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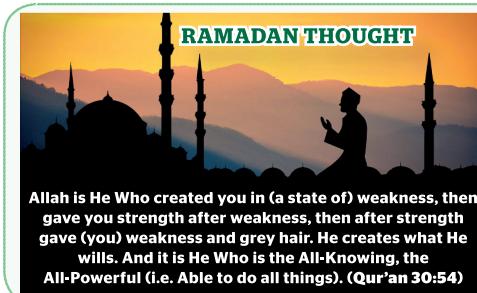
THURSDAY Vol. XXXXV No. 13327

March 27, 2025
Ramadan 27, 1446 AH

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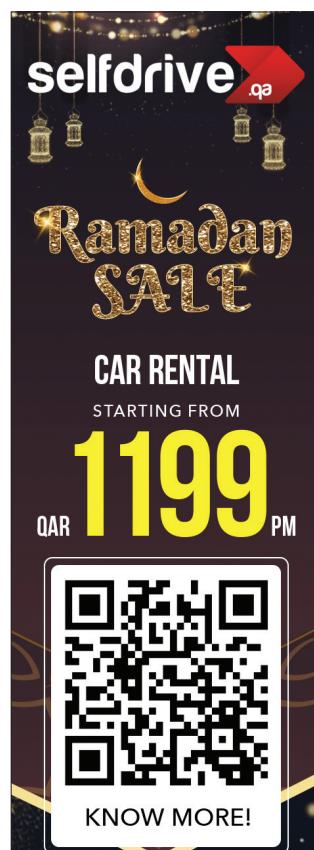


Prayer times

Fajr.....4:13; Zuhr.....11:39; Asr.....3:07;
Maghrib.....5:51; Isha.....7:21

Fasting times

Iftar today5:51pm
Imsak tomorrow.....4:02am



Bank holidays from March 30 to April 3

Banks, insurance companies and all other financial institutions in Qatar will have Eid al-Fitr holiday from March 30 to April 3, Qatar Central Bank announced yesterday. All financial institutions will resume their operations on April 6. However, banks and other financial institutions may keep open some facilities to cater to urgent needs of their customers.

Qatar raises over QR 220mn for Syria, Gaza in campaign broadcast live on Qatar TV

● '27th Night Challenge' drive was organised by QC in association with QRCS

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar Charity (QC) raised over QR220mn against the target of QR40mn, in the '27th Night Challenge,' held yesterday at Katara Cultural Village to fund a reconstruction project of 1,500 homes in Syria's Hama countryside.

At the conclusion of the three-hour campaign at midnight, the donations stood at QR20,400,000 with the door still open for more. The event in collaboration with Qatar Red Crescent Society at Katara's Al-Hikma (Wisdom) Square saw donations received through various means and online from individuals, companies, banks and other organisations and entities.

Within the first hour, the donations touched QR13mn and soon after jumped to QR90mn before exceeding QR200mn by the second hour of the campaign. An anonymous philanthropist donated more than QR30mn.

The campaign broadcast live on YouTube and Qatar TV was under the slogan 'Rebuilding Hope.' The initiative aims to restore 1,500 homes, enabling families to re-



A panel discussion in progress on Qatar TV during the campaign yesterday.

turn, while also rebuilding vital infrastructure, including a health centre, mosques, primary, preparatory, and secondary schools, a kindergarten, and 50 commercial shops.

Speaking to Qatar TV, Dr Bi-

lal Turkia, the Syrian charge d'affaires in Qatar, highly appreciated Qatar's efforts to support the Syrian people. Qatar has always been a pioneer in helping and supporting the Arab and Muslim nations and stood by the peoples in

defending their right to dignified life, he said.

Dr Turkia recalled that the government and the people of Qatar hurried to help the Syrian people. "There are a large number of displaced Syrians even to this

day and they need a lot to build their homes and restore the related services. This campaign will be highly instrumental in helping many displaced Syrians to start a new dignified human life," he added. [To Page 16](#)

218,810,000 QR

ليلة 27

تغطية خاصة لليلة 27 المخصصة لاغاثة أهلنا في غزة وسوريا

Falcon Gold & Precious Metals set to open Qatar's First and Only Gold Refinery

Falcon Gold & Precious Metals is set to open Qatar's first and only gold refinery in Qatar Free Zone, marking a significant milestone in the country's economic diversification efforts. The state-of-the-art facility will position Qatar as a key player in the global gold market, leveraging advanced technology and sustainable practices to enhance local production, create job opportunities, and drive economic growth.

Located in the Qatar Free Zone, Falcon Gold's refinery benefits from cutting-edge infrastructure and seamless access

Falcon Gold's operations encompass refining and trading, ensuring the highest levels of purity for gold and other precious metals. The company aims to establish itself as a trusted partner in the global gold trade, facilitating secure transactions and connections across international markets. Integrity, quality, and customer satisfaction form the core values of Falcon Gold, ensuring transparency and ethical standards in all business dealings.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and a team of skilled professionals, Falcon Gold & Precious Metals is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. The company invests in research and development to stay ahead of industry trends, enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and reliability in gold refining. A key aspect of their approach is their proprietary adaptation of the aqua regia technique, a refining process that maximizes gold purity while minimizing environmental impact.

Falcon Gold is committed to responsible gold sourcing and production, ensuring compliance with international standards. The company upholds ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management), ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management), and ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational Health & Safety). Strict supply chain controls ensure that refined



FALCON GOLD
AND PRECIOUS METALS QFZ LLC

to air and seaports. The Free Zone's tax exemptions provide a favourable business environment, reducing costs

and increasing the competitiveness of Falcon Gold's products in the international market.

precious metals do not contribute to human rights violations, money laundering, or the financing of conflict and terrorism.

The facility boasts an advanced in-house laboratory employing cutting-edge analysis techniques. The gold content in alloyed metals is determined using gravimetric analysis, cupellation, and acid parting methods. Instrumental analysis methods such as Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectroscopy (ICP-OES) and X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF) further ensure precision in gold assessment. The refinery's products are manufactured according to stringent international standards, including ISO 11426:2021 for gold and ISO 13756:2024 for silver. Third-party quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) checks further validate Falcon Gold's commitment to excellence.

Beyond economic contributions, Falcon Gold & Precious Metals is poised to make a significant socio-economic impact in Qatar. By establishing a strong gold refining and trading presence, the company will contribute to the country's GDP and attract foreign investment, strengthening Qatar's global economic position. The facility will create numerous employment opportunities, from skilled refining professionals to administrative and

The refinery has an impressive capacity, with the ability to refine up to 600 kilograms of gold bullion per day, primarily in the form of 1kg bars. Additionally, the facility will produce specialized products, including coins and customized bars, allowing businesses to imprint their company seals or design unique gold items. The standard product range includes bars of various sizes, from 1g to 1kg, as well as 1oz coins. Presales for Falcon Gold's products are now open, and inquiries can be made through their official sales channel.

support staff, fostering local talent development through training programs.

Falcon Gold's emphasis on technological advancement and innovation places Qatar at the forefront of the refining and mining sectors. Collaborations with local universities and research institutions will drive knowledge transfer and promote a culture of continuous innovation. Additionally, Falcon Gold is dedicated to environmental sustainability, adhering to ISO 14001:2015 standards and implementing eco-friendly practices to minimize its ecological footprint.

The company also embraces corporate social responsibility by engaging with local communities, supporting education, healthcare, and infrastructure projects. Ethical business practices remain a priority, ensuring the fair treatment of all stakeholders involved in its operations.

Falcon Gold's impact extends beyond Qatar's borders, as its operations will enhance the country's presence in international gold markets. By exporting refined gold and precious metals, Falcon Gold contributes to Qatar's global trade partnerships, further solidifying the nation's reputation for high-quality, ethical, and innovative industrial practices.



Abidin Ayikol
Falcon Gold Managing Director

Carrefour كارفور

27th مارس
March 2025

- 29th مارس
March 2025

(سيتي سنتر، فيلاجيو، لاند مارك، قطر مول و إزدان الوكرة)
(City Center, Villaggio, Landmark, Mall of Qatar & Ezdan Al Wakrah)

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PRODUCT



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Thursday to Friday only!



/PACK
بـالعلبة

2.75 QR

طماطم كرزية ٢٥٠ غم، محلية
Tomato cherry 250g, Local



/KG
كـغ

3.00 QR

موز، الإكوادور
Banana, Ecuador



/PACK
بـالعلبة

3.75 QR

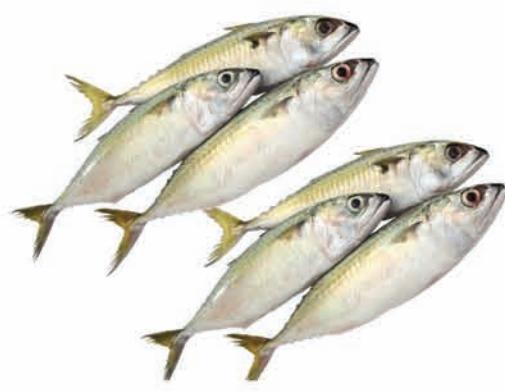
عنب أبيض، الهند
White grapes, India



/PACK
بـالعلبة

5.75 QR

توت أزرق، المغرب/البيرو
Driscoll's blueberry 125g, Morocco / Peru



/KG
كـغ

5.50 QR

ماكيريل، السعودية
Mackerel, Saudi



/KG
كـغ

9.50 QR

شعرى حجم كبير، محلي
Sherry big, Local



/KG
كـغ

9.75 QR

سمك صافي، محلي/عمان
Saffi medium, Local / Oman



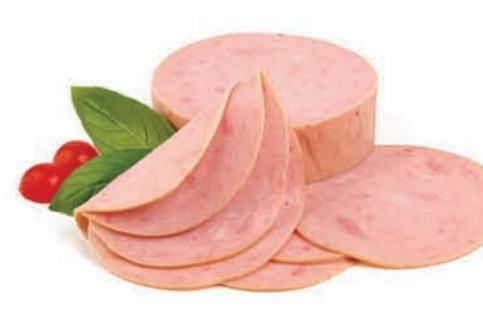
/KG
كـغ

9.50 QR

بلطي، مصر
Tilapia, Egypt



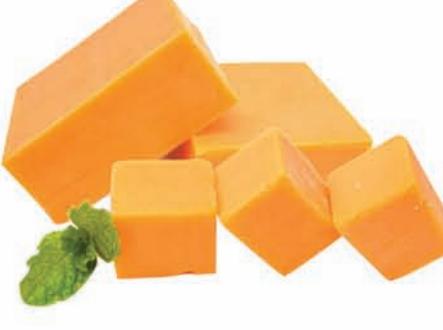
12.00 QR
لحم بقر ٥٠٠ غم
جنوب إفريقيا
Beef cubes 500g, South Africa



/KG
كـغ

19.75 QR

مرتديلا متنوعة، الإمارات
Mortadella assorted, UAE



/KG
كـغ

28.75 QR

جبنة شيدر متنوعة
المملكة المتحدة
Castle cheddar cheese assorted, UK



/PACK
بـالعلبة

14.75 QR

باقة ورد ١٠
Mixed rose bouquet X 10

FROZEN



14.00 QR
7.75 QR
دجاج كاملة ... اثمن
Frangosul whole chicken 1000g



16.00 QR
8.00 QR
زيت دوار الشمس نوف ١.٨ لتر
Noof sunflower oil 1.8L

36.00 QR
24.75 QR
أرز سورينجاري
مناعي ٥ كـغ
Mannai super punjabi rice 5kg



14.00 QR
5.00 QR
مشروب فيمتو ٧٠٠ مل
Vimto cordial fruit 710ml



5 Pieces
16.00 QR
8.75 QR
مناديل ناعمة للوجه ٢٠٠ منديل، طبقتان
Jelp Cleans soft facial tissue 200 sheets 2ply

34.00 QR
12.00 QR
مسحوق الغسيل أرييل ٢.٥٥ كـغ
Ariel detergent 2.25kg



The widest range delivered in
60 MINUTES



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MoPH announces Eid working hours

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) announced yesterday the working hours in the public healthcare sector during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. The ministry said that all emergency and inpatient services at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) hospitals, including Pediatric Emergency Centers, will operate 24/7 throughout the holiday. The ambulance service will also continue to operate around the clock.

Additionally, 20 out of 31 health centres affiliated with the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) will remain open during the Eid al-Fitr holiday. The corporation will also provide urgent care services 24/7 at 12 health centres, including six designated for paediatric urgent care cases.

The Ministry of Public Health has directed all government

health institutions to announce the detailed working hours of their services during the holiday. The ministry also announced the working hours for several of its service departments during the Eid break.

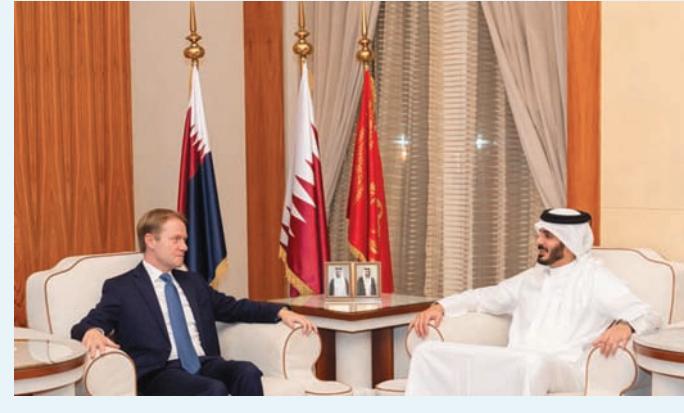
The Medical Relations and Treatment Abroad Department will receive visitors at the Ministry of Public Health building from 9am to 12pm, except on the first day of Eid and on Fridays and Saturdays. The Newborn Registration Office at the Women's Wellness and Research Center will operate from 8am to 12pm throughout the Eid holiday, excluding the first day of Eid, Friday, and Saturday.

The Death Registration Unit will also receive visitors during the entire Eid al-Fitr holiday at the Unified Humanitarian Services Office from 8am to 12pm.

The ministry further noted that the unified healthcare sector call centre (16000) operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Interior minister meets French envoy

HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with ambassador of the French Republic to the State of Qatar Jean-Baptiste Faivre. The meeting discussed bilateral co-operation between the two countries and ways to enhance and develop it, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. (QNA)



Al-Misnad in virtual call with Sweden's minister



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad met via video conference with Swedish Minister for International Development Co-operation and Foreign Trade Benjamin Dousa. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed co-operation relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them, particularly in the development field. The latest humanitarian developments in the region, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Syria, and Sudan, were also discussed, in addition to a number of topics of common interest. (QNA)

Cabinet extends highest Eid al-Fitr greetings to Amir, people of Qatar

QNA
Doha

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani chaired the Cabinet's regular meeting held on Wednesday. Following the meeting, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohammadi stated the following:

The Cabinet extended its highest greetings to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani on the imminent advent of the blessed Eid al-Fitr, praying to Almighty Allah to return this blessed occasion to His Highness with the best of health and happiness, to the be-

loved country of Qatar and its people and residents with prosperity and growth under the Amir's wise leadership, and to the Arab and Islamic nations with goodness, welfare and blessings.

The Cabinet then considered the items on its agenda and approved a draft decision by the Minister of Justice regarding fees for certain services offered by the Ministry of Justice. The draft decision aims to align with the updated list of ministry services, streamline fees by reducing and merging some charges, and clarify the names of others. Additionally, it exempts first-time transactions for establishing businesses, companies, and institutions from documentation fees, facilitating business setup and supporting Qatar's business environment. The decision also in-

cludes fee reductions for people with disabilities and individuals over the age of sixty.

The Council also approved a draft decision by the Minister of Municipality regarding the determination of fees for services provided by the Public Works Authority (Ashghal). The draft resolution aims to align with the updated list of services offered by the Authority, add new services, and exempt certain government agencies, their administrative units, and companies contracting with them from specific fees.

The Cabinet took the necessary measures to ratify an agreement on mutual administrative assistance for the effective implementation of customs law, and the suppression, investigation, and combating of customs violations between the govern-

ment of the State of Qatar and the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, as well as a memorandum of understanding for co-operation in education, higher education, and scientific research between the governments of the State of Qatar and the Republic of Sierra Leone.

The Cabinet also decided to approve a draft memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding co-operation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as a draft memorandum of understanding on co-operation in the field of ports between the Ministry of Transport of the State of Qatar and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works of the Republic of Ecuador.

Furthermore, the Cabinet reviewed a draft law amending some provisions of Law No. (17) of 2018, which established the Workers Support and Insurance Fund, and a draft decision of the Board of Directors of the Fund, amending some provisions of Decision No. (2) of 2022 regarding the controls and procedures for disbursing workers dues. The Cabinet took the appropriate decision regarding both. The Cabinet concluded its meeting by reviewing two reports and taking appropriate decisions regarding them: a report on the results of the National Civil Aviation Security Committee's work from 1/7/2024 to 31/12/2024, and a report on the participation of the State of Qatar's delegation, headed by HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry, in the Qatar-India Business Forum.

Qatar National Library unveils engaging lineup of events for April

Qatar National Library (QNL) is hosting a diverse range of events throughout April.

On April 10, the Library kicks off its monthly events with a special evening with musicians from Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, celebrating the significant contributions of women to global arts and music. The event will feature works by female composers such as Clara Schumann, Cecile Chamis-

nade, and Ethel Smyth, complemented by video projections honouring female artists in visual arts and architecture.

On April 12, the Mursidhi Mentorship Program (formerly known as the QNL Mentorship Program) returns under its new identity, offering one-on-one mentorship opportunities for the youth seeking guidance on academic and career pathways. The introductory session will be followed by two

additional sessions on April 19 and 26.

The Library will host a two-day academic symposium on April 14 and 15 that explores the rich traditions of Moroccan book and manuscript production. The event is part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture and also celebrates Arabic Manuscript Day 2025, under the patronage of the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organisation (Alesco).

QNL will also celebrate Autism Awareness Month with a special sensory exploration event, alongside other educational, cultural and community-focused initiatives.

On April 19, QNL invites families to a heartwarming day of sensory. The event, held in collaboration with the Parents' Autism Platform and tailored for children with autism and their families, will feature interactive activities,

sensory-friendly storytelling and opportunities to connect with the Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) to learn about the latest autism research.

On April 26, the Library will host a workshop dedicated to CV writing, cover letters and personal statements. Whether applying for a job or university programme, this session offers students and graduates practical advice and personalised feedback. (QNA)

QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation



Awqaf updates 'Ramadan Oasis' on Islamweb portal

The Islamweb, affiliated with the Department of Call and Religious Guidance at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs (Awqaf), has launched an updated version of "Ramadan Oasis" that offers rich and updated contents spotlighting various aspects related to the holy month of Ramadan. The move is intended to provide superb services for visitors and those interested in these contents. The oasis features a combination of Sharia Fatwas, a variety of consultations, as well as religious and cultural articles, in addition to beneficial recreational materials.

It leverages AI technologies to streamline the surfing process for these Fatwas and articles, thereby optimising the quality of content and ensuring prompt access to the required information.

In addition, Islamweb has dedicated special programs to children that tackle Ramadan values and ethics through a thrilling and dramatic style, including the series of Ramadan as a school of ethics that corrects some erroneous behaviours through simplified and beneficial footage.

The oasis likewise offers live Fatwa services around the clock, either via Telegram, or WhatsApp, thereby helping users obtain accurate answers to a wide diversity of jurisprudence matters related to Ramadan. (QNA)

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/>

Official

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Belarus

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 President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko on the occasion of his swearing-in for a new presidential term, wishing him success in performing his duties and for the bilateral relations between the two countries further progress and prosperity.

Amir sends cables of congratulations to president of Bangladesh

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 President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Mohammed Shahabuddin, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day.

Qatari surgeons to perform cochlear implants for Kyrgyz children

Qatari surgeons will perform cochlear implant surgeries for Kyrgyz children with hearing impairments from April 4 to 11, the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs announced. The efforts are funded by Awqaf in co-operation with the Ministry of Public Health and Hamad Medical Corporation. They are also part of a co-operation agreement between Awqaf and the Ministry of Public Health, with the aim of providing advanced medical care for children with fourth degree of hearing loss or deafness to be able to integrate into society and education. An Awqaf statement said the medical team's agenda in Bishkek includes initial examinations for dozens of children with hearing loss, in co-operation with local hospitals, plus following up on children who had undergone cochlear implants during previous visits. Children who have received cochlear implants are being rehabilitated at specialised medical centres in Kyrgyzstan, under the supervision of a Kyrgyz medical team. (QNA)



Scope of Work:

Contractor shall provide Nitrogen (N2) tanks with a capacity of 10,000 liters and 20,000 liters, vaporizers with a minimum capacity of 2,500 Nm3/hr, nitrogen heaters with auto temperature controllers, associated hoses, supervisors and skilled manpower in order to maintain a constant nitrogen header pressure of 6.0 bar at 280C during Company's various shutdowns/start-ups and any other situations. The Contract duration shall be for a period of five (05) years starting tentatively from Q12026 with a sole option for Company to extend the Contract duration further for up to two (02) years.

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).

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عيد مبارك
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



Carrefour  **كارفور**



We extend our heartiest greetings to

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

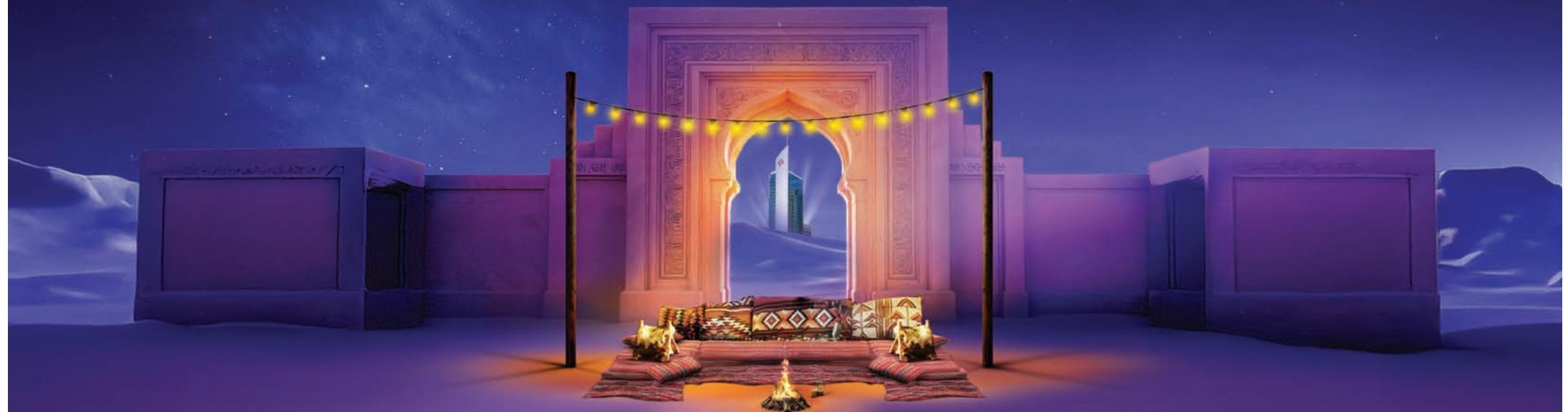
His Highness
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani
Father Amir

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

And to all honorable people of Qatar on the occasion of

Eid Al Fitr

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



The Chairman, Board of Directors, Group Executive Officer
and all employees of Commercial Bank



البنك التجاري
COMMERCIAL BANK |

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

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Minister of Justice chairs Lawyers Admission Committee meeting



The Lawyers Admission Committee held a meeting, chaired by HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi. The committee discussed the topics on its agenda, including the swearing-in of seven new lawyers. The committee also addressed several regulatory matters concerning the legal profession, including the minutes of the subcommittees, and took appropriate decisions. During the meeting, HE the Minister and Chairman of the Committee congratulated the new lawyers, commending their expertise and skills, which represent a significant enhancement to the Qatari legal and judicial system. (QNA)

'Qatar's focus on vulnerable groups reflects commitment to achieving well-being for all'

Qatar has achieved notable human rights progress in recent years manifested in many initiatives and accomplishments across sectors of health, education, labour, social security, and sustainable development, said HE the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah. Speaking during the Univers

sal Periodic Review (UPR) of Qatar before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, HE al-Attiyah highlighted Qatar's special focus on vulnerable groups, showcasing the nation's deep commitment to the well-being of all citizens and residents.

HE al-Attiyah noted that several draft laws are currently under study by relevant state authorities.

These laws represent significant steps toward further strengthening and protecting human rights within the State.

HE al-Attiyah reiterated the NHRC's dedication to continuously applying human rights principles to all under Qatar's legal jurisdiction, expressing the nation's determination to continue advancing on this path. (QNA)

Qatar attends Petersberg summit to support global climate action



QNA
Berlin

Qatar took part in the ongoing Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin with a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), headed by HE MoECC Undersecretary Eng Abdulaziz bin Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Zaid al-Mahmoud.

This participation underscores the State's commitment to supporting international efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development.

The dialogue aims to strengthen international co-operation for implementing the Paris Agreement and achieving the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, as well as preparing for the COP30 climate conference scheduled to take place in Brazil. This year's agenda focuses on accelerating the implementation of Paris Agreement goals, discussing climate finance, nationally determined contributions (NDCs), adaptation measures, and climate governance.

In his speech during the sessions, HE the MoECC Undersecretary highlighted the pivotal role of subsidiary body sessions at the Bonn Climate Change Conference in paving the way for global stocktake dialogues, mitigation programs, and just transitions tailored to the national circumstances of each country.

The Qatari delegation emphasised the importance of international collaboration as a corner-

stone for meaningful progress in climate action, referring to Article 3, Paragraph 5 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which advocates for a global economic system that supports sustainable development, particularly in developing nations. Through its participation in the dialogue, Qatar aims to highlight the significance of climate justice, support a just transition to a low-carbon economy, and ensure that developing countries receive assistance in adopting environmentally friendly technologies.

The Petersberg Climate Dialogue is a significant platform for high-level discussions on climate co-operation and serves as a key step in preparing for the upcoming COP30 conference.

'Palestinian people face existential threat due to genocide, ethnic cleansing war'

QNA
Geneva

Qatar stressed that the fraternal Palestinian people are today, in full view of the world, going through a critical phase in their history, noting that they face a real existential threat as a result of the war of extermination and ethnic cleansing waged by Israel, the occupying power.

They are also subjected to forced displacement schemes, settlement and racist policies, collective punishment, starvation, the denial of humanitarian aid, and the complete destruction of infrastructure and all the components of a decent life needed by any people in the world.

This came in a statement by the State of Qatar delivered by Acting Charge d'Affaires of Qatar's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva Jawhara bint Abdulaziz al-Suwaidi during her participation in the "General Debate on the Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories, Item 7" within the framework of the 58th session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva.

Al-Suwaidi condemned the ratification of a law allowing set-



tlers to own land and property in the West Bank and the ratification of the separation of 13 illegal settlement neighbourhoods in the West Bank, paving the way for their legalisation as colonial settlements.

These laws constitute a flagrant violation of international law and resolutions, as well as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

They undermine efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace and further jeopardise security and stability in the Middle East. She also condemned the resumption of the unjust Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, the deliberate bombing of civilians and civilian facilities, especially hospitals, and the Israeli occupation government's announcement of the establishment of a special

agency for the displacement of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip under the name "voluntary departure." She urged the international community to assume its legal and moral responsibilities and take all necessary measures, which are numerous, to compel the Israeli occupation to immediately halt its aggression against the Palestinians, ensure the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in all its stages and details, provide full protection for Palestinian civilians, in accordance with the provisions of international law and relevant agreements, and ensure accountability for all those responsible for the crimes and grave violations committed against the Palestinian people.

She reiterated Qatar's firm stance on the justness of the Palestinian cause and the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination. She also reiterated Qatar's commitment to continuing its efforts within the framework of its joint mediation to end the war on the Gaza Strip, prevent its recurrence, and rebuild the Strip, leading to the implementation of the two-state solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

HBKU supports regional dialogue at Mena environmental law conference

The Unesco Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) co-organised the 6th Mena Environmental Law and Policy Scholars' Conference, which saw international experts reaffirm the importance of environmental law in advancing water security.

Hosted in Riyadh by the Association of Environmental Law Lecturers in Middle East and North African Universities (Asselmu) and Faculty of Law, Arab East Colleges, the conference convened scholars, educators, and practitioners for discussions and workshops on critical topics, including environmental law education, the role of the judiciary in climate justice, and regional water gov-

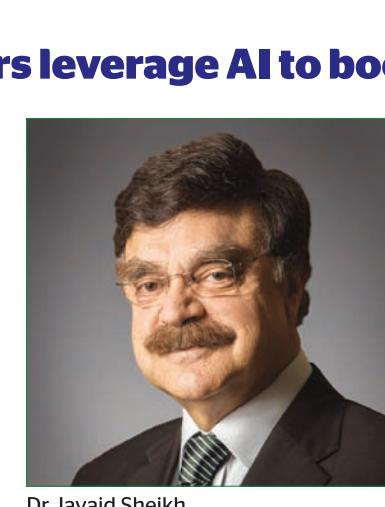
ernance frameworks. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme, and Sader Legal Publishing assisted in the organisation as sponsors, with the Rule of Law Programme Middle East & North Africa, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., and Unesco Chair on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development providing technical support.

Dr Damilola Olawuyi, SAN, professor, HBKU's College of Law, and Unesco Chairholder on Environmental Law and Sustainable Development, said: "Environmental law is a core component of the region's efforts to advance water security. Through our ongoing collaboration with UNEP, Asselmu and Arab East Colleges, we work to strengthen

environmental policy and legal frameworks around the Arab world by helping to build the expertise and research capacity of key organisations and institutions." The conference also benefited from the contribution of two HBKU College of Law students. Elena Athwal, SJD Candidate, served on the jury of a session dedicated to early career

researchers, giving them feedback on their projects alongside academic and industry experts. One of the early researchers was Cristina al-Thalathini, JD Candidate, who presented her ongoing project, "Upscaling Eco-Innovative Technologies in Water Management through Public-Private Partnerships in Qatar."

A large language model (LLM) called Llama 3, by Meta, was then used to analyse the data and create personalised recommendations for each student. The data from the students, who were monitored for a six-week period, was interpreted using Llama 3, which was programmed with detailed prompts constructed by the research team to guide the analysis of the data and the automatic generation of personalised recommendations for each student.



Dr Javaid Sheikh.

All student data and recommendations were collected anonymously to protect the participants' privacy. The researchers noted that care must be taken to avoid overwhelming students with excessive feedback, and highlighted the risk of "model hallucinations," which is when the LLM generates plausible but incorrect information. They also stated that future iterations of this type of research will need to incorpo-

rate safeguards against harmful recommendations and ensure that outputs are critically evaluated for accuracy and appropriateness.

Dr Ahmed said: "The research gave us clear indications that large language models have the capacity to interpret different types of data from multiple sources and generate personalised recommendations that could help improve students' well-being and academic performance." Other researchers who worked on the paper, which has been published in *Scientific Reports*, a leading journal, were Dr Javaid Sheikh, dean

of WCM-Q, professor of psychiatry and professor of population health sciences; Dr Alaa Abd-Alrazaq, assistant professor of research in population health sciences; Dr Rawan al-Saad, postdoctoral associate, and Sarah Aziz, research specialist. Dr Sheikh said: "This research demonstrates the great potential of AI and large language models in particular to boost academic performance and well-being for students. The study also highlights the need for AI approaches to be deployed extremely carefully to protect the safety and well-being of users."



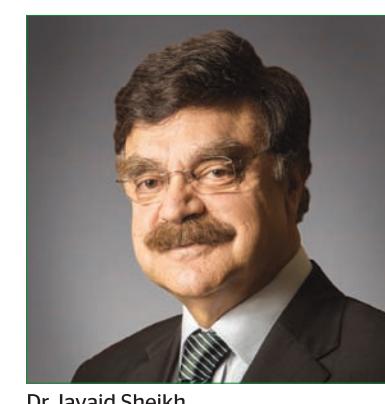
Participants at the conference.

WCM-Q researchers leverage AI to boost student wellness, academic success

Researchers at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) have published a study that utilised large language models and data from wearable smart devices to generate personalised recommendations to enhance the wellbeing and academic performance for a group of school students.

The research, led by Dr Arfan Ahmed, assistant professor of research in population health sciences, collected data from 12 students from academic reports, sleep quality surveys, and wearable Fitbit devices which recorded activity levels (step counts), sleep minutes and stress scores.

A large language model (LLM) called Llama 3, by Meta, was then used to analyse the data and create personalised recommendations for each student. The data from the students, who were monitored for a six-week period, was interpreted using Llama 3, which was programmed with detailed prompts constructed by the research team to guide the analysis of the data and the automatic generation of personalised recommendations for each student.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

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THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Awqaf starts distributing Zakat al-Fitr kits

The Zakat Affairs Department at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs has started packing and distributing Zakat al-Fitr. This is part of its ongoing efforts to promote social solidarity and deliver Zakat al-Fitr to the deserving persons before Eid al-Fitr prayer.

The initiative, according to an official statement from Awqaf, is implemented in co-operation with a major shopping mall.

It was attended by students from Al Noor Qur'anic Educational Centre affiliated with the Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance. The aim is to instil the values of giving and charitable work in the hearts of young generations.

Youssef Hassan al-Hammadi, head of the Zakat Services Department, stated that the department has set the value of a sa' (one sa') of the local staple food for this year at QR15 per person. This is equivalent to 2.5kg of rice.

The Zakat Affairs Department has co-operated with a leading delivery company to distribute the food baskets to eligible families



before the Eid al-Fitr prayer. This is in order to ensure the kits reach the beneficiaries on time and in a manner that preserves the dignity of the beneficiaries and avoids any embarrassment.

The Zakat al-Fitr include rice, flour and lentils. Al-Hammadi noted that the department was keen to select the best and highest quality varieties available in the local market to ensure adequate food for needy families and bring

them joy and happiness on Eid al-Fitr.

"All of the Zakat al-Fitr funds are converted into food distributed to those in need within Qatar without any deductions. This complies with Islamic Shariah law," he said.

This initiative comes within the framework of the Zakat Affairs Department's efforts to activate community partnerships and promote the values of solidarity



and compassion among members of society. Students from Al Noor Qur'anic Educational Center were involved in the process of filling the kits to instil in them the values of social responsibility and charitable work and engage them in efforts to support families in need during the holy month.

The Zakat Affairs Department noted that Zakat al-Fitr can be paid early during Ramadan. The Zakat payer delegates the Za-

kat Affairs Department, which is responsible for distributing it to those entitled to it at the prescribed time, ensuring that it reaches those entitled to it before the Eid prayer and absolving the Zakat payer of his obligation. This is in line with the teachings of Islamic Shariah.

Zakat al-Fitr 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. Also, it can be paid by sending SMS Z in English or letter Za in Arabic to 92229 for Ooredoo users and 97779 for Vodafone users.

Collection points are functional in more than 30 mosques. Their locations are posted daily on the department's social media accounts. This reinforces the mosque's social role and facilitates Zakat donors' access to their Zakat.

QRCS ensures food security for families during Ramadan

The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) is wrapping up its Ramadan Iftar projects outside Qatar, having distributed food parcels and hot meals to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people across the globe, including in Gaza, Syria, and Yemen.

These projects form part of its 'Ramadan Fruitful Giving 2025 Campaign (1446 AH)'.

In partnership with Hayat Yolu Association, 15,300 food parcels were distributed across Gaza, under the supervision of Dr Mohamed Salah Ibrahim, assistant secretary-general for Relief and International Development at QRCS, who headed a two-week official delegation to Gaza.

Dr Ibrahim took part in the packaging of food parcels in Deir Al-Balah, Central Gaza, as well as the distribution of food parcels at the Insan Camp in the Central Governorate.

In co-ordination with Gazelle Destek Organisation, QRCS' personnel in Gaza distributed 227,367 hot meals at shelters in Northern and Southern Gaza throughout Ramadan.

QRCS' representation office in the West Bank and Al-Quds, in co-operation with Palestine Red Crescent Society, is distributing Ramadan food parcels to 7,850 beneficiaries across the northern, central, and southern West Bank, as well as villages and outskirts of Al-Quds City.

Thanks to the generous donors of Qatar, food parcels were distributed in Baidoa and Banadir respectively, helping 11,166 fasting people at various camps find food during Ramadan. In co-ordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society, more than 13,500 food parcels were distributed to internally displaced people (IDP) at camps of Aleppo and Idlib.

Qatari ambassador to Sudan Mohamed Ibrahim al-Sada participated in the distribution of 2,088 Ramadan food parcels to



QRCS distributes food parcels and hot meals to hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people across the globe.



vulnerable people in many states, in co-operation with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society.

In co-operation with Yemen Red Crescent Society, QRCS distributed 7,476 food parcels for the benefit of 52,332 IDPs and most vulnerable people in six governorates (Taiz, Aden, Al-Hudaydah, Lahij, Al-Mahrah, and Raymah), at a total cost of \$458,656. Each one-month parcel contained 60kg of food staples like flour, sugar, rice, dates, canned beans, vegetable oil, and salt.

The Tanzanian Red Cross Society and Uganda Red Cross Society distributed Ramadan food parcels to 171 poor and low-income families in Tanzania and 600 families, or 3,000 Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees and the host community in Uganda respectively.

With the donations of the benevolent people of Qatar, QRCS and the Lebanese Red Cross worked together to deliver Ramadan Iftar parcels to 11,700 Syrian

refugees and other local beneficiaries across Lebanon.

QRCS' representation office in Bangladesh completed the Ramadan Iftar project, in co-operation with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, with diverse food parcels distributed to 10,100 poor families at refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, as well as 6,350 poor local families in several districts.

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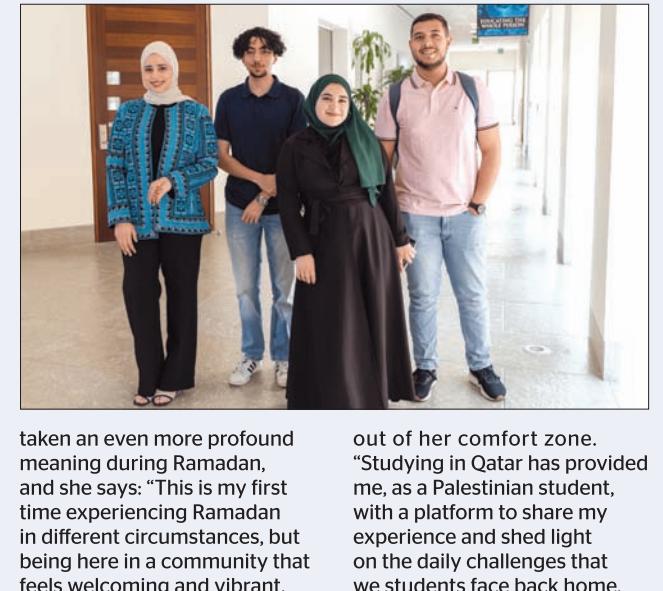
Thanks to the generous donors of

Palestinian students find home at QF's Education City during Ramadan

Through a partnership between Qatar Foundation, Education Above All, and Georgetown University in Qatar, four Palestinian students from Al Quds Bard College have embarked on a journey of academic and personal transformation at Education City. Scholarships that have been offered to these students enable them to study at Georgetown University in Qatar - one of Qatar Foundation's (QF) partner universities - while continuing their education at Al Quds Bard College, in addition to gaining hands-on experience through internships at Qatar Museums.

As the Holy Month of Ramadan unfolds, the Palestinian students, who came to Qatar and to Education City in January 2025, reflected on their journey so far and their experiences in Education City, which has become much more than an academic campus. For Shatha Alsabbah, a third year Molecular Genetics student from Bethlehem, Qatar represents her first adventure outside Palestine.

"This is my first time leaving my country, and Qatar has been great so far - everything is easy, accessible, and everyone I met has been kind and helpful," she said, while emphasising the stark contrasts between her life in Palestine and her new environment. "There are many things I couldn't do in Palestine, so experiencing the freedoms here has been eye opening and something I'm very grateful for." Alsabbah's experience in Qatar and Education City has



taken an even more profound meaning during Ramadan, and she says: "This is my first time experiencing Ramadan in different circumstances, but being here in a community that feels welcoming and vibrant, makes me feel that I am in a place where my academic and personal journey is deeply nurtured."

For Abdelrahman Mekki, a junior from Jerusalem who is studying Social Thoughts, Economics, and Policy, Education City is a nurturing space where academic dreams and personal growth come together, paving the way for a brighter future for Palestine.

He contrasts life in Doha with his experiences back home: "The ease of mobility here is something I have to highlight. It is much easier here in Qatar compared to the West Bank. Even the freedom of speech feels more expansive."

Majd Johar, a third year Molecular Genetics student with a deep passion for social sciences, recalled the initial challenges of stepping

out of her comfort zone. "Studying in Qatar has provided me, as a Palestinian student, with a platform to share my experience and shed light on the daily challenges that we students face back home, especially on our way to university".

For Majd, hope and passion are the driving forces that propel her forward despite the hardships back home. Her message is clear: even when the journey is challenging, the promise of a better future remains steadfast.

Alaa Abhari, a third year student specialising in Human Rights and International Law with a minor in Urban Studies, values the hybrid structure of the programme that blends rigorous academic classes with real world internships.

"Being able to attend classes at both institutions and intern at Qatar Museums has given me a unique opportunity to grow both as a human rights advocate and as an engaged citizen in a diverse community," he said.

Qatar Pavilion at Venice to explore hospitality's impact on architecture

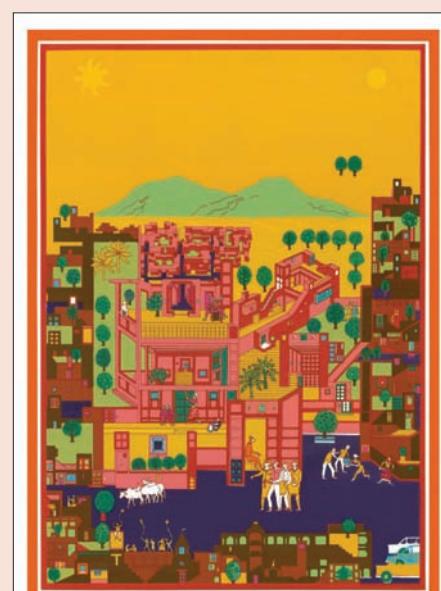
Qatar Pavilion's 'Beyti Beytak. My Home is Your Home. La mia casa è la tua casa' exhibition, at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2025, will examine how hospitality shapes the architecture and urban environments of the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (Menasa).

According to Qatar Museums, the two-part exhibition which marks the nation's debut at the event, also explores how modern and contemporary architecture responds to the needs of communities while reimagining a sense of belonging.

Beyti Beytak produced by QM and organised by the future Art Mill Museum, features an installation in the Giardini della Biennale and a presentation at the ACP-Palazzo Franchetti. The presentation at the ACP-Palazzo Franchetti is organised with the support of ACP Art Capital Partners. Beyti Beytak will be on view from May 10 to November 23.

In a press statement, Qatar Pavilion commissioner and QM chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani said: "This exhibition not only highlights the profound contributions of Menasa architects to global architecture but also reflects our shared values of hospitality, community, and belonging."

"As we continue to shape a cultural landscape of dialogue and exchange, this exhibi-



Qatar Pavilion explores hospitality's impact on architecture.

tion serves as a testament to Qatar's role in advancing cultural diplomacy and fostering a deeper understanding of our diverse architectural heritage."

In the Giardini, on the site of the future Qatar Pavilion, Pakistani architect Yasmeen Lari's Community Centre (2024) showcases Lari's humanitarian, social, cultural, and architectural development model.

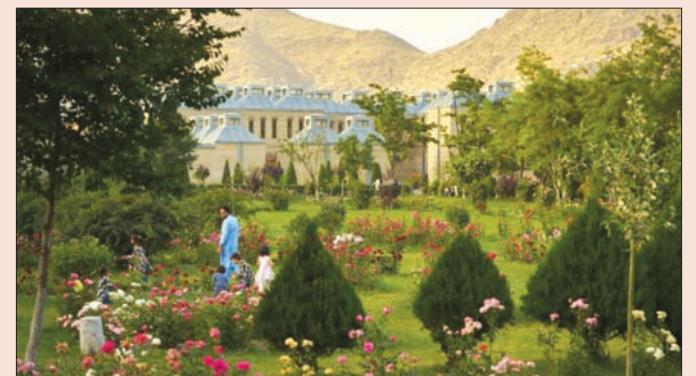
The temporary installation, a bamboo structure, uses techniques that were deployed by the architect as part of relief efforts prompted by the Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, an organisation she co-founded in 1980.

The foundation continues to establish shelters and villages for those suffering from a devastating earthquake and repeated flooding in Pakistan.

Events inside the Community Centre throughout the duration of the Biennale Architettura 2025 will focus on traditional Qatari forms of welcome, including the serving of coffee and dates.

At ACP-Palazzo Franchetti, the exhibition will present the work of more than 30 architects, including several who have not previously shown in Venice. Examining three generations of architects that have worked in the Menasa region, the exhibition features drawings, photographs, models, and important archival documentation.

A section is also devoted to the architecture and urbanism of Doha, which includes several doors from the old city that have been restored with the support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.



Ajmal Maiwandi, Chihilston Garden and Palace Rehabilitation, Kabul, 2015-2018.



Rizvi Hassan, Hindupura Community Centre, Rohingya, completed in 2019.



Keeping your copybook clean

Imagine there was a copybook in which you wrote down all the good and bad deeds you do every day, all your life.

If you possessed such a book, what would you do? Would you try to count your good deeds and your sins? Would you look at your good deeds and take pride over them? Would you look at your sins and regret them? Would you wonder if there was a way to erase them, so that you could meet Allah The Almighty on the Day of Resurrection and receive your Book of Deeds in the right hand?

If such thoughts have crossed your mind, you should know you can keep your copybook clean by taking yourself to account. The early generations of Islam were in the habit of holding themselves to account regularly and would encourage each other to do the same.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Hold yourselves in reckoning before you get held in 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.”

Allah The Almighty praised obedient people saying (what means): {Verily, those who live in awe for fear of their Lord; And those who believe in the Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of their Lord; And those who join not anyone (in worship) as partners with their Lord; And those who give that (their charity) which they give (and also do other good deeds) with their hearts full of fear (whether their alms and charities have been accepted or not), because they are sure to return to their Lord (for reckoning). It is these who hasten in the good deeds, and they are foremost in them [e.g. offering the compulsory Salaat (prayers) in their (early) stated, fixed times and so on].} [Qur'an, 23: 57-61]

‘Aa’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said, “I asked the Prophet, sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, about this verse say-

ing, ‘Are those who consume alcohol, commit adultery or fornication, and steal?’ He, sal-lallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, said: ‘No! O daughter of the Sid-deeq [the one who verifies the truth; an appellation for Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him]; in fact they are those who fast, pray and spend in charity, yet they fear that Allah might not accept from them; those are the ones who rush into performing righteous deeds.’” [At-Tirmithi, Ibn Maajah and Ahmad]

This is how our honourable Salaf (righteous predecessors) were. They always tried to come close to Allah The Almighty by performing good deeds, and they rushed towards Him with different types of virtues and acts of worship. They held themselves to account for mistakes they committed, and most of all, they feared that Allah The Almighty might not accept their deeds from them.

Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, used to hold his own tongue and say, “This is what will cause my destruction.”

‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, recited chapter At-Toor until he reached the verse which says (what means): {Verily, the Torment of your Lord will surely come to pass.} [Qur'an 52:7] Then he cried so hard that he became physically ill and people visited him on account of this ailment. Whenever ‘Uth-maan ibn ‘Aa’faan, may Allah be pleased with him, used to stand by a grave he would cry until he would wet his beard and say, “If I am standing in a place between Paradise and Hell Fire, and do not know to which of the two Allah will command that I go, I would choose to become dust before knowing my destiny.”

‘Ali ibn Abu Taalib, may Allah be pleased with him, used to fear two things the most, following his desires and having a (false) hope of living long; he used to say, “As for the hope of living long, it makes one forget the Hereafter, and as for following one’s desires it prevents one from following the truth.”

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

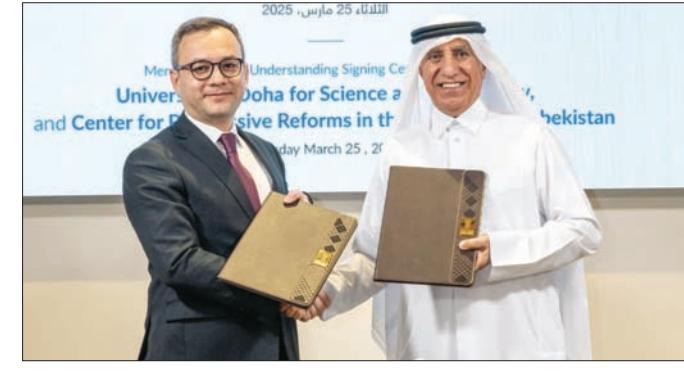
Uzbekistan, Qatar enhance ties with new vocational skills centre

In a landmark step towards strengthening bilateral co-operation, the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) and Uzbekistan’s Center for Progressive Reforms signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday, marking a major step in academic co-operation and professional development.

The agreement, facilitated by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Doha, reflects the shared commitment of both nations to advancing education, skills development, and economic empowerment, a statement said.

The Uzbek-Qatar Vocational Skills Center that will be established in Namangan, Uzbekistan, will train engineers, industrial workers and nurses using UDST’s world-class vocational programmes, ensuring graduates receive certifications that open doors to employment in Qatar, the Middle East, and beyond.

Qatar has emerged as a regional leader in education, with institutions like UDST setting benchmarks in technical and vocational training. Recognised



for its cutting-edge curricula, state-of-the-art facilities, and industry-aligned programmes, UDST has become a model for applied learning, equipping students with skills that meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global economy.

Beyond its domestic achievements, Qatar has been a key supporter of educational and humanitarian initiatives worldwide, providing development assistance to partner nations. Projects like the Uzbek-Qatar Vocational Skills Center align perfectly with

Qatar’s vision of fostering sustainable development through education and capacity-building. Such support would further solidify Qatar’s role as a global advocate for education-driven growth while deepening ties with Uzbekistan.

UDST president, Dr Salem Al-Naemi, praised the initiative, stating: “This partnership underscores our university’s commitment to sharing Qatar’s expertise in vocational training with friendly nations. This collaboration will enhance academic

exchanges, research initiatives, and professional training, ultimately benefiting students, faculty, and the workforce in both Qatar and Uzbekistan.”

Mirshohid Aslanov, co-founder of the Center for Progressive Reforms, highlighted the project’s potential to reduce unemployment in Uzbekistan’s Fergana Valley, a region with a high working-age population. “By equipping young people with internationally competitive qualifications, we are creating pathways to prosperity for thousands,” he said.

A Bright Future for Uzbek-Qatar Collaboration

The Uzbek-Qatar Vocational Skills Center marks a new chapter in bilateral relations, demonstrating how shared expertise can drive meaningful change. As both nations continue to explore joint ventures in trade, investment, and education, this initiative stands as a testament to the power of international co-operation in building a more skilled and prosperous future, the statement added.

HIA offers travel tips for Eid al-Fitr holidays

As the Eid al-Fitr travel period approaches, Hamad International Airport (HIA) said it is fully prepared to facilitate a seamless travel experience for departing and arriving passengers to meet the expected increase in travel traffic during this period.

HIA has offered tips for a smooth journey. “Early check-in: Save time by checking in online and arrive at the airport at least three hours before your flight. Check with your airline for online check-in options to streamline your journey.” Qatar Airways offers early check-in for economy passengers from 12 to four hours before departure, until April 5, excluding US and Canada flights. QR Passengers using early check-in get a 10% discount at Qatar Duty Free stores.

“Self-check-in & bag-drop: Utilise self-service kiosks to check-in, print boarding passes, and tag your bags. Drop them off at the bag-drop counters before

proceeding to border control. “E-Gates: Citizens and residents above the age of 18 can expedite the immigration process using e-gates (restrictions apply). Minimum height to use the E-Gates is 130cm.

“Baggage guidelines: Baggage allowances and weight restrictions will be strictly enforced by airlines. Check with your airline for specific guidelines. Non-standard or oversized luggage is discouraged. A baggage repack area is available in the departure hall with luggage weighing machines to assist passengers.

“Parking: Use the dedicated parking facilities for quick drop-offs, pick-ups, and short stays. Avoid leaving vehicles unattended at the curbside. Enjoy special discounted rates for long stays in car park (using the pre-book option only), ensuring proximity to the terminal.

“Car rental and limousine services are all located close to the arrival hall. Valet parking: For



As the Eid al-Fitr travel period approaches, Hamad International Airport (HIA) has said it is fully prepared to facilitate a seamless travel experience for departing and arriving passengers.

PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

the ultimate convenience, drop off your vehicle with our valet service available at Departures.

“Ensure no prohibited items like liquids, aerosols, and gels are in your carry-on. Pack liquids in 100ml containers within a clear, resealable bag. Remove electronic devices larger than a mobile phone for X-ray screening.

“Small vehicles powered by

lithium batteries, such as hoverboards, are not allowed. Download the HIAQatar App: Get real-time updates on flight status, baggage claim, and directions to boarding gates. Enjoy food, beverage, and retail offers from Qatar Duty Free. Digital wayfinding: Use QR codes at various digital touchpoints for easy navigation around the terminal.”

Eight days of Eid al-Fitr festivities at Old Doha Port

Old Doha Port will be hosting eight days of Eid al-Fitr celebrations, from the first day of Eid, featuring immersive experiences in the Mina District and across the Mina Parks, offering a vibrant showcase of Qatar’s rich heritage, musical artistry, and family entertainment.

With free entry, from 4pm to 10pm daily, visitors can enjoy cultural performances and activities that reflect the spirit of Eid. Guests will be welcomed by the rhythmic sounds of a traditional maritime band performing at Al Bandar, alongside live music from different artists throughout Mina District. The district will also come alive with interactive shows for children, several play areas, and a group of family-friendly activities that will enrich visitors’ experiences.

Complementing the celebrations in Mina District, the Mina Park behind The Terminal will host the family-focused Mega-park Carnival from March 27 to April 6, running from 4pm to 12 midnight during Ramadan and 3pm to 11pm after Ramadan.

The carnival features live shows, giant inflatables, interactive games, street food stalls, and a bustling bazaar, making it the ultimate gathering space for families and children of all ages.

This Eid programming aligns with Old Doha Port’s mission to connect the local community and international visitors to a dynamic port where history lives, maritime tourism thrives, and culture prospers, a statement said yesterday. As a landmark that celebrates Qatar’s heritage while shaping the future of regional tourism, Old Doha Port

continues to foster experiences that are inclusive, memorable, and rooted in national pride.

“Our Eid celebrations embody the values of community, hospitality, and tradition that define Old Doha Port,” CEO engineer Mohammed Abdulla al-Mulla said.

“We are proud to offer a space where families can gather, culture can be experienced firsthand, and joyful memories can be made. As the marine gateway to Qatar, we aim to ensure that every celebration at the Port reflects the beauty of our nation’s story; past, present, and future.” The Eid celebrations build on the momentum of a memorable Ramadan season at Old Doha Port which welcomed large crowds through a series of dynamic and culturally resonant events.

Food safety drive intensified ahead of Eid

Doha Municipality has been carrying out daily inspection campaigns on various commercial activities related to food handling to ensure their compliance with the required health regulations, stressed Najlaa Abdulrahman al-Hail, head of the Health Control Section at the Doha Municipality.

She told local Arabic daily *Arrayah* that such inspections are conducted through a 24-hour shift system in preparation for the upcoming Eid al-Fitr, ensuring continuous and effective monitoring using the latest inspection tools and equipment to achieve the highest food safety standards.

Field workshops are being organised to raise health awareness among workers in the food establishments and facilities. The inspection campaigns also extend to women beauty salons, barber shops, and laundries, with awareness programmes for workers on the health requirements stipulated in Ministerial Decision No 38 for 2025 regarding non-medical public health standards. Al-Hail said the Health Control section has conducted over 12,000 inspection rounds during the holy month of Ramadan.

These inspections covered all commercial ac-



tivities and several areas in Doha and the Industrial Area, resulting in issuing of more than 50 violation reports in accordance with Law No. 8 of 1990 on the regulation of human food control and the removal of these violations. The section also worked on correcting the violators’ situations to arrive at satisfactory settlements. The awareness campaigns targeted more than 8,000 workers in the food establishments, salons, and laundries to ensure compliance with the required health standards.

Expanded Eid celebrations at MDD



This year’s expanded programme at MDD will take place from 2pm to 1am.

Msheireb Properties is set to transform its downtown district into a vibrant hub of Eid al-Fitr festivities, unveiling an expanded lineup of immersive experiences and live entertainment from the first day of Eid until April 5.

In a press statement, Dr Hafiz Ali Abdulla, senior director of Corporate Communications at Msheireb Properties, said: “This Eid, we’ve decided to re-imagine our approach to festivities in Msheireb Downtown Doha (MDD), inspired by Qatari heritage and infused with engaging new experiences. Our vision is to make

Msheireb the heart of Eid festivities in Doha, offering something for everyone to enjoy.” The programme, taking place from 2pm to 1am, reflects the spirit of Eid and offers culturally authentic interactive entertainment. Baraha Msheireb, the largest courtyard in the region, will host family games, and live performances featuring a guitarist, saxophonist, violinist, as well as duo and trio musicians throughout the day.

Sikat Al Wadi will host international roaming entertainment, featuring performers from diverse backgrounds, alongside live music and interactive shows. Festival-goers can also participate in the popular painting workshop, where they can craft personalised Eid decorations, and unwind at the Mindfulness Mirror Installation, designed for moments of reflection amid the excitement.

At Sahat Al Nakheel, visitors can enjoy stage performances, engaging children’s activities, giveaways, and an Eid ‘Q&A’ session, creating an interactive experience for all ages. At Al Kahraba street, pop-up stalls will be installed offering traditional Eid specialties. For food enthusiasts, pop-up stalls will serve traditional Eid specialties, offering a culinary journey through the holiday’s signature flavours. Visitors can unwind at the Ghori shop.

The Host Msheireb experience at Company House Courtyard will be back to welcome families with a range of games, challenges, and creative workshops and traditional offerings from Saasna Restaurant. Activations at Host Msheireb will take place from 4-11pm.

MoPH inspects food outlets, warehouses

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has launched a comprehensive regulatory plan on locally produced food products and food warehouses, aimed at enhancing food safety and protecting consumer health.

This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts by the MoPH to maintain health regulations, ensure food safety standards, and to promote public health in Qatar.

The plan includes several key components, with a primary focus on monitoring factories and locally produced food to ensure they comply with approved health requirements. Additionally, inspections of food warehouses are being conducted to ensure that the storage conditions for both local and imported products meet health standards and do not expose products to any risks. Since the beginning of 2025, the Food Safety Department at MoPH has conducted 378 inspection visits to food factories, during which 725 samples of



food products were withdrawn for safety testing.

Meanwhile, MoPH has awarded 23 local factories with certificates of compliance with health requirements, enabling them to export their products to foreign markets.

The MoPH statistics indicate that 257 food shipments have been exported since the beginning of the current year, containing 1,537 Qatari products, with a total weight of 8,574,586,000 kilograms. MoPH reaffirms its constant commitment to ensuring the highest food safety standards, aiming to strengthen consumer confidence in local products and promote the distribution of high-quality Qatari food products that meet health requirements in global markets.

Latin American art set for display at National Museum of Qatar

Qatar Museums (QM) and the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Malba) will present 'LatinoAmericano' at the National Museum of Qatar from April 21 to July 19, showcasing 170 works by more than 100 artists from across the continent.

Modern and contemporary art from Malba and Eduardo Costantini collections, the first large-scale showcase of modern and contemporary Latin American art in the West Asia and North Africa (Wana) region, will be showcased at the exhibition as part of the Qatar Argentina and Chile Year of Culture.

"Aligned with Qatar's

National Vision 2030, we take pride in serving as a cultural hub at one of the world's crossroads, using the arts to establish dialogue, bridge cultures, and promote mutual understanding. That is the mission of the Years of Culture initiative, which has been strengthening Qatar's relationships worldwide since 2012 and is proud to support the LatinoAmericano exhibition as part of this year's partnerships with Argentina and Chile," QM's Exhibitions, Public Art, and Rubayia acting deputy CEO Sheikha Reem al-Thani said in a press statement.

Curated by Issa al-Shirawi, curator and head of International Exhibitions

at QM; and María Amalia García, curator in chief at Malba, LatinoAmericano will address the question: How do you represent or capture the diversity of a full continent through images?

Using the collections of Malba, Eduardo F Costantini, and QM, the exhibition will offer a panoramic view of the artistic production of a continent through groups of works by key artists from 1900 to the present day. It will consist of approximately 170 works by more than 100 artists from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Paraguay, Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay across painting, photography, video, sculpture, installation, and archival documentation.



LatinoAmericano will critically explore and redefine Latin American art within historical narratives and theoretical frameworks. Organised into five thematic sections, the exhibition will examine the

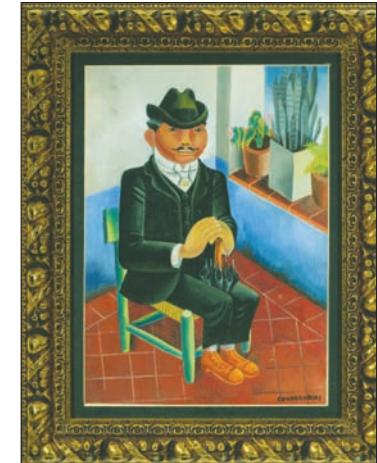
region's diverse identities, urban development, moments of societal transitions, and the transformative artistic practices unique to Latin America.

On display will be key pieces from Malba's collec-

tions, such as 'Autorretrato con chango y loro' (1942) by Frida Kahlo, 'Baile en Tehuantepec' (1928) by Diego Rivera, and 'Rompecabezas' (1967) by Jorge de la Vega, among others.

A number of these masterpieces are newly acquired by Malba and will make their debut in this exhibition, offering an exclusive first glimpse. These works will be presented alongside works from the collections of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the future Art Mill Museum by artists such as Alice Rahon and Mathias Goeritz, among others.

In the courtyard of the National Museum, Marta Minujín's Sculpture of Dreams (2023) will be installed.



The exhibition will showcase modern and contemporary art from Malba and Eduardo Costantini collections as part of the Qatar Argentina and Chile Year of Culture.

National Archives 'aims for leadership in document management'

Dr Ahmed Abdullah al-Buainain, secretary-general of the National Archives of Qatar, has emphasised that the National Archives of Qatar seeks to become a leading national centre for document and records management.

Dr al-Buainain, stressed that the National Archives of Qatar is making documented information an effective tool in supporting development, enhancing transparency, and enabling institutions to access it in more efficient and impactful ways.

In an interview with Al Jazeera Net, he said that to achieve this goal, the National Archives of Qatar Strategy 2025-2030 was recently launched.

Dr al-Buainain said: "The 2025-2030 strategy reflects the state's commitment to preserving and managing documents as a fundamental part of its responsibility to protect national identity and ensure the sustainability of documentary heritage. Through this strategy, we aim to transform the National Archives of Qatar into a leading national centre for document and records management. So that documented information becomes an effective tool in supporting development and enhancing transparency."

He further commented on the role of digital transformation and emphasised that: "Digital transformation is one of the key pillars of the 2025-2030 strategy."

As work is underway to modernise document management systems and leverage AI technologies to make access to infor-



Dr Ahmed Abdullah al-Buainain

mation more efficient and faster, one of the key initiatives within the new strategy is the launch of an advanced digital platform that allows institutions and individuals to conduct advanced searches within the national archive database.

This platform will rely on AI technologies to classify and analyse documents. Thus, contributing to improving search accuracy, reducing the time required to retrieve information, and enhancing integration between various entities.

Concerning partnerships with research or international institutions, Dr al-Buainain stated: "International and local partnerships are an essential part of the National Archives Qatar's vision. We are working to expand our collaboration with research institutions and specialised centres to ensure access to the latest technologies and practices in document management. For example, the 'International Archives' project is an initiative aimed at retrieving historical records related to Qatar held abroad. In order to contribute

to building a more comprehensive historical picture of the country and its development over time.

"To achieve this goal, several memoranda of understanding have been signed with international archives, such as the Ottoman Archives and the British Archives.

On the most prominent programmes and initiatives to be implemented, Dr al-Buainain explained: "We are implementing a set of programmes and initiatives aimed at improving the preservation and management of national documents and records, in order to enhance their availability to support national institutions, scientific research, and protecting Qatar's documentary heritage."

He quoted the current examples of the Institutional Documentation Project as it represents one of the most important strategic projects. It aims to preserve and organise official documents issued by relevant authorities and institutions in the country, to ensure continued access to them as a reference documenting the development of government policies, decisions, and programmes. The Family Archives Project focuses on documenting the social history of Qatar by collecting and preserving family correspondence, photographs, and manuscripts that reflect cultural and social transformations across generations.

In addition, the Oral History Project, a significant project aims to document personal narratives and historical testimonies from national figures, decision-makers, and community leaders, he said.



Earth Hour observed at Doha Festival City

On March 22, when the world observed Earth Hour, Doha Festival City had two Qatari boys dim 50% of the mall's lights from 8.30pm to 9.30pm, a statement said.

The duo, 14-year-old Omar Nusair al-Ejli and 6-year-old Ibrahim Nusair al-Ejli are encouraging every household in Qatar to appoint a 'Young Earth Hour Officer' – a family member responsible for switching off unnecessary lights one hour before bedtime, every night.

Earth Hour is a global movement where individuals, businesses, and cities switch off lights for an hour to promote energy conservation. By putting young voices at the forefront, Doha Festival City reinforces its commitment to sustainability, aligning with Qatar National Vision 2030 and fostering eco-conscious practices in the community.

"At Doha Festival City, we believe in the power of youth," said Christopher Barton, director – Asset Management, Qatar, Al-Futtaim Real Estate.

Beyond Earth Hour, Doha Festival City remains a leader in sustainability, with smart lighting systems, optimised HVAC operations, reducing energy consumption by 25%, and 23 EV charging stations, with Tesla Superchargers in the works. Recognised for its efforts, the mall received the Silver Award for Sustainability Excellence from the Middle East Council's Shopping Centre Awards in 2024, the statement added.

Gaza Strip on verge of unprecedented famine

QNA
New York

The Gaza Strip is on the verge of an unprecedented famine with Israeli occupation rejecting relief organisations' endeavours to bring essential supplies into the enclave, UNRWA said yesterday.

A statement from the UN agency warned the situation in Gaza is deteriorating as the occupation's aggression on the Strip continues for the second week. Essential supplies are running low, and some will only be sufficient for a few more days unless shipments resume entering the Strip, the statement read.

UNRWA spokesperson Adnan Abu Hasna said there is a near-total collapse in all aspects of life in Gaza. He stressed the need for a ceasefire and the entry of thou-



Palestinians make their way with belongings as they flee their homes, after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders, in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip.

sands of trucks of aid, considering that otherwise it would be a

death sentence for the place, the infrastructure, and the people.

Militants 'kill 16 on Nigerian army base, military outpost'

Reuters
Maiduguri/Yaounde

Suspected fighters launched a co-ordinated attack on an army base and a military outpost in Nigeria's northeastern Borno State, killing at least 16 people, security sources told Reuters.

Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province

militants have mainly operated in the northeast of Nigeria, attacking security forces and civilians and killing and displacing tens of thousands of people.

In the latest assault, Boko Haram insurgents and ISWAP fighters struck an army base in the Wajir area of Borno State at about 2100 GMT on Monday and set military equipment on fire, the sources said.

CONSOLIDATION Zimbabwe president fires army chief

Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa acted to consolidate his hold on power with Tuesday's dismissal of a senior general, political analysts say, amid growing fears of a possible coup by former allies, Reuters reported from Harare. Tuesday's removal of Anselem Sanyatwe, Zimbabwe's second most powerful general and head of the army, was the third such reshuffle by Mnangagwa in recent months. Mnangagwa also removed the chief of police and head of Zimbabwe's intelligence service.

Sudan army chief declares capital 'free' from inside presidential palace

AFP
Khartoum

Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan arrived at Khartoum's presidential palace yesterday, declaring the capital "free" of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces after nearly two years of war.

"Khartoum is free, it's done," said Burhan, Sudan's de facto leader, in a broadcast aired by state television, capping a multi-day campaign by his forces to recapture central Khartoum's state institutions from paramilitary control.

When war broke out in April 2023 between Burhan and his former deputy, paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, the RSF quickly swept through the capital's government district, forcing authorities to flee to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

An army source said earlier troops had surrounded the RSF in its last major stronghold in the Khartoum area, just south of the city centre.

Military spokesman Nabil Abdallah said the force had recaptured and "fully secured" Khartoum airport, where RSF fighters were stationed for nearly two years.

The takeover comes a day after the army was accused of one of the war's deadliest air strikes, killing dozens in a market in the western region of Darfur, according to the United Nations. Witnesses said they counted 270 bodies buried.

Following their recapture of the presidential palace in a key battlefield victory on Friday, the army has surged through central Khartoum, clearing out paramilitary pockets.

"The remnants of the RSF militia are fleeing" across the White Nile, said the army source, requesting anonymity because he is not authorised to brief the media.

According to the source, the paramilitaries were using the Jebel Awdiya bridge, their only remaining way out of Khartoum, linking it to RSF positions west of the city and then to its strongholds in Darfur. Across Khartoum, witnesses and activists reported this week



Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan gestures to soldiers inside the presidential palace after the Sudanese army said it had taken control of the building, in the capital Khartoum, yesterday.

that RSF fighters were retreating southwards, ostensibly towards Jebel Awdiya.

The RSF did not respond to a request for comment.

Since April 2023, the war has killed tens of thousands of people, uprooted more than 12mn and created the world's largest hunger and displacement crises.

It has also divided the country in two, with the army holding the east and north, and the RSF controlling nearly all of Darfur and parts of the south.

Following a year and a half of defeats, the army took the tide late last year, pushing through central Sudan to Khartoum.

The RSF had so far maintained its position in Jebel Awdiya, as well as the western and southern outskirts of Omdurman – Khartoum's twin city just across the Nile. According to the United Nations, more than 3.5mn people were forced to flee the capital since the start of the war.

Millions more, unable or unwilling to leave, were left to face hunger, abuses and indiscriminate shelling of their homes by both sides.

Footage shared on social media appeared to show residents of central Khartoum celebrating the RSF's retreat.

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GULF TIMES

German fiscal bonanza offers no quick fix

Germany gave the final green light on Friday to a massive surge in borrowing seen as boosting the country's anaemic economy and ailing corporate sector – but just not in the short term. Chronic labour shortages and numerous bureaucratic procedures needed to launch spending plans and tendering processes will delay the positive ripple effect both for companies and an economy that has contracted for two straight years.

While no-one contends that procedures for allocating huge sums of public money should be anything less than rigorous, German business leaders say that process will inevitably take time.

The fiscal plan includes a €500bn (\$545bn) special fund for infrastructure and plans to largely remove defence investment from the rules that cap borrowing. Marc Tenbreg, head of the DMB association – which represents the thousands of “Mittelstand” small and medium sized firms that power the domestic economy – says that red tape, complex European tendering requirements and personnel bottlenecks often meant past funding did not get used effectively.

“It will not be enough to simply pump more money into infrastructure projects,” he said. Financial markets have welcomed the historic reforms, sending Germany’s blue-chip DAX 30 to record highs this week with the construction and defence sectors expected to benefit the most. Berlin’s plans have also fuelled a rally in the euro and eurozone yields, with the German 10 year yield reaching 2.938% last week, its highest since October 2023.

Yet economists say the fiscal expansion, formally approved on Friday by the upper house of parliament, will not provide a quick fix for the economy this year.

Germany has lagged other European economies over the past two years

average of more than two percentage points a year over the next 10 years. With the deal on a defence and infrastructure spending ramp-up, it expects the economy to grow 2.1% in 2026, instead of 1.1%.

Still, it recently revised its forecast for the economy this year, saying it will stagnate due to weak private spending, after forecasting in December that it was set for 0.2% growth.

Likewise, business executives across the manufacturing heartland who are struggling with high labour and energy costs, and cutting jobs, are not joining in the cheer just yet.

“It’s too early for this to really spur confidence for investment decisions,” said Ulrich Flatken, head of Mecanindus Vogelsang, which produces cylindrical fasteners for carmakers and other industrial clients and has a staff of 450.

“Let’s see whether truly tangible structural reforms become part of a coalition agreement,” he said, referring to talks between political parties to form a coalition government following last month’s election.

Germany has lagged other European economies over the past two years. Jesko von Stechow, CFO of gas producer Westfalen AG, said a mix of EU and domestic regulation had “virtually choked off the economy” and called on the country’s new leadership to make drastic reductions to bureaucracy. The spending plans have revived the fortunes of some of Germany’s oldest and downtrodden companies – ThyssenKrupp has doubled in value in a month.

But while its European steel business, the continent’s second-largest steelmaker, welcomed the stimulus this week, its head said he is sticking with plans to cut capacity and jobs.

Siemens announced plans on Tuesday to cut 5,600 jobs at its Digital Industries business. Around 340,000 academics from the STEM sector – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics – are expected to leave the labour market by 2035, worsening the current gap of around 130,000 vacancies in engineering and IT professions.

“We need more engineering capacity to implement the huge investment package in concrete projects that will take several years,” Adrian Willig, director of the Association of German Engineers (VDI), told Reuters.

Some even warn of a potential overheating of the economy unless those production capacities are expanded.

“Otherwise, there is a risk the enormous demand from the investment packages will lead to a sharp increase in inflation,” said Robert Grundke, senior economist for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development think tank. – Reuters

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The military balance shifts in favour of the Sudanese Army



By Mohamed Suleiman al-Shazly
Khartoum

On Wednesday, the Sudanese Army announced that it had taken control of Khartoum Airport, marking the largest ground assault on both military and civilian targets across vast areas of the capital. The move has brought the army closer to declaring Khartoum free from the control of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Since the early hours of the day, the army advanced across various districts of the capital, securing significant victories. These included the completion of its control over the Soba Bridge, which links eastern Khartoum to the south, as well as full control of the Manshiya Bridge connecting the East Nile district to central Khartoum. Intense clashes are also ongoing near Jabal Awliya Bridge, the final remaining access point for RSF forces.

Sudanese Army spokesperson, Nabil Abdullah, said, “We have reclaimed the last RSF camp in Khartoum and established full control over the airport, which has been completely secured after two years of RSF presence there.” The army further announced that it is nearing full control of Khartoum after retaking a number of strategic facilities, including the Tayba camp, located south of the capital, which had been one of the RSF’s largest strongholds.



Members of the Sudanese army gather next to a destroyed military vehicle after a battle with Rapid Support Forces in the capital Khartoum on Tuesday. (Reuters)

In successive briefings, Abdullah confirmed that the army had secured the Tayba camp in the Tayba Hasnab area south of Khartoum. The army also solidified its hold on the western side of the Manshiya Bridge over the Blue Nile, which connects East Nile to central Khartoum, as part of ongoing operations to seize control of the capital.

He added that Sudanese forces had cleared the Baqir area in Gezira state, situated to the southeast of Khartoum, a strategic entry point to the city. Abdullah further emphasised that the Sudanese military was advancing “steadily and professionally, dismantling the remaining strongholds of the thugs” – a reference to RSF elements – within the capital.

These swift developments are the latest in the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Army and the RSF, which erupted on April 15, 2023. The violence followed the army’s capture of the presidential palace and several ministries in Khartoum in the past few days.

Although the RSF remains determined to continue its resistance in Khartoum, the fast-evolving situation on the ground suggests they may soon be forced to withdraw from all three parts of the capital – Khartoum, Khartoum Bahri, and Omdurman. This raises concerns that the RSF might shift its focus towards Darfur.

The RSF, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), comprises tens of thousands of fighters. The force first gained prominence in Darfur, where it assisted the government in suppressing an insurgency from 2003 onwards. Initially known as the Janjaweed – meaning “devils on horseback” – these militias earned a notorious reputation.

Since April 2023, the war between the Sudanese Army and the RSF has resulted in over 20,000 deaths and displaced nearly 15 million people, according to estimates from the United Nations and local authorities. Research conducted by American universities has placed the death toll at around 130,000.

In recent weeks, the RSF’s territorial control has rapidly diminished, with the Sudanese Army making significant gains across the states of Khartoum, Gezira, White Nile, North Kordofan, Sennar, and Blue Nile.

However, as the conflict deepens, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The ongoing violence has caused widespread suffering, with millions of civilians trapped in conflict zones, facing shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.

Humanitarian aid has struggled to reach those in need due to the intensifying fighting and the disruption of vital infrastructure. The war has also exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, with displaced persons living in precarious conditions, both within Sudan and across neighbouring countries. As the humanitarian crisis escalates, the prospects for peace remain uncertain, leaving countless families in desperate need of assistance and protection.

(mohsuleiman@gmail.com)

Russia gets US to agree to help lift curbs

By Guy Faulconbridge
Moscow

Russia said on Tuesday the US had agreed to help it lift restrictions on food, fertiliser and shipping companies in exchange for agreeing to a maritime security deal in the Black Sea.

The United States further said it had also agreed with Russia and Ukraine to implement a ban on military strikes on each other’s energy installations.

If implemented, the deals would represent the clearest progress yet towards a wider ceasefire that Washington sees as a stepping stone towards peace talks to bring an end to Russia’s three-year-old war in Ukraine.

What are the main aspects of the agreements?

What does Russia get?

The United States said it “will help restore Russia’s access to the world market for agricultural and fertiliser exports, lower maritime insurance costs, and enhance access to ports and payment systems for such transactions.”

Russia said it had agreed with Washington “to ensure the implementation of the Black Sea Initiative, which includes ensuring the safety of navigation in the Black Sea, the non-use of force and the prevention of the use of commercial vessels for military purposes while organising



appropriate control measures through the inspection of such vessels.”

The Kremlin said the deal on maritime safety would come into force after a series of conditions were met – including the lifting of restrictions and sanctions on a major agricultural bank, exporters of food and fertiliser and on Russian vessels.

Those include the lifting of restrictions on state agricultural bank Rossekhzobank “and other financial organisations involved in ensuring international trade in food (including fish products) and fertilisers, their connection to SWIFT, and the opening of necessary correspondent accounts.”

The conditions include the removal of curbs on trade finance operations and of sanctions on companies producing and exporting food (including fish products) and fertilisers, as well as lifting on the work of insurance companies with shipments of food (including fish products) and fertilisers. Other conditions include the lifting of

restrictions on the maintenance of ships in ports and sanctions against Russian-flagged vessels involved in food and fertiliser trade.

Restrictions would also be removed on the supply of agricultural machinery to Russia, as well as on other goods involved in the production of food (including fish products) and fertilisers.

What does Ukraine get?

Washington said it had agreed with Ukraine “that the United States remains committed to helping achieve the exchange of prisoners of war, the release of civilian detainees, and the return of forcibly transferred Ukrainian children.”

Where did this deal come from?

The deal is effectively a return to the Black Sea Initiative, struck in 2022 with the help of Turkey and the United Nations, and to an accompanying three-year memorandum of understanding under which UN officials agreed to help Russia get its food and fertiliser exports to foreign markets.

Russia withdrew from the initiative in 2023, complaining that its own food and fertiliser exports faced serious obstacles, though Moscow is not currently facing serious problems getting its grain to market by the Black Sea.

While Russian exports of food and fertiliser are not subject to Western sanctions, Moscow has said restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance have amounted to a barrier to shipments. – Reuters

DISASTER

Mass bleaching drains life from Australian reef

An "unprecedented" mass bleaching event has been recorded off Australia's western coast, scientists said, turning huge chunks of a celebrated reef system a sickly dull white. A months-long marine heatwave had "cooked" the sprawling Ningaloo Reef, ocean scientist Kate Quigley said, part of a world heritage-listed marine park renowned for vibrant corals and migrating whale sharks. Although environment officials were still verifying the scale of damage, data collected by Quigley and a team of scientists found it was on track to be the reef's worst mass-bleaching event in years. "Warm oceans have just cooked the corals this year," Quigley said.

OFFBEAT

Australian lawmaker shocks senate with dead salmon stunt

An Australian lawmaker dangled a floppy dead salmon in senate yesterday, accusing the government of falling hook, line and sinker for polluting industrial fish farms. Environmental advocates have questioned the practices of intensive salmon farms in the island state of Tasmania, accusing them of choking waterways with waste. Greens senator Sarah Hanson-Young said she was fed-up with a government that refused to enforce stringent environmental standards. "On the eve of an election, have you sold out your environmental credentials for a rotten, stinking extinction salmon," she said, briefly pausing to heft the fish on to her desk.

DISPUTE

S Korea installs sea platform to monitor China presence

South Korea has set up a "reciprocal" platform in a disputed area of the Yellow Sea, known in Seoul as the West Sea, where China has increasingly built structures. Oceans Minister Kang Do-hyung said yesterday. China says its structures are fish farming equipment, but they have raised alarm bells in Seoul over concerns Beijing could be seeking to stake claims in the Provisional Maritime Zone, where the two countries' exclusive economic zones overlap. Kang told parliament that South Korea is monitoring the Chinese presence by setting up a stationary floating platform for "environmental survey".

COMMENT

UK sanctions on ex-military unhelpful, says Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's new government yesterday criticised Britain's sanctions against three retired top military commanders, saying the move complicated reconciliation after its decades-long conflict. The British government announced on Monday sanctions against the former head of Sri Lanka's armed forces, Shavendra Silva, former navy commander Wasantha Karannagoda and former army commander Jagath Jayasuriya. A former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebel Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, was also sanctioned. London's "action did not assist but served to complicate the national reconciliation process in Sri Lanka", the government said.

Prince Harry resigns from Africa charity after row

AFP
London

Prince Harry said he had quit as patron of a charity he founded in southern Africa almost 20 years ago with a "heavy heart" amid a bitter boardroom battle, in a new blow to the royal living in self-exile.

Harry and Lesotho's Prince Seeiso said they were resigning after a "devastating" dispute between trustees and board chair Sophie Chandaqua, who was appointed in 2023. Relations "broke down beyond repair," they said in a joint statement. Harry had vowed not to walk away from the Sentebale charity in his first public speech after he dramatically split from Britain's royal family in 2020.

He founded the charity in 2006 in honour of his mother Princess Diana with Seeiso to help young people with HIV and AIDS in Lesotho and later Botswana.

"What's transpired is unthinkable. We are in shock that we have to do this, but we have a continued responsibility to Sentebale's beneficiaries," they said.

Trustees on the board had already left the UK-registered organisation and requested Chandaqua's resignation. It is not clear exactly what is behind the rift, but Chandaqua said she was being targeted after raising serious concerns about the charity including accusations of harassment.

ment, misogyny and racism.

Sentebale said in a statement it had not received the resignations but confirmed a "recalibration of the board."

Last year, the charity said it was seeking to become a "locally led organisation" and was evolving to focus on "youth health, wealth and climate resilience" in southern Africa. In December it announced the departure of its London-based CEO and the appointment of a new interim executive director in Johannesburg, in a "first move to place the most critical senior roles in close proximity to its programmes in Southern Africa."

In their statement, Harry and Seeiso said: "With heavy hearts, we have resigned from our roles as patrons of the organisation until further notice, in support of and solidarity with the board of trustees who have had to do the same."

"It is devastating that the relationship between the charity's trustees and the chair of the board broke down beyond repair, creating an untenable situation."

Chandaqua alleged she had faced a backlash after trying to air concerns about the charity's governance. The Zimbabwe-born lawyer said this was "the story of a woman who dared to blow the whistle about issues of poor governance, weak executive management, abuse of power, bullying, harassment, misogyny, misognoir – and the coverup that ensued."



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves speaks as she presents the Spring Budget Statement at the House of Commons, in London yesterday.

Reeves cuts spending plans in face of slowing UK economy

Reuters
London

British Finance Minister Rachel Reeves trimmed her plans for spending increases in a budget update yesterday that provided some reassurance for investors, but the risks of a global trade war could put fresh tax hikes on the table later this year.

Britain's budget watchdog halved its forecast for economic growth in 2025 and said a catch-up towards the end of the decade would not make up all of the difference. It also raised its forecasts for public borrowing and inflation.

Reeves sought to pin the downgrade on "a changing world," citing the war in Ukraine and uncertainty overhanging the world economy

which is at risk of upheaval from US President Donald Trump's trade tariff plans.

"The global economy has become more uncertain, bringing insecurity at home as trading patterns become more unstable and borrowing costs rise for many major economies," she said.

However, the budget watchdog said an increase in employers taxes announced by Reeves in her first full budget last October would weigh on growth in earnings for workers from next year, representing another brake on the economy.

Reeves said she would not let the slowdown jeopardise her budget plans and she acted to rebuild a nearly £10bn (\$12.90bn) fiscal buffer that had been more than wiped out in just five months by the weaker economic outlook and higher borrowing costs.

"These fiscal rules are non-negotiable. They

are the embodiment of this government's unwavering commitment to bring stability to our economy," she said in her speech, which focused heavily on increased defence spending.

One of Reeves' self-imposed fiscal rules is to aim to balance day-to-day public spending with tax revenues by 2030. To get back on target, she shaved growth in day-to-day spending on public services to 1.2% a year in real terms from 1.3%.

The centre-left Labour government also announced £4.8bn of cuts to welfare payments, angering some of its lawmakers.

A government assessment of the changes, which aim to slow a surge in sickness-related benefits, estimated 3.2mn households would lose out and 250,000 additional people would enter relative poverty after housing costs by the end of the decade.

Maharashtra scraps 6% EV tax plan to boost adoption

India's Maharashtra state has withdrawn a proposal for a 6% sales tax on electric vehicles priced above \$35,000 to encourage adoption at a time when EV sales are still nascent in the country - the world's third-largest auto market. "We are disincentivising (EVs in the luxury segment) without any reason... we will not go ahead with this," Devendra Fadnavis, chief minister of the western state, told lawmakers in the state assembly yesterday.

India's EV market is small, making up about 2% of total car sales of 4mn last year, as worries related to higher pricing and inadequate charging points weigh on adoption. The federal government wants to increase this to 30% by 2030. A reversal of the proposal, made weeks earlier, comes as global EV giant Tesla is gearing up to sell cars in India where it will compete with homegrown rivals such as Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors.

French foreign minister in Indonesia



Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto (right) meets French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barot in Jakarta yesterday.

India-China issues 'can be addressed without conflict'

Reuters
New Delhi

India and China will have issues in the "foreseeable future" but there are ways to address them without getting into a conflict, India's foreign minister said yesterday.

The two countries reached an agreement in October regarding patrolling along their Himalayan border, thawing a stand-off that began in 2020 when 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed in clashes.

The dispute impacted several aspects of bilateral ties, from trade and technology to air travel.

"We know that, between India and China... at least in the foreseeable future, there will be issues, but there are ways of addressing those issues, and what happened in 2020 was not the

way," Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said in a conversation with non-profit Asia Society.

"We had a war with China in 1962. It took us 14 years after that to send back an ambassador. It took us 12 more years for the prime minister of India to visit that country... From 1988 till 2020, while we had incidents in the border areas, we had not actually had bloodshed. The last bloodshed was 45 years before 2020. What happened in 2020 was actually very traumatic for the relationship. It wasn't just the bloodshed, it was the disregard of written agreements," he added.

India Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also said last week that "trust, enthusiasm, and energy" would return to the equation with China, and that the focus of the countries was to ensure difference do not turn into disputes.

Devastating South Korea wildfires claim 24 lives

Reuters
Uiseong County, South Korea

The death toll in the wildfires raging across South Korea's southeastern region rose to 24 and the pilot of a firefighting helicopter was killed when the aircraft crashed yesterday, as the country battles some of its worst forest fires in decades.

The deadly wildfires have spread rapidly and forced more than 27,000 people from their homes, the government said.

The blazes, fuelled by strong winds and dry weather, have razed entire neighbourhoods, closed

schools and forced authorities to transfer hundreds of inmates from prisons.

"We are deploying all available personnel and equipment in response to the worst wildfires ever but the situation is not good," acting president Han Duck-soo said, adding that the US military in Korea was also assisting.

The Korea Forest Service said 24 people had been confirmed dead in the fires. It did not give a breakdown, but earlier the Safety Ministry said 14 people had died in Uiseong county, and four other deaths were linked to a blaze in Sancheong county. Many of the dead were older peo-

ple in their 60s and 70s, said Son Chang-ho, a local police official.

The Forest Service also said one of its fire-fighting helicopters crashed while trying to extinguish a blaze and the pilot was killed.

South Korea relies on helicopters to tackle forest fires because of its mountainous terrain and the incident led to the brief grounding of the fleet.

The Uiseong fire, only 68% contained and exacerbated by gusty winds, showed "unimaginable" scale and speed, said Lee Byung-doo, a forest disaster expert at the National Institute of Forest Science.

Climate change is projected to

make wildfires more frequent globally, Lee said, citing the unusual timing of wildfires that ravaged part of Los Angeles in January and a recent wildfire in northeast Japan.

"We have to admit large-scale wildfires are going to increase and for that we need more resources and trained manpower," he said.

The Korea Forest Service has been facing technical issues with its fleet of 48 Russian helicopters. Eight have been out of operation since last year because sanctions related to the Ukraine war mean it cannot import parts, a Democratic Party lawmaker said in October.

An eyewitness yesterday said the Forest Service helicopter

started making a strange sound before plunging to the ground.

"It completely exploded and I couldn't even tell which parts were the propellers," Kim Jin-han, 63, said.

Video footage from the scene showed what appeared to be smoking debris scattered over a hillside. The cause of the accident was being investigated, authorities said.

The weather agency has forecast rain across South Korea today, though only between 5mm to 10mm was expected in fire-hit areas.

More than 10,000 firefighters were being deployed in four

separate areas yesterday, including hundreds of police officers and military units, while 87 helicopters were being used, the safety ministry said.

Kim Jong-gun, a Forest Service spokesperson, said it planned to secure more wildfire-fighting helicopters, responding to criticism about a lack of equipment and helicopters.

The blazes broke out on Saturday and were threatening several Unesco World Heritage sites - Hahoe Village and the Byeongsan Confucian Academy - in Andong city yesterday, a city official said, as authorities sprayed fire retardants to try to protect them.



Hegseth texted start time of planned Yemen killing

Reuters
Washington

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth texted plans to kill a Houthi militant leader in Yemen two hours before a military operation that would normally be a closely guarded secret, according to screenshots of a chat released by *The Atlantic* yesterday.

The revelation that highly sensitive attack plans were shared on a commercial messaging app, possibly on personal cellphones, has triggered outrage in Washington and calls from Democrats that members of Trump's national security team be fired over the leaks.

President Donald Trump's administration has sought to contain the fallout from the revelation that the March 15 chat included *The Atlantic*'s editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg on the encrypted messaging app Signal.

Hegseth has repeatedly denied texting war plans, and Trump and his top advisers are saying no classified information was shared, bewildering Democrats and former US officials, who regard timing and targeting details as some of the most closely held material ahead of a US military campaign.

"I think that it's by the awesome grace of God that we are not mourning dead pilots right now," Democrat Jim Himes of Con-

nnecticut said at a hearing of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee.

If Houthi leaders knew a strike was coming, they might have been able to flee, possibly to crowded areas where targeting is more difficult and the number of potential civilian casualties might be deemed too high to proceed.

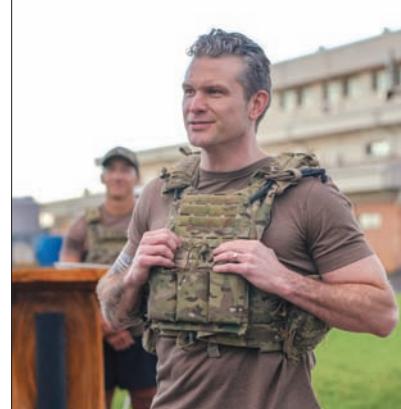
The chat did not appear to include any names or precise locations of Houthi militants being targeted or to disclose information that could have been used to target US troops carrying out the operation.

Pentagon officials aware of the planning believed that information was classified at the time, one US official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity, raising questions over whether, when and how Hegseth's text messages may have been declassified.

It has also renewed scrutiny of Hegseth, who only narrowly won Senate confirmation after a bruising review that raised serious questions about his experience, temperament and views about women in combat.

Goldberg, who had initially declined to publish the chat details, did so yesterday. *The Atlantic* magazine did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the release of the additional messages.

Hegseth's text started with the title "TEAM UPDATE" and included these details, according to *The Atlantic*:



US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth during his meeting with Naval Special Warfare Sailors at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. (Reuters)

"TIME NOW (1144et): Weather is FAVORABLE. Just CONFIRMED w/CENTCOM we are a GO for mission launch"

"1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)"

"1345: 'Trigger Based' F-18 1st Strike Window Starts (Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so SHOULD BE ON TIME - also, Strike Drones Launch (MQ-9s)"

"1410: More F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package)"

"1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS

WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier 'Trigger Based' targets)"

"1536 F-18 2nd Strike Starts - also, first sea-based Tomahawks launched."

"MORE TO FOLLOW (per timeline)"

"We are currently clean on OPSEC"

"Godspeed to our Warriors."

Hours later, national security adviser Mike Waltz confirmed to the group the killing of the Houthis' top missile expert.

"We had positive ID of him walking into his girlfriend's building and it's now collapsed," Waltz wrote.

Reuters could not immediately establish what kind of building was brought down in the US military strike, how many occupants were inside, and how the detail squares with Pentagon statements there were no known civilian casualties.

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said on X that Hegseth was "merely updating the group on a plan that was underway & had already been briefed through official channels."

Senior US national security officials have classified systems that are meant to be used to communicate secret materials.

But CIA Director John Ratcliffe testified on Tuesday at a Senate hearing that Waltz set up the Signal chat for unclassified coordination and that teams would be "provided with information further on the high side for high-side communication."

Waltz has said he took full responsibility for the breach as he had created the Signal group. But yesterday, Waltz also played down the disclosure, saying on X: "No locations. No sources & methods. NO WAR PLANS. Foreign partners had already been notified that strikes were imminent."

At a hearing yesterday, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said Hegseth would be the one to determine what defence information was classified.

"Ultimately, the secretary of defence (holds) the authority to classify or de-classify," Gabbard said, addressing the House Intelligence Committee.

Hegseth did not answer a question on Tuesday evening about whether he declassified the information discussed in the Signal chat, telling reporters: "Nobody's texting war plans and that is all I have to say about that." He expressed pride in the strikes.

"The strikes against the Houthis that night were devastatingly effective. And I'm incredibly proud of the courage and skill of the troops. And they are ongoing and continue to be devastatingly affected," Hegseth said.

The US military has declined to offer basic details about the offensive in Yemen, including how many strikes have been carried out, what senior leaders have been targeted or killed and even whether the operation has a name.

The Atlantic publishes full US attack plan in Signal chat

US magazine *The Atlantic* yesterday published the full exchange of leaked messages between officials laying out plans for an attack on Yemen, as the White House fought fiercely to defend itself over the slip-up.

Details including the times of strikes and types of planes used were shown in screenshots of the chat between President Donald Trump's top officials on the commercial Signal messaging app.

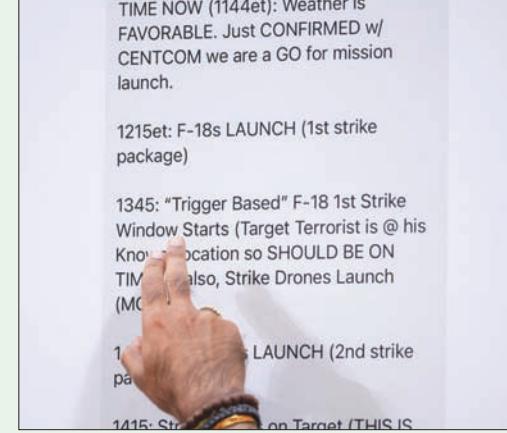
The story broke earlier this week after an *Atlantic* journalist was accidentally added to the chat, and the magazine said it was revealing full details of the attack plans now because Trump's team insisted that no classified details were involved.

The White House reacted defiantly, launching a co-ordinated attack in which it slammed the magazine's journalists as "scumbags" and dismissed the story as a "hoax."

"There weren't details, and there was nothing in there that compromised, and it had no impact on the attack, which was very successful," Trump told podcaster Vince Coglianese when asked about the latest revelations.

Vice-President JD Vance, who was on the Signal conversation, said *The Atlantic* had "oversold" the story.

National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, who has taken responsibility for accidentally adding *Atlantic* journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to the chat,



US Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) points to text messages by Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth during an annual worldwide threats assessment hearing at the Longworth House Office Building yesterday in Washington, DC. (AFP)

likewise insisted that the Signal chain revealed "no locations" and "NO WAR PLANS."

Goldberg revealed Monday that Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth sent information in the Signal chat

about imminent strikes against the Houthi rebels on March 15.

The magazine – which initially said it published only the broad outlines about the attacks to protect US troops – said it had published the full details after the Trump repeatedly denied that any classified details had been included.

The texting was done barely half an hour before the first US warplanes took off – and two hours before the first target was expected to be bombed.

"1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)," Hegseth writes, referring to F-18 US Navy jets, before adding that "Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so SHOULD BE ON TIME."

"1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier 'Trigger Based' targets.)"

Hegseth also writes about the use of US drones and Tomahawk cruise missiles.

A short time later, Waltz sent real-time intelligence on the aftermath of an attack, writing that US forces had identified the target "walking into his girlfriend's building and it's now collapsed."

The full version of the chat group also revealed the informal side of the high-stakes chat, including when Waltz wrote a garbled message and Vance replied "What?" Waltz explained he was "typing too fast."

The chat included emojis of a fist, an American flag,

a muscled arm and a flame. *The Atlantic* said its full publication yesterday included everything in the Signal chain other than one CIA name that the agency had asked not to be revealed.

It added that it had asked the government whether there would be any problem in publishing the rest of the material, given the official insistence that no secrets were shared.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt had replied insisting there was no classified material involved but adding that "we object to the release," the magazine said.

The depth of detail has fuelled a furious outcry from Democrats in Congress who are accusing the Trump officials of incompetence and putting US military operations in peril.

The House of Representatives discussed the scandal in a hearing yesterday.

The story also threatens to cause further ructions between Washington and its allies, after Goldberg revealed disparaging comments by Vance and Hegseth about "pathetic" European nations during their chat.

The Trump administration has stepped up attacks on the Houthi rebels in response to constant attempts to sink and disrupt shipping through the strategic Red Sea.

The Houthi rebels have controlled much of Yemen for more than a decade.

Pakistani journalist charged with disinfo

AFP
Islamabad

A Pakistani journalist was charged yesterday with spreading disinformation online hours after his family reported he was seized in an overnight raid on his home.

Muhammad Waheed Murad (pictured), a multimedia journalist for Saudi-owned Urdu News, is the second reporter in recent days to come up against Pakistan's strengthened laws targeting online content.

Murad is facing several charges including committing "cyber terrorism" and spreading "false and fake information".

A judge ordered he be remanded in custody for two days, an AFP journalist at the Islamabad court reported.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), which deals with cybercrime, had requested the journalist be held for 10 days.

The charge sheet seen by AFP accused Murad of glorifying a deadly attack on a train carried out by separatists in Balochistan province.

Murad was detained at around 2am when more than a dozen people stormed his home, his mother-in-law Abida Nawaz said in a video.

Before his appearance in court, the journalist's lawyer had filed a petition stating unidentified officials "presumably from intelligence agencies" arrived in double-cabin trucks that they typically use.

"The pattern of his abduction was the same as in the past," Imaan Mazari told AFP.

"The abductors, their modus operandi, and the way they stormed the house in the dead of night make it clear who they are." His arrest follows the detention Thursday of Farhan Mallick, founder of Pakistani Internet media channel Raftaar, who is facing charges of "anti-



Portrait of Muhammad Waheed Murad, a Pakistani journalist.

state posts and fake news".

In the same week two brothers of exiled journalist Ahmad Noorani were kidnapped from their family home after he wrote about the growing influence of the powerful military chief's family.

The FIA charge sheet against Murad mentions he shared Noorani's content on his social media accounts, which is "likely to cause fear, panic, unrest and disorder in the general public".

Murad has previously criticised the role of Pakistan's military, which analysts say is deeply involved in the country's politics and economy.

The country has been ruled by the military for several decades of its 77-year history and criticism of the security establishment has long been seen as a red line.

Rights groups have accused Islamabad's shadowy intelligence agencies of "disappearing" critics, an allegation the military denies.

Pakistani journalists have reported rising state censorship in recent years and the public has shifted to consuming much of its news from social media.

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists earlier yesterday condemned what it called an "enforced abduction" of the reporter.

"Such actions against journalists are unacceptable and threaten the very fabric of democracy and press freedom," the group said in a statement.

5 sentenced to death for 'online blasphemy'

A Pakistan court has sentenced five men to death for posting blasphemous content online, a prosecution lawyer told AFP yesterday, as the country witnesses a sharp increase in such cases.

Private groups in Pakistan have brought charges against hundreds of young individuals in recent years for allegedly committing blasphemy online.

Blasphemy is an incendiary charge in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where even unsubstantiated accusations can incite public outrage and lead to lynchings.

"All five accused were sentenced to death for spreading blasphemous content against the Holy Prophet (PBUH)," a lawyer from the Legal Commission on Blasphemy.

Pakistan, a private group which brought the case to court, told AFP. "Separately all were sentenced to life imprisonment for Qur'an's desecration and 10 years imprisonment for hurting religious sentiments," lawyer Rao Abdur Raheem said.

The five men – one Afghan and four Pakistanis – were sentenced on Tuesday in Rawalpindi, the garrison city that neighbours the capital Islamabad.

The sentences will run concurrently, Raheem said.

The convicts have a right to appeal in the upper courts.

Despite the conviction, Pakistan has never executed anyone for blasphemy.

The decision comes a day after a Pakistani YouTube star was charged with blasphemy after launching a perfume named after the very law he has fallen foul of.

Rajab Butt launched his "295" perfume which refers to blasphemy legislation in the penal code.

Currently in Saudi Arabia, the thirty-year-old faces up to 10 years in prison in two blasphemy cases related to videos he posted online. Many of the online blasphemy cases are being brought to trial by private "vigilante groups" led by lawyers and supported by volunteers who scour the Internet for offenders, rights groups and police say.

Trump says 'we have to have' Greenland ahead of Vance trip

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump ramped up his claims to Greenland yesterday, saying ahead of a visit by Vice-President JD Vance that the United States needed to take control of the Danish island for "international security."

Since coming to power in January, Trump has repeatedly insisted that he wants the self-governed territory to be a US possession, refusing to rule out the use of force to achieve his goal.

"We need Greenland for international safety and security. We need it. We have to have it," Trump told podcaster Vince Coglianese. "I hate to put it that way, but we're going to have to have it."

Greenland, which is seeking independence from Denmark, holds massive untapped mineral and oil reserves, though 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 because of climate change.

The US president's latest strident comments come as Vice-President Vance is due to accompany his wife Usha on a visit to the US-run Pituffik Space Base in Greenland on Friday.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Greenland's outgoing Prime Minister Mute Egede had earlier harshly criticised plans by a US delegation to visit the Arctic island uninvited for what was initially a much broader visit.

Egede had qualified the initial plans as "foreign interference," noting that the outgoing government had not "sent out any invitations for visits, private or official."

Yesterday, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen welcomed the decision to limit the visit to the US space base.

"I think it's very positive that the Americans have cancelled their visit among Greenlandic society. They will only visit their own base, Pituffik, and we have nothing against that," he told public broadcaster DR.

Greenlandic officials have re-

peatedly said the territory does not want to be either Danish or American, but is "open for business" with everyone.

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

Following March 11 elections, Greenland has only a transitional government, with parties still in negotiations to form a new coalition government.

Egede has called for "all countries to respect this process."

Marc Jacobsen, a senior lecturer at the Royal Danish Defence College, called the decision to limit the US visit "a de-escalation," a term also used by Foreign Minister Lokke.

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A moment from the fundraising campaign yesterday. **PICTURES:** Thajudheen



Officials and dignitaries attending the event.

Qatar raises over QR 220mn for Syria, Gaza in campaign broadcast live on Qatar TV



Officials and guests at the fundraising campaign yesterday.

From Page 1

Ahmed Fakhro, CEO's assistant for the Resources Development and Communication sector at QC, stated that the values of philanthropy and giving are deeply rooted among Qataris and expatriates.

"Every year this campaign is organised by Qatar Charity during Ramadan and the collection always far exceeds the target, indicating the strong desire of the people of Qatar to support others in need," said Fakhro.

The QC official observed that the collected donations are much needed to give dignified new lives to the Syrians and the people of Gaza, who are undergoing extreme suffering in very tough circumstances. Further, the health sector in Gaza is almost completely destroyed due to the ongoing war there, and this needs huge work and resources.

in Istanbul, Turkiye, where the largest city for orphans was built.

Dr Mohamed Salah Ibrahim, director of Relief and International Programmes Division at QRCS, said that the partnership with Qatar Charity has a very long history of success in the humanitarian work. He stressed that this campaign hopes to benefit the most affected people, help alleviate their sufferings and give them a better life.

In particular, the situation in Gaza is very difficult and the people there need huge support and the relief work has to be quick and effective to give people a sustainable source of income, he added.

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