Reuters found.

Multi-billion-dollar market

Criminals can get hold of batch numbers through a corrupt



A suspected fake Ozempic pen, featuring the batch number MP5B060 on its label above the branding, that was bought in Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, is seen at an unknown location in this handout photo obtained by Reuters on April 17, 2024. Novo Nordisk has previously said an Ozempic pen whose scale extends when setting the dose, as this one does, can be identified as counterfeit. (Reuters)

connection at a drugmaker's manufacturing facility, or just by buying the drug and using scanning technology to copy the packaging, inserts and so on, Sam Louis, a former US Department of Justice lawyer focused on healthcare fraud matters, told Reuters.

With at least 890mn people suffering from obesity globally, according to the WHO, demand is huge. The active ingredient in Ozempic, called semaglutide, leads to an average weight loss of 15%. It's part of a class of drugs that reduce food cravings and cause the stomach to empty more slowly.

Novo's franchise for Ozempic and Wegovy, a weight-loss version of semaglutide, brought in nearly \$19bn in net sales last year. It said it is working with authorities in several countries to tackle counterfeits of both.

Novo's head of global product security, Anne Devaud, told Reuters the company potentially has identified one source in connection with the batch number on the counterfeit that Drew bought, which it also suspects of distributing fake versions of other companies' injectable drugs.

The company declined to provide more details. The wide recurrence of the same batch number suggests a global counterfeiting operation could be to blame, five anti-counterfeiting experts and a WHO official said.

"Our experience is that when you have the same batches and labelling, it is most likely the same people or maybe several smaller distributors that have purchased from one big source," said Rutendo Kuwana, the WHO team lead for incidents with substandard and falsified medicines.

Bootlegged batch numbers and repackaged insulin are just part of the picture: criminals can divert or steal drugs from hospitals or other healthcare systems before adding fake labels and packaging, or they can simply put any liquid in a vial or stamp out pills and place them

in counterfeit packaging, a Novo spokesperson said.

"All these different potential origins, often via organised criminal networks involving multiple jurisdictions, represent serious challenges for those involved in fighting these crimes," the spokesperson said.

Even so, at least 18 different batch numbers have been found on fake Ozempic pens in 14 countries since the start of last year, adverse event reports and health regulator announcements show.

The solution is not simple. A legitimate Ozempic batch contains 280,000 pens; some countries ban all products carrying a batch number after finding fakes that carry it. Others do not, saying that to withdraw a whole batch on account of a few fakes could exacerbate shortages.

Jared Davis, a former US Food and Drug Administration and Homeland Security agent who is now a consultant on counterfeiting issues at law firm Oberheiden, said it is difficult for government agencies to stop the spread of fakes when demand is so high.

"Most countries aren't going to pull the entire line and get rid of it because an organisation or a few folks decided that they're going to run a counterfeit scheme and target that particular batch number," said Davis.

A deadly resemblance

Fake Ozempic adds to a glut of counterfeit pharmaceuticals that kill around a million people each year, according to the WHO. A September 2023 report from the US CDC said use of suspected fake pills, including painkiller Oxycotin, led to nearly 55,000 deaths in the US alone in 2021.

Overall, Ozempic faked in a variety of ways has been found in nearly 30 countries, Reuters found. Fakes have been linked to more than two dozen cases of serious harm globally, and to two deaths in the United States.

Ozempic can cost more than \$1,000 in the US for a multi-dose

pen that lasts a month. Drew said he had heard the drug could be bought for less in the Mexican border town of Nuevo Progreso.

"I called ahead and asked a few pharmacies first if they had it, and they said yes, telling me prices of like \$200 a pen. So I was like, oh, this is going to be great," he told Reuters.

"I went down there, and most of the pharmacies actually had a much higher price, and the one I found was the lowest," he said, adding that the store he went to doubled as a restaurant. Drew paid around \$350 per pen.

Bringing drugs into the United States across the border is a criminal offence. Drew, who asked to be identified by his first name only, said he did not use the pens, report the purchase to the authorities, or hand the product in for testing.

He said he couldn't remember the name of the store where he bought them and after initially speaking to Reuters, deleted his original social media post.

Rebadging insulin to look like Ozempic is lucrative. Like some types of insulin, Ozempic comes in a blue, prepackaged autoinjector. Insulin can be bought for as little as \$8.81 per unit outside the US, according to a report from the RAND Corporation on the global cost of the drug.

When Drew opened the boxes he bought, the autoinjectors had Ozempic labels, but were thinner and a darker blue than pens he had seen before, his photos show.

An insulin product manufactured by French drugmaker Sanofi, branded Apidra Solostar, comes in a prepackaged blue autoinjector with a clipped lid similar to Ozempic.

A Sanofi spokesperson said the company was aware of illegally mislabelled Apidra pens being passed off as Ozempic, and has been working with partners to protect patients, but declined to comment on whether the company has since tried to distinguish its product from Novo's.

How to find and check an Ozempic batch number

Explosive demand and high prices for Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly's weight loss and diabetes drugs have fuelled a criminal effort to package autoinjector pens containing other substances, such as insulin, with branding and batch numbers that make them look like Novo's Ozempic.

If patients suspect they have bought a fake version of Ozempic or another drug, they can search the Internet for the associated batch number to see if the World Health Organisation or any national health authorities have flagged it.

Patients can typically find these batch, or lot, numbers on both legitimate and fake versions of Ozempic or other similar pen-based drugs like Novo's Wegovy in two places: on the outside of the box it is packaged in and on the

label of the autoinjector itself. Novo and Lilly have also published guides to help patients identify suspected fake versions of their drugs in other ways and report them.

The WHO this year flagged three batch numbers — LP6F832, NAR0074 and MP5E511 — that have been linked to fake Ozempic in Brazil, the US and Austria respectively, a Reuters review of documents and regulator announcement shows.

The organisation sent an alert to health regulators in July 2023 flagging MP5B060 — which has been found on fake Ozempic pens in at least 10 countries — as well as MP5A370 and MP5D600, which have both been found in Guatemala, according to an announcement from the country's health regulator.

Novo, asked if it would make Ozempic pens more distinctive, said it was unlikely that any one change would prevent fakes because counterfeiters can adjust nimbly.

To ban or not to ban

Azerbaijan first flagged it had found fakes using batch number MP5B060 in December 2022.

The WHO's warning came after three more people suffered severe low blood sugar, or hypoglycaemia, after using fake Ozempic pens with the same Egyptian batch number: a woman in Britain who got her autoinjector at a beauty salon, a man in Serbia who bought his in the United Arab Emirates, and a woman in Lebanon, according to separate reports sent by Novo Nordisk to the FDA that were reviewed by Reuters. In the US, a 39-year-old woman suffered severe hypoglycaemia and was rushed to the emergency room after taking what she thought was Ozempic with that batch number, a US FDA document shows. The report said her outcome was not known.

Some countries, including Poland and Ukraine, said they have banned the importation and sale of drugs marked with bootlegged batch numbers identified by international agencies. But regulators in Britain, Finland, Ireland and Sweden told Reuters they had not.

Ireland's health ministry said it found no fakes under batch numbers flagged by the European Union, so simply alerted wholesalers and others to be vigilant when buying Ozempic. It said it had other controls in place to block falsified packs, including scanning barcodes printed on them. Britain's health regulator said in response to a Freedom of Information Act request in May that it had opted to focus on visual differences between the pens, such as differences in colour and construction, rather than banning batch numbers. Asked why, it said in July that banning batch numbers risked causing shortages of legitimate medicines.

Britain and Ireland's regulators did not comment on the possibility that not banning batch numbers might help them circulate.

Massive profits

Reported counterfeits of Ozempic have been more common than those of Eli Lilly's Mounjaro, a newer rival. But these too are on the rise.

A US FDA report seen by Reuters said a 61-year-old woman in the US had been hospitalised for severe stomach pain and seizure after vomiting 70 times over four hours last January, having taken a fake version of Mounjaro sold to her in a vial by a health consultant, who was not named. As of early May, she was partly recovered, the report said.

Lilly said the proliferation of counterfeit and unsafe or untested versions of its drug is a significant safety concern; steps it has taken include a tool to help people determine if they have a genuine Lilly product.

But it called on the authorities to take more action against those who circulate knockoffs. Sophisticated global counterfeiting operations can make massive profits from such fakes and often find ways to evade detection, said Rana Saoud, a special agent in charge at US Homeland Security Investigations. The National Institutes of Health, the US government agency responsible for public health research, has said the counterfeit drug trade as a whole could be worth as much as \$431bn annually, citing analysts.

Identifying leaders of such a supply chain is a challenge. A New York woman, Isis Navarro Reyes, was in May charged with smuggling fake versions of Ozempic and other weight loss drugs into the US, then using TikTok to help sell the products. Reyes could not be reached for comment. "Until we get specifics...we're not going to know if it's a lone actor or part of a criminal organisation," said Saoud at Homeland Security Investigations. "But generally speaking, it's an organisation looking to profit." — Reuters

Trump plan for Musk-led efficiency body could give CEO big influence

By Sheila Dang, Akash Sriram, Joey Roulette, Nora Eckert

Billionaire Elon Musk will head a government efficiency commission with a vast remit if Donald Trump is elected US president, potentially putting him in position to change the rules for corporate America, including the wide swath of industries in which his companies compete. Trump on Thursday announced the plan, including Musk's role, and said he wanted to see recommendations for "drastic reforms," starting with hunting down fraud and improper payments, that would target "the entire federal government."

The commission would put Musk, who leads rocket company SpaceX, electric carmaker Tesla, technology companies X and xAI and several others, a chance to plan the slimmer government Republicans often advocate, but could see him making rules that directly affect his own work and wealth. Musk repeatedly suggested creating a government efficiency commission in a public conversation with Trump on social media platform X in August, saying that government spending should be trimmed to a sensible level and that Musk himself was willing to help.

Trump in the conversation responded that Musk was "the greatest cutter" of jobs. Presidential commissions have been created on a number of topics, such as when President Joe Biden created



Donald Trump and Elon Musk tour the Firing Room Four after the launch of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and Crew Dragon spacecraft on NASA's SpaceX Demo-2 mission to the International Space Station from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on May 30, 2020. (Reuters)

one to examine the idea of reforming the Supreme Court, said Nikolas Guggenberger, an assistant professor of law at University of Houston Law Center, whose work focuses on antitrust, law and technology. But Musk's significant relationships with the US government, worth billions of dollars, make it a different matter.

"He has a large company that sells electric vehicles, he has a large company that sells satellites, he has a social media platform. In all those areas, you can imagine advice being tainted by the fact that he has strong economic interests," Guggenberger said.

To be sure, Trump gave few details of how the commission would work but

described it as carrying out audits and making recommendations, which has been tried before. "There's already been many, many audits done and recommendations made for efficiency," said Cristina Chaplain, a former director at the Government Accountability Office. Moreover, changing laws and rules is complicated. While business people could bring a fresh perspective, she added, "that often clashes with reality of government operations, and laws and regulations that affect them."

Musk has chafed for years at what he sees as government inefficiency, and his own corporations are heavily regulated: SpaceX must obtain signoffs for rocket launches and new technology; auto regulators are scrutinising the safety of Tesla's self-driving technology; and health agencies must approve much of the work done by his brain technology implant startup Neuralink.

Some investors would welcome his influence in Washington.

"Musk cleaned house at Twitter. He'd cut the fat out of government spending as well," said Triple D Trading analyst Dennis Dick, who has a long position in Tesla, referring to Musk's huge job cuts when he took over the social media firm.

Musk's view of efficiency in the space sector and elsewhere could spark action that hurts rivals, some space industry experts said. That could mean viewing government efforts to sustain multiple vendors of rockets as wasteful, for instance. "There's a lot of people who are nervous

about Musk, just because of the policies he promotes and the statements he makes and the fights he gets into with governments," said Tim Farrar, a satellite industry analyst.

Investors frequently ask whether Musk is doing too much. "He's going to spread himself thinner and try to make the government efficient, as well as running an electric car company, a space company, the Boring company and Twitter? Something would have to give," said Sam Fiorani, vice-president at research firm AutoForecast Solutions.

"You can't imagine Elon Musk would volunteer to work for a president who was planning on dismantling his business," said Fiorani, adding the EV market could benefit overall.

Musk did not respond to a request for comment but wrote on X of the efficiency commission, "This is badly needed."

Tom Schatz, president of the watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste, which grew out of a commission under President Ronald Reagan, said there was precedent for vast savings. Moreover, bringing in more executives would spread the responsibility.

"With the right team working on this full-time, the chairman of these task forces is not the one who works every minute of every day on it," he said. "With someone of Elon Musk's stature, that would help bring in other CEOs, other independent, non-governmental people to come in and examine the operations of the federal government."

Land Rover Defender 110 & 130 exhibited at S'hail

Alfardan Premier Motors Co, the official retailer of Jaguar Land Rover in Qatar, concluded its participation at the eighth edition of the Katara International Hunting & Falcons Exhibition (S'hail) with a showcase of Land Rover's latest fully equipped Land Rover Defender 110 and 130.

As Land Rover's most durable 4x4, the Land Rover Defender is especially suitable for hunting and falconry: its off-road capabilities and adequate space for equipment make it ideal.

"The Land Rover Defender has attracted considerable attention, particularly from loyal Qatari clients of the brand, as

hunting and falconry is a big part of Qatar's culture," said Alfardan Premier Motors marketing and customer relationship manager Hussein Adra.

"Through this exhibition, we wanted to showcase how the historical hunting and falconry experience could be made even more memorable with the powerful and convenient all-terrain vehicle, the Defender," he said. "The vehicle's complex characteristics and features draw a strong sense of loyalty as all our Defender editions do."

The Defender is as technologically advanced as it is durable.

It introduces Land Rover's new Pivi Pro

infotainment system. The next-generation touchscreen is intuitive and user-friendly, requiring few inputs to perform frequently used tasks, while its always-on design guarantees almost instant responses.

A comprehensive supply of charging sockets throughout the cabin will keep occupants charged and connected at all times, whether using digital devices to stream music or camping accessories to provide home comforts in remote locations.

Front-row occupants can choose from a pair of 12V power supplies and two USB sockets, one of which is located behind the central touchscreen - perfectly located to minimise trailing wires when used to power a dashcam.

In the second row, occupants have two USB ports and a pair of 12V charging points and, when third-row seats are fitted, they come with a USB outlet and 12-volt socket.

The loadspace includes an additional 12-volt socket while a three-pin 230V domestic socket is also available.

Configurable Terrain Response debuts on the new Defender, allowing experienced off-roaders to fine-tune individual vehicle settings to perfectly suit the conditions, while inexperienced drivers can let the system detect the most appropriate vehicle settings for the terrain, using



the intelligent "Auto" function.

Meanwhile, the advanced Clear Sight Ground View technology helps drivers take full advantage of the Defender's all-conquering capability, by showing the area usually hidden by the bonnet, directly ahead of the front wheels.

This is achieved through the strategically placed cameras in front of the vehicle which projects the vision that is in front of the wheels on the central touchscreen.

The Defender also offers multiple Accessory Packs, including Explorer, Adventure, Country and Urban - giving the

Defender a unique character that is capable of conquering many terrains.

Land Rover's 4x4 family expanded with the introduction of the practical Defender 130 body design, which joined the existing 90 and 110 derivatives.

The Defender 130 is ready for any adventure with premium interior practicality for up to eight occupants, across three rows of seating.

With a spacious 2-3-3 seat configuration, the latest digital technologies and advanced integrated chassis technologies, Defender is the toughest, most capable off-road expert.



Snapshot from S'hail 2024, which concluded yesterday.

S'hail 2024 concludes with record turnout

The 8th Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail 2024) concluded yesterday evening, drawing the largest crowd in its history.

The five-day event, packed with activities, has strengthened its position as a global pioneer platform for the hunting and falconry sectors.

The final day, in particular, saw visits from prominent dignitaries, including high-ranking officials and ambassadors.

Among the distinguished attendees were Central Municipal Council Chairman Mohamed bin Ali al-Athba and Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Hamad al-Sabah, besides a number of ambassadors and diplomatic envoys in the country.

In a ceremony marking the event's conclusion, members of the organising committee and sponsors of S'hail 2024 were honoured for their contributions.

This year the exhibition saw participation from 19 countries: Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Lebanon, Pakistan, Germany, the UK, China, Spain, France, the US, Portugal, Belgium, Russia, Australia, South Africa, Lithuania, and Poland.

A total of 171 companies, both regional and international, took part,

many of which were newcomers from China, Poland, and Australia.

They showcased the latest in hunting equipment, falconry gear, and outdoor expedition supplies.

Several Qatar ministries and institutions were among the active participants, including the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Municipality, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Communications.

Major sponsors included the Social and Sports Activities Support Fund (Daam), the Qatar Insurance Group, and Al Kass Sports Channels.

Katara public relations and communications director Salem Mabkhut al-Marri expressed pride in the event's success.

"S'hail 2024 attracted an exceptional turnout of visitors and participants, reflecting the immense local and international interest," he said. "This success further cements S'hail's position as one of the most important exhibitions in the field."

Al-Marri also highlighted the extensive media coverage and the role social media influencers played in promoting the event.

"Their contributions significantly boosted attendance and engagement," he added.

The event introduced several competitions, including a daily raffle for falcons aimed at encouraging younger participants aged 10-16 to engage with the tradition of falconry.

In addition, the "Best Falcon Hood" competition saw a craftsman from the UAE win first place and \$3,000.

Second and third places were awarded to companies from Qatar and Kuwait, respectively.

Other notable competitions included "Best Booth Design", where Peninsula Sculptors won QR15,000, and "Best Garage Exhibit", where Desert Engine won QR15,000.

These competitions were judged based on public votes and expert evaluations.

To enhance the visitor experience, the organising committee provided a wide range of services, including a well-designed layout for easy navigation, porter services, and multiple ATMs.

Various restaurants and cafeterias were available throughout the event, offering visitors a range of food options.

As S'hail continues to grow in scale and prestige, it remains a key destination for hunting and falconry enthusiasts from across the region and beyond.



Al Noor Centre provides pioneering, innovative services to children with visual disabilities

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Al Noor Centre is committed to providing an advanced therapeutic, rehabilitating and educational environment, said executive director Meshal al-Naimi, and keeps pace with the latest technologies to meet the needs of members and beneficiaries with visual disabilities.

"In the new academic year, we believe in the importance of achieving independence for people with visual disabilities," he said. "We aim to provide an advanced therapeutic, rehabilitating and educational environment that enhances their capabilities and helps them succeed in a developing and changing world."

Al-Naimi said that Al Noor Centre for the Blind works hard to provide pioneering and innovative services to support people with visual disabilities in Qatar.

As it is the first centre of its kind in the country, he said, that adopts a compre-



hensive and innovative approach to providing services, devoting all its efforts to meeting the needs of this vital section of society.

The centre has made intensive preparation to receive new members, with a comprehensive update in the package of services provided.

This includes providing distinguished education and rehabilitation at the highest level and organising sports competi-

tions under the supervision of professional trainers.

In addition, there are Braille reading activities to enhance the reading and writing skills of the blind.

Al Noor Centre uses the latest international devices and programmes to support, empower and integrate its members, with a focus on meeting the needs of members in three main educational stages: early childhood (3-6 years), basic

education (first to sixth grade), and integration (post-sixth grade).

The centre provides advanced therapeutic, rehabilitating and educational services for children with visual impairments accompanied by mental and developmental disabilities.

Al Noor Centre provides an advanced set of assistive technology tools that enhance the individual member's ability to access information and participate effec-

tively in educational activities.

These tools include screen readers, Braille text display devices, and Braille notebooks, in addition to smart and magnifying devices.

The centre also stresses the importance of improving the skills of specialists and staff through advanced training programmes and specialised workshops.

The centre has also worked to renovate places designated to support people with disabilities and modernise recreational facilities.

The centre also focuses on providing full support to children with visual impairments and their families.

This includes providing early intervention programmes for the blind and visually impaired children from birth to three years, with training sessions aimed at enhancing their growth and developing their skills.

The centre also provides targeted training for mothers to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support their children.