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### BUSINESS | Page 4

#### GCC fixed exchange rate policy leads to financial and monetary stability, says Sheikh Bandar



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## Amir, Aliyev exchange congratulations

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev exchanged congratulations on the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries. In the two exchanged congratulation cables on this occasion, His Highness the Amir and the

president of Azerbaijan voiced their satisfaction with the level of the close relations between the two countries over the past decades. They also emphasised their joint determination to support and consolidate those relations in various fields for the good of the peoples of the two friendly countries. (QNA)

## Amir receives message from Djibouti president



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a verbal message from President of the Republic of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, pertaining to relations between the two countries and issues of common interest. Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed conveyed the message, during His Highness the Amir's meeting with him at his Amiri Diwan office yesterday. (QNA)

## Moody's lauds Qatari banks' resilience

Qatari banks' resilience has been praised by international credit rating agency Moody's, which highlighted their robust growth, asset quality, and substantial capacity to navigate various challenges.

In its recent report, Moody's noted Qatari banks have demonstrated impressive liquidity coverage ratios and successfully attracted significant financial inflows through diverse deposits.

The report notes that, during the recent period, Qatari banks have been primarily funded by customer deposits, which accounted for approximately 52% of total assets as of June this year.

Moody's specifically pointed out the substantial level of deposits from government and government-owned entities, which represented around 36% of total deposits as of June 2024.

Moody's commended Qatari banks for their successful efforts in expanding and attracting deposits from the domestic private sector while also drawing in foreign and international deposits.

**In its recent report, the international credit rating agency noted Qatari banks have demonstrated impressive liquidity coverage ratios and successfully attracted significant financial inflows through diverse deposits**

The agency also highlighted the ongoing expansion in the credit sector, which is in line with the country's economic growth trajectory.

In particular, Moody's observed that credit extended to the private sector is projected to

see notable growth this year, reflecting the sustained momentum in implementing large-scale projects within the country.

Moody's forecasts that private sector credit growth will be around 3% to 4%.

Moreover, Moody's emphasised the reduced credit risks faced by Qatari banks.

The agency noted that Qatari banks have effectively mitigated the risks associated with unexpected economic shocks due to their loan portfolios and credit exposures and their ability to manage associated challenges.

A significant portion of credit is directed towards the public sector, which significantly reduces the risk of credit defaults.

The report also underscores the pivotal role of prudential regulations issued by Qatar Central Bank (QCB) and aimed at curbing Qatari banks' over-reliance on foreign funding. **To Page 4**

## Trump safe after shots fired near his golf course

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was safe after multiple shots were fired near his golf course in West Palm Beach, Florida, yesterday.

The shots originated outside the fence line of the course. The Associated Press reported that US Secret Service agents opened fire after seeing a person with a firearm near Trump's golf club, adding that no injuries were reported.

The Secret Service said it was investigating the incident, which occurred shortly before 2pm (1800 GMT). Trump was injured in an assassination attempt in Pennsylvania on July 13.



Trump at a rally in Las Vegas.

The White House said in a statement that President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris had been briefed about the incident and were relieved to know that he is safe.

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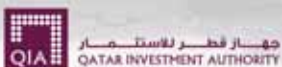
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### National accreditation for public schools launched

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education, represented by the School Evaluation Department, held an introductory meeting to launch the National School Accreditation System for public schools. The system will be implemented in public schools for the current academic year 2024-25. The public school principals along with several consultants and experts from the department attended the meeting. Director of the School Evaluation Department Nasser al-Yafei delivered a presentation on the National School Accreditation System, which has been applied to private and international schools

in Qatar since 2011. The system aims to enhance school performance, encourage continuous improvement, and ensure quality education and educational outcomes in Qatar. Intensive training workshops on "Preparing the Self-Study Report and National Accreditation Standards" will be conducted for the public schools selected in the first phase. Field visits to these schools will be conducted in the second semester of the 2025-26 academic year. Obtaining accreditation will provide schools with official recognition of quality, creating competition among other schools to achieve national accreditation. **(QNA)**

### Deputy PM meets Djibouti's premier

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid bin Mohammed al-Attiah met with the visiting Djibouti's Prime Minister, Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed topics of common interest. They also discussed co-operation between the two sides and ways to enhance and develop them. The meeting was attended by a number of senior officials and officers from both sides. **(QNA)**



### PM meets Djibouti counterpart

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met at the Amiri Diwan yesterday with the visiting Prime Minister of Djibouti, Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed. The meeting discussed co-operation between the countries and ways to support and develop them, in addition to a number of regional and international issues of common concern. **(QNA)**



### Minister meets GCC, WHO, Gavi officials

HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohammed al-Kuwari yesterday held separate meetings with several officials. In a meeting with the Director General of the Executive Office of the Gulf Health Council, Sulaiman bin Saleh al-Dakhil, the two sides discussed Qatar's preparations to host the 10th GCC Health Ministers' Committee meeting and the 87th GCC Health Ministers' Council, due in October. The deliberations also covered the co-operation between Qatar and the GCC Health Council, and the council's key activities and future projects. In a virtual meeting with WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr Hanan Hassan Balkhy, they tackled Qatar's preparations for hosting the 71st WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean (RC71) in October, and ways to boost the Qatar-WHO collaboration. HE Dr al-Kuwari discussed with CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Dr Sania Nishtar, the Qatar-Gavi co-operation to support vaccine access for all countries, specially those in conflict. **(QNA)**



# Call to address traffic congestion near schools

Increased traffic congestion around the schools' exit and entry points during morning and afternoon have been observed across many areas in Doha, especially around the schools located within areas of high density population.

Accordingly, parents have called on the entities concerned to resolve the situation to avoid delays and to enhance the safety of students and their parents. A large number of vehicles converge on the schools in the early morning hours and during the afternoon. Limited parking lots cause congestion during peak hours around schools.

Talking to local Arabic daily *Arrayah*, a number of parents suggested some solutions to this persisting issue that arises at the start of a new school year.

Engineer Fawzi al-Nuaimi pointed out that the schools themselves could play an active role in mitigating the effects of this phenomenon such as regulating the exit and entry of students, and asking the Traffic department's help in organising the traffic around the schools during the entry and exit hours.

He said schools should be built away from the main roads and streets and the construction of the building itself should be designed



in a way that allows ample exit and entry points, with adequate number of parking lots. He also suggested that schools should encourage students and parents to

use school buses rather than their own vehicles to reduce congestion.

Zakaria al-Majid stressed that the most practical solution for this

issue is the use of school buses by the largest possible number of students. He pointed out that at some schools around 600 vehicles assemble during the early morn-

ing and afternoon hours waiting for students, which causes congestion. Mohamed al-Obaidy suggested that schools could start and end their day early to reduce traffic congestion. All schools and work entities having the same start and end timings could cause congestion on the roads.

Mohamed al-Ghadid said that the daily traffic congestion around many schools is a problem that is very difficult to resolve, especially for the schools located within dense residential areas. While the use of school buses seems to be a good solution, many feel it is exhausting and time consuming for students, he added.

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## PM attends graduation ceremony of Shafallah Center members

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani attended yesterday the graduation ceremony of the 2024 batch of members of the Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities.

The ceremony was attended by a number of ministers and senior officials, in addition to the parents of the graduates.

HE Sheikh Mohammed honoured the 43 graduates from the Shafallah Center and handed them their graduation certificates.

He also inaugurated the 'Endless Love' sculpture donated by Qatar Museums to the Shafallah Center in honour of the efforts of Her Highness the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

The graduates received specialised educational and rehabilitation services of highest international standards, with the aim of developing their personal capabilities, improving their skills, and enhancing their integration into society.

It is worth noting that the Shafallah Center for Persons with Disabilities was established by Her Highness Sheikha Moza in 1999, with the aim of providing

exemplary services to persons with mental disabilities and autism who are not older than 21 years of age in the field of special education and rehabilitation, as well as community awareness of their issues and rights.

The centre is one of the centres under the umbrella of the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development and Family. (QNA)



## Itqan celebrates Healthcare Simulation Week

Hamad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Itqan Clinical Simulation and Innovation Center (Itqan) is joining the Healthcare Simulation Week celebrations which runs until September 19.

The global initiative showcases the vital role of simulation in improving patient safety, enhancing clinical skills, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among healthcare professionals.

"Simulation is the bridge between theory and practice, where knowledge is transformed into skill and skill into excellence. This week offers a unique opportunity for individuals and organisations to share their goals, collaborate, and drive the healthcare simulation field forward," Itqan's acting executive director Dr Abdullah Yousuf said.

"As we celebrate Healthcare Simulation Week 2024, we are organising a series of activities under the theme 'Launchpad to Legacy: What's Your Next?' highlighting the trans-



formative power of simulation in healthcare education and its crucial role in shaping the future of medicine," he explained.

Itqan is hosting a one-day booth at Qatar University, connecting with students and faculty to highlight the vital role of simulation in healthcare education. Itqan is also participating in Qatar National Patient Safe-

ty Week further promoting its initiatives and advancements.

"At Itqan, we provide hands-on simulation workshops that replicate real-life medical scenarios, allowing participants to experience clinical practice in a supportive and controlled environment. This immersive approach not only equips healthcare providers with the skills they need to excel but also inspires the next generation of medical professionals to pursue careers in this field. We invite all stakeholders, from policymakers to educators, to join us in advancing the field of healthcare simulation, improving patient outcomes, and ensuring that Qatar remains at the forefront of medical innovation," added Dr Yousuf.

Over the past two years, Itqan has hosted more than 5,000 students from approximately 70 schools, significantly increasing interest in healthcare professions through its partnership with the Health Profession Awareness Programme.

## PHCC to upgrade radiology labs at three health centres

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has announced the commencement of an upgrade to the X-ray machines at three health centres: Abu Bakr Al Siddiq, Gharrafat Al Rayyan, and West Bay.

The installation of the new X-ray machines at these centres will take place over a period of three months, a statement said.

The PHCC's biomedical team will make every effort to expedite the process and complete the installation and upgrade as swiftly as possible to resume services for patients and beneficiaries, it was explained.

During this period, patients requiring radiology services at these centres will be redirected. Qatari patients from Abu Baker Al Siddiq Health Centre will be redirected to Muaitheer Health



Centre, and non-Qatari patients to Al Rayyan Health Centre.

Those from Gharrafat Al Rayyan Health Centre will be redirected to either Madinat Khalifa or Umm Sial Health Centres.

Qatari patients from West Bay Health Centre will be redirected to Al Sadd Health Centre, and non-Qatari patients to Qatar University Health Centre during weekdays or Madinat Khalifa Health Centre during weekends.

# Venture Gulf Engineering marks three decades of excellence in oil and gas services



Venture Gulf Engineering W.L.L, a key player in Qatar's Oil and Gas Services sector, celebrated its 30th anniversary on Sunday, September 8th, at the Sheraton Grand Salwa Ballroom. Among the attendees were Turkish Ambassador His Excellency Dr. Mustafa Goksu, Sri Lankan Ambassador His Excellency Mohammed Mafaz Mohideen, and other diplomats from the Spanish, Pakistani, and Jordanian embassies. The event, marking three decades of innovation and growth, brought together employees, joint venture partners, clients, and other business partners to celebrate the company's success.



The celebration began with a compelling five-minute video, starting

with the vision of the founder, Saeed Bin Abdul Aziz Al Nasr, to create a "One Stop Shop for the Oil and Gas Sector in Qatar." This was followed by an engaging segment highlighting the growth of VGE, detailing the various milestones, achievements, and expansion projects that have defined the company's journey.

In his keynote address, Vice Chairman and COO Abdullah Bin Aziz Al Nasr reflected on the company's humble beginnings in the 1990s and its current achievements. He noted that VGE started as a small team with a big vision and has since expanded into a leading oil and gas company in Qatar. He expressed his gratitude to his brothers, Saeed Al Nasr, Khalid Al Nasr, Eisa Al Nasr, and Hamad Al Nasr, as well as to all clients, partners, and employees.

Operations Manager Harish Baliga discussed both the business and

technical advancements, emphasizing the development of the logistics base, strategic business partnerships, and enhancements in operational efficiencies. Human Resource Manager Hussein Ala Eddine added that the HR team has become a strategic partner in driving the company's vision and success, vowing to continue striving toward this goal.

A highlight of the event was a three-minute video featuring testimonials from various employees across VGE's business divisions. Employees spoke about the company's support during the COVID-19 pandemic, the sense of family bonding, the freedom in decision-making, and the management's open-door policy.

Key personnel from partner companies, such as Chris Kleinhans, Regional Director Middle East at OEG

Offshore, added their testimonials, praising VGE's transparency and trusted partnership. Anand Kumar, owner of Aquachemi, expressed his gratitude to Abdullah for the unconditional support during the challenging days of their partnership.

Amidst an aura of celebration, several companies offered gifts of appreciation to Mr. Abdullah Bin Aziz Al Nasr. TMS Industrial Refrigeration presented their Distributorship Certificate to Mr. Harish Baliga. Venture Gulf Engineering shared wonderful mementos with all attendees as a token of appreciation. The Emcee of the event Mrs. Sushma Harish concluded the event by thanking all the attendees, and event supporters, and by reiterating how VGE believes in creating value to customers, employees and to the community.



## UDST students participate in Sasol Solar Challenge 2024

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has announced its participation in the Sasol Solar Challenge 2024 to promote scientific research and innovation.

The UDST selected a team of 13 students and four faculty members to design and build a solar-powered car in an integrated educational and practical initiative, in which the university will compete against some of the best universities from Europe, America and Asia, amateurs, and professionals worldwide, indicating that the project will represent the university in the international competition held in South Africa this week.

The car was designed to maximise solar photovoltaic efficiency, enabling it to generate enough energy for seven hours of daily driving on a single charge, while the team was keen to choose lightweight and durable materials to manufacture the car's body, which contributed to increasing its efficiency.

The electrical system was also designed with great precision to ensure that the car performs perfectly in all conditions.

The car's chassis was manufactured on campus, reflecting the students' high capabilities in engineering and manufacturing.

"The dedication and innovation our students have shown are truly commendable," said UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi. "Their participation in the Sasol Solar Challenge is a prime example of what applied education can achieve."

"It demonstrates how our hands-on approach empowers students to tackle real-world challenges, aligning with Qatar's Third National Development Strategy, which emphasises sustainability, innovation, and human development," he said.

"At Sasol, we are immensely proud to welcome the University of Doha for Science and Technology as the first-ever Qatar team to join the Sasol Solar Challenge," Sasol Qatar vice-president Lourens Jacobs said, adding that "this achievement marks a significant milestone not only for Qatar but also for our shared commitment to Qatar National Vision 2030".

Sasol is an international integrated chemicals and energy company and has been present in Qatar since 2008,



"By supporting these talented students in showcasing their skills on a global stage, we are contributing to the development of future leaders who will drive Qatar's transition to a knowledge-based and sustainable economy," he continued. - QNA

## Amir congratulates El Salvador, Costa Rica presidents

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to El Salvador President Nayib Bukele on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day.

His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Deputy Amir and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves Robles on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. - QNA

## Moody's lauds Qatar banks' resilience

From Page 1

These regulatory frameworks have reinforced financial stability and helped decrease foreign liabilities to 33% of total liabilities (as of end-June), down from a peak of approximately 39% as of year-end 2021.

Additionally, banks have successfully diversified their foreign liabilities across various maturities and geographies.

The bond rating company also anticipates that the Qatari banks will shift toward a longer-term funding structure in a lower interest rate environment.

At the end of March this year, the Qatari banks' stocks of liquid assets stood at around 24.7% of total assets, Moody's said, providing a sound buffer against potential market fluctuations and risks and supporting their growth trajectory.

# Civil service bureau launches first session of 'Sadara' programme

The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau has launched the first session of the "Sadara" programme, in co-operation with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Justice, and the Qatar Finance and Business Academy.

The launch was announced at a ceremony held yesterday, attended by HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi and HE the President of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau and Secretary-General of the National Planning Council, Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak al-Khalifa, who inaugurated the programme.

In her opening speech, Institute of Public Administration acting director Maha Masoud al-Marri stated that the Sadara programme reflects continuous efforts to study Qatar's labour market and determine its needs for trained and qualified national competencies in terms of drafting legislation and analysing policies in the legal departments of government agencies.

The programme will run until November 28, with the participation of 35 train-



Snapshots from the event.

ees: 30 government employees and five new graduates.

Al-Marri said the programme aims to develop the Qatari youth's capabilities in policy analysis and drafting legislation within government legal departments in accordance with the country's laws, in addition to developing the skills of people with promising talents who are seeking job opportunities in the field of law.

She said the Sadara programme includes modules on the legal foundations

and principles in Qatar's legal system, drafting legislative instruments and the characteristics of modern legislation in Qatar, legal oversight in drafting legislation, publishing, enforcement and expiry of legislation, and measuring the legislative impact in Qatar, in addition to workshops in the Legislation and Policy Laboratory, and it will conclude with a training module to be held during a trip to Singapore to learn about the drafting of legislation there. - QNA

## MoPH marks 10th Qatar Patient Safety Week

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is celebrating the 10th Qatar Patient Safety Week from September 15-21, under the theme *Improving Diagnosis for Patient Safety*.

The week-long event coincides with World Patient Safety Day and reflects the growing international awareness of diagnostic errors as a major concern in patient safety.

The 10th Qatar Patient Safety Week aims to raise awareness and emphasise the importance of accurate, safe and timely diagnosis and its central role in improving patient safety.

The week also focuses on prioritising diagnostic safety in patient safety policies and practices at all levels of healthcare, in line with Qatar's plans and the Global Patient Safety Action Plan.

Additionally, the week seeks to strengthen collaboration between policymakers, healthcare leaders, health workers, and all relevant stakeholders to develop and enhance practices for accu-

rate and safe diagnosis.

It also aims to empower patients and their families to actively engage with healthcare workers and leaders to improve diagnostic processes.

To mark the occasion, the MoPH, in partnership with its collaborators, is organising several key activities and events, including a scientific conference featuring keynote lectures, panel discussions delivered by local, regional, and international speakers and experts, as well as the sharing of personal experiences by patients and caregivers.

The conference will also include workshops on various patient safety topics, an accompanying exhibition, and a competition among the booths of participating healthcare institutions.

To commemorate the 10th Qatar Patient Safety Week, the MoPH is launching a public awareness campaign at a local shopping mall on September 20-21, where messages targeting all relevant groups will be broadcast across vari-

ous social media platforms, and tomorrow several landmarks across Qatar will be illuminated in orange as a symbol of solidarity and commitment to improving patient safety.

Activities will also be held in academic institutions and local healthcare facilities, targeting national, regional, and international leaders in the field, healthcare leaders and facility managers, healthcare workers, patients and their families, academics and researchers, and IT (information technology) professionals.

Qatar Patient Safety Week is an annual national event, established by the MoPH in 2014.

Its aim is to promote the concept of patient safety across all tiers of healthcare workers and among patients.

The event encourages sustainable collaboration between the MoPH, healthcare providers, the community, and all concerned stakeholders to ensure safer healthcare in Qatar. - QNA

## Miandad named Top 100 Global Leader by Forbes

In a remarkable achievement that transcends borders, Mohammad Miandad, Managing Director of Naseem Healthcare and Chairman & Managing Director of 33 Holdings, has been recognized as one of the Top 100 Healthcare Leaders by the prestigious Forbes Middle East. This recognition underscores his exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing healthcare diversification not just in Qatar, but globally.

### Standing tall among the best

This coveted distinction places Miandad in a league of extraordinary healthcare leaders from across the GCC, and other nationalities from Canada, the US, and beyond. Notably, he is the only Indian national residing in Qatar to be featured on this prestigious list. This recognition is a powerful indication to his ability to bridge geographical and cultural divides through his leadership and vision.

### Leading with Innovation

Under Miandad's guidance, Naseem Healthcare has emerged as a trailblazer in Qatar's healthcare landscape. He has consistently driven the organization towards excellence, pioneering groundbreaking solutions that elevate patient care and accessibility within the region. His dedication to innovation has



resulted in his diversified healthcare investments to ABM4 Trading, ABM4 Scientific, Dfine Dental Lab, and Qatar Institute of Speech and Hearing (QISH), that has significantly enhanced the lives of countless individuals.

Ever humble, Miandad acknowledges this achievement as a collective triumph. "This recognition is a true honour, but it wouldn't be possible without the unwavering dedication of my entire team," he states. "Their hard work and solid support are the foundation upon which my every milestone is built."

## Porsche, Kia models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Porsche Centre Doha, Al Boraq Automobiles Co, has announced the recall of Porsche Taycan, 2020-2025 models, as a malfunction in the installation of brake hoses on the left and right sides of the front axle may cause material fatigue and result in brake hose failure.

If this occurs, the driver might experience reduced braking effectiveness and a change in the brake pedal feel. Recall Campaign No: ARBO.

The ministry, in co-operation with Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Company, has also announced the recall of Kia Stinger, 2017-2023 models, as misalignment of the fuel control valve plunger in the high-pressure fuel pump can result in uneven wear.

Over time, this wear can cause the plunger to remain in a stuck open condition. The MoCI urged all customers to report any violations to its Consumer Protection and Anti-Commercial Fraud Department, which processes complaints, inquires and suggestions through the following channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, social media channels @mociqatar, and mobile application MOCIQatar available on iPhone and Android devices.

## Ministry of Labour lifts ban on outdoor work during summer

### Notice

The Ministry of Labour announces the conclusion of the annual decision on banning outdoor work during summer, effective from the fifteenth of September. Work can resume as normal, but with adherence to health and safety standards.

The Ministry of Labour has lifted the summer ban on outdoor work. A post shared by the ministry on X said work is allowed to continue normally following Occupational Safety and Health guidelines from today. The outdoor work ban was from 10am to 3.30pm.



## QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/MNT/6733/24 PROVISION OF SCAFFOLDING SERVICES ON CALL OFF BASIS	15/09/2024 to 19/09/2024	0	500,000	30/09/2024

### Scope of Work:

Contractor shall provide comprehensive scaffolding services on a call-off basis to Company for its Onshore facilities. The scope of work includes the erection and dismantling of scaffolding, design, inspection and certification to ensure compliance with standards. Contractor is also responsible for ensuring all activities adhere to relevant safety regulations and providing immediate response on services according to emergencies and priorities. The Contract duration shall be for a period of five (05) years starting from Q1 2025 tentatively with a sole option for Company to extend the Contract duration further for up to two (02) years.

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

**Note:** Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local 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 Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa/en-US/>

# ConteQ Expo24, key milestone in Qatar's progress

The ConteQ Expo24 (Advanced Technology for Construction & Services Expo), which opens today, is an important milestone in Qatar's progress towards technology in the relevant sectors, organising committee chairman engineer Salim Mohammed al-Shawi said.

In a press statement, issued by the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), al-Shawi said the exhibition is held in accordance with Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly in terms of promoting innovation, digitisation, and sustainable development in the construction and services sectors.

"As a promising opportunity to attract investment to Qatar, we are fully confident that this event will be of great importance and contribute to upgrading our national potential and advancing the country's sustainable development," he said.

The three-day ConteQ Expo24 is being held at the Qatar National Convention Centre to showcase the latest research and innovative breakthroughs driving transformative improvements in many areas.

"The event will showcase Qatar's commitment to technological advancement and sustainable development in the construction and services sectors. Industry professionals, technology enthusiasts, and investors are encouraged to attend this transformative event that promises to shape the future of construction and services in Qatar and beyond," the statement said.

Running until Wednesday, the exhibition will feature more than 60 speakers and 250 exhibitors and partners with the attendance of global tech giants such as Google, Microsoft, Siemens, Huawei, and IBM. The event is expected to attract more than 15,000 visitors.

"The exhibition will bring about a technological shift in the construction and services sectors. Traditional innovation concepts of experts and investors will change as the exhibition opens its doors," the statement said.

The exhibition will feature several panel discussions with the participation of the most prominent speakers in the respective field to cover topics such as expanding the scope of modular construction, shaping tomorrow's workforce, and driving construction productivity



Engineer Salim Mohammed al-Shawi



using digital and smart solutions and automation, in addition to automation of artificial intelligence and the future of construction of 3D printers with other accompanying workshops at the exhibition.

The exhibition will provide an exceptional platform for SMEs and multinational companies to explore the latest innovations, methodologies and solutions in construction technology and services. It will also allow visitors to attend workshops, panel discussions and practical presentations of the latest technologies that will shape the future of smart cities and infrastructure.

The benefits gained from ConteQ Expo24 will not only include sharing knowledge, communicating and showcasing modern technologies, but it will also serve as a platform that attracts promising investments to Qatar. It is expected to urge local and international industry leaders to conclude agreements and partnerships and promote innovation and growth that meets the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, the statement added.

# CRA launches public consultation on Qatar's postal sector

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has issued the draft Consumer Protection Policy and Regulation for Qatar's postal sector, reiterating its priority of protecting consumer rights and elevating service providers' accountability.

CRA has announced that the document is now open for public consultation and has invited stakeholders and the public to provide their feedback. This public consultation period closes on September 24.

The draft Consumer Protection Policy and Regulation for Qatar's postal sector offers a comprehensive framework.

The document has carefully balanced the priority of safeguarding consumer rights with the need to hold the postal service providers to higher standards of service.

While the regulation clearly ensures consumer protection, they also elaborate on the expected standards that all postal licensees must adhere to as they remain both reliable and transparent.

Amel Salem al-Hanawi, director, Consumer Affairs Department at CRA, reiterated the importance of this public consultation saying: "CRA is committed to ensuring that the postal sector operates in a manner that protects the rights

of consumers. For us, it is vital to ensure that all stakeholders participate in this consultation and give their feedback. These views are crucial in shaping regulations that will benefit consumers and providers of postal services in Qatar.

"Under the watchful eye of CRA, postal service providers will meet their obligations as outlined in the new framework. This oversight reinforces CRA's commitment to maintaining a fair postal market and fostering a transparent and competitive environment in line with Qatar's Vi-

**"CRA is committed to ensuring that the postal sector operates in a manner that protects the rights of consumers. For us, it is vital to ensure that all stakeholders participate in this consultation and give their feedback"**

sion 2030 and the Digital Agenda 2030." Another important area that has been included in the draft regulation is a standardised complaints resolution process. When applied, the regulation will pave the way for consumers to escalate unresolved complaints from service providers to CRA. This process will build trust in postal

services as consumer grievances will be resolved efficiently and fairly. By giving CRA this oversight, the regulation has given consumers a solution that goes beyond the general internal complaint-handling procedures of service providers.

CRA said: "The new policy and regulation will have a positive impact on Qatar's postal sector. Consumers will benefit from higher service standards, greater transparency and an efficient and reliable way to have their accusations resolved.

"Postal sector service providers, on the other hand, will have clear guidelines and standardised procedures for their operations. For CRA, the introduction of the new policy and regulation will provide a structured framework to ensure compliance, uphold consumer rights and reinforce the regulatory structure."

Interested parties and stakeholders in the postal services sector can submit their feedback and comments via email to [postalinfo@cra.gov.qa](mailto:postalinfo@cra.gov.qa), by September 24.

The public consultation document and the consultation guidelines are available on CRA's website via the following link: <https://www.cra.gov.qa/en/document/consumer-protection-policy-and-regulation-for-postal-sector>

# 2024 Ajyal jury registrations open

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) has opened jury registrations for the 2024 edition of its Ajyal Film Festival, set to take place from November 16-23.

Young people aged eight to 25 from around the world are invited to become part of the Ajyal Jury Experience, offering them a platform to not only engage with internationally acclaimed cinema but also voice their opinions on key global issues.

The event annually brings together more than 500 young participants from over 50 countries. Jurors will watch a wide range of films from across the world, share perspectives with their peers, and interact with filmmakers and industry professionals through curated workshops and discussions.

The Ajyal Jury Experience enables young people to discover the transformative power of film in three age-specific groups - Mohaqa (ages 8-12), Hilal (ages 13-17) and Bader (ages 18-25). Jurors are encouraged to explore cinema not only as a form of entertainment but as a medium for promoting positive social change. Jurors' votes will determine which filmmakers will receive funding for their next projects, playing a crucial role in helping to shape the



global cinematic narrative. In a press statement, DFI CEO and Ajyal Film Festival director Fatma Hassan Alremaih said: "By encouraging creativity, sparking meaningful dialogue, and inspiring the next generation to dream without limitations, the programme empowers youth to raise their voices on global issues."

# Zulal Wellness Resort unveils holistic experiences

Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som will celebrate World Wellness Weekend with a selection of holistic and transformative complimentary wellness experiences on September 20 and 21, a statement said.

The pioneering wellness destination and the largest in the Middle East will offer activities from nutrition workshops and wellness talks to Pilates and sunset meditation. Members of the public are invited to register for these transformative sessions which aim to encourage long-lasting positive lifestyle changes.

This year's World Wellness Weekend will take place in over 160 countries and promote wellness through the five pillars of sleep, nutrition, vitality, serenity and solidarity.

**Purpose & Solidarity - Wellness Talk** on September 20, 4pm to 5pm: Led by Zulal's expert practitioners, the talk will help participants explore the deeper meaning of their life's purpose. Through reflection and guided discussions, the session fosters personal growth and solidarity with others on the path to self-discovery.

**Movement & Vitality - Mat**



**Pilates** on September 20, from 5.30pm to 6.30pm: Participants will experience the rejuvenating

benefits of Mat Pilates in a energising session designed to enhance strength, flexibility and vitality

and engage in mindful movement guided by Zulal's skilled instructors.

**Sleep & Creativity - Singing Bowl Session** on September 20 from 7pm to 8pm: This meditative journey uses sound frequencies to calm the mind and body, helping participants tap into their creative energy while promoting restful sleep.

**Nutrition & Immunity - Nutrition Workshop** on September 21 from 3pm to 4pm: Incorporating the principles of Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM), the workshop provides insights into strengthening immunity through

balanced nutrition. Zulal's expert nutritionists will guide participants on how to integrate immune-boosting foods and holistic dietary practices into their daily lives.

**Mindfulness & Serenity - Sunset Meditation** on September 21, 4pm to 6pm: Guided by mindfulness practitioners in the tranquil surroundings of the resort, participants will practice techniques aimed at cultivating inner peace and mental clarity. Those interested in joining the complimentary sessions should register via WhatsApp or phone on +974 4477 6555, the statement added.

# Infinity Rent A Car enhances its fleet with a diverse range of Kia cars

To help customers gear up for the new academic year, Infinity Rent A Car, a leading rent and leasing mobility provider in Qatar, has strengthened its product line up with its recent purchase of Kia cars from Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Co. (AMTC), the official dealers for the brand in the local market.

From the stylish and efficient new Sonet, to the in-demand high-tech Seltos to the practical and versatile Carens for SUV's to the economical Pegas and stylish new K3 for sedans, customers can choose from a variety of models, according to their needs.

Equally important, Infinity Rent A Car offers its customers not only competitive rates but exceptional service as well, from maintaining its fleet to be drive-ready and family-friendly immediately to responding to immediate concerns on the road, whatever they may be.

"We are pleased to have Infinity Rent A Car choose Kia to fortify its fleet for the upcoming school year. We are confident that there is a Kia available for different sets of customers, no matter what their needs will be. With four decades of experience as the brand's dealer in the local market, our team will be ready to support Infinity in surpassing their customers' expectations," remarked an AMTC official.

The refreshed Sonet is a welcome redesign of the popular entry SUV with its revamped exterior, capturing attention along with a redesigned radiator grille, sleek 16-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels, and striking LED headlights alongside 'Star-Map' tailgate lamps. The updated rear spoiler adds a sporty flair, ensuring the Sonet's dynamic presence on the road. Inside the cabin, the new Sonet impresses with numerous enhancements aimed at improving the driving experience. Key additions



include a 10.25-inch cluster screen, new USB-C charging ports, and a practical 60:40 split-folding rear seat, providing both comfort and versatility for passengers and cargo. Safety remains a top priority for Kia, and the new Sonet restyled is equipped with advanced features such as Lane Keep Assist (LKA), Driver Attention Warning, and Lane Following Assist (LFA). These cutting-edge technologies enhance driver support and overall vehicle safety, offering greater peace of mind.

The Seltos is designed to impress with its futuristic and sporty appearance. Its front and rear end headlights feature the signature

'Star-Map' design that add a hypermodern look to the car when lit, as well as a front fog lamp. The model also boasts a high-tech integrated controller where air conditioning and infotainment features are easily navigated. For both convenience and safety purposes, the Seltos can be connected to the latest smartphones without cables with the Wireless Smartphone Charger and Apple CarPlay/Android Auto. In addition, the Seltos is equipped with an electric parking brake, which aids by stopping the car to a stationary position, assisting with emergency braking, as well as assisting with seamless parking.



The K3 Kia has tapped into the demands of buyers within the compact sedan segment and fleet companies seeking all-rounded functional vehicles that deliver on tech, and design and safety. The car's interiors ensure advanced connectivity and utmost passenger comfort with its central resolution touchscreen, two-zone touch climate control, rear air vents, among other features. Its exteriors play on a bold and futuristic appearance that maintains a high-tech character for adopting bold lines and shapes, while maintaining the traditional tiger nose grille. The K3 is also equipped with safety features, providing front and rear end

protection, demonstrating Kia's commitment to safety across all its vehicles by increasing driver awareness.

Infinity Rent A Car is a leading mobility provider to both individual and corporate customers with a dedicated team aimed at providing focused support, wide range of cars to select from and excellent value to choose from. With the end user in mind, Infinity provides not only variety and reliability in car selection but offer them to customers in either brand-new or well-preserved conditions. The cars are also chosen to have added features such as connectivity to enhance the lease experience.

# QCS campaign to raise awareness, support for children with cancer

**Q**atar Cancer Society (QCS) has announced the launch of its 'Let's Draw a Smile' campaign, in conjunction with the global Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

The aim is to raise awareness about the importance of early detection of cancer in children and emphasise the need for preventive measures.

This year's campaign features an innovative initiative to support children with cancer by selling cup holders adorned with drawings created by the children during their treatment. These drawings reflect their hopes and dreams and demonstrate their bravery in facing the illness. The cup holders are sold at a symbolic price of QR5, with all proceeds going to support the QCS programme, which provide treatment, care and psychological support to children with cancer and their families.

The public can purchase cup holders from participating cafes such as Charger, Fuel Specialty coffee, origin, Halo Dough Bar, Harvest, Savant Blended Cafe, Era Restaurant, Roastado or through the talabat app. QCS has urged everyone to take part in supporting the sick children, as even small contributions can make a significant difference in improving their lives and providing them with hope.

The campaign also includes a variety of entertainment activities and awareness workshops targeting the general community as well



as children living with cancer and their families, to support them psychologically and emotionally during their treatment journey.

Among the highlights is the 'Our Children are Gold' workshop, in collaboration with Sidra Medicine and support by Perff Up Center, and Caboodle Pampers and Play. The workshop focuses on the importance of physical activity during and after treatment for children with cancer and includes gift distribution and various entertainment segments.

Hiba Nassar, health educator at QCS, said: "The 'Let's Draw a Smile' campaign aims to achieve more than just raising awareness about childhood cancers. We seek to enhance community support for children facing this disease. Purchasing a cup holder decorated with children's drawings is a simple but meaningful gesture of solidarity. Every cup holder sold contributes to improving the life of a child with cancer and provides the care and support they need during

their treatment journey. We invite the Qatari community to participate in this campaign and support these children and their families in every possible way."

"Childhood cancers are not just a health issue but a humanitarian one that requires collective effort. Through this initiative, we hope to inspire the community to work together to promote early detection and support families going through this difficult experience," she added.

Nassar stressed the importance of early detection by ensuring that parents keep up with regular medical check-ups for their children and report any early signs to their doctor. There are no specific prevention methods for childhood cancers, but regular check-ups with a doctor contribute to detecting the disease, which can improve the chances of recovery.

"Parents should be careful in minimising radiation exposure during pregnancy, ensure breastfeeding for at least six months and that children receive all recommended vaccinations, encourage a healthy lifestyle with proper diet and exercise, and limit unhealthy snacks. Additionally, fostering a joyful home environment, using sun protection (hats, sunscreen, sunglasses and long-sleeved clothing), maintaining a healthy sleep routine, avoiding smoking during pregnancy, and protecting children from secondhand smoke are crucial in preventing childhood cancers," she added.



## Reyada Medical Centre unveils '20,000+ Smiles' campaign

**R**eyada Medical Centre has announced the successful launch of its new dental initiative, the '20,000+ Smiles' campaign, held on September 3.

The campaign marked a significant achievement for their dental department, having provided care to over 20,000 care seekers.

Reyada is introducing affordable dental packages, reaffirming its commitment to accessible, affordable, and high-quality dental care, a statement explained. The campaign emphasised the organisation's gratitude towards

its dedicated dental team and support staff, who were honoured for their hard work and achievements.

Jamsheer Hamza, managing director at Reyada Medical Centre, said: "Our team is delighted to have achieved the milestone of 20,000 successful dental procedures and counting. We remain steadfast in our commitment to serving our community and continue providing affordable, accessible care of the highest quality".

Executive director, Dr Abdul Kalam emphasised: "As a JCI accredited medical centre, we uphold world-class stand-

ards to ensure the best care and clinical outcomes for every patient and we will always strive to continue to spread smiles and build confidence through our dental department."

Reyada Medical Centre operates from 7am to midnight, every day of the week, to accommodate the diverse needs of patients. The multi-specialty medical facility offers a comprehensive range of medical services and houses more than 18 departments including radiology, laboratory, pharmacy, optical and physiotherapy supported by cutting-edge technology, the statement added.

## Al Raqim competition delegation visits Turkiye



**A** delegation from the Qatar International Arabic Calligraphy Competition (Al Raqim) Committee has visited various institutions in Turkiye, a statement from the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf), said.

Headed by Dr Saleh bin Ali al-Marri, director of Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al-Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre (Fanan), the delegation visited the Research Centre For Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) affiliated under the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC). Also, the delegation met with a number of calligraphers and specialists in Arabic calligraphy.

This was with the aim of learning about similar experiences and enhancing co-operation with institutions interested in Arabic calligraphy in the Islamic world.

The delegation, which included Ali al-Muhanna, Hassan al-Obaidli and calligrapher Obaida al-Ban-ki, met with experts and scholars across Turkiye. They discussed co-operation between Al-Raqim competition and IRCICA, future projects that can be accomplished and the importance of art competitions in the field of Arabic calligraphy. IRCICA officials praised the initiative of Qatar. The com-

mittee visited the Çamlıca Mosque and the adjacent Islamic Museum and met with the top calligrapher Hassan Shalabi and the well-known illuminator

Dr Muhammad Hassan Shalabi. Calligrapher Shalabi, a judge in the Qatar Mushaf Competition, praised the Al Raqim competition. The committee also visited the calligrapher Hussein Qutlu's Centre and met with the head of arts at Zeytinburnu Municipality in Istanbul and the secretary of Arabic calligraphy competitions.

Al Raqim is one of the Arabic competitions with the highest prize money, QR1mn. There are five categories with each recognising eight winners. The jury of Al-Raqim consists of five of the world's leading calligraphers.

Awqaf earlier launched Al Raqim at Fanan in the presence and sponsorship of HE the Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem. The contest is the largest international competition organised by the centre in collaboration with the Museum of Islamic Art. The competition epitomises the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030 in entrenching its cultural role in the Middle East and the entire world, in addition to promoting cultural exchange among Arab nations.

## QNA chief takes part in OANA executive board meeting



The Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) 53rd Executive Board Meeting kicked off in Moscow yesterday. Director General of Qatar News Agency (QNA), Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi, chaired the QNA delegation to the meeting. Attended by OANA Executive Board and Technical Committee, the meeting focused on the future of the organisation and the impact of artificial intelligence on the media. **(QNA)**

## QNL hosts forum on digitisation of Arab archives

In line with its mission to preserve and promote the region's heritage and facilitate access to information, Qatar National Library (QNL), in collaboration with the Arab Organisation for Administrative Development, hosted a two-day forum to discuss the digitisation of traditional archives across Arab countries.

The Executive Director at QNL, Tan Huism, said: "Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies have opened up a wealth of opportunities for enhanced accessibility and preservation of documentary heritage. However, the limited understanding of the safe and effective use of digital practices in heritage management remains an area of concern, an issue found globally but particularly in the region. This consideration was at the heart of the forum's programme, building on Qatar National Library's commitment to strengthening capabilities in management and preservation of digital collections, both nationally and regionally." The Director General of the Arab Organisation for Administrative Development, Dr Nasser al-Hatian al-Qahtani, expressed his gratitude to QNL for hosting this year's edition of the forum, noting that the event "provided a platform to explore the contribution of digitisation to advancing research across the region by providing access to a wealth of historical resources".

"The forum explored the reality of digital heritage in libraries and cultural institutions across the region and provided insights into future endeavours to promote digitisation in Arab countries," Dr al-Qahtani explained. Maryam al-Mutawa, head of Collection Access – QNL Distinctive Collections, said "Digital technology is increasingly becoming essential to the sustainable management and accessibility of heritage resources, radically shaping our journey into the future." "For custodians of heritage and conservation specialists," she said, "it has become a necessity to embrace forward-looking approaches and methodologies that can significantly widen access to knowledge for our future generations and fortify the link to their cultural and historic past. Qatar National Library was thrilled to have taken another stride forward in educating the community about innovative ways to protect our region's heritage as well as encouraging co-operation in this area." Ikhlas Ahmed, an interaction specialist at the Heritage Library at QNL, said that the forum was attended by experts from 11 countries, representing 30 governmental and private institutions, to discuss digital access and artificial intelligence applications, and how to preserve documentary heritage and make it available to researchers, through different models of repositories. **(QNA)**

## QNA launches training for specialist media reporting

Qatar News Agency (QNA) rolled out yesterday a training course on preparing specialist media reports, intended for raising national media cadres' efficiency.

Held at the QNA headquarters in Doha, the qualitative training programme brought together 19 journal-

ists from QNA and other related public facilities. It is part of QNA's scheme to develop the media performance across multiple national agencies. The five-day course offers intensive training on how to prepare specialised reports, integrate topics and use artificial intelligence in monitoring and analysis. **(QNA)**

## QC in Somalia pact for neonatal care

**Q**atar Charity (QC) has signed a co-operation agreement with Banaadir Hospital for Maternity and Child Care in Mogadishu, Somalia, to manage and enhance its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), in a new push to improve healthcare services for children in the country.

The agreement was signed by Dr Fartun Sharif, director general of Banaadir Hospital, and Abdul Fattah Adam, director of QC's office in Somalia, in the presence of the hospital's medical staff and representatives from the health-care sector. The agreement aims to increase the number of vulnerable and displaced newborns receiving care at this government hospital by 10% for neonates born at the hospital and by 30% for those referred from outside the hospital. It also aims to provide all necessary resources, including modern



medical supplies, equipment, and highly skilled medical personnel, to improve care and ease the burden on the NICU. In her speech during the signing ceremony, Dr Sharif expressed her gratitude to QC, stating, "The NICU is one of the most critical departments providing sensitive and essential health services, and we hope this

partnership will help meet its basic needs."

Adam said: "This partnership demonstrates Qatar Charity's commitment to supporting neonates, who require specialised healthcare services." Last year, QC's office in Somalia implemented 25 health projects, benefiting approximately 262,200 patients.

## MoEHE workshop focuses on govt school programmes

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) organised a virtual workshop on government school programmes and activities at various educational levels via the 'Teams' application. The workshop targeted school principals, academic deputies, administrators and supervisors of school activities at various educational levels, with the aim of familiarising them with the mechanisms for implementing student programmes and activities in government schools and providing support in an appropriate educational environment. The workshop presenters reviewed the most important tasks carried out by the ministry in

organising and planning programmes and activities, and ways to achieve balance between various educational activities, in addition to the regulations and rules that must be followed in order to ensure the smooth running of work, and to benefit from electronic services through the ministry's website. They also explained the selection of required activities within the semester, the specialists' tasks, additional request, valuable activities, the state agencies and institutions contributing to the programmes, and the models and policies of the programmes department, which constitute a qualitative shift in managing tasks in the school environment. **(QNA)**

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**I, JUBAER IBN LUTFULLAH**  
holder of

**BANGLADESH Passport No. EM0427205**  
**QID No. 30405000292**

hereby change my name

from

**JUBAER IBN LUTFULLAH**

to

**JUBAER IBN LUTFULLAH**

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

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**I, PITCHAI VETRICHEZIYAN**  
holder of

**INDIAN Passport No. U0585182**  
**QID No. 26735602390**

hereby change my name

from

**PITCHAI VETRICHEZIYAN**

to

**VETRICHEZIYAN KARUPPAIAH**

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



## Tragic losses in Gaza



Family and friends comfort Palestinian physician Najwa Alborno as bodies of five members of the Alborno family were brought to Al-Ahli Arab hospital, also known as the Baptist hospital in Gaza City, yesterday, after they were killed in reported Israeli bombardment of Zeitoun neighbourhood where they had gone earlier to check on their home, amid the ongoing war between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas group.

## Houthi missile reaches central Israel for first time

Reuters  
Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would inflict a “heavy price” on the Houthis who control northern Yemen, after they reached central Israel with a missile yesterday for the first time.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said the group struck with a new hypersonic ballistic missile that travelled 2,040km (1,270 miles) in just 11 1/2 minutes.

Missile pieces landed in fields and near a railway station. There were no direct casualties, but nine people were lightly hurt

while seeking cover. Reuters saw smoke billowing in an open field in central Israel.

At a weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said the Houthis should have known that Israel would exact a “heavy price” for attacks on Israel.

The Houthis have fired missiles and drones at Israel repeatedly in what they say is solidarity with the Palestinians, since the Gaza war began with a Hamas storming of Israel in October.

The drone that hit Tel Aviv for the first time in July killed a man and wounded four people. Israeli air strikes in response on Houthi military targets near the port of Hodeidah killed six and wounded 80. Previously, Houthi

missiles have not penetrated deep into Israeli air space, with the only one reported to have hit Israeli territory falling in an open area near the Red Sea port of Eilat in March.

Israel should expect more strikes in the future “as we approach the first anniversary of the Oct first week operation, including responding to its aggression on the city of Hodeidah,” Houthi spokesperson Sarea said.

The deputy head of the Houthi’s media office, Nasruddin Amer, said in a post on X yesterday that the missile had reached Israel after “20 missiles failed to intercept” it, describing it as the “beginning”.

## Hamas official says group has ‘high ability’ to continue conflict

AFP  
Istanbul

A senior Hamas official said yesterday that the Palestinian movement had ample resources to continue fighting Israel despite losses sustained over more than 11 months of war in Gaza.

“The resistance has a high ability to continue,” Osama Hamdan said during an interview in Istanbul. “There were martyrs and there were sacrifices... but in return there was an accumulation of experiences and the recruitment of new generations into the resistance.”

His comments came less than a week after Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant told journalists that Hamas, whose October first week storming of Israel triggered the war, “no longer exists.”

“The number of casualties... is much less than what is expected in a battle of this size, level and breadth,” Hamdan said yesterday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched retaliatory military operations to destroy Hamas after the group’s surprise storming of southern Israel.

The Israeli military campaign has killed at least 41,206 people in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory’s health ministry, which does not provide breakdowns of civilian and fighters’ deaths.

Netanyahu is facing mounting domestic pressure to seal a deal in which hostages would be released in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

But months of negotiations aimed at securing a truce have apparently stalled.

In the interview yesterday, Hamdan said the United States, Israel’s most important military backer, was not doing enough to force concessions from Netanyahu that would end the bloodshed.

“The American administration does not exert sufficient or appropriate pressure on the Israeli side,” Hamdan said. “Rather it is trying to justify the Israeli side’s evasion of any commitment.”

The war between Israel and Hamas has drawn in other groups in the Middle East, notably Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Houthi fighters in Yemen.



Hamas official Osama Hamdan speaks during an interview with AFP in Istanbul, yesterday.

Yesterday the Houthis claimed a missile attack on central Israel that, while producing no casualties, triggered a rush to shelters and added to regional tensions.

Hamdan said the attack showed the limits of Israel’s ability to defend itself, including its oft-touted aerial defence system.

“It is a message to the entire region that Israel is not an immune entity,” Hamdan said.

“Even Israeli capabilities have limits.” Hamdan also reiterated Hamas’s view that an attack earlier this month in which a Jordanian truck driver shot dead three Israeli guards at a border crossing underscored widespread anger at Israel in the region.

As for leaders who have normalised diplomatic ties with Israel or are considering doing so, Hamdan said they should ask themselves how they would feel if their countries were occupied and the world stood by and watched.

Hamdan said yesterday it was impossible to imagine a scenario in which Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar would leave the besieged territory.

Sinwar and other leaders “are ready to be martyred thousands of times in Palestine rather than leaving it because everything he is doing is to free Palestine,” Hamdan said.

Hamas has demanded a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, including the Philadelphi corridor, a narrow strip of land along Egypt’s border that has emerged as a key sticking point in the truce talks.

## Jordan’s King Abdullah appoints new PM

Reuters  
Amman

Jordan’s King Abdullah has designated key palace aide Jafar Hassan as prime minister after the government resigned yesterday, the royal court said, days after a parliamentary election in which the Islamist opposition made some gains in the kingdom.

Hassan, now head of King Abdullah’s office and a former planning minister, replaces Bisher Khasawneh, a veteran diplomat and former palace adviser who was appointed nearly four years ago, a royal court statement said.

Khasawneh will stay on in a caretaker capacity until the formation of a new cabinet, the statement said.

Harvard-educated Hassan, a



This handout picture released by the Jordanian Royal Palace yesterday shows Jordan’s new Prime Minister Jafar Hassan.

widely respected technocrat, will face the challenges of mitigating the impact of the Gaza war on the kingdom’s economy, hard-hit by curbs to investment and a sharp drop in tourism

In Hassan’s appointment letter, the king said democracy should be strengthened in the

country and that its economic future hinged on pushing ahead with donor-backed mega-infrastructure projects in energy and water. The outgoing prime minister had sought to drive reforms pushed by King Abdullah to help reverse a decade of sluggish growth, hovering at around 2%, that was worsened by the pandemic and conflict in neighbouring Iraq and Syria.

Politicians say a key task ahead is accelerating IMF-guided reforms and reining in more than \$50bn in public debt in a country with high unemployment and whose stability is supported by billions of dollars of foreign aid from Western donors.

The Muslim Brotherhood opposition and allies of Palestinian Hamas group made significant gains in Tuesday’s election, boosted by anger over Israel’s

war in Gaza. The Islamists won 31 seats, the most since parliamentary life was revived in 1989 after decades of martial law, leaving them the largest political grouping in parliament.

In a country where anti-Israel sentiment runs high, they have led some of the largest protests in the region in support of Hamas, which their opponents say allowed them to increase their popularity. Although the new composition of the 138-member parliament retains a pro-government majority, the more vocal Islamist-led opposition could challenge IMF-backed free-market reforms and foreign policy, diplomats and officials say.

Under Jordan’s constitution, most powers still rest with the king. The assembly can force a cabinet to resign by a vote of no confidence.

## Lebanese novelist Khoury dies aged 76

AFP  
Beirut

Novelist Elias Khoury, one of Lebanon’s most renowned writers and a fervent advocate of the Palestinian cause, died yesterday from illness aged 76, sources close to his family said.

Khoury, who was born in 1948 to a Christian family in Beirut, died in the Lebanese capital where he had been hospitalised for months, the sources said.

Over several decades Khoury produced a large body of work in Arabic that touched on the themes of collective memory, war and exile, alongside writing for newspapers, teaching literature and

editing a publication linked to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Many of his books were translated into foreign languages including French, English, German, Hebrew and Spanish.

One of his best-known novels, *Gate of the Sun*, tells the story of Palestinian refugees expelled from their homes in 1948 during the war that coincided with Israel’s foundation.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven out or expelled from their homes during that war, in what Palestinians call the Nakba, or catastrophe in Arabic.

The novel was made into a film by Egyptian director Yousry Nasrallah.

## Egypt rail crash kills three including two children

AFP  
Cairo

Two children were among three people killed when two trains collided Saturday in northern Egypt, the health ministry and state media said.

It was the latest in a series of deadly accidents to hit Egypt’s extensive rail network, which has been beset by ageing infrastructure and mismanagement.

Another 49 people were injured in the crash, which happened in Zagazig, 80 kilometres north of Cairo, the ministry said on its Facebook page. State-owned newspaper *Al-Ahram* said two children were among the dead.

Transport Minister Kamel el-Wazir said in a television interview that the cause of the collision was “the human element, but what exactly we leave to the security services to determine”, adding there had been no technical issues.

## More than 40 dead after boat capsizes in Nigeria

AFP  
Kano

More than 40 people are presumed to have died after a boat overloaded with passengers sank on a river in northwestern Nigeria, authorities said yesterday.

The vessel was ferrying 53 farmers to their farms across the Gummi River in Zamfara State on Saturday when it capsized.

“Only 12 were rescued yesterday shortly after the accident,” said Na’Allah Musa, a political administrator of the flood-hit Gummi district where the accident happened.

## Israeli leaflets tell residents of south Lebanon to evacuate

AFP  
Beirut

Israel dropped leaflets over a Lebanon border village yesterday urging residents to leave, state-run media said, but Israel’s military said a brigade had taken the initiative without approval.

It was the first time Israelis had told residents of south Lebanon to evacuate in 11 months of cross-border fire between Hezbollah and Israel over the Gaza war, triggered by Hezbollah ally Hamas’s October first week storming of Israel.

“The Israeli enemy dropped leaflets over Wazzani calling on those in the area and its surroundings to evacuate,” the official National News Agency said, referring to a southern border village.

Wazzani mayor Ahmed al-Mohammed shared with AFP a picture of the leaflets that showed a



Syrian refugees gather their belongings as they prepare to leave the southern Lebanese village of Wazzani after the Israeli army dropped leaflets calling for them to evacuate, yesterday.

map of the region with the areas marked for evacuation marked in red. The leaflet read in Arabic: “To all residents and refugees living in the area of the camps, Hezbollah is firing from your region. You must immediately leave your homes and head north of the Kh-

am region before 04:00pm (1300 GMT). Do not return to this area until the end of the war”.

It added: “Anyone present in this area after this time will be considered a terrorist!”

Wazzani is an agricultural region where Syrians are often

hired to work the land. Asked about the incident, an Israeli military spokeswoman said the leaflets had been dropped by drone in an area from which rockets had been fired into northern Israel. “This was an initiative of the 769 Brigade, it was not approved by the Northern Command. An investigation has been opened,” she added.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli aircraft regularly drop leaflets urging residents to evacuate before an attack.

On Saturday, Hezbollah’s second-in-command Naim Qassem 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 Israelis.

The cross-border violence since early October has killed 623 people in Lebanon, mostly fighters but also including at least 141 civilians, according to an AFP tally.

# Artificial intelligence is 'accelerating the climate crisis', expert warns

By Mathew Leiser  
AFP

If you care about the environment, think twice about using AI. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) uses 30 times more energy than a traditional search engine, warns researcher Sasha Luccioni, on a mission to raise awareness about the environmental impact of the hot new technology. Recognised as one of the 100 most influential people in the world of AI by the American magazine *Time* this year, the Canadian computer scientist of Russian origin has sought for several years to quantify the emissions of programs like ChatGPT or Midjourney. "I find it particularly disappointing that generative AI is used to search the Internet," laments the researcher, who spoke

with AFP on the sidelines of the "ALL IN" artificial intelligence conference, in Montreal. The language models on which the programs are based require enormous computing capacities to train on billions of data points, necessitating powerful servers. Then there's the energy used to respond to each individual user's requests. Instead of simply extracting information, "like a search engine would do to find the capital of a country, for example", AI programs "generate new information", making the whole thing "much more energy-intensive", she explains. According to the International Energy Agency, the combined AI and the cryptocurrency sectors consumed nearly 460 terawatt hours of electricity in 2022 - 2% of total global production. A leading researcher on the impact of AI

on climate, Luccioni participated in 2020 in the creation of a tool for developers to quantify the carbon footprint of running a piece of code. "CodeCarbon" has since been downloaded more than a million times. Head of the climate strategy of startup Hugging Face, a platform for sharing open-access AI models, she is now working on creating a certification system for algorithms. Similar to the program from the US Environmental Protection Agency that awards scores based on the energy consumption of electronic devices and appliances, it would make it possible to know an AI product's energy consumption in order to encourage users and developers to "make better decisions". "We don't take into account water or rare materials," she acknowledges, "but at least we know that for a specific task, we

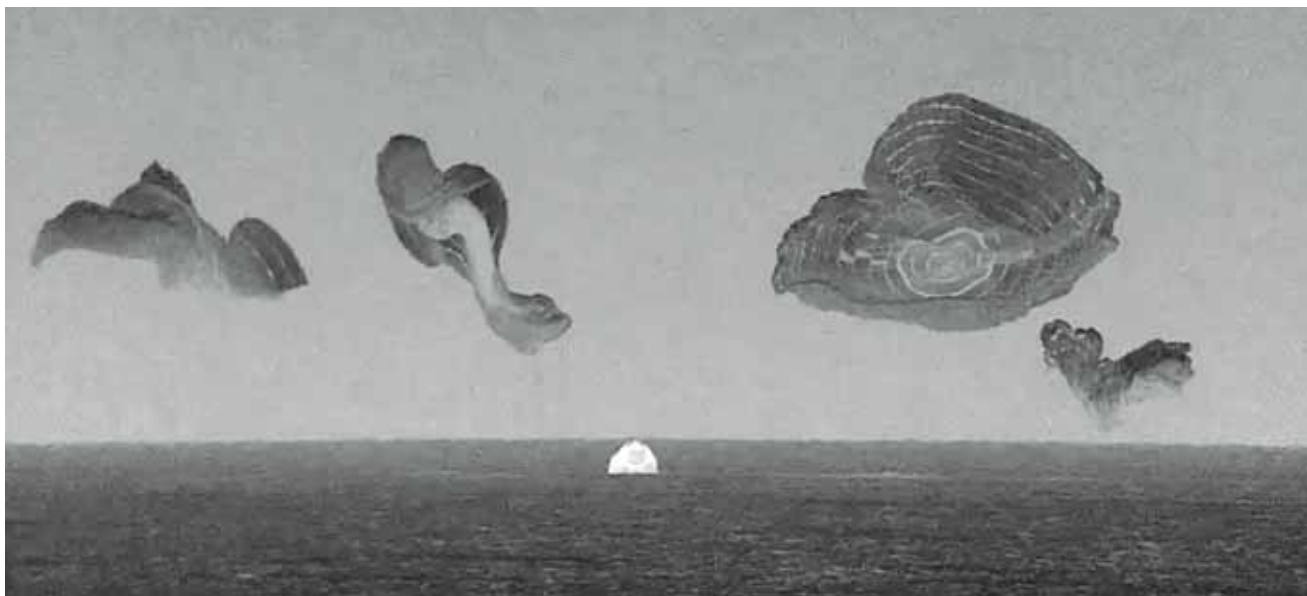
can measure energy efficiency and say that this model has an A+, and that model has a D?". In order to develop her tool, Luccioni is experimenting with it on generative AI models that are accessible to everyone, or open source, but she would also like to do it on commercial models from Google or ChatGPT-creator OpenAI, which have been reluctant to agree. Although Microsoft and Google have committed to achieving carbon neutrality by the end of the decade, the US tech giants saw their greenhouse gas emissions soar in 2023 because of AI: up 48% for Google compared to 2019 and 29% for Microsoft compared to 2020. "We are accelerating the climate crisis," says Luccioni, calling for more transparency from tech companies. The solution, she says, could come from governments that, for the moment, are

"flying blindly", without knowing what is "in the data sets or how the algorithms are trained". "Once we have transparency, we can start legislating," Luccioni said. It is also necessary to "explain to people what generative AI can and cannot do, and at what cost", according to the expert. In her latest study, the researcher demonstrated that producing a high-definition image using AI consumes as much energy as fully recharging the battery of your cell-phone. At a time when more and more companies want to integrate the technology further into our lives - with conversational bots and connected devices, or in online searches - Luccioni advocates "energy sobriety". The idea here is not to oppose AI, she emphasises, but rather to choose the right tools - and use them judiciously.

# Historic private astronaut mission ends with splashdown off Florida

AFP  
Washington

The SpaceX Polaris Dawn mission, which made history when its crew conducted the first spacewalk by non-government astronauts, concluded early yesterday with a splashdown off the coast of Florida. The Dragon spacecraft plunged into the ocean at 3.37am (0737 GMT), a webcast of the arrival showed, with a recovery team deploying in the pre-dawn darkness to retrieve the capsule and crew. The capsule was lifted from the water and onto the recovery vessel half a hour later. After brief medical checks, a smiling and waving SpaceX engineer Anna Menon was the first of the crew to exit, followed by engineer Sarah Gillis, pilot Scott Poteet and commander Jared Isaacman. A helicopter was due to transport them to land. "Happy, healthy, home," the Polaris Programme wrote on X. "A new era of commercial spaceflight dawns, with much more to come."



This still image taken from a SpaceX and Polaris broadcast yesterday shows the manned Polaris Dawn mission's 'Dragon' capsule splashing down off the coast of Dry Tortugas, Florida, completing the first human spaceflight mission by non-government astronauts of the Polaris Programme. - AFP

The four-member team led by fintech billionaire Isaacman launched on Tuesday from the Kennedy Space Centre, quickly journeying deeper into the cosmos than any humans in the past half century as they ventured into the dangerous Van Allen radiation belt. They hit a peak altitude of 870 miles (1,400km) - more than three times higher than the International Space Station (ISS) and the furthest humans had ever travelled from Earth since the Apollo missions to the Moon. Then on Thursday, with their Dragon spacecraft's orbit brought down to 434 miles, Isaacman swung open the hatch and climbed out into the void, gripping a structure called "Skywalker" as a breathtaking view of Earth unfolded before him.

"SpaceX, back at home we all have a lot of work to do, but from here, Earth sure looks like a perfect world," he told mission control in Hawthorne, California, where teams erupted in applause. He went back inside after a few minutes and was replaced by a second astronaut, SpaceX engineer Gillis, who, like Isaacman, performed a series of mobility tests on SpaceX's sleek, next-generation suits. Since Dragon doesn't have an airlock, the entire crew were exposed to the vacuum of space. Mission pilot Poteet and SpaceX engineer Menon remained strapped in throughout as they monitored vital support systems. It marked a "giant leap forward" for the commercial space industry, said National

Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) chief Bill Nelson, as well as another triumphant achievement for SpaceX. Founded in 2002, the company has quickly outpaced its legacy competitors, now thriving as one of Nasa's prime contractors - thanks in large part to owner and chief executive Elon Musk's fervent drive to colonise Mars. Since completing their extravehicular activity, the crew have continued to carry out roughly 40 science experiments - for example inserting endoscopic cameras through their noses and into their throats to image their airways and better understand the impact of long-duration space missions on human health. They also demonstrated connectiv-

ity with SpaceX's Starlink Internet satellite constellation by sending back to ground control a high-resolution video of Gillis playing *Rey's Theme* by *Star Wars* composer John Williams, on the violin. Polaris Dawn is the first of three missions under the Polaris programme, a collaboration between Isaacman and SpaceX. Financial terms of the partnership remain under wraps but Isaacman, the 41-year-old founder and chief executive of Shift4 Payments, reportedly poured \$200mn of his own money into leading the 2021 all-civilian SpaceX Inspiration4 orbital mission. The final Polaris mission aims to be the first crewed flight of SpaceX's Starship, a prototype next-generation rocket that is key to Musk's interplanetary ambitions.

## Foreigners held over alleged plot against Venezuela

Three Americans, two Spaniards and a Czech citizen have been detained in Venezuela on suspicion of plotting to destabilise the country, the government said, as the United States and Spain denied Caracas's allegations that they were involved. The arrests come amid heightened tensions between Venezuela and both the United States and Spain over Venezuela's disputed July 28 presidential election, which the country's opposition accuses President Nicolas Maduro of stealing. Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello said on Saturday that the foreign nationals were being held on suspicion of planning an attack on Maduro and his government. "We know that the United States government has links to this operation," Cabello asserted. Cabello said two Spaniards were recently detained in Puerto Ayacucho in the southwest. He added that three Americans and a Czech national were also arrested and linked the alleged plot to intelligence agencies in the United States and Spain, as well as to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado. A US State Department spokesman said on Saturday that "any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false". "We are seeking additional information. We are closely monitoring the situation," the official added, while declining to provide additional details due to privacy considerations. Spain also rejected allegations that it was involved (See Page 11). He added that about 400 rifles originating in the United States had been seized. The Czech Republic has yet to react to the claims. Maduro's claim to have won a third term in office sparked mass opposition protests, which claimed at least 27 lives and left 192 people wounded. About 2,400 people, including numerous teens, were arrested in the unrest. - AFP/Reuters

## Vance defends pet-eating story

The Republican vice-presidential nominee has defended his claim that immigrants are eating people's pet animals in an Ohio town, a claim multiple officials say is "dangerous" and unfounded. Donald Trump's running mate JD Vance (pictured) had made the surprising claim earlier this month - saying that Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio - were eating people's pet cats and dogs.



Vance is a US senator who represents Ohio. Trump amplified the claim during his debate on Tuesday with Democrat Kamala Harris, provoking widespread mockery at home and abroad - but also prompting a series of threats that forced some Springfield schools and hospitals to close. "My constituents are telling me firsthand that they're seeing these things," an unapologetic Vance said on CNN. Vance denied any responsibility for the recent spate of threats against Springfield, blaming them on "psychopaths" and "losers". Springfield's mayor, a local sheriff and the state's Republican governor have said they have no evidence to back up Vance's claims. "These discussions about Haitians eating dogs and cats and other things need to stop," Governor Mike DeWine said on ABC. "What we know is that the Haitians who are in Springfield are legal. They came to Springfield to work (and) ... they are very good workers." Thousands of Haitians have settled in Springfield in recent years, most of them under a federal programme granting them temporary protected status. Governor Josh Shapiro of the neighbouring state of Pennsylvania, a Democrat once touted as a possible Harris running mate, accused Vance yesterday of recklessly fanning the flames of rumour. "When they go out and they lie about this stuff, they put their fellow Americans at risk," he told CNN interviewer Dana Bash. "JD Vance should be ashamed of himself. This is dangerous stuff." Vance denied that his remarks had any connection to the threats against Springfield. "The violence is disgusting," he said. "We condemn it." However, he repeatedly blamed the problems in places like Springfield on the border policies of the Biden-Harris administration. Trump, like Vance, has doubled down on his attacks on migrants. Campaigning on Friday in California, Trump vowed there would be "large deportations" from Springfield if elected. He has promised to deport millions of undocumented migrants nationwide. Harris, meantime, appeared on Friday in Shapiro's state of Pennsylvania, perhaps the most crucial of the swing states expected to decide the November election. "I offer a new generation of leadership," said the 59-year-old Democrat, underlining the contrast to Trump, who is 78. - AFP

## US voters narrowly support Trump's tariff pitch, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds

Reuters  
Washington

Donald Trump's campaign vow to increase tariffs on imported goods, particularly from China, has the support of a narrow majority of US voters, illustrating his economic advantage over rival Vice-President Kamala Harris, a new Reuters/Ipsos poll shows.

The Republican former president and his Democratic opponent have both vowed to pursue tax cuts if they win the November 5 election. However, voters also credit Trump with being more likely to lower the \$35tn national debt - even though independent economic forecasters say that his proposals would have the opposite effect. Some 56% of registered voters in the September 11-12 poll said they were more likely to support a candidate backing a new 10% tariff, or tax, on all imports, as well as a 60% tariff on imports from China. By comparison, 41% said they were less likely to support a candidate attached to that proposal. The poll showed Harris with an overall five-percentage-point lead over Trump nationally, though the US presidential race will largely be decided in about seven battleground states where the race is tighter. The poll details Trump's strengths on a key issue, the US economy. "This is what's keeping the election so close," said Karlyn Bowman, a polling expert at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.



Trump gestures during a campaign rally in Tucson, Arizona. - Reuters

Bowman said that Trump's advantage flows from a perception the economy did well during his 2017-2021 administration, and from his success convincing voters US economic problems stemmed from underhanded economic competition from other countries, notably China. The poll found one in three Democrats said they were more likely to vote for a candidate backing higher tariffs and steep levies on Chinese goods, compared with two-thirds who said they were less likely to do so. Independent voters mirrored the wider electorate. Until the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic ravaged the global economy in 2020, the US economy by many measures performed well during the Trump administration, boosted by tax cuts for consumers. Unemployment was at its lowest in decades, although the national debt was rising and would explode during the pandemic. This year, Trump has promised an array of tax cuts on the campaign trail, including ending income tax on tipped income - a

proposal Harris also supports. On Thursday, he vowed to end taxes on overtime pay. Seventy per cent of registered voters supported the idea of exempting tips from taxes. Trump called himself a "tariff man" during his presidency as he slapped levies on Chinese imports. Economists are wary of the idea, including at Wall Street bank Goldman Sachs, which estimates Trump's tariffs and other policies would slow the economy. Harris mentioned Goldman Sachs's assessment in Tuesday's presidential debate and has noted that many independent economists believe Trump's policies would add to the national debt. However, the poll found that 37% of US voters see Trump as more likely to focus on reducing the debt, compared with 30% who picked Harris. Another 30% said neither would do so. The Reuters/Ipsos poll gathered responses online from 1,405 registered voters, with a margin of error of about three percentage points.

## The Life of Chuck wins top prize at Toronto film fest

*The Life of Chuck* - the latest adaptation of horror master Stephen King's work, starring Tom Hiddleston - won the coveted top prize yesterday at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Voted for by audiences, the People's Choice Award at North America's biggest film festival has become something of an early Oscars bellwether, predicting eventual Academy Award best picture winners such as *Nomadland* and *Green Book*. *The Life of Chuck*, directed by Mike Flanagan, is based on King's 2020 novella about a banker, Charles Krantz (Hiddleston). It tells the story of his life in reverse chronological order - against a rather apocalyptic backdrop. Mark Hamill and Chiwetel Ejiofor co-star in the film, which had its world premiere in Toronto, but does not yet have a distributor - a situation that is likely to change after yesterday's win. The first runner-up prize went to audacious musical *Emilia Perez*, about a drug lord who is of a minority gender, and the second runner-up award went to Cannes Palme d'Or winner *Anora*, about the life of a New York exotic dancer. The TIFF, opened on September 5, is known for attracting both megawatt stars and a large crowd of cinephiles eager to catch movies before the general public. Last year's People's Choice Award went to *American Fiction*, which went on to earn five Oscar nominations and win the statuette for best adapted screenplay. - AFP



# US to provide Bangladesh \$202mn more aid

Reuters  
Dhaka

The US is committed to supporting Bangladesh's inclusive economic growth, institution building and development and will provide an additional \$202mn of aid, a US delegation said

during a visit to Dhaka yesterday. The six-member delegation, led by deputy undersecretary of the treasury department Brent Neiman, is the first from the US since the interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took office last month following the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after deadly protests.

In a televised address last week, chief adviser Yunus said the government was appealing for \$5bn in aid to help stabilise an economy that has been struggling since the Ukraine war sharply increased the cost of fuel and food imports. Bangladesh last year sought a \$4.7bn bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) said it would provide a \$202mn grant to promote good governance, social, human and economic opportunity and resilience, in a deal signed yesterday in Dhaka. It follows a 2021 agreement where USAID pledged a total of \$954mn between 2021 and 2026, of which

\$425mn had already been provided. In a statement released on its Facebook page following the meeting with Yunus, the US embassy emphasised its readiness to support Bangladesh in its pursuit of a more "equitable and inclusive future". Yunus sought US support to help rebuild Bangladesh, carry out es-

sential reforms to the judiciary, police and financial institutions and to recover assets stolen by the previous regime, according to a statement from his office. The visiting US delegation expressed Washington's willingness to support these reform efforts, offering both technical and financial assistance, the statement said.

# Philippines sends replacement ship to Sabina Shoal, vows continued presence

Reuters  
Manila

The Philippines said it was sending a vessel to Sabina Shoal to replace a coast guard ship that returned to port yesterday after a five-month deployment at the contested feature in the South China Sea, in a swap that would likely irk China.

Beijing had demanded the Philippines withdraw the 318-foot coast guard vessel Teresa Magbanua it claimed was "illegally stranded" at the atoll, which it asserts it owns as part of its broader claim to nearly the entire South China Sea.

"The Philippine side's actions have seriously infringed on China's territorial sovereignty," Liu Dejun, a spokesperson for China's coast guard said in a statement yesterday about what it referred to as Manila's "withdrawal" of its ship.

Teresa Magbanua, which was deployed at Sabina Shoal to monitor what Manila suspects to be China's small-scale land reclamation activities in the area, has returned to port as its mission has been accomplished, the Philippine Coast Guard and National Maritime Council (NMC) said.

"Another will immediately take over," NMC spokesperson Alexander Lopez said, citing an order from the Philippine Coast Guard chief. "Definitely, we will keep our presence there."

Sabina Shoal, which China refers to as Xianbin Reef and the Philippines as the Escoda Shoal,

lies 150km west of the Philippine province of Palawan, well within the country's exclusive economic zone.

Teresa Magbanua's presence there has angered Beijing, turning the shoal into the latest flashpoint in the contested waterway.

Manila and Beijing have traded accusations of intentional ramming of each others' vessels near Sabina last month, just after reaching a pact on resupply missions to a beached Filipino naval ship in the Second Thomas Shoal.

Teresa Magbanua's return was necessary for the medical needs of its crew and to undergo repairs, and once it has been resupplied and repaired, it will resume its mission, along with other coast guard and military assets "as defenders of our sovereignty," Lucas Bersamin, executive secretary and NMC chairman said in a statement.

The move followed high-level talks between Manila and Beijing in China last week where the Philippines reaffirmed its position on Sabina and China reiterated its demand that the vessel be withdrawn.

China's coast guard said it would continue to carry out law enforcement activities in the waters under Beijing's jurisdiction in accordance with the law and safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests.

China claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, overlapping into maritime zones of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.



Flood-affected residents try to make their way through a damaged road at the Yado displacement camp in Than Dung Gyi, eastern Karen state.

# Volunteers rush to help as Myanmar flood toll surges

AFF  
Bago, Myanmar

Volunteers rushed to areas inundated by floods in Myanmar yesterday as the country's death toll from the Typhoon Yagi deluge surged to 113 and remote areas reported increasing numbers of dead and missing.

Floods and landslides have killed more than 400 people in Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand in the wake of Typhoon Yagi, which hit the region last weekend, according to official figures.

However, with roads and bridges damaged in Myanmar and phone and Internet lines

down, information has been limited. One man said how he had tried to rescue people with ropes as floodwaters 15 feet high surged through the hill town of Kalaw in Shan state on September 10.

"The current was very strong and even some buildings were destroyed," he said, describing pieces of furniture being washed through the streets.

"I could see trapped families in the distance standing on the roofs of their houses," said the man, who works for a local non-governmental group.

"I heard there were 40 bodies in the hospital," he said.

A businesswoman in Yangon who runs a company in Kalaw said her staff there had re-

ported nearly 60 people had been killed in the town. The junta said yesterday the death toll had jumped to 113 by Saturday night. The previous toll had been put at 74.

It did not specify whether any of those confirmed dead had been killed in Kalaw.

More than 320,000 people had been displaced and moved to "temporary relief camps", junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said.

In Inle Lake, a tourist hotspot about 30kms from Kalaw, flood levels had risen on Saturday to the second storey of houses built on stilts above the water, according to one man helping to evacuate his family.

"Whole villages have been submerged" in some areas near the lake, he said yesterday, asking to remain anonymous.

## Prince William wishes brother on 40th birthday

Britain's Prince William wished his estranged younger brother Harry a happy birthday, as the younger son of King Charles III turned 40 yesterday. Harry's ties with his family have been increasingly fraught since he and wife Meghan Markle quit royal life and moved to California in 2020. William and Harry used to be close - a bond that was forged with the death of their mother Princess Diana in 1997. But according to British media reports, they have not spoken to each other in two years. "Wishing a Happy 40th Birthday to The Duke of Sussex!", read a post on William and wife Catherine's official X account, referring to Harry's royal title.

It shared an earlier message on the royal family's X account which read: "Wishing The Duke of Sussex a very happy 40th birthday today!".

That post was accompanied by a photo of a smiling Harry and an emoji of a birthday cake.

## Omar Abdullah speaks at poll rally



Omar Abdullah, leader of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) party, addresses a campaign rally ahead of the assembly elections, in Pulwama, India, yesterday.

## Kejriwal to resign as Delhi chief minister

Reuters  
New Delhi

Indian opposition leader Arvind Kejriwal yesterday said he will resign as chief minister of the Delhi regional government, a day after he was released from prison on bail in a graft case.

Kejriwal was granted bail on Friday by India's Supreme Court and left prison on Saturday almost six months after being detained in relation to alleged irregularities in the capital city's liquor policy.

Kejriwal is a fierce critic of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a former anti-corruption activist whose decade-old Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) quickly rose to mainstream politics, although its clout is relatively small compared to older opposition parties.

AAP had expected that Kejriwal's release from prison would

allow him to campaign as a chief minister in regional elections next month in the northern state of Haryana, and in Delhi early next year.

Kejriwal, announcing his resignation as chief minister at a meeting with AAP workers, said he would only return to the post if people certify his honesty by voting for him in the upcoming Delhi election. He called on the election commission to bring forward the Delhi election to November, from February 2025.

"I demand elections be held in November with Maharashtra elections, I demand the elections be held immediately," Kejriwal said.

He was first taken into custody in March by India's financial crime-fighting agency, weeks before the country's national elections, in relation to Delhi's liquor policy.

# Scotland's only oil refinery to close next year

Reuters  
London

Grangemouth, Scotland's only oil refinery, is to close in 2025 with the loss of 400 jobs, operator Petroineos said yesterday, as part of plans to turn the 100-year old plant into a fuels import terminal.

Petroineos said last November it was preparing to shut Grangemouth, Britain's oldest refinery. Production will cease in the second quarter of next year, subject to an employee consultation, a company spokesperson said.

The decision was criticised by trade unions and politicians.

"It is deeply disappointing that Petroineos have confirmed their previous decision to close Grangemouth oil refinery," UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said.

The site will become an import and distribution terminal for finished fuels, which will cut the number of employees at the site from 475 to around 75 over the next two years.

Petroineos is a joint venture between PetroChina International London (PCIL) and INEOS Group, a British chemicals firm founded by billionaire Sir Jim Ratcliffe.

The company cited economic difficulties as the reason for the closure, stating that the company

had invested \$1.2bn since 2011, and returned losses in excess of \$775mn over the same period.

"Grangemouth is increasingly unable to compete with bigger, more modern and efficient sites in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Due to its size and configuration, Grangemouth incurs high levels of capital expenditure each year just to maintain its licence to operate," the company said.

It said the plant is currently losing around \$500,000 per day, and expects to see a \$200mn loss for 2024.

Petroineos's plans for Grangemouth had been opposed by trade unions and local politicians and there were campaigns to extend

production until a low-carbon alternative for its long-term future could be secured. The UK and Scottish governments announced a joint plan yesterday, including a £100mn (\$130.43mn) financial package, to secure an industrial future for Grangemouth after the refinery closes.

This will go towards career support for affected workers as well as investments in local energy projects.

"We are announcing a package of investment to help the workforce find good, alternative jobs, invest in the community and serve a viable industrial future for the Grangemouth site," Miliband said.

Trade union Unite, which rep-

resents workers at Grangemouth, described the closure as an "act of industrial vandalism".

"The complex is critical to the nation's manufacturing base and energy security," Unite Scottish secretary Derek Thomson said.

Frank Demay, chief executive of Petroineos Refining, said demand for the fuels produced at Grangemouth had already started to decline. "With a ban on new petrol and diesel cars due to come into force within the next decade, we foresee that the market for those fuels will shrink further," he said.

The refinery processes mainly North Sea Forties crude oil, which it has a direct link to via the For-

ties Pipeline System (FPS), and U.S. WTI Midland. Both of those crude oil grades help to underpin the Brent global oil benchmark, meaning the refinery's closure could have wider significance for the oil market.

Ineos said it is "business as usual" for its other operations around the Grangemouth site, namely the Ineos Olefins and Polymers petrochemical plant and the FPS.

The new Labour government has previously committed funding to look into possible low-carbon projects at the site. The research has identified three possible long-term options, including low-carbon hydrogen, clean eFuels and sustainable aviation fuels.

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## Rethinking pain: The hidden burden of abdominal fat

Excess abdominal fat has long been blamed for multiple health concerns. Now, going by a latest study, it turns out that excess abdominal fat could be contributing to chronic pain throughout the body. The study has discovered a surprising connection between abdominal fat and widespread musculoskeletal pain, with implications for how we understand and treat chronic pain conditions.

Researchers from the University of Tasmania and other institutions analysed data from over 32,000 participants in the UK Biobank study to examine the relationship between abdominal fat and chronic pain. Using advanced MRI imaging, they were able to precisely measure two different types of abdominal fat – visceral adipose tissue which surrounds the internal organs, and subcutaneous adipose tissue, which lies just beneath the skin.

The results revealed a clear dose-response relationship – the more abdominal fat a person carried, the more likely they were to experience chronic pain in multiple areas of the body. This held true for both visceral and subcutaneous fat. Participants with higher levels of abdominal fat had greater odds of reporting chronic pain overall and were more likely to have pain in multiple sites like the neck, back, hips, and knees.

Intriguingly, the connection between fat and pain appeared to be stronger in women compared to men. Women tended to have more subcutaneous fat and less visceral fat than men but showed larger increases in pain risk as their abdominal fat increased. The

### The UK Biobank study opens up exciting new avenues for investigating the roots of chronic pain and developing more effective treatments

researchers suggest this could be due to differences in how fat is distributed and functions in male and female bodies.

The results revealed a clear dose-response relationship – the more abdominal fat a person carried, the more likely they were to experience chronic pain in multiple areas. As to why would abdominal fat contribute to widespread pain, the study authors propose several potential mechanisms. Excess fat tissue produces inflammatory compounds

that can sensitise nerves and amplify pain signals throughout the body. It may also place increased mechanical stress on joints and tissues. Additionally, visceral fat, in particular, is metabolically active and linked to various health issues that could exacerbate pain.

The research, published in the journal *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine*, challenges the traditional view that obesity primarily affects joint pain through increased load-bearing. Instead, it suggests that fat tissue itself may drive widespread inflammation and pain sensitisation. This could help explain why conditions like fibromyalgia that involve pain all over the body are more common in people with obesity.

The findings have important implications for both prevention and treatment of chronic pain. Maintaining a healthy weight and reducing abdominal fat through diet and exercise may help reduce pain risk. For those already experiencing chronic pain, weight loss interventions targeting abdominal fat could potentially provide relief. The sex differences uncovered also highlight the need for tailored approaches for men and women.

More research is necessary to fully understand the complex relationship between body composition and pain. However, this study opens up exciting new avenues for investigating the roots of chronic pain and developing more effective treatments. The study was supported by a grant from the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council.



## Putin's options for Ukraine missiles response include nuclear test, experts fear

By Andrew Osborn and Mark Trevelyan  
London

Vladimir Putin's options to retaliate if the West lets Ukraine use its long-range missiles to strike Russia could include striking British military assets near Russia or, in extremis, conducting a nuclear test to show intent, three analysts said. As East-West tensions over Ukraine enter a new and dangerous phase, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and US President Joe Biden are holding talks in Washington on Friday on whether to allow Kyiv to use long-range US ATACMS or British Storm Shadow missiles against targets in Russia. President Putin, in his clearest warning yet, said on Thursday that the West would be directly fighting Russia if it went ahead with such a move, which he said would alter the nature of the conflict. He promised an "appropriate" response but did not say what it would entail. In June, however, he spoke of the option of arming the West's enemies with Russian weapons to strike Western targets abroad, and of deploying conventional missiles within striking distance of the United States and its European allies.

Ulrich Kuehn, an arms expert at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy in Hamburg, said he did not rule out Putin choosing to send some kind of nuclear message – for example testing a nuclear weapon in an effort to cow the West.

"This would be a dramatic escalation of the conflict," he said in an interview. "Because

the point is, what kind of arrows has Mr Putin then left to shoot if the West then still continues, apart from actual nuclear use?" Russia has not conducted a nuclear weapons test since 1990, the year before the fall of the Soviet Union, and a nuclear explosion would signal the start of a more dangerous era, Kuehn said, cautioning that Putin may feel he is seen as weak in his responses to increasing Nato support for Ukraine.

"Nuclear testing would be new. I would not exclude that, and it would be in line with Russia shattering a number of international security arrangements that it has signed up to over the decades during the last couple of years," he said.

Gerhard Mangott, a security specialist at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, said in an interview he also thought it was possible, though in his view not likely, that Russia's response could include some form of nuclear signal.

"The Russians could conduct a nuclear test. They have made all the preparations needed. They could explode a tactical nuclear weapon somewhere in the east of the country just to demonstrate that (they) mean it when they say we will eventually resort to nuclear weapons."

Russia's UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the UN Security Council on Friday that Nato would "be a direct party to hostilities against a nuclear power," if it allowed Ukraine to use longer range weapons against Russia.

"You shouldn't forget about this and think about the consequences," he said. Russia, the world's largest nuclear power, is also in the process of revising its nuclear doctrine

– the circumstances in which Moscow would use nuclear weapons. Putin is being pressed by an influential foreign policy hawk to make it more flexible in order to open the door to conducting a limited nuclear strike on a Nato country.

#### British blowback

In the case of Britain, Moscow was likely to declare that London had gone from a hybrid proxy war with Russia to direct armed aggression if it allows Kyiv to fire Storm Shadow missiles at Russia, former Kremlin adviser Sergei Markov said on social media platform Telegram on Friday.

Russia was likely to close the British embassy in Moscow and its own in London, strike British drones and warplanes close to Russia, for example over the Black Sea, and possibly fire missiles at F-16 warplanes that carry the Storm Shadows at their bases in Romania and Poland, Markov predicted. Putin has tried and failed to draw red lines for the West before, prompting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky – who is urging the West to be less cautious when it comes to confronting Moscow – to dismiss their importance.

But Putin's latest warning on long-range missiles is being seen inside and outside Russia as something he will have to act on if London or Washington allow their missiles to be used against Russia.

University of Innsbruck's Mangott said the way Putin's warning has been shown repeatedly on Russian state television created an expectation that he would need to deliver.

Dmitry Peskov, Putin's spokesman, told a press briefing on Friday that Putin's message had been "extremely clear and unambiguous."

Markov, the former Kremlin advisor, said "Russia has decided to break" the strategy of "boiling a frog on a slow flame," referring to the West's incremental increases in help to Ukraine aimed at not provoking a sharp Russian response.

"The step that the West is now planning next, it's a small step, but it crosses a red line that we will actually be forced to respond to. We will consider that you are at war with us."

Sergei Mironov, the leader of a pro-Kremlin political party, said in a press statement on Friday: "The moment of truth has come for the West, whether it desires a full-scale war with Russia."

#### Ukraine escalation

Short of nuclear sabre rattling or strikes on British assets, more predictable responses might include Russia stepping up attacks on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, Kuehn said.

Mangott predicted Kyiv would bear the brunt of Russia's military response if the West gave it the requested green light, and he did not expect a Russian military attack on Nato territory.

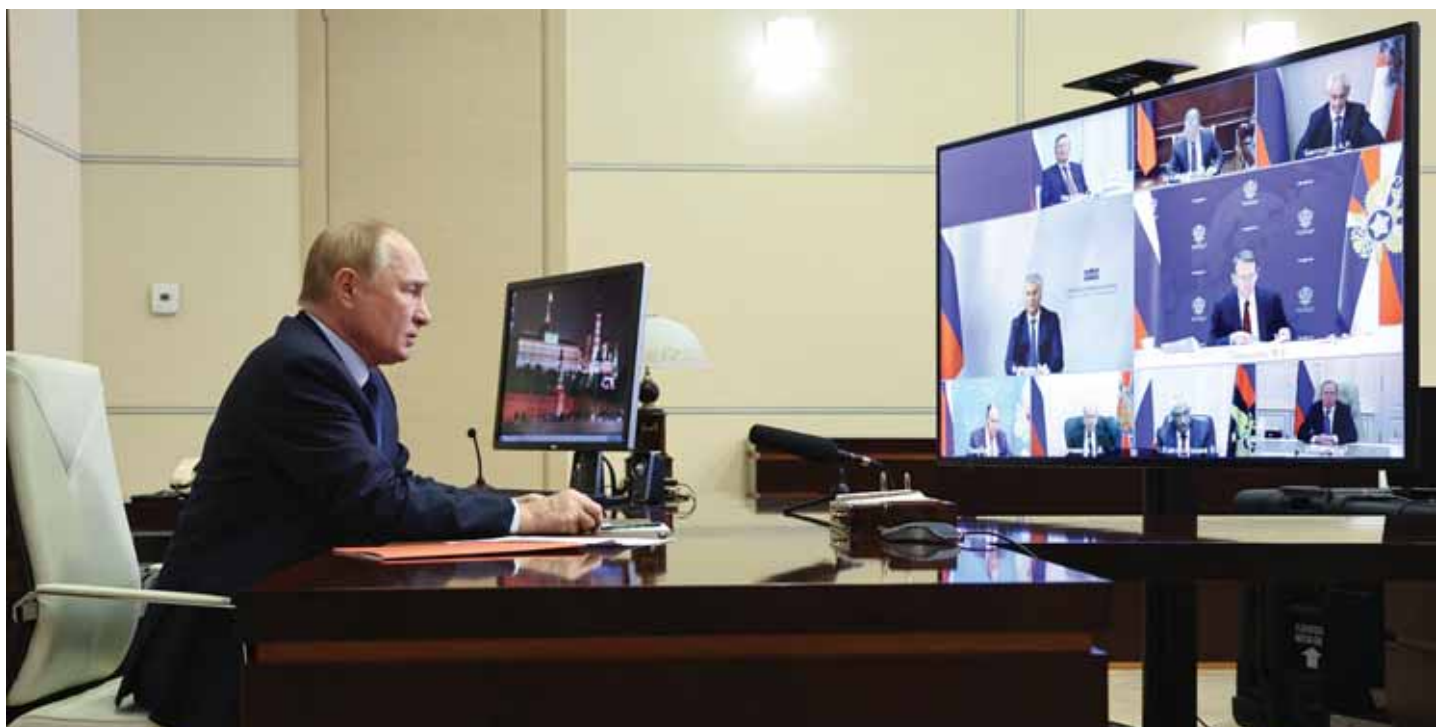
Another option would be for Russia to escalate "hybrid" actions such as sabotage in Europe or interference in the US election campaign, Kuehn said.

Mangott said the danger for the West was that it did not know where Putin's red lines really were.

"Allowing Ukraine to use Western weaponry, assisted with Western satellite images (and) Western military advisers is something that very closely encroaches on vital Russian interests," he said.

"So I think those (people) are wrong who say 'Well nothing will happen, let's just do it!'"

– Reuters



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a Security Council meeting via videoconference at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow on Friday. (AFP)

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# Death toll rises as storm lashes central, eastern Europe

AFP  
Glucholazy

One person has drowned in Poland and an Austrian fireman has died responding to floods, authorities said yesterday, as Storm Boris lashed central and eastern Europe with torrential rains.

Since Thursday, swathes of Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia have been hit by high winds and unusually heavy rainfall.

The rains have flooded streets and submerged entire neighbourhoods in some places, while shutting down public transport and electricity in others.

Romanians waded through armpit-high water to safety, Poles sought shelter in schools and Czechs hurriedly put up sand dykes in an effort to keep the water at bay.

Yesterday's deaths bring the overall toll from the storm to eight, with thousands evacuated across the continent.

In Romania, two bodies were found yesterday, after four people

were reported killed earlier, and one person was declared missing.

Four people were reported missing in the Czech Republic.

"The water came into the house, it destroyed the walls, everything," Sofia Basalic, 60, a resident of Romania's village of Pechea, in the hard-hit region of Galati, told AFP.

"It took the chickens, the rabbits, everything. It took the oven, the washing machine, the refrigerator. I have nothing left," she said.

"Heartfelt solidarity with all affected by the devastating floods in Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia", EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen wrote on X, formerly Twitter, adding that the EU was ready to offer support.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said yesterday morning that "we have the first confirmed death by drowning, in the Klodzko region" on the Polish-Czech border in the southwest of the country, which has been hit hardest by the floods.

Around 1,600 people have been evacuated in Klodzko and Polish

authorities have called in the army to support firefighters.

Separately, a fireman in north-eastern Austria died in floods in the Lower Austria region, which has been classified as a natural disaster zone, regional governor Johanna Mikl-Leitner told reporters yesterday.

"For many residents, the upcoming hours will be the worst of their lives," she said.

Emergency services had made nearly 5,000 interventions overnight in the state of Lower Austria, where flooding had trapped many residents in their homes.

A highway from western Austria to Vienna was shut just outside the capital and four of Vienna's five metro lines had been shut in the city, where the Wien river was threatening to overflow its banks, according to local news reports.

In Poland, authorities shut the Gorkowice border crossing with the Czech Republic after a river flooded its banks on Saturday, as well as closing several roads and halting trains on the line linking the towns of Prudnik and Nysa.

Tusk said that Ukraine, which is fending off a Russian invasion



This aerial photograph taken yesterday shows local residents being evacuated by rescuers in the village of Rudawa, southern Poland. (AFP)

in its third year, has offered to send some 100 rescuers specially equipped to deal with floods to help as an expression of solidarity with Poland, which has steadfastly backed Kyiv during the war.

"It's very touching", Tusk said of the offer.

In the Czech Republic, a dam in the south of the country burst its banks, flooding towns and villages downstream.

In the village of Velke Hostice, residents put up a wall of sandbags 500 metres long in an effort to hold back the rising waters of the River Opava.

"If we don't stop the wave, it will flood the lower part of the village," local hunter Jaroslav Lixa

told AFP. In southeastern Romania, another body was found yesterday in the worst-affected Galati region, where four people had died on Saturday.

"We are again facing the effects of climate change, which are increasingly present on the European continent, with dramatic consequences," Romania's President Klaus Iohannis said.

Hundreds of people have been rescued across 19 parts of the country, emergency services said, releasing a video of flooded homes in a village by the Danube river.

"This is a catastrophe of epic proportions," said Emil Dragomir, mayor of Slobozia Conachi, a village in Galati, where he said 700

homes had been flooded.

Romania's interior minister said more than 6,000 households and 15,000 people were affected in the region.

In Austria, some areas of the Tyrol region were blanketed by up to a metre (three feet) of snow — an exceptional situation for mid-September, which saw temperatures of up to 30 degrees Celsius last week.

Rail services were suspended in the country's east early yesterday.

In neighbouring Slovakia, a state of emergency has been declared in the capital Bratislava.

Heavy rains are expected to continue until at least today in the Czech Republic and Poland.

# Stricken Red Sea tanker salvage makes 'slow' progress

AFP  
Athens

The towing of an abandoned tanker struck by Yemen's Houthi rebels in August, threatening environmental disaster, is proceeding slowly for a second day, a Greek military source told AFP yesterday.

The operation to tow the Greek-flagged Sounion which began Saturday "is proceeding at a very slow pace", the source said, adding that it was "initially headed north" without revealing a destination.

The tanker was hit on August 21 by Iran-backed Houthis with missiles off the coast of Hodeida while carrying 150,000 tonnes of crude oil.

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



This handout picture provided by EUNAVFOR ASPIDES yesterday and dated September 14, shows a vessel with a rope extended toward the Greek-owned oil tanker Sounion as smoke and fire billows from it, off the coast of Hodeida in the Red Sea. (AFP)

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

The operation is being overseen by the European Union's Red Sea naval mission, Aspides, which yesterday said the tanker was being towed to a "safe location".

"The salvage of the MV SOUNION is a complex operation and consists of various phases", the mission said on X, formerly Twitter.

It added aerial shots of the tanker escorted by two warships, one dated Sunday, in which it is still emitting smoke.

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.

Fires were still visible on board in Aspides pictures on X dated Saturday.

"When it reaches safe mooring there will be an attempt to put out the fire and preliminary steps will be taken to secure the cargo from leaking," the Greek source said yesterday.

The ships' radars have been turned off for security reasons.

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

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.

Since November, the Houthi attacks have caused the sinking of two ships and 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 solidarity with Palestinians over Israeli war actions in Gaza.

# 41 injured as Russian bomb strikes Kharkiv apartment

Reuters  
Kyiv

A Russian-guided bomb struck a multi-storey apartment building yesterday in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, triggering a fire and injuring at least 41 people, the region's governor said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the latest attack underscored the need for Ukraine's Western partners to provide weapons and air defence systems and permission to use weaponry on targets deep inside Russia to save lives.

Oleh Syniehubov, governor of Kharkiv region in northeastern Ukraine, said on Telegram that rescue operations were proceeding, with 12 people in hospital, three in serious condition. He said residents could be trapped under rubble. Syniehubov posted photos of heavy damage to the top four of five storeys of the building, with smoke and fire billowing out of blown-out windows.

Zelensky, in his nightly video address, said three other guided bombs had struck villages in Kharkiv region, where population centres have been a frequent target of Russian attacks near the Russian border.

Russia did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the apartment building but has denied intentionally targeting civilians despite having killed thousands of them since it invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Zelensky called for rapid decisions on long-range strikes "in order to destroy Russian military aviation right where it is based. These are obvious, logical decisions. "Every Russian strike of this nature, every instance of Russian terror, like today in Kharkiv...this proves that there must be long-range capability and it must be sufficient."

He said appropriate decisions were expected in the first instance from the United States, France, Germany and Italy, "those whose decisiveness can help save lives."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said last week that the West would be directly fighting with Russia if it allowed Ukraine to strike Russian territory with Western-made long-range missiles.

# 2 Spaniards arrested in Venezuela not linked to any plot, says Madrid

Reuters  
Madrid

Two Spanish nationals arrested in Venezuela had no links to the Spanish secret service and Spain was not involved in any plan to politically destabilise the South American country, a Spanish foreign ministry source said yesterday.

Two Spaniards, three US citizens and a Czech citizen were arrested in Venezuela on suspicion of links to an alleged plot to undermine President Nicolas Maduro's government, Venezuela's interior minister said on Saturday.

"Spain denies and absolutely rejects any insinuation of being implicated in an operation of political destabilisation in Venezuela," the Spanish foreign ministry source said.

"The government has confirmed that the (two Spanish citizens) detained do not form part of the Centre for National Intelligence or any state organisation. Spain defends a democratic and peaceful solution to the situation in Venezuela."

The arrests are likely to deepen Vene-

zuela's already tense relations with Spain and the United States after a disputed presidential election in July.

Venezuelan Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello told a press conference on Saturday that two Spaniards were allegedly linked to Spain's secret service and were planning the assassination of a mayor.

He named the Spaniards as José María Basoa and Andrés Martínez Adasne. Photographs of the men were shown on state television.

The father of Adasne, Andrés Martínez, told *El Mundo* newspaper yesterday his son did not work for the Spanish secret service.

"My son does not work for the CNI, of course not. We are waiting for information from the consulate and embassy. We still do not know what they are accused of or the reason for their arrest," he said.

Cabello also accused three US citizens and a Czech of involvement in terrorist acts, including alleged plans to assassinate Maduro and other officials.

The US State Department said on Saturday that "any claims of US involvement in a plot to overthrow Maduro are categorically false".

The State Department spokesperson also confirmed that a "member of the US military" was being held and noted "unconfirmed reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela".

The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, called Maduro's government "dictatorial" during an interview with Spanish television channel Telecinco yesterday.

On Saturday, a Spanish foreign ministry source told Reuters it was asking Venezuela for more information.

"The Spanish embassy has sent a verbal note to the Venezuelan government asking for access to the detained citizens in order to verify their identities and their nationality and in order to know what they are accused of exactly," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The Spanish nationals were detained while taking photographs in the town of Puerto Ayacucho, Cabello said.

Venezuela recalled its ambassador to Spain last week for consultations and summoned the Spanish ambassador to appear at the foreign ministry after a Spanish minister accused Maduro of running a "dictatorship".

# 8 migrants die in bid to cross Channel

Eight migrants died yesterday when their overcrowded vessel capsized while trying to cross the Channel from France to England, French authorities said, less than two weeks after the deadliest such disaster this year.

The latest tragedy means 46 migrants have lost their lives attempting to reach British shores so far this year, a regional official said, up from 12 in 2023.

The French and British governments have sought for years to stop the flow of migrants, who pay smugglers thousands of euros per head for the passage on overloaded rubber dinghies.

Regional prefect Jacques Billant said the incident happened at around 1am off the coast of the northern town of Ambleteuse.

"The toll was terrible, with eight people reported dead," he told the press near the site of the accident.

He said they seemed all to be men. Six survivors were hospitalised, including a 10-month-old baby with hypothermia, he added.

The boat had set off from the Slack river that flows into the sea between the towns of Wimereux and Ambleteuse. It had 59 people on board from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran, Billant said.

"Only one out of six had a lifejacket," he said.

The dinghy "quickly got into difficulty and ran aground", he said. "The boat was torn apart on the rocks." Christel

Leclair, a volunteer at a local charity, said a second boat had departed at around 7:30am despite the fatal accident.

Departures "happen the whole time — winter, day, night, summer... as soon as the sea is calm," she said.

"The boats are more and more overcrowded. They don't have lifejackets, just sometimes the inner tube of a tire," she added.

"There are children, pregnant women and tiny babies. We're sad and deflated." The Auberge des Migrants (Migrant shelter) charity on X called on the French and British states to "immediately rethink their migration policy".

Billant said that this year French authorities had dismantled 20 people smuggling networks, arresting 77 people of whom 59 have been referred to the courts.

But Charlotte Kwantes, of the Utopia 56 charity helping migrants, said departures would only continue.

Without enough legal options for migrants wishing to reach the United Kingdom, "people are continuing and will continue to take the same risks, whatever the quantity of patrols and means deployed at the border," she said.

Maritime authorities said Saturday that migrants had made numerous attempts to cross the Channel in recent days, with 200 people rescued in 24 hours over Friday and Saturday alone.

## Qatar Museums unveils major new public artwork honouring Sheikh Moza



Infinity Love is installed outdoors at Al Shafallah Centre for Persons with Disabilities.

Qatar Museums (QM) unveiled yesterday *Infinity Love*, a stainless steel sculpture in the form of Arabic calligraphy, as the most recent addition to the nation's programme of public art installations.

Commissioned from Qatari artist Bashayer al-Badr, the work honours Her Highness Sheikh Moza bint Nasser.

It is installed outdoors at Al Shafallah Centre for Persons with Disabilities in recognition of 25 years of her support for the institution, which protects the rights of the disabled in Qatar and provides services for people with mental disabilities and autism.

The artwork was unveiled by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani.

Shafallah Centre executive director Maryam Saif al-Suwaidi and representatives of the QM and various government ministries were present at the ceremony.

Al-Badr has explored the expressive potential of Arabic calligraphy in sculpture since 2016 and rendered the characters of *Infinity Love* in a non-traditional style, reminiscent of handwritten gestures.

In the sculpture, the initial letter of the word "love" (ل, haa) and the final letter (و, baa) intertwine to form the infinity symbol, creating a visual metaphor for both feelings of endlessness and unity, whether the bonds are between two individuals or among the people of the diverse nation of Qatar.

"*Infinity Love* pays homage to the tireless efforts of Her Highness Sheikh Moza bint Nasser to better the lives of Qataris, especially those in greatest need," al-Badr said. "I offer the sculpture to the public in the same spirit with which Her Highness has dedicated more than two decades of her life to this important cause."

"I am especially honoured to have been commissioned to make this work specifically for Al Shafallah Centre for Persons with Disabilities, where I hope it can offer wonder and joy to the patients, their families, and the dedicated staff," he added.

*Infinity Love* joins the more than 140 public artworks installed, and often specially commissioned, by the QM that comprise the nation's vast outdoor museum.

## QU marks premiere of *To the Sons of the Nation*

Qatar University (QU) celebrated yesterday the premiere of a documentary on His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani's wisdom and vision that led to Qatar's multi-field progress.

*To the Sons of the Nation*, directed by Qatar's Amal al-Muftah and Rawda al-Thani, traces the great achievements under His Highness the Father Amir's leadership through interviews with key Qatari figures and archival footage documenting pivotal moments during his reign.

These achievements range from economic prosperity, to advanced education and health sectors in Qatar and a robust global status for the country.

The Doha Film Institute (DFI)'s latest production addresses the bold decisions that His Highness the Father Amir took to subdue challenges and put Qatar on a sustainable path towards prosperity and development.

The documentary highlights the major transformations that Qatar has witnessed, and delivers an inspiring message to future generations to continue striving towards



achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Qatar University president Dr Omar al-Ansari said that it was a great honour to document the life of His Highness the Father Amir, who presented a unique model of sacrifice, wisdom, and insight for his country.

The QU is proud to review pages from the history of Qatar's wise

leadership, and draw lessons from them.

Dr al-Ansari noted that the university, from this standpoint, is keen to build the student's character and enhance the spirit of belonging and pride in the country and its leaders.

Meanwhile, QU Vice-President for Student Affairs Dr Mohammad Diab hailed His Highness the Fa-



Snapshots from the premiere of *To the Sons of the Nation* at Qatar University.



ther Amir as a symbol of outstanding national achievements, and a leader who, with his insightful vision, was able to lead Qatar to a stage of progress and prosperity in various fields.

The official also lauded the documentary as an opportunity for current generations, especially students, to learn about the efforts to consolidate Qatar's regional and

international status.

Dr Diab urged university students to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the country's history, and look forward to a bright future in which they will be ambassadors for this great nation.

Student Activities director Abdullah al-Mulla said that the film screening on the QU campus is an

exceptional occasion to promote national values among students and highlight the role of the wise leadership in building the nation.

He indicated that this event provides students with the opportunity to learn about the history of Qatar and His Highness the Father Amir's inspiring journey that accomplished renaissance and development. - QNA

## Olympic gold medallist Sifan Hassan shares her inspiring journey

Olympic gold medallist Sifan Hassan has shared her inspiring running journey - from migrating from Ethiopia to the Netherlands aged 15, to winning three medals at the recent Paris 2024 Olympic Games - during a talk at Qatar Foundation (QF).

She was the latest guest of the Education City Speaker Series, Qatar Foundation (QF)'s platform for dialogue, with the discussion at the Education City Stadium exploring topics such as training, recovery, nutrition, faith, and her future goals.

"I started running as a child. In Ethiopia, running is part of the culture - everybody runs," Hassan explained. "I was born in the city, but I grew up in a village, and we would run to school."

"However, I really like to sleep in the morning," she laughed. "My mum would always say, 'you have to wake up', but I'd say, 'please, let me sleep!'"

"However, at school, when you were late, you got into trouble," Hassan added. "And I always got up late, so I had to run really hard to get to class on time, every day."

Reflecting on her move from Ethiopia, Hassan shared how challenging it was initially.

She described the move to the Netherlands as difficult due to the cultural differences, and arriving in the winter made it even harder as she had spent so much time outdoors in Ethiopia.

However, as she explained in her talk,

she decided to pursue running as it was free, and this became her outlet.

Hassan is known for racing vastly different distances, and has won Olympic medals across four different events.

In the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, she ran the 1,500m, 5,000m, and 10,000m races, where she won a bronze and two gold medals.

In Paris this summer, she ran the 5,000m, 10,000m, and marathon, winning two bronze medals and one gold.

Speaking about why she chooses to run such a range of races, she said: "I'm a very curious person - when I was a child, I wanted to be a scientist."

"I was always very curious," she continued. "Sometimes I run three hours just to see the end of the route. When I do one thing, I get bored, so I'm always thinking of something new. I really like a challenge. It motivates me."

In Paris, Hassan also made headlines by wearing a hijab to collect her gold medal for her record-breaking marathon race.

"My faith is a big part of me," she said. "I went to the Netherlands when I was 15, I had no family to guide me," Hassan explained. "As a child, you need someone to guide you. But I practiced my faith - this when I really started to practice my faith. Islam has shown me the route, the path."

Speaking about that podium moment, she said: "I was so proud. I am Muslim. I am an Olympic champion."

Hassan's Education City Speaker Series



talk followed the announcement of the QF's Creating Pathways Programme, of which she is ambassador.

The aim of the programme is to nurture sporting talent in girls aged 12-16, with track and field being the first of five elite sports it focuses on.

To register for the Women's Track and Field Programme, which will be rolled out this month, visit: <https://educationcity.qa/feed/creating-pathways-track-and-field>



## QU Health, Trinity College Dublin explore strengthening academic and research ties

Qatar University (QU)'s health sector and Trinity College Dublin have engaged in a high-level meeting aimed at strengthening academic and research ties.

Both institutions are renowned for their contributions to medical and health sciences and the collaboration discussions mark a new chapter of health profession education and research.

The QU was represented by Health and Medical Sciences vice-president Prof Asmaa al-Thani and the associate vice-presidents, directors and the deans of the health sector colleges.

Representing Trinity College Dublin were several senior leaders, including vice-president for global engagement Dr Emma Stokes and associate professor Gavin Dave.

Both the QU Health and Trinity College Dublin shared insights into their strategic priorities, research strengths and themes,



QU and Trinity College Dublin officials during the meeting.

as well as their approaches to health profession education.

This collaboration aims to foster innovation and drive partnerships in advancing healthcare solutions and health profession education, a statement said.

Dr Mohamed Ahmedna, associate

vice-president for strategy and quality at the QU Health, said: "This meeting builds on previous discussions initiated during a visit by Dr Asmaa last summer."

"We have identified significant overlaps between our health sector at the QU and the programmes offered at Trinity,"

he said. "These similarities pave the way for comprehensive partnerships that will benefit both institutions."

Dr Ahmedna stressed the potential for collaborative student training programmes and joint research projects between the two universities.

Dr Stokes spoke highly of Trinity College curriculum's successes, particularly in research outputs.

"Research is embedded in our curriculum, and our students are actively contributing to the field of population medicine," she noted.

Dr Stokes also discussed the expansion of Trinity's dental facilities, which will soon include 65 new dental chairs, providing a state-of-the-art environment for dental education.

"We are keen to explore areas where both universities can benefit from each other's strengths, particularly in research and teaching," she added.

Through partnerships that include collaborative opportunities, student exchanges, joint research initiatives, and shared clinical experiences, the two institutions are set to contribute to the future of global healthcare, the statement added.