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**MONDAY** Vol. XXXXVI No. 13352

April 21, 2025  
Shawwal 23, 1446 AH

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## BUSINESS | Page 1

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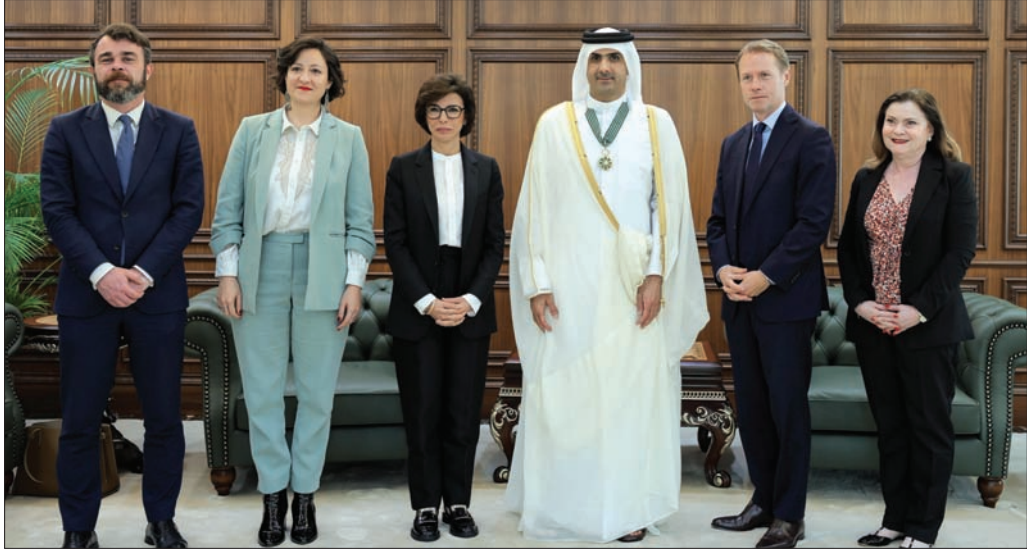
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## France awards culture minister with Order of Arts and Letters



France awarded HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani with the Order of Arts and Letters with the rank of Commander, the highest of this prestigious Order. French Minister of Culture Rachida Dati awarded the medal to HE the Minister of Culture, in recognition of his efforts to strengthen cultural relations between Qatar and France, in

addition to his ongoing efforts to support arts and literature and develop the cultural scene in Qatar. HE Sheikh Abdulrahman has been working to implement a comprehensive cultural strategy to enhance national identity, support artistic creativity, and expand the scope of international cultural co-operation.

The French Order of Arts and Letters was established in 1957 and is awarded to writers, artists, and intellectuals who have enriched the cultural scene with their distinguished contributions. It is a ministerial decoration granted by the French Minister of Culture in recognition of distinguished contributions to the fields of arts and literature. **(QNA)**

### QF wraps up inaugural BilAraby Summit

Qatar Foundation has concluded the inaugural BilAraby Summit, following two days of rich dialogue, artistic expression, and cultural exchange that brought together more than 800 participants from across the Arab region and beyond. The summit created a vibrant space for over 20 speakers, panellists, and storytellers from diverse backgrounds who explored how the Arabic language can remain a living force in today's world. **(QNA) Page 3**

### Disarming Hezbollah 'delicate', says Aoun

Lebanon's president said disarming Hezbollah was a "delicate" matter, as authorities reported Israeli strikes yesterday that killed two people in the country's south. The series of raids came despite a November ceasefire that sought to end more than a year of hostilities with Hezbollah, which Washington has been pressing the Lebanese government to disarm. President Joseph Aoun said that restricting the bearing of arms to the state was "a sensitive, delicate issue that is fundamental to preserving civil peace" and required due "consideration and responsibility". **(AFP)**

### Ukraine, Russia trade truce breach blame

Russia and Ukraine blamed each other yesterday for breaking a one-day Easter ceasefire declared by President Vladimir Putin, with both sides accusing the other of hundreds of attacks and the Kremlin saying there was no order for an extension. **(Reuters) Page 11**

## Gaza medics' killing due to Israeli 'failures'

Reuters

Tel Aviv/Jerusalem

The Israeli military yesterday said a review into last month's killing of emergency responders in Gaza found there had been "several professional failures" and that a commander would be dismissed over the incident.

The 15 paramedics and other rescue workers were shot dead on March 23 in three separate shootings at the same location near Rafah. They were buried in a shallow grave where their bodies were found a week later by officials from the UN and the Palestinian Red Crescent.

In a statement yesterday, the military said a commanding officer is to be reprimanded. A deputy commander, a reservist who was the field commander, will be dismissed from his position for providing an incomplete and inaccurate report, it said. "The examination identified several professional failures, breaches of orders, and a failure to fully report the incident," the military said.

"The fire in the first two incidents resulted from an operational misunderstanding by the troops, who believed they faced a tangible threat from enemy forces. The third incident involved a breach of orders during a combat setting," it said.

A video recovered from the mobile phone of one of the dead men and published by the Pal-

### Palestine Red Crescent: Israeli probe 'full of lies'

The Palestine Red Crescent rejected the findings of an Israeli military investigation that blamed "operational failures" for the killing of 15 Gaza emergency service workers, denouncing the report as "full of lies".

"The report is full of lies. It is invalid and unacceptable, as it justifies the killing and shifts responsibility to a personal error in the field command when the truth is quite different," Nebal Farsakh, spokesperson for the Red Crescent, told AFP.

estinian Red Crescent showed uniformed emergency responders and clearly marked ambulances and fire trucks, with their lights on, being fired on by soldiers.

Major General Yoav Har-Even, who conducted the review, told reporters that soldiers, from a special forces unit, had believed they were under threat after firing on what they initially determined as a Hamas vehicle but was in fact an ambulance. Two occupants were killed and a third was detained and questioned over suspected Hamas links.

The man was released the next day after further questioning. **To Page 5**

# NHRC chief lauds Qatar's milestones in education, health and employment

QNA

Ottawa

Qatar has achieved a breakthrough in achieving full equality in education, health, and employment, said HE the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah.

HE al-Attiyah added that Qatari women have been appointed as judges since 2010 and took up positions in the military, civil aviation, and diplomatic corps. This is in addition to the State's extensive efforts to protect workers' rights and its achievement of equality and social justice through the rapid legislative reforms and developments made to the Qatari Labour Law over the past years.

This came during two separate meetings held by HE al-Attiyah in Ottawa, with Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's Vice-Chairperson Athanasios Hadjis, and with Deputy Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth Frances McRae.

During her meeting with Hadjis, HE al-Attiyah noted that the committee is one of the key national institutions in the region, having been classified as an "A" by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) since 2010, in accordance with the Paris Principles. She explained that the NHRC



HE NHRC Chairperson Maryam bint Abdullah al-Attiyah with Canadian Deputy Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth Frances McRae.

has formed a permanent working group dedicated to promoting a culture of human rights, in addition to its role in making recommendations to the State regarding its accession to international agreements and reviewing relevant legislation.

HE al-Attiyah emphasised the committee's commitment to integrating human rights concepts into school curricula, noting that it continues its efforts to strengthen its regional role by supporting the establishment of similar national institutions in a

number of Arab countries.

She stressed that Qatar has undertaken significant reforms to protect and promote workers' rights, highlighting NHRC's important role of providing advisory recommendations to relevant government agencies, receiving worker petitions and assisting them in finding solutions in co-operation with relevant authorities, as well as raising workers' awareness of their rights through campaigns, training courses, and other awareness-raising activities. **To Page 4**

## QNB maintains title as 'Most Valuable Banking Brand' in Mideast, Africa

QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region, has once again secured its position as the most valuable banking brand in the region, according to the latest Brand Finance Banking 500 report.

With a brand value of \$9.36bn, QNB maintains its leading position among MEA banks and continues to rank among the top 50 banking brands globally, holding steady at the 39th position year-on-year.

In a notable achievement, QNB has advanced in the overall global brand rankings across all sectors, climbing to the 245th position from 259th place last year.

The bank's brand value wit-



nessed an impressive 11% year-on-year growth, increasing from \$8.4bn to \$9.358bn.

These accomplishments reflect QNB's strategic investments in digital innovation, customer experience, and global expansion,

as well as the trust placed in the brand by its stakeholders across the international markets in which it operates.

Commenting on the achievement, QNB Group Chief Executive Officer, Abdulla Mubarak al-Khalifa, said: "We are proud to be recognised once again as the most valuable banking brand in the Middle East and Africa. This achievement is a testament to the strength of our brand, our unwavering commitment to excellence, and the trust that our customers and stakeholders place in us.

"Our continued focus on innovation, digital transformation, and customer-centric services has allowed us to maintain our leadership both regionally and globally."

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## Awqaf minister meets Uzbek officials in Tashkent

**QNA**  
Tashkent

**H**E the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem met with a number of Uzbek officials during his visit to Tashkent.

HE al-Ghanem met with Adviser to the President of Uzbekistan and Director of the National Agency for Social Protection Mansurbek Olloyorov. The two sides discussed prospects for co-operation in areas of social welfare related to Islamic work, as well as mechanisms for exchanging institutional expertise to contribute to the development of joint social initiatives.

He also met with Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs of Uzbekistan Sodiq Toshboev, and leaders of the Muslim Administration. The



meetings addressed ways to enhance bilateral co-operation in religious affairs, including scientific and advocacy programmes, the exchange of expertise in religious training and rehabilitation, and support for efforts to spread the culture of moderation and balance.

The two sides emphasised the importance of continuing co-ordination and co-operation in all that serves the causes of the

Islamic world and enhancing the role of religious institutions in consolidating noble human values.

The visit embodies Awqaf's commitment to strengthening ties with sisterly and friendly countries and expanding areas of strategic co-operation, in a way that serves tolerant Islamic values and enhances the role of religious institutions in serving communities.

## QRI gets prestigious CARF accreditation



Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Suwaidi

**H**amad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Qatar Rehabilitation Institute (QRI) has been awarded international accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), marking a ground-breaking achievement with QRI becoming the first HMC facility to achieve this prestigious rehabilitation accreditation.

CARF accreditation is recognised globally as the gold standard in rehabilitation care, awarded only to institutions that demonstrate the highest levels of clinical quality, safety and operational excellence. QRI received the maximum three-year accreditation on its first attempt – an exceptional and rare accomplishment that reflects QRI's excellence in care delivery.

Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Suwaidi, managing director of HMC, said: "CARF accreditation is a landmark achievement for HMC and a proud moment for Qatar. It confirms that the people of Qatar have access to world-class rehabilitation services, delivered by dedicated professionals in a facility that meets the highest global standards. This milestone reflects our commitment to providing the very best care for our population."

This medical achievement supports HMC's strategy to achieve excellence in delivering



Dr Khalid Mohammed al-Jalham

medical services and enhancing patient experience. It also seamlessly aligns with Qatar's Third National Development Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030, under which HMC is committed to adopting the latest medical technologies and providing advanced healthcare that significantly improves the lives of patients.

The CARF survey team commended QRI for its robust interdisciplinary care model, outcome-driven services, and unwavering commitment to continuous quality improvement. The report highlighted QRI's passionate leadership, highly engaged management, and a dedicated team culture among staff. CARF also recognised QRI's strides in technological transformation, including the integration of precision rehabilitation approaches, positioning the institute at the forefront of innovative, patient-centred rehabilitation care.

Dr Khalid Mohammed al-Jalham, HMC's chief medical officer, commented: "The accreditation of QRI by CARF is yet another demonstration of the international standard of healthcare available at HMC. This achievement highlights our system-wide focus on quality, safety, and patient-centred care, and reinforces our leadership in specialist rehabilitation services



Dr Hanadi al-Hamad

that meet the diverse needs of our community."

Dr Hanadi al-Hamad, deputy chief for rehabilitation, and medical director and CEO of QRI, added: "Achieving CARF accreditation for the first time is an extraordinary accomplishment and a tribute to every member of the QRI team. It reflects years of strategic planning, investment in innovation, and above all, the hard work and passion of our staff. I am incredibly proud of this achievement, which positions QRI as a national and regional leader in rehabilitation."

QRI provides a comprehensive range of services supporting individuals of all ages through recovery and reintegration into the community. The Institute offers inpatient, day care, outpatient, and home-based rehabilitation, as well as a nationwide community rehabilitation programme, backed by advanced facilities including robotic labs, aquatic therapy, healing garden, immersive recreational room, simulation rooms, and assistive technology.

Its innovative Precision Rehabilitation model – an individualised, data-driven approach – sets a new standard in patient-centred care by leveraging advanced analytics to develop personalised treatment plans for optimal recovery outcomes.

## Culture minister meets French counterpart



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani met in Doha yesterday with French Minister of Culture Rachida Dati. The meeting explored avenues for cultural co-operation between Qatar and France and discussed ways to strengthen and expand these ties. **(QNA)**

## Labour minister chairs summit roadmap session in Cairo



**H**E Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri, Minister of Labour, chaired the session on the Roadmap for the Second World Summit on Social Development, held yesterday in Cairo alongside the 51st Arab Labour Conference.

The session was attended by ministers of labour, as well as representatives from the International Labour Organisation and the Executive Council of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers of the Gulf Co-operation Council.

The session focused on the upcoming Second World Summit on Social Development 2025, scheduled for Nov 4-6 in Doha. The summit aims to advance inclu-

sive social development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In his remarks, HE al-Marri emphasised that the 2025 World Social Summit represents a historic opportunity to reaffirm the international community's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. He highlighted the need for a renewed global social contract that adapts to rapid transformations amidst geopolitical challenges, climate change, and technological advancements.

He also noted that Qatar has proactively collaborated with partners in the UN system, civil society organisations, and the

tripartite partners to contribute to the summit's success. This includes efforts in technical and political preparations, as well as fostering dialogue with regional and international partners to ensure fair and inclusive representation of diverse perspectives.

HE al-Marri stressed the importance of the Arab region playing a leading role, not only in the preparation phase but also in shaping the outcomes of the Summit. This involvement should reflect regional priorities in areas such as social justice, decent work, social protection, and building more cohesive and resilient societies. **(QNA)**

## QNA chief meets Cuban ambassador

Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) HE Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with Cuban ambassador Jose Enrique Enriquez Rodriguez. The meeting discussed aspects of media co-operation. **(QNA)**



## PHCC officially launches 'Ahlan Oral Health' campaign

**T**he 'Ahlan Oral Health' campaign was officially launched yesterday in its third edition for the year 2025 at Al-Mashaf Health Centre, under the slogan: 'A Healthy Smile for a Healthy Life.'

Organised by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), the campaign targets all segments of society (from infants to the elderly), a statement said.

This year's edition features a significant expansion in scope and participation compared to previous years. It includes large-scale field visits to screen employees in selected government entities, engaging preventive and educational activities in Qatar's largest nurseries in terms of the number of children, in addition to specially tailored programmes for individuals with disabilities implemented with care and respect.

Dentists are also delivering lectures in schools for the teaching and administrative staff through the Oral Health Ambassadors Programme, alongside the development and dissemination of educational content through media and social platforms.

The campaign is part of a strategic plan developed by the Oral Health Promotion and Prevention Department under the Preventive Health Directorate and implemented collaboratively with the Corporate Communication and the Operations directorates, showcasing corporate integration in delivering pre-



ventive health messages to the wider community.

The campaign, running until May 1, reflects PHCC's vision of promoting prevention as the foundation of health and highlights that oral health is a shared responsibility requiring the collective efforts of individuals and institutions.

Ultimately, the campaign aims to embed daily healthy habits and emphasise that prevention begins in the mouth and extends to the well-being of the entire body and quality of life, the statement added.

## Sidra Medicine in pact with global firm for AI-driven healthcare innovation

**S**idra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Germany-based Vitafluence.ai GmbH and its Swiss venture studio, EmpathicAI.Life, to explore potential collaborations in artificial intelligence (AI) and digital health innovation.

The MoU outlines a framework for a three-year collaboration focused on the joint development of initiatives to advance AI-powered healthcare delivery as well as to foster innovation within Sidra Medicine's academic medical ecosystem.

The agreement will set the

groundwork for pilot programmes, knowledge exchange, and co-development of digital solutions designed to support clinical decision-making and to personalise patient care, said Sidra Medicine in a press release today.

The MoU was signed by CEO of Sidra Medicine, Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch and Co-Founder of Vitafluence.ai, Dr Peter O. Owotoki.

CEO of Sidra Medicine, Dr Iyabo Tinubu-Karch said: "Our joint research, clinical and medical education programmes are designed to embrace emerging technologies that can revolutionise diagnostics, treatment and patient care. Working with Vitafluence.ai gives



us the opportunity to explore a range of AI-driven applications, including predictive modelling,

AI-assisted diagnostics, and tailored treatment pathways, that align with our mission of deliver-

ing world-class precision medicine for our patients.

"This collaboration represents

an incredible opportunity to contribute to Qatar's ambitious vision for medical and digital health advancement, and most importantly, to work together in delivering impactful outcomes for women and children."

The partnership lays the groundwork for introducing cutting-edge digital health solutions into Sidra Medicine's ecosystem, driving forward its commitment to innovation and excellence in care.

Sidra Medicine will be exploring the transformative role of artificial intelligence in advancing global healthcare at its upcoming AI and Medicine 2025 conference from April 23-26. **(QNA)**



# Ministry undersecretary to deliver 2025 NU-Q graduation address

A decade after delivering her own class speech as a graduating student, Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani, undersecretary at the Ministry of Labour in Qatar, returns to Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) as the 2025 graduation speaker.

She will address the Class of 2025 at the university's 14th annual ceremony on May 5 at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), a statement said yesterday.

The Class of 2025 comprises 118 students from 18 countries.

"Najwa embodies the very essence of leadership, excellence, and global impact that we champion at NU-Q," said dean Marwan M Kraidy.

"As a multidisciplinary institution dedicated to evidence-based storytelling and shaping narratives of the Global South, we take pride in alumni like Najwa, who exemplify these values in action," he said. "From her early work in human rights to shaping Qatar's migrant labour policies, she has been a force for positive change – bridging research, advocacy, and policy to create meaningful impact."

"Her journey reflects the transformative power of a Northwestern education, and we are honoured to have her return to inspire the next generation of leaders and change-makers," Kraidy added.

Najwa al-Thani's career spans human rights, strategic communications, and labour policy.

She began at Qatar's National Committee for Human Rights before taking on a key role in communications at the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, the organisation behind FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

She later became assistant undersecretary for migrant affairs at the Ministry of Labour, where she helped shape Qatar's labour policies.

In December 2024, she was appointed undersecretary, overseeing strategic labour reforms and market policies.

Beyond her government role, Najwa al-Thani has also served as vice-chairman of the Board of Directors for the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund, general sec-

retary for the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, and chair of the National Minimum Wage Commission.

She is also a member of the National Workforce Planning Committee and the board of directors for Qatar Manpower Solutions Company, Jusour.

A Class of 2015 alum, Najwa al-Thani earned a bachelor of science in communication with a certificate of Middle Eastern studies before pursuing a master's in global governance and diplomacy at Oxford University.

She is currently completing a PhD in social sciences and humanities at Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

Reflecting on her return to cam-

pus, Najwa al-Thani said: "I'm truly honoured to return to NU-Q, a place that played such an important role in shaping my own journey."

"To stand before the Class of 2025, who are now beginning their own paths, feels like a full-circle moment," she said. "My time here gave me the tools and perspective to make a difference, and I'm excited to share what I've learned along the way."

"I hope to inspire these graduates to embrace their unique journeys and make a meaningful impact wherever life takes them," Najwa al-Thani added.

Graduation speakers are selected through a process led by the Graduation Speaker Commit-



Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani

tee, composed of faculty, staff, and students.

This committee identifies individuals whose distinguished experiences and contributions resonate with the values of the occasion.

Najwa al-Thani was selected for her exemplary leadership and the invaluable perspectives she brings with her work, shaping key global conversations and driving positive change in her field.



## talabat supports riders during Ramadan

Leading on-demand delivery platform in the Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region, talabat, rolled out a series of impactful initiatives during Ramadan aimed at supporting and appreciating riders.

In collaboration with restaurant and logistics partners, the initiatives were designed to reflect the spirit of giving while recognising the vital role riders play, a statement said.

As many as 30,000 Iftar kits were distributed through talabat Mart, alongside 3,000+ hot meals provided at key rider hotspots in collaboration with restaurant partners such as Tasty Tea and Ottoman Palace.

talabat also hosted community Iftars attended by more than 500 riders, and delivered daily "Break Fast" snack packs.

The "Make a Wish" campaign returned this year, granting wishes to several riders, including Umrah trips, family reunions, and education support.

"Ramadan is a time for giving back, and at talabat, riders are always front and centre," said talabat Qatar managing director Francisco Miguel De Sousa. "These initiatives are our way of showing appreciation for their hard work and dedication. We are proud to support them not only during this special month, but every day of the year."

Through these initiatives, talabat reaffirms its ongoing commitment to rider well-being, community engagement, and uplifting everyday heroes.

Customers can download the talabat application through the iOS App Store, Google Playstore, and Huawei App Gallery, the statement added.



## Qatar Charity opens sewing workshop in Mauritania

Qatar Charity (QC), in co-operation with Mauritania's ministry of vocational training, handicrafts, and crafts, has inaugurated a new sewing workshop in Nouakchott to benefit graduates of vocational training programmes, who come from underprivileged families.

The inauguration was attended by ministry secretary-general Amady Ould Taleb, Qatar embassy chargé d'affaires Fahad al-Dosari, QC Mauritania Branch director Omer Abdelaziz Mohamed, and Ibrahim Ould Abibakar, director of the Technical and Vocational School.

Taleb said that the inauguration of the sewing workshop reflects a "fruitful partnership with Qatar Charity" focused on vocational training and economic empowerment for vulnerable families.

Mohamed emphasised the QC's strong focus on vocational training and economic empowerment due to their significant impact on vulnerable families.

Abibakar expressed gratitude to the QC for funding the workshop, noting that the project is a result of strong partnerships in the training sector and aims to elevate training quality to meet labour market demands and decrease unemployment rates.

Beneficiary Al Salima bint Abdullah highlighted its importance in creating essential job opportunities for women and families in need.

## QRCS launches 'Little Hearts' medical convoy in Bangladesh



The Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has launched a Little Hearts medical convoy in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with the aim of providing life-saving medical care for children with congenital heart defects.

The initiative is in partnership with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), and Bangladesh ministry of health.

A medical delegation from Sidra Medicine volunteered to perform the procedures, comprising senior consultant cardiologist Prof Younes Boudjemline, paediatric anaesthesiology consultant Dr Mohammad Firas Al-Rabbat, and chief cardiac catheterisation technologist Aladdin Ali Mohamed.

Over six days, 300 children will receive medical examinations and 125 specialised cardiac catheterisations performed for patients, using advanced medical equipment at the NICVD.

The project involves practical training and transfer of expertise to the local doctors in Bangladesh, who would be engaged in the medical interventions using the latest catheterisation tools, ensuring sustainability of services and building the capacity of local health system.

# BilAraby Summit concludes

Qatar Foundation (QF) has concluded the inaugural BilAraby Summit, following two days of dialogue, artistic expression, and cultural exchange that brought together more than 800 participants from across the Arab region and beyond.

Held at Multaqa (Education City Student Centre), the summit featured a space for more than 20 speakers, panellists, and storytellers from diverse backgrounds who explored how the Arabic language can remain a living force in today's world.

Dr Abdul Wahid Zainal, a speaker at the summit and founder of Camel Code Academy, said: "The BilAraby Summit spread awareness of the importance of enhancing Arabic's presence in the digital world. We hope this marks the beginning of real progress toward that goal."

"Our project focuses on teaching children about technology, one of today's most critical skills," he said.

"We help children explore areas of study such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and coding," Dr Zainal added. "Since our children spend so much time on screens, we want to give them meaningful educational alternatives that empower them to become creators, not just consumers."

Dr Said Ismail, acting president and chief scientific and operations

office of the Qatar Precision Health Institute, a member of the QF, described BilAraby as a pivotal step toward reviving Arabic, not just as a linguistic heritage, but as a driver of creativity and innovation in the age of science and technology.

"We do not view Arabic as a static tradition, but as a living language that can interpret scientific and technological advancements with a distinctly Arab perspective," he said. "This summit has proven that our differences are not lines of division, but threads that, when woven together, form a vibrant tapestry of Arab identity."

"Our dialects and cultures are a source of endless wealth, and our gathering here is not just a celebration of the past, but a collaborative effort to build a future inspired by our heritage, responsive to today's challenges, and imaginative in its solutions," Dr Ismail said.

The summit offered an opportunity for sharing stories, lived experiences, and bold ideas, reinforcing Arabic as a language not only of tradition, but of transformation.

The second day saw a lineup of motivational talks, creative showcases, and thought-provoking conversations that bridged heritage and innovation.

In a session on *Dampening the Force of Impact*, Baraa al-Sarraj from Syria looked at how Arab societies cope with collective trauma and develop resilience, offering a psycho-social perspective



grounded in shared memory and healing.

Shawk al-Alawi from Bahrain followed with a reflection on how professions become expressions of identity, weaving together personal narrative and societal change.

Dr Amida Shaalan from Yemen delivered a talk on *The Legacy of the Granddaughter of the Queen of Sheba*, offering a feminist perspective of Arab history through the lens of resistance and identity.

In the session on *The Line of Defence for Our Identity*, Dr Laith Alawneh from Jordan underscored the need to preserve the Arabic language and culture in the face of global digital disruption.

The summit opened space for engaging discussions, where young people showcased real-life experiences, grassroots initiatives, and creative approaches that illustrated the evolving role of Arabic as a tool for innovation rather than a static heritage.

These open spaces served as hubs for dialogue and collaboration, with speakers including Muhanad al-Dabi from Sudan, Taimur al-Hadidi from Egypt, and Sumaya al-Maimani from Kuwait, sparking conversations on digital culture, artificial intelligence, language, identity, and linguistic diversity.

Mohamad al-Ramash from the Atheer Podcast and Bishr al-Najjar from the Manbat – Sowt Podcast hosted a special session of the Arabic Podcast on the second day.

Cultural diversity and the breadth of perspectives it brought together were the definitive features of the summit.

Voices from the Gulf, the Levant, and the Maghreb infused the programme with diversity and insight, revealing common threads and rich distinctions across the Arab world.

This cross-regional dialogue underscored the potential of the Arabic language to act as a unifying force amid complexity.

The day concluded with a performance by Tunisian calligrapher Karim Jabbari, who brought Arabic script to life in an expressive live display that captured the summit's theme – *Ideas Have a Voice and an Echo*.

The event was supported by several educational and cultural organisations, including the Misk Foundation (also known as Mohamed Bin Salman Foundation), QatarDebate, Qatar Reads, Qatar Foundation International, Sowt Podcast, the Diwan, Hamad Bin Khalifa University's Fanar Project, Al Sharq Forum, ArabiQuest, Sard Media Group, and Al Jazeera 360.



## QU launches graduation ceremony website

Qatar University (QU) has launched a website pertaining to the Graduation Ceremony Class of 2025, which falls under a special tab on the university's official website.

The ceremony website (accessible through the QR code) includes information on a number of topics related to the main ceremonies of the graduation event of the Class of 2025 and the details of the individual college ceremonies.

The QU has urged all Class of 2025 graduates to observe important instructions that have been officially

published recently, whether on the ceremony's website or through the university's official social media platforms.

The graduation ceremony is a celebrated annual event at the QU, since its inception in 1977, and aims to celebrate students graduating from bachelor and postgraduate degrees.

The graduates will complete the final step in their university journey in the presence of QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari, vice-presidents and officials, faculty, in addition to VIP guests and family members.



# QU holds conference on pharmacy education, science, and practice

Qatar University (QU)'s College of Pharmacy has organised the Pharmacy Education, Science, and Practice Conference under the theme *Patient First: Advancing Pharmacy through Education, Science, and Practice*.

The three-day conference reflects the rapid advancements in pharmacy, mirroring ongoing transformations in education, science, and clinical practice.

The event served as an interactive platform for aspiring professionals, researchers, and passionate educators to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and explore the latest developments in pharmaceutical sciences-contributing to a brighter future for the pharmacy profession both locally and globally.

The conference welcomed more than 300 participants from over 20 countries, including academics, students, and health professionals, and featured an elite group of keynote speakers.

In her opening remarks, assistant dean for the College of Pharmacy's Student Affairs, Reem al-Mannai, stated that the conference represents an inspiring academic milestone reflecting the university's commitment to advancing pharmaceutical education and care.

Al-Mannai said the conference theme, *Patient First: Advancing Pharmacy through Education, Science, and Practice*, reflects a shared commitment to a professional future amidst innovation and rapid developments in pharmacy.

QU Vice-President for Health and Medical Sciences Prof Asmaa al-Thani affirmed that the

conference is a unique opportunity to explore the evolving role of the pharmacy profession in enhancing the quality of healthcare and improving patient outcomes.

"This scientific event is exceptional, bringing together a distinguished group of experts, researchers, and practitioners in pharmacy," she said. "It emphasises the sharing of insights and experiences on how to advance this vital sector."

QU Associate Vice-President for Health and Medical Sciences Prof Mohamed Ahmedna said: "The importance of this conference lies in the opportunity it offers to exchange expertise both locally and internationally, through collaboration with highly recognised and experienced individuals."

He highlighted the College of Pharmacy's role in supporting Qatar National Vision 2030, especially in education and healthcare.

College of Pharmacy dean Dr Mohamed Izham said: "The College of Pharmacy at QU successfully organised this international conference under the theme *Patient First* to highlight patient quality of life and well-being." – **QNA**





QATAR

# QatarDebate Center organises Youth Debate at UN in New York

QNA  
New York

QatarDebate Center, a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, organised a high-level interactive youth debate for the second consecutive year at the UN headquarters in New York.

This came during the centre's participation in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, as part of its preparations to hold the Summit of the Future, slated to convene in September 2025 under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.

The debate served as a platform to bolster the presence of Qatari youth in international forums and amplify their contribution to global debates.

It centred on the impact of AI on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the participation of a host of Qatari youth who deliberated on the foremost AI-associated challenges and opportunities, such as market justice, environmental impact, access to technology, and renewable energy.

The debate was attended by HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth



Yasser bin Abdullah bin Ahmed al-Jamal, Director of Programmes at QatarDebate Center Abdulrahman al-Subaie, and Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the UN Mohammed al-Nasr.

Meanwhile, QatarDebate Center, in collaboration with the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced the launch of the Qatar Youth Delegates to the UN Programme, which intends to empower Qatari youth to represent the nation in global forums and contribute to crafting future policies.

In addition, the participants underscored the importance of bolstering the role of youth in discussing global issues, especially those related to AI and

sustainable development. They pointed out that these initiatives contribute to advancing their skills in critical thinking and heralding their toward offering innovative solutions that serve the communities.

Through this initiative, the centre emphasises its commitment to supporting the engagement of Qatari youth in formulating future visions and deepening their roles in the areas of innovation and technology, in commensurate with the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. (QNA)

## NHRC chief lauds Qatar's milestones in education, health and employment

From Page 1

She reviewed key legislative developments in Qatari labour law over the past years, noting that the law regulating the entry and exit of expatriates grants workers the right to transfer to another employer. This allows the employer to loan workers to another employer for a period not exceeding six months, renewable for a similar period. The law also allows expatriates to work part-time for another employer in addition to their original work, after obtaining the employer's approval. She pointed out that the amendment includes exemption from exit permits for all employees of companies and institutions subject to the labour law, granting them the right to leave the country at any time during the validity of their employment contract. The NHRC chairperson explained that the establishment of the Labour Disputes Settlement Committee, which is responsible for resolving individual disputes arising from the application of the provisions of the Labour Law or the employment contract, has reduced the burden on the courts, improved the right to litigation, and strengthened the protection of workers' rights. She noted that the state has exempted workers from paying any fees related to labour lawsuits, noting that the establishment of the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund has provided the necessary protection for workers and enabled them to receive their financial dues without having to wait for their employers to provide them with payment in the event of payment difficulties. HE al-Attiyah said that the Wage Protection System (WPS) – a comprehensive electronic platform –

was introduced through an initiative by the Ministry of Labour and Qatar Central Bank. The system aims to regulate and document the payment of workers' wages across institutions, ensuring that employers consistently pay salaries on time. She also highlighted one of the key legislative developments: the summer working hours regulation for outdoor and exposed workplaces. The decision mandates that, between June 1 and September 15 each year, work under direct sunlight or in open areas is prohibited from 10am to 3:30pm, protecting workers from extreme heat. On the Canadian side, Hadjis gave an overview of the tribunal's independent role, separate from regular court system, which focuses on cases of racial discrimination. He also underlined the tribunal's broad legal authority, which includes issuing binding decisions and awarding compensation to victims. In her meeting with McRae, HE al-Attiyah highlighted Qatar's significant progress toward full gender equality. She noted that women in Qatar have equal access to social security, housing services, and educational opportunities, and benefit from flexible work arrangements, paid maternity leave, breastfeeding breaks, and childcare support. She also stressed that Qatar provides a comprehensive healthcare system supporting women through all stages of pregnancy and postnatal care. Qatari women, she added, hold leadership roles across ministries, the diplomatic corps, and the judiciary. For her part, McRae expressed appreciation for the NHRC's work and discussed with HE al-Attiyah the committee's collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family in promoting family protection awareness.

## Al Markhiya Gallery to host art works by three Arab artists

Al Markhiya Gallery has announced a collaborative art exhibition titled "Between Realism and Abstraction – Takamol!", which will be on display from April 22-June 19.

The event features works by three distinguished Arab artists from Qatar, Jordan and Egypt.

Following the success of the exhibition Linking Distances in 2022, this new showcase explores the fluid boundaries between figuration and abstraction, reflecting concepts of identity, transformation, and artistic evolution.

Each artist approaches these themes uniquely, using contrasts of vivid colours with deep black, a reference to traditional 'abayas'. This creates a visual dialogue between concealment and revelation.

Other artists used depictions of urban landscapes and expressive portraiture, where faces become vessels of memory and experience.

Between Realism and Abstraction offers a vibrant conversation between tradition



and innovation, where personal and cultural narratives are embodied through bold and thought-provoking visual language. (QNA)

## Qatar students shine at ARIU's innovation challenge

Al Rayyan International University College (ARIU), in partnership with the University of Derby, has hosted the inaugural 'ARIU Innovation Challenge Competition' at its West Bay campus in Doha.

The event welcomed more than 100 students from 17 high schools across Qatar, who came together to present groundbreaking ideas under the theme 'Sustainable Innovation'.

The competition challenged Year 11 and 12 students to develop innovative business ideas that address sustainability challenges in Qatar, with tracks focusing on business, hospitality, and tourism.

Student teams worked under the guidance of faculty mentors from ARIU and received expert feedback from a distinguished panel of judges comprised of academic and business leaders from Qatar.

The top honours were awarded to King's College Doha (1st place), Oryx International School (2nd place), and Park House English School (3rd Place).

Each winning team received a prize of QR15,000, QR10,000, and QR5,000, respectively, along with certificates of participation for all contestants.

Professor Ivan Ninov, executive dean of



Winners of the inaugural 'ARIU Innovation Challenge Competition' hosted by Al Rayyan International University College (ARIU), in partnership with the University of Derby.

ARIU, emphasised the institution's role in shaping future leaders: "This competition exemplifies our commitment to inspiring the next generation of leaders and change makers. By focusing on sustainability, we encourage students to think critically and creatively about real-world challenges and how they can be part of the solution. Events like this prove that the future is in very capable hands."

Dr Christopher Dutt, associate professor and programme leader for ARIU's business programmes, added: "It was truly inspiring to witness the level of passion

and innovation these students brought to the challenge. Their ideas reflect not only a deep understanding of sustainability issues but also a genuine desire to create a meaningful impact."

Throughout the day, students showcased prototypes, pitched business models, and demonstrated their vision for a sustainable future.

The ARIU Innovation Challenge not only celebrated innovation and creativity but also fostered teamwork, leadership, and public speaking skills among participants.

## Al Jazeera Printing Press holds annual day



The annual day of Al Jazeera Printing Press 2024 was held recently in Retaj Salwa Resort & Spa, during which awards were distributed to last year's best-performing employees by director Jacob Kannath.

## Kia models recalled

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Al-Attiya Motors and Trading Company, has announced the recall of Kia Cerato, 2021-2024 models, as while modifying the logic to address other issues during cluster development. ESC option recognition logic in ABS warning lamp activation logic was missed. The ministry urges all consumers to report any violations or breaches by contacting the Consumer Protection and Combatting Commercial Fraud Department, which receives complaints, suggestions, and inquiries through the following communication channels: call centre: 16001, e-mail: info@moci.gov.qa, ministry's accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry's mobile app: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)

### Auction / مزاد

تدعو شركة مرافق قطر ذ.م.م المزاديين المختصين الى المزاد التالي:-

**MARAFEQ Qatar LLC invites competent Auctioneers for the following engagement:**

رقم المزاد Auction Ref.	موضوع المزاد Auction Subject	قيمة التأمين التقائى Auction Bond	رسوم المزاد / غير مستردة Auction Fees*	جدول التقييم Auction Timelines (Schedule)
				Issue/Collect Close/Submit
MQ-QDOM- MISC-25-03	بيع (مزاد) أصول وقطع غير ومستملكات شركة "الديار القطرية للعمليات والصيانة على أساس "ما هو عليه" / "في المكان المعلن" Sale (Auction) of QDO&M Spares, Consumable, and Inventory Items on "as-is" / "where-is" Basis	QR 25,000/-	QR 250/-	Sunday, Apr 20, 2025 (استاذ) Thursday, May 08, 2025 (تقديم)

\*non-refundable and non-negotiable

م.عمر قاتان للاستشارات والتأجير

**Document Collection Date and Location:**  
From: Sun, Apr 20, 2025, To: Thu, May 08, 2025 (from 8:30am through 3:30pm, working days only)  
From: MARAFEQ Qatar LLC (MQ), C&P Department, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Al-Baraha (a.k.a. Katara Hospitality) Tower, Marina District, Lusail City, Qatar

**Document Collection Process:**  
Auction Documents may only be collected from the 'Document Collection Location' during the dates and times designated herein. The auctioneer's nominee must present the following documents at the time of document collection:  
- Copy of a recent date extract of the Auctioneer's CR  
- Original 'delegation letter' by the company addressed to MQ, authorizing the nominee to collect Auction Documents  
- Original 'proof of payment' of the Auction Fees.

**Auction Fees Payment Guidelines:**  
Prescribed Auction Fees must be paid into the Bank Account below only. Kindly mention the Auction Ref. (above)  
Title: MARAFEQ Qatar LLC  
Bank: Masraf Al-Rayyan (Grand Hamad Branch)  
Account: 0003-127914-001  
IBAN: QA68 MAFR 0000 0000 0003 127914 001  
SWIFT: MAFR QA QA

**Means of Communication:**  
Mailto: [procurement@marafeq.com.qa](mailto:procurement@marafeq.com.qa)  
Phone: +974-4012-0358

**Key Categories of Asset Items:**  
1. Testing Tools  
2. Hand Tools & Power Tools  
3. IT & Related Assets  
4. Home Appliances  
5. Office Furniture  
6. Portable Toilets  
7. Water Tanks & Pumps (Different Sizes)  
8. Empty 20' & 40' Containers (with racks)  
9. Cleaning Equipment  
10. Facility Maintenance Spares & Consumables  
11. Scrap Items

تحتفظ شركة مرافق قطر ذ.م.م بكامل الحق في تعديل شروط المزاد في أي وقت بدون إبداء أسباب و/أو إلغاء المزاد بدون أسباب وبدون أدنى مسئولية عليها في هذا الصدد أيا كان نوعها أو مصدرها  
MARAFEQ Qatar LLC reserves its right to modify the auction advertisement and/or auction documents at any time, or cancelling the auction entirely, without justification or any liability on its part.

### قطر للطاقة QatarEnergy

**The General, Limited Tenders Committees and Supply Chain Department announces the following Tenders:**

**Important Notice:**  
Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QatarEnergy via Mushтарыat Portal can "Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document" from QatarEnergy website (Mushтарыat Portal).

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids submitted by a Local company (companies incorporated in Qatar) acting as Tenderer in accordance with this Invitation to Tender, will not be accepted by QatarEnergy without any further notification, if such companies are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (<https://icv.qatar-energy.com>) by the specified Original Tender Closing Date or Original due date for submission of COMMERCIAL Package in case of two stage Tendering as per ITT. However, any Local company that has been established within last two (2) years is exempt from this mandatory ICV certification requirement.

Sl. No.	Tender Number	Tender Sale Period		Tender Closing Date	Tender Bond	Bond Curr.	Tender Fee	Fee Curr.
		Start Date	End Date					
1	LT25101900	21.04.2025	27.04.2025	19.05.2025	60,000.00	QAR	200.00	QAR

Title of Tender: IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUMENT MOCS AT QATARENERGY, REFINERY, MESAIEED

Mid-Tender Meeting Location : **To be advised if required**

Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time : **To be advised if required**

\* Tender documents can be purchased and downloaded from QatarEnergy Website-> Supply Management-> Tenders page during the Tender Sale Period mentioned above against each Tender. Request for issuance of Tender after the specified Tender Sale Period will not be entertained.

\* Always refer to QatarEnergy Website ([www.qatarenergy.qa](http://www.qatarenergy.qa)) -> Supply Management -> Tenders page for up to date information on QatarEnergy Tenders. Subscribe to Tender Alert to receive notification in your email on new Tenders

\* Changes to Tender Sale Period and Bid Closing Date will be updated in QatarEnergy website/Mushтарыat Portal only.

\* Brief Scopes of Work for the above tenders are posted on the QatarEnergy website/Mushтарыat Portal.

\* Suppliers and Contractors who are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy are instructed to maintain their Company Registration and Communication details upto date and valid via QatarEnergy Mushтарыat Portal on urgent basis.

\* No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.

\* QatarEnergy invites all prospective Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in QatarEnergy Tenders to register online and obtain a QatarEnergy SAP Vendor Code, a mandatory requirement for the issue of Tender Documents by QatarEnergy.

\* Prospective Qatar based Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in future QatarEnergy Tenders shall obtain an ICV score. Relevant information pertaining to ICV, ICV Scorecard, ICV Certification, and ICV Guidelines are available on the ICV Digital Portal - <https://icv.qa/en-US>



# Qatar Museums launches Tasweer 2025

Qatar Museums yesterday launched the 2025 edition of Qatar Photo Festival: Tasweer. The festival explores themes of belonging through eight exhibitions across five venues until June 20, highlighted by the main exhibition, ‘Lying Between Two Seas’, at the Fire Station: Artist in Residence.

QM Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani unveiled the exhibitions in the presence of CEO Mohamed Saad al-Rumaihi, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art president Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed al-Thani and other dignitaries.

The Qatar Photo Festival: Tasweer was launched in 2021 by Khalifa al-Obaidly, the festival's founding director. The third edition features Myriam Berrada as artistic director, alongside guest



curators Sheikha Maryam Hassan al-Thani and Dr Bahaa Eddin Abu Daya.

This edition presents a curated selection of artworks of more than 88 artists from the Arab world and its diaspora, showcasing photographic practices, celebrating the

diversity of talent in the region. Each exhibition presents a compelling visual narrative inspired by unique themes. The festival's central theme explores notions of belonging.

Joining ‘Lying Between Two Seas’ is ‘Daoud Ouled Sayed, The



Edge of the Moment’, celebrating over three decades of work by Moroccan photographer and filmmaker Daoud Ouled Sayed (at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art); ‘Erasure: Escape from Hell: Gaza’s Fight for Survival’, curated by the Humanitarian Photography

Grant (in an outdoor courtyard at Katara Cultural Village); ‘Refractions: Tasweer Project Awards’, which brings together images from 18 contemporary Arab photographers who won Tasweer Project Awards in 2023 and 2024 (at buildings 45 and 46 in Katara);

‘Interlocking Lights: Stories from Tasweer Single Image Awards’, which showcases 32 winning photographs from 2023 and 2024, representing photographers from 12 countries in the Arab world and beyond (at Company House, Msheireb); ‘The Mihrab’, a visual dialogue by Khalid al-Musalmani on places of worship in Qatar (at Gallery 3 at the Fire Station: Artist in Residence); ‘After the Game’ exhibition, which explores the participation of photographers and filmmakers in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 (Gallery 4 at the Fire Station: Artist in Residence) and the ‘Garangao 2025’ exhibition, which showcases images submitted during an open call that celebrates the power of photography to document a joyful and beloved tradition (at Fire Station: Artists in Residence).

## Arab League set to hold expo on Israeli violations in Palestine

QNA

Cairo

The General Secretariat of the Arab League is set to hold an exhibition next Tuesday to document the Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Slated to be held on the margins of the 163rd Ordinary Session of the Council of the Arab League at the ministerial level, the two-day event convenes as part of the activities of the Tripartite Co-ordination Mechanism between the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC), and the African Union to support the Palestinian cause, in addition to co-ordinating Arab, Islamic, and African stances on the global stage accordingly.

In a statement yesterday, the Arab League highlighted that the exhibition is set to document the Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, where Israel, the de facto occupying power, has stepped up its all-out siege on humanitarian aid bound for the Strip and engaged in targeting civilians and relief workers. Israel has intensified its air strikes and ground offensives, as well as targeting of food, water, and health infrastructure on purpose, despite the binding orders rendered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the UN Security Council resolutions, the statement reads.

The statement added that Israel continues to prosecute these violations to annihilate life through



Smoke rises from Gaza after an air strike, as seen from the Israeli side of the border, yesterday.

the large-scale systematic destruction of cities and residential neighbourhoods, mass killings, starvation, and thirst as tools in this war, in addition to inflicting collective punishment upon the civilians amid the failure of all global efforts to halt the blithe Israeli crimes. In addition, the Arab League has called on the international community to ramp up pressure on the Israeli occupation forces to stop this unjust war, genocide, decimation, and displacement against the Palestinian people in the enclave.

It stressed that Israel must reopen safe corridors to get all medical, food, and fuel essentials into the Strip to salvage the health and utility services, alongside civil defence and medical equipment to retrieve the injured and bodies of martyrs from the rubble.

It is highly imperative to end the

injustice and oppression inflicted upon the Palestinian people and empower their right to self-determination, end the Israeli occupation of their territories, embody their independent statehood, and salvage the remaining precepts of international justice and the very essence of humanity that was mocked, whose sanctity and symbolism have been desecrated in Gaza in the sight of the entire world, the statement continued.

The exhibition is the second of its kind to be held under this Tripartite Mechanism after the first one was held on the margins of the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, which was held from Feb 15-16, 2025, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Furthermore, the OIC will organise a similar exhibition on the margins of its ministerial meeting, which is poised to convene during June 2025.

## Gaza medics’ killing due to Israeli ‘failures’

From Page 1

Military spokesman Effie Defrin told reporters the incident took place in a “complex combat zone” but was clearly a mistake by the soldiers.

In addition to the two killed in the first incident, Har-Even said 12 people were killed in the second shooting and another person was killed in the third incident.

Red Crescent and UN officials have said 17 paramedics and emergency workers from the Red Crescent, the Civil Emergency service and the UN had been dispatched to respond to reports of injuries from Israeli air strikes.

The military said in its state-

ment that in the second shooting the deputy commander did not initially recognise the vehicles as ambulances due to what they said was “poor night visibility” and ordered troops to open fire on a group of individuals who emerged from a fire truck and ambulances.

In a briefing with reporters, the military presented drone footage of the incident which showed the unit of about 20 soldiers opening fire on a fire truck and ambulances from a distance of around 30m.

Har-Even said the soldiers had believed they were firing on a group of Hamas fighters and only realised they had shot paramedics when they conducted a scan of the

site after the engagement.

Paramedic Munther Abed, who was detained by the military and later released, has said soldiers opened fire on clearly marked emergency response vehicles.

The Red Cross said on April 13 another Palestinian emergency responder was being held by Israeli authorities. The military said yesterday that he is still in Israeli custody.

About 15 minutes after the soldiers opened fire on the group of emergency responders, the military said that soldiers fired at a Palestinian UN vehicle. The military blamed “operational errors in breach of regulation” for the incident.



Protesters wave Palestinian and Moroccan flags as they march towards the port against the planned docking of a ship said to be carrying fighter jet parts to Israel in Tangiers, yesterday.

The Danish company has said it does not transport weapons or ammunition to conflict zones, though it has a contract with the US government and has previously acknowledged shipments that “contain military-related equipment” derived from “US-

Israeli security co-operation”. The protesters in Tangier also called for the severing of diplomatic relations with Israel. The North African kingdom has officially called for “the immediate, complete and permanent halt to the Israeli war on Gaza.”

## Qatar attends Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2025

QNA

Beirut

Qatar participated in the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) 2025, held in Beirut under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), as part of regional preparations to follow up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Qatar’s delegation was led by HE the Director of the International Organisations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikha Hanouf bint Abdulrahman al-Thani.

During a side event titled “Pathways to the World Summit on Sustainable Development”, Her Excellency outlined Qatar’s vision for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, which the country will host from Nov 4-6. She highlighted the concrete steps and preparations Qatar has undertaken at both national and international levels to ensure effective participation and meaningful outcomes, reaffirming the State’s strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

She further emphasised that Qatar views the World Summit on Sustainable Development as



a vital platform for fostering global dialogue on social development issues and as an opportunity to enhance the effective engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

She expressed Qatar’s aspiration for the summit to reflect global development priorities and reiterated the country’s commitment to delivering a successful event. This includes both logistical excellence and broad, impactful participation, reflecting a firm belief that true social development can only be achieved through the collective involvement of all sectors in shaping its future.



### Public Announcement



To all Ships, Fisherman, and Mariners

Subsea Survey Works Offshore in Ras Laffan & Al Shaheen Field By the Vessel “Stanford Hobby”  
Subsea Survey Works Offshore Qatar from 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025

In pursuant and under directives from the Department of Registration and Seafarers Affairs, Ministry of Transport, State of Qatar, this announcement is to inform all Vessels, Mariners, and Fisherman that North Oil Company intends to undertake subsea survey works by the vessel “Stanford Hobby” in the Al Shaheen Field locations, bound by the coordinates and location map shown below.

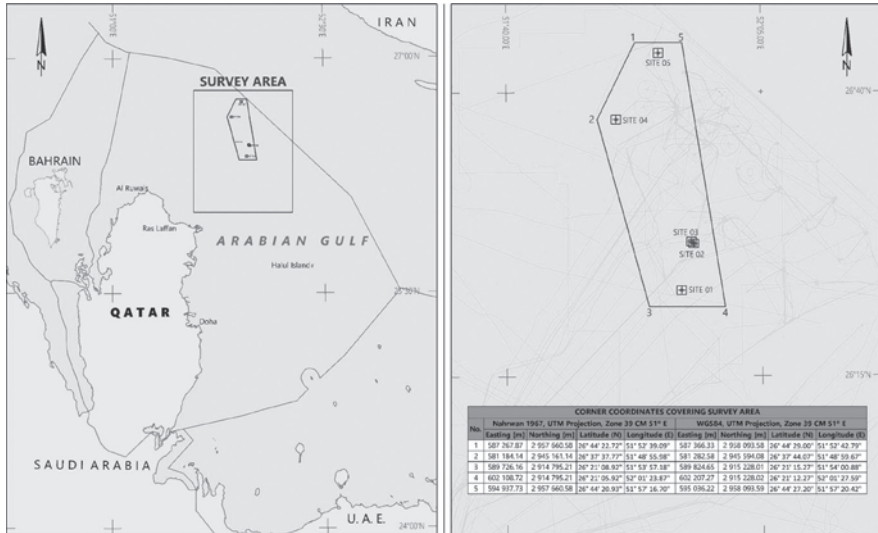
Coordinates: •

Corner Coordinates Covering Survey Area				
Nahrwan 1967, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				
ID	Easting (m)	Northing (m)	Latitude	Longitude
1	587 267.87	2 957 660.58	26° 44' 22.72"	51° 52' 35.09"
2	581 184.14	2 945 161.14	26° 37' 37.77"	51° 48' 55.98"
3	589 726.16	2 914 795.21	26° 21' 08.92"	51° 53' 57.18"
4	602 108.72	2 914 795.21	26° 21' 05.82"	52° 01' 23.87"
5	594 937.73	2 957 660.58	26° 44' 20.93"	51° 57' 16.70"

Corner Coordinates Covering Survey Area				
WGS84, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				
ID	Easting (m)	Northing (m)	Latitude	Longitude
1	587 356.33	2 958 093.58	26° 44' 29.00"	51° 52' 42.79"
2	581 282.58	2 945 594.08	26° 37' 44.07"	51° 48' 59.67"
3	589 824.65	2 915 228.01	26° 21' 15.27"	51° 54' 00.88"
4	602 207.27	2 915 228.02	26° 21' 12.27"	52° 01' 27.39"
5	595 036.22	2 958 093.58	26° 44' 27.00"	51° 57' 20.42"

Geotechnical Survey Coordinates				
Nahrwan 1967, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				
ID	Easting (m)	Northing (m)	Latitude	Longitude
Q25-AS-APP72-CPT-001	594 739.11	2 917 352.39	26° 22' 30.87"	51° 56' 58.70"
Q25-AS-APP72-CPT-002	594 772.56	2 917 318.94	26° 22' 29.77"	51° 56' 59.90"
Q25-AS-APP72-BH-001	594 724.51	2 917 304.34	26° 22' 29.31"	51° 56' 58.16"
Q25-AS-APP72-RW-CPT-001	595 171.88	2 917 602.25	26° 22' 38.88"	51° 57' 14.39"
Q25-AS-APP72-RW-CPT-002	595 205.33	2 917 568.80	26° 22' 37.79"	51° 57' 15.58"
Q25-AS-APP72-BH-CPT-001	595 157.58	2 918 054.20	26° 22' 37.52"	51° 57' 13.99"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-001	596 909.05	2 925 060.96	26° 26' 40.89"	51° 58' 19.10"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-002	596 930.18	2 925 079.34	26° 26' 41.48"	51° 58' 19.86"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-003	596 954.46	2 925 051.43	26° 26' 40.57"	51° 58' 20.73"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-004	596 933.34	2 925 033.05	26° 26' 39.98"	51° 58' 19.97"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-001	596 589.62	2 925 348.31	26° 26' 50.31"	51° 58' 02.64"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-002	596 568.98	2 925 318.06	26° 26' 50.33"	51° 58' 06.89"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-003	596 556.00	2 925 353.17	26° 26' 50.48"	51° 58' 06.21"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-001	584 243.75	2 945 195.97	26° 37' 38.26"	51° 50' 46.63"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-002	584 218.37	2 945 169.56	26° 37' 37.40"	51° 50' 45.71"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-003	584 203.39	2 945 207.34	26° 37' 38.83"	51° 50' 45.25"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-001	591 103.63	2 956 001.98	26° 43' 27.94"	51° 54' 57.50"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-002	591 067.23	2 955 997.95	26° 43' 27.82"	51° 54' 56.18"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-003	591 081.52	2 956 035.21	26° 43' 29.02"	51° 54' 56.70"

Geotechnical Survey Coordinates				
WGS84, UTM Projection, Zone 39 CM 51° E				
ID	Easting (m)	Northing (m)	Latitude	Longitude
Q25-AS-APP72-CPT-001	594 817.62	2 917 785.21	26° 22' 37.21"	51° 57' 02.41"
Q25-AS-APP72-CPT-002	594 871.07	2 917 751.76	26° 22' 36.12"	51° 57' 03.61"
Q25-AS-APP72-BH-001	594 823.02	2 917 737.16	26° 22' 35.65"	51° 57' 01.87"
Q25-AS-APP72-RW-CPT-001	595 270.39	2 918 035.07	26° 22' 45.23"	51° 57' 18.09"
Q25-AS-APP72-RW-CPT-002	595 303.84	2 918 001.62	26° 22' 44.13"	51° 57' 19.29"
Q25-AS-APP72-RW-CPT-003	595 255.79	2 917 987.02	26° 22' 43.67"	51° 57' 17.55"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-001	597 007.57	2 925 493.82	26° 26' 47.22"	51° 58' 22.81"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-002	597 028.70	2 925 512.20	26° 26' 47.81"	51° 58' 23.57"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-003	597 052.98	2 925 484.29	26° 26' 46.50"	51° 58' 24.44"
Q25-AS-GA-CPT-004	597 031.86	2 925 465.91	26° 26' 46.31"	51° 58' 23.68"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-001	596 688.14	2 925 781.17	26° 26' 56.64"	51° 58' 11.35"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-002	596 667.50	2 925 750.92	26° 26' 55.66"	51° 58' 10.60"
Q25-AS-GE-CPT-003	596 648.52	2 925 786.03	26° 26' 56.81"	51° 58' 09.92"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-001	584 342.20	2 945 628.92	26° 37' 44.55"	51° 50' 50.32"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-002	584 316.82	2 945 602.50	26° 37' 43.70"	51° 50' 49.40"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-003	584 303.94	2 945 640.29	26° 37' 44.93"	51° 50' 48.94"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-001	591 202.11	2 956 434.98	26° 43' 34.215"	51° 55' 01.20"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-002	591 165.71	2 956 430.95	26° 43' 34.09"	51° 54' 59.89"
Q25-AS-HA-CPT-003	591 160.00	2 956 468.21	26° 43' 35.30"	51° 55' 00.41"



All Vessels, Mariners, and Fishermen are expected to keep clear of the survey locations during the operations. North Oil Company takes no responsibility for any loss or damage caused to outside parties in association with this operation following the publication of this notice.

For more details contact 7048 9890





# Yemen’s Houthis say two killed in US strikes on Sanaa area



People assess the damage caused by a reported strike in Yemen's Houthi-held capital Sanaa, yesterday.

AFP  
Sanaa

At least two people were killed in overnight US strikes in and around Yemen’s capital Sanaa, media controlled by the Houthi fighters reported yesterday, in the latest such air raid.

The group’s Al-Masirah channel, citing the rebels’ health ministry, reported two deaths and 11 injured in the “US aggression on Sanaa, the capital, and the governorate”.

The channel earlier said one

person was killed in an air strike on the governorate’s Bani Matar area, where a deadly US raid was reported a week ago.

Beyond Sanaa, the Houthis said yesterday that air strikes also hit Yemen’s Marib and Amran provinces. Earlier this week, the rebel group said that US strikes on the fuel port of Ras Issa killed at least 80 people and wounded 150 in the deadliest attack of Washington’s 15-month campaign against the Houthis.

The US military has hammered the Yemeni fighters with near-daily air strikes for the past month in a bid to stamp out their

attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Claiming solidarity with Palestinians, the fighters began attacking the key maritime route and Israeli territory after the Gaza war began in October 2023.

The US strikes began in January 2024 but have multiplied under President Donald Trump, starting with an offensive that killed 53 people on March 15.

Houthi attacks on the Red Sea shipping route, which normally carries about 12% of global trade, have forced many companies into costly detours around the tip of southern Africa.

# Neighbours improvise first aid for wounded in besieged Sudan city

AFP  
Port Sudan

For a week, eight-year-old Mohamed has suffered the pain of shrapnel stuck in his arm.

But he is one of the lucky ones in Sudan’s western city El-Fasher, which is under paramilitary attack.

“One of our neighbours used to be a nurse. She helped us stop the bleeding,” Mohamed’s father, Issa Said, 27, said via satellite connection under a total communications blackout.

“But his arm is swollen and he can’t sleep at night from the pain.” Like an estimated 1mn more people trapped in the city under a year-long siege by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), Said cannot get to a hospital for emergency care.

With only the most meagre supplies remaining in El-Fasher, his family is among those whose only medical help has come from neighbours and family members who improvise.

In its quest to seize the North Darfur state capital — the only major Darfur city it has not conquered during two years of war with Sudan’s army — the RSF has launched attack after attack, which have been repelled by army and allied forces.

Even if people were to brave the streets, the Saudi Hospital is the only partially functioning one now, according to a medical source there, and even that has come under repeated attack.

Humanitarian operations in El-Fasher have been severely disrupted due to “access constraints, a critical fuel shortage and a volatile security environment,” with

health services particularly affected, the United Nations’ humanitarian agency OCHA said.

‘OPENED THEIR HOMES’

Mohamed, an aid co-ordinator who fled to El-Fasher after getting shot in the thigh during an RSF attack days ago on the nearby famine-hit Zamzam displacement camp, estimates hundreds of injured civilians are trapped in the city.

According to aid sources, hundreds of thousands have fled Zamzam for the city, which is already on the brink of mass starvation according to a UN-backed assessment.

Yet the people of El-Fasher have “opened their homes to the wounded,” Mohamed said, requesting to be identified by his first name for safety.

“If you have the money, you send someone to buy clean gauze or painkillers if they can find any, but you have to make do with what you have,” said Mohamed, whose leg wound meant he had to be carried the 15 kilometres from Zamzam to the city, a journey that took hours.

In crowded living rooms and kitchens, civilians with barely any medical training cobble together emergency first aid, using household items and local medicinal plants to treat burns, gunshot wounds and shrapnel injuries.

Another victim, Mohamed Abakar, 29, said he was fetching water for his family when a bullet pierced his leg.

The limb immediately broke underneath him, and a neighbour dragged him into his home, fashioning him a splint out of a few pieces of wood and cloth.

“Even if it heals my broken leg, the bullet is still inside,” Abakar

said, also by satellite link.

By Monday, the RSF’s recent attacks on El-Fasher and surrounding displacement camps had killed more than 400 people, according to the UN.

At least 825,000 children are trapped in “hell on Earth” in the city and its environs, the UN children’s agency Unicef has warned. The people of El-Fasher have suffered a year of RSF siege in a city the Sudanese military has also bombed from the air.

Residents have taken to hiding from the shelling in makeshift bunkers, which are often just hastily dug holes topped with bags of sand.

But not everyone makes it in time.

On Wednesday, a shell broke through Hanaa Hamad’s home, shrapnel tearing apart her husband’s abdomen before they could scramble to safety.

“A neighbour and I treated him as best we could. We disinfected the wound with table salt and we managed to stop the bleeding,” said the 34-year-old mother of four.

But by morning, he had succumbed to his injuries, too severe for his wife and neighbour to handle.

Trying to recover from his leg wound, the aid co-ordinator Mohamed pleaded from his sick bed for “urgent intervention from anyone who can to save people”.

The medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on Friday called for aid airdrops.

“If the roads to El-Fasher are blocked, then air operations must be launched to bring food and medicines to the estimated 1mn people trapped there and being starved,” head of mission Rasmane Kabore said.

## Defence expo in Iraq



Officers inspect an Iranian UAV on display at the 13th International Defence Exhibition Iraq (IQDEX) in Baghdad, yesterday.

# Women protesters torch mine run by Chinese in Guinea-Bissau

AFP  
Bissau

Women protesters in Guinea-Bissau yesterday attacked a Chinese-run site in the northwest of the country mining zircon, setting fire to equipment, the interior minister and witnesses said.

One protester told AFP they had acted after the authorities failed to act on their complaints that the activity was damaging their farms and ruining the local environment.

Several women and a village leader were arrested following the protest at Nhiquin, near the resort town of Valera not far from the border with Senegal, witnesses told AFP.

They said several hundred

women were involved in the protest at the site, which Chinese companies have been working since 2022.

“All the facilities have been burned down,” Interior Minister Botche Cande told reporters after visiting the site, without specifying what exactly had been destroyed.

“When the state makes an effort to find partners, nobody has the right to destroy their property,” he added, visibly irritated.

Cande said he would be sending more guards to the site to guarantee its security while it was rebuilt.

The women responsible had all fled and taken shelter in the forest, he added.

“They must be tracked down and arrested.” “It’s unacceptable that people do such things

and everything goes on as if nothing happened,” he said.

Edmundo Infanda, sub-prefect of Suzana, which takes in Nhiquin, said a lot of women had taken part in the protest and the local police could not stop their demonstration.

One of the women who took part in the protest, Aissato Cadjaf, told AFP: “We told them we didn’t want sand extracted without our consent.”

“All our rice fields are destroyed. There are no more fish in the small river near the site,” she added. But no one had listened, despite their protests, she said.

Zircon is used in ceramics and the building industry.

Guinea-Bissau is ranked 179th out of 193 on the UN’s Human Development Index.

# South Sudan government retakes flashpoint Nasir town

AFP  
Juba

South Sudanese government forces have retaken the town of Nasir which had been a flashpoint in a deepening political crisis, an army spokesman

said yesterday. Clashes around Nasir in the north-eastern Upper Nile State have helped unravel a power-sharing agreement between President Salva Kiir and his long-time rival, Vice-President Riek Machar.

The violence has threatened to plunge South Sudan, which became the world’s youngest country after gaining independence in 2011, back into civil war.

Kiir’s allies accuse Machar’s forces of fomenting unrest in Nasir in league with the so-called White Army, a loose band of armed youths from Machar’s Nuer ethnic community. An estimated 6,000 White Army combatants overran a military encampment in Nasir in early March, killing a senior general and many others.

South Sudan’s army has been battling to retake the area with support from the Ugandan army.

“The National Army Spokesman would like to officially announce to own rank and file and the members of the public on re-liberation of the historical town of Nasir,” spokesman Lul Ruai Koang said in a statement yesterday.

The army said this week it had also taken the nearby town of Ulang, long controlled by Machar’s forces. Kiir and Machar fought a five-year civil war that killed some 400,000 people until they agreed a power-sharing deal in 2018.

The deal has all but collapsed in recent weeks as Kiir expands his control in several areas.

Several of Machar’s political and military allies have been arrested in recent weeks, while Machar himself was placed under house arrest in late March. Clashes around the country have killed almost 200 people and displaced an estimated 125,000 since March, the United Nations said last week.

Human Rights Watch said the army has dropped improvised incendiary devices and killed nearly 60 people over a month-long period in Upper Nile State.

## Carnival celebrates heritage



Participants sit on horses as they wait for the parade to start during the Lagos Fanti Carnival, in Nigeria yesterday. After Brazil abolished slavery, some of the enslaved Africans returned to West Africa, settling in several countries including Nigeria and Sierra Leone. They brought with them Latin American food, religion and colour. Yesterday, thousands of descendants of the freed slaves, donned elaborate costumes at a colourful parade in Lagos to proudly keep their heritage alive.

# Lion kills 14-year-old girl in Kenya

AFP  
Nairobi

A lion has killed a 14-year-old girl outside the capital Nairobi, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) said yesterday.

The incident occurred on Saturday in a ranch to the south of Nairobi National Park. The attack was witnessed by another teenager, who raised the

alarm, the KWS said in a statement. “KWS rangers and response teams were swiftly mobilised and traced bloodstains leading to the Mbagathi River, where the girl’s body was recovered with injuries on the lower back,” the conservation agency said in a statement. “The lion was not sighted at the scene,” it added.

It said a trap had been set for the lion and teams deployed to comb the area, along with additional safety measures.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

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# Trump eyes gutting US diplomacy in Africa, cutting soft power: report

By Sebastian Smith  
AFP

The United States would drastically reduce its diplomatic footprint in Africa and scrap State Department offices dealing with climate change, democracy and human rights, according to a draft White House order.

The executive order, framed as a strategy to cut costs while “reflecting the priorities” of the White House, also lays out measures to slash US soft power around the world.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the *New York Times*, which first reported the existence of the draft order, had fallen “victim to another hoax”.

“This is fake news,” Rubio posted on X.

However, a copy of the draft viewed by AFP calls for “full structural reorganisation” of the State Department by October 1 of this year.

The aim, the draft order says, is “to streamline mission delivery, project American strength abroad, cut waste, fraud, abuse, and align the Department with an America First Strategic Doctrine”.

The biggest change would be organising US diplomatic efforts into four regions: Eurasia, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia-Pacific – with no equivalent focus on Africa.

The current Africa Bureau would be eliminated.

In its place would be a “Special Envoy Office for African Affairs” who reports to the White House’s internal National Security Council, rather than the State Department.

“All non-essential embassies and consulates in Sub-Saharan Africa shall be closed,” the draft order says, with all remaining missions consolidated under a special envoy “using targeted, mission-driven deployments”.

Emphasis in Africa would be placed on

counterterrorism and “strategic extraction and trade of critical natural resources”.

The US footprint in Canada – a historic US ally that President Donald Trump has repeatedly suggested should be annexed and made a 51st state – would likewise get a downgrade.

The diplomatic presence would see a “significantly reduced team” and the embassy in Ottawa would “significantly downscale”.

Tom Yazdgerdi, president of the American Foreign Service Association, which represents US diplomats, said that officers support making the government more efficient, but this “looks like a hatchet job”.

“It looks like we’re pulling back from the world,” he said.

The plan would impose far-reaching cuts to American soft power globally.

While the draft executive order obtained by AFP has not been discussed publicly by officials, it comes amid a flurry of moves to cut decades-old US initiatives and to

question long-held alliances, including with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato).

An earlier proposed plan leaked to US media would see the State Department’s entire budget slashed by half.

While that proposal also has yet to be confirmed, the State Department did announce last week that it has scrapped an agency built to track and combat aggressive disinformation campaigns run by foreign governments.

The administration has also already axed the US government’s foreign aid arm, USAID.

The new draft order says current offices dealing with climate change, oceans, global criminal justice, and human rights would be “eliminated”.

Also on the scrap list is the State Department’s separate office for Afghan women and girls.

A decades-old programme to project US cultural and English-language contacts

around the globe would be partially dismantled.

The Fulbright programme funds research and teaching scholarships for Americans abroad, as well as attracting foreign students to US institutions.

Under the executive order, many of those opportunities would vanish.

This would follow Trump’s already ongoing dismantlement of Voice of America, the network built to broadcast into repressive countries.

Yazdgerdi criticised what he described as a “self-inflicted wound” for the United States.

Soft power is “what showcases America. This is the inspiring element. Yes there’s a fearful element in that we have an awesome military and you need that of course, but this is what inspires people”, he said.

“You’re basically ceding the field to countries that have no issue filling the void – Russia and China immediately spring to mind.”

## Ousted Pentagon officials question leak investigation claims

By Phil Stewart  
Reuters

Dan Caldwell, once one of US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth’s most senior advisers, issued a joint statement on Saturday along with two other Pentagon officials casting doubt on an internal leak investigation that led to their ouster this week.

“We are incredibly disappointed by the manner in which our service at the Department of Defence ended,” Caldwell posted on X. “Unnamed Pentagon officials have slandered our character with baseless attacks on our way out the door.”

Caldwell and the others added: “We still have not been told what exactly we were investigated for, if there is still an active investigation, or if there was even a real investigation of ‘leaks’ to begin with.”

The comments were the first by Caldwell since Reuters first disclosed that he was escorted out of the Pentagon building on Tuesday after an internal Pentagon leak investigation identified him for making “an unauthorised disclosure”, a US official told Reuters.

After Caldwell, the Pentagon also ousted less senior officials Darin Selnick, who recently became Hegseth’s deputy chief of staff, and Colin Carroll, who was chief of staff to Deputy Defence Secretary Steve Feinberg.

The statement by Caldwell, Selnick and Carroll suggested that they did not leak sensitive or classified information, saying: “We understand the importance of information security and

worked every day to protect it.”

The Pentagon did not respond to a request for comment.

Although Caldwell is not as well-known as other senior Pentagon officials, he has played a critical role as an adviser to Hegseth.

His importance was underscored in a leaked text chain on Signal disclosed by the *Atlantic* last month.

In it, Hegseth named Caldwell as the best staff point of contact for the National Security Council as it prepared for the launch of strikes against the Houthis in Yemen.

Caldwell had drawn attention in Washington for past views that critics have called isolationist, but which advocates said sought to right-size America’s defence priorities.

A Marine Corps veteran who deployed to Iraq, Caldwell was quoted as saying before going to the Pentagon that America would have been better off if US troops had just stayed home.

He was also a sceptic of US military assistance to Ukraine and advocated for US retrenchment from Europe.

The ouster of Caldwell is separate from a wave of firings since Hegseth, a former Fox News host and combat veteran, took over the Pentagon in January.

Those firings of top brass have included the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the top admiral in the Navy, the head of US Cyber Command and the top US military lawyers.

Reuters was first to report on April 7 the firing of the US military representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) Military Committee.

## Trump slams ‘weak’ judges as deportation row intensifies

AFP  
Washington

The clash over President Donald Trump’s bid to exercise unprecedented powers in deporting migrants deepened yesterday as he again bashed the judiciary, while a top Democrat warned the country was “closer and closer” to a constitutional crisis.

The latest events followed a dramatic intervention by the Supreme Court in the pre-dawn hours of Saturday to temporarily block Trump’s use of an obscure law to deport Venezuelan migrants without due process.

Trump lashed out yesterday on his Truth Social platform, not specifically naming the high court but slamming the “WEAK and INEFFECTIVE Judges and Law Enforcement Officials who are allowing this sinister attack on our Nation to continue, an attack so violent that it will never be forgotten!”

Samuel Alito, one of two conservative high-court justices to vote against the halt, has called the emergency ruling by the court’s majority “legally questionable” (*see accompanying report*).

The court’s order at least temporarily halted what rights groups warned were imminent deportations of Venezuelan migrants being held in Texas, who have been accused of being gang members.

More broadly, the decision temporarily prevents the government from continuing to expel migrants under the 1798 Alien Enemies Act – last used to round up Japanese-American citizens during World War II.

The Trump administration has been butting heads with federal judges, rights groups and Democrats who say he has trampled or ignored constitutionally enshrined rights in rushing to deport migrants, sometimes without the right to a hearing.

### Supreme Court judge raps ‘legally questionable’ deportation block

A US Supreme Court judge has criticised a dramatic night-time intervention by the court on Saturday to block President Donald Trump’s use of an obscure law to deport Venezuelan migrants without due process.

Conservative Justice Samuel Alito called the emergency ruling “rushed” and “legally questionable” in statement published hours after he dissented from the order.

Alito and Justice Clarence Thomas, who were the only justices dissenting on Saturday, are two of the most conservative members on the nine-member panel.

Alito wrote in an opinion that the court had not waited for a government response to the case, which was made by rights lawyers on behalf of the migrants.

The court had also issued the order without “concrete support” for the applicants’ claim that deportations could take place as soon as Saturday night, he said.

“In sum, literally in the middle of the night, the Court issued unprecedented and legally questionable relief ... without hearing from the opposing party, within eight hours of receiving the application, with dubious factual support for its order,” Alito wrote. “We had no good reason to think that, under the circumstances, issuing an order at midnight was necessary or appropriate.” – **AFP**

“We’re getting closer and closer to a constitutional crisis,” Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar told CNN. “Donald Trump is trying to pull us down into the sewer of a crisis.”

The Republican president has insisted that he is protecting American citizens against a wave of undocumented migration – including, he says, murderers, terrorists and rapists – while carrying out the will of the voters who returned him to the White House.

Last month, the Trump administration sent hundreds of migrants, most of them Venezuelan, to the maximum-security CECOT prison in El Salvador, alleging they were members of violent gangs.

In the most publicised case, Maryland resident Kilmar Abrego Garcia was deported to the El Salvador mega-prison without charge.

The administration admitted that Abrego Garcia had been included among the deportees due to an “administrative error”, and a court ruled that the government must “facilitate” his return.

Trump has since doubled down, however, insisting that Abrego Garcia is in fact a gang member, including posting an apparently doctored photo on social media on Friday of a gang symbol tattooed on his knuckles.

CECOT inmates are packed in windowless cells, sleep on metal beds with no mattresses, and are forbidden visitors.

Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen managed on Thursday to secure a meeting with Abrego Garcia and said the man was bewildered by his detention and felt threatened in prison.

Yesterday Van Hollen challenged the Trump administration to provide evidence that it is respecting US laws in its deportation sweep.

“I’m okay with whatever the rule of law dictates,” he told CNN, “but right now we have a lawless president ... a lawless president who is ignoring the order of the Supreme Court of the United States to facilitate (Abrego Garcia’s) return.”

“They need to put up or shut up in the courts of the United States,” Van Hollen said.



A Boeing 737 MAX plane, intended for China’s Xiamen Airlines, arrives at Seattle’s King County International Airport after returning from China due to ongoing tariff disputes. – **Reuters**

## Boeing jet returns to US from China, a victim of tariff war

A Boeing jet intended for use by a Chinese airline landed back at the planemaker’s US production hub yesterday, a victim of the tit-for-tat bilateral tariffs launched by President Donald Trump in his global trade offensive.

The 737 MAX, which was meant for China’s Xiamen Airlines, landed at Seattle’s Boeing Field at 6.11pm (0111GMT), according to a Reuters witness. It was painted with Xiamen livery.

The jet, which made refuelling stops in Guam and Hawaii on its 5,000-mile (8,000km) return journey, was one of several 737 MAX jets waiting at Boeing’s Zhoushan completion centre for final work and delivery to a Chinese carrier.

This month Trump raised baseline tariffs on Chinese imports to 145%.

In retaliation, China has imposed a 125% tariff on US goods.

A Chinese airline taking delivery of a Boeing jet could be crippled by the tariffs, given that a new 737 MAX has a market value of around \$55mn, according to aviation consultancy IBA.

It is not clear which party made the decision for the aircraft to return to the US.

Boeing did not immediately respond to request for comment.

The return of the 737 MAX, Boeing’s best-selling model, is the latest sign of disruption to new aircraft deliveries from a breakdown in the aerospace industry’s decades-old duty-free status.

The tariff war and apparent U-turn over deliveries comes as Boeing has been recovering from an almost five-year import freeze on 737 MAX jets and a previous round of trade tensions.

Confusion over changing tariffs could leave many aircraft deliveries in limbo, with some airline chief executives saying that they would defer delivery of planes rather than pay duties, analysts say. – **Reuters**

## Nasa’s oldest active astronaut returns to Earth on 70th birthday

Cake, gifts and a low-key family celebration may be how many senior citizens picture their 70th birthday.

However, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa)’s oldest serving astronaut Don Pettit became a septuagenarian while hurtling towards the Earth in a spacecraft to wrap up a seven-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

A Soyuz capsule carrying the American and two Russian cosmonauts landed in Kazakhstan yesterday, the day of Pettit’s milestone birthday.

“Today at 0420 Moscow time (0120 GMT), the Soyuz MS-26 landing craft with Alexei Ovchinin, Ivan Vagner and Donald (Don) Pettit aboard landed near the Kazakh town of Zhezkazgan,” Russia’s space agency Roscosmos said.

Spending 220 days in space, Pettit and his crewmates Ovchinin and Vagner orbited the Earth 3,520 times and completed a journey of 93.3mn miles.

It was the fourth spaceflight for Pettit, who has logged more than 18 months in orbit throughout his 29-year career.

The trio touched down in a remote area southeast of Kazakhstan after undocking from the space station just over three hours earlier.

Nasa images of the landing showed the small capsule parachuting down to Earth with the sunrise as a backdrop.

The astronauts gave thumbs-up gestures as rescuers carried them from the spacecraft to an inflatable medical tent.

Despite looking a little worse for wear as he was pulled from the vessel, Pettit was “doing well and in the range of what is expected for him following return to Earth”, Nasa said in a statement.

He was then set to fly to the Kazakh city of Karaganda before boarding a Nasa plane to the agency’s Johnson Space Centre in Texas.

The astronauts spent their time



International Space Station (ISS) crew member and Nasa astronaut Don Pettit is carried to a medical tent shortly after landing in the Soyuz MS-26 space capsule with Roscosmos cosmonauts Alexei Ovchinin and Ivan Vagner in a remote area near Zhezkazgan, Kazakhstan yesterday. – **Reuters**

on the ISS researching areas such as water sanitisation technology, plant growth in various conditions and fire behaviour in microgravity, Nasa said.

The trio’s seven-month trip was just short of the nine months that Nasa astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams unexpectedly spent stuck on the orbital lab after

the spacecraft they were testing suffered technical issues and was deemed unfit to fly them back to Earth.

Space is one of the final areas of US-Russia co-operation amid an almost complete breakdown in relations between Moscow and Washington over the Ukraine conflict. – **AFP**

## High early voting numbers ahead of Canada election

AFP  
Montreal

Canada’s election authority said on Saturday that high early turnout was a sign of “enthusiasm for the ballot” in an election campaign overshadowed by tensions with its American neighbour.

More than 2mn Canadians cast ballots on the first day of early voting on Friday, according to initial Elections Canada data provided to AFP, a 36% increase from 2021.

Voters have until this evening to file early ballots ahead of the April 28 election.

On Friday, long queues formed outside polling

stations in several large cities, with some people waiting up to two hours, local supervisors told AFP.

This year is a “special” election given “what’s going on with the United States”, said Josee Fournier outside a polling station in Montreal on Saturday.

The 60-year-old human resources worker said she had weighed her choice until the very last moment given the “serious” cross-border tensions.

Raphael Collomb, 35, said he had been “following all of the media and the candidates’ platforms” as he prepared to vote.

He wanted “the economy to do better and more peace and quiet for everyone”, he told AFP.

US President Donald Trump has issued a slew of threats to impose tariffs and undermine Canadian sovereignty since returning to office in January.

The perceived menace from abroad has prompted many Canadians to vote based on which party leader and prospective prime minister they think is best suited to stand up to Trump.

Recent polling puts the Liberals led by incumbent Mark Carney at around 44% support, leading the Conservative opposition under Pierre Poilievre at around 38%.

Smaller contenders include the left-wing New Democratic Party at 8%, and the Quebec separatist party Bloc Quebecois at 5%.





# Bhutan turns to ‘green’ cryptocurrency to fuel economy

Reuters  
New Delhi

The Himalayan nation of Bhutan is exploring ways to mine and leverage green cryptocurrencies using hydropower to boost its economy and create jobs to reduce brain drain, the chief ex-

ecutive of its sovereign wealth fund said.

Green cryptocurrencies are digital currencies mined using clean energy resources such as wind, hydro or solar power instead of fossil fuel.

Sandwiched between Asian giants India and China, Bhutan has earned millions of dollars in recent years by investing in some of the

world's most popular cryptocurrencies and used some of its profit to pay government salaries for two years, two senior officials in Thimphu, the capital said.

“We are a nation that runs 100% on hydropower, and every digital coin we mine in Bhutan using hydropower offsets that coin which gets mined using fossil fuels,” said

Ujjwal Deep Dahal, the CEO of the fund, Druk Holding and Investments.

“So a coin mined in Bhutan will contribute to the green economy,” he said.

Dahal said the fund, which controls Bhutan's only power generation utility, began adding cryptocurrencies to its portfolio in 2019,

seeing virtual currencies as a tactical investment and a gamechanger for the country.

Bhutan is famed for its Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, an economic gauge that incorporates factors ignored by the usual measures of gross domestic product, such as recreation, emotional well-being and sustainability.

It uses hydropower to operate energy-guzzling supercomputers to create digital assets that can be added to the blockchain.

Officials are exploring whether large conglomerates could buy Bhutan's “green” coins to meet their targets on environmental, social and governance (ESG) norms.

# Fake accounts ‘drove praise of Duterte and now target Philippine election’

Reuters  
Manila

A sophisticated network of fake social media accounts sprang to the impassioned defence of former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte after he was sent to the International Criminal Court to face charges over his bloody drug war.

Around a third of accounts discussing the arrest on the platform X, mostly praising Duterte and lambasting the court, were fake, according to research by a tech firm that termed it a “deliberate, organised” campaign. The accounts acted with a sophistication that made them hard to distinguish from real people, it said. Such aggressive proliferation of disinformation has now begun shaping discourse around the nation's mid-term elections next month, said the company, Israel-based Cyabra, which uses artificial intelligence to identify fake accounts. Its findings echo warnings from lawmakers and researchers in the Philippines and indicate increasingly sophisticated and “seamless” manipulation in a country dubbed “patient zero” for global disinformation.

In another upcoming study up to 45% of discussions about the elections – a showdown between President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and the Duterte camp – have been driven by inauthentic accounts, including

sock puppets, avatars and bots.

“What we found in the Philippines isn't just disinformation spike – it's digital warfare,” said Cyabra's chief executive, Dan Brahmy.

“These fake networks didn't just show up – they shaped the conversation,” Brahmy said, adding the election-related accounts could garner around 54mn views.

“And if it's happening this visibly in the Philippines, it's naive to think it's not happening elsewhere too.”

The firm said it did not trace the origins of the fake accounts, though it was likely a single source. Spokespeople for the Marcos government and Duterte did not respond to requests for comment. The level of “co-ordinated disinformation” seen in the Philippines was far above the typical 7%-10% range of online conversations globally about “highly sensitive or polarising” issues, according to Cyabra, which has monitored similar campaigns worldwide.

It found that 16% of X accounts involved in discussions about a December election in Romania that were cancelled over accusations of Russian meddling had been fake.

The use of fake accounts and paid influencers for political operations is widespread in the Philippines, with multiple political parties turning to “click armies” credited with helping sweep Duterte into the presidency in 2016. Analysts saw the hallmarks of a troll army in the days after his arrest last month, when a surge of false

claims swept social media, with supporters claiming the ICC had no jurisdiction, calling its move a “kidnapping”, and harassing victims.

Duterte's 2016-2022 presidency was defined by the tough-on-crime former mayor's anti-drug operations, which Philippine police have said killed 6,200 suspects.

Cyabra, which says its machine learning can identify fake accounts through behavioural signals, analysed 1,890 profiles that generated more than 5,500 posts and comments on X about Duterte's arrest.

About a third were flagged as fake, responsible for more than 1,300 posts generating more than 7,000 engagements, including likes, comments and shares, potentially reaching more than 11.8mn views, the company said. Cyabra said the accounts posted simultaneously, with co-ordinated activity spikes, identical content and promotion of the same hashtags and narratives. “The content produced by the fake profiles revealed a clear objective: to bolster public support for Rodrigo Duterte and shape a sympathetic, legacy-driven narrative around his arrest,” the firm said. The wave of pro-Duterte disinformation is boosting support for the narrative that he was kidnapped by the ICC at the behest of the Marcos government, said Victor Andres “Dindo” Manhit, a Manila-based political analyst and founder of the research and advisory firm Stratbase Group.



A surfer waits for a large wave on Bronte Beach in Sydney.

# Six drowning deaths as huge waves hit Australian coast

AFP  
Sydney

A fisherman died after being swept off rocks near Sydney yesterday, stretching the Easter weekend death toll of drownings to six as huge waves battered Australia's east coast.

Emergency services winched two people from the surf at Watamolla Beach, but one of them couldn't be revived, New South Wales Police said in a statement.

The pair had been fishing when swept off rocks on the outskirts of southern Sydney. The second person, a 14-year-

old boy, was in a stable condition in hospital.

It continued a run of fatalities over the holiday weekend, with the search ongoing for two other people still missing in the surf since Friday – one off Sydney and one off Melbourne.

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) issued a warning on Thursday that strong swells would create hazardous surf conditions along the coasts of New South Wales and Victoria.

Three people drowned on Friday in New South Wales, while a woman died and a man went missing after they were swept into the sea near Melbourne.

On Saturday, when swells were as high as 11.5 feet in some places, a fisherman was swept to his death off rocks in southern New South Wales.

SLSA had released data before the weekend showing 630 people had died at beaches without an active lifesaving service over the last 10 years.

Chief executive Adam Weir advised patrolled beaches should be prioritised for safety.

“We know that Aussies and visitors to our country like to go off the beaten track to enjoy camping, fishing and other coastal activities,” Weir said in a statement.

## Britain intercepts Russian aircraft over Baltic Sea

Britain yesterday said two of its fighter jets had intercepted Russian aircraft over the Baltic Sea close to Nato alliance airspace in separate incidents on Tuesday and Thursday.

The Typhoon fighters were scrambled to intercept a Russian Ilyushin Il-20M “Coot-A” intelligence aircraft on Tuesday, Britain's Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

Two day later, two Typhoons intercepted an unknown aircraft leaving Kaliningrad air space, it said.

Minister for the Armed Forces Luke Pollard said with Russian aggression growing and security threats on the rise, Britain was stepping up to reassure its allies, deter adversaries and protect its national security.

“This mission shows our ability to operate side by side with Nato's newest member Sweden and to defend the Alliance's airspace wherever and whenever needed, keeping us safe at home and strong abroad,” he said in a statement.

## Pro-monarchy protest in Nepal



Supporters of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) carry Nepal's national flag as they shout slogans during a pro-monarchy protest to demand the restoration of monarchy and the status of a Hindu state in Kathmandu yesterday.

# Man linked to Bangkok building collapse arrested

AFP  
Bangkok

Thai authorities said they have arrested a Chinese executive at a company that was building a Bangkok skyscraper which collapsed in a major earthquake, leaving dozens dead.

The 30-storey tower was reduced to an immense pile of rubble when a 7.7-magnitude quake struck neighbouring Myanmar last month, killing 47 people at the construction site and leaving another 47 missing.

Justice Minister Tawee Sod-song told a news conference that a Thai court had issued arrest warrants for four individuals, including three Thai nationals, at China Railway No.10 for breaching the Foreign Business Act.

The department of special investigation, which is under the justice ministry, said in a statement that one of the four had been arrested – a Chinese

“company representative” who they named as Zhang.

China Railway No.10 was part of a joint venture with an Italian-Thai firm to build the State Audit Office tower before its collapse.

Zhang is listed as a 49% shareholder in the firm, while the three Thai citizens have a 51% stake in the company. But Tawee told journalists that “we have evidence... that the three Thais were holding shares for other foreign independents”.

The Foreign Business Act says that foreigners may hold no more than 49% of shares in a company.

Separately, Tawee said several investigations related to the collapse were ongoing, including over the possibility of bid rigging and the use of fake signatures of engineers in construction supervisor contracts. Earlier this month Thai safety officials said testing of steel rebars – struts used to reinforce concrete – from the site has found that some of the metal work was substandard.

# Vietnam ups wind, solar targets as energy demand soars

AFP  
Hanoi

Vietnam has dramatically increased its wind and solar targets as it looks to up its energy production by 2030 to meet soaring demand, according to a revised version of its national power plan.

The country has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the latest edition of its Power Development Plan 8 (PDP8), as it is known,

maps out how it will reach those goals.

The manufacturing powerhouse has been heavily reliant on coal to meet its rapidly expanding energy needs. But now it wants to “strongly develop renewable energy sources”, according to the plan, which was published Wednesday on the government's news portal.

With targets set at 73 gigawatts (GW) for solar and 38GW for on-shore wind energy by 2030 – and a significant increase to 296GW and 230GW by 2050 – the plan looks “really ambitious”, said Andri Prasetyo, senior researcher at Senik Centre Asia. The 2023 version of the PDP8 aimed for 12.8GW for solar and 21GW for wind by the end of the decade.

“I think this sends a clear message, Vietnam is positioning itself to maintain leadership in Southeast Asia's clean energy transition, (even) taking a more prominent role in the region,” he said.

Solar power grew rapidly in Vietnam until 2020 but its success hit a roadblock due to infrastructure limitations.

Prasetyo said Vietnam's new

targets were “increasingly feasible”, although they far outstrip market projections of what the country can achieve.

The latest version of the PDP8, which was approved this week, also re-emphasises the country's 2023 pledge to end the use of coal by 2050.

Coal will represent nearly 17% of its energy mix by the end of the decade, down from a target of 20% set in 2023.

Meanwhile, solar will account for 31% of the country's energy by 2030, while onshore wind will

be 16%. More than \$136bn will be needed if Vietnam is to get there, the document said.

Under the new plan, the country also aims to open its first nuclear power plant by 2035 at the latest.

It comes after Vietnam and Russia signed an agreement on nuclear energy in January, with Hanoi saying Russian nuclear giant Rosatom was “very interested” in co-operating on a project in central Ninh Thuan province.

Overall, as Vietnam targets an ambitious 10% economic growth

rate by the end of the decade, it wants to raise its total installed capacity to a maximum of 236GW by that date.

That's up by more than 80GW from the figure outlined in 2023.

Hanoi is also eager to avoid a repeat of the rolling blackouts and sudden power outages in summer 2023 that led to losses among manufacturers. They also prompted massive disruption for residents, as intensely hot weather and unprecedented drought strained energy supplies in northern Vietnam.



# 11 dead in Delhi building crash

AFP  
New Delhi

At least 11 people, including three children, were killed in New Delhi after a residential building collapsed on the outskirts of the Indian capital, local reports and authorities said.

The incident happened in the early hours in the northeastern district of the city that mostly houses migrant workers, with rescue teams digging through the rubble throughout the day.

Eleven people were pronounced dead, NDTV channel

reported, though 11 others were rescued and taken to hospital. Five were still undergoing treatment, the network said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was “saddened by the loss of lives”.

“Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones,” Modi’s office posted on X. “May the injured recover soon.”

President Droupadi Murmu, who lives in her official residence just 20kms from the site, said that “the deaths of many people including women and children is very sad”.

Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party recently won the Delhi

state election for the first time in almost three decades.

The cause of the collapse was not immediately known.

Delhi minister Kapil Mishra blamed corruption in the municipal government, run by a rival political party, for such building collapses, saying on X: “Construction of such illegal buildings is going on in full swing.”

“Survey of all these illegal buildings is necessary, strict action is required against them,” he added.

Local media reports said that the four-storey building “came crashing down like a stack of cards”.



People gather at the site of the collapsed building in New Delhi, India.

# India auction for deep-sea blocks containing critical minerals extended

Reuters  
New Delhi

India has extended an auction of deep-sea blocks containing critical minerals used in electric vehicle batteries and other products until May 1, a spokesperson at the ministry of mines said.

China is a top global producer of 30 of the 50 minerals considered critical by the US Geological Survey, but has been curtailing exports recently amid trade tensions with the US.

India in November launched the first tranche of an auction of 13 offshore deep-sea mineral blocks, including three lime mud blocks, three construction sand blocks,

and seven polymetallic nodule blocks. The blocks contain critical minerals including cobalt, copper, manganese, and nickel.

An initial bid deadline of February 27 was bumped to April 2 and has been extended again, the ministry spokesperson confirmed.

“We have received queries from companies that want to study the blocks and have asked for time,” a source said, declining to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Another source said the move was aimed at encouraging wider participation from potential bidders. Opposition parties have called for the auction to be cancelled citing risks to the environment and local media have re-

ported protests led by fishermen in the southern state of Kerala.

Earlier this month, the mines minister in a written reply to parliament said the ministry had consulted the environment ministry, department of fisheries and others before launching the auction.

India currently lacks the seabed mining expertise to extract minerals, experts say. Some Indian mining and cement companies have approached Dutch shipbuilder Royal IHC for technical assistance as they prepare to bid for deep-sea blocks, it was reported last month.

New Delhi has also had limited success in its onshore critical minerals auction, with only about half of the 48 blocks awarded to bidders.

# Eli Lilly’s Mounjaro launch in India ignites wave of weight-loss enquiries

Reuters  
Hyderabad

The India launch of Eli Lilly’s popular weight-loss drug Mounjaro has triggered a huge wave of patient enquiries about its availability, with some Indian doctors fielding hundreds of calls about the medicine, according to a Reuters survey.

The survey of 18 doctors, patients and weight-loss clinic operators follows the US drugmaker’s market entry ahead of Danish obesity drug rival Novo Nordisk into a nation expected to have the second-largest population of overweight or obese people by 2050.

“Since the launch of Mounjaro, we have seen a remarkable increase in customer interest,” said Suryan-sh Kumar, founder of Delhi-based weight management services provider Elevate Now.

Elevate Now fielded more than 200 calls in just a week about Mounjaro, he said in a post on social media.

Mounjaro’s launch has brought cheer to Indian patients who had been relying on friends, family or suppliers abroad to get hold of these drugs.

Bengaluru resident Vikram, a 57-year-old medical professional who did not want his surname published to avoid weight stigma, had obtained the drug from Dubai over the past eight months. He has shed over 23% of his body weight.

“It will be a lot more convenient to get it now,” he said.

Local availability also makes life easier for Indian patients who relied on the black market for weight-loss drugs.

Muffazal Lakdawala, director of surgery at Sir H N Reliance Foundation Hospital, said he expects patients who make the switch to Lilly’s authorised drug to pay less than half the black market price.

He also expects Lilly to have an early entry advantage over Novo’s Wegovy, which has the same active ingredient as its diabetes medicine Ozempic that is often used off-label for weight loss.



Amar Vennapusa, a bariatric surgeon, administers a dose of Eli Lilly’s Mounjaro, a tirzepatide injection drug used for treating type 2 diabetes and weight loss, to his patient P Keerthi Reddy, 32, at his health clinic in Hyderabad, India.

“A lot of our patients who used to take Ozempic have now switched over to taking Mounjaro because of availability in India,” Lakdawala said.

Novo is looking to bring forward its planned India launch of Wegovy to better compete with Lilly, two sources said earlier this month.

India’s generic drugmakers are also racing to make cheaper versions of Wegovy in a bid to grab a share of the burgeoning weight-loss market, which Nuvama analysts estimate will reach \$175bn a year globally by 2035.

Novo may also have to price Wegovy more competitively in India after some industry watchers, such as market research firm Pharmrack, said Mounjaro’s launch was “creating ripples” in the nation with its pricing.

Mounjaro, a once-weekly injection approved by India’s drug regulator, is priced at Rs4,375 (\$50.86) for a 5milligram vial and Rs3,500 for a 2.5mg vial, its lowest doses, the company said. Its highest dose is 15mg.

A patient in India may have to spend about \$200 a month when taking a weekly dose of 5mg, subject to doctor’s prescription.

Mounjaro carries a list price of \$1,079.77 a month in the US, although the amount patients pay

largely depends on their insurance plan. Zepbound, which has the same active ingredient, tirzepatide, is the brand name for the US weight loss version, with Mounjaro sold for diabetes there.

Lilly offers 5mg, 7.5mg and 10mg vials of Zepbound for \$499 and higher for a month’s supply if customers pay cash without any third-party involvement.

Bengaluru-based Manipal Hospitals has seen over a 20% increase in patient queries on weight-loss medication availability, said Abhijit Bhograj, a consultant endocrinologist.

The heightened interest has some doctors urging patients to seek more information before clamouring for the drug.

“There needs to be wider awareness on usage,” said Hyderabad-based bariatric surgeon Amar Vennapusa, who received over 100 calls in two days after announcing Mounjaro availability.

Keerthi Reddy, 32, who underwent bariatric surgery a few years back, took her first Mounjaro shot this week at Vennapusa’s clinic.

“My friends and family living abroad have already tried it and saw good results,” Reddy told Reuters. “I’ve been waiting for it to be available in India.”

## India revamps gas policy to boost affordability, supply

India said it has introduced enhancements to the domestic gas allocation policy with an aim to strengthen the framework for sustained availability and affordability of natural gas.

Under these new directions, from the first quarter of fiscal 2026, domestic natural gas allocations for compressed natural gas (CNG) and piped natural gas (PNG) segments will be done on a two-quarter advance basis. Allocation will also now include new well gas from nomination fields of the two state explorers, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, and Oil India with auction-based allocation for new well gas being replaced with a quarterly pro-rata allocation.

With both administered pricing mechanism gas and new well gas prices linked to Indian crude basket prices, which are calculated monthly, the government sees the allocation of domestic gas to make natural gas more affordable for CNG and PNG consumers after recent decline in crude prices.

## Left organisations protest govt policies



Leftist activists attend a mass meeting organised by various left organisations to protest against different labour policies of the state and central government at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, India, yesterday.

## US cotton exports to India climb on lower prices

Reuters  
New Delhi

US upland cotton exports to India have risen in the past few months fuelled by global tariff conflicts, declining American prices and rising demand in the country, industry experts said.

Exports to India from February to April jumped to 155,260 running bales, from 25,901 shipped during a year ago period, according to the US department of agriculture’s (USDA) data. The exports hit an over 2-1/2-year high in the week of February 20.

The increase comes as Washington-Beijing trade tensions escalate, reducing US cotton exports to China. China will impose 125% tariffs on US goods, up from the 84% previously announced, the finance ministry said on Fri-

day. With these tariffs and a drop in China’s demand, upland cotton grown in Texas and other regions is now finding a market in India, according to Ajay Kedia, director of Kedia Advisors.

At the same time, exports to China are expected to decrease, said Justin Cardwell, head of research and technology at Alternative Option.

India is the world’s second-largest cotton producer after China, as well as one of the world’s largest cotton yarn processors and exporters. However, declining yields have recently turned the country from a net exporter to a net importer of the fibre.

India mainly imports Extra Long Staple (ELS) cotton from the US, benefiting from a 10% duty exemption, unlike short staple cotton which has an 11% import duty.

# Indian ad group warns against pricing co-ordination

Reuters  
New Delhi

After high-profile antitrust raids in India, a group of major ad agencies has asked members, who include GroupM, Dentsu and Publicis, to avoid communicating with rivals over WhatsApp or share sensitive pricing data, a document shows.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) shook the sector in March with dawn raids during an investigation of suspected collusion over publicity rates and discounts in the world’s eighth biggest ad market with 2025 revenues of \$18.5bn. The investigation has cast

a shadow on India’s fast-growing broadcast and streaming sector, which counts Reliance-Disney and Sony among top players, and could alter how advertising is priced and sold by global media buying agencies.

The March 18 surprise searches followed tip-offs under a leniency scheme by the CCI that reduces penalties for companies providing evidence, with Dentsu one of those applying. Days later, the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) asked members to avoid discussions over pricing or other commercially sensitive information during its meetings where the group’s legal adviser should be present, according to an advisory

seen by Reuters that showed the increased concern over compliance.

“Members are requested not to discuss (through any mechanism, including e-mails, WhatsApp groups, documents, any informal, or formal meetings), any commercially sensitive information,” said the advisory, drafted by the group’s law firm in the case, Trilegal, and shared with all members.

Such information includes prices or pricing strategies, the document added, asking members to exit existing WhatsApp groups and cease communication with each other.

The advertising association counts Indian units of GroupM

– owned by Britain’s WPP, Japan’s Dentsu and France’s Publicis among members.

All their Indian offices, including AAAI’s, were raided in March.

The CCI and media agencies, including AAAI, did not respond to queries. Law firm Trilegal said its policy was to not comment on ongoing cases. The advisory added that any form of co-ordination or exchange of commercially sensitive information may raise concerns under India’s competition laws and attract further scrutiny from the CCI.

The CCI does not make public details of any investigations until they conclude. They can take years.

The March raids also covered the office of the nation’s top broadcasters’ body in New Delhi, IBDF, which represents the likes of Reliance-Disney and Sony.

Last year, Dentsu submitted evidence to the CCI after it detected price collusion internally and filed a leniency plea with the CCI which allows a 100% penalty waiver for the first company providing evidence of wrongdoing.

Among Dentsu’s submissions was a 2023 IBDF-AAAI “procedure” document related to how ad agencies must conduct business in India, a source with direct knowledge of the investigation said.

The 10-page IBDF-AAAI document stated it wanted to eliminate

“lower pricing as being the reason to award a pitch” and wanted to “discourage any misadventures by agencies” to win clients.

“The agency shall not unilaterally offer any discount on existing rates,” said the 2023 document, which also required one agency to issue a “no objection” certificate if a client moves to another ad agency.

IBDF did not respond to queries, but the latest advisory appears to end the 2023 practice.

Agencies are “advised to not impose any restrictions (including requirements for a no-objection certificate or embargo) shared by any other trade associations,” said the March 26 AAAI document.





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GULF TIMES

## Have we just glimpsed life beyond earth?

Mankind's search for extra-terrestrial life may have reached a turning point with 'the strongest signs yet of possible life beyond our solar system' being detected. In 'a potential landmark discovery', scientists using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) have detected in an alien planet's atmosphere the chemical fingerprints of gases that on Earth are produced only by biological processes. The two gases - dimethyl sulphide, or DMS, and dimethyl disulphide, or DMDS - involved in observations of the planet named K2-18 b are generated on Earth by living organisms, primarily microbial life such as marine phytoplankton - algae. This suggests the planet may be teeming with microbial life, the researchers said. They stressed, however, that they are not announcing the discovery of actual living organisms but rather a possible biosignature - an indicator of a biological process - and that the findings should be viewed cautiously, with more observations needed.

These are the first hints of an alien world that is possibly inhabited, said astrophysicist Nikku Madhusudhan of the University of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy, lead author of the study published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters. "This is a transformational moment in the search for life beyond the solar system, where we have demonstrated that it is possible to detect biosignatures in potentially habitable planets with current facilities. We have entered the era of observational astrobiology," Madhusudhan said. There are various efforts underway searching for signs of life in our solar system, including various claims of environments that might be conducive to life in places like Mars, Venus and various icy moons, he noted.

### Detection of potential biosignatures on exoplanet K2-18 b may mark a profound moment in humanity's search for extra-terrestrial life

K2-18 b is 8.6 times as massive as Earth and has a diameter about 2.6 times as large as our planet. It orbits in the "habitable zone" - a distance where liquid water, a key ingredient for life, can exist on a planetary surface - around a red dwarf star smaller and less luminous than our sun, located about 124 light-years from Earth in the constellation Leo. A light-year is the distance light travels in a year, 9.5tn km. One other planet also has been identified orbiting this star. About 5,800 planets beyond our solar system, called exoplanets, have been discovered since the 1990s. Scientists have hypothesised the existence of exoplanets called hycean worlds - covered by a liquid water ocean habitable by microorganisms and with a hydrogen-rich atmosphere. Earlier observations by JWST, launched in 2021 and became operational in 2022, had identified methane and carbon dioxide in K2-18 b's atmosphere, the first time that carbon-based molecules were discovered in the atmosphere of an exoplanet in a star's habitable zone.

"The only scenario that currently explains all the data obtained so far from JWST including the past and present observations, is one where K2-18 b is a hycean world teeming with life," Madhusudhan said. "However, we need to be open and continue exploring other scenarios," he said while stating that the baseline assumption is of simple microbial life. DMS and DMDS, both from the same chemical family, have been predicted as important exoplanet biosignatures. JWST found that one or the other, or possibly both, were present in the planet's atmosphere at a 99.7% confidence level, meaning there is still a 0.3% chance of the observation being a statistical fluke.

The gases were detected at atmospheric concentrations of more than 10 parts per million by volume. "For reference, this is thousands of times higher than their concentrations in the Earth's atmosphere, and cannot be explained without biological activity based on existing knowledge," Madhusudhan said.

Scientists not involved in the study counselled circumspection. "The rich data from K2-18 b make it a tantalising world," said Christopher Glein, principal scientist at the Space Science Division of the Southwest Research Institute in Texas. "These latest data are a valuable contribution to our understanding. Yet, we must be very careful to test the data as thoroughly as possible."

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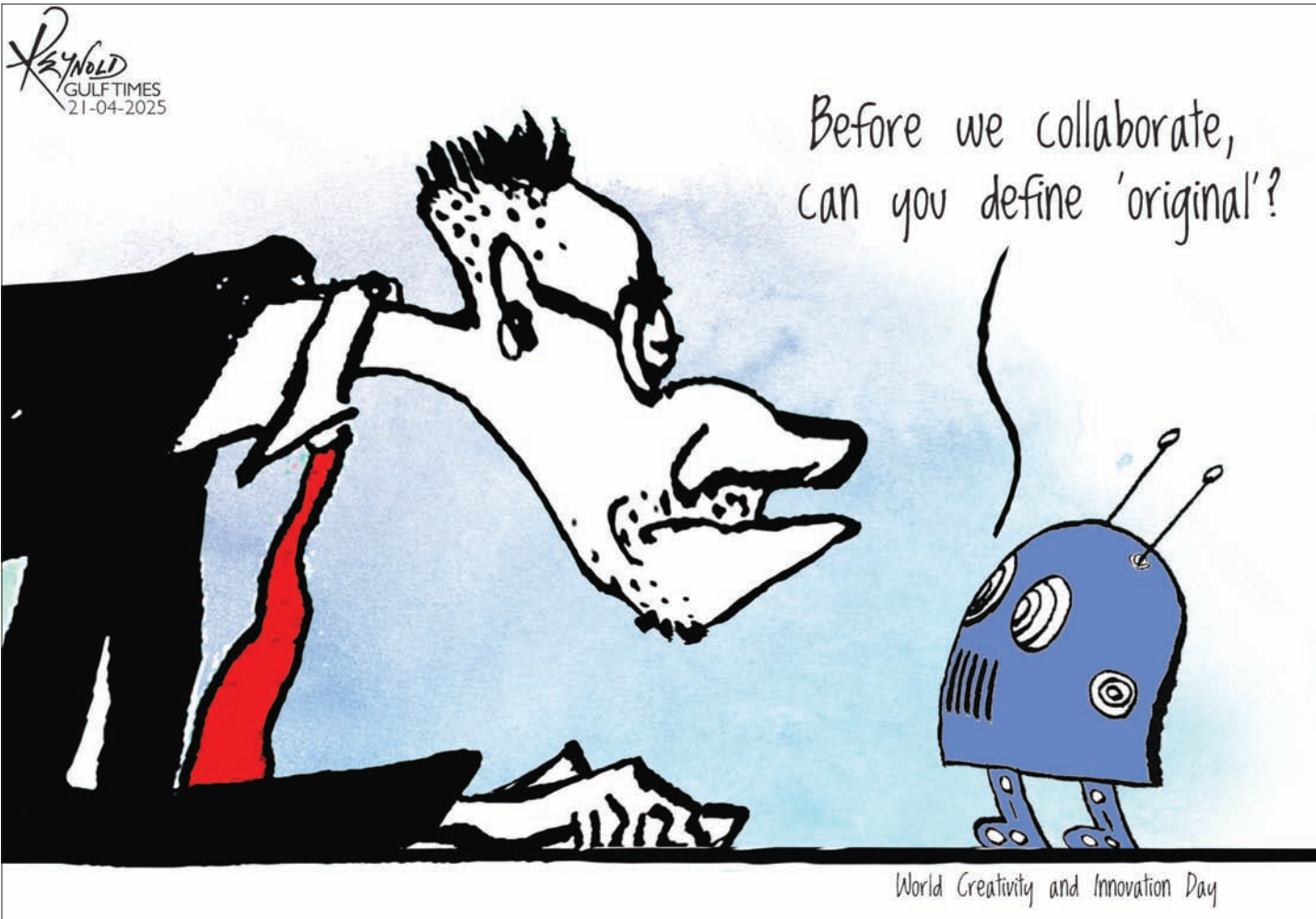
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## A platform for professionals, advocate for young journos

Amid the rapid global evolution of the media landscape, along with Qatar's endeavours to upgrade its media infrastructure in alignment with its National Vision 2030, the Qatar Press Center (QPC) stands out as one of the nation's institutional cornerstones dedicated to advancing journalism and empowering journalists.

QPC is one of the leading press institutions serving the press sector in Qatar and has forged exceptional relationships with numerous press institutions and unions at both the regional and global levels. The Center is supported by its founders, drawn from the pioneering pillars of journalistic and media work in Qatar.

In addition, QPC strives to fulfil its mandate with the requisite professionalism and efficiency, sustaining its trajectory while advancing the national journalistic experience, in addition to extending services to the various facets of the media and press professions.

Director General of QPC, Sadiq Mohammed al-Amari, told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that the Center was established in December 2017 as a private institution of public interest pursuant to Law No 21 of 2006. Since its inception, it has sought to serve as an inclusive umbrella for journalists at home, enriching their professional experience through specialised training courses, seminars, and open lectures, whether on journalistic issues or broader societal concerns.

The Center continues to advance journalistic culture and reinforce the media's role in national development.

Al-Amari elaborated on QPC's departments and training activities, stating that it comprises multiple divisions, including training courses, syndicate liaison, research and publications, as well as membership and events.

The Center regularly organises courses in key areas such as political analysis, news anchoring, media institution management, television correspondence, and mobile journalism. During the past month of Ramadan alone, QPC held several interactive workshops that received significant approbation from participants, al-Amari said.

He added that upon its establishment, QPC has been committed to dedicating its halls to bearing the names of outstanding figures in Qatari journalism, indicating that the move was taken in recognition of the legacies of those press entrepreneurs in Qatar.

Al-Amari highlighted that they include Abdullah Hussein al-Naama Hall, named after the founder and first editor-in-chief of *Al Arab*, Qatar's first daily newspaper; Nasser Mohammed al-Othman Hall, commemorating the veteran journalist and former editor-in-chief of *Arrayah*, who was also honoured with the Arab Media Personality Award; Abdulrahman al-Muadhadi Hall, named after the former director



of Qatar Radio; as well as Dr Rabia bin Sabah al-Kuwari Hall, paying tribute to the renowned media professor at Qatar University and founding member of *Al Sharq* newspaper.

These halls are fully outfitted with cutting-edge training technologies, allowing the Center to independently host all events without reliance on external venues, he said.

Al-Amari further explained that QPC's board of directors comprises a phalanx of Qatari media figures chaired by Saad bin Mohammed al-Rumaihi, with the members including Jaber Salem al-Harami, Dr Khalid Mubarak al-Shafi, Mohammed Hajji, Abdullah Talib al-Marri, Abdulrahman al-Qahtani, Dr Rabia bin Sabah al-Kuwari, and Abdulaziz Mohammed al-Abdulghani.

In addition, al-Amari highlighted that the board is vested with the task of crafting the Center's general policies and work plans, while keeping pace with global developments in this profession, as the Center has dedicated a section to membership affairs, registering 300 journalists from a wide diversity of the nation's media institutions.

He added that those members are endowed with ID cards that streamline professional duties and provide access to various service benefits.

Overall, al-Amari stated that the Center performs an incredible role in supporting young journalists on social media platforms, in recognition of the significance of their inclusion in this career, particularly the fresh entrants. He emphasised that essential training is provided to prepare them for the labour market.

The Center accords special priority to content creators who share beneficial material on social media platforms. They are rehabilitated by inculcating in them the principles of comprehensive journalism, al-Amari noted, affirming that journalism is no longer confined to institutions alone, as long as any individual equipped with the right tools and professional awareness can emerge as a powerful media voice.

Regarding the memorandum of understanding (MoU) recently

signed with the Qatar Media Corporation (QMC), al-Amari says this memorandum intends to bolster institutional relationships within the national media sector and launch joint training and professional seminars that contribute to honing the skills of media practitioners.

The MoU includes collaboration with radio and TV channels to produce films and documentary programmes chronicling the trajectory of Qatari journalism, in addition to forging partnerships with the Al Jazeera Media Institute and Joann bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies, al-Amari highlighted.

He noted the foremost priority the Center gives to espousing the issues of journalists regionally and globally, emphasising that the Center has always been the first media entity that condemned the Israeli assaults on Palestinian journalists since the flare-up of the aggression on 7 October 2023.

QPC documented the killing of 214 Palestinian journalists, hosted several of them, communicated with journalists in Gaza, and issued official letters to international organisations such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and Human Rights Watch (HRW), al-Amari continued.

He stressed that the aim was to call for protecting the journalists and holding the aggressors to account, stating that the Center declared its solidarity with the Sudanese, Yemeni, and Syrian journalists who had been subjected to gross violations.

With the rapid technological advancements and the new techniques currently being leveraged in all aspects of journalism and media, particularly in terms of artificial intelligence, AI has undoubtedly become a reality that can't be ignored. However, it cannot replace the human mind - neither in crafting news, nor in analysing or interpreting it, al-Amari highlighted.

Al-Amari clarified that AI may serve as a supportive tool, but the human element remains the guarantor of professionalism, accuracy, and sound editorial judgement. Full reliance on

machines would be inherently limited; what is required is a strategic fusion of technology with human expertise.

On the future of media institutions amid the increasing pressures and financial challenges, al-Amari elucidated that financial challenges are the prime hitches facing the media today, particularly following the significant downturn in the advertising market since 2014.

This decline, he said, was further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as advertisers pivoted towards digital platforms and influencers, putting conventional channels in a precarious position.

Hence, there is a relative improvement in the post-pandemic era, but this is not enough, as long as media institutions need new resources to survive; otherwise, some mammoth media entities might be shuttered in the years ahead, al-Amari noted.

On the Center's external relations, al-Amari stated that QPC maintains collaborative ties with several Arab journalist unions, including those in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine, as the Center is a member of the Federation of Arab Journalists and the Gulf Federation of Journalists, and strives to join the International Federation of Journalists soon enough, in pursuit of enhancing communication among journalists globally, sharing expertise, and expanding the network of joint engagement.

Domestically, QPC contributes to promoting journalistic performance through leveraging the latest global technologies in this area, in addition to connecting the journalists at home with their peers abroad.

Concluding his remarks, al-Amari sent a message to journalists and media institutions in Qatar, confirming that QPC will always be open to all national and foreign talents and those with a genuine passion for media work. He underlined that the media future in Qatar is burgeoning, on the condition that professionalism and knowledge should be maintained to keep up with the updates without dispensing with the core precepts of journalism. (QNA)



# Ukraine and Russia trade barbs over ceasefire breaches

Reuters  
Moscow/Kyiv

Russia and Ukraine blamed each other yesterday for breaking a one-day Easter ceasefire declared by President Vladimir Putin, with both sides accusing the other of hundreds of attacks and the Kremlin saying there was no order for an extension.

Putin, who sent thousands of Russian troops into Ukraine in February 2022, ordered his forces to stop all military activity along the front line in the three-year-old war until midnight Moscow time (2100 GMT) yesterday.

TASS news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying there was no order from Putin to extend the ceasefire. "There were no other commands," Peskov was quoted as saying when asked if it could be prolonged.

In Washington, the State Department said it would welcome an extension.

Ukraine's foreign minister Andrii Sybiha said Moscow's actions in coming days "will reveal Russia's true attitude toward US peace efforts" and a proposed 30-day ceasefire.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia was pretending to observe the Easter ceasefire, but had carried out hundreds of artillery attacks on Saturday



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky poses on the occasion of Easter celebrations in Kyiv yesterday. (AFP)

night, with more yesterday.

Russia launched 67 assaults from midnight until 8pm local time, Zelensky wrote on X.

"Either Putin does not have full control over his army, or the situation proves that in Russia, they have no intention of making a genuine move toward ending the war, and are only interested in favourable PR coverage," Zelensky posted. "However, there were no air raid alerts today. Hence, this is a format of ceasefire that has been achieved and that is the easiest to extend," he said, proposing that Russia abandon drone and missile strikes on civilian targets for at least 30 days.

If Russia does not agree, it will

be proof that it intends to continue doing only those things that destroy human lives and prolong the war, he added.

Russia's Defence Ministry said Ukraine had broken the ceasefire more than 1,000 times, damaging infrastructure and causing civilian deaths.

The ministry said Ukrainian forces had shot at Russian positions 444 times while it had counted more than 900 Ukrainian drone attacks, including on Crimea and the Russian border areas of the Bryansk, Kursk and Belgorod regions.

"As a result, there are deaths and injuries among the civilian population, as well as damage to



People prepare traditional Easter cakes and eggs in the Donetsk region, a Russian-controlled area of Ukraine, yesterday. (Reuters)

civilian facilities," the ministry said. Ukraine's military said earlier that activity on the front line had decreased. Some Russian military bloggers also said frontline activity had declined substantially.

Reuters was unable to immediately verify the battlefield reports.

The apparent failure to observe even an Easter ceasefire shows how hard it will be for US President Donald Trump to clinch a lasting peace deal.

The US will walk away from peace efforts unless there are clear signs of progress soon, Trump and his secretary of state, Marco Rubio, said on Friday.

Last month, after Ukraine accepted Trump's proposal for a 30-day truce, Putin said crucial issues of verification had not been sorted out. Both Moscow and Kyiv have agreed to a moratorium on attacks on energy targets and at sea, which

each accuses the other of breaking. Zelensky reiterated that Kyiv was willing to extend the ceasefire for 30 days but said that if Russia kept fighting yesterday, so would Ukraine.

"The Ukrainian army is acting - and will continue to act - in a fully symmetrical manner," he wrote on X. Ukrainian soldiers also believe the ceasefire claims to be false as the fighting continues.

"Shelling continued - we can see it in the news - for example, in Kherson. Also, assaults and shelling continued at the front line. There is no indication of a ceasefire," said Dmytro, 24, from 93rd Kholodnyi Yar separate mechanised brigade.

"My opinion did not change regarding the ceasefire: it was announced only to show to the world as if they are making some steps, concessions for us. But in real-

ity, as we can see at the front line, nothing has changed. I think it is blatant lie as it always was," said Serhii, 22, a soldier from the same brigade.

Putin told his top general, Valery Gerasimov, to be ready to respond "in full" if Kyiv broke the truce.

Announcing the ceasefire before heading to an Orthodox Easter service, Putin said the truce would show whether or not Ukraine was ready or able to implement peace.

Easter falls on the same day this year for Orthodox and Western churches, and Zelensky urged Ukrainians not to give up hope that peace will one day return.

"We know what we are defending. We know what we are fighting for," he said in a social media video, wearing a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt and standing in front of Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kyiv.

## Lovers kept waiting as war drags on

Kateryna Halushka often sits alone, staring at her phone waiting for a sign of life from her boyfriend, a Ukrainian soldier fighting at the front. Like thousands of others, the Russian invasion has turned her love life into an anxious wait for messages, calls and short-lived reunions. Holding little faith in US President Donald Trump's promise to end the war, they are stuck in what Halushka called a constant state of waiting. "I've got a new social role," the 28-year-old told AFP in a Kyiv park. "I am now a woman who waits". Halushka struggled with the idea of sitting still.

She worked two jobs and volunteered as a paramedic - away from the front since she suffered a severe injury. "That constant waiting state is quite stressful... you wind yourself up thinking something bad happened. You just sit there, waiting for a call, waiting for a message," she said. She had already lost one boyfriend in the war, killed at the front. That pain would come back anytime her current partner did not answer for a day or two.

"You live with the constant understanding that he may go to fight and not return. You constantly live with the idea that he may die and you'll never see his body again," she said. "Your brain never comes up with anything good. It doesn't imagine that your boyfriend shot Putin, or that the war is over," she added. Trump, who once boasted he could end the war in hours, is pushing for a peace deal that would, in theory, offer Ukrainian soldiers the chance to return home.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday announced a short Easter truce to run over the weekend. But he rejected a US call for an unconditional and full ceasefire last



Kateryna Halushka (left) and Daria Yedamova pose for portraits in Kyiv. (AFP)

month and there is no sign Moscow and Kyiv are anywhere close to striking an agreement.

Daria Yedamova, whose husband Artur was serving in the northeastern Kharkiv region, said she was also pessimistic.

"I am hoping for him to come back, I wish we could have a forever peace. But we live in the real world," she said. Cheered on by Artur in video calls, she has been knocking down walls to renovate a flat they bought in Kyiv, all while taking care of their two young children.

"We're laying the groundwork for the future," she said.

But with no permanent end to the fighting in sight, the separation is taking its toll. Lina, the couple's 11-month-old daughter, does not always recognise her father on the rare occasions they meet up. He enlisted just a few months after she was born.

Artur's son, three-year-old Taras, constantly longs for him. "He says, 'Dad will come', 'we will sleep together', or 'we will read together'," Yedamova told AFP. Families of serving soldiers regularly travel across the country for short



reunions. Halushka's boyfriend is given occasional permission to come to Kyiv on leave.

She was looking forward to honouring a small tradition when she next saw him - stir-fried chicken Gong Bao at a food court in Kyiv, followed by take-out strawberry cake covered in pink icing. She held on to such fleeting moments of happiness against a darkening future. Halushka is among the growing numbers of Ukrainians anxious at Trump's overtures towards Moscow. The US leader has pressured Kyiv into making concessions and is refusing to offer US-backed security guarantees that Ukraine sees as vital.

The share of Ukrainians believing Trump's election was bad for Ukraine surged from 21% in December 2024 to 73 percent in March 2025, according to the Kyiv Institute for Sociology.

"I feel anger and hatred that we have to communicate with stupid people," Halushka said. Trump and his billionaire ally Elon Musk have probably "never opened a history book in their lives," she blasted.

"When Russia attacks us again - and it's a matter of when, not if - then my boyfriend's chances to survive will be even lower," she said.

## Reunion hospital boss urges reinforcements amid outbreak

The head of the hospital service on the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion yesterday called for medical reinforcements to cope with an epidemic of the mosquito-borne chikungunya disease.

"We are really stretched to our limits," Lionel Calenge told the RMC radio station.

"Epidemiologists predicted the epidemic peak would hit in mid-April, and here we are."

His appeal went out a day before French President Emmanuel Macron was to embark on a five-day tour of Indian Ocean territories, including a stop in Reunion tomorrow.

Since the start of the year, chikungunya has already killed six people on the island, and around one in nine people in the population of nearly 900,000 is believed to be affected.

Although France's public health service said the epidemic appeared to be easing in early April, Calenge said: "Every day, for several weeks now, we have been getting between 30 and 40 patients with 'chik' in our two emergency wards."

The four hospitals under his charge have insufficient beds, with 581 people hospitalised with the disease since the start of 2025, including 46 newborns, while 540 medical staff have been off work since early March because they contracted chikungunya, he said.

He said that his service had so far received three back-up doctors, but he was calling for six more.

## German police launch manhunt after 2 shot dead

A large police operation was under way in Germany yesterday to find one or more shooters who killed two men the day before in the centre of the country, police said.

The bodies of the two victims, both with gunshot wounds, were found in front of a residential address in Bad Nauheim, a town north of Frankfurt, on Saturday afternoon, Giessen city police said.

The victims were a man, 59, and his 28 year-old son-in-law, both of Turkish nationality, who "had no previous dealings with the police", police and prosecutors said yesterday. "A big force deployment" of police from uniformed, plain clothes and special forces branches have fanned out, backed by a helicopter, to find the perpetrator or perpetrators, it said. The search continued yesterday in parallel with investigations. Authorities said "a personal motive" seemed to be behind the killings, adding that "no element indicates that there would be a danger for outsiders" crossing paths with the suspect or suspects.

Bad Nauheim is 25km north of Frankfurt and has a population of around 33,000. It was famous for being where Elvis Presley did US military service between 1958 and 1960 and where he met his future wife, Priscilla Presley.

## Ukraine eyes gas import

Ukraine may need to import up to 6.3bn cubic metres (bcm) of gas for the 2025/26 winter season as reserves have fallen to a record low due to war-related damage to some facilities, the former head of its gas transit operator said yesterday.

Ukraine has been forced to ramp up gas withdrawals from storage and increase imports this winter and spring after Russian missile attacks damaged production facilities in the east of the country, Serhiy Makogon said on Telegram messenger.

Quoting data from Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE), he said that the storage level was "the lowest ever" at 0.7bcm - 2.22% of full storage capacity - as of April 16, the end of the winter and spring season.

## Star Wars series Andor back for final season amid buzz

If *Andor* - which returns from tomorrow for its second and final season - has been received as one of the very best *Star Wars* TV series, that is largely thanks to the grittier, more adult approach taken by its creator Tony Gilroy.

That standpoint - far, far away from the family-pleasing tone often encountered in the *Star Wars* universe run by the Disney empire - should be of no surprise to those who watched the 2002 action thriller *The Bourne Identity*, written by Gilroy.

Its genesis was already evident in the 2016 *Star Wars* movie *Rogue One*, which Gilroy co-wrote - and which serves as the climax to *Andor*, which recounts the rebellion leading up to that film's events.

"Everything is emotionally charged" because "we're getting close to *Rogue One*," Diego Luna, the actor who plays the protagonist Cassian Andor, told AFP. For Disney, the success of *Andor* stands out as a new hope for a franchise that has become hit-or-miss with audiences

in recent years.

That is why it has banked heavily on the 12-episode story, which cost a staggering \$645mn to make, according to *Forbes* magazine.

Where *Rogue One* was about a rebel suicide mission to steal the plans for the Death Star, with "characters that sacrifice everything for a cause", *Andor* is about how one of those characters "gets there", Luna said.

Unlike in a typical hero's journey, the series explores the motives and dark sides of both camps: the rebels and the Empire. It spends time with figures such as a rebel alliance operative played by Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgard. Gilroy, speaking to AFP with Luna during a Paris visit, said the original plan was for five seasons of *Andor*, but he came to realise "there's no physical way to do it" given "the volume of work" required. The result was two seasons, but with episodes that were "more intense, more complex in every possible way", Luna said.



Mexican actor Diego Luna attends the launch event for the second season of Lucasfilm's *Andor* at El Capitan theatre in Hollywood, California. (AFP)

With season one finishing in late 2022 with a stunning 96% rating on the critic aggregation site Rotten Tomatoes,

season two has star billing on the Disney+ streaming platform. That season hits the small screen from tomorrow in the United States, or from Wednesday in France, Germany, Italy and other territories.

*Andor* is not the only hit *Star Wars* television series.

*The Mandalorian*, which preceded it, excited audiences for the first two seasons before interest waned in its third. That story will move to the cinemas, with a film scheduled for release next year. But *Andor* has impressed fans and critics with its darker vibe, greater political themes and more realistic tone. Gilroy said his approach to the series was informed by a decades-long reading obsession about uprisings - "all this crazy stuff I've learnt about... the Russian Revolution and... the French Revolution, and Thomas Paine and Oliver Cromwell and the Haitian Revolution and the Roman Revolution and Zapata." "I mean, it's all in there," he said. The second season focuses on the use of

propaganda, looking at the tragic destiny of a planet called Ghorman, for which Gilroy and his team embarked on serious world-building, imagining its economy, language, culture and dress.

Part of the inspiration came from a French TV series about a village living under German occupation in World War II, *A French Village*.

"I loved that show... I had some of those actors in my head" while writing about Ghorman's inhabitants, he said.

Even if some people might see some echoes of today's Earth in aspects of *Andor*, Gilroy said a writer's horizon, stretching years ahead, did not allow him to anticipate current events.

But, he said, "the sad truth is that history is... rinse and repeat," adding: "We so commonly feel, narcissistically, that we live in unique times."

Technology might change, the rhetoric might alter, "but the dynamic of oppression and resistance are a Catherine wheel. It just keeps going. I think it's timeless, sadly."





Snapshots from the ceremony.



Awqaf honours winners of ‘Al Muhaddith Al Saghir’ competition



HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem has honoured the winners of the 11th “Al Muhaddith Al Saghir” competition. During a ceremony attended by the students and their parents, HE al-Ghanem handed over the honorary plaques to those who scored the highest grades in this public contest, in the presence of Awqaf’s Undersecretary HE Sheikh Dr Khalid bin Mohammed bin Ghanem al-Thani, and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education HE Dr Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi. The event was organised by the Awqaf’s Department of Da’wah and Religious Guidance. The top achievers were 20 students who received plaques engraved with the names of the Prophet’s Companions. Additionally, 103 students earned top marks at level five (Elite 1), along with five students at level six, 12 students from the

Audio Education Complex, and five students from the Al Noor Centre for the Blind. Addressing the ceremony, HE the Minister of Awqaf emphasised that the contest has been evolving year after year in terms of participant numbers, categories, and organisational aspects. HE al-Ghanem noted the inauguration of a new branch for the elite and the addition of two branches, with the first one steeped in the science of Hadith terminology through memorisation of Al-Bayquniyyah Poem, while the second is a newly introduced category titled “The Little Grammarian”, dedicated to memorising the Ajrumiyyah text. In addition, the minister congratulated the students and expressed his profound happiness about this participation and interaction between male and female students, as well as parents and schools, which evidently broke the record. Overall, 12,381 students registered in this edition, with 8,328 qualifying from

443 schools, along with 1,313 parents. Female winners will similarly be honoured today in the presence of women leaders from Awqaf, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, alongside honorees and their mothers. The ceremony featured the screening of a documentary film on the life of Imam Ibn Ajurrum, Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Dawud Al Sanhaji, highlighting his scholarly journey, upbringing, and contributions to Arabic grammar, most notably his authorship of *Al Muqaddimah Al Ajurrumiyyah*, regarded as one of the foremost didactic texts in the field of Arabic linguistics. The contest is intended to inculcate the love of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as well as decent morals in students, and pursue his footsteps through applying his Hadiths, as the contest has been keen on fostering societal engagement through the participation of parents, thereby solidifying the communication between students, parents, and

schools to enhance memorisation and focus in students, and at the end of the day, they literally excel. The competition is primarily aimed at reinforcing the Arabic language and spreading exemplary conduct among students and their peers in other schools, in addition to filling their leisure time. These competitions are the product of a collaboration between the Awqaf’s Department of Da’wah, the General Department of Endowments, and the Ministry of Education, represented by Jassim bin Hamad Secondary School for Boys, Umm Al Qura Primary School for Boys, and Al Iman Secondary School for Girls. The organising committee has granted cash awards to the top-ranking winners across all eight levels of the competition, worth between QR200 and QR2,500 depending on the level and grade. The awardees include male and female students and parents. Award values for the plaque recipients range from QR4,000-QR6,000. - QNA

NMoQ unveils groundbreaking ‘LatinoAmericano’ exhibition

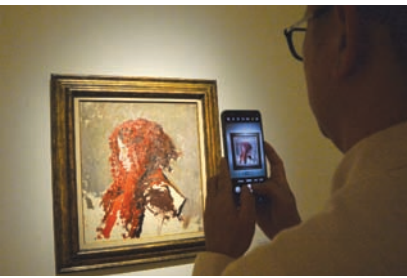
By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) has opened its doors to “LatinoAmericano”, a landmark exhibition representing the first large-scale showcase of modern and contemporary Latin American art in the West Asia and North Africa (Wana) region. Running until July 19, the exhibition at the NMoQ features 170 works by more than 100 artists from across Latin America, offering a panoramic view of the continent’s rich artistic heritage.

Speaking at a press preview yesterday, NMoQ director HE Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Hamad al-Thani highlighted the importance of the exhibition. “‘LatinoAmericano’ provides an incredible opportunity to bring this wide-ranging collection to audiences in our region for the first time as part of our cultural exchange,” he said. “It is, in fact, a cornerstone of our Qatar, Argentina, and Chile 2025 Year of Culture.” HE Sheikh Abdulaziz added that the exhibition is a result of a collaborative partnership between Qatar Museums (QM) and the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Malba) Foundation.

Contributions also come from the private collection of Eduardo Costantini, the collection of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and the future Art Mill Museum, underlining a unified effort to bring this significant collection to Qatar. Malba president Teresa A L Bhulgeroni expressed her pride in representing Latin American art and culture. “LatinoAmericano brings together some of the most significant treasures of modern contemporary art,” she said. “The exhibition presents a carefully curated selection: unique and powerful voices that convey the intensity and beauty of the complexities of our continent.” Curated by QM curator and head of International Exhibitions Issa al-Shirawi and Malba curator-in-chief Maria Amalia Garcia, the exhibition explores and redefines Latin American art within historical narratives and theoretical frameworks. The exhibition is organised into five thematic sections, examining the region’s diverse identities, urban development, moments of societal transitions, and the transformative artistic practices unique to Latin America. Visitors will have the opportunity to see iconic pieces from Malba’s collections, including Frida Kahlo’s *Autorretrato con chango y loro* (Self-Portrait with Monkey and Parrot) (1942), Diego Rivera’s *Baile en Tehuantepec* (Dance in Tehuantepec) (1928), and Jorge de la Vega’s *Rompecabezas* (Puzzle) (1967). A number of these masterpieces were newly acquired by Malba and are making their debut in this exhibition. The exhibition also features works from the collections of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the future Art Mill Museum, including pieces by artists such as Alice Rahon and Mathias Goeritz, creating a dialogue between Latin American and Arab modern art.

Snapshots from the ‘LatinoAmericano’ exhibition at the NMoQ.



Curators Maria Amalia Garcia and Issa al-Shirawi at the press preview of ‘LatinoAmericano’ yesterday at the NMoQ. PICTURES: Shaji Kayamkulam



HE Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Hamad al-Thani



Teresa A L Bhulgeroni

Senyar 2025 competitions begin



The competitions of the 11th Senyar Festival, organised by Katara Cultural Village, launched yesterday with the participation of 54 teams from Qatar and other GCC countries. A total of 27 teams set sail toward the Sealine Reserve, the designated fishing zone, to start the first rounds of the “Hadaq” and “Laffah” fishing competitions. Jihad al-Jaidah, head of the Referee Committee for the Senyar Festival 2025, said that the competitions were marked by intensity and thrill, as the teams faced fishing challenges according to the strategy laid out by each team’s captain, whether they start with the Hadaq method or the Laffah method. The official noted that some participating teams achieved outstanding results from day one, managing to reach the set quotas as per the competition rules, including catching species such as Hamour, Sheri, and Kingfish, while adhering to the required weights and measurements. Al-Jaidah said that the fishing period runs from 4.30am to 6pm, after which the referee committees will start the calculation of the results, verifying each team’s compliance with the general instructions and competition rules, and ensuring the catches match the permitted species.

Any violations or breaches of the penalties list will also be recorded. He stressed that all judging will be carried out with complete integrity and transparency. The official also noted that the teams in the first group will conclude their competitions today at 6pm, returning to their designated dock in the Sealine. The second group, made up of the other 27 teams, will begin their rounds of the Hadaq and Laffah competitions on Wednesday and Thursday. The traditional dhows will head to the Sealine tomorrow, departing from the ports of Doha, Al Wakrah, and Al Khor. A total of 16 teams from each group are set to qualify for the Challenge Round, in addition to the team that wins the “Biggest Fish” competition. The final results will be determined during the Challenge event, and the winning teams announced at the conclusion celebration, at Katara Beach on Friday, in the presence of a large crowd and accompanied by traditional cultural events. The Senyar Festival 2025 is sponsored by the Social and Sport Contribution Fund (Daam), alongside support from various entities and companies contributing to the organisation of this prominent heritage event.

