

For his part, Executive Director of the EAA's ROTA programme Abdulla al-Abdulla said: "At Education Above All Foundation, we believe young people are not just beneficiaries of climate action, they are its driving force. This initiative puts adolescents, both in and out of school, at the heart of sustainable development, equipping them with the skills to build greener communities and resilient futures. By investing in climate education today, we are empowering a generation to protect their environment and lead transformative change across Zanzibar and beyond!" **To Page 4**



Qatar, Sierra Leone hold political consultations



The first round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of Qatar and Sierra Leone convened yesterday in Freetown. The Qatari side was chaired by HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, while the Sierra Leonean side was chaired by Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Alan C E Logan. Throughout this round, both sides discussed bilateral ties and topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Sheikha Moza meets Bangladesh interim government chief adviser



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and the Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, met yesterday with Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, Dr Muhammad Yunus, on the sidelines of the Earthna Summit 2025. The meeting focused on the efforts of the EAA Foundation to enrol out-of-school children and provide educational opportunities for refugees in Bangladesh. The two sides also explored potential avenues for collaboration with Qatar Foundation in the areas of health, education and innovation. **(QNA) PICTURE: AR Al-Baker**

Sierra Leone’s VP meets al-Hammadi

Sierra Leone’s Vice-President, Dr Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, met in Freetown yesterday with HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi. The meeting discussed bilateral relations, in addition to topics of common interest.



Al-Hammadi meets Sierra Leone’s deputy FM



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, met in Freetown yesterday with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation of Sierra Leone, Frances Piagie Alghali. The meeting discussed bilateral relations. **(QNA)**

Culture minister meets Egyptian counterpart



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani met with Egyptian Minister of Culture Dr Ahmed Fouad Hano. The meeting discussed aspects of co-operation and explored ways to strengthen and develop cultural ties between the two countries. **(QNA)**

Al-Khulaifi meets US official

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met on Monday in Washington with Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Michael Kozak. The meeting discussed the Qatar-US strategic relations and ways to develop them in various fields. They also exchanged views on key issues of common interest in Latin America. **(QNA)**



Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show announced

Old Doha Port is launching the first-of-its kind Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show, dedicated to the resale of boats and maritime vessels, from May 5-7, between 5pm and 9pm daily. Hosted along the picturesque Mina Corniche, the show will feature an open-air display of pre-owned yachts, superyachts, fishing boats, jet skis, and traditional dhow boats, all manufactured in 2007 or later with no size restrictions.

The event creates a space where high-value assets can be meaningfully exchanged, providing an accessible channel for those looking to explore or invest in marine ownership, a statement said. The Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show will also welcome maintenance service providers on-site, offering practical support for both sellers and prospective buyers, as well as a wide range of food and beverage outlets.

Old Doha Port CEO engineer Mohammed Abdullah al-Mulla, said: “By introducing Qatar’s first boat and



sea vessel resale exhibition, we are not only creating an important economic platform but also honouring our maritime identity in a contemporary way.”

Experts hail Qatar’s efforts in preserving Arabic manuscripts

Experts and enthusiasts have lauded Qatar’s role in preserving Arabic manuscripts. This came during a seminar organised by the Qatar National Library (QNL) and the Ministry of Culture’s Department of Public Libraries, in celebration of Arabic Manuscript Day 2025.

The event aimed to highlight the rich Arab heritage and manuscripts that have shaped the nation’s memory and served as a bridge between civilisations. It also served as a reminder of the importance of preserving the cultural and scientific heritage of the Arab and Islamic world.

QNL Director-General Ibrahim al-Bouhashem al-Sayed said the Qatari efforts in preserving Arabic manuscripts manifested through endeavours by the Min-



istry of Culture, the QNL, and the Department of Public Libraries in promoting the value of manuscripts across multiple fields. These manuscripts have contributed throughout the ages to building the Arab and human mind, he added.

Al-Sayed highlighted the im-

portance of Arabic manuscripts as a cultural heritage, an intellectual memory, and a bridge of knowledge between civilisations, carrying within it timeless human and social values. He noted that this year’s celebrations reflect the pivotal role of manuscripts in shaping Arab cultural identity. **(QNA)**

CONGRATULATIONS

*Mohammed Al-Shareef*

Class of 2012, Texas A&M at Qatar  
Asset Manager, ExxonMobil Qatar

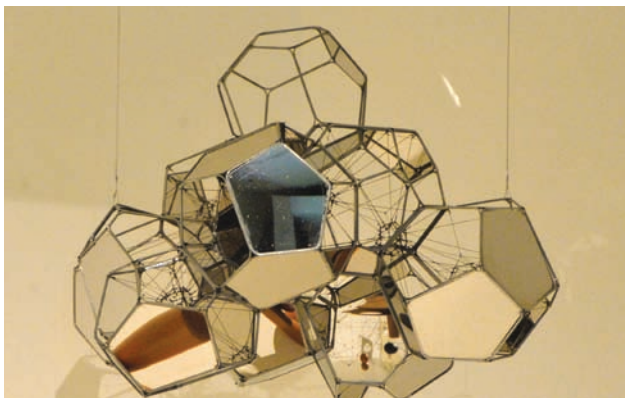
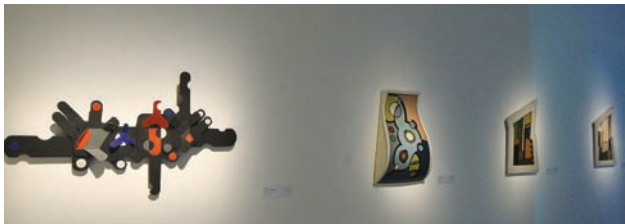


Texas A&M University at Qatar proudly announces that Mohammed Al-Shareef, Class of 2012, has been named the 2025 Alumnus of the Year.

Your remarkable achievements and dedication are an inspiration to the Aggie community and beyond.

*Gig 'em!*





Latin American art highlights celebrated masterpieces and immersive installations at the exhibition. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam



QM Chairperson HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and other dignitaries touring the exhibition.

## Qatar, Latin America connect through landmark art exhibition

By **Joey Aguilar**  
Staff Reporter

The ‘LatinoAmericano/Modern and Contemporary Art from Malba and Eduardo Costantini Collections’ at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) provides an opportunity for visitors to explore Latin American art, featuring celebrated masterpieces and immersive installations.

Qatar Museums (QM) Chairperson HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani recently unveiled this large-scale showcase – the first major exhibition in the West Asia and North Africa region dedicated to Latin American modern and contemporary art.

The opening event was also attended by QM CEO Mohammed Saad al-Rumaihi, NMoQ director Sheikh Abdulaziz al-Thani, Malba Foundation President Teresa Bulgheroni, and other guests.

Presented in partnership with the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Malba), QM said LatinoAmericano highlights a dynamic cultural exchange between Qatar and Latin America. The exhibition, on view until July 19, serves as a centrepiece of the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture.

This year's edition of the initiative also includes an array of activities, from performances and exhibitions to sporting and culinary events, photography projects, and volunteer trips, among others. It showcases



A performance from the opening ceremony.

around 170 works from more than 100 pioneering and contemporary artists hailing from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico,

Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Organisers noted that visitors have the chance to journey through the evolution of Latin American

art from the early 20th century to the present, witnessing how artists have reflected upon, challenged, and reshaped their social, political, and cultural landscapes.

QM noted that the experience extends beyond the museum walls with Marta Minujin's large-scale installation ‘Sculpture of Dreams’ (2023). This whimsical, inflatable structure, previously displayed in New York's Times Square, offers visitors a sensory expression of the playfulness and imagination inherent in Latin American art.

Co-curated by Issa al-Shirawi, curator and head of International Exhibitions at QM, and Maria Amalia García, chief curator at Malba, the exhibition is thoughtfully organised into six thematic sections. These sections explore

artistic responses to key themes such as urbanisation, identity, memory, and resistance, providing a nuanced perspective on the shared yet diverse experiences that define the region's visual language.

Iconic works by renowned artists such as Frida Kahlo (Autorretrato con chango y loro, 1942), Diego Rivera (Baile en Tehuantepec, 1928), Fernando Botero (El viudo, 1968), and Wifredo Lam (Omi Obini, 1943) are displayed alongside lesser-known gems and contemporary voices.

The exhibition also features newly acquired pieces from Malba making their public debut, as well as significant works from Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the future Art Mill Museum, further bridging artistic dialogues.

## Vodafone Qatar launches new loyalty scheme ‘iPoints’

Vodafone Qatar has announced the launch of iPoints, a new loyalty programme that recognises and rewards its customers based on their spending. Featuring a tiered system – Bronze, Silver, Gold, and the exclusive Black tier – iPoints offers enhanced rewards for Vodafone Qatar's customers. Available to all Postpaid, Prepaid, and Home subscribers, iPoints allows users to accumulate points which can be redeemed for a diverse selection of benefits, including bill payments, recharges, and add-ons. Additionally, Vodafone customers can also enjoy exclusive offers from Vodafone Qatar's partners, including Avios with Qatar Airways Privilege Club, and special deals with Snoonu.

Baran Yurdagul, chief operating officer at Vodafone Qatar, said: “We continuously aim to empower customers and provide them with great deals and offers to get the best value from our services. iPoints directly responds to



our customers' needs, while offering a simple, transparent, and rewarding experience.” Registration is simple and accessible through the My Vodafone App. For more information, visit <https://www.vodafone.qa/en/ipoints>



## QNB harnesses art to promote sustainability among children

In line with its commitment to environmental sustainability, QNB hosted a special event for children, bringing together creativity and innovation on the occasion of the Earth day, celebrated annually on April 22 with the aim to raise community awareness about environment issues.

The event included a variety of art workshops to promote values of environmental protection among young people by nurturing their artistic and handcraft skills in an atmosphere brimming with creativity and inspiration. Participants, aged seven to 10, designed 3D Earth cards with tips on things children can do to help save the planet. In a fun and creative atmosphere, the children painted a canvas using their hands after dipping them in blue and green paints, symbolising the importance of planting trees and protecting the world's seas and oceans from pollution, as well as conveying a message of unified efforts to protect the planet.

In the gardening workshop,



the children enjoyed planting plants themselves and painting eco-friendly pots in their own style before taking their creations home. On this occasion, Heba al-Tamimi, Senior Executive Vice-President, QNB Group Communications, said: “We are very pleased to organise this initiative to teach children to better appreciate nature and enable them to explore their creative abilities through art as

a tool for self-expression and environmental awareness. The artworks they created convey their vision of the planet around them. This initiative reflects our role as a leading financial institution that strives to reduce carbon emissions and encourage customers' green choices, in support of global efforts to protect the environment and build a more sustainable world.”

## Qatar Museums unveils ‘Keys to Memories’ artwork in Lusail

Qatar Museums unveiled a new public artwork, ‘Keys to Memories’, in front of the Lusail Metro Station. The unveiling was attended by Qatar Museums CEO Mohammed Saad al-Rumaihi and HE Director-General, Supreme Committee, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth engineer Yasir al-Jamal.

The new artwork, created by Boo Design Studio in collaboration with Qatari artist and educator Maryam al-Homaid transformed 250,000 reclaimed keychains into a striking reflection of the shared experiences of football fans during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. The keychains collected, in collaboration with the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, form a visual representation of fans' chants of the final four teams that compet-



ed. This piece blends traditional motifs with modern aesthetics, offering a contemplative space where the past and future converge. Acting Deputy CEO of Exhibitions, Public Art, and Rubayia at Qatar Museums Sheikhha Reem al-Thani said: “Public art has the power to preserve collective ex-

periences and enrich the urban landscape. Keys to Memories reminds viewers of the excitement and togetherness that we all experienced during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, further demonstrating how culture, whether in sport or visual art, brings people together.” (QNA)

## QPO to mark women’s creativity in unique library concert

By **Joey Aguilar**  
Staff Reporter

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO), in collaboration with Markhiya Gallery and Fire Station, is set to present a special concert tomorrow (April 24) at the Qatar National Library, honouring the significant contributions of women to the arts both in Qatar and internationally.

In a press statement, QPO noted that the event, themed “Philharmonic at the Library: A Celebration of Women's Creativity Worldwide”,



Charlene Kasdorf

promises a unique blend of artistic discussion and musical performance, highlighting the inspirations, challenges, and empowering messages of women in the arts.

The concert will feature distinguished artists renowned in their respective fields, who will share insights into their creative journeys. These artists include Hind al-Obaidli, a contemporary Qatari artist known for her captivating depictions of the human body in water, and Lina Alaali, a prominent Qatari artist who explores her na-

tions cultural heritage through a contemporary lens.

Al-Obaidli's architectural background from Oxford Brookes University infuses her art with precision, blurring the lines between tangible and abstract spaces as she explores the human form. Alaali, a graduate of Qatar University with a Bachelor of Arts in Artistic Education, masterfully blends traditional and modern elements in her artwork, which has been exhibited throughout the Gulf region and beyond. Both artists will discuss their experiences and inspirations as women navigating the art world.

The event will also feature Charlene Kasdorf, a visual literacy educator and artist dedicated to building creative confidence, and Fatima Tarig Jawed, a Pakistani ceramic

sculptor who transforms discarded automobile parts into striking metal-like sculptures, reflecting emotional journeys of transformation.

Adding a musical dimension to the celebration, female musicians from QPO will perform chamber music composed by women from diverse centuries and regions. The featured musicians include Jihoon Shin (flute), Ines Wein (viola), Julie Sgarro (harp), and Anna Dietrich (vocals).



Fatima Tarig Jawed





## Qatar-Afghanistan ties discussed



HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri met yesterday with Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Alhaj Mullah Abdul Manan Omari. The meeting discussed issues of common concern and co-operation relations between Qatar and Afghanistan. **(QNA)**

# ‘More potential for further co-operation’ between Qatar and Guinness World Records

By Ayman Adly  
Staff Reporter

Qatar is exerting great efforts to enhance the lives of its inhabitants while at the same time giving importance to sustainable environment and clean energy solutions, noted Naser Batat, head of Commercial – Growth Strategy – Guinness World Records, Mena & Turkiye.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* in Doha yesterday, Batat recalled there are more than 100 Guinness World Records credited to Qatar for different corporate, personal, government and private achievements in various fields that mostly focus on sustainability and improving the quality of life for the people.

These include The Lusail Bus Depot as the largest electric bus depot with a capacity of 478 buses, the world’s longest air-conditioned pedestrian and jogging path in an open park in Umm Al Seneem Park, and others such as the Gewan Island’s Crystal Walk with two Guinness World Records: the largest air-conditioned outdoor mall and the largest interactive lighting canopy outdoors.

All these world records focus on sustainability and improving the lives of the residents of the country.

On the records achieved by individuals in Qatar, Batat particularly expressed his admiration for the Fastest Crossing of the Country by Wheelchair made in 2021 by the para-athlete Ahmed al-Shahrani. He explained that while this shows the admirable skill and the de-



Guinness World Records official Naser Batat in conversation with *Gulf Times* yesterday in Doha. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

termination of the person, it is also a very clear indication and proof that the country has paid great attention for persons with special need.

Qatar has developed sophisticated public services and infrastructure that gives these people easy access to all public services to make their lives easier, the official observed.

“The Panda House, a unique and amazing place in Qatar and the region, is considered the largest closed Panda house in the world, but Guinness World Records does not want to create a new trend for subcategorising things such as the largest house for a cat, snake or whatever, even though, it stands out as an amazing place with greater tourist potential,” Batat said.

The official, based in Dubai Media City, has visited Qatar several times on a regular basis over the past few years, and sees that there are a lot of potential

for more effective co-operation between Qatar and World Guinness Records on all levels, as with every visit to the country he discovers more achievements and sophistication in various fields.

While Qatar enjoys ultra-modern and sophisticated infrastructure and facilities, there is a clear focus on maintaining and promoting the local culture, heritage and traditions. In particular, Souq Waqif with its heritage layout, architecture and atmosphere is considered among the best and most distinct places in the region and attract many tourists.

“Qatar is a family-friendly country with many interesting places and sites to visit in addition to considerably excellent number of public parks across the country. The country has a huge potential as a hot tourist destination but people around the world should be introduced to these to reach out for more audience,” he pointed out.


Batat hoped that the World Guinness Records would open a regional office in Doha, which he expected to be a global hub for enhancing creativity and fostering skills and innovation.

He further explained that it is very easy to reach out to Guinness World Records through its website so persons with special skills, qualities, attributes or achievements could get more global recognition to help them improve their lives, as Guinness World Records gives recognition and certification only without any material or financial rewards. It helps foster physical and intellectual talents and skills, he added.

## Qatar, Cyprus discuss food security



HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met with Cypriot Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment Dr Maria Panayiotou. During the meeting, the two parties discussed ways to develop bilateral co-operation in areas of mutual interest, particularly in agriculture and food security sectors, thus contributing to joint efforts to achieve sustainable development and exchanging expertise and experiences between the two countries. **(QNA)**



**The Transport Company**  
**MOWASALAT (KARWA)**

**Mowasalat (Karwa) announces the following tender:**


Tender Ref. No.	Tender Title	Tender Fee	Electronic Tender Fee Payment Dates	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
TC/015/MTS/2025	Supply of Tyers on Call-off Basis	QAR 2,000	24 April to 1 May 2025	QAR 135,000	21 May 2025
TC/017/ITC/2025	Provision of Private Cloud Support for Dell VMWARE	QAR 1,000		QAR 45,000	22 May 2025
TC/025/ITC/2025	Consultancy Services for Renovating Fleet Applications	QAR 1,000		QAR 30,000	25 May 2025
TC/026/ITC/2025	Supply of Manpower for Installation of IOT Devices	QAR 1,000		QAR 61,200	21 May 2025

**CONDITIONS:**


- Interested bidder shall pay the tender fee to Mowasalat Bank Account details as shown:
- Bidder must submit proof of tender fee payment (Bank Deposit Slip + a Signed & Stamped Expression of Interest (indicating Tender Ref. No. and Title / Company Name and details of nominated contact person i.e., Tel. No., Fax No., and Email address) + Copy of valid Commercial Registration to Mowasalat Secretary - Tender Committee at email: [tenders@mowasalat.com](mailto:tenders@mowasalat.com)
- Tender documents will be released via email on the next working day after the tender fee payment date to all bidders who have submitted the bank deposit slip and other documents requested.
- Bonds: Tender Bond & Performance Bond:** Bids must be accompanied by Bonds issued by a local bank operating in the State of Qatar as per the Qatar Central Bank template. Further details of bonds can be found in the tender documents. *Bids without Tender Bond shall not be considered.*
- Tender validity:** Bid validity period shall be 180 days from the bid closing date.
- Tender documents submission:** Bids must be submitted in 3 separate sealed (**IN RED WAX**) envelopes addressed to **Secretary - Tender Committee** clearly highlighting the Tender Ref. No. & Tender Title:
  - Envelope 1#** must include the Technical Bid submission (1 Original + 1 non-Editable copy in a USB)
  - Envelope 2#** must include Commercial Bid submission (1 Original + 1 Editable MS Excel spreadsheet copied in a USB)
  - Envelope 3#** must include the Tender Bond (1 Original) & Audited Financial Statement for last 3 years.
- Bid Closing Date:** Bid submission deadline is **12.00 noon Doha Local Time** as on the Bid closing date shown above. The 3 envelopes must be handed over to the Office of The Secretary - Tender Committee, located at Mowasalat Head Office, Industrial Area. Any tender submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tel.: 4458 8724


Fax: 4458 8850




Supplier Registration




Mowasalat Location




كافار




دوحة ليموزين



خدمات كرو



أكاديمية كرو



كرو للتكنولوجيا

## EAA initiative to empower 100,000 students in Zanzibar

From Page 1

Unicef Representative to Tanzania Elke Wisch said: “Empowering children and youth with the knowledge and skills to tackle environmental challenges is vital for their future and their communities. This initiative equips adolescent girls

and boys” in Zanzibar to become proactive agents of change, while also strengthening community resilience to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for all”. In addition to benefiting young people, the initiative will directly train more than 800 adults, including teachers,

head teachers, and local administrators, and will lead to benefits for facilitators, community members, and local businesses. The initiative will also seek collaborations with community members, involving local leaders and inclusive approaches to amplify youth-led climate actions.


## Jeep models’ recall announced

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with United Cars Almana, has announced the recall of Jeep Grand Cherokee, Grand Wagoneer, Wagoneer, 2024 model, over a possible defect in the programming of the rear-view camera module during the manufacturing process, which may result in the camera not being activated while reversing the vehicle.

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

The ministry said that it will co-ordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

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](mailto:info@moci.gov.qa), ministry’s accounts on social media: @mociqatar, ministry’s Mobile App: MOCIQATAR (available on iOS and Android devices)



**QATAR FUEL ADDITIVES COMPANY LIMITED**  
**QAFAC**

**TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT**


**The Tender Committee of QAFAC invites qualified local suppliers to participate in the following Tenders in accordance with QAFAC tendering procedures:**

S.N	Tender No.	Description	Collection Fee	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
1	QTC/034/25	Four (4) Years Call off Contract for Civil Maintenance Services at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed	Qrs. 300/-	Qrs. 900,000/-	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
2	QTC/035/25	Four (4) Years Call off Contract for Supply of Safety Shoes at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed	Qrs. 300/-	Qrs. 20,000/-	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
2	QTC/037/25	Four (4) Years Call off Contract for Supply of Liquefied Chlorine at QAFAC Plant, Mesaieed	Qrs. 300/-	Qrs. 25,000/-	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2025

Interested companies are invited to collect the above tender document as follows:

- Collection Date :** From **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025** (QAFAC working days from Sunday to Thursday only)
- Collection Time :** 08:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- Location :** The Gate, Bay Tower 2, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Bay, QAFAC
- Tender Fees :** As shown above, (**Non-refundable**) can be paid at QAFAC Doha Office
- Validity :** Offers must be valid for 120 days from closing date.
- Bid Bond :** Offers must include a Bid bond issued from a local bank and valid for 120 Days from closing date.
- Authorization :** Tenders will be issued to authorized company personnel with the following:
  - Official authorization on Company Letter Head
  - Proper Identification
  - Copy of Company’s Commercial Registration
  - Focal Point of Contact (Name, Telephone, Mobile & Email)
  - Valid ICV Certificate (Mandatory for S.No.1)

Note: “Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of state of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that have been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV digital Portal :- <https://icv.qa/US>



**DOLPHIN ENERGY**  
**دولفين للطاقة**

**Dolphin Energy Limited**

**Invitation to Tender**

Tender Number	Description	Tender Bond	Deadline for Tender Submission, 12 Noon (Qatar Time) on
RFP-QC-OPU-1838	Call-Off Agreement for Lifting Services (Inspection, Testing & Certification)	QAR 30,000	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
ITT-QC-OPU-1844	Call-Off Agreement for Repair and Maintenance of Offshore CCUs, Baskets, Skips, etc.	USD 5,000	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dolphin Energy Limited (Qatar) is inviting companies to participate in the above Tenders.

Only companies registered in the State of Qatar with proven experience, technical knowledge, as well as a demonstrated track record in the supply of the services required should apply.

**How to Tender**

Expression of Interest (EOI) Form and Scope of Services/Works can be downloaded from the company’s website [www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement](http://www.dolphinenergy.com/procurement)

Interested companies must complete the EOI Form and submit to company’s email address within two (2) working days from the publication date of this advertisement.

Following receipt of completed EOI Form, interested companies will receive a Request for Proposal (RFP) through Dolphin Energy’s SAP Ariba to tender.







Iran says technical nuclear meeting with US postponed to Saturday

AFP  
Tehran

A technical, expert-level nuclear meeting between Iran and the United States will be held on Saturday, coinciding with the third round of indirect talks mediated by Oman, Tehran announced yesterday.

“The technical consultative meeting between the two countries, which was to be held as part of the indirect talks between the two sides on Wednesday,” foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said. He said the decision to reschedule the meeting was made “following Oman’s proposal and the agreement of the Iranian

and American delegations”. The reason for the delay was not immediately clear. Tehran and Washington have held two rounds of indirect talks in Muscat and Rome since April 12, with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff leading the negotiations. Oman said the third round, also

set for Saturday, would again be held in Muscat. The talks earlier this month in the Omani capital were the first discussions at such a high level between the foes since US President Donald Trump abandoned a landmark nuclear accord in 2018. Following Saturday’s latest round in Rome, Araghchi said the meeting was “good” and that the

negotiations were “moving forward”. On Monday, Trump said Washington had “very good meetings” on Iran. Western countries including the United States have long accused Iran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons -- an allegation Tehran has consistently denied, insisting that its programme is for peaceful civilian purposes. Later yesterday,

Baqaei said Araghchi was heading to China for talks. Iran has in recent weeks engaged with its allies China and Russia over its nuclear programme. Before leaving for Beijing, Araghchi spoke with UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi and briefed him on the latest developments in talks with the United States, a foreign ministry statement said.



A man walks with empty pales of water in his hands past destroyed and burnt-down excavators at the Jabalia municipality garage, which was hit by Israeli bombardment, in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

UN says Gaza ‘land of desperation’ after 50 days of total siege

AFP  
Geneva

The UN warned yesterday that Gaza was facing deepening hunger 50 days into a total Israeli blockade on all aid entering the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. “Gaza has become a land of desperation,” Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, said on X. “Hunger is spreading and deepening, deliberate and manmade.” After 18 months of devastating war and an Israeli blockade on aid since March 2, the UN has warned of a dire humanitarian situation for the 2.4mn inhabitants of the

Palestinian territory. Israel has accused the Palestinian group of diverting aid, which Hamas denies. The heads of 12 major aid organisations warned last Thursday that “famine is not just a risk, but likely rapidly unfolding in almost all parts” of the territory. “You can see a clear tendency towards total disaster,” Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA told reporters in Geneva yesterday. “It is true that right now is probably the worst humanitarian situation we have seen throughout the war in Gaza.” In his post on X, Lazzarini questioned “how much longer until hollow words of condemnation will translate into action to lift

the siege, resume a ceasefire and save whatever is left of humanity?” The UNRWA chief decried that 2mn people in Gaza, most of them women and children, “are undergoing collective punishment”. “The wounded, sick and elderly are deprived of medical supplies and care,” he said, even as humanitarian organisations like UNRWA have thousands of trucks waiting with supplies that risk expiring. “Humanitarian aid is being used as a bargaining chip and a weapon of war,” he charged. “The siege must be lifted, supplies must flow in, the hostages must be released, the ceasefire must resume.”

Twelve children and teens drown in Ivory Coast boat capsizes

A boat overturned during a church outing for Easter on a lagoon near the city of Abidjan in Ivory Coast, killing 12 children and teenagers, a government minister said yesterday, AFP reported from Abidjan. “Twelve bodies have been recovered and are being taken to the morgue,” said Sports Minister Adje Silas Metch, who went to the site of the accident that happened late Monday. The bodies are “of children and adolescents,” he said, saying that one was a youngster who was not from the church but had joined the boat crossing. A police report seen by AFP confirmed the death toll at twelve, adding that six teenagers had been rescued.

Five killed as truck rams into procession

A truck ploughed into a procession of Christian faithful marking Easter in northern Nigerian Gombe state on Monday, killing five people and injuring eight, police said, AFP reported from Kano. The truck laden with grains “lost control due to brake failure” and rammed into the procession along the highway in the predominantly Christian town of Billiri, Buhari Abdullahi, police spokesman for Gombe state said in a statement dated Monday. “Regrettably, five persons... were confirmed dead by medical personnel, while eight others are currently receiving treatment,” he said.

Fighter group leader among two dead in Israeli strikes on Lebanon

AFP  
Beirut

A leader from Hamas-aligned Lebanese group Jamaa Islamiya was among two people killed in Israeli strikes in Lebanon yesterday, the group and Israel’s military said. Israel has continued to carry out regular strikes on Lebanon despite a November truce with Hezbollah group that sought to halt more than a year of hostilities between the foes including two months of all-out war. Lebanon’s civil defence said “an Israeli drone targeted a car” near the coastal town of Damour, about 20 kilometres south of Beirut, and rescuers recovered a man’s body. An AFP photographer saw the charred wreckage of a car at the scene. The Lebanese army had cordoned off the area and forensic teams were conducting an inspection. Lebanese Islamist group Jamaa Islamiya in a statement announced the death of Hussein Atwi, calling him “an academic



Lebanese security forces inspect the scene of an Israeli air strike in Baawerta (Baaouerta), near the coastal town of Damour, about 20km south of Beirut, yesterday.

leader and university professor” and saying an Israeli drone strike “targeted his car as he was travelling to his workplace in Beirut”. A Lebanese security official, who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity, said Atwi was a leader of Jamaa Islamiya’s armed wing, the Al-Fajr Forces. The official said Israel had previously targeted Atwi during its recent war with Hezbollah. Jamaa Islamiya, closely

linked to both Palestinian Hamas group and Lebanon’s Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for multiple attacks against Israel before the November 27 ceasefire. Also yesterday, Lebanon’s health ministry said an “Israeli enemy” strike in south Lebanon’s Tyre district killed one person. The Israeli military said the air force “eliminated” a local Hezbollah “commander” in the same area.

Syria arrests Assad-era officer accused of ‘war crimes’: ministry

AFP  
Damascus

Syrian authorities said yesterday they had arrested a former officer in the feared security apparatus of ousted ruler Bashar al-Assad, the latest such announcement as the new government pursues ex-officials accused of atrocities. The interior ministry announced in a statement that security forces in the coastal province of Latakia had arrested the “criminal brigadier-general

Sultan al-Tinawi”, saying he was a key officer in the air force intelligence, one of the Assad family’s most trusted security agencies. The statement accused Tinawi of involvement in “committing war crimes against civilians, including a massacre” in the Damascus countryside in 2016. It said he was responsible for “co-ordinating between the leadership of the Lebanese Hezbollah and a number of sectarian groups in Syria”. Tinawi has been referred to the public prosecution for further investigation, the statement said.

UN agency forced to halt food aid for 650,000 women, children in Ethiopia

AFP  
Addis Ababa

The World Food Programme said yesterday that it was suspending aid for 650,000 malnourished women and children in Ethiopia because of a lack of funding. The UN agency warned they were among 3.6mn people in Ethiopia who would no longer have access to food aid in the coming weeks without urgent new funding. “WFP is being forced to halt treatment for 650,000 malnourished women and children in May due to insufficient funding,” it said in a statement. “WFP had planned to reach 2mn mothers and children with life-saving nutrition assistance in 2025,” it added. The WFP, like other aid agencies, has been



File photo shows a mother holding her severely malnourished son at the Samre Hospital, in Tigray Region, Ethiopia.

caught in the crosshairs of funding cuts by US President Donald Trump, who signed an executive order freezing all foreign aid for three months shortly after his inauguration in January.

It comes as several Western countries have also reduced aid spending. More than 10mn people are facing hunger in the east African country of around 130mn, the UN agency said. Ethiopia is still recovering from a brutal civil war between federal forces and rebels in the northern region of Tigray between November 2020 and November 2022 that killed at least 600,000 people. Around 1mn people — a sixth of Tigray’s population — are still displaced. There are also ongoing armed conflicts in Ethiopia’s two most populous regions, Amhara and Oromia, that have displaced hundreds of thousands. The WFP warned that the violence was disrupting humanitarian operations, restricting its ability to “reach over half a million vulnerable people in the region”.

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# Billion-dollar cyberscam industry spreading globally: UN

Reuters  
Bangkok

Asian crime syndicates behind the multibillion-dollar cyberscam industry are expanding globally including to South America and Africa, as raids in Southeast Asia fail to contain their

activities, the United Nations said in a report. Criminal networks that emerged in Southeast Asia in recent years, opening sprawling compounds housing tens of thousands of workers, many trafficked and forced to scam victims around the world, have evolved into a sophisticated global industry, the United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime (UN-ODC) said. Even as Southeast Asian governments have intensified a crack-down, syndicates have moved within and beyond the region, the agency said, adding that a “potentially irreversible spillover has taken place... leaving criminal groups free to pick, choose, and move... as

needed.” “It spreads like a cancer,” said Benedikt Hofmann, UNODC acting regional representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. “Authorities treat it in one area, but the roots never disappear; they simply migrate.” Conservative estimates indicate there are hundreds of large-scale scam farms around the world gen-

erating tens of billions of dollars in annual profits, the UNODC said. The agency called on countries to work together and intensify efforts to disrupt the gangs’ financing. “The regional cyberfraud industry... has outpaced other transnational crimes, given that it is easily scalable and able to reach millions of potential victims online, with no

need to move or traffic illicit goods across borders,” said John Wojcik, a regional analyst with UNODC. The US alone reported more than \$5.6bn in losses to cryptocurrency scams in 2023, including more than \$4bn in so-called romance scams designed to extort money from often elderly and vulnerable people.

# Vietnam cracks down on fraud on US exports, document shows

Reuters  
Hanoi

Vietnam’s trade ministry has issued a directive to crack down on illegal transshipment of goods to the US and other trading partners as it tries to avoid steep US tariffs, according to a document.

The ministry in the directive, which was dated and effective April 15, said trade fraud was likely to increase amid growing tension caused by US tariffs.

That in turn would make it “more complicated to avoid sanctions that countries will apply to imported goods” if fraud is not prevented, it said.

The directive did not specifically name any countries where transshipment fraud might originate. However, Vietnam’s goods imports are nearly 40% from China and Washington has openly accused Beijing of using the nation as a transshipment hub to dodge US duties.

Vietnam has been slapped by the Trump administration with 46% “reciprocal” tariffs, currently paused until July, which if applied could seriously undermine a growth model that relies on exports to the US, its top market, and large investments in the country by foreign manufacturers.

Under the directive, officials at the trade ministry, customs and other agencies have been told to strengthen supervision and in-

spection of imported goods to establish their origin, “especially imported raw materials used for production and export”.

Vietnam’s Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh instructed officials to combat trade fraud, counterfeiting and other issues of concern for the US as the country readied to start talks with Washington on tariffs, the government said on its portal yesterday.

The trade ministry directive was issued the day China’s President Xi Jinping concluded a trip to Vietnam during which several agreements were signed, including one on strengthening co-operation between agencies in charge of issuing certificates on the origin of goods.

Earlier this week, Beijing warned countries against striking trade deals with the US at its expense.

Under allegations of illegal transshipment, exported goods from China stop in Vietnam to change their certificate of origin despite no or insufficient value being added in the country, before being shipped to the US where they can enjoy lower tariffs than if they were labelled as Chinese products.

New stricter procedures are to be implemented to inspect factories and supervise the release of “Made in Vietnam” labels, “especially for enterprises with a sudden increase in the number of applications for certificates of origin”, the Vietnamese trade ministry’s document said.

## Early voting in Australia election begins



Early voting in the Australian election began yesterday, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese’s centre-left Labor party holding a slim lead over the conservative opposition coalition. A steady increase in early and postal voting means as many as half of eligible Australians will cast their ballots before the May 3 election date, according to data from the country’s election commission.

# Myanmar rebels to hand key city back to junta, says China

AFP  
Yangon

A Myanmar ethnic minority armed group is preparing to hand a captured city back to the military in a Beijing-brokered deal, China’s foreign ministry said yesterday, as residents reported junta troops already returning.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) ousted Myanmar’s military from the city of Lashio in August 2024, capturing their northeastern command and a key trade route to China. Analysts say it was the worst strategic loss

the military suffered since seizing power in a 2021 coup that sparked a civil war pitting the generals against anti-coup fighters and long-active ethnic armed groups.

But Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told reporters the MNDAA is set to relinquish the city to the military without firing a shot.

“At the joint invitation of both sides, China recently dispatched a ceasefire monitoring team to Lashio, Myanmar, to oversee the ceasefire between the Myanmar military and the MNDAA and to witness the smooth and orderly handover of Lashio’s urban area,” he said.

China is a major ally and arms supplier of

the junta but also maintains ties with ethnic rebel groups that hold territory near its border like the MNDAA, which can muster around 8,000 fighters.

Monitors have said the fall of Lashio - around 100kms from Chinese territory - was a step too far for Beijing, which balked at the prospect of instability on its borders.

The MNDAA has not commented on the handover and a spokesman for Myanmar’s military could not be reached for comment.

But a military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: “Some military officers have been transferred to Lashio in recent days. Some are on their way to Lashio already.”

## Former Thai police chief cleared in hit-and-run case

A Thai court yesterday cleared a former national police chief of evidence tampering over a fatal 2012 hit-and-run case involving an heir to the Red Bull fortune. The court in Bangkok found two other defendants, both former public prosecutors, guilty of violating anti-corruption laws for dropping charges against the Red Bull heir, Vorayuth “Boss” Yoovidhya. It was the first time anyone has been convicted in connection to the fatal crash, in which Vorayuth allegedly hit and killed a police officer with his Ferrari in an Bangkok neighbourhood before fleeing the scene. The case has long captivated public attention in Thailand as emblematic of what critics say is the impunity enjoyed by the kingdom’s super-rich and well-connected. The court yesterday found there was “no clear evidence” that former police chief General Somyot Poompanmoung, named as the first defendant, “had any power in investigating the case”.

## Spring garden party



Japan’s Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako arrive to greet guests during the spring garden party at the Akasaka Palace imperial garden in Tokyo, Japan, yesterday.

## Nepal survey estimates nearly 400 snow leopards

AFP  
Kathmandu

Nepal’s first nationwide survey of the threatened snow leopard estimated nearly 400 of the elusive big cats in the Himalayan nation, wildlife officials said yesterday.

Habitat loss, climate change and poaching have greatly impacted snow leopard populations across Asia, listed as a “vulnerable” species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). But the survey offers a rare shot of hope, confirming numbers lie at the upper end of the previous estimates.

With thick grey fur dotted with dark spots, and large paws that act as natural snow shoes, the species are difficult to spot and quick to hide, making field research challenging. “This is a historic step in Nepal’s snow leopard conservation journey,” Haribhadra Acharya, senior ecologist at the department of national parks and wildlife conservation, said.

“This is the first time we are getting authentic data with the great effort of researchers,” he said.

An estimated total of 397 snow leopards were counted, determined through motion-sensor camera and genetic analysis in seven key areas.

It offers the most comprehensive national estimate of snow leopards previously estimated by the IUCN to be in the range of 301-400.

Snow leopards are the least studied of the big cats globally due to their low population density and remote mountain habitats they inhabit.

“Nepal has only 2% of the size of the snow leopard habitats globally, (yet) we host 10% of the total estimated population”, Ghana S Gurung, country representative of WWF Nepal, said.

“More importantly, we are the second smallest country in terms of snow leopard habitat size after Bhutan, (but) we hold the fourth largest population,” he added.

# Early holiday, more fans: Philippines schools adapt to climate change

AFP  
Manila

Kindergarten teacher Lolita Akim fires up five standing fans with three more at the ready as she fights to hold the attention of her pint-sized pupils in Manila’s soaring heat.

Last year, heatwaves forced millions of children in the Philippines out of school. It was the first time that soaring temperatures had caused widespread class suspensions, prompting a series of changes.

This school year started two months earlier than usual, so the term ends before peak heat in May.

Classes have been rearranged to keep children out of the midday heat, and schools are equipped with fans and water stations.

The moves are examples of how countries are adapting to the higher temperatures caused by climate change, often with limited resources.

As a teacher, Akim is on the front-lines of the battle to keep her young charges safe and engaged.

“In this weather, they get drenched in sweat; they become uneasy and stand up often. Getting them to pay attention is more difficult,” she said of the five-year-olds in her care at the Senator Benigno S Aquino Elementary School.

Some 6mn students lost up to two weeks’ worth of classroom learning last year as temperatures hit a record 38.8C, according to the education department.

Schools reported cases of heat exhaustion, nose bleeds and hospitalisations as students struggled through lessons in classrooms without air conditioning.

Scientists say that extreme heat is a clear marker of climate change, caused largely by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Last year’s heat was further exacerbated by the seasonal El Nino phenomenon. But even this year, nearly half Manila’s schools were forced to close for two days in March when the

heat index - a measure of temperature and humidity - hit “danger” levels. “We’ve been reporting (the heat index) since 2011, but it’s only been recently that it’s become exceptionally warm,” national weather service specialist Wilmer Agustin said, attributing it to “El Nino and climate change”.

This year, conditions in most of the country will range between “extreme caution” and “danger” on the government’s heat alert system, he said, “especially in April and May”.

On April 11, scores of schools in Manila were shuttered as temperatures were expected to hit 34C, while the national weather service said the heat index for at least five provinces

would hit the danger level.

During last year’s closures, alternative learning helped make up some of the gap.

But “the overall impact on students’ education was significant”, said Jocelyn Andaya, assistant education secretary for operations.

So this year, a series of measures have been instated to avoid further learning loss.

Classroom sessions have been shortened to four hours a day - avoiding the searing midday sun - and water stations were installed in each classroom as well as at least two oscillating wall fans.

Some newer schools have heat-reflective roofs, and bigger ones now

employ nurses. Just 3% of students affected by last year’s heatwaves were able to access online classes, so this year printed material was prepared for students if they must stay home.

Even so, Benigno Aquino school principal Noel Gelua cautioned that “there is no real alternative to face-to-face learning.”

But there are limits to what can be done, given the education department has a budget of just 10bn pesos (\$174mn) for climate adaptation, infrastructure and disaster readiness.

The Philippines also has a perennial classroom shortage, with 18,000 more needed in the capital alone.





# 24 killed in militant attack in Kashmir

• US vice-president condemns ‘devastating terrorist attack’ • Perpetrators will be brought to justice: Modi

AFP  
Pahalgam

At least 24 people were killed in Kashmir when gunmen opened fire on tourists yesterday, a senior police officer said, with authorities calling it the worst attack on civilians in years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi decried the “heinous act” in the summer retreat of Pahalgam, pledging the attackers “will be brought to justice”.

A tour guide said he reached the scene after hearing gunfire and transported some of the wounded away on horseback.

“I saw a few men lying on the ground looking like they were dead,” said Waheed.

The attack targeted tourists in Pahalgam, which lies about 90km by road from the key city of Srinagar.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. The killings come a day after Modi met with US Vice-President J D Vance, who is on a four-day tour of India with his wife Usha and children.

Vance offered his and Usha’s condolences to the “victims of the devastating terrorist attack in Pahalgam”.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they mourn this horrific attack,” he wrote on X.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that “the attack is much larger than anything we’ve seen directed at civilians in recent years,” with the death toll “still being ascertained”.

“This attack on our visitors is an abomination,” he said in a statement. “The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt.”

A reporter at Pahalgam spoke to another witness of the shooting who asked not to be identified.

“The militants, I can’t say how many,



A woman, who was injured in a suspected militant attack near Pahalgam, receives treatment in a hospital in Anantnag yesterday.

came out of the forest near an open small meadow and started firing,” said the witness, who cares for the horses that are popular with tourists in the area.

“They were clearly sparing women and kept shooting at men, sometimes single shot and sometimes many bullets, it was like a storm.”

The witness said dozens of people fled as the gunmen opened fire.

“They all started running around in panic,” he added.

“We tried to comfort them but they were

“The militants, I can’t say how many, came out of the forest near an open small meadow and started firing”

just screaming... we helped carry some injured out of there on ponies.”

India’s Interior Minister Amit Shah flew to Kashmir and vowed those responsible would be caught.

“Those involved in this dastardly act of terror will not be spared, and we will come down heavily on the perpetrators with the harshest consequences,” Shah said in a statement.

One security source said that foreign tourists were among those shot, but there was no official confirmation.



Indian army personnel stand guard as they speak with tourists near Pahalgam, south of Srinagar, yesterday.

## US supports India, says Trump

India has the full support of the US, President Donald Trump said yesterday after militants opened fire on tourists in Jammu and Kashmir territory, killing 24 people. “Deeply disturbing news out of Kashmir. The US stands strong with India against terrorism. We pray for the souls of those lost, and for the recovery of the injured. Prime Minister Modi, and the incredible people of India, have our full support and deepest sympathies,” Trump said on Truth Social.

Rahul Gandhi, leader of India’s main opposition Congress party, called the killings “heartbreaking”.

“Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger,” Modi said in a statement following the attack.

In recent years, the authorities have

heavily promoted the mountainous region as a holiday destination, both for skiing during the winter months, and to escape the sweltering heat during the summer elsewhere in India.

Around 3.5mn tourists visited Kashmir in 2024, according to official figures, the majority domestic visitors.

## Modi visits Saudi Arabia to bolster ties

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Saudi Arabia’s Jeddah yesterday. The trip comes a day after Modi held high-level talks with US Vice-President J D Vance in India, with New Delhi looking to seal a trade deal with Washington and stave off punishing tariffs.

“India deeply values its long

and historic ties with Saudi Arabia that have acquired strategic depth and momentum in recent years,” said Modi in a statement.

“Together, we have developed a mutually beneficial and substantive partnership.”

Pictures posted on Modi’s X account showed the premier being greeted by several Saudi

officials after touching down in Jeddah in the afternoon. Saudi Arabia has been a key supplier of oil to India, the world’s most populous country, for years. India’s rapidly developing economy relies heavily on petroleum imports, with Saudi Arabia ranked as its third-largest supplier according to the Indian foreign ministry.

## Australian leaders vow to stand firm on social media age limits as election nears

Reuters  
Sydney

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he expects to receive pressure from social media giants to ease Australia’s impending ban on children using their platforms, with opposition Liberal leader Peter Dutton keen to agree with him in an election debate yesterday.

President Donald Trump’s US administration has already raised the issue on behalf of the firms, mostly US-based, in relation to trade tariff negotiations.

In the televised event ahead of

a national election on May 3, Albanese and Dutton both pledged strong support for laws that force social media companies to negotiate to pay for local news hosted on their platforms, and that will restrict access to X, Facebook, Instagram and others by children aged under 16 from December.

Albanese said his government “won’t budge” on the issue.

“The social media ban that Australia is implementing with bipartisan support is world-leading,” Albanese said during the debate on the Nine Network.

“There’s no question in my mind that in the lead-up to December, when it comes into force,

you will see major pressure being placed by some of the social media giants,” Dutton said his Liberal and National coalition was “on a unity ticket” with Albanese’s Labor Party on the issue.

He said multinational technology companies “just see our kids as a commodity, as a profit line online”.

“We have worked really hard to hold those companies to account,” he said, “to provide a safer place online and to make sure the big media companies treat our kids with respect according to the law, and it is not this lawless zoo.” Nine’s panel declared Dutton the winner of the third leaders’ debate.

## ‘Earth Day’ observed



Students hold their paintings and posters with environmental themes as they gather on the occasion of ‘Earth Day’ at a school in Amritsar, India, yesterday.

## Indian steel mills pause job cuts after government steps to curb imports

Reuters  
New Delhi

India’s smaller steel mills plan to delay job cuts and other measures such as trimming output, executives said, after the government imposed a temporary tariff to protect local producers from a surge in cheap imports, chiefly from China.

On Monday, India, the world’s second-biggest producer of crude steel, imposed a 12% temporary tariff, or provisional safeguard duty, on some steel imports for 200 days.

The directorate of general remedies, which is still conducting its investigation, is expected to submit its final findings by August-

September, following which the government will decide the rate and duration of the tariff, steel secretary Sandeep Poundrik said at a news conference yesterday.

“We have put the decision to cut jobs on hold and we will see how demand fares,” said Adarsh Garg, chairman and managing director at northern Indian state Punjab’s Jogindra Group.

“The industry was in losses and this duty might bring relief and the opportunity to raise prices,” Garg said.

In the western city of Pune, Enlight Metals was seeing an increased order flow from the early hours of yesterday, director Vedant Goel said, adding that rising demand would help it retain external labour set to be re-

moved due to cheaper imports.

New Delhi’s tariffs are primarily aimed at China, the second-biggest exporter of steel to India behind South Korea in 2024-25.

“There are various measures which the government is taking to ensure that domestic steel industry is not harmed by low-cost dumping,” Poundrik said.

Beijing’s shipments may slow, traders and analysts said.

“China’s steel exports to India in 2025 might return to a level seen three years ago, around 1mn tonnes, or a third of its exports to India last year,” said Xu Xiangchun, Beijing-based director of content at consultancy Mysteel.

India was a net importer of finished steel for a second straight year in 2024-25.

## Vance warns of ‘very dark time’ without close US-India ties

Reuters  
Jaipur, India

The US wants to sell more energy and defence equipment to India to build closer ties, Vice-President J D Vance said yesterday, praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi repeatedly as talks over a trade deal progress.

Visiting the northwestern Indian city of Jaipur, Vance hailed what he called India’s vitality over the “sameness and flatness” of some Western nations. His remarks followed criticism by US President Donald Trump of steep Indian tariffs on cars, farm goods and other products.

The rebalancing of global trade because of Trump’s tariff actions is “going to produce great benefits for the people of India,” Vance said.

India is trying to position itself as a manufacturing base of choice for the world as China faces high US duties.

“If India and the US work together successfully, we’re going to see a 21st century that is prosperous and peaceful,” Vance told an audience of a few hundred students, traders, government officials and politicians in Jaipur.

“But I also believe that if we fail to work together successfully, the 21st century could be a very dark time for all of humanity.”

He said it would be natural for India to buy more defence equipment from the US, including Lockheed Martin’s F-35 fighter jets, as the two countries do regular military exercises.

“We, of course, want to collaborate more,” he said. “We want to work together more, and we want your nation to buy more of our military equipment.”

He said the US wanted to sell more energy to India and also help it explore its own resources, including offshore natural gas reserves and critical mineral supplies. Nuclear energy is also an important area of focus for both sides. Vance is on a mostly personal, four-day visit to India along with his wife, who is the daughter of Indian immigrants, and their three children.

India is seeking an early trade deal with the US - its largest trading partner - before the end of a 90-day pause on the steep tariffs announced by Trump’s administration.

“Prime Minister Modi is a tough negotiator. He drives a hard bargain,” Vance said to laughter from the audience.

India, the world’s fastest-growing big economy, hopes to “positively conclude” the first part of a trade pact by autumn, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in San Francisco on Monday.

Vance said he and Modi, who hosted Vance’s family for dinner at his home on Monday, had made good progress on trade talks and confirmed that the two sides had finalised the terms of reference for the trade negotiation.

“It sets a roadmap toward a final deal between our nations,” he said.

Vance has criticised some foreign leaders but was effusive in his praise for Modi, who went to see Vance’s family on the birthday of Vance’s second son while both leaders were in France for an AI conference in February.

“I think he’s a special person,” Vance said. “In the past, Washington approached Prime Minister Modi with an attitude of prejudice or even one of condescension. And, as I told Prime Minister Modi last night, he’s got approval ratings that would make me jealous.”



US Vice-President J D Vance addresses a gathering at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur yesterday.



# Trump, Zelensky to attend Pope’s funeral on Saturday

AFP  
Vatican City

Pope Francis’s funeral will be held on Saturday, the Vatican announced, as world leaders from US President Donald Trump to Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky said they would attend to honour the Catholic leader.

The Argentine pontiff, 88, died on Monday after a stroke, less than a month after returning home from five weeks in hospital battling double pneumonia.

His funeral, which is expected to draw huge crowds, will take place at 10am on Saturday in the majestic Baroque plaza in front of St Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.

Francis’s coffin — which he previously ordered should be of wood and zinc — will then be taken inside the church and from there to Rome’s papal basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore for burial.

The funeral date was set by cardinals meeting in a so-called “general congregation”, the first of a series of meetings which will culminate in a conclave within three weeks, where a new Pope will be elected.

Francis died in the Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican residence where he lived during his 12-year papacy, and his body was laid out in its chapel on Monday evening.

Senior clergy and Vatican staff paid their respects yesterday, many shedding a tear as they prayed before the pontiff’s open wooden coffin.

The Jesuit was dressed in his papal vestments — a red chasuble, white mitre and black shoes, with rosary beads laced around his fingers.

His coffin will be transferred to St Peter’s Basilica today at 9am, to lie in state until Saturday’s funeral.

In St Peter’s Square, believers and tourists alike gathered to pay their respects, some bearing flowers or candles and with many lost in their thoughts.

“When a church is left without its head we are all a little disoriented,” said Slovenian priest Bastian Dolinsek.

Sister Maria Guadeloupe Hernandez Olivo, from Mexico, said it was “very hard,



A man places an image of late Pope Francis in a memorial outside the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Cathedral before an inter religious homage in Argentina yesterday. (Reuters)

very sad” to hear news of his death.

“I did not expect it,” she told AFP, adding: “I believe he’s in a better place, no longer suffering, but I do feel this emptiness for our pastor.”

According to the Holy See’s official media outlet, Vatican News, Francis started feeling ill Monday at around 5:30am, less than 24 hours after he greeted a crowd of faithful in St Peter’s Square on Easter Sunday.

Before falling into a coma, he waved to his personal nurse Massimiliano Strappetti from his bed, in what Vatican News described as “a gesture of farewell”.

On Sunday, he had thanked Strappetti for encouraging him to take what would become his last tour of St Peter’s Square in his popemobile.

“Thank you for bringing me back to the square,” Francis was quoted as saying.

He was pronounced dead at 7:35am on Monday.

“He did not suffer. It all happened quickly,” Vatican News said, citing people who were with the pontiff in his final moments.

Tributes have poured in from around the globe for Francis, a liberal reformer who took over following the resignation of German theologian Benedict XVI in 2013.

Argentina announced a week of national mourning and President Javier Milei said he would attend the funeral.

India began three days of state mourning yesterday, a rare honour for a foreign religious leader, while Italy declared five — longer than the three days observed for

Pope John Paul II in 2005.

Trump was among the first to confirm he would attend the funeral, even after Francis criticised his migrant deportations.

Other expected guests include European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, France’s Emmanuel Macron and Britain’s Prince William.

Ukrainian President Zelensky will also attend, and expressed hope of meeting Trump at the ceremony.

Cardinals will meet again today afternoon, to arrange the next steps.

At the first meeting, attended by around 60 cardinals, lots were drawn to pick three people to help the camerlengo, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, run the Vatican’s day-to-day affairs until a new Pope is elected.

Only those under the age of 80 are eligible to vote in the conclave, which should begin no less than 15 days and no more than 20 after the death of the Pope — meaning between May 5 and 10.

Speculation is already growing about who will take over from Francis, born Jorge Bergoglio, who was the first Pope from the Americas and the first Jesuit.

Cardinal Francois-Xavier Bustillo, the bishop of Ajaccio in Corsica, told AFP as he arrived in Rome that it would be an “intense” time.

Francis, who during his papacy wore plain robes and eschewed the luxury of his predecessors, has opted for a simple tomb, unadorned except for his name in Latin, Franciscus.

In choosing to be buried in Rome’s Santa Maria Maggiore basilica, he will become the first Pope in more than 100 years to be laid to rest outside the Vatican.

His death certificate released by the Vatican said Francis died of a stroke, causing a coma and “irreversible” heart failure.

Although Francis was ordered by doctors to spend two months resting after being discharged from Rome’s Gemelli hospital on March 23, the pontiff could not resist numerous public appearances.

“I saw on Easter Sunday that the Pope was tired. He kept going right to the end, right to his last breath,” Bustillo said.

The hugely popular Francis was an energetic reformer who sought to open the Church to everyone, but his views also sparked fierce internal opposition.

Francis advocated tirelessly for the defence of migrants, the environment, and social justice without deviating from the Church’s positions on abortion or priestly celibacy.

Outspoken and stubborn, Francis also sought to reform the governance of the Holy See, expand the role of women and lay people, and clean up the Vatican’s murky finances.

Faced with revelations of widespread child sex abuse in the Church, he lifted pontifical secrecy and forced religious and lay people to report cases to their superiors — measures that victims’ groups said did not go far enough.

## Zelensky: Ukraine ready for direct talks with Russia only after truce

Ukraine will only hold direct talks with Russia once a ceasefire is in place, its President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, as his US counterpart Donald Trump pushed for a speedy deal to end the three-year Ukraine conflict.

“After the ceasefire, we are ready to sit down in any format,” Zelensky told journalists at a briefing a day before key talks in London on a potential Ukraine settlement.

Trump, who promised on the campaign trail to strike a deal between Moscow and Kyiv in 24 hours, has failed since his return to office three months ago to wrangle concessions from Russian President Vladimir Putin to halt his troops’ offensive in Ukraine.

Trump said over the weekend that he hoped a peace deal could be struck “this week” despite no signs the two sides were anywhere close to agreeing even a ceasefire, let alone a wider long-term settlement.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned yesterday against rushing into a speedy ceasefire, telling a state TV reporter that the issue was too “complex” for a quick fix.

“It is not worth setting any rigid time frames and trying to get a settlement, a viable settlement, in a short time frame,” he said.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov meanwhile told state media that US presidential envoy Steve Witkoff was expected this week in Moscow, his fourth visit to Russia since Trump took office.

Moscow’s forces occupy around a fifth of Ukrainian territory and tens of thousands of people have been killed since the war started in February 2022. After rejecting a US-Ukrainian offer for a full and unconditional ceasefire last month, Putin announced a surprise Easter truce over the weekend.

Fighting dipped during the 30-hour period but Russia launched fresh attacks on residential areas on Monday and yesterday, Ukrainian officials said. Kyiv and its allies dismissed the truce as a public relations exercise from Putin.

“The Easter truce that he announced somewhat unexpectedly was a marketing operation, a charm operation aimed at preventing President Trump from becoming impatient and angry,” French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told FranceInfo radio.

Ukraine’s allies will meet in London today, a senior Kyiv official told AFP.

They are expected to discuss the contours of a possible deal they could all get behind.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will not attend the London talks due to scheduling issues, a State Department spokeswoman said, adding that US envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg would take part.

## Nordics, Lithuania plan joint purchase of combat vehicles

Sweden, Finland, Norway and Lithuania plan to beef up military capabilities around the Baltic Sea with a joint order for several hundred CV90 combat vehicles, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said yesterday. Kristersson made the announcement at a joint press conference in Stockholm with his Lithuanian counterpart Gintautas Paluckas, following talks between the two.

“Our focus right now is on a potential co-ordinated acquisition of the CV90 infantry fighting vehicles with Sweden, Lithuania, Finland and Norway together,” Kristersson said. “With a possible co-ordinated procurement, we will strengthen our shared military capabilities in the Baltic Sea region,” he said. The CV90 combat vehicle is made by BAE Systems Hagglunds in Ornskoldsvik, Sweden.

Kristersson gave no exact price for a future order. “We are at least discussing several hundreds of vehicles, and they are quite costly,” he said. “On the other hand, we are expanding our military defence budgets,” he added. At the end of March, Sweden announced it would increase defence spending by about 300bn kronor (\$30bn) over the next decade. It said it aimed to boost its defence spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2030, up from the current 2.4%. The Nordic country dropped two centuries of military non-alignment and applied for membership in Nato in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, becoming its 32nd member in March 2024.

# State Department to cut positions, rights offices

AFP  
Washington

President Donald Trump’s top diplomat Marco Rubio yesterday unveiled a restructuring of the US State Department that will cut positions and scale back human rights offices, saying the “bloated” organisation was ideologically out of sync with the administration.

Rubio billed the plan as a major shake-up in the State Department, long a bete noire for many US conservatives, although the outline was less drastic than drafts that have circulated — including one of which would have virtually wiped out day-to-day diplomacy in Africa.

“The Department is bloated, bureaucratic and unable to perform its essential diplomatic mission in this new era of great-power competition,” Rubio said in a statement, referring to US rivalry with China.

“The sprawling bureaucracy created a system more beholden to radical political ideology than advancing America’s core national interests.”

One key change will be eliminating a division in charge of “civilian security, democracy and human rights.”

It will be replaced by a new office of “co-ordination for foreign assistance and humanitarian affairs,” which will absorb functions of the US Agency for International Development — gutted at the start of the Trump adminis-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio attends a meeting at the Justice Department in Washington, DC yesterday. (Reuters)

tration with the elimination of more than 80 percent of programmes.

The new office will oversee a bureau on “democracy, human rights and religious freedom” — a shift from the current “democracy, human rights and labour,” which included advocacy of workers’ rights overseas.

Previous administrations from both major US parties had separate envoys in charge of religious freedom, a position now being merged.

In an opinion piece, Rubio aired grievances about previous work within the bureau including its unsuccessful push internally to restrict weapons sales to Israel on human rights grounds.

“The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor became a platform for left-wing activists to wage vendettas against ‘anti-woke’ leaders in nations such as Poland, Hungary and Brazil, and to trans-

form their hatred of Israel into concrete policies such as arms embargoes,” he wrote in the piece on Substack.

The restructuring formalises the end of a special envoy on climate, which had been a senior position under Trump’s predecessor Joe Biden.

The plan newly eliminates an office on war crimes, whose recent work has included documenting Russia’s treatment of civilians in Ukraine.

Rubio’s outline also gets rid of the Office of Conflict and Stabilisation Operations, whose activities have included a task force that tries to prevent atrocities overseas before they happen.

State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said that the end of offices did not necessarily mean their functions would end and that their areas of focus “could be implemented in a better, more nimble, faster way.”

Lawmakers of the rival Democratic Party accused Rubio, a former senator, of a lack of transparency and of ceding ground to China, which has topped the United States globally in the number of diplomatic missions.

“These potentially sweeping changes have less to do with streamlining the State Department and more to do with eviscerating American soft power, including our values-driven defence of human rights and democracy globally,” said Representative Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Brandon Wu of anti-poverty group ActionAid USA said that Rubio’s plan was “part of an unhinged crusade against perceived ‘woke’ policies and practices, not a coherent plan for reform.”

Rubio reposted an article from the online outlet The Free Press that said the State Department will reduce overall offices from 734 to 602.

Under secretaries will be asked to come up with plans within 30 days to reduce personnel by 15%, it said, cuts that are significant but below those at a number of federal agencies.

A senior State Department official, asked about the figures, said they sounded “correct” but that some positions may be eliminated without laying people off.

“There will not be stories or images of people carting their belongings out of the building today,” the official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

# Over 100,000 Afghans left Pakistan in April, says Islamabad

AFP  
Islamabad

More than 100,000 Afghans have left Pakistan in the past three weeks, the interior ministry said yesterday, after Islamabad announced the widespread cancellation of residence permits.

Calling Afghans “terrorists and criminals”, the Pakistan government launched its mass eviction campaign on April 1.

Analysts say the expulsions are

designed to pressure neighbouring Afghanistan’s Taliban authorities, which Islamabad blames for fueling a rise in border attacks.

The interior ministry told AFP that “100,529 Afghans have left in April”.

Convoys of Afghan families have been heading to the border since the start of April when the deadline to leave expired, crossing into a country mired in a humanitarian crisis.

“I was born in Pakistan and have never been to Afghanistan,” 27-year-old Allah Rahman told

AFP at the Torkham border on Saturday.

“I was afraid the police might humiliate me and my family. Now we’re heading back to Afghanistan out of sheer helplessness.”

Afghanistan’s Prime Minister Hasan Akhund on Saturday condemned the “unilateral measures” taken by its neighbour after Pakistan’s foreign minister Ishaq Dar flew to Kabul for a day-long visit to discuss the returns.

Akhund urged the Pakistani government to “facilitate the dignified return of Afghan refugees”.

Afghans in Pakistan have reported weeks of arbitrary arrests, extortion and harassment by authorities, with many of those forcibly returned living in Sindh and Punjab provinces.

Many people are leaving voluntarily, choosing to depart instead of face deportation, but the UN refugee agency UNHCR said that in April alone, more arrests and detentions took place in Pakistan — 12,948 — than in all of last year.

Pakistan’s security forces are under enormous pressure along the border with Afghanistan as

they battle a growing insurgency by ethnic nationalists in Balochistan in the southwest, and the Pakistani Taliban and its affiliates in the northwest.

Last year was the deadliest in Pakistan in a decade.

The government frequently accuses Afghan nationals of taking part in attacks and blames Kabul for allowing militants to take refuge on its soil, a charge Taliban leaders deny.

Millions of Afghans have poured into Pakistan over the past several decades fleeing successive wars,

as well as hundreds of thousands since the return of the Taliban government in 2021.

Some Pakistanis have grown weary of hosting a large Afghan population as security and economic woes deepen, and the deportation campaign has widespread support.

“They came here for refuge but ended up taking jobs, opening businesses. They took jobs from Pakistanis who are already struggling,” 41-year-old hairdresser Tanveer Ahmad told AFP as he gave a customer a shave.



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GULF TIMES

Tariff worries weigh amid US, global recession warnings

Just as the tariffs - fuelled worries about an escalating trade war are wreaking havoc on global financial markets, the global economic outlook could deteriorate further as US President Donald Trump pursues aggressive policies.

The US economy is seen set to lose billions of dollars in revenue in 2025 from a pullback in foreign tourism and boycotts of American products, adding to a growing list of headwinds keeping recession risk elevated.

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday slashed its forecast for global growth this year, citing the effect of Trump's new tariff policies on the world economy.

The IMF's projections, which incorporate some but not all tariff measures introduced this year, see the global economy growing by 2.8% this year, 0.5 percentage points lower than the previous World Economic Outlook (WEO) forecast in January.

"We are entering a new era as the global economic system that has operated for the last 80 years is being reset," IMF chief economist Pierre - Olivier Gourinchas told reporters in Washington. "If sustained, increasing trade tensions and uncertainty will slow global growth."

Global trade is expected to plummet this year in the wake of Trump's tariff offensive, fuelling uncertainty that threatens "severe negative consequences" for the world, the World Trade Organisation warned last Wednesday.

While Trump made a U-turn on steeper tariffs for dozens of countries, he has escalated a trade war with China, slapping 145% levies on Chinese goods while Beijing retaliated with a 125% duty on US products.

The IMF on Tuesday slashed its forecast for global growth this year, citing the effect of Trump's new tariff policies on the world economy

Median inflation forecasts in the April 14 - 17 Reuters poll have surged since last month, potentially restricting the Federal Reserve from delivering more than two interest rate cuts between now and year-end.

The probability of a US recession over the coming year has surged to 45%, the highest since December 2023, from 25% last month.

The US economy, which started the year on a solid footing of strong growth, consumer spending and hiring, is expected to grow just 1.4% in 2025, a sharp downgrade from 2.2% predicted last month.

JP Morgan ratcheted up its odds for a US and global recession to 60%, as brokerages scrambled to revise their forecast models with tariff distress threatening to sap business confidence and slow down global growth.

HSBC has said the recession narrative will gain traction, but added some of this is already "priced in".

Other research firms including Barclays, BofA Global Research, Deutsche Bank, RBC Capital Markets and UBS Global Wealth Management also warned the US economy faces a higher risk of slipping into a recession this year if Trump's new levies remain in place.

To be sure, several US economic indicators are slowing down, but economic data have yet to fall off a cliff. The concern is whether the US can resist the downdraft, providing a balance for the rest of the world.

Longer term, however, the greater concern is if consumers and other countries will conclude that the US is not a bastion of predictability and stability for the global economy.

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"Some truths don't make it to print."  
World Book Day

Dumping biomass in ocean is not a climate solution

By James Kerry and Lisa Levin  
Wädenswil/San Diego

Puro.earth, a self-appointed "carbon-removal certifier", is seeking to establish a new accredited means of carbon sequestration: dumping bundled biomass (wood or crop waste) into the ocean. At least two companies are already selling carbon credits based on plans to dump biomass in the Black Sea. But "ocean storage of biomass" (OSB) lacks scientific verification and highlights the risks of commercialising unproven climate interventions.

The idea is that "degradation-resistant biomass" would be dumped into the Black Sea basin, where anoxic (oxygen-free) conditions would further slow, or even halt, degradation. As a result, the approach's proponents claim, the carbon would effectively be removed from the biological cycle for over 1,000 years, with minimal environmental impact. But there is no scientific evidence that this is true.

While anoxic zones might appear barren, they are by no means devoid of life. And the tiny organisms found there - such as the Synechococcus bacteria, which was recently discovered in the Black Sea's anoxic basin - break down organic matter and release trapped carbon. They simply use chemosynthesis, rather than photosynthesis, to do it. Since carbon can migrate across the "chemocline" (chemical transition zone) that separates anoxic zones from oxygen-rich waters, whatever is released within the Black Sea's anoxic basin can return to the ocean's carbon cycle and, ultimately, the atmosphere.

Two more processes could accelerate the release of carbon: dumping large quantities of baled

biomass could - and likely would - induce turbulent chemical mixing in the chemocline, while the heat generated by decomposing biomass could further weaken the Black Sea's stratification. Moreover, as the ballast makes contact with the seafloor, it will likely resuspend sediment that currently acts as a reservoir not only of carbon, but also hydrogen sulphide (which is toxic) and methane (a highly potent greenhouse gas).

The seabed disturbance, together with the erosion of the chemocline, could cause these gases, in addition to carbon dioxide, to penetrate the oxygen-rich areas of the Black Sea, which support a diverse array of marine life, including dolphins, porpoises, and many species of fish, some of which can be found nowhere else. Any expansion of the anoxic zone or intrusion of toxic gases into this habitat could severely harm its ecosystem, which is already under intensifying pressure from overfishing, pollution (including chemical, plastic, and noise pollution), habitat destruction, and rising temperatures.

But that is not all. The gases released as a result of OSB could ultimately make their way into the atmosphere, with potentially catastrophic consequences. This is not without precedent. When the stratification of Lake Nyos in Cameroon collapsed in 1986, large clouds of CO2 gas were released, killing an estimated 1,700 people.

Puro.earth insists that OSB is safe. But these claims are based on modelling and short-term laboratory experiments, which cannot possibly replicate the unique and complex conditions of the Black Sea's anoxic basin. For one thing, these experiments tend to underestimate rates of organic degradation, by failing to account for the possibility that they will increase over

time - for example, as microbial communities adapt, or due to a breakdown in the structural integrity of the biomass.

Moreover, while Puro.earth promises strict requirements for monitoring, environmental, and social safeguards, it plans to observe the effects of its activities for only 15 years after the last biomass bundle is dumped - a far cry from the 1,000 years of carbon sequestration being claimed. Without long-term observational data, it cannot credibly claim that OSB is a legitimate - let alone benign - means of carbon removal, especially because the carbon permanency and ecological consequences of such activities are difficult to predict and even harder to monitor in such remote and poorly studied environments.

Land considerations further challenge the logic of OSB. Terrestrial biomass has value in itself, both in terms of the nutrients it contains and because there may be better uses for it, such as in the synthesis of biofuels. A complete life-cycle analysis of the OSB process suggests it involves significant energy consumption in the harvesting, processing, transportation, and monitoring of the biomass. Puro.earth rightly asserts that any biomass used in the process "must be free from harmful impurities and compounds" such as toxins and pesticides. Yet that requirement would necessitate chemical testing of entire batches, which would likely impose significant costs.

Even if OSB were safe and efficient, with dumped biomass remaining durably sequestered in anoxic waters, its promise as a climate intervention would be dubious. The problem is one of scale. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we should be removing 6-10 gigatonnes of

CO2 from the atmosphere each year until 2050. Even assuming that only crop waste was used, locking up just one gigatonne of CO2 would require around 500mn tonnes of dry biomass, an amount comparable to the entire annual US corn harvest. This is not the only significant constraint on the proposed method; another is the paucity of anoxic zones on our planet to dispose of the biomass.

Companies that stand to gain financially from such projects should not be the arbiters of carbon-crediting mechanisms, nor are they qualified to make objective judgements about environmental safety. Under the Law of the Sea Convention, the standard has been, and always should be, one of precaution. A genuinely careful and conservative approach would be to conduct smaller-scale, multiyear controlled experiments before any large-scale, commercialised deployment were even to be considered.

The fact that OSB represents a low-tech approach to neutralising CO2 emissions does not exempt it from the precautionary principle and dumping regulations under the London Convention and London Protocol. The burden of proof is on the proponents of the intervention to demonstrate that their actions would not violate these standards. This should be reflected in any permitting decisions about OSB that countries bordering the Black Sea, such as Georgia and Türkiye, might have to make in the coming years. - Project Syndicate

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- Lisa Levin is Distinguished Professor Emerita at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego.



Plastic waste is pictured at the bottom of the sea, off the island of Andros, Greece. (Reuters file photo)



# Sudan’s political fragility rooted in absence of civil service policy to uphold institutional scaffolding



By Mohamed Suleiman al-Shazly

The British-influenced tradition that once defined Sudan’s civil service is beyond full retrieval. In its heyday, it was characterised by punctuality, decorum, and reverence for time. Offices opened with precision, correspondence was handled with care, and even minor tardiness could threaten a career. Punctuality wasn’t just a habit — it was an honour, a signal that public duty mattered, and time, like the people it served, deserved respect.

When I was a boy, I used to set my watch by the arrivals and departures of my cousin, who held a mid-ranking position at the Civil Service Bureau. Dressed in the Sudanese white robe, she embodied the elegance and timeless beauty of her culture. The pristine, flowing fabric draped over her figure, symbolising dignity, tradition, and pride. The white robe, deeply rooted in Sudanese identity, connected her to her heritage and the values that shaped her. As she moved, the fabric seemed to tell a story of Sudan’s rich history and the strength of its people, especially the women who proudly wear it.

Among the female civil servants of Sudan, she stood as one of many who, with quiet dedication, worked to shape the country’s future — embodying the sense of responsibility that came with their roles in public service. Her adherence to strict punctuality was the hallmark of her professionalism. Always on time, she believed that every moment mattered in serving her country, demonstrating a commitment not only to her work but to the values of discipline and respect that defined the character of all Sudanese civil servants at that time — a dedication that, sadly, has since faded.

Likewise, those near Khartoum’s railway station would set their clocks to the rhythm of the trains. “The Atbara train is arriving,” or “The Port Sudan train is leaving,” were common phrases, and the punctuality of the trains reflected the culture’s deep respect for time. People adjusted their watches to match the exact timing of arrivals and departures, making punctuality an essential part of daily life. That commitment, once shared by both the trains and the people, has since faded. Those days of unwavering punctuality may never return.

Policy is often seen as the domain of politicians, but no strategy, however visionary, can take shape without the steady hand of the civil service. Far from being mere implementers of political decisions, civil servants play a critical role in shaping policy itself — providing analysis, continuity, and practical judgement that guide governments towards realistic and sustainable goals. In well-functioning states, they are the institutional memory and quiet architects behind the scenes, ensuring that national priorities survive the turbulence of political change.

The strength of this role lies in the civil service’s neutrality. A professional bureaucracy does not concern itself with who occupies the presidential palace or the prime minister’s office, nor whether power shifts through elections or coups. Its allegiance is not to individuals or parties, but to the enduring interests of the state. This indifference to politics is not apathy

— it is a fundamental safeguard of good governance. It allows the civil service to offer consistency where politics brings volatility, and stability where regimes come and go.

But institutions are only as strong as the people within them. A resilient civil service depends on a cadre of well-trained, competent professionals — individuals who understand not only the machinery of government but also the broader public good. Training and capacity-building are not optional extras; they are essential to ensuring that civil servants can act with competence, integrity, and impartiality. When neglected, the consequences are predictable: sluggish bureaucracies, inconsistent policy, and eroded public trust.

Such professionalism, however, does not happen by chance. It requires investment in meritocratic recruitment, continuous development, and legal protections that shield civil servants from political interference. Without these safeguards, the civil service may experience significant changes in personnel with each new administration.

A strong civil service does not serve presidents or prime ministers; it serves the public. And in places where politics is unstable and power fleeting, the quiet, principled persistence of the bureaucracy may be the only thing that endures.

Historically, the civil service is ancient, evolving from the need for administrative structures in early political systems. Its evolution is defined by the refinement of its concept and the codification of values and laws guiding its function.

However, its journey has been marked by challenges, especially politicisation, which has sometimes turned it from a driver of progress into a barrier to development. The debate over whether the civil service remains professional or becomes politically compromised is central to contemporary administrative thought. A meritocratic civil service, built on competence and integrity, is far more effective than one tainted by cronyism and political allegiance.

In my view, the cry of leader Ismail al-Azhari, calling for independence with the slogan ‘Liberation, not reconstruction’, marked the first moment that decisively extinguished the enthusiasm of our civil servants.

For Sudan, rebuilding its civil service is more than just a policy choice — it is a crucial step towards reinventing our homeland, rebuilding trust in future governments, and ensuring that essential services reach those who need them most. Only through a professional, competent, and well-trained civil service can the political goals of any government or leader — regardless of the type of leadership — be effectively realised, benefiting all sectors of society.

Not long ago, our civil service stood as a noble institution, carrying the flame of Sudanese brilliance and potential. Though initially designed to serve imperial interests, it became a remarkable achievement in the Middle East and Africa.

The story of Sudan’s civil service is, to me, one of the most poignant reflections of our nation’s rise, fall, and persistent yearning for dignity. The Sudanese community watched it evolve — from a borrowed instrument of empire to a proud engine of national purpose, and then to its current broken state. Its journey mirrors our own: full of promise, battered by politics.

In its prime, our civil service



embodied a palpable sense of purpose. Civil servants — selected through rigorous exams, trained with care — were not mere functionaries; they were nation-builders, respected both at home and abroad. I grew up admiring these individuals, whose pressed shirts, trousers, robes and measured words spoke of a deeper truth: that good governance begins not with grand speeches, but with punctuality, precision, and integrity. The “old boys” and the “matriarchs of government”, moulded in British-inspired institutions, shared a unique bond of camaraderie and discipline that profoundly shaped the nation’s governance, time and again to its benefit.

However, that culture has eroded. Today, many offices open late, delays are routine, and indifference hangs in the air. Somewhere along the way, we lost our way. What followed was not a sudden collapse, but a slow corrosion. With each political shift came patronage, where loyalty was elevated over competence. Our civil service, once a sanctuary for the most capable among us, became a battleground of competing interests. I watched as merit was discarded, professionalism drained from institutions, and public trust withered. The machine that once ran with quiet efficiency began to falter, burdened by neglect, political meddling, and appointments of widely recognised unqualified individuals.

It is a deeply sorrowful and shameful reality that we are destroying an invaluable legacy — one granted to us in a way others were not fortunate enough to experience — and doing so with reckless indifference and blind ignorance. Sudanese civil servants were not only tasked with managing our country’s affairs; they played a pivotal role in establishing municipal and service departments across several nations, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region. Through their work and vision, they helped lay the foundation for modern infrastructure in these nations.

Tragically, we have failed to recognise the immense potential within the Sudanese civil service. We squandered what could have been our greatest strength. Worse, we failed to understand its significance as the British did, with their keen foresight. Blinded by shortsightedness, we let this legacy slip away, never fully grasping its importance. Had we known how to manage and nurture what we had been entrusted with, our path could have been drastically different — we could have led with innovation and progress, rather than falling behind.

The British administration in Sudan (1898–1955) recognised the untapped potential of Sudanese civil servants and worked to develop a professional and efficient administrative class. Moving beyond colonial hierarchies, they invested in training and mentorship to prepare Sudanese for leadership

roles in governance. This initiative aimed not only to support colonial administration but also to cultivate future leaders capable of managing an independent Sudan.

Through rigorous education, often in British institutions, Sudanese civil servants earned a reputation for competence and professionalism. As Sudan approached independence, the demand for local participation in governance increased, prompting the British to expand Sudanese representation in higher administrative roles. Though British dominance persisted for some time, efforts were made to replace expatriate officials with capable Sudanese counterparts.

Unlike in many other colonies, where direct rule often came with harsh repression, Sudan’s governance by the British Foreign Office, combined with the leadership of graduates from prestigious institutions like Oxford and Cambridge, resulted in a comparatively more cordial form of colonial administration. This approach, led by a class of educated elites from Britain, was marked by a degree of co-operation with local elites and a focus on maintaining stability. It stood in stark contrast to the more aggressive and exploitative tactics employed in places like India. While not without its flaws, this system fostered a different dynamic between coloniser and colonised — one that was arguably less confrontational and more diplomatically inclined.

Sir George Stewart Symes (1882–1962), a colonial administrator of rare foresight, proved instrumental in laying the bureaucratic groundwork for Sudanese self-rule. In 1943, in a move that raised more than a few eyebrows in Whitehall, he merged the seniority lists of British and Sudanese civil servants — an administrative sleight of hand that quietly placed Sudanese officials on equal footing with their imperial overseers. Four years later, a further reform barred non-Sudanese from entering the pensionable civil service, a policy shift that nudged the administration unmistakably towards national hands.

The effects were swift. By 1955, Sudanese held 9,915 civil service positions. That number climbed to 11,521 the following year and to 15,868 in 1957. Within the span of a decade, the colonial bureaucracy had been, for all practical purposes, fully indigenised. From junior clerks to senior administrators, the Sudanese state had acquired a machinery staffed almost entirely by its own citizens.

The handover was not left to chance. In 1946, the Sudanisation Committee was formed to guide the transition. Charged with scrutinising departmental plans and advising the Staff Committee, it ensured that the replacement of expatriates with Sudanese civil servants was neither haphazard nor merely symbolic. It was, rather, a strategic rebalancing — one that underscored a broader movement

towards national sovereignty and institutional self-reliance.

British colonial governors frequently praised the Sudanese civil service as “the best in Africa”, often describing it as “second to none”. Such accolades reflected the view that Sudanese administrators excelled in both skill and dedication, setting a benchmark across Africa and the Middle East.

Under British rule, a well-structured civil service became the cornerstone of governance. Drawing on their experience in statecraft, the British implemented an administrative framework that brought order to a vast, diverse land, laying the foundation for Sudan’s development.

When Sudan gained independence in 1956, we did not discard this colonial framework — we adopted it, infused it with our own vision, and sought to make it ours. It may have been foreign in origin, but we filled it with hopes of a nation united by shared service, built on discipline, merit, and the quiet heroism of daily work. Yet the winds do not always favour the ship. Those grand hopes were shattered.

The coup of November 17, 1958, ended Sudan’s fledgling democracy when General Ibrahim Abboud seized power, dissolved parliament, and banned political parties. This marked the beginning of military dominance, ending a vital chapter in Sudan’s history. The coup was significant for Sudan and the continent — Sub-Saharan Africa’s first military coup and Africa’s second after Egypt’s in 1952. It ended the Westminster-style system, paving the way for cycles of coups, uprisings, and fleeting democracies. Although Abboud’s rule had limited effect on the civil service, it shook the nation’s political stability and prospects.

After the irrational cry of leader Ismail al-Azhari, I would say that the first serious crack in the civil service’s façade of neutrality and professionalism came after the October 21, 1964, Revolution, though its impact was limited. A more decisive intervention occurred with Jaafar Nimeiri’s May 25, 1969, coup, which promised to purge reactionary forces — a goal initially fuelled by leftist zeal, later shifting to the right.

The most devastating blow came with Omar al-Bashir’s military coup on June 30, 1989, orchestrated by Hassan al-Turabi of the Islamic Front. Where the left masked its encroachment on institutions as ideological purification, Turabi’s circle called their takeover “empowerment” — a euphemism for the complete restructuring of the civil service. By the 1990s, under Bashir’s regime, the civil service became increasingly politicised, with party loyalty determining appointments. This further eroded its effectiveness.

The 2019 Revolution, driven by a desire for renewal, sought to dismantle this politicisation, intervening under the banner of “disempowerment” — a reclamation of merit and institutional integrity. But that fragile promise was again shattered by the military’s return on October 25, 2021, continuing the cycle of disruption. As of writing, the country faces ongoing civil war, political instability, and economic hardship. Today, there is no viable civil service. It is not merely an administrative apparatus; it is the conscience of the state, the invisible hand that gives form to governance. If Sudan is to rise from its ashes, it must do so not through slogans, but through the quiet, daily work of capable hands and principled minds. In this work — measured, disciplined, and purposeful — the

true rebirth of a nation begins.

Those early years remain etched in the national memory — a time when civil servants were esteemed not only for what they did, but for what they represented. Selected through rigorous exams, trained with care, and guided by duty, they carried themselves with distinction. In their dress and their offices, they embodied quiet excellence. Sudanese bureaucrats were counted among the finest in Africa and the Arab world, their counsel sought abroad, their discipline admired at home. They were not mere administrators — they were architects of a national vision rooted in justice, unity, and purpose.

That golden image now lies in fragments. The collapse of education, erosion of institutional norms, and entrenchment of corruption have hollowed out the civil service. Where once young Sudanese were driven by purpose, many today are driven by necessity or wearied by disillusionment. Systems that once rewarded diligence and intellect now reward proximity to power. Training has dwindled, and with it, the culture of excellence has nearly vanished.

This decline is not just bureaucratic — it is a national affliction. The civil service, once a vessel of hope, is now a shadow of its former self. Institutions meant to serve have lost their sense of service. Trust between citizens and the state has frayed. Teachers work without proper training, clerks labour without direction, nurses tend the ill with little support. Their perseverance is noble, but it cannot sustain a system that no longer sustains them.

To rebuild the civil service is to reclaim Sudan’s soul. This requires more than technical fixes — it demands moral clarity and political will. Patronage and loyalty must be dismantled. Institutions must be depoliticised. Recruitment must be merit-based, performance fairly evaluated, and training restored as a cornerstone of reform. Ethics must be re-anchored, with civil servants held to standards worthy of their role as custodians of public trust.

The task is formidable, but not impossible. With inclusive dialogue, strategic vision, and international partnership, Sudan can forge a civil service that is impartial, effective, and trusted. It will take time and perseverance, but the reward — a state that serves its people with dignity — is worth every effort.

True reconstruction begins not with bricks, but with spirit. Sudan’s revival depends not only on rebuilding infrastructure but on restoring integrity, competence, and purpose within the civil service. Those who carry out the quiet work of governance must be equipped, protected, and held accountable. Their commitment must be matched by the state’s commitment to them.

To close, it is important to emphasise that civil service reform in Sudan represents a crucial and necessary step toward the successful implementation of governmental policies. Without a well-functioning and efficient civil service, the plans and aspirations of politicians are bound to remain unfulfilled, ultimately amounting to little more than empty promises. The strength and effectiveness of the civil service form the foundation of any government’s ability to translate vision into reality. Our civil service strategies should prioritise rebuilding the state’s framework on robust, inclusive foundations, equipping it to meet the demands of its public responsibilities.

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## What’s known about whether Trump can fire Powell from the Fed

President Donald Trump on Monday kept up his verbal assault on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell over the Fed’s refusal for now to further cut interest rates, rattling financial markets growingly ever more fearful that Trump may ultimately try to fire the US central bank chief over the matter.

**Can Trump fire Powell?**

Whether Trump has the authority to do so is unclear. The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 establishing the Fed stipulates that members of its Board of Governors, appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate to staggered 14-year terms, can be only be removed for “cause” - long thought to mean misconduct, not policy disagreement. That said, the law omits reference to limits on removal from its description of the four-year term of the Fed chair, who is one of the seven governors.

**Would this be uncharted territory?**

There is no direct legal precedent, since no president has ever tried to fire a Fed chief. There are, however, lawsuits now working their



**SPOTLIGHT:** US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell (left) and US President Donald Trump. (AFP)

way through the courts over unrelated firings by Trump being watched as possible proxies for whether he has that power. One is currently pending before the Supreme Court, where any attempt to fire Powell would almost certainly end up.

**What would firing Powell mean in practical terms?**

A lot would hinge on just how Trump might choose to “fire” the Fed chief. As each of his predecessors has done, Powell holds three roles - chair of the Federal Reserve System, member of the Board of Governors

and chair of the Fed’s interest-rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee.

**Can Trump oust him just as Fed chair?**

Were Trump to try to remove Powell only as chair of the Fed system, Powell could remain a governor until that term expires at the end of January 2028. The next scheduled board vacancy does not occur until January 2026, which in the meantime would leave Trump only the option of nominating one of the other incumbent governors to be chair. Two of those other six were appointed by Trump in his first term - governors Christopher Waller and Michelle Bowman, whom Trump recently nominated as vice-chair for bank oversight. Both, like Powell, have spoken about the importance of Fed independence, so it’s not clear that either immediately would deliver the rate cuts Trump wants.

**What about removing him as FOMC head?**

Trump has no direct control over who heads the

FOMC. The FOMC chair is chosen annually by the panel’s 12 members - the seven governors, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and four of the other regional bank presidents, who serve on the panel on a rotating basis. By tradition the FOMC chooses the Fed chair as its head, with the New York Fed president as its vice chair. In theory, though, they could choose any of the members, including Powell should he still be a governor.

**... or as a governor?**

Removing Powell as a governor would have the largest impact. Were it to withstand legal challenge, it would give Trump both a board vacancy and chair vacancy to fill with a nominee of his own choosing. Also it would open the door to Trump firing as many of the other governors as he pleased to install a wider Fed leadership he saw as compliant with his wishes.

**Would Powell be able to challenge it?**

Should it occur, Powell would have the stand-

ing to challenge his firing in federal court, but he would have to fund that effort with personal resources. A lawyer and former private equity leader, he has the personal wealth to finance such an effort. Powell has said repeatedly that he believes his removal is not allowed under the law, and said more recently that he does not believe the cases working their way through the courts now over Trump’s firing of other independent federal board and agency members will apply to the Fed.

**Will it actually happen?**

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last week that Trump has discussed firing Powell and replacing him with Kevin Warsh, who served as a Fed governor between 2006 and 2011. Warsh, the paper said, has advised against that, advocating that Trump should allow Powell to remain until his term as Fed chair expires in May 2026. Also last week, White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett, also seen as a potential replacement to Powell, said the matter was the subject of ongoing study inside the administration. - Reuters





## Four Earthna 2025 prize winners awarded \$1mn

From Page 1

The international jury who selected the winners comprised prominent environmental and cultural leaders, including Caravane Earth founder and CEO Fahad bin Mohammed al-Attiah, former Colombian president Ivan Duque, Survival International founder Robin Hanbury-Tenison, SouthBridge Investments Senior Partner and CEO Dr Frannie Leautier, and former Ireland president Mary Robinson.

Launched by Earthna on Earth Day in 2024, the Earthna Prize is awarded biennially with details of the second edition to be announced later this year.

Themed “Building our Legacy: Sustainability, Innovation, and Traditional Knowledge”, the summit’s latest edition is set to conclude today at Msheireb Downtown Doha.



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Dr Muhammad Yunus and other dignitaries at the Earthna Summit 2025 opening yesterday. **PICTURE:** Aisha Al-Musallam



HE Sheikha Hind bint Hamad al-Thani addressing the Earthna Summit 2025 yesterday. **PICTURE:** AR Al-Baker

## Call to blend tradition with science for water solutions

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

A talk at Earthna Summit 2025 yesterday focused on the vital connection between traditional ecological knowledge and modern science to address global water scarcity challenges, citing examples like Oman’s Aflaj irrigation systems.

Titled “Water Scarcity: Exploring Sustainable Solutions for Resilience”, the session brought together experts who highlighted the need to integrate time-tested practices with cutting-edge technology to achieve lasting water security. Dr Raha Hakimdavar, a hydrologist, science policy expert, and senior adviser at Georgetown University in Qatar and the Earth Commons Institute, argued that traditional knowledge is not a separate entity from the scientific method. She underlined the ingenious Aflaj irrigation systems of Oman, which have sustained communities for centuries, as prime examples of innovation rooted in careful observation and experimentation. “If we look at the ingenuity that existed from centuries ago... these were innovations... based on science, on experimentation. Science, what is it really? It is the power of observations,” stressed Dr Hakimdavar on the importance of considering traditional water management systems alongside (rather than in isolation from), modern scientific advancements and engineering practices, pointing their potential compatibility. She cautioned against relying solely on technological solutions to solve the water crisis, saying:



Experts discuss global water scarcity challenges at Earthna Summit 2025 yesterday. **PICTURE:** Thajudheen

“Technology alone is not going to help us address our challenges moving forward”. She pointed out the need for a deeper understanding of water as a finite and precious resource. Dr Hakimdavar urged a shift in perspective, noting that many in modern society have become disconnected from the origins and inherent value of water. Dr Ann-Perry Witmer, a teaching associate/professor at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and originator of Contextual Engineering, echoed the call for a more holistic approach. She challenged the assumption that experts already possess all the answers and emphasised the importance of listening to and building trust with local communities before imposing solutions. “We need to teach our engineers, our policymakers to think like water,” she said, alluding to the need for adaptable and collaborative strategies. Dr Manzoor Qadir, deputy director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, offered a concise framework for integrating traditional knowledge into water

management practices. He proposed an “intricate approach” based on the three “As”: Acknowledge, Advocate, and Appreciate: “Unless we really acknowledge there is a wealth of knowledge sitting in indigenous communities... that is still valid today, and then advocate for it and then appreciate”. Dr Rajendra Singh, chairman of Tarun Bharat Sangh, widely known as “the Waterman of India”, shared some insights into the transformative power of community-led water conservation initiatives. He described how empowering communities to take ownership of their water resources can lead to the revival of rivers, the restoration of ecosystems, and the reversal of migration patterns. “When we start the work, the community joined hands,” Dr Singh said, highlighting the essential role of local engagement. The Earthna Summit, which concludes today (April 23), serves as a crucial platform for experts, policymakers, and community leaders to engage in collaborative problem-solving through presentations, interactive panel discussions, workshops, and roundtables.

## Earthna Summit unveils key research, policy publications

**Qatar’s commitment to sustainability underscored**

By Joey Aguilar  
Staff Reporter

The Earthna Summit 2025, an international forum dedicated to advancing sustainability, unveiled yesterday several key research and policy publications focused on environmental stewardship.

The studies, released at the opening day of the two-day event, included a comprehensive examination of Qatar’s ecological environment, alongside strategies for reducing carbon emissions.

Themed ‘Building Our Legacy: Sustainability, Innovation and Traditional Knowledge’, the summit has gathered local and global leaders, experts, policymakers, and youth from more than 100 countries. Organised by the Earthna Centre for a Sustainable Future, a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the summit coincides with International Earth Day.

HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, addressing the event, underscored the importance of the summit as a strategic platform for enhancing dialogue and co-ordinating efforts to address climate change challenges, particularly in the GCC region. He stressed the critical role of integrating traditional knowledge with innovative approaches to achieve sustainable solutions and foster international co-operation in addressing environmental issues.

The publications released aim to provide a framework for informed decision-making and action. ‘Semiotics of Nature,’ a col-



HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie addressing the Earthna Summit 2025.

laborative effort between Earthna and Hamad Bin Khalifa University’s College of Islamic Studies, explores the intricate connections between nature, semiotics, and spirituality, advocating for an environmental ethic rooted in both faith and scientific principles.

“Towards the Development of a Sustainability Framework for Qatar,” produced by Earthna, Wealth Fair Economics, and the University of Sussex Business School, introduces the concept of Inclusive Wealth as a foundational element for balanced development within the nation.

A policy dossier titled ‘Carbon Emissions Reduction Strategies for Qatar,’ co-authored by Earthna and the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, examines specific carbon reduction strategies aligned with Qatar’s National Vision 2030.

Earthna’s brief, ‘Qatar’s Ecology: An Assessment with Recommendations,’ provides a detailed analysis of Qatar’s ecological landscape and offers actionable recommendations to promote sustainability.

“Traditional Knowledge in Water Resource Management,” a report from Earthna, highlights effective traditional water management practices from Oman, Spain, Peru, and Ethiopia, emphasising their significant role in enhancing climate resilience and fostering community-led conservation efforts.

In a press statement, Earthna chair Justin Mundy underlined the urgency of addressing global sustainability challenges and re-imagining climate finance, saying: “This year’s Earthna Summit comes at a critical time – midway between COP29 and COP30. It’s more than a gathering; it’s a catalyst for action. By bringing together knowledge holders, innovators, and decision-makers, we create a space where ideas converge and evolve into tangible solutions.”

Earthna executive director Dr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata echoed this view, noting that summit attendees share a commitment to measurable impact and the creation of a legacy of sustainability for future generations.

Beyond the research publications, the opening day also featured the inaugural Earthna Prize ceremony, recognising exceptional projects demonstrating environmental stewardship through the use of traditional knowledge.

The summit also hosted the International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism Conference, convening global experts to explore urban development rooted in traditional architecture.

The Earthna Village is offering attendees a chance to engage in Agora Sessions and hands-on workshops, exploring sustainable futures rooted in cultural context.

## Role of media in driving climate action underlined



Yassin speaks as the other panellists look on at the Earthna Summit 2025 yesterday.

As part of Qatar Foundation’s two-day Earthna Summit, the session ‘Climate Through a Lens: The Power of Media’ brought together storytellers and visual communicators to explore how media can shape public understanding and inspire action on climate change.

Held at the Earthna Village – an interactive, community-centred space in Msheireb Downtown Doha – the session, moderated by Nick Clark, environment editor at Al Jazeera English, saw Hanza Yassin, wildlife cameraman and presenter; Ali Rae, journalist and filmmaker with Al Jazeera English; Anthony Flint, senior fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; and Thijs Biersteker, environmental artist and founder of Woven Foundation share their insights on how different media forms can be powerful tools in making the climate crisis more relatable, emotional, and urgent.

Yassin explained how his personal journey – from growing

up around pet lions in Sudan to filming golden eagles in Scotland – shaped his distinctive visual language for environmental storytelling. “Being severely dyslexic, I see the world through images,” he said. “That’s how I communicate – and photography became my language.”

Reflecting on how he approaches documentary work differently, Yassin added: “I try to show the full picture – not just pan into the perfect part of the scene, which is what we typically see in documentaries. I include the people, the context – the real story. Even if it’s not always picture-perfect, it humanises the narrative, and that, to me, is more important.”

Speaking on why the urgency of climate change still hasn’t hit home for most people, Rae emphasised the psychological barriers that prevent audiences from engaging meaningfully with the climate crisis – what she called the five D’s: distance, doom, dissonance, denial, and identity.

“We have all the science we need – but our response hasn’t caught up,” she said. “Understanding how people psychologically process climate information is key to changing the conversation.”

According to Biersteker, transforming data into interactive, physical art can spark emotional connection and understanding. “If something is unimaginable, it becomes un-actionable,” he said.

“We need to turn the complexity of science into something compelling – something that makes people feel, because if we don’t, we risk alienating people from the cause. If we can add emotion to the data, we can speak to the imagination – and that gives me hope.”

And Yassin ended the session on a note of cautious optimism, saying: “If we can spark curiosity in the next generation – like [famous broadcaster and biologist] Sir David Attenborough did for me – there’s a chance to build something better.”

Actor, entrepreneur, and philanthropist Idris Elba spoke of the need to innovate through creativity in order to drive change and highlighted the importance of engaging young people where they are, through platforms like his new application the Akuna Wallet, which will empower African creatives.

Speaking on Earth Day, at the opening ceremony of at Qatar Foundation’s Earthna Summit – titled ‘Building Our Legacy: Sustainability, Innovation and Traditional Knowledge’ – yesterday, Elba illustrated how vital it is to inspire young people by reflecting on how his own passion for acting was ignited at the age of 14, when a well-known British actor visited his school.

“It was then, for the first time, we realised that acting was a job,” he explained. “And from that time on, my own career has been built on finding ways to replicate that moment of encouragement and inspiration.” This mission manifests in Elba’s philanthropic work, which he directs through the establishment of the Elba Hope Foundation.

“I’m allowed to come here because of what I do for a living,” he said. “But the seed of being able to inspire others is completely embedded in me. So now I am



Idris Elba speaking at the Earthna Summit 2025 yesterday.

very focused on doing as much as I can when it comes to youth engagement, to pass on that inspiration – to have that moment where they’re like, ‘this man, from this show, is a human being, and is helping me right now.’” Elba, who is an actor, filmmaker, philanthropist, musician, and founder of IE7/The Akuna Group, explained that the medium of film – through voiceover, music, and imagery – has the power to move people and sustain engagement. Historically, film and television have been used to propagate both “good and bad things,” he said, which is why he believes the idea of “conscious creativity” is essential to sustaining the cycle of learning – acknowledging that everything we know today has been shaped by the teachings of our forefathers.

“The same will go for creativity,” he said. “I am only an actor because an actor came and spoke to me – to pay that forward is a very important cycle. I think being conscious while creating, knowing we’ll influence the next generation, is really very important. And when we think about how that connects to the climate crisis, the food crisis, we are creative human beings.”

Elba also spoke about the importance of learning, preserving, and respecting the past – to stay connected to traditions while adapting to global changes.

“My dad used to tell me, when he was a boy, one village would speak to another via the talking drum,” he said. “If there was rain coming or there was something the next village should know, they used the drum as the traditional way to communicate.”

“Let’s not do away with the talking drum, but let’s find ways to innovate for that connection – it’s really important.”

Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus, honourable chief adviser of the Government of Bangladesh, also spoke at the two-day Summit’s opening ceremony. The event in Doha, has brought together local and global leaders, experts, policymakers, and youth from more than 100 countries, a statement said.