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Prayer times

Fajr.....4:15; Zuhra.....11:40; Asr.....3:07;
Maghrib.....5:51; Isha.....7:21

Fasting times

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Imsak tomorrow4:03am

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March 30-April 7
are Eid holidays
for public sector

On the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, the Amiri Diwan announced that the Eid holidays will be as follows: Eid holiday for ministries, other government agencies and public institutions starts on Sunday, March 30, 2025 and ends on Monday, April 7, 2025. Employees are to resume work on Tuesday, April 8, 2025. As for Qatar Central Bank (QCB), banks, and financial institutions working under the supervision of QCB and Qatar Financial Markets Authority (QFMA), the QCB Governor shall specify the start and the end of the holiday. (QNA)

US lauds Qatar's role in establishing stability in region

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani on Monday received a phone call from US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Discussion during the call focused on the Qatari-US close strategic relations and ways to support and develop them, particularly enhancing joint co-ordination on regional and international issues. The US secretary of state expressed his country's gratitude to Qatar for facilitating the release of American citizen George Glezmann, who was detained in Afghanistan, commending Qatar's efforts to establish security, peace, and stability in Afghanistan and the region. (QNA)

Al-Sisi, Spanish PM call for Gaza truce

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez affirmed, in a phone call yesterday, their categorical rejection of the ongoing Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip. They stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire, an end to the Israeli ground incursion into the Strip, and the imperative of delivering humanitarian aid. (Page 7)

US VP travelling to Greenland on Friday

US Vice-President JD Vance said he would join his wife Usha on a trip Friday to Greenland, saying he wanted to check "security" in the autonomous Danish territory that Donald Trump has talked about taking over.

Old Doha Port to host first fishing exhibition

Old Doha Port's inaugural Fishing Exhibition is set to take place from April 9 to 12 at Mina Park, offering a modern tribute to that past and blending tradition and innovation in one immersive, community-first experience.

This new addition to the Port's cultural calendar pays homage to Qatar's deep-rooted fishing traditions while showcasing the latest innovations in the regional fishing industry.

Old Doha Port CEO engineer Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla said: "This event is more than a showcase; it's a celebration of community, craftsmanship, and culture, kicking off the start of the fishing season in the region.

Additionally, it supports local businesses and entrepreneurs by providing a platform to exchange experiences and showcase the latest innovations and products to consumers and fishing enthusiasts".



Visitors will experience a curated lineup of 30 exhibition stands, featuring a diverse selection of local and regional fishing equipment, gear brands, and industry retailers. Exhibitors include Qatar Fish, Alfardan Marine Services, Ghys Marine, Al Lingawi Trading, Doha Craft Marine, Blue Whale Marine, Beluga Marine, and other

leading brands in the maritime and fishing sector.

These stands will present everything from traditional tools to cutting-edge technology in marine equipment, illustrating how far the fishing sector has evolved while still honouring its origins. A celebration of community, craft, and cultural identity, Old Doha Port noted that the exhibition is envisioned to become an annual fixture, providing essential fishing equipment for seagoers and marking the start of the fishing season in the region.

The four-day event, set in Mina Park, south of Mina District, a waterfront green space within the Port known for its scenic charm and active programming, is free of charge and welcomes all ages to explore the culture and craft of fishing. The activities will continue daily in the evening during the exhibition from 4 to 9pm. **To Page 6**

QDB unveils specifics of 'investment guarantee'

Qatar Development Bank (QDB) has unveiled the specifics of its Partial Guarantee Investment (PGI) Programme, introduced in late 2024 to stimulate venture capital investments in Qatar.

The programme aims to reduce financial risks, encouraging both individual investors and investment groups to invest in tech start-ups.

Commenting on the initiative, QDB CEO Abdulrahman Hesham al-Sowaidi said the Partial Guarantee Investment Programme aligns with QDB's vision of building a diversified economy.

"Our goal is to strike a balance between fostering venture capital investments and mitigating the risks that may deter investors from engaging in venture capital activities in Qatar," he said.

"This programme supports the aspirations of the private sector and aligns with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy, which focuses on sustaining growth, advancing technological sectors, and empowering the private sector," he added.

The programme targets individ-



ual investors, investment groups, clubs, and local funds interested in investing in Qatari startups. Through its investment arm, QDB will provide partial guarantees to encourage eligible investors to expand their portfolios.

The guarantee is available based on specific eligibility criteria for both companies and investors. Eligible companies must be based in Qatar, ensuring neutrality in the investment process.

Those interested in applying for the programme or learning more about the process can visit the programme's page on www.qdb.qa/financing-and-funding/equity-and-investment/partial-guarantee-program

Ukraine, Russia agree on sea, energy ceasefire deal

Reuters
Washington/Moscow

The United States reached deals yesterday with Ukraine and Russia on a truce in the Black Sea and a pause in attacks on energy facilities, with Washington also pledging to push for the lifting of some financial sanctions against Moscow.

The separate agreements are the first formal commitments by the warring sides since the inauguration of Donald Trump, who is pushing for an end to the war and a rapid rapprochement with Moscow that has alarmed Kyiv and European countries.

The US agreement with Russia goes further than the agreement with Ukraine, with Washington committing to help seek the lifting of international sanctions on Russian agriculture and fertiliser exports, long a persistent Russian demand.

The Kremlin said this would mean restoring links between some Russian banks to the international financial system.

Kyiv and Moscow both said they would rely on Washington to enforce the deals.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the truce agreements would take effect immediately, and that if Russia violated them he would ask Trump to impose additional sanctions on Moscow



and provide more weapons for Ukraine.

"We have no faith in the Russians, but we will be constructive," he said.

He also said Ukraine had not signed on to the US offer to help relieve sanctions on Russia, which was in the US-Russia statement but not in the separate statement agreed with Ukraine.

"We believe that this is a weakening of position and sanctions," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said: "We will need clear guarantees. And given the sad experience of agreements with just Kyiv, the guarantees can only be the result of an order from Washington to Zelensky and his team to do one thing and not the other."

The talks in Saudi Arabia followed separate phone calls last week between Trump and the two presidents, Zelensky and Vladimir Putin.

Putin rejected Trump's proposal for a full ceasefire lasting 30 days, which Ukraine had previously endorsed.

New Israeli evacuation orders hit thousands of Gazans

Reuters
Gaza/Cairo

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 23 Palestinians yesterday, local health officials said, as the Israeli military expanded evacuation orders to tens of thousands of residents across the enclave.

The Israeli military resumed its campaign against resistance movement Hamas in Gaza a week ago, shattering a two-month ceasefire. Since then, nearly 700 people, mostly women and children, have been killed, Palestinian officials say.

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million population has already been displaced by the fighting multiple times dur-



Palestinians flee their homes, after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders, in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

ing nearly 18 months of war and is facing worsening shortages of food and water after Israel suspended aid deliveries earlier this month.

Yesterday, the Israeli army told residents in all northern border towns to evacuate, saying Palestinian rockets had been fired at Israel from the area.

The affected towns include Jabalia, Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and Shejaiya in Gaza City. Orders were also issued for areas in Khan Younis and Rafah in the south.

"For your safety, you must move immediately south to known shelters," the military said in its orders to residents in Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's historic refugee camps.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas, which accuses Israel of abandoning the January 19 ceasefire deal, said it was co-operating with a new effort, mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States, to restore calm and conclude the three-phase ceasefire agreement.

According to some Hamas sources, there has been no breakthrough.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said that 792 people had been killed in the week since Israel resumed bombardments on the Palestinian territory, including 62 in the past 24 hours.

The ministry said in a statement that it recorded "792 martyrs and 1,663 injuries" since strikes resumed, bringing the total death toll since the war started on October 7, 2023, to 50,144.



Eid Mubarak

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His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar on the occasion of

Eid Al-Fitr

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and
wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity
under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



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Despite repeated warnings, Islamophobia, discrimination against Muslims on the rise

Despite repeated warnings from the United Nations and its recognition as a violation of international law and human rights, Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims continue to rise in parts of the world.

Islamophobia, defined as fear or prejudice against Muslims leading to provocation, hostility, and incitement, occurs both in reality and online. Recent data from human rights organisations indicate record levels of anti-Muslim incidents and hate speech in several countries, despite official pledges to combat all forms of discrimination. The UN and human rights groups note a marked increase in Islamophobia since the escalation of Israeli aggression in Gaza on October 7, 2023.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, marking the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on March 15, highlighted the alarming rise in anti-Muslim bigotry worldwide.

He stated that the world is witnessing increased racial profiling, discriminatory policies, and outright violence against individuals and places of worship, and stressed the need for online platforms to combat hate speech and harassment.

In statements to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Assistant Professor at Qatar University's Department of International Affairs in the Faculty of Arts Dr Abdullah al-Otaibi explained that the rising anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly in Western nations, is influenced by complex structural and contextual factors.

He cited a historical Orientalist legacy that fostered negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims as cultural or political

"others," noting that these biases persist in mainstream discourse due to a lack of critical reassessment.

Dr al-Otaibi added that weak moderate media narratives and the exploitation of incidents by populist right-wing parties have accelerated the spread of Islamophobia. He also pointed to globalisation and immigration waves that have introduced Muslim communities with distinct identities to Western cities, fuelling cultural anxiety among some groups. This anxiety is exacerbated by the absence of effective cultural and educational integration programmes in many countries.

To combat these phenomena, Dr al-Otaibi emphasised the need for transformative strategies rather than defensive responses. Legal frameworks should be revised to explicitly address religious discrimination and criminalise profiling based on faith. Simultaneously, Muslim communities must be empowered to engage with decision-making, education, and media institutions as active contributors.

Addressing the potential escalation of anti-Muslim prejudice into direct violence, Dr al-Otaibi called for clear political will to combat hate crimes through strict laws and dedicated security units. Beyond security measures, he advocated for cultural and media reforms to challenge narratives that justify or ignore such violence. Interfaith alliances, particularly in Western countries, are vital to demonstrating solidarity against hate, with initiatives like exchange programmes in schools and places of worship promoting trust and breaking stereotypes.

Speaking to QNA, Assistant Professor

in the Department of International Affairs at Qatar University Dr Abdullah al-Otaibi emphasised the need for humanity to adopt several mechanisms to fight religious intolerance and discrimination, particularly against Islam and Muslims. He advocated for the establishment of a binding international charter prohibiting hate speech against religions and affirming freedom of belief within frameworks of societal responsibility.

Dr al-Otaibi suggested strengthening global religious dialogue through independent institutions funded by UN organisations or regional alliances. He also proposed empowering youth to lead initiatives that utilise modern tools such as digital media and interactive arts. Universities and research centres should play a role in providing a scientifically accurate portrayal of Islam to reach broader audiences.

Regarding social media's impact, Dr al-Otaibi warned that its algorithms often amplify divisive and provocative content, spreading anti-Muslim sentiment. However, he acknowledged its positive potential in offering marginalised communities platforms to raise awareness and build cross-border solidarity. He stressed the importance of promoting balanced and responsible use of these tools.

Dr al-Otaibi concluded by calling for international digital legislation that sets clear standards to combat hateful content and ensures major platforms respond seriously to complaints. He suggested Islamic nations form a regional digital alliance to develop counter-narratives highlighting Islamic cultures' positive aspects and documenting hate speech

practices. In a related discussion, Dr Ibrahim Ahmed al-Karoory, Professor at Lusail University's College of Law, spoke to QNA identifying factors contributing to rising Islamophobia. These include the deliberate misassociation of isolated violent acts with Islam, biased media coverage perpetuating negative stereotypes, and insufficient understanding of Islamic cultures. Immigration policies framing Muslim refugees as cultural threats also contribute to the issue.

Dr al-Karoory proposed combating intolerance through purposeful media campaigns, educational programmes, and laws promoting equality and banning racial discrimination. He emphasised regular monitoring and reporting on hate speech incidents globally to evaluate human rights conditions and highlight violations.

Many governments have already enacted measures to combat Islamophobia by introducing hate crime laws, prosecuting perpetrators, and organising public awareness campaigns to dispel misconceptions about Muslims and Islam.

Additionally, the 60 member states of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) adopted a UN General Assembly resolution designating March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

This resolution underscores that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation, or ethnic group. It calls for fostering global dialogue to promote tolerance and peace, rooted in respect for human rights and the diversity of beliefs. (QNA)

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Greece

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to Greece President Constantine Tassoulas on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani also sent a similar cable to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on the occasion.

Qatar condemns in the strongest terms Israeli occupation's bombing of town in Syria

The State of Qatar condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli occupation's bombing of the town of Koya, west of Daraa, in the Syrian Arab Republic, which resulted in deaths and injuries, considering it a dangerous escalation and a flagrant violation of international law. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that the continuous aggression by the occupation against Syria and Lebanon, along with its ongoing brutal war on Gaza, threatens to ignite a cycle of violence in the region. In this context, the ministry called on the international community to exert pressure on the occupation to comply with international legitimacy resolutions. The ministry reiterated the State of Qatar's full support for Syria's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and the aspirations of its brotherly people for security and stability. (QNA)

BilAraby gathers global innovators to explore knowledge frontiers in April

QNA
Doha

BilAraby, an initiative launched by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), has announced the speakers for its inaugural summit, set to take place on April 19-20 at the Education City Student Center.

The summit offers a comprehensive intellectual experience through 20 lectures and approximately 12 workshops covering various fields, including sustainability, artificial intelligence, medicine, programming, arts, the aesthetics of the Arabic language, and space

exploration. It will also feature exploratory sessions and panel discussions focusing on developing Arabic content and promoting innovation in the Arabic language, along with interactive spaces created in collaboration with 10 partners from across the Arab world.

The event is expected to attract more than 500 prominent figures from the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond, including top executives, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and innovators.

It provides an interactive environment with opportunities for direct networking through over 10 innovative pavilions offering live interactions with speakers and leading organisations in innovation.



Interested participants can register through the official website (www.bilaraby.qa), where Arab audiences from Qatar, the region, and around the world will have the chance to explore new and innovative ideas through the inaugural activities of the BilAraby summit.

The roster of speakers includes Abdul Rahman Sayidi from Mauritania, who will discuss how time can save people in a lecture titled 'The Rhythm of Work in Harmony with the Rhythm of Existence'; and Dr Amida Shaalan from Yemen, who will take participants

on a journey through 'Inscriptions and Artifacts'. Lina al-Thakir from Saudi Arabia will explore how she has developed a digital game that promotes the Arabic language in her lecture, 'A Game to Save Arabic'; while Amer Darwish from Palestine will speak about how to 'Spark Inspiration from Refugee Camps'.

Muhammad Rajab al-Dabi from Sudan will highlight 'How Books Became Entry Tickets to Events', while Diana al-Sindi, an Iraqi American, will discuss 'How to Bring Space Closer'. Sumaya al-Maimani, from Kuwait and India, will discuss her 'Two Dinars' initiative and how she hopes it can contribute to a better world, with Dr Laith Alawneh from Jordan speaking about 'The Medical Knowledge Revolution in Arabic'.

Dr Abdul Wahid Zainal from Qatar will discuss 'How the Youngsters Can Become Technology Developers, not Consumers'; Salam Katanani from Jordan will speak about why 'Reality is Just an Illusion'; Razan Zuaier from Palestine will focus on 'The Green Resistance Revolution'; and Taimur al-Hadidi from Egypt will demonstrate how to 'Turn Waste into Architectural Masterpieces'.

And Baraa al-Sarraj from Syria will share his inspiring story, 'From the Darkness of Prison to the Light of Knowledge', while Shawk al-Alawi from Bahrain will explore 'The Identity of Professions'.

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QT, Katara Hospitality honour Gerhard Foltin

Qatar Tourism (QT) and Katara Hospitality honoured Gerhard Foltin, a hospitality pioneer who helped shape Qatar's luxury tourism sector, with a special Suhoor recognising his five decades of contributions, including founding the iconic Sheraton Grand Doha.

Foltin first arrived in Doha in 1977 to manage the iconic Doha Club. In 1982, he became the founding general manager of the Sheraton Grand Doha, where he played a key role in its planning and design. With a career spanning more than five decades, his visionary leadership has left a lasting impact on the growth and evolution of Qatar's hospitality landscape, a statement said.

The event was held at Sheraton Grand Doha Hotel in the presence of QT chairman HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, and Katara Hospitality CEO Nasser Matar al-Kawari, along with key industry figures. Foltin expressed his appreciation for the recognition extended to him by QT and Katara Hospitality. Al-Kharji thanked Foltin for his contributions, saying: "Gerhard Foltin's leadership helped shape Qatar's hospitality sector and set new standards of excellence."

Al-Kawari said: "At Katara Hospitality, we take immense pride in celebrating



Gerhard Foltin flanked by HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji and Nasser Matar al-Kawari at the honorary Suhoor.

the individuals who have been part of our journey – those whose vision, hard work, and commitment have helped shape Qatar's hospitality landscape. It is through such remarkable contributions that we continue our pursuit of excel-

lence, I extend our deepest gratitude to Foltin for his invaluable contributions.

"His legacy will continue to inspire us as we move forward, honouring the past while shaping the future of hospitality in Qatar".

NCSA holds awareness workshop for students with disabilities

QNA

Doha

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA)'s National Cyber Security Academy held awareness-raising workshops in several schools for persons with disabilities, as part of its Cyber Eco project for the academic years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

The NCSA intended to

reach out to a variety of student categories to provide them with integrated cyber awareness and build a secure community in terms of cybersecurity. The awareness-raising workshops were primarily devoted to four public schools for persons with disabilities, through which training tools were approved based on the needs of the targeted category, with the workshops tackling diverse topics



such as the safe use of the internet and technological applications.

Delivered by in-the-know trainers who mastered this domain, the workshops reviewed the global advancements in the field of cybersecurity, as well as the provision of advanced information about phishing and spoofing attacks, online fraud, the use of web bots, content security policy, and so forth.

Director of the National Cyber Excellence Department at NCSA, Dala al-Aqidi, stated that the agency strives to strengthen students' capabilities, stemming from its recognition of the centrality of this segment to the national societal fabric. She added that the agency works to bolster their capabilities in knowledge, awareness, and training on the safe use of technology, in addition to including this segment into daily digital activities to provide maximum benefits while simultaneously safeguarding

privacy and digital security.

NCSA intends to increase the number of targeted schools and intensify field trips, awareness-raising workshops and educational stages for persons with disabilities in the upcoming period, al-Aqidi highlighted.

Al-Aqidi emphasised that the academy's various programmes seek to promote the overall cyber awareness at the community level, including students in schools and universities, women, families, dignitaries, and the expatriate workforce.

In addition, the NCSA has been committed to providing integrated educational, training, and recreational experiences to students through a wide variety of innovative tools that combine the fundamentals of education with the experiences of recreation, thereby enhancing the anticipated impact of content suitable for the specific age characteristics of students at these educational stages.

The NCSA provided an array of tools that contribute to enhancing students' capabilities, foremost of which were training toolkits that addressed critical cyber topics, guidelines for teachers and parents, a comprehensive guide for digital safety, as well as the implementation of cyber games, commemorative gifts, and graduation projects presented by students at the conclusion of the project. (QNA)

QRCS expands humanitarian efforts

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) is expanding its humanitarian efforts, launching projects to provide access to safe water and sanitation for more than 438,000 people.

QRCS is also addressing the needs of orphans, older persons, and underserved communities in multiple countries, a statement said yesterday.

The focus is on digging wells, installing water pumps, tanks, pipelines, and solar panels; and deploying water tankers to serve disadvantaged communities and improve their living and health conditions.

According to QRCS' Projects Guide 2025, there are 10 Watsan, or 'Access to Safe Water and Sanitation' projects to be implemented for the benefit of 438,510 people in Gaza, Syria, Yemen, Niger, Somalia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Mauritania, at a cost of over QR13mn.

Pegged at QR11.6mn, QRCS plans to launch 11 multi-sector projects for 45,100 beneficiaries in Syria, Yemen, Niger, Afghanistan, Somalia, Lebanon, and Jordan. These projects involve clothing for poor families, support for orphans, food and care for older persons, and provision of school bags and stationery for poor students.

Looking back at the results of 2024, QRCS implemented many Watsan projects to serve 562,854 people, spending QR12,148,221. At a cost of QR30,987,435, multi-sector projects targeted 2,504,253 people.

The benevolent donors of Qatar are invited to donate to Watsan and multi-sector projects,



by visiting QRCS' website (www.qrcs.qa) or mobile app (QRCS); contacting the call centre (44027777), donor service (66666364), or home donation collection (33998898); send an SMS with the code "1" to 92216 (QR 100), 92552 (QR 250), 92869 (QR 350), 92092 (QR 500), and 92246 (QR 1,000); or make a bank transfer to any of the following accounts: QIB (IBAN: QA51QISB00000000011057190014), QIIB (IBAN: QA66QIIB00000000011112666003), Al-Rayyan Bank (IBAN: QA18MAFR00000000011199980003), QNB (IBAN: QA21QNBA000000000850020196062), or Dukhan Bank (IBAN: QA-37BRWA000000000200000094340).



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Awqaf Inaugurates new project in Muaither

The General Directorate of Endowments of the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) has inaugurated a new endowment project in Muaither, comprising three residential villas specifically designed based on highest architectural standards. The move underscores Awqaf's commitment to establishing enduring projects that support the real estate sector and providing housing solutions that meet the community's needs.

Director-General of the General Directorate of Endowments Eng Hassan Abdullah al-Marzouqi affirmed that the project is an adjunct to the endowment investment projects that generate sustainable returns in support of endowment programmes and enhance the societal advancement.

The project fuses the epochal design with carefully learned spaces and sophisticated facilities, positioning itself as an integrated model that meets the needs of contemporary families and offers an integrated housing environment that bolsters life quality, added al-Marzouqi. He explained that the General Directorate of Endowments operates based on a strategic vision that aims to maximise the utmost utilisation of endowment assets through meticulously learned investments that achieve best added value for the community and contribute to achieving sustainable development.



QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (USD)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/EPM/6980/25 FRONT END ENGINEERING DESIGN (FEED) STUDY FOR METERING SYSTEMS UPGRADE (MSU) PROJECT	26/03/2025 to 22/04/2025	0	250,000	06/05/2025

Scope of Work:

The EPC Contractor's scope primarily includes Front End Engineering Design (FEED) Study for Metering Systems Upgrade (MSU) Project for QatarEnergy LNG.

The intent of this Project is to implement an optimized and sustainable solution that comply/address:

1. The metering control system and its associated network infrastructure shall comply with Industrial Control System (ICS), QatarEnergy Hydrocarbons Measurement Guidelines (HMG) and MCIT (Ministry of Communications & Information Technology).
2. To address existing deficiencies in the measurement of non-LNG products and the calculation of state royalty payments for Common Condensate Storage & Loading (CCSL) rundown, Common Liquified Petroleum Gas (CLPG) rundown, and CLPG berth loading metering systems.
3. Contractor shall perform a detailed study on Company's selected option and develop a FEED Package along with an EPC scope of work. This will be used by Company for EPC tendering and will form basis of the EPC work to be performed.

Important Note:

- The participation is encouraged from competent, qualified, and experienced contractor, who has direct similar experience (in past/present) of FEED Study for Metering Systems Upgrade (MSU) Project.
- The Tenderer must have experience in handling minimum Five (5) LNG and /or Oil & Gas Facility Brownfield projects of comparable magnitude and complexity (multi-disciplines)

Bid Validity: Bid Offer 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/>



Tender - Waseef

Waseef Asset Management (Waseef) would like to invite competent Service Providers for the below Open Tenders:

Tender Number	Subject	Bid Bond (QAR)	Non-refundable Tender Fee (QAR)	Bid Submission Closing Date
GTC/wSF/SMDM/IPCCTV/08/2025	TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF DESIGN & BUILT, INSTALLATION, TESTING, COMMISSIONING & MOI-SSD HANDINGOVER OF IPCCTV SYSTEM FOR SOUQ MESAIEED AND DUNES MALL	90,000	2,500	April 30, 2025
GTC/wSF/BV/IPCCTV/09/2025	TENDER FOR THE DESIGN, UPGRADE, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF CAMERAS, VMS, SERVER, STORAGE AND MOI CERTIFICATE RENEWAL FOR BARWA VILLAGE PROJECT	37,000	2,000	April 30, 2025
GTC/wSF/DM/FAS/10/2025	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM IN LINE WITH THE NEW DESIGN DRAWINGS AND QATAR CIVIL DEFENCE (QCDD) REGULATIONS FOR DUNES MALL	10,000	500	April 30, 2025
GTC/wSF/BABCF/VM/11/2025	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF KAHRAMAA REGISTERED KWH AND WATER METERS WITH ACTIVATION AND HANDOVER TO THE OWNER FOR COMMERCIAL UNITS IN BARWA AL BARAHA CENTRAL FACILITY PROJECT	10,000	500	April 30, 2025
GTC/wSF/AKC/DI/12/2025	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF UNDERGROUND DI GATE VALVES AND DI FLOAT VALVES FOR PORTABLE WATER NETWORK AT AL KHOR COMMUNITY PROJECT	21,000	500	April 30, 2025
GTC/wSF/BABLC/FRD/13/2025	TENDER FOR THE REMOVAL OF DAMAGE FIRE RATED DOORS, SUPPLY & INSTALLATIONS OF NEW FIRE RATED DOORS, FRAMES AND ITS ACCESSORIES AT BARWA AL BARAHA LABOR CAMP	18,000	500	May 1, 2025
GTC/wSF/AC/14/2025	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF WINDOW AND SPLIT AIR CONDITIONER UNITS FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS MANAGED BY WASEEF	60,000	2,000	May 1, 2025
GTC/wSF/AKC/ARR/15/2025	TENDER FOR THE ASPHALT ROAD REPAIRING WORKS & THERMOPLASTIC ROAD MARKING WORKS AT AL KHOR COMMUNITY PROJECT	16,000	500	May 1, 2025
GTC/wSF/AKC/RTS/16/2025	TENDER FOR FABRICATION, SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF ROAD TRAFFIC SIGNAGES & BUILDING NUMBER PLATES AT AL KHOR COMMUNITY PROJECT	9,000	500	May 1, 2025

The Tender Document will be available from March 26, 2025 onwards upon submission of the below documentation to tender@waseef.qa

To collect please provide the following:

1. Authorization Letter on Company letterhead, copy of Commercial Registration and valid identification of the representative.
2. Bank deposit slip carrying tender number and subject details. Tender fee shall be deposited to Account Name - Waseef Asset Management Co. Account Number 0002-105222-200 with Masraf Al Rayan Bank.

Please note the following:

1. Bidders should submit a bid bond issued by a bank operating in the State of Qatar and valid for 120 days from the closing date.
2. Technical and Commercial offers must be submitted in separate sealed envelopes and delivered to the below-mentioned address: GTC Secretary, 10th floor, Waseef Head Office, Al Owainia Tower, Old Salata, Museum Park Street, Doha, Qatar.



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Eid Mubarak

We extend our heartiest greetings to

His Highness
Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar

His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar on the occasion of

Eid Al-Fitr

We hope for more returns of this memorable occasion and
wish that Qatar always enjoys security, welfare and prosperity
under the wise leadership of His Highness The Amir



Ali Bin Ali
HOLDING



Doha to emerge as vibrant artistic hub in Spring 2025

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Doha is set to become a hub for diverse artistic expression in Spring 2025 with a programme of exhibitions from Qatar Museums (QM), including the Tasweer Photo Festival and a landmark show of Latin American art.

In its newsletter, QM noted that one of the season's highlights is the 3rd edition of Tasweer Photo Festival Qatar, the premier photography biennial, opening on April 20.

According to QM, this year's festival explores the profound theme of belonging, showcasing a powerful collection of images through five exhibitions across five locations in Doha. The anchor exhibition, "To Look at the Sea is to Become What One Is," will be housed at the Fire Station: Artists in Residence.

Tasweer 2025 will also feature works from photographers from West Asia and North Africa through exhibitions including "Daoud Aouad Syad, Territories of the Instant," and "Obliteration – Surviving the Inferno: Gaza's Battle for Existence".

QM said the winners of the 2023 and 2024 Tasweer Awards will be showcased, in addition to hosting symposia, masterclasses, and workshops, offering photographers opportunities for learning and growth. Exhibitions will run from April 20 to June 20, with "Daoud Aouad Syad" at Mathaf extending to July 10. The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) will present 'Latinoamericano', a groundbreaking exhibition featuring modern and contemporary Latin American art from the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Malba) collection.

This, QM added, marks the first large-scale presentation of Latin American art in the West Asia and North Africa region, offering a unique opportunity to explore the vibrant and diverse artistic landscape of the continent.



A vibrant Spring 2025 exhibition season.

The QM programme offers a diverse range of experiences for art lovers such as the "Qatar: Close to my Soul" at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. This survey exhibition showcases the works of Qatari artists from various generations, offering insights into the artistic styles and trends that have shaped the nation's creative identity. Mathaf will also feature "Wafa al-Hamad: Sites of Imagination," displaying works from the Mathaf Permanent Collection. The Museum of Islamic Art will present "A Seat at the Table: Food & Feasting in the Islamic World," while the future Qatar Auto Museum will showcase "Ultraleggera: A Design Journey with Marcella Gandini Between Italy and Qatar". QM announced the 2nd edition of the Design Doha Biennale, set to run from April 16 to June 30. Building on the success of its 2024 debut, the 2026 biennale promises to further expand Doha's role as a global design hub.

Design Doha launched an Exhibition Open Call, inviting curators from the Mena region and beyond to contribute to the biennale's narrative. The submission deadline for the open call is May 13.

HMC's UCC marks five years of service

The Urgent Consultation Center (UCC) at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has marked five years of operation, having fielded more than 800,000 calls since its inception.

Launched in 2020 to ensure patients had access to essential services during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Urgent Consultation Center continues to provide fast and easy access to essential healthcare services for patients. The telephone-based UCC allows patients to speak to healthcare professionals to obtain appropriate diagnoses. Calls are triaged by a doctor to determine which specialty the patient should be referred to.

While the UCC is not a substitute for regular follow-up appointments in outpatient clinics, it serves as a valuable support system for managing urgent medical needs between scheduled visits.

It ensures that patients receive timely medical advice, prescription refills, discussion of investigation results, and necessary



Dr Khalid al-Rumaihi

referrals to OPD, PHCC, or the emergency department without unnecessary delays.

The service covers 14 specialties including: urology, general medicine, cardiology, geriatric medicine, pain management, neurology, dermatology, ENT, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, vascular surgery, neurosurgery, oncology/haematology and dietetics.

Dr Khalid al-Rumaihi, head of urology at HMC and lead of the UCC said over the course of its

five years, the service had a 97% response rate to patients calls.

"This service has been instrumental in providing accessible and timely healthcare to our community," Dr al-Rumaihi said.

"In the past five years, we have witnessed firsthand the positive impact it has had on patient experience and the efficiency of our healthcare system. The UCC offers patients the opportunity to speak with highly qualified medical professionals who can assess their symptoms, provide immediate advice, and direct them to the appropriate level of care."

"The service has also empowered patients to make informed decisions about their health and, has provided a convenient way to access key services, which has had significantly reduced the need for them to visit hospital."

The UCC operates from 8am to 3pm Sunday to Thursday.

Patients can access the service by calling Qatar's unified health sector hotline on 16000 and selecting option three for urgent medical consultations.

providing a unique experience for guests.

The Fishing Competition will be a key highlight and event, taking place on April 11-12, building on the success of last year's contest. It invites professionals and hobbyists to cast their lines into the surrounding waters, with all participants departing directly from various docks and ports across the country.

The exhibition offers a variety of food and beverage offerings that will add a celebratory touch, highlighting local dishes and

Old Doha Port to host first fishing expo

From Page 1

The exhibition will include a wide variety of accompanying events and live performances, such as demonstrations by traditional craftsmen, showcasing skills such as net making and rope weaving associated with maritime life. A traditional folk maritime band will perform throughout the exhibition,

bringing the rhythm of Qatar's coastal heritage to life. The event will also feature hands-on activations and storytelling spaces that allow visitors, especially children, to learn about the country's seafaring past in fun, engaging ways.

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Safari hosts prize ceremony for 'Win 25 Toyota Raize Cars' promo



Safari, a leading retail hypermarket group in Qatar, hosted the prize handover ceremony for the first lucky draw of its grand 'Win 25 Toyota Raize Cars' mega promotion at Safari Mall.

The winners, Soail Ahmad Ansari, Sobuj Manik, Thomas Mathew, and Md Arifur Rahman Bhuyan, received the keys to their brand-new Toyota Raize cars. Safari's management team congratulated the winners and expressed their gratitude to the customers for their overwhelming participation.

A Safari representative stated: "We are thrilled

to reward our valued customers through this exciting promotion. With more lucky draws to come, we encourage everyone to continue shopping and participating for their chance to win."

The 'Win 25 Toyota Raize Cars' promotion continues, with a total of six lucky draws, each awarding four Toyota Raize cars to lucky winners. The second lucky draw is set to take place on April 27. Customers can participate by making a purchase for QR50 or more from any Safari outlet.

Qatar gets ready to host diverse events in April

Qatar's April 2025 event calendar is packed with diverse offerings, from Eid al-Fitr celebrations and MotoGP to film festivals, sustainability expos, and concerts by international stars like Ed Sheeran, promising a vibrant month for residents and visitors.

To celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Qatar will host a range of special events, including the prominent Lusail Sky Festival at Al Saad Plaza in Lusail City from April 3-5.

This event will feature aerial displays, including acrobatic aircraft formations, drone parades, glider performances, laser displays, and fireworks, creating a uniquely festive atmosphere.

Lagoona Mall is set to offer children's activities and workshops from March 30 to April 4. Simultaneously, from March 30 to April 5, Mall of Qatar will present "A Wonderland of Soapy Bubbles".

At Place Vendome Mall, children can immerse themselves in the Smurf-tastic Fair from March 31 to April 15, while Doha Quest will offer festive attractions for all ages from April 1-5.

The Lusail International Circuit presents the 2025 MotoGP Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar from April 11 to 13. Also, Qatar Airways Premier Padel Tour 2025 will take place from April 15.

At the Aspire Dome, the 17th Artistic Gymnastics World Cup - Taishan will run from April 16 to 19. Additional sporting highlights include the Al Maha Island Aquathlon and the Al Zubarah Race on April 19, followed by the Beach Sports Festival at Sand Court in Aspire Park from April 20 to 26.

Qatar will host the Qumra 2025 at Museum of Islamic Art from April 4 to 9 while the Bila-Baray Summit will take place from April 19 to 20 at Multaqa - Education City Students Centre.

From April 22 to 25, the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre will welcome EcoGreen Expo, alongside the 2nd Edition of the Earthna Summit for a Sustainable Future on April 22-23. Other major events include the 4th edition of Habb Al Saad Exhibition from April 25 to 29, and the Build Your House 2025 Exhibition, running from April 28 to May 1.

On April 4, a concert featuring Abdulaziz al-Duwaihi and Hisham Mahrous, promising a vibrant evening of music and entertainment will take place at U Arena.

TUL8TE concert will also take place at Doha Golf Club on April 4.

From April 3 to 12, the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) will present the Disney-inspired musical theatre produc-



tion The Disney Musical Show: The Magic Box. Other musical highlights include Candlelight: Mozart & Chopin Classics on April 11, and Bollywood sensation Anirudh's Hukum World Tour concert on the same day.

Comedy fans can enjoy the 3a Ka3ba improve comedy show on April 26, while classical music lovers can experience the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of Mahler's Fifth Symphony on the same evening.

Rounding off the month, Ed Sheeran will take the stage at Lusail Multipurpose Hall on April 30, as part of his highly anticipated world tour.

Ministry recalls Honda models

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI), in co-operation with Damasco (Doha Marketing Services Company), has announced the recall of Honda Civic, CRV, Civic Type-R, and Z-RV, 2022-2024 models, due to possibility of a decrease in the amount of grease in the mesh gear of the steering gearbox which may cause the steering operation to produce noise or become stuck.

The ministry said the recall campaign comes within the framework of its ongoing efforts to protect consumers and to ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The ministry has urged all consumers to report any violations or breaches by contacting the Consumer Protection and Combating Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: Call Centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)

Al Jazeera Media Institute's 'Learn Arabic' initiative witnesses 59% growth

The Interactive Arabic Courses Programme, offered by the Al Jazeera Media Institute's "Learn Arabic" initiative, witnessed significant growth in 2024.

It was marked by the introduction of a variety of new courses carefully designed to precisely meet learners' needs.

This development included significant improvements to student placement mechanisms, which contributed to enhancing the learning experience and ensuring optimal academic outcomes.

In 2024, 27 courses were held, a 59% increase compared to 2023. These courses were distributed across the winter, spring, summer, and fall semesters.

This allowed students greater flexibility in choosing dates that fit



their personal schedules. New specialised courses were also launched in fields such as Arabic for economics, politics, and the media, in order to meet the needs of students

seeking to learn Arabic for specific professional and academic purposes. This provided them with the opportunity to acquire specialised language skills.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

VCUarts Qatar fêtes winners of High School Fine Art Awards

VCUarts Qatar, in partnership with the Division of Art and Theatre at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), has announced the winners of the 2024-2025 High School Fine Art Awards.

This year's competition was titled, "God is Beautiful and Loves Beauty": A Dialogue on the Concept of Beauty in Arab and Islamic Culture. The Fine Art Awards recognise high school students seeking to explore beauty as it is expressed in nature, Islamic art, ethics, and the pursuit of knowledge.

VCUarts Qatar dean, Amir Berbić said: "This partnership represents an exciting step forward in nurturing the artistic talents of the next generation of art and design students here in Qatar."

The students, teachers, families, and friends were also welcomed and congratulated by Hemayat al-Kaabi, head of the Visual, Literary, and Drama Section, Department of Educational Supervision, MoEHE, and Dr Cherif Amor, associate dean



VCUarts Qatar dean Amir Berbić

for Academic Affairs and professor at VCUarts Qatar. The awards were announced by Dr Aissa Deebi, director of the Painting + Printmaking department at VCUarts Qatar and Dr Amro Abouelhoda, specialist, Visual Education Standards, Office of The Assistant

Undersecretary For Educational Affairs. Winning artworks are open to the public at the Saffron Hall at VCUarts Qatar, until April 3. The exhibition is open Saturday through Thursday, from 9am to 5pm, and closed on Fridays and public holidays.



A winner receiving the award.



Mangrove planting on Qetaifan Island North

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has announced its collaboration with Qetaifan Projects to implement an innovative environmental project that involves planting 1,000 seedlings of native mangrove trees on Qetaifan Island North in Lusail City.

Considered a first-of-its-kind in Qatar, the project incorporates mangrove trees as a key element in landscape design, adding a unique environmental and aesthetic dimension. Youssef al-Hamar, director of the Department of Wildlife Plant Development at the Ministry, stressed that the project reflects the ministry's commitment to promoting sustainable environmental practices. It aligns with efforts to achieve the goals of sustainable development and Qatar National Vision 2030.

The official noted that planting native mangrove trees on Qetaifan Island is



an environmental milestone in Qatar, as these trees are being utilised for the first time in a functional and aesthetic manner. Besides, this initiative enhances the integration of environmental solutions with sustainable urban planning.

Adel al-Yafei explained that the project will contribute to improving the quality of the coastal environment through expanding green spaces and enhancing biodiversity.

It will provide natural habitats for marine life and birds while raising community awareness about the importance of innovative environmental solutions. This initiative sets a pioneering model for integrating urban planning with environmental sustainability.

ecological benefits. This initiative is part of a series of environmental projects implemented by the ministry in collaboration with both the public and private sectors.

Al-Yafei explained that the project aims to support the coastal environment, enhance ecological balance, and utilise natural resources for the rehabilitation of coastal areas in innovative ways. In addition, it seeks to raise community awareness about the vital role of mangrove trees as an effective environmental solution.

He noted that mangroves help absorb carbon, improve air quality, protect coastlines from erosion, and provide habitat for marine organisms and migratory birds.

This project is part of the ongoing collaboration between the Department of Wildlife Plant Development, Qetaifan Projects, and the Earthna Centre for a Sustainable Future.

Kia Qatar hosts Suhoor for exemplary Fleet Customers



Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Co. (AMTC), exclusive distributor of Kia in Qatar, recently held a private Suhoor event for their select corporate customers. The event was held in the intimate and elegant setting of the Jardin restaurant in the Banyan Tree Doha at La Cigale Mashaireb hotel in the heart of the city.

The highlight of the night was the special recognition ceremony wherein plaques of appreciation were awarded to the aforementioned companies one by one by Mohammed Maali, AMTC's Chief Executive Officer.

In a statement, Hossam Abu Shadi, Kia Qatar Brand Director, remarked: "Our corporate customers play a vital role in our success, and this event is a small token of our appreciation for their trust and continued partnership. Ramadan is a time of gratitude and fellowship, and we are honored to celebrate this special occasion with our esteemed clients."

The guests were lavished with a Suhoor buffet featuring a selection of Arabic, Mediterranean and other international cuisine. Traditional Ramadan beverages, Shisha, and other delicacies as well as live oud performance enhanced the spirit of fellowship. The evening was a wonderful opportunity for industry leaders and decision-makers to connect in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere with the Kia Qatar team.

As Kia Qatar continues to set high standards in customer care and dedication to provide mobility solutions, the event was a testament to the brand's ongoing commitment to nurture business relationships founded on mutual success and trust.



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UDST, Qatar Charity provide meals to campus workers

In the spirit of Ramadan, the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), in collaboration with its Qatari Student Association and Qatar Charity (QC), has once again distributed Iftar meals to workers on campus.

This year, the university provided 500 meals to individuals across various divisions, including safety and security, housekeeping, maintenance, and others.

Students played a vital role in the initiative, organising and distributing meals within the university cafeterias.

The event not only promoted a sense of community but also reinforced the core values of Ramadan, which include kindness, generosity, and giving back.

"Education extends beyond the classroom; we aim to instil in our students a strong sense of social responsibility and empathy," said



UDST president Dr Salem Al-Naemi. "Ramadan is a time of reflection and unity, and we encourage our students to actively participate in community initiatives that create a lasting impact."

For many shift workers, Iftar can be a challenging time as they are unable to break their fast with their families.

Through this initiative, the UDST reaffirms its appreciation for the workers who contribute to campus life and ensures they feel valued as part of the university community.

QC chief local programmes officer Faisal Rashid AlFehaida expressed his support for the collaboration.

"Iftar represents a time of unity and compassion, and we are pleased to partner once again with the University of Doha for Science and Technology in this initiative," he said. "The UDST's commitment to social responsibility and volunteerism continues to inspire its students and the wider community."

AlFehaida further encouraged other institutions and companies to embrace similar charitable initiatives, emphasising the importance of ensuring that support reaches as many workers and low-income individuals as possible within the country.



Qatar Charity's 'Mobile Iftar' project continues

Qatar Charity (QC) continues its Ramadan campaign "Giving Lives On" by implementing its "Mobile Iftar for Workers" project, thanks to the generous support of donors in Qatar.

This initiative provides Iftar meals to farm workers at their residences and workplaces across eight areas within Qatar.

From the first day of Ramadan until its end, the project provides 4,000 daily Iftar meals to farm workers in Al Sheehaniya, Al Khurayb, Al Khor, Al Wakrah, Simsimsim, Al-Jumayliyah, and Abu Nakhla, as well as to workers at Ruwais Port.

By the end of Ramadan, the project aims to have provided a total of 120,000 meals.

The QC distributes the Iftar meals directly to the workers' residences and workplaces, aiming to ease the burden on them, saving them time and effort after a long day's work.

The workers who benefit from the project have expressed their thanks, saying that the QC has been helping them for years.

They shared that the meals significantly reduce the difficulty of preparing Iftar and allowing them to experience the kindness and support of the Qatari community.

The QC's "Giving Lives On" campaign also takes place abroad.

Awqaf urges believers to pay Zakat al-Fitr early

The Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf) has urged the believers to pay Zakat al-Fitr.

In a video published by the Zakat Affairs Department of Awqaf, preacher Sheikh Thabet al-Qahtani said Zakat al-Fitr is an obligatory religious duty for Muslims.

"It's a purification from idle talk and foul language and a source of food for the poor," he said, encouraging the believers to pay Zakat al-Fitr before going to Eid al-Fitr prayers.

Awqaf earlier announced the value of Zakat al-Fitr for this year in Qatar to be 2.5kg of rice, which is equivalent to QR15.

This estimation is based on the Shariah rulings outlined in the noble Sunnah and corresponds to the staple diet of the country's residents.

The amount was set according to a study con-

ducted by the department on the average price of rice in local markets.

Awqaf has said that the primary form of Zakat al-Fitr is food, as practiced during the Prophet (peace be upon him)'s time.

It has also urged all Muslims to expedite the payment of Zakat al-Fitr early to allow the Zakat Affairs Department to distribute it as food to the needy within Qatar at the appropriate time while fulfilling its purpose of aiding the poor and bringing them joy on the Eid.

Zakat can be paid through the Zakat Affairs Department's website <https://zf.org.qa/QibOnlinePay/Pay?cat=zakatfitr> and smartphone applications available for Android and iOS devices.

It can also be paid by sending SMS Z in English or letter Za in Arabic to 92229 for Ooredoo users and 97779 for Vodafone users.

MoI ready to ensure safe holidays

All security and service departments at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) have finalised their preparations to welcome Eid al-Fitr, ensuring comfort and reassurance for all residents of Qatar to celebrate the joyous occasion.

Local Arabic daily *Arrayah* reported that a technical co-ordination meeting was held recently at the National Command Centre (NCC) to discuss the security plan for the Ministry of Interior's departments, as well as the support and reinforcement plans from the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) during Eid al-Fitr holiday to further enhance security.

At the NCC, the operational system remains on high alert, ready to fulfil its duties 24/7 throughout the Eid holiday.

Highly trained personnel operate in the

main operations room of the Command and Control Department, which includes all relevant entities responsible for responding to emergency reports received from the Emergency Services Room (999) and the Emergency Unit for the Deaf (992).

Advanced technological systems are used to manage various incidents and crises, monitor and track their outcomes, and ensure rapid response.

The General Directorate of Coastal Security has developed a plan to intensify marine patrols due to the increased number of sea-goers, ensuring their safety.

The directorate's marine patrols operate around the clock to provide necessary assistance to sea-goers, including fishermen, tourists, and those engaging in recreational activities such as water sports.

The Rescue Police (Al Fazaa) are making preparations by increasing the number of patrols across the country, particularly on highways experiencing heavy traffic, to ensure that everyone enjoys Eid safely.

Al Fazaa patrols are deployed to prevent accidents or violations that may disturb public peace.

The department's plan includes positioning patrols near public parks, markets, shopping malls, and tourist attractions, as well as securing prayer areas and mosques designated for Eid al-Fitr prayers.

Additionally, patrols will be stationed in various areas to maintain security and provide assistance.

The Traffic Patrols and Investigation Department of the General Directorate of Traffic has completed all preparations to

ensure traffic flow during Eid al-Fitr.

A comprehensive plan has been developed to increase the presence of patrols and traffic officers across the country, especially near mosques and Eid prayer sites, within residential neighbourhoods, and around commercial complexes, commercial streets, and markets.

On the morning of Eid al-Fitr, efforts will focus on managing traffic at the busiest Eid prayer locations to prevent congestion.

Patrols will be present throughout the day on highways and major roads.

In the evening, patrols and traffic officers will be stationed at event venues associated with Eid celebrations and in areas with high public turnout, such as the Corniche, The Pearl Island and other popular destinations.



Pakistan embassy organises community Iftar and dinner

The embassy of Pakistan in Doha organised a community Iftar and dinner event on March 23 to commemorate Pakistan Day, a statement said, bringing together members of the Pakistani community in Qatar.

Ambassador Muhammad Aamer congratulated the community on Pakistan Day and highlighted the historical significance of March 23, 1940 – the day the Lahore Resolution was passed, laying the foundation for the creation of Pakistan.

He paid tribute to the founding fathers of the nation and em-

phasised upholding the values of unity, faith, and discipline.

Aamer also appreciated the contributions of the Pakistani community in Qatar, praising their hard work, dedication, and role in strengthening the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and Qatar.

The event was attended by many Pakistanis working in the private and public sectors of Qatar and their families.

The programme featured a special prayer for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, followed by Iftar and dinner.



'Musahar' at Katara evokes Ramadan atmosphere of old

Katara – the Cultural Village continues to enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the holy month of Ramadan through a series of heritage events that revive popular heritage.

The most prominent event is the "Musahar Katara" event, which takes visitors on a journey through time to relive one of the oldest Ramadan customs rooted in Islamic societies.

In the alleys of "Freej Katara", a "Musahar" roams the streets, dressed in traditional attire and carrying his distinctive drum.

He awakens fasting people for Suhoor with his voice, just as in ancient times.

This event is part of Katara's efforts to preserve heritage and introduce new generations to authentic Ramadan customs.

"Freej Katara" is one of Doha's most prominent Ramadan destinations, offering visitors a unique experience that reflects the heritage character of old Qatari neighbourhoods.

Other Ramadan activities at Katara include Ramadan Majlis, religious lectures, and heritage competitions, all of which aim to enhance the spirit of the holy month and convey ancient societal values in an engaging, interactive manner.

Through these events, Katara affirms its commitment to strengthening Qatar's cultural and heritage identity, and highlights Ramadan values that foster a spirit of cohesion and communication among community members, in an atmosphere brimming with warmth and harmony.



Ooredoo wraps up numerous Ramadan 2025 initiatives

Ooredoo Qatar has concluded its "Experience More this Ramadan with Ooredoo" campaign.

As the official partner of Rafeeq Al Khair, Ooredoo distributed essential food baskets and Iftar meals.

The initiative included Iftar distributions at Al Duhail Sports Club, in collaboration with the Rafeeq Al Khair team and Shabab Lad3m Platform.

Ooredoo supported Al Shafallah Centre for People with Disabilities, creating a memorable Garangao celebration for individuals with disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

The company further embraced cultural traditions by participating in Garangao festivities at Boulehdan Museum, in collaboration with Rafeeq Al Khair, fostering connections through shared heritage.

Ooredoo served as the platinum sponsor of the DOOH Holy Qur'an Competition, an initiative recognising talented Qur'anic reciters with prizes of up to QR100,000.

Ooredoo also played a key role in promoting an active and healthy lifestyle during Ramadan, sponsoring sporting events, including the Alkass Padel Tournament and Doha Cycling Events.

Ooredoo served as the official telecom sponsor of the e-School Olympic Ramadan Tournament, nurturing young talents and encouraging a spirit of sportsmanship.

Words of wisdom on holding oneself to account

Umar ibn al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Hold yourselves to account before you get held to account in the reckoning, and weigh your deeds before they get weighed for you, because reckoning tomorrow (the Day of Resurrection) becomes easier when you hold yourselves for reckoning today; get prepared for the major exhibition, on that day you will be exposed and nothing will be hidden."

He once wrote a letter to some of his officials, saying: "Hold yourself in reckoning during the times of ease before you get held in reckoning at the time of difficulty (the Hereafter), because he who holds himself in reckoning during the time of ease will have a pleasant consequence and will rejoice; and he who becomes busy with life and desires (and did not hold himself in reckoning) will regret and lose."

Here are some sayings of scholars across centuries encouraging us to take ourselves to account, before the Final Reckoning.

Al-Hasan, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "You will find the believer always holding himself in reckoning saying, 'What did I want to do? What did I want to eat? What did I want to drink? But the sinful will go on without holding himself in reckoning."

Maymoon ibn Mahraan, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The slave will not

achieve piety until he becomes harder on himself in reckoning than a stingy partner when he questions his partner; and that is why it is said that the self is like a betraying partner, if you do not hold it in reckoning your wealth would go to waste."

Al-Hasan, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The believer is always holding himself in reckoning, and reckoning becomes easy on the Day of Resurrection only for those who held themselves in reckoning during their lifetime; and it becomes difficult for those who went on in life without reckoning."

Maalib ibn Deenaan, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "May Allah have mercy upon a slave who says to himself, 'Aren't you the one who did so and so?' Then he restrains it and forces it to adhere to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition) and takes control over it."

Ibn Mulaykah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "I met thirty of the Companions of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, and each one of them fears that he is a hypocrite."

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "If one looks at the Companions who find that they worked hard yet were the most fearful of Allah, while we combine negligence and feeling secure (from punishment)."

These are the words of Ibn Al-Qayyim dur-

ing his period, what should we say about our time?

Al-Fudhayl ibn 'Iyaadh, may Allah have mercy on him, said to a man: "How many years have passed from your life so far? The man said, 'Sixty years.' Al-Fudhayl said, 'Then you have initiated a journey towards your Lord, and you have almost arrived to your destiny.'

Abu Ad-Dardaa; may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Your life is but days, whenever a day passes, a portion of you has finished."

The question arises: How does one take oneself to account?

Ibn Al-Qayyim said that it is done in the following sequence:

First, start with the obligatory matters and make up any shortcomings in them.

Second, check the prohibitions, and repent, seeking forgiveness for the violations committed and strive to perform good deeds to wipe out the bad deeds.

Third, hold yourself in reckoning for your heedlessness by mentioning Allah The Almighty ('Thikr').

Fourth, hold yourself to account for the usage of the tongue, eyes, ears, feet and hands. What did you intend by using them? How did you use them?

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emeainpage/>

DECISION

UK ends contract with asylum seeker hotel provider

The UK government yesterday said it was ending a "disastrous" £2bn a year contract with a hotel group providing accommodation to asylum seekers because of performance "concerns". The Home Office revoked its contract with Stay Belvedere Hotels, one of the largest providers of hotels for asylum seekers with 51 hotels across England and Wales. The Home Office, which is trying to slash an asylum seeker backlog and reduce the use of costly hotels, cited "concerns about its performance and behaviour as a government supplier". SBHL was awarded the contract in 2019 by the previous Conservative government.

DISASTER

Strong earthquake hits off New Zealand's South Island

A 6.7-magnitude earthquake struck off New Zealand's South Island yesterday, the US Geological Survey said. The tremor hit at 2.43pm (0143 GMT) at a depth of 10kms off the southwest tip of New Zealand's South Island, according to the USGS. Centred around 160kms from mainland settlement Riverton, it was initially recorded as a 7.0-magnitude jolt before it was downgraded. There was no tsunami warning or immediate reports of damage, according to the Honolulu-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. New Zealand's emergency management agency warned residents to avoid nearby coastal areas due to the risk of "strong and unusual currents".

ANNOUNCEMENT

Bangladesh 'to secure Starlink Internet deal soon'

Bangladesh's interim leader yesterday said a commercial deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX-owned satellite Internet network Starlink is expected to be reached within three months to provide Internet services across the country. Muhammad Yunus, who has led Bangladesh's government since the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina last year, has said the deal would provide a reliable Internet service that could not be disrupted by any future political upheaval. "If Starlink is launched, no government will have the ability to shut down Internet access or lock citizens out of the digital world," Yunus said in a televised speech to the nation ahead of Independence Day.

CRISIS

S Korea wildfires spread forcing evacuation

Wildfires spread across South Korea's southeastern region yesterday, forcing the evacuation of thousands of inmates from local prisons and causing residents to flee their homes. Acting President Han Duck-soo vowed to deploy firefighting helicopters and ground personnel to battle the fires. The city of Andong, with a population of 150,000 people, issued an alert to its residents to evacuate to safe areas, according to a city official and a public text alert. The city is home to the 14th- to 15th-century Hahoe Folk Village, a Unesco World Heritage site. The official said the blaze was currently about 10km from Hahoe.

India 'eyes tariff cut on more than half of US imports to shield its exports'

Reuters

New Delhi

India is open to cutting tariffs on more than half of US imports worth \$23bn in the first phase of a trade deal the two nations are negotiating, two government sources said, the biggest cut in years, aimed at fending off reciprocal tariffs.

The country wants to mitigate the impact of US President Donald Trump's reciprocal worldwide tariffs set to take effect from April 2, a threat that has disrupted markets and sent policymakers scrambling, even among Western allies.

In an internal analysis, New Delhi estimated such reciprocal tariffs would hit 87% of its total exports to the US worth \$60 billion, two government sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Under the deal, India is open to reducing tariffs on 55% of US goods it imports that are now subject to tariffs ranging from 5% to 30%, said both sources, who sought anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

In this category of goods, India is ready to "substantially" lower tariffs or even scrap some entirely, on imported goods worth more than \$23bn from the US, one of the sources said.

India's trade ministry, the prime minister's office and a government spokesperson did not reply to mail seeking comments.

Overall the US trade-weighted average tariff has been about 2.2%, data from the World Trade Organisation shows, compared with India's 12%. The US has a trade deficit of \$45.6bn with India.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit in February, the two nations agreed to start talks towards clinching an early trade deal and resolving their standoff on tariffs.

New Delhi wants to strike a deal before the reciprocal tariffs are announced and assistant US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch is leading a delegation of officials from US for trade talks which began yesterday.

The Indian government officials warned that cutting tariffs on more than half of US imports hinges on securing relief from reciprocal tax.

The tariff cut decision was not final, with other options under discussion such as sectoral adjustments of tariffs and product-by-product negotiations rather than a wide cut, said one of the officials.

India is also considering wider tariff reform to lower barriers uniformly, but such discussions are in early stages and might not figure

immediately in talks with the US, said one of the officials.

Even though Modi was among the first leaders to congratulate Trump on his election victory in November, the US president has continued to call India a "tariff abuser" and "tariff king", vowing not to spare any nation from tariffs.

New Delhi estimated increases of 6% to 10% in tariffs on items such as pearls, mineral fuels, machinery, boilers and electrical equipment, which make up half its exports to the US, due to reciprocal tax, both sources said.

The second official said the \$11bn worth of pharmaceutical and automotive exports may see the most disruptive impact due to reciprocal tariff, given their dependence on the US market.

The new tariffs could benefit alternative suppliers like Indonesia, Israel and Vietnam, the official added.

To ensure political acceptance by Modi's allies and the opposition, India has set clear red lines for the negotiations.

Tariffs on meat, maize, wheat and dairy products that now range from 30% to 60%, are off the table, a third government official said. But those on almonds, pistachio, oatmeal and quinoa may be eased.

Congress protests rising unemployment



Security personnel detain members of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) during a protest against the union government condemning the rise in unemployment, in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

Japan backs close security ties with India, S Korea

Reuters

New Delhi

Japan has said that it backed close security co-operation with South Korea and India in the Indo-Pacific, days after the Philippines' military chief said a US-backed security group wanted both nations to join to counter China in the region.

Japan's ministry of defence said in a statement that it supported building a multi-layered network of alliances in general, and but declined to say whether it has given its consent or made any specific considerations on the expansion

of the Squad group. The Squad is an informal multilateral grouping made up of Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and the US, focused on defence co-operation, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises and operations. "It is important to build networks among allies and like-minded countries organically and in a multi-layered manner, as well as to expand such networks and strengthen deterrence, as Japan faces the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II," Japan's ministry of defence said.

It added that the ministry "believes that close co-operation

among regional partners, including Australia, the Philippines, as well as the Republic of Korea and India is extremely important from the perspective of realising a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' while the Japan-US Alliance remains at its core." General Romeo S Brawner, military chief of the Philippines, said at a security forum in New Delhi last week that Squad nations were trying to include India and South Korea in the grouping to counter China. His remarks followed a series of escalating confrontations between Manila and Beijing over the past couple of years in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

Britain gives go-ahead to £10bn Thames tunnel

Reuters

London

Britain gave the green light yesterday to a new £10bn (\$13bn) road tunnel for the River Thames in southeast England, in its latest backing for an infrastructure project to help revive a sluggish economy.

The Labour government has put speeding up the planning process to deliver new energy and transport projects at the heart of its growth agenda since it was elected last year, backing expansion at London's Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

"When I said I would back the builders, not the blockers, I meant it," Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on X.

"Giving the Lower Thames Crossing the green light will drive growth and make journeys

quicker, safer, and more reliable."

The Lower Thames Crossing, consisting of a tunnel and roads 23kms in length, was granted development consent by Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander, the planning inspectorate said.

The tunnel will connect Kent, south of the river, to Essex, on the north side, improving connectivity and providing more road capacity for goods to travel between ports and central and northern England.

The idea for an additional crossing in this part of the river east of London was first mooted as far back as 1989.

Formally proposed by the then-Labour government in 2009, the crossing has been held up as an example of the difficulties faced in trying to get infrastructure projects off the ground in Britain.

All staff to travel in economy class from April: Air India

Air India yesterday said all staff, including top management, would travel in economy from April 1 to free up seats for paying customers, as the airline works on improving its image following criticism over flight delays. Staff would be upgraded to premium economy and business class seats on a flight only if these remained unsold 50 minutes prior to departure, The Times of India said in a report, confirmed by the airline. "With this, we want to ensure that our premium seats... for which we are seeing huge demand - are available for booking to our customers first, demonstrating a culture of customer-centricity in the new Air India," a spokesperson said. India is among the world's fastest-growing major aviation markets, and its domestic air passenger traffic has been growing at an annual rate of 10-12% over the past 10 years, according to the government.

Motorcyclist killed by giant Seoul sinkhole



One person was killed after a massive sinkhole opened up in Seoul, the fire department said, with harrowing video footage showing the moment his vehicle was swallowed by the hole. The vast hole opened up at an intersection in the southeast of the South Korean capital during the evening rush hour around 6.30pm on March 24.

Chinese officials admit toxic river leak after rare media reports

AFP

Beijing

Chinese authorities yesterday said they had controlled a leak of toxic heavy metal into a river, after media outlets reported that officials had known about the incident for days.

An emergency response was launched after detecting "abnormal water quality" in a section of the Lei River, officials in the central city of Chenzhou said on Sunday, without giving further details.

In a rare move, multiple news outlets later reported that authorities knew about elevated levels of

thallium, a potentially harmful heavy metal, in the river as early as March 16.

The Chenzhou city government admitted that thallium concentrations were at least 13 times higher than normal on that day, in a further statement yesterday, but said the incident "has now been controlled".

Thallium is a tasteless, odourless heavy metal that can damage the nerves, liver, kidneys and other human tissues when consumed in significant quantities.

According to the Southern Metropolis Daily, river monitoring stations first detected the leak in a stretch of river between Chenzhou

and nearby Hengyang, a city home to 6.5mn people in Hunan province.

The incident "caused inter-city pollution and threatened the safety of downstream drinking water", the state-backed news outlet said.

It added that officials quietly launched an emergency response the following day, seeking to "eradicate... the danger and uphold social stability".

Authorities did not disclose the incident until Sunday's statement, which said local water was "safe" to drink but did not provide details of the leak or the scope of the government's response.

One resident who lives near an affected stretch of the Lei River,

in Liyang, said yesterday that her family has continued to use water from the tap despite health concerns.

"We're definitely afraid," 37-year-old Xiaoshu, who asked to be identified by a nickname, said over the phone.

"It's fine for us adults, but what if children or the elderly drink it? What if they get sick?"

The mother-of-two said she had heard about the contamination online through articles shared in group chats and videos posted to Douyin, China's version of TikTok.

"Everybody's been talking about it," she said, but admitted that local authorities never directly notified

her of any water contamination.

Despite worrying about the water's safety, Xiaoshu, who sells fishing equipment, said she has bought some bottled water but can't afford to turn off the tap.

"Our family's economic situation is what it is," she said.

"Wealthy people can use bottled water, but for regular folks like us, we can only do that for the water we drink and use tap water for everything else."

The Chenzhou government yesterday blamed a local cement factory for the leak, saying rainwater had washed dust containing thallium from a recently dismantled kiln into the river.

It said emergency responders had controlled the pollution source and treated river water to remove the thallium, adding that concentrations had soon returned to normal in downstream areas.

China has cracked down on environmental pollution in recent years, but industrial contamination remains common in many parts of the country.

Media coverage of such incidents has also dried up since President Xi Jinping came to power over a decade ago and tightened the government's grip on the press.

Some yesterday took to social media to lament the delayed government response.

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GULF TIMES

India stocks under pressure amid growth worries, China buoyancy

Indian equities have of late come under pressure amid waning domestic consumption, raising questions over the outlook for local shares after a nine-year rally.

Global investors are deserting India's stock market, selling shares at a record pace to buy Chinese stocks instead, in a dramatic reversal of fortunes for the Asian giants over the last six months.

A hit to earnings from high inflation and interest rates have chipped 13% off Indian stocks from September's record high, while China's promise of stimulative policies lures investor interest.

"When China gets flows, India doesn't," said Jitana Kandhari, deputy chief investment officer of the solutions and multi-asset group at Morgan Stanley Investment Management.

Foreigners have pulled nearly \$29bn out of Indian stocks since October, the most in any six-month period, as they turn their backs on a market most investors had embraced for a couple of years.

That money has fled to China, where Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng Index, home to many major Chinese companies, is up 36% since late September, drawn by bets on artificial intelligence spurred by Chinese startup DeepSeek.

Global fund managers are in no rush to load up on Indian stocks even after an unprecedented losing streak has lowered equity valuations.

That's because the market is still grappling with challenges posed by an economic slowdown, profit downgrades and potential US tariffs. Traders looking for bargains within Asia are gravitating toward still-cheap Chinese equities, which are in the middle of a bull run.

Overseas investors have pulled almost \$15bn from Indian shares so far this year as the selloff has wiped out \$1.3tn from India's market value.

Overseas investors have pulled almost \$15bn from Indian shares so far this year, putting outflows on track to surpass the record \$17bn registered in 2022, according to a Bloomberg report. The selloff has wiped out \$1.3tn from India's market value.

For the first time in two years, China has a larger weight than India in the portfolio of Britain's Aubrey Capital Management, which focuses on consumer companies.

While asset managers such as Morgan Stanley and Fidelity International remain overweight on India, they have trimmed exposure over the last few months to add to bets in China.

China's stock market has proved an unlikely sanctuary from the trade war unleashed by US President Donald Trump, as it is relatively cheap and seen poised on the cusp of an economic recovery.

Before the steep selloff in Indian stocks over the past six months, investors had scrambling to keep up with the strong performance that carried its valuation to eye-watering levels.

But slowing corporate earnings and an economy seen growing in the current financial year at the slowest pace in four have hurt sentiment, investors say.

India's benchmark NSE Nifty 50 Index is trading at 18 times forward earnings, compared with 21 times in September. But despite the drop, the market's multiple remains higher than that of all its emerging Asian peers.

Latest government figures show India's economy will expand at a four-year low of 6.5% in the current fiscal year. Some analysts expect growth in the coming years to remain well below the nearly 9% average seen in the past three years.

Corporate profits have also taken a hit in this environment.

More than 60% of companies comprising the Nifty 50 Index saw downgrades to their forward profit estimates last month, according to JM Financial Ltd.

To be sure, not everyone is giving up on India.

"India has one of the best economic backdrops of the major markets, with plenty of economic drivers as well as stock market support," according to Ryan Dimas, portfolio specialist for William Blair's global equity strategies.

Yet, Morgan Stanley's Kandhari reckons that the "inflection point" at which foreign money stops leaving Indian stocks is likely only in the second half of 2025.

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Trump administration likely overstepped authority in immigration crackdown

By Luc Cohen, Tom Hals and Jack Queen

The Trump administration has likely exceeded its authority in invoking rarely applied laws to justify parts of its wide-ranging immigration crackdown, legal experts said.

Still, the Supreme Court could ultimately determine if the White House has the far-reaching power it claims to decide who should be deported. President Donald Trump, a Republican, has drawn pushback from Democratic lawmakers and civil rights groups for deporting alleged Venezuelan gang members to El Salvador by citing a wartime law from 1798, and for trying to deport a lawful permanent resident under an untested statute passed in 1952.

In both cases, the administration likely overstepped its statutory authority and is vulnerable to being overturned by courts, said immigration lawyer David Leopold.

"These are unilateral, factual determinations made by the executive," Leopold said in an interview on Monday.

Neither the White House nor the Justice Department immediately responded to requests for comment. The Trump administration over the weekend invoked the 18th-century Alien Enemies Act, which gives the president the authority to detain and deport foreign citizens during times of war, to deport 238 alleged gang members.

The administration asserted that the gang, Tren de Aragua, was invading the United States, justifying their deportations under the law, which was enacted to combat spying and sabotage

during tensions with France. But US District Judge James Boasberg in Washington temporarily blocked any deportations under the Alien Enemies Act, writing that the law refers to hostile acts perpetrated by another nation.

The alleged gang members were flown to El Salvador nonetheless, potentially setting up a constitutional clash.

Boasberg's ruling came in response to a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, which said the Trump administration's invocation of the law would deprive people in immigration detention of due process rights because they would not be able to challenge the determination that they are "alien enemies."

Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt wrote in a post on X on Monday that the Supreme Court had "repeatedly made clear" that federal courts have no jurisdiction over the president's authorities under the Alien Enemies Act,

which was used to justify internment camps for people of Japanese, German and Italian descent during World War Two but had not been invoked since.

Leavitt did not specify the Supreme Court cases she was referring to, and legal experts said they were not aware of any such precedent.

"They are just making stuff up," said Michael Gerhardt, a law professor at the University of North Carolina. Scott Anderson, a fellow with the Brookings Institution think tank, said the Supreme Court in 2015 declined to endorse the idea that the executive branch had exclusive authority over foreign affairs. Anderson said the idea that foreign policy is beyond judicial or congressional review is "complete nonsense."

Josh Blackman, a constitutional law professor at South Texas College of Law Houston, said the president has the right to decide what constitutes an invasion, and that no formal declaration of war is needed. He pointed to a 1948 Supreme Court decision, *Ludecke v. Watkins*, upholding the removal under the Alien Enemies Act of a German national in 1946, after World War Two ended.

The court found that determining when a "declared war" ended was the role of the executive branch, not the courts. "The executive branch has discretion to decide this as a political question," Blackman said. The circumstances of the removal of the alleged gang members is different than those in the *Ludecke* case because there is no declared war.

The Trump administration has already appealed Boasberg's temporary block on the deportations. The question of whether the administration's invocation of the Alien Enemies Act was constitutional could ultimately end up before the Supreme Court, which has a 6-3 conservative majority.

Similarly, the statute used by the Trump administration to justify the immigration detention of Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil appears to have been used only once before, according to legal experts. Lawyers for Khalil, a green card holder of Palestinian descent, have said the arrest was retaliation for his participation in pro-Palestinian protests and violated his rights to free speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

The administration has justified his detention under a provision of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act stating that any immigrant

may be deported if the secretary of state determines that their activities or presence in the US could pose adverse foreign policy consequences.

Trump has, without evidence, accused Khalil of supporting Palestinian militant group Hamas.

The provision has been tested just once before, legal experts said. In 1995, the statute was used to detain Mario Ruiz Massieu, a former assistant attorney general of Mexico, after the US government failed four times to convince a federal judge to extradite him back to Mexico, where he faced criminal charges. Massieu challenged his detention in a case that was overseen by the late federal Judge Maryanne Trump Barry - Trump's older sister.

Barry found the law unconstitutional. She said Massieu's case begged the question if a noncitizen in the US legally can be removed at the unfettered discretion of the Secretary of State without a meaningful opportunity to be heard. "The answer is a ringing 'no,'" she wrote. The administration of former President Bill Clinton appealed the ruling and it was reversed on a technicality that did not address the law's constitutionality. A judge has temporarily blocked Khalil's deportation, and his lawyers are fighting for him to be released from immigration custody in Louisiana.

Khalil's lawyers have said that provision was not intended to stifle dissent. Leopold said Congress intended for the provision to be used sparingly. "This broad immigration statute, based solely on some abstract foreign policy worry, is being used to chill speech," Leopold said. - Reuters



US President Donald Trump speaks before signing an executive order during an Education event in the East Room of the White house in Washington, DC, last Thursday. (AFP)

Trump team scrambles to handle Signal fallout

Reuters
Washington

The Trump administration sought yesterday to contain the fallout after a magazine journalist disclosed he had been inadvertently included in a secret group discussion of highly sensitive war plans, while Democrats called on top officials to resign over the security incident.

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe – both of whom were in the chat – testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that no classified material was shared in the group chat on Signal, an encrypted commercial messaging app.

But Democratic senators voiced scepticism, noting that the journalist, Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg, reported that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted operational details about pending strikes against Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi, "including information about targets, weapons the US would be deploying, and attack sequencing."

Committee members said they planned – and Gabbard and Ratcliffe

agreed to – an audit of the exchange. The Senate's Republican majority leader, John Thune, said yesterday he expected the Senate Armed Services Committee to look into Trump administration officials' use of Signal.

"It's hard for me to believe that targets and timing and weapons would not have been classified," Senator Angus King, a Maine independent who caucuses with Democrats, said at the contentious hearing, which featured several sharp exchanges.

The revelation on Monday drew outrage and disbelief among national security experts and prompted Democrats – and some of President Donald Trump's fellow Republicans – to call for an investigation of what they called a major security breach.

"I am of the view that there ought to be resignations, starting with the national security adviser and the secretary of defence," Democratic Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon said at the hearing.

But Trump voiced support for his national security team when questioned about the incident at a White House event yesterday with Michael Waltz, his national security adviser who mistakenly added Goldberg to



Central Intelligence Agency Director John Ratcliffe (right), accompanied by FBI Director Kash Patel (left), and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, speaks during a Senate Committee on Intelligence Hearing yesterday in Washington, DC. (AFP)

the Signal discussion. Trump said the administration would look into the use of Signal, but said he did not think Waltz should apologise.

US Senator Jon Ossoff of Georgia appeared to grow frustrated after Ratcliffe answered "I don't recall" to a series of questions about the content of the Signal chat.

"Director Ratcliffe, surely you prepared for this hearing today," Os-

soff said. "You are part of a group of principals, senior echelons of the US government, and now a widely publicised breach of sensitive information."

"We will get the full transcript of this chain, and your testimony will be measured carefully against its content," he added.

Some Republicans also wanted to know more. Senator Todd Young

said he would inquire during a closed hearing later. "It appears to me there are some unanswered questions," the Indiana Republican said.

A former US official told Reuters that operational details for military actions are typically classified and known to only a few people at the Pentagon and such top secret information is usually kept on computers that use a separate network. National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes said on Monday that the chat group appeared to be authentic.

Sensitive information is not supposed to be shared on commercial mobile phone apps, and unknown numbers – such as Goldberg's – should not have been included. Additionally, Signal's ability to erase conversations would violate laws governing the retention of government records.

"This is one more example of the kind of sloppy, careless, incompetent behaviour, particularly toward classified information ... of this administration," the committee's Democratic vice-chairman, Mark Warner of Virginia, said.

Accounts appearing to represent Vice-President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Ratcliffe,

Gabbard, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, White House chief of staff Susie Wiles, and senior National Security Council officials were assembled in the chat group, Goldberg wrote on Monday.

Gabbard acknowledged that she had been abroad during the chat, although she declined to say whether she was using a private phone. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt accused Goldberg of sensationalising the story in a post on X.

Also on X, White House communications director Steven Cheung dismissed as "faux outrage" the concern over the inclusion of a journalist in a war-planning chat. Hegseth told reporters on Monday that no-one had texted war plans. Goldberg, appearing on CNN on Monday, called those comments "a lie."

It remained unclear why the officials chose to chat via Signal rather than the secure government channels typically used for sensitive discussions.

Signal has a "stellar reputation and is widely used and trusted in the security community," said Rocky Cole, whose cybersecurity firm iVerify helps protect smartphone users from hackers.

Chewing gum releases microplastics into mouth, say researchers

AFP
Paris

Chewing gum releases hundreds of tiny plastic pieces straight into people's mouths, researchers said yesterday, also warning of the pollution created by the rubber-based sweet.

The small study comes as researchers have increasingly been finding small shards of plastic called microplastics throughout the world, from the tops of mountains to the bottom of the ocean – and even in the air we breathe.

They have also discovered microplastics riddled throughout human bodies – including inside our lungs, blood and brains – sparking fears about the potential effect this could be having on health. "I don't want to alarm people," Sanjay Mohanty, the lead researcher behind the new study which has not yet been peer-reviewed, told AFP.

There is no evidence directly showing that microplastics are harmful to human health, said Mohanty of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The pilot study instead sought to illustrate yet another little-researched way that these mostly invisible plastic pieces enter our bodies – chewing gum.

Lisa Lowe, a PhD student at UCLA, chewed seven pieces each of 10 brands of gum, before the researchers then ran a chemical analysis on her saliva. They found that a gram (0.04 ounces) of gum released an average of 100 microplastic fragments, though some shed more than 600. The average weight of a stick of gum is around 1.5 grams.

People who chew around 180 pieces of gum a year could be ingesting roughly 30,000 microplastics, the researchers said.

This pales in comparison to the many other ways that humans ingest microplastics, Mohanty emphasised.

For example, other researchers estimated last year that a litre (34 fluid ounces) of water in a plastic bottle contained an average of



240,000 microplastics.

The most common chewing gum sold in supermarkets is called synthetic gum, which contains petroleum-based polymers to get that chewy effect, the researchers said. However, packaging does not list any plastics in the ingredients, simply using the words "gum-based".

"Nobody will tell you the ingredients," Mohanty said.

The researchers tested five brands of synthetic gum and five of natural gum, which use plant-based polymers such as tree sap.

"It was surprising that we found microplastics were abundant in both," Lowe told AFP.

David Jones, a researcher at the UK's University of Portsmouth not involved in the study, said he was surprised the researchers found certain plastics not known to be in gum, suggesting they could have come from another source in the lab.

But the overall findings were "not at all surprising", he told AFP.

People tend to "freak out a little bit" when told that the building blocks of chewing gum were similar to what is found in car tyres, plastic bags and bottles, Jones said.

Oliver Jones, a chemistry professor at Australia's RMIT University, said that if the relatively small number of microplastics were swallowed, they "would likely pass straight through you with no impact".

"I don't think you have to stop chewing gum just yet."

Lowe also warned about the plastic pollution from chewing gum – particularly when people "spit it out onto the sidewalk".

Their identity was not revealed but Blachon said they were "adult children" of the Vedovinis.

Breakthrough in French toddler death mystery

A lengthy investigation into the mysterious death in 2023 of a French toddler took a surprise turn yesterday when police arrested the boy's grandparents on suspicion of murder.

The death of Emile Soleil, a boy of two-and-a-half who went missing in a French Alpine village in July 2023, had remained unexplained even after some of his remains were discovered nine months later. Prosecutors at the time said the cause of his death could have been "a fall, manslaughter or murder".

Emile had been staying at the summer home of his maternal grandparents in the tiny hamlet of Le Haut-Vernet when he vanished. Two neighbours last saw him walking alone on a street in Le Vernet, 1,200 metres up in the French Alps, in the late afternoon of July 8, 2023.

Emile's mother and father were absent on the day he disappeared. Nine months later, a walker discovered his skull and teeth 1.7 kilometres (1.1 miles) from the village.

Police later found more bones and items of the boy's clothing.

Within hours of police being alerted to Emile's disappearance, hundreds of people joined the police and military to search for the toddler over an area of nearly 100 hectares.

Thirty houses in the area were searched and residents questioned. Some media had focused on the role of boy's grandfather, Philippe Vedovini. He had been questioned in the 1990s over alleged violence and physical abuse at a private school but police had initially considered his possible involvement in Emile's death as only one of many hypotheses.

In a sharp turn of events, Vedovini and his wife were arrested yesterday morning on suspicion of "voluntary homicide". Aix-en-Provence chief prosecutor Jean-Luc Blachon said in a statement sent to AFP.

Contacted by AFP, the couple's lawyer, Isabelle Colombani, said she had no comment, having "only just heard" about the development. Two other members of the family were also arrested, prosecutors said.

Their identity was not revealed but Blachon said they were "adult children" of the Vedovinis.

The Gulf Clan was born out of the right-wing

Danish premier says US visit puts 'unacceptable pressure' on Greenland

AFP
Copenhagen

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (pictured) yesterday criticised a planned US delegation visit to Greenland, a Danish territory coveted by President Donald Trump, as putting "unacceptable pressure" on both the territory and her country.

The White House has announced that Usha Vance, the wife of Vice-President JD Vance, will visit Greenland from Thursday to Saturday to attend Greenland's national dog sled race in Sisimiut, on the northwestern coast.

The race has been largely sponsored by the US consulate in Nuuk, Greenlandic media reported.

According to the Arctic island's outgoing Prime Minister Mute Egede, US national security adviser Mike Waltz will also visit Greenland this week, while US media have reported that Energy Secretary Chris Wright will travel there as well.

The visits, presented as private, have angered Danish and Greenlandic politicians.

"You can't organise a private visit with official representatives



of another country," Frederiksen told reporters.

The visit comes at a time of political flux in Greenland, where political parties are still negotiating to form a new coalition government following a March 11 general election.

"This is clearly not a visit that is about what Greenland needs or wants," Frederiksen told broadcaster DR.

"That's why I have to say that the pressure being put on Greenland and Denmark in this situation is unacceptable."

"And it's pressure we will resist," she added.

The outgoing Greenlandic government said in a post on Facebook it had not "sent out any invitations for visits, private or official".

"The current government is a

transitional government pending the formation of a new governing coalition, and we have asked all countries to respect this process," it wrote.

Since returning to power in January, Trump has insisted he wants the United States to take over Greenland for national security purposes and has even refused to rule out the use of force to achieve that aim.

A self-governing Danish territory which is seeking to emancipate itself from Copenhagen, Greenland holds massive untapped mineral and oil reserves, although oil and uranium exploration are banned.

It is also strategically located between North America and Europe at a time of rising US, Chinese and Russian interest in the Arctic, where sea lanes have opened up due to climate change.

Greenland's location also puts it on the shortest route for missiles between Russia and the US.

According to opinion polls, most Greenlanders support independence from Denmark but not annexation by Washington.

Greenland's likely new prime minister – Jens-Frederik Nielsen of the centre-right Democrats, who won the election – has criticised Trump's moves on Greenland as "inappropriate".

Mane story: Afghan women in the crosshairs of Taliban

Until Taliban authorities took power in Afghanistan, women like Fatima were able to freely sell their hair to be made into wigs, bringing in crucial cash. But a ban last year has forced the 28-year-old and others to covertly trade hair – collected from shower drains or the salon floor – braving the risk of punishment one strand at a time. "I need this money," said Fatima, 28, one of the few women still in paid private employment in Kabul after the Taliban regained control in 2021. "I can treat myself to something or buy things for the house."

The woman, who withholds her last name for security reasons, sells every 100 grams of hair for little more than \$3, a small addition to her monthly salary of \$100. Buyers who want to export the locks for wig production abroad "would knock on our doors to collect" the hair, she said.

One of those buyers is a man, who also requested anonymity, sending the manes to Pakistan and China from Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries. Taliban authorities have cracked down on the rights of women, imposing what the UN calls a "gender apartheid". They banned women and girls from universities and schools, effectively strangling their employment hopes. Women have also been barred from parks and gyms, while beauty salons have been shut down.

Last year, Taliban authorities imposed vice and virtue laws regulating everyday life for men and women, including banning sales of "any part of the human body" including hair. They have not said what the punishment for violations would be. "We must respect the appearance that God has given to humans



An Afghan woman adjusting her hair at a salon in Kabul. (AFP)

and preserve their dignity," Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (PVPV) spokesman Saiful Islam Khyber told AFP. He said the trading of hair had become "normalised" in the country and that now "selling body parts is not allowed."

The restrictions have not deterred Fatima, however. During prayer times, when Taliban officials and forces attend the mosque, Fatima sneaks to a Kabul waste site to hand over her cache of tresses.

The few extra dollars are significant, with 85% of Afghans living on less than a dollar a day, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

At a secret salon in Kabul, two worn-out leather chairs sit in a small, cold room where hairdresser Narges now only receives about four customers a week. Before the 2021 takeover, the 43-year-old widowed hairdresser used to give crop cuts to five to six clients every day. Now, only the wealthiest of her customers brave visiting the salon, and even they sometimes ask if they can take valuable spare hair home with them. "They're the only ones who can

still care about beauty," she said. For others, the threat of a Taliban punishment is too much to risk. Wahida, a 33-year-old widow whose husband was a soldier killed in 2021, has a constant worry about how she will feed her three children. She still collects hair that has fallen from her eight-year-old daughter's head and her own, with strands from the root more valuable than those cut with scissors.

The unemployed Afghan woman, who now relies almost entirely on charity, stuffs them in a plastic bag to keep them for a potential sale later. "I had a glimmer of hope when I used to sell my hair. Now that it's banned, I'm devastated. I'm hoping buyers will come back to my door," she said, sitting in her home.

"I know there are places to sell. But I am afraid of getting caught there."

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