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SPORT | Page 1

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Qatar gears up for a grand Eid celebration



Doha Corniche all decked out for Eid festivities. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

Today is the first day of Eid al-Fitr

The Crescent Sighting Committee at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs announced that Sunday, March 30, will be the first day of Eid al-Fitr. The announcement was made after the committee's meeting at the headquarters of the ministry last evening. The committee said it held its meeting on Ramadan 29, 1446 AH, corresponding to March 29, 2025, to sight the crescent of Shawwal month, and prove the testimony of who sees it. The committee said the crescent sighting was confirmed on Saturday night. As a result March 30, 2025 will be the first day of the blessed Eid al-Fitr. The committee extended greetings on the advent of the blessed Eid al-Fitr to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, as well as the honourable government, the people of Qatar and all Muslims. (QNA)

No talks with RSF: Sudan army chief

Sudanese army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan vowed yesterday that his troops will fight on until the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) lays down its weapons. In his first televised address since the military recaptured the capital Khartoum this week, Burhan said that an end to nearly two years of devastating fighting is possible "if this militia lays down its arms". He ruled out any negotiations with the paramilitaries, saying that victory will only be complete once "the last rebel has been eradicated from the last corner of Sudan". **Page 7**

Qatar is set to celebrate Eid al-Fitr in grand style, with a week-long lineup of festivities and events across the country. Various organisations and entities have announced exciting activities to mark the joyous occasion as the holy month of Ramadan comes to a close.

Visit Qatar has unveiled an exciting schedule of events starting today (Sunday). Kicking off the celebrations is The Wonderland of Soapy Bubbles at the Oasis Stage in Mall of Qatar. Running until April 5, this mesmerising show will dazzle visitors with breathtaking bubble tricks and captivating effects, creating an imaginative world where creativity floats in every bubble.

Adding to the excitement, Lusail Sky Festival will take centre stage at Lusail City, promising jaw-dropping aerial performances, including sky text planes, paramotors, laser shows, and fireworks. Held at Al Sadd Plaza from April 3-5, the event is free and open to all, offering thrilling sky-high entertainment for the whole family. The festival's highlights include aerobatic displays, a breathtaking showcase of 3,000 drones, sky-writing, and aviation spectacles.

For Disney fans, the highly anticipated theatrical production Disney: The Magic Box will make its Doha debut at Al Mayassa Theatre in the Qatar National Convention Centre from April 3-12. This enchanting show brings a century of Disney nostalgia to life, following the story of Mara as she embarks on a magical journey into The Magic Box.

making it a must-see for families.

The Cultural Village Foundation - Katara will present Katara Eidiya, featuring live performances by the Police Music Band and traditional Qatari Ardha dancers, alongside street art displays, Asian-African folklore performances, and a rababa music showcase. Visitors can also explore the Soul of Gold exhibition, where Turkish artist Haticce Yeti and her students will present over 30 exquisite paintings, celebrating the beauty of Islamic gilding art through a contemporary lens.

Meanwhile, municipalities across Qatar have been gearing up for the celebrations, ensuring food safety through rigorous inspections and preparing public parks and recreational areas to welcome large crowds during the holiday season.

Fireworks will light up the skies at multiple locations throughout Eid. Katara will host nightly fireworks displays from the first day of Eid for three consecutive days, while Al Wakrah Old Souq will extend its celebrations with fireworks for four days. As part of the Lusail Sky Festival, a synchronized fireworks show with music and light effects will also take place, adding a dazzling touch to the festivities.

Msheireb Downtown Doha is set to unveil a host of Eid celebrations, including family-friendly games, live musical performances, interactive shows, and gourmet experiences. Running from the first day of Eid until April 5, these festivities will feature immersive installations and live entertainment, bringing the community together in a joyous celebration. **To Page 4**

Pages 2, 6, 12

Lack of supplies hindering Myanmar quake response



Rubble lies near a pagoda damaged during a strong earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar, yesterday.

A severe lack of medical supplies is hampering efforts to respond to the deadly earthquake in Myanmar, the United Nations said yesterday, adding that those affected need urgent humanitarian aid.

The UN said it was mobilising emergency response efforts, alongside humanitarian partner organisations, following the huge earthquake that struck on Friday leaving more than 1,600 people dead in Myanmar and neighbouring Thailand.

"As the full scale of the disaster unfolds, urgent humanitarian assistance is needed to support those affected," the UN humanitarian agency

Amir exchanges Eid al-Fitr greetings with leaders of Islamic countries

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani exchanged cables of greetings with Their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses leaders of the sisterly Arab and Islamic countries on the occasion of the blessed Eid al-Fitr. His Highness the Amir also received cables of greetings on the occasion from a number of leaders of friendly countries. His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani exchanged cables of greetings with Their Highnesses, Excellencies crown princes and vice-presidents of the sisterly Arab and Islamic countries on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani exchanged cables of greetings with Their Excellencies prime ministers of the sisterly Arab and Islamic countries on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr. (QNA)



Amir to perform Eid al-Fitr prayer at Lusail ground

The Amiri Diwan announced that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will perform Eid al-Fitr prayer along with citizens at Lusail prayer ground today morning. The Amiri Diwan wished that this blessed occasion be full of goodness and blessings for Qatar, and the Arab and Islamic nations. (QNA)

Amir to receive Eid al-Fitr well-wishers today

The Amiri Diwan announced that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani will receive Eid al-Fitr well-wishers at Lusail Palace on the first day of Eid as follows: Immediately after Eid prayer and until 6:15am: Their Excellencies Sheikhs; ministers; Shura Council Speaker;

ministries' undersecretaries; members of the Shura Council; and citizens. From 6:15am-6:30am: officers of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Interior, as well as directors of departments and national institutions. His Highness the Amir will receive immediately after Al Asr prayer

at 3:45pm Their Excellencies Sheikhs, along with citizens. From 3:45pm-4pm: heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the country.

The Amiri Diwan wished that this blessed occasion be full of goodness and blessings for Qatar, and the Arab and Islamic nations. (QNA)

Hamas agrees to truce proposal

Reuters

Cairo

Hamas has agreed to a Gaza ceasefire proposal it received two days ago from mediators, the Palestinian resistance group's chief said yesterday.

"Two days ago, we received a proposal from the mediators in Egypt and Qatar. We dealt with it positively and accepted it," Khalil al-Hayya said in a televised speech.

"We hope that the (Israeli) occupation will not undermine it," said Hayya, who leads the Hamas negotiating team in indirect talks aimed at securing a ceasefire in the war in Gaza that erupted in October 2023.

Security sources said on Thursday that Egypt had received positive indications from Israel over a new ceasefire pro-



Palestinians shop at a market ahead of the upcoming holiday of Eid al-Fitr, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

posal that would include a transitional phase.

The proposal suggests Hamas release five of the Israeli hostages it is holding each week, the sources said.

The Israeli prime minister's

office said it had held a series of consultations according to the proposal that was received from the mediators, and that Israel had conveyed to the mediators a counter-proposal in full co-ordination with the US.

Taliban release US woman, 2 Britons

An American woman has been freed by the Taliban in Afghanistan after she, two Britons and their Afghan translator were detained earlier this year, Washington's former envoy to Kabul, Zalmay Khalilzad, said yesterday. "American citizen Faye Hall, just released by the Taliban, is now in the care of our friends, the Qatars in Kabul, and will soon be on her way home," Khalilzad, who has been part of a US delegation working on Taliban hostage releases, wrote on X. She was released on Thursday following a court order and with logistical support from Qatar, the source added. Hall, who has been identified by the Taliban's interior ministry as Chinese-American, was detained in February along with Peter and Barbie Reynolds, as they travelled to the British couple's home in central Bamyan province. (AFP) **Page 11**



MoI all set for ensuring safety, security during Eid holiday

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has completed all arrangements and measures for Eid al-Fitr to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality public services and the implementation of preventive security and traffic measures. These efforts aim to provide citizens, residents, and visitors with a safe and peaceful environment during the holiday.

Head of the National Command Center (NCC) Brig Ali Mohammed al-Mohannadi emphasised the centre's commitment to enhancing security operations during Eid. This is achieved through active co-ordination with relevant ministry departments and other state institutions. He said that the centre operates under a comprehensive plan designed to ensure safety and security, while providing a comfortable environment for all. The plan is monitored around the clock through the mechanisms of Central Operations and Technical Affairs, ensuring optimal readiness to address emergencies and secure various events across the country.

Al-Mohannadi explained that NCC staff, consisting of officers, non-commisioned officers, personnel, and employees, are qualified and trained to carry out tasks across operational rooms. These include the Emergency Services Room (999), the Emergency Service for the Deaf Branch (992), the Command and Control Room, and the Security and Traffic Surveillance Room. Additionally, external operation rooms and security department operation rooms work in full co-ordination with the centre, ensuring rapid response to incidents within their geographic zones.

The centre's plan relies on advanced security systems to manage events effectively, working closely with all departments and state institutions involved in emergency response efforts.

Meanwhile, Director of the Rescue Police Department (Al Fazaa), Col Sheikh Ali bin Hamad al-Thani, confirmed that the department provides round-the-clock security services nationwide to maintain safety and public order. He stated that Eid preparations include increasing patrols across the country, particularly on busy roads, near public parks, markets, mosques, and Eid prayer areas. These measures aim to prevent incidents and disturbances.



Doha Corniche yesterday with the skyscrapers illuminated with Eid greetings. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

He also emphasised the importance of patrols for securing public events, co-ordinating with other departments to fulfil their security tasks. Col Sheikh Ali urged pedestrians to exercise caution when crossing streets, carry identification, and not hesitate to request assistance from the Al Fazaa patrols stationed across various roads. He reassured the public of the readiness of patrols to provide security and humanitarian support at any time.

Additionally, Col Abdullah Mohamed al-Hail, Director of Operations of the General Directorate of Civil Defence, confirmed the department's readiness for Eid through response teams available at all Civil Defence centres. He noted that the department operates round-the-clock shifts and has a fleet of advanced vehicles

and equipment capable of handling all reports effectively.

Col al-Hail highlighted the importance of awareness during Eid, urging the public to follow safety measures. These include switching off electrical appliances during travel, exercising caution while cooking, avoiding electrical overloading, and adhering to all safety instructions issued by the MoI.

Director of the Public Transport Security Department at the Ministry of Interior, Col Salem Sultan al-Nuaimi, highlighted the department's enhanced security efforts during the Eid period, adding that these efforts aim to protect passengers and property by intensifying patrols at public transport stations and on transit vehicles (metro, public transport trams),

as well as securing events near public transport stations through collaboration with relevant authorities to ensure easy access for visitors.

He explained that the department, in its commitment to rapid emergency response, has prepared teams ready to handle any emergencies, such as accidents or unexpected situations, co-ordinating with ambulance, civil defence, and traffic police units.

In the same context, Director of the Operations Department at the Coast Guard and Border Security General Directorate, Lt Col (Naval) Hassan Ahmed al-Sulaifi, said that the departments work during the Eid holiday requires increased patrols due to the rise in the number of sea-goers, ensuring their safety. He emphasised

that the maritime patrols operated by the Coast Guard are available around the clock to assist fishermen, holidaymakers, and those enjoying water sports.

Lt Col al-Sulaifi also noted that the department is keen on increasing and intensifying patrols near the shores during Eid to offer assistance and prevent disturbances caused by jet ski riders to beachgoers. On this joyful occasion, he advised sea-goers to adhere to maritime safety regulations, including carrying sufficient fuel, wearing life jackets, and having first aid kits onboard. He also stressed the importance of following security instructions about staying away from fishing areas or approaching them in general.

Furthermore, he urged jet ski enthusiasts to avoid swimming areas near open beaches, hotel beaches, and other private locations, advising them to always wear life jackets while using jet skis and refrain from riding them at night, particularly due to poor visibility.

He also recommended that families with children at the beach should ensure their children do not swim alone and should keep them under constant supervision while on the beach. In case of any issues, families should contact the operations room at phone number (999).

Furthermore, Capt Salem Mubarak al-Buainain confirmed that the General Directorate of Traffic has completed all preparations for a comprehensive traffic plan covering all areas of the country during the Eid holiday, aimed at enhancing safety for all road users and ensuring smooth traffic flow.

He explained that the department will intensify the presence of traffic patrols around the clock, distributing them across different areas to provide rapid intervention in emergencies and traffic congestion.

Capt al-Buainain noted that the plan would focus on organising vehicle movement around mosques and prayer grounds on the first day of Eid, as well as in areas with high foot traffic during the evening, such as Doha Corniche, Lusail, The Pearl, Katara - the Cultural Village, Souq Waqif, and other popular destinations. This effort will continue throughout the Eid holiday. (QNA)

Eid Mubarak

Wishing you and your family prosperity, joy, and happiness on the occasion of Eid-Al-Fitr



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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



QNB concludes Ramadan Sustainability Camp for children

QNB concluded its Ramadan sustainability camp 2025 recently, which was designed for children aged seven to 10 years. This year's special camp featured a series of engaging activities that embody the values of giving, sustainability, and celebration. The camp kicked off with an inspiring session focused on creativity, where children designed Ramadan-themed gift boxes, and coloured prayer mats made of eco-friendly material. Following this, participants enjoyed the Garango celebration with traditional treats, while dressing in traditional attire, and engaging in cultural games. Additionally, children had the



opportunity to prepare and distribute delicious dessert, promoting a spirit of generosity

and community. The camp finally concluded with a vibrant Eid celebration, featuring creative



crafts in a joyful celebration to instill the spirit of Eid in the children.



Through these initiatives, QNB is committed to enrich Ramadan experience and to give back to

the community while fostering meaningful connections with the families.

Environment ministry marks Earth Hour

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) celebrated Earth Hour yesterday by turning off the lights in its main building (Al Aeed Tower) and all affiliated buildings for one hour.

The ministry reported that marking this event is part of its commitment to upholding environmental responsibility, along with its active role in enhancing the community's awareness of the significance of rationalising energy consumption, contributing to reducing detrimental carbon emissions, and encouraging community members to pursue sustainable practices that contribute to conserving the environment.

To mark this event, the ministry's Director of Green Development and Environmental Sustainability, engineer Abdullah Jumaa al-Muraikhi, highlighted that Earth Hour is one of the most significant global environmental initiatives held annually with the objective of reinforcing awareness of the importance of combating environmental challenges, in addition to protecting the Earth's natural resources.

He pointed out that the ministry continues to implement environmental programmes and initiatives that contribute to achieving environmental sustainability and strengthening national and global efforts to pre-



serve the environment for generations to come.

The event was intended to emphasise that everyone is part of a single ecosystem, affected by

their actions, with studies revealing that this event has helped reduce the average electricity consumption in some nations by 4% over six years. (QNA)

Don't carry others' bags, Mol urges passengers

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has advised travellers to be cautious while travelling to ensure their safety and security. MoI, in an X post, urged the travellers not to carry bags of others without knowing their contents, citing this may delay your travel procedures and expose you to legal liability. "Failure to verify the content of the luggage could expose the passengers to legal liability. The bearer has full legal responsibility if these materials are prohibited in the

country," MoI warned earlier. MoI has also advised to avoid bringing any suspicious substances or drugs, citing some narcotic substances and medicines may be allowed to be used in your country but they are prohibited in Qatar. "Stay away from suspicious places and bad companions. Don't hesitate to report any crime. Security is a shared responsibility that everyone bears," MoI said.



OPEN CALL

Tender Ref. No.	Description	Tender Bond	Tender Fees	Bid Closing Date
INQ-QC-2025-001	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR LEASE OF KITCHEN SPACE	N/A	N/A	17-April-2025

We invite interested parties to submit proposals for the lease of a fully equipped kitchen space that meets the following requirements:

- ◆ Size: 1,700 – 2,000 sqm
- ◆ Condition: Fully equipped with all necessary kitchen facilities and appliances
- ◆ Rental Duration: 1 year (rental can be extended)
- ◆ Preferred Locations: Msheireb, Old Doha Port, Corniche, or nearby areas with convenient access to logistics and distribution networks, proposals for alternatives will also be considered.

Submission Deadline: 17th April 2025

Interested parties, preferably direct owners, are requested to submit their proposals by the deadline.

For further details and submission guidelines, please contact: Email: jaguado@gm.org.qa or Contact No.: +974 4402 8659/+974 5050 7681

Qatar gears up for a grand Eid celebration

From Page 1

Visitors to Old Doha Port can immerse themselves in cultural performances and activities reflecting the spirit of Eid. Traditional maritime bands will perform at Al Bandar, while live music from various artists will fill the Mina District. The area will also host interactive shows for children, expansive play zones, family-friendly entertainment, giant inflatables, street food stalls, and a bustling bazaar, running for eight days from the first day of Eid.

With an array of exciting events and activities, Qatar is set to offer unforgettable Eid celebrations for residents and visitors alike, blending tradition, culture, and modern entertainment into a truly festive experience.



Prophet's guidance concerning Eid day

1. The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, used to always perform the two Eid prayers in the Musalla (outside prayer grounds). He only performed this prayer in the masjid one time, due to rain.

sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, reached the Musalla he would begin with the prayer - without Adhaan and without 'Iqaamah, and without saying "as-Salaatu Jaami'atan" (i.e. "Salaah (prayer), in Congregation").

2. Whenever he finished the prayer, he would stand - facing the people - while the people would be sitting. Then, he would deliver the religious advice and exhortation; and he would begin the Khutbah with 'Praise of Allah'.

3. He used to eat an odd number of dates before going out for the Eid al-Fitr (prayer). As for the Eid al-Adha (prayer), he would not eat until he returned from the Musalla (outside prayer grounds), in which case he would eat from the Ad-heeyah (sacrificed animal).

4. He used to take a Ghusl (complete bath) for both of the Eids.

5. He used to go out to the two Eid prayers walking.

6. Whenever the Prophet,

and hope for the blessings of that day for purification from sins'.

Since menstruating women (who stay away from the musalla) as well as those who are virgin are commanded to observe Eid prayer, there is no doubt that the men, old and young are even strongly commanded to observe it.

3. Eid prayer should be performed before the khutba of Eid as is confirmed in the hadith narrated by Um Atiya, may Allah be pleased with her, who said: "We used to be ordered to come out on the day of Eid and even to bring the virgin girls from their houses and menstruating women so that they might stand behind the men and say takbir along with them

5. It is recommended that the Imam recites in the first Raka'at Soorah Al-A'laa (chapter 87) and Soorah Al-'Ghaashiah (chapter 88) in the second. Other reports also show that the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, used to recite Soorah Qaaf (chapter 50) and Soorah Al-Qamar (chapter 54) as is confirmed in Sahih Muslim.

6. There is no Sunnah prayer either before or after Eid prayer as Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that whenever the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, went for Eid prayer, he used to pray two Raka'at (of Eid) but nothing before or after them.



QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/OON/7065/25 FOR RENTAL OF NITROGEN TANKS, NITROGEN VAPORIZERS, NITROGEN HEATERS WITH ACCESSORIES AND MANPOWER ON CALL-OFF BASIS	29/03/2025 to 12/04/2025	Nil	700,000/-	05 th May 2025

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 280°C 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).

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/>



Fanar wraps up Ramadan Forum for communities

The Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Centre (Fanar) under the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has wrapped up its Ramadan Forum for the communities in Qatar.

The forum, according to an official statement from Awqaf, was attended by the members of Filipino, Malaysian, Indonesian, Tamil and Bangladeshi communities in Qatar. The event drew widespread attendance and en-

gaged participants.

The forum witnessed a large turnout from various communities, with attendance at some events exceeding 450 people to reflect the strong interest in these initiatives that aimed at promoting Islamic values and introducing the spiritual atmosphere of Ramadan.

The events included religious lectures and presentations introducing Qatari customs and traditions during Ramadan in addition to interactive activi-

ties that strengthened the bonds of love and brotherhood among participants.

The forum's programmes were diverse, with each activity focusing on a specific aspect of Ramadan values and rituals. The programme for the Filipino community was attended by approximately 300 members. It covered the ritual of fasting and the spiritual atmosphere of Ramadan. Around 150 members of the Malaysian community attended the programme, which included a

lecture titled 'Signs of the Pious'. 270 participants from the Indonesian community attended a lecture while 150 persons from the Tamil community attended the programme. The event for the Bangladeshi community was the best-attended with marked attendance of 450 participants.

These Ramadan gatherings aimed to strengthen religious values among Muslim communi-

ties by explaining and clarifying Islamic concepts and instilling a spirit of harmony and compassion among different cultures.

The events also provided an opportunity for interaction and discussion, and participants expressed their appreciation for the beneficial activities, which helped them gain a deeper understanding of the teachings of Islam.

Participants praised the organisational and spiritual atmosphere that pervaded the forum saying such events enhance cultural co-existence and community communication.

These initiatives come within the framework of the efforts of Awqaf and Fanar to spread religious awareness and to promote Islamic values among the country's diverse communities.



Eid fervour in Doha



Eid al-Fitr preparations got into full swing last night in Doha with shops selling sweets, flowers and girls getting their hands painted with henna in intricate designs. **PICTURES:** Noushad Thekkayil



Eid shopping

Palestinians shop at a market ahead of the upcoming holiday of Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.



Shoppers browse for sweets along the alley of Damascus' Hamidiya covered market yesterday, as Muslims prepare ahead of the holiday of Eid al-Fitr marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Gaza Red Crescent says nine workers missing after Israeli fire at ambulances



Palestinians sit amid rubble of houses, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

AFP
Gaza City

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said yesterday that the fate of nine crew members in the Gaza Strip remains unknown nearly a week after Israeli forces had hit ambulances.

The Israeli military said troops had opened fire on ambulances after identifying them as "suspicious vehicles"; in an incident on Sunday in southern Gaza that Hamas authorities condemned as a "war crime", reporting at least one person killed.

The gunfire in Rafah city's Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood came just days into a renewed Israeli offensive in the southern area, close to the Egyptian border, after the military resumed its bombardments of Gaza on March 18 following an almost two-month-long truce.

The Red Crescent in a statement accused Israeli authorities of refusing to allow search operations to locate the missing workers.

"For the seventh consecutive day, the fate of nine Palestine Red Crescent EMTs remains unknown

after they were besieged and targeted by Israeli forces in Rafah," it said.

"We condemn Israel's deliberate obstruction of search efforts and hold it fully responsible for the lives of our team members," the statement added.

The emergency response service said that "initial reports from the crew at the time of the incident confirmed they came under heavy gunfire from Israeli forces, resulting in multiple injuries."

The Israeli military said in a statement that its forces had "opened fire toward Hamas vehicles and eliminated several Hamas fighters". "A few minutes afterwards, additional vehicles advanced suspiciously toward the troops" who "responded by firing toward the suspicious vehicles", it said, adding that several "fighters" were killed. The military did not say whether there was fire coming from the vehicles.

"Some of the suspicious vehicles... were ambulances and fire trucks," the military statement said, citing "an initial inquiry" of the incident.

The day after the incident, Gaza's civil defence agency said in

a statement that it had not heard from a team of six rescuers from Tal al-Sultan who had been urgently dispatched to respond to deaths and injuries.

On Friday, the agency reported finding the body of the team leader as well as the rescue vehicles - an ambulance and a fire engine - and said a vehicle from the Palestine Red Crescent Society was also "reduced to a pile of scrap metal".

"The targeted killing of rescue workers - who are protected under international humanitarian law - constitutes a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime," said Hamas political bureau member Bassem Naim. Tom Fletcher, head of the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said that since March 18, Israeli air strikes have hit "densely populated areas", with "patients killed in their hospital beds. Ambulances shot at. First responders killed."

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 921 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory since Israel resumed its large-scale strikes.

Sudan army says retakes market in Khartoum-area from paramilitaries

AFP
Port Sudan

The Sudanese army said yesterday it had taken control of a major market in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman, long used by its rival Rapid Support Forces as a staging ground for attacks.

It is the latest conquest in the army's major offensive this month to wrest back control of the entire capital region, which includes Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri - three cities split by branches of the River Nile.

The blitz saw the army recapture the presidential palace on March 21, followed by the war-damaged airport and other key

sites in the city centre.

In a statement, army spokesman Nabil Abdullah said forces extended "their control over Souq Libya in Omdurman" and seized "weapons and equipment left behind by" the RSF as they fled.

Souq Libya, one of the largest and busiest in the Khartoum area, had for months been an RSF stronghold and a launchpad for attacks on northern and central Omdurman since the war with the army began on April 15, 2023.

While the army already controls much of Omdurman, the RSF still holds ground in the city's west, particularly in Omdurman district.

Late Thursday, the military

spokesman said that the army had "cleansed" Khartoum itself from "the last pockets" of the RSF.

Sudan's war began almost two years ago during a power struggle between the army and the RSF, a paramilitary force that was once its ally.

Khartoum has seen more than 3.5mn of its people flee since the war began, according to the UN. Millions more, unable or unwilling to leave, live among abandoned buildings, wrecked vehicles and what the army says are hidden mass graves. The war has carved Sudan in two: the army holds sway in the east and north while the RSF controls most of Darfur in the west, and parts of the south.

US embassy in Syria warns of increased risk of attacks

AFP
Damascus

The US embassy in Syria has warned its citizens of an "increased possibility" of attacks during the upcoming holiday marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

"The US Department of State cautions US citizens of the increased possibility of attacks during Eid al-Fitr holiday, which could target embassies, international organisations, and Syrian public institutions in Damascus," said a statement posted on the embassy website late Friday.

"Methods of attack could include... individual attackers, armed gunmen, or the use of explosive devices," it added, without elaborating on specific threats or who may be behind them. Security in Syria remains tenuous after rebel-led forces overthrew long-time ruler Bashar al-Assad in December following nearly 14 years of war that erupted with the brutal repression of anti-government protests

in 2011. Washington advises its citizens not to travel to Syria "due to the significant risks of terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, hostage-taking, armed conflict, and unjust detention", according to the statement.

The embassy's operations have been suspended since 2012.

A French diplomatic source said yesterday that "messages have been passed to French citizens currently in Syria about a heightened terror risk".

A worker at a UN body, requesting anonymity, told AFP that employees at international organisations in Syria had received a warning e-mail about public gatherings that urged precautionary measures in the coming week.

War-torn Syria is awash with weapons and for years has been home to myriad armed groups and fighters including militants.

Syria's transitional authorities face the daunting task of maintaining security in the ethnically and religiously diverse country whose new security forces are still dominated by former rebels.

Kenyan UN soldier killed in CAR

AFP
Bangui

A soldier from Kenya serving with a UN stabilisation force in the Central African Republic was killed on Friday in an ambush in the southeast of the country, the second such death this year, the UN said.

The UN Special Representa-

tive in the Central African Republic, Valentine Rugwabiza, strongly condemned the ambush in a statement yesterday, calling on Central African authorities "to spare no effort in identifying the perpetrators of these acts".

The latest death comes less than two months after a Tunisian UN soldier was killed February 11 in a firefight with still unidentified gunmen in the north of the coun-

try. Minusca, the UN's peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, has lost about 150 personnel since it was deployed in 2014. It has about 17,000 soldiers and police in the country to help the local army maintain order.

The southeast of the Central African Republic has seen renewed conflict since 2024 between militias representing the Azande and Fulani ethnic groups.

Guinea ex-dictator freed from jail after 2009 massacre pardon: junta

AFP
Conakry

Guinea's ex-dictator Mousa Dadis Camara, jailed for 20 years over a 2009 massacre, was pardoned for "health reasons" by the West African country's junta head, with a human rights body yesterday saying he has left prison.

"Upon the proposal of the Minister of Justice, a presidential pardon is granted to Mr. Moussa

Dadis Camara for health reasons," said a decree read out on television by presidential spokesperson General Amara Camara late Friday.

A source in the Guinean human rights federation OGDH told AFP Dadis Camara had left jail late Friday and had arrived in the capital Conakry.

"He made a brief stop-off at his home then was driven to a villa in a chic Conakry district where he is being monitored by police," the source added.

Following a landmark trial permitted by the junta after it took power in 2021, a court found Dadis Camara guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced him in July to 20 years behind bars.

On September 28, 2009, at least 156 people were killed by gunfire, knives, machetes, or bayonets in a massacre at an opposition rally, according to a UN-mandated international commission of inquiry.

Dadis Camara was found responsible for the massacre and for failing to punish its perpetrators, a judge ruled.

ed and at least 109 women were physically abused.

The abuses continued for several days against women who were held captive, and detainees were tortured.

Only 57 bodies of the victims were recovered, according to families and human rights organisations, and the toll is believed to be far higher.

Dadis Camara was found responsible for the massacre and for failing to punish its perpetrators, a judge ruled.

Seven other people were also sentenced to prison terms of up to life imprisonment for their role in the massacre.

The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) had welcomed the verdict, calling it a "landmark moment in establishing the truth... and bringing to account those bearing the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed".

Camera's younger brother Jean Dadis Camara said he was delighted to hear the news of the

pardon. "Everyone is happy. We thank the president," he said.

"We are extremely grateful to President Mamadi Doumbouya for this pardon. It is the greatest gift for the entire family," said Marcus Olivier Thea, a close friend and confidant of the former dictator.

The junta's head General Mamadi Doumbouya announced Wednesday that compensation ordered by a judge would be paid to the victims of the September 28, 2009, massacre.



'Everyone was screaming': quake shocks Thailand tourists

AFP
Bangkok

French tourist Augustin Gus was shopping for a T-shirt in one of Bangkok's many malls when a massive quake began shaking the building in the Thai capital. "Just when I left the elevator, the earth starts moving. I thought it was me... it was not me," the 23-year-old told AFP.

"Everyone was screaming and running, so I started screaming as

well." The powerful 7.7-magnitude quake struck Friday afternoon in neighbouring Myanmar, where over 1,000 people have been killed and several cities face large-scale destruction. The damage and toll was far smaller in Bangkok, with 10 people confirmed dead so far, most in the collapse of an under-construction skyscraper.

For many tourists who flocked to the popular destination, the quake was a disconcerting experience. Some were lazing in rooftop pools when the powerful shaking began

to stop the water off the edge of high-rise buildings. Others were left stranded in the streets with their luggage when the city's metro and light-rail system shut down for safety checks after the quake.

The city's residents, unused to earthquakes, were not able to offer much guidance, said one business traveller from the Solomon Islands, who asked not to be named. "Unfortunately there were no procedures in place" during his evacuation from the 21st floor of a Bangkok skyscraper on Friday. "So

everyone was getting confused," he said. "I just wanted to get out."

Cristina Mangion, 31, from Malta, was in her hotel bed when the shaking began. "I thought I was feeling dizzy from the heat," she told AFP. Hotel staff came to knock at the doors of each room to offer help, and Mangion's father quickly messaged to check she was okay.

Despite the experience Mangion and Gus were among the tourists out on Saturday at the sprawling Chatuchak market. The popular tourist draw is not far from the

scene of the deadly building collapse, and market security guard Yim Songtakob said crowds were thinner than usual. "That's normal... people are scared," said the 55-year-old, who has worked at the market for a decade. Still, Mangion said she would not be deterred by the tremors. "I feel bad for what happened," she said.

"I think the best thing is to actually come here and still continue as if nothing happened."

"This weekend will probably be harder than usual for business,"

she added. Gus also said he was not worried about enjoying the rest of his three-week trip. "I'll still have great memories, it's just an experience and that's why I'm travelling," he said.

Frenchman Gilles Franke, a regular visitor to Thailand who hopes to one day retire in the country, was equally sanguine about the risk of aftershocks. "When it's your time, it's your time," the 59-year-old told AFP. "You can die when you cross the road, you can die at any time in your life."

Myanmar earthquake toll crosses 1,600 as rescuers dig for survivors

AFP
Mandalay

The death toll from a huge earthquake that hit Myanmar and Thailand passed 1,600 yesterday, as rescuers dug through the rubble of collapsed buildings in a desperate search for survivors. The shallow 7.7-magnitude quake struck northwest of the city of Sagaing in central Myanmar early Friday afternoon, followed minutes later by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock.

The quake destroyed buildings, downed bridges, and buckled roads across swathes of Myanmar, with massive destruction seen in Mandalay, the country's second biggest city and home to more than 1.7mn people. "We need aid," said Thar Aye, 68, a Mandalay resident. "We don't have enough of anything."

At least 1,644 people were killed and more than 3,400 injured in Myanmar, with at least 139 more missing, the junta said in a statement. Around 10 more deaths have been confirmed in Bangkok. But with communications badly disrupted, the true scale of the disaster is only starting to emerge from the isolated military-ruled state, and the toll is expected to rise significantly.

In Mandalay, AFP journalists saw rescuers pull a woman alive from the remains of one apartment block where a Red Cross official said more than 90 people could be trapped. There are reports of damage to Mandalay Airport, which would complicate relief efforts in a country whose rescue services and health-care system have already been ravaged by four years of civil war sparked by a military coup in 2021.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing issued an exceptionally rare appeal for international aid on Friday, indicating the severity of the calamity. Previous military governments have shunned foreign assistance, even after major natural disasters. The country declared a state of emergency across the six worst-affected regions after the quake, and at one major hospital in the capital, Naypyidaw, medics were forced to treat the wounded in the open air. Offers of foreign assistance began coming in, with President Donald Trump pledging US help.

An initial aid delivery arrived from India, while China said it sent more than 80 rescuers to Myanmar and pledged \$13.8mn in emergency assistance. Aid agencies have warned that Myanmar is unprepared to deal with a disaster of this magnitude. Some 3.5mn people were displaced by the raging civil war, many at risk of hunger, even before the quake struck.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said yesterday that the emergency response was being hindered by a "severe shortage" of medical supplies, along with damaged roads and communications infrastructure. Across the border in Bangkok, rescuers were continuing to work Saturday as a second night drew in, searching for survivors trapped when a 30-storey skyscraper under construction collapsed.

Bangkok governor Chadchart Sittipunt told reporters that eight people had been confirmed dead in the building collapse so far. But he said 79 were still unaccounted for at the building, close to the Chatuchak weekend market that is a magnet for tourists. "All my friends and my brother were in the

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building when it collapsed", said construction worker Khin Aung.

Sniffer dogs and thermal imaging drones were deployed to seek signs of life in the rubble. Bang-

kok city authorities said they will deploy more than 100 engineers to inspect buildings for safety after receiving over 2,000 reports of damage.

Rallies grow in S Korea as court weighs president's fate

AFP
Seoul

Hundreds of thousands of South Koreans rallied for and against impeached President Yoon Suk-yeol yesterday as protests grow while the country's Constitutional Court weighs whether to dismiss him. Yoon was impeached by lawmakers over his disastrous December 3 declaration of martial law, and the court last month held weeks of tense impeachment hearings to determine whether to officially remove him from office.

The wait has only emboldened rival camps to hit the streets in greater numbers every weekend.

Yesterday main streets through central Seoul were filled with protesters for and against Yoon carrying political signs and waving flags despite the cold weather.

"The people are overwhelmed with fatigue and frustration as... the ongoing crises remain unresolved," said Lee Han-sol, 34, who was protesting for Yoon's dismissal. "The ongoing delays have led to a growing sense of scepticism."

But Yoon supporters, whose members include right-wing YouTubers and religious figures, told AFP his impeachment trial is unlawful. "The Constitutional Court won't be able to ignore us. Look at us, there so many of us here," said Lee Hye-sook, 58.

The Constitutional Court was

given 180 days from the time it took on Yoon's impeachment case to issue a ruling, meaning it has until June to decide his fate. It has typically issued rulings within weeks for past presidential impeachment cases, but it has taken longer over Yoon's case, without providing a reason.

At least six of the court's eight justices must vote to remove Yoon. But the wait has also given rise to a surge in speculation, with some suggesting the justices must be experiencing tense disagreements. The former prosecutor was detained in a dawn raid in January on insurrection charges but was released in early March on procedural grounds. He has remained defiant throughout and blamed a

"malicious" opposition. Yoon also faces a criminal trial on charges of insurrection over the martial law bid, making him the first sitting South Korean president to stand trial in a criminal case. If the Constitutional Court decides to formally dismiss Yoon, it would trigger elections in 60 days - which opposition leader Lee Jae-myung is currently frontrunner to win.

This week an appeals court overturned an election law conviction against Lee, potentially clearing the way for him to mount a presidential campaign. But if it is reinstated on appeal, he will be stripped of his parliamentary seat and barred from running for office for five years, including the next presidential vote.



Supporters of impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol attend a street rally in Seoul.



Tesla protesters in London



Protesters opposing billionaire Elon Musk gather outside a Tesla dealership in Acton, London.



UK dreams of US trade deal before Trump tariffs

AFP
London

Britain's government is hoping to reach a last-minute post-Brexit trade agreement with Washington to avoid - or at least mitigate - more tariffs set to be announced on Wednesday by US President Donald Trump.

Britain has set out to strike a trade deal with the United States since departing the European Union at the start of the decade, but had been unsuccessful under the previous Conservative government. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, leader of the Labour party that won power in July, visited Washington at the end of February and came away hopeful an accord could be reached.

Trump himself held out the prospect of a "great" deal that could avoid tariffs on Britain, hailing Starmer as a tough negotiator. Talks have continued, with Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds recently visiting Washington, while Starmer and Trump took up the baton in a phone call earlier this week.

It is thought that the UK government wants to agree some kind of trade deal ahead of April 2 - termed "Liberation Day" by Trump, when he is set to unveil supposedly "re-

ciprocal" tariffs, tailored to different trading partners.

It would follow Trump's announcement this week of imposing steep tariffs on imported vehicles and auto parts, vowing retaliation as trade tensions intensify and price hikes appear on the horizon. "We're engaged in discussions with the United States about mitigating the impact of tariffs," Starmer said heading into the weekend.

Finance minister Rachel Reeves on Thursday said Britain would not seek to "escalate" trade wars, in contrast to strong comments by other major economic powers that hinted at retaliation in response to the auto-sector tariffs. Downing Street has described a potential agreement as an "economic prosperity deal", indicating it will fall short of a free trade deal ultimately sought by London.

As it stands, the United States is the UK's single largest country trading partner. "Some type of arrangement that might let the UK escape some tariffs is possible but it would not be a full-scale trade deal," Jonathan Portes, professor of economics at King's College London, told AFP.

"Brexit is a double edged sword - it gives us more flexibility and we can negotiate with a view to our own interests."

"But equally, it means we have less weight than as part of the EU and moreover we cannot afford to agree to anything that complicates our trading relationship with the EU," Portes added.

UK media has reported that London may scrap a tax on tech giants to avert US tariffs under Trump and clear a pathway to a trade deal. Starmer in response stressed that "in the end, our national interest has to come first, which means all options are on the table".

His spokesman added that the UK will "make sure that businesses pay their fair share of tax, including businesses in the digital sector".

The digital tax is currently worth about £800mn (\$1bn) annually to the UK Treasury.

Reynolds conceded that the digital tax is not "something that can never change or we can never have a conversation about".

Portes, along with David Henig, director of the UK Trade Policy Project, pointed to the risk of altering Britain's tax policy in return for a promise from Trump over tariff exemptions. "If Trump keeps his word and the UK gains significant benefits as a result, then eliminating a tax could be a good deal," Henig told AFP. "That, however, is quite a gamble."

Turtle-watching



People take pictures of newly-hatched olive ridley turtles released by wildlife division officials along a beach in Chennai, India.



India sends aid flights to quake-hit Myanmar

Indian aid flights began landing in Myanmar yesterday, New Delhi's foreign ministry said, a day after a powerful 7.7-magnitude caused widespread damage in its civil war-ravaged neighbour. Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing issued an exceptionally rare appeal for international aid, indicating the severity of a

calamity that has killed at least 694 people and injured 1,670 others. Previous military regimes in the country have shunned foreign assistance even after major natural disasters. Indian foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said a C-130 military transport plane had been dispatched carrying hygiene kits, blankets, food parcels and

other essentials. "A search and rescue team and medical team is also accompanying this flight," he added. "We will continue to monitor the developments and more aid will follow." Jaishankar's ministry later shared photographs of the flight being unloaded after it landed in the commercial capital Yangon. (AFP)

PM Albanese starts election drive touting healthcare credentials

Reuters
Sydney

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese touted his Labor party's credentials on affordable healthcare yesterday, the first full day of campaigning for a general election expected to have cost of living as a central issue.

Albanese on Friday called the election for May 3 as his centre-left Labor runs neck-and-neck in opinion polls with the Liberal-National opposition led by Peter Dutton, who has campaigned on a housing crisis that he says is putting home ownership out of reach.

After enjoying a healthy lead for much of his term, Albanese's personal approval ratings are now near those of Dutton, a former police officer and the defence minister in the last conservative government.

Labor, which in February pledged an extra A\$8.5bn (US\$5.3bn) for Medicare, bills its protection of Australia's universal healthcare scheme as a key difference between it and the Liberal-



Peter Dutton



Anthony Albanese

National coalition, which says it is superior on economic management and border protection.

"At this election, this little card here, your Medicare card, is what is at stake," Albanese said while campaigning in Dutton's electorate in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland state.

Medicare, established by Labor in 1984, guarantees all Australians and some overseas visitors access to a wide range of health and hospital services at low or no cost.

Liberal leader Dutton, also campaigning in Brisbane, said: "I

want to make sure that it's easier, not harder, for Australians, and this election really is about who can manage the economy."

On Friday he said cutting permanent migration by 25% would boost home-building. Longer-term, Dutton wants to adopt nuclear power in the country. Albanese has received little benefit from slowing inflation and the central bank's first interest rate cut in five years. The prime minister says a Liberal-National government would axe public programmes and revoke modest new tax cuts passed by parliament.

Nepal probes deadly violence in pro-monarchy demonstration

Reuters
Kathmandu

Nepal's government is investigating deadly violence that occurred during a rally by the supporters of the former king seeking the restoration of constitutional monarchy, a minister said yesterday.

Two people were killed on Friday and at least 112 injured, including 77 security officials, authorities said, after police used force to stop the stone-throwing crowd from marching towards the parliament building in the capital Kathmandu.

Protesters vandalised homes,

shops, a hospital, a political party office, vehicles and a shopping mall and snatched a weapon from the police, the authorities in the Himalayan nation said.

"This is sheer vandalism, arson, looting and anarchy. It cannot be a protest," cabinet spokesman Prithvi Subba Gurung, the minister of communication and information technology, told Reuters.

Rishiram Tiwari, Kathmandu's chief district officer, said 105 protesters including some pro-monarchy leaders were taken into custody.

Nepal's 239-year-old monarchy was abolished in 2008 by a specially elected assembly as part of a deal with Maoist former

rebels, ending an insurgency that killed 17,000 people between 1996 and 2006.

The last king, 77-year-old Gyandeva, lives as a commoner with his family in a private house in Kathmandu. Political instability has rocked Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries, with 14 governments since the abolition of the monarchy, hampering economic growth and discouraging investment.

Public frustration has risen over the failure of successive governments to deliver on commitments to develop the economy of the country, a natural buffer between Asian giants China and India.

Indian security forces kill 16 Maoist rebels: police

AFP
Raipur

Indian security forces killed at least 16 Maoists during a fierce gun battle yesterday, police told AFP, as New Delhi ramps up efforts to crush the long-running insurgency.

More than 10,000 people have been killed in the decades-long "Naxalite" rebellion, whose members say they are fighting for the rights of marginalised people in India's resource-rich central regions. Saturday's skirmish in Chhattisgarh state began after security forces launched a raid in the dense forests of Sukma district, police chief P Sundarraj told AFP. "We have so far recovered 16 bodies from the Maoists," he said, adding that the toll may rise further. Sundarraj said the gunfight

was ongoing and that government forces had recovered a cache of arms including rocket and grenade launchers, assault weapons and other rifles.

A crackdown by security forces killed around 287 rebels last year, an overwhelming majority of them in Chhattisgarh, according to government data. The Maoists demand land, jobs and a share of the region's immense natural resources for local residents.

They made inroads in a number of remote communities across India's east and south, and the movement gained in strength and numbers through the first decade of this century.

At its peak, the rebels had an estimated strength of 15,000-20,000 armed cadres and were operating in districts equivalent to nearly a third of India's landmass. New Delhi then deployed

tens of thousands of troops in a stretch of territory known as the "Red Corridor".

The insurgency is a shadow of its former self as a result of years of counterinsurgency operations. Home Minister Amit Shah has vowed to eradicate the last remnants of the movement by early 2026. More than 110 Maoists have already been killed so far this year.

Earlier this month security forces shot dead 30 Maoists in two separate clashes. Another 31 were killed in a single day last month. The conflict has also seen scores of deadly attacks on government forces. A roadside bomb killed at least nine Indian troops in January.

A 2010 forest ambush in Chhattisgarh killed 76 paramilitary troops - the single deadliest attack on Indian security forces by the insurgents.

**CHAIRMAN**

Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Attiyah

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Faisal Abdulhameed al-Mudahka

Deputy Managing Editor

K T Chacko

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

Unexpected sea level rise threatens coastal ecosystems and marine biodiversity

Sea level rise is a major global issue driven by climate change, primarily due to melting ice caps and the thermal expansion of seawater.

Higher sea levels lead to more frequent and severe coastal flooding. Increased erosion have seen threatening coastal infrastructure and communities around the world.

Globally, sea level rose faster than expected in 2024, mostly because of ocean water expanding as it warms, or thermal expansion.

According to a recent Nasa-led analysis, last year's rate of rise was 0.23 inches (0.59 centimetres) per year, compared to the expected rate of 0.17 inches (0.43 centimetres) per year.

"The rise we saw in 2024 was higher than we expected," said Josh Willis, a sea level researcher at Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California.

"Every year is a little bit different, but what's clear is that the ocean continues to rise, and the rate of rise is getting faster and faster."

In recent years, about two-thirds of sea level rise was from the addition of water from land into the ocean by melting ice sheets and glaciers. About a third came from thermal expansion of seawater. But in 2024, those contributions flipped, with two-thirds of sea level rise coming from thermal expansion.

"With 2024 as the warmest year on record, Earth's expanding oceans are following suit, reaching their highest levels in three decades," said Nadya Vinogradova Shiffer, head of physical oceanography programmes and the Integrated Earth System Observatory at Nasa Headquarters in Washington.

Since the satellite record of ocean height began in 1993, the rate of annual sea level rise has more than doubled. In total, global sea level has gone up by 4 inches (10 centimetres) since 1993, noted Jane J Lee of Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

According to Nasa, there are several ways in which heat makes its way into the ocean, resulting in the thermal expansion of water. Normally, seawater arranges itself into layers determined by water temperature and density.

Warmer water floats on top of and is lighter than cooler water, which is denser. In most places, heat from the surface moves very slowly through these layers down into the deep ocean.

But extremely windy areas of the ocean can agitate the layers enough to result in vertical mixing. Very large currents, like those found in the Southern Ocean, can tilt ocean layers, allowing surface waters to more easily slip down deep.

The massive movement of water during El Niño – in which a large pool of warm water normally located in the western Pacific Ocean sloshes over to the central and eastern Pacific – can also result in vertical movement of heat within the ocean.

In another report, Nasa noted the rate of global sea level rise doubled in the last 30 years.

Citing recent findings, the premier space agency said this rate measures the average rise in sea level each year – most of it resulting from climate change. The study found that in 1993, the rate was about 0.08 inches (2.1 millimetres) per year but has since increased to about 0.18 inches (4.5 millimetres) per year in 2023.

The study reports that sea level also is expected to grow by another 6.6 inches (169 millimetres) globally over the next 30 years if it follows this trend.

"We have had this succession of satellite missions over the past three decades, one building on top of another, and it's that data on a global scale that allows us to precisely track the rate of global sea level rise," said Nasa Sea Level Change Team Principal Investigator Benjamin Hamlington, the new study's lead author.

Although a number of factors contribute to sea level rise, the primary causes are warming and ice-melt due to greenhouse gas emissions, Hamlington said.

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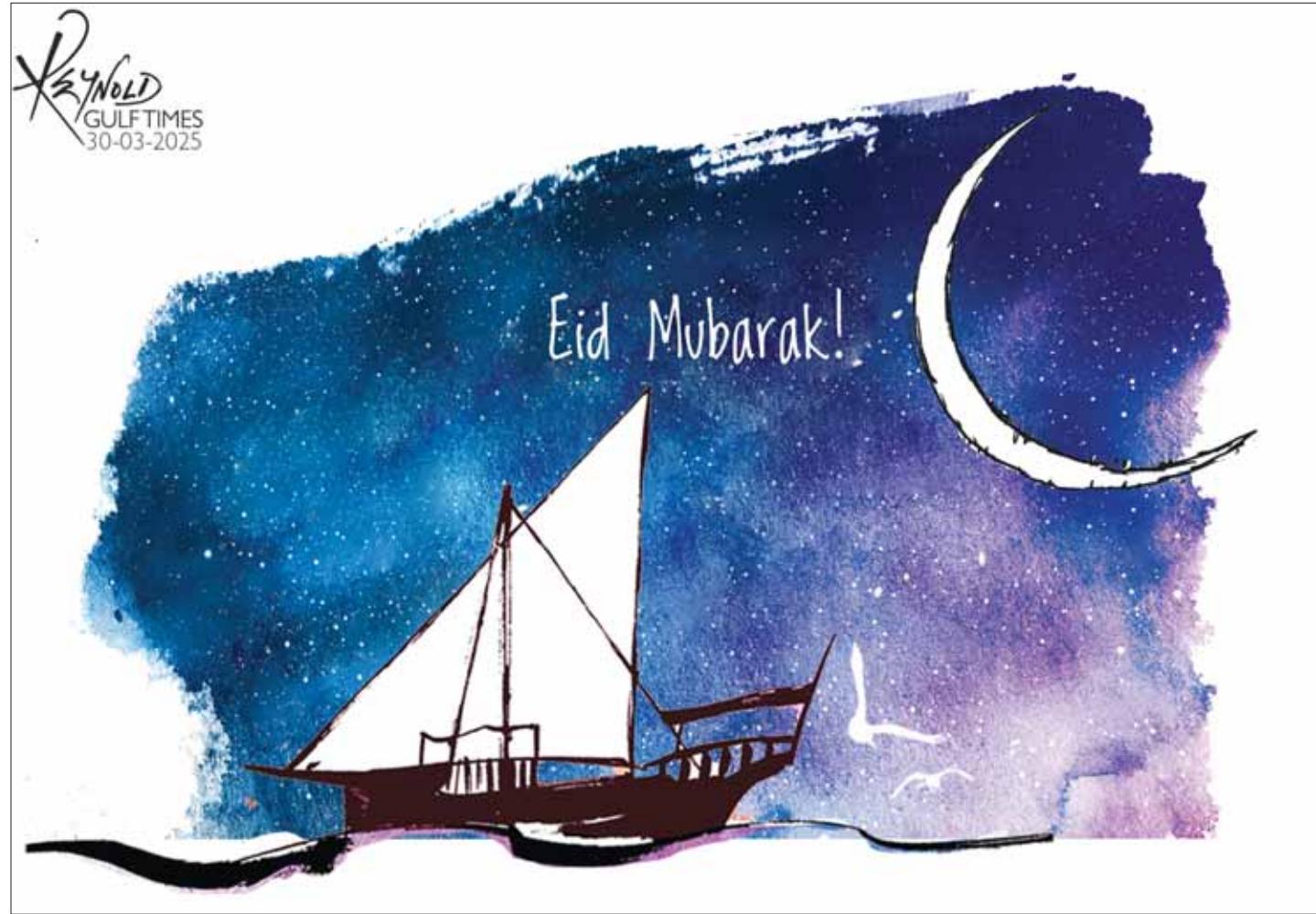
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Starmer set for health strategy test as Reform gains ground

By Elizabeth Piper
London

In the nuclear medicine department of London's University College Hospital, patients pass through polished corridors to airy rooms decorated with green-leaf stencils, where they are scanned and treated, particularly for cancer, with cutting-edge technology that uses radioactive tracers.

The facility is a showcase for Prime Minister Keir Starmer's bid to revitalise Britain's National Health Service that should boost employment, as well as helping to counter the growing popularity of Nigel Farage's party, Reform UK, members of Starmer's team say. Starmer has visited to advertise his "reform or die" agenda for the health service.

His team sees the NHS in England as one area where it can offer people tangible improvements soon, a member of his team said.

So it's in hospital corridors such as these, where political rhetoric meets practical reality, that votes for Starmer's Labour Party could be won or lost as his health reform agenda is tested in local elections in parts of England on May 1.

Before last year's national election, public satisfaction with Britain's run-down and overburdened health service had slumped to its lowest on record. The service was founded by Labour in 1948; nearly half the party's supporters told pollsters that improving it was their number one concern.

In its October budget, Labour injected almost £26bn (\$34bn) into the system over two years, calling that the largest boost in day-to-day NHS spending since 2010.

But it is cutting Britain's welfare bill to try to meet its fiscal rules.

It said the NHS must start reducing waiting times and took steps to cut bureaucracy and red tape, including scrapping NHS England, an organisation that manages health services.

Among targets, Starmer set a goal of doubling the number of scanners in England to help reduce the more than 6mn people waiting for treatment and provide more than 2mn extra appointments every year.

The government said in February the NHS had met its appointments target between July and November 2024 and was chipping away at the list.

How sustainable such steps prove to be – and particularly, whether they show up in the less affluent regions where Brexit campaigner Farage is gaining ground – will be an acid test.

"When you ask those who switched to Labour at the last election, it was very clear that the NHS and the economy were the two key tests as to whether Labour have delivered on their promise," said Luke Tryl, executive director of think tank More in Common UK.

Farage, whose party has rivalled the popularity of Britain's two main parties in recent weeks, hopes to win votes in central and northern England and the nation's increasingly deprived coastal areas, where dissatisfaction with the NHS runs deep.

Reform UK did not respond to a request for comment for this story but has argued it could eradicate waiting lists by reducing NHS managers, boosting the workforce and offering private healthcare vouchers.

Health Minister Wes Streeting,

who said in January that improving the health service would be a "potent antidote" to populism, says this shows Farage does not believe in the NHS's mandate of "a universal service free at the point of use" – which Farage rejects.

For one health expert, Starmer's strategy is a gamble because it will take longer than May for the benefits of Labour's extra spending to be noticed by voters.

"The problem with investment in health is that it is notoriously quite sticky, it takes a while to see noticeable benefits," said Luke Munford, senior lecturer in health economics at The University of Manchester.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Social Care said: "We have hit the ground running." Besides delivering the extra appointments, the spokesperson said the government had invested in family doctors to shift care out of hospitals and diagnostic equipment to get patients answers sooner.

Labour plans three major shifts for health: to move care from hospitals to the community, switch treatment and administration technology to digital methods, and work on methods of prevention rather than just treatment – hence the publicity focus on scanners.

But even in the London hospital, staff say the challenges are many. Some scanners cost around a million pounds each. Demand, as elsewhere across Europe, is surging as post-war Baby Boomers age and sicken. And skilled staff are hard to come by.

Geoff Bellingan, medical director for cancer and surgery at the trust that runs the hospital,

said it was seeing a "significant rise" in some referrals "and those patients all need diagnostics".

The hospital said the nuclear medicine department has already increased its rate of some scans by nearly one-fifth, is allowing family doctors more direct access to its imaging services, and trying to push more patients through by streamlining procedures.

But it lacks space for new machines and cannot recruit enough radiographers from within the UK, because not enough are trained there.

Most of its scanning services do not generate enough revenue in the NHS's internal accounting system to cover their cost, the hospital said. It is looking for different ways to deal with the constraints, including options for more bulk procurement, income generation and private partnerships to reduce costs, David Probert, chief executive of the University College London Hospitals trust, told Reuters in February.

As well as finding enough investment, hospitals need to bring "the population with you," Probert said: elderly people, for instance, often struggle with online services.

He said that every year he tells his staff the next one is going to be "incredibly challenging. And now I'm saying it again: The next year will be incredibly challenging."

One of Reform's main targets is the eastern area of Lincolnshire, a largely agricultural region where Andrea Jenkyns, who left the Conservative Party to join Reform, is standing to be mayor on May 1.

She did not respond to a request for comment for this story but Reform has said it hopes to channel local frustration with high immigration by promoting a policy to freeze non-essential immigration, which Farage says contributes to lengthy NHS waiting lists.

Lincolnshire's director of public health, Derek Ward, told a local committee in January that the region's population aged over 85 is expected to almost double by 2043 and its residents have been identified as having increasing long-term health needs. He declined further comment so close to the elections.

Munford, the health economist, said deprived areas including Lincolnshire were hit harder than richer ones by government cuts since 2008, which targeted budgets for preventative health.

This means many voters in such regions not only suffer worse health, but also have lost faith in government after promises for new hospitals failed to materialise.

"Austerity was the perfect storm in deprived areas," he said. "The obvious thing to do is to blame the status quo, the government."

The government said its extra funds are weighted towards poorer areas: "We are ensuring the NHS is fit for the future while taking immediate action to improve patient care," its spokesperson said. - Reuters



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer during a press conference on the sidelines of a summit for "coalition of the willing" at the British embassy in Paris on Thursday. (AFP)

US vaccine chief resigns over RFK 'lies': media

AFP/Reuters
Washington

The top US vaccine official has resigned, citing the "misinformation and lies" that he said were being peddled by the incoming health secretary, reports said.

According to both the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), Dr Peter Marks was forced out of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s vaccine division, as Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr takes charge.

Kennedy is a noted vaccine sceptic, while Marks has worked at the FDA since 2012 and was part of the US effort to roll out inoculations during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The WSJ reported that Marks was given the choice by a Health and Human Services official to resign or be fired.

In a resignation letter cited by the newspapers, Marks complained of an "unprecedented assault on scientific truth" being pushed by Kennedy and his supporters.

"It has become clear that truth

Measles outbreak worsens as cases in Texas, New Mexico rise 20% in three days

Texas and New Mexico health departments said on Friday that the number of measles cases in their states rose 20% since their last reports three days ago, as experts warn they expect the outbreak to further spread in coming weeks. Texas now has 400 cases, the Texas Department of State Health Services said, 270 of which were in Gaines County, where the current measles outbreak started. Texas has reported two deaths from measles since this outbreak began. New Mexico reported one additional case, bringing its total count to 44. Kansas and Oklahoma have also linked local outbreaks to the Texas cases. The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), whose data is one day behind the Texas and New Mexico report, said there were a total of 483

confirmed measles cases as of March 27, a jump of 105 from a week earlier. Infectious disease experts said the magnitude of the outbreak's acceleration was uncertain, but it was clear that more cases would emerge. The number of US measles cases so far this year has already exceeded those reported for all of 2024. Experts have warned that declining US vaccination rates can make the population vulnerable to highly contagious measles. The disease, which can be especially serious in young children, was considered eradicated in the US in 2000. However, vaccination rates have since fallen, and just 80% of those in the Texas county where the outbreak began were inoculated against measles, below the 95% needed for so-called herd immunity. - Reuters

and transparency are not desired by the Secretary, but rather he wishes subservient confirmation of his misinformation and lies," he said.

During President Donald Trump's first term, the US leader was proud of his administration's "Project Warp Speed" development of vaccines to control spread of coronavirus.

However, when he came to power for a second term in January this year, he appointed 71-year-

old Kennedy, who has long peddled unsupported theories that vaccines are ineffective or trigger childhood disease.

Last year 75 Nobel laureates urged the US Senate to oppose Kennedy's nomination, but he was confirmed in February with only one member of the Republican majority voting against it.

According to the WSJ, a Health and Human Services (HHS) spokesman responded to Marks' resignation by saying if he "does

not want to get behind restoring science to its golden standard and promoting radical transparency, then he has no place at the FDA under the strong leadership of Secretary Kennedy".

Earlier this week Kennedy announced plans to reshape federal public health agencies, including cutting 10,000 employees and centralising some functions of the FDA, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and others under his purview.

Musk's voter prize offers in US election face legal challenge

Billionaire and Trump ally Elon Musk faces an immediate legal challenge to his promise to give \$1mn to two voters in Wisconsin's Supreme Court race in his latest attempt to use his vast fortune to sway the results of crucial US votes.

Wisconsin Attorney-General Josh Kaul wrote on Instagram that his office was "aware of the offer recently posted by Elon Musk" and said he plans to "take legal action today to seek a court order to stop this from happening".

Musk, the world's richest person and one of President Donald Trump's top advisers, has already spent millions trying to boost support for Republican Brad Schimel, who would tilt the swing-state's top court to a conservative majority if elected.

The Tesla and SpaceX tycoon announced on X, which he also owns, that he would "hand over checks for a million dollars" to two people who sign a petition opposing "activist judges" – a term used by Republicans for judges who rule against some of Trump's policies.

He has also offered \$100 to anyone signing the petition.

Serious national issues are on the docket for the Wisconsin court's next term, including abortion access and rules for voting in the crucial 2026 midterm nationwide congressional elections.

Schimel is also openly backed by Trump, who wrote on his Truth Social platform this week that the race is "really big and important".

The latest stunt was a redux of Musk's earlier million-dollar prizes in battleground states during the presidential election.

The entrepreneur has emerged as one of the most powerful people in the country, with huge government contracts for his companies and a free-ranging role in Trump's administration to slash spending on everything from foreign policy to domestic programmes. - AFP

11 dead in drone strikes against Pakistani Taliban

At least 11 people were killed yesterday in northern Pakistan when the army launched a series of drone strikes against the Taliban – losses which the provincial government called "deeply regrettable".

Three strikes took place late on Friday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, targeting "Pakistani Taliban hideouts" in the area bordering Afghanistan, a senior police officer said on condition of anonymity. Violence had erupted there in recent months.

"It was only this morning that we learned that two women and three children were among the victims," the officer said.

Provincial government spokesman Muhammad Ali Saif confirmed late in the day that an "anti-terror operation was conducted in the mountainous area of Kaflang, Mardan district, based on confirmed intelligence regarding the presence of terrorists".

"Reports indicate that the location was being used as a hideout and transit point for terrorist elements," he said. "Subsequent information revealed that unarmed civilians were present in the vicinity of the operation site." - AFP

US tells French companies to comply with Trump's order banning diversity

Reuters
Paris

The Trump administration has ordered some French companies with US government contracts to comply with his executive order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programmes, highlighting the extraterritorial reach of US policies and their potential impact on European corporate practices.

The companies have been told to confirm their compliance in a questionnaire entitled *Certification Regarding Compliance With Applicable Federal Anti-Discrimination Law*.

Reuters has seen a copy of the questionnaire.

The move comes amid rising economic and political tensions between the United States and Europe following Donald Trump's election on an "America First" platform.

It also raises questions about the practical changes targeted companies may need to implement, given differing approaches between the US and France.

US firms have embraced DEI policies, tracking race and ethnicity data and setting diversity targets.

In France, a secular approach limits such practices, with laws restricting data collection and corporate efforts focusing more on gender and socioeconomic background.

The documents will also spark concerns in European boardrooms that the Trump administration is widening its fight against DEI policies overseas, at a time when Trump's actions on tariffs and security ties have upended transatlantic relations.

French business daily *Les Echos*, which first reported the demand late on Friday, said it had been sent out to firms by the US embassy in Paris.

"We inform you that Executive Order 14173, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-based Opportunities, signed by President Trump, applies to all suppliers and service providers of the US government, regardless of their nationality and the country in which they operate," reads the letter, according to a copy that French newspaper *Le Figaro* published on its website.

"We would be grateful if you could complete and sign the document in English within five days and return it to us by e-mail. If you do not agree to sign this document, we would appreciate if you could provide detailed reasons, which we will forward to our legal services," the letter added, with reference to the certification seen by Reuters.

An embassy spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

There was no indication that the companies receiving the letter were selected based on their presence in the United States.

A source close to the matter confirmed that France's state-controlled telecoms group Orange, which has no US presence, received the letter.

Meanwhile, defence electronics firm Thales and oil major TotalEnergies, both with operations in the US, did not receive it, according to spokespeople for the companies. Orange declined to comment.

An official close to French Finance Minister Eric Lombard said the matter would be taken up with the US government.

"This practice reflects the values of the new US government. They are not the same as ours. The minister will remind his counterparts in the US government of this," the official said.

It was not immediately clear if similar letters and questionnaires had been sent to foreign companies in other European countries.

Serbian students protest pro-government media 'propaganda'

AFP
Belgrade

Serbian demonstrators gathered for a rally outside a pro-government television channel yesterday, branding it a "propaganda tool", in the latest of nearly five months of mass protests.

Holding banners "Manipulator, not a journalist", waving Serbian and university flags, and blowing whistles, student organisers called on citizens to join the demo in front of the offices of *Informer*, a television station with a tabloid newspaper of the same name.

"Informer has been spreading numerous lies and falsehoods for a long time," said Bogdan Vucic, a student at the Belgrade Faculty of Political Science.

The nationwide wave of student-led protests against state corruption has raised pressure on the nationalist government of President Aleksandar Vucic.

It was sparked by the deadly collapse of a roof at a newly-renovated train station in Novi Sad, Serbia's second city, in November.

Since the beginning of the protests, pro-government media have portrayed student demonstrators as "foreign agents", alleging that they are funded by the opposition and plotting a "coup d'état".

Bogdan Vucic said one of his student peers had become a target of both the *Informer* TV station and the tabloid.

"They have published information about his family that goes against the most basic standards of decency, not to mention journalistic ethics," he said.

According to the Press Council – the regulatory body that monitors newspapers – *Informer* violated the Serbian journalists'



Student protesters stage a 'disinfection' performance during a demonstration outside a pro-government *Informer* television station in Belgrade. - AFP

Right: A cameraman of *Informer* television station is seen on the office's roof. - AFP

code of ethics 647 times in 2024.

Many newspapers and channels in Serbia are owned by people with close ties to the government and regularly echo its talking points.

Tabloid *Kurir* said students "terrorise Belgrade".

Informer alleged they are paid by US aid agency USAID and billionaire George Soros – a regular target of right-wing conspiracy theories.

Another pro-government broadcaster, *Informer* TV, branded the protest movement an uprising supported by Kosovo, which broke away from Serbia in 2008.

"Such narratives contribute to making students enemies of the state – it creates a violent atmosphere and divisions," said Bogdan Vucic. "That's why we want to put an end to what we could call propaganda –

very dirty propaganda."

Informer is among the most widely-read newspapers in Serbia, with 57,028 copies printed daily. It is cheaper than its competitors at just 40 Serbian dinars (\$0.36) a copy.

The group claims its TV channel is the "most watched among cable networks" in the country.

Like other pro-government outlets, *Informer* benefits from public funding – through advertising purchased by state operator *Petrol* Serbia – and exclusive interviews with the country's leaders.

Meanwhile, "the situation for independent media in Serbia is increasingly dire" to the point where they risk disappearing, said Slobodan Georgiev, news director of television channel NOVA S.

According to the media watchdog Re-



porters Without Borders, the majority of Serbian media derive their income from advertising and opaque public subsidies – both sources largely controlled by the ruling elite and dependent on the media groups' political alignment.

"Advertisers close to the government, as well as state-owned companies, completely bypass independent media," said Dragoljub Petrovic, editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Danas*.

Critical media and journalists are subjected to various forms of pressure, including vindictive lawsuits, public insults, and being labelled traitors.

"Independent journalists face relentless pressure, including direct attacks from the head of state and leading figures of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party," Georgiev said.

Afghan Taliban set nearly 2,500 prisoners free

Afghanistan's Taliban government released nearly 2,500 prisoners ahead of celebrations marking the end of Ramadan, the Supreme Court said yesterday.

The Supreme Court said on X that "2,463 prisoners who were eligible for amnesty were released, while 3,152 others received

sentence reductions" as per a decree by the Taliban supreme leader.

The release of prisoners convicted of minor crimes is common practice ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, expected to start today.

Last year, Taliban authorities released around 2,800 prisoners ahead of the end of Ramadan, local media reported. - AFP

The man suspected of stabbing five people in central Amsterdam on Thursday is a 30-year-old Ukrainian national from the eastern Donetsk region, local police said yesterday.

The man is suspected of having wounded five random people, using multiple knives, during a stabbing rampage near

the busy Dam Square on Thursday afternoon.

He was arrested quickly after the incident with the help of bystanders, sustaining an injury to his leg.

The man will be brought before a judge on April 1 to decide on his further detention. - Reuters

Hundreds of thousands join Istanbul protest rally

AFP/Reuters
Istanbul

Waving flags and chanting slogans, many hundreds of thousands of anti-government demonstrators rallied yesterday in Istanbul in defence of democracy after the arrest of Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu which sparked Turkey's worst street unrest in over a decade.

"I am not afraid, and I will continue to resist. I call on everyone not to be afraid... they fired me (from my job) but one day, justice will be served," said Gunay Yildiz, a former employee of Istanbul's Esenyurt district municipality.

Bunyamin Turan, a retired teacher, said: "When we look at the history of humanity, in all countries, all administrations, all regimes where there was such oppression, sooner or later, the people and those who resisted the oppression have won. The real owners of those countries won."

Turkish authorities did not comment on the latest mass protest.

Erdogan has previously branded the demonstrations "street terror".

The last major demonstration called by CHP was on Tuesday, ahead of yesterday's big rally, although students have continued to protest throughout the week.

Speaking to French newspaper *Le Monde*, CHP leader Ozel said that there would be weekly rallies every Saturday in different cities across Turkey as well as a weekly Wednesday night demo in Istanbul.

"If we don't stop this attempted coup, it will mean the end of the ballot box," he said.

"I joined the rallies outside City Hall for four days together with university students. I told them not to give in," protester Cafer Sungur, 78, told AFP.

"There is no other way than to keep fighting," he said. "I was jailed in the 1970s but back then there was justice. Today we can't talk about justice anymore."

Student groups have kept up their own protests, most of them masked, in the face of a police crackdown that has seen nearly 2,000 people arrested.

The authorities have also cracked down on media coverage.



Everything in place for safe, clean Eid holiday: authorities

All the municipalities across the country have completed their preparations to welcome Eid al-Fitr, having carried out intensive inspection campaigns to ensure food safety, and getting public services, parks and recreational areas ready for the large numbers of visitors expected during the holidays.

Efforts have also been intensified to clean beaches and prayer areas, ensuring a clean and safe environment for worshippers and the public.

As part of efforts to maintain environmental cleanliness and safety, the General Cleanliness Department, in collaboration with various municipalities, has conducted intensive campaigns to clean mosques and Eid prayer yards.

The initiative included cleaning the beaches and islands to enhance visitor comfort.

The campaign covered the cleaning of 362 mosques and prayer yards, with the participation of 315 workers and supervisors, 73 vehicles.

Some 3.34 tonnes of waste were removed, including 730kg of recyclable materials.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Municipality has urged beach and island visitors to maintain cleanliness to support sustainability efforts and ensure a clean and safe environment for all.

Meanwhile, Al Rayyan Municipality has completed its preparations through campaigns on confectionery shops, traditional catering kitchens, and food establishments to ensure compliance with Law No 8 of 1990 on the Regulation of Human Food Control.

The municipality has also ensured the safety of slaughtered animals in abattoirs and the continued operation of the central market in Al Salihiya during the holidays.

Preparations included cleaning and disinfecting Eid prayer yards and mosques, preparing family parks and beaches for visitors, and intensifying monitoring to identify abandoned vehicles.

Family parks will be open from 5am to 1am, while public parks will operate 24/7 during the holidays.

Al Rayyan Municipality conducted 200 awareness tours across women's beauty salons, men's barber shops, and laundries, providing guidance and necessary requirements to ensure compliance with the standards stipulated in Ministerial Decision No 38 of 2025, in accordance with Law No 5 of 2015.

Doha Municipality Health Control Section has intensified inspection campaigns on fruit, vegetable, nut, and confectionery shops.

A veterinary team is also inspecting butcher shops and slaughterhouses.

Inspectors from Doha Municipality have further carried out inspection campaigns on women's and men's salons, as well as laundries.

Al Shamal Municipality has launched a comprehensive monitoring plan, including inspections of food establishments, supervision of butcher shops and poultry and fish markets, and preparation of parks and recreational areas for visitors.

Disinfection campaigns for public facilities, Eid prayer yards, and mosques have been conducted, alongside pest and rodent control measures.

Cleaning teams will operate in two shifts daily to maintain a clean and safe environment.

Al Sheehaniya Municipality has carried out 24-hour intensive inspection campaigns on food establishments.

In addition, 13 samples of sweets, fruits, and chocolates have been sent to the central laboratory for safety examinations.

Preparations included special monitoring plans for events and celebrations, with Al Sheehaniya Central Abattoir operating from 7am to 4pm and dedicated teams handling complaints around the clock.

Al Khor and Al Thakhira Municipality has launched extensive inspection campaigns covering restaurants, traditional catering kitchens, shopping malls, confectionery shops, butcher shops, fish markets, and fruit and vegetable stalls.

Inspections were conducted at the abattoirs and the fish market, with additional butchers and sanitation workers deployed to enhance consumer convenience.

Eid prayer areas across the municipality were cleaned using advanced equipment.

Al Wakrah Municipality has intensified its monitoring efforts on food establishments and expanded its inspection campaigns across women's and men's salons and laundries in key areas of Al Wakrah City.

Umm Salal Municipality has completed preparations for Eid prayer areas and public parks to accommodate visitors.

The Ministry of Municipality reaffirms its commitment to ensure a clean and safe environment during Eid, urging the public to adhere to the set health guidelines, co-operate with municipal teams, and contribute to maintaining public cleanliness while enjoying the festive atmosphere in a safe and comfortable setting.

