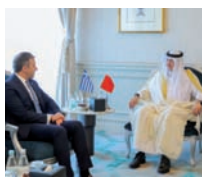
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The Peninsula

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Amir stresses importance of de-escalation and resolving disputes through diplomatic means

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani discussed with Amir of Kuwait H H Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah the fraternal relations between the two countries.

This came during a phone call H H the Amir received from H H the Amir of Kuwait yesterday. The phone call discussed a number of developments of common concern at the regional and international levels, particularly those related to the Israeli attack on the territories of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H H the Amir received a phone call from H H the Amir of Kuwait yesterday. The phone call discussed a number of developments of common concern at the regional and international levels, particularly those related to the Israeli attack on the territories of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H H the Amir also discussed with Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq H E Mohammed Shia Al Sudani the bilateral relations between the countries.

This came during a phone call H H the Amir received from the Iraqi Prime Minister yesterday. The phone call discussed a number of regional and international developments of common concern, particularly the Israeli attack on the territories of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this regard, H H the Amir and the Iraqi Prime Minister stressed the importance of de-escalation and resolving disputes through diplomatic means. — ***QNA***

Qatar warns of disastrous impact of Israel's action on energy supplies

DOHA: Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani received yesterday phone calls from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic H E Antonio Tajani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada H E Anita Anand, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic H E George Gerapetritis.

Prime Minister voiced Qatar's condemnation of the repeated Israeli violations and attacks in the region, which undermine peace efforts and threaten to drag the region into a regional war.

The calls discussed relations and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the developments in the region, particularly the Israeli attack on Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this context, H E the Prime Minister voiced the State of Qatar's condemnation of the repeated Israeli violations and attacks in the region, which undermine peace efforts and threaten to drag the region into a regional war.

He also emphasized the gravity of Israel's targeting of economic facilities in Iran, warning of its disastrous regional and international repercussions, particularly for the stability of energy supplies.

H E the Prime Minister stressed the need for concerted regional and international efforts to de-escalate tensions and resolve disputes through diplomatic means, affirming that Qatar is making strenuous efforts with its partners to return to the path of dialogue among all parties to address outstanding issues and consolidate security and peace in the region and the world. — ***QNA***

Citizens travelling abroad urged to register on Ministry's App

DOHA: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged Qatari citizens wishing to travel abroad to register their information through the Ministry's app to facilitate communication with them; in preparation for providing the necessary assistance and guidance when necessary.

In a statement, the Ministry affirmed its utmost commitment to the safety of citizens and its full readiness to provide all necessary facilities in this regard. — ***QNA***

Autism Parents Platform launched at The Pearl Qatar for inclusive support

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: A new milestone for autism awareness and support was marked with the official launch of the Autism Parents Platform at The Pearl Island as the center is the first of its kind in Qatar to earn official community accreditation from the International Council for Accreditation and Continuing Education.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage and presence of the Minister of Social Development and Family, H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi. The launch event was also attended by the CEO of United Development Company (UDC), Yasser Salah Al-Jaidah, alongside other distinguished guests and partners.

The platform, which began five years ago as an Instagram initiative, has grown into a powerful community hub for families, caregivers, and individuals on the autism spectrum.

The platform, which began five years ago as an Instagram initiative, has grown into a powerful community hub for families, caregivers, and individuals on the autism spectrum. Speaking to The Peninsula, the platform's Founder, Hamda Al-Hitmi, shared the inspiring journey behind the project.

"Autism Parents Platform started as an Instagram platform five years ago, and we began with the women's and the mother's support group," said Al-Hitmi. "Then later, we expanded our services to include play dates and events. We, the three mothers who started the initiative, became autism specialists and decided to dream bigger."

The new facility at The Pearl includes an inclusive playground and community club designed to welcome children of all abilities. The space aims not only to provide services but also to raise broader public awareness about autism. "We had this idea to have an inclusive playground, a club where everyone can come and enjoy, whether they're on the spectrum or not. It's a place to raise awareness," she noted.

Backed by support from a host of sponsors including the UDC, Ooredoo, Seashore Group, Blue Salon, and Lulu, the Autism Parents Platform is already making an impact. "We are so lucky to have such great sponsors who believe in us. Now our dream has come true," Al-Hitmi said.



Minister of Social Development and Family H E Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi, UDC CEO Yasser Salah Al-Jaidah and the Founder of Autism Parents Platform Hamda Al-Hitmi, along with other officials at the launch ceremony.

In addition to offering events and recreational activities, the platform also hosts workshops, training sessions, and educational programs for businesses, service providers, and caregivers seeking to become autism-friendly. ➔P4

Qatar advances domestic workers' rights through legal reforms

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Vice-Chairman of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al-Kuwari, has affirmed that Qatar has made remarkable progress in safeguarding the rights of domestic workers.

Speaking at an event in Doha yesterday, he highlighted that this commitment is clearly demonstrated through a series of legal reforms, most notably the introduction of Law No. (15) of 2017, which specifically addresses the rights and protections of domestic workers.

NHRC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) held a high-level discussion session and a round-table meeting at the Westin Doha Hotel yesterday.

This event was held to commemorate International Domestic Workers' Day under the theme "Advancing Access to Justice for Domestic Workers: Enhancing Legal Support and Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms."

The discussion saw participation from the Ministries of Labor and Interior, along with several experts.

Al-Kuwari stated that celebrating international, regional, and national human rights days provides a valuable opportunity to assess progress in addressing human rights concerns and raising awareness about them.

He emphasised, "We seize International Domestic Workers' Day to continue our efforts in education, awareness, and advocacy with our partners and stakeholders, especially since about 168,626 individuals are performing domestic work in Qatar, according to the 2022 Labor Force Survey report issued by the Planning and Statistics Authority (National Planning Council) in 2023.

This event was held to commemorate International Domestic Workers' Day under the theme "Advancing Access to Justice for Domestic Workers: Enhancing Legal Support and Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms."

"These individuals represent 8.39% of the total non-Qatari workforce, which has made this work an integral part of our economic and social life in Qatar."

He added, "These workers have left their communities in search of livelihood opportunities that ensure a decent life for them and sustainable development for their communities. From our perspective, protecting the rights of domestic workers is a protection of human rights guaranteed in the Permanent Constitution of Qatar, which stipulates that Qatari society is based on the pillars of justice, benevolence, freedom, equality, and noble ethics.'

"These are the fundamental components that reflect Qatari society's vision of domestic workers as an integral part of the Qatari family, based on values of giving, respect, and goodness for all its members."

Al-Kuwari affirmed that caring for the rights of domestic workers is a social and cultural priority, based on the Islamic principle: "Is there any reward for goodness except goodness?"

He also pointed out that the Qatari Constitution emphasizes the principle of equality, the rule of law, human dignity, personal freedoms, and integrity. ➔P3

Study shows 12-week exercise programme improves heart health

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: A recent study from Qatar has shown that regular, supervised physical activity can help improve blood fat levels and reduce health risks related to heart disease.

The study focused on adults who joined a 12-week exercise program at Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) wellness centers.

The study, titled "Changes in Adult Lipid Profiles Following a 12-Week Physical Exercise Program at Wellness Centers, Primary Health Care Corporation, Qatar: A Retrospective Cohort Study With Pre-post Comparison," was published in the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest biomedical library.

Researchers tracked changes in key blood fats — total cholesterol, triglycerides (TGs), LDL (bad cholesterol), and HDL (good cholesterol) — before and after the exercise program. The program included a mix of aerobic and strength-training exercises done three times a week.

Results showed that participants had clear health improvements. While total cholesterol dropped slightly on average, about 32% of those with borderline high levels saw their results move into the healthy range. Triglyceride levels improved the most, with 71% of borderline cases returning to normal. LDL and HDL levels also showed positive changes, though not as strongly across all participants.

In addition to better blood fat levels, the study found that people lost weight and body fat and reduced their waist size — all signs of improved overall health. ➔P3

Shura Council approves proposal to enhance services, privileges for elderly

DOHA: The Shura Council convened its regular weekly session yesterday, chaired by Speaker H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim, at the Tamim bin Hamad Hall at the Council's headquarters.

The Council reviewed the report of the Social Affairs, Labor, and Housing Committee regarding the proposal submitted by Member H E Issa bin Ahmed Al Nasr, which focuses on providing enhanced services and privileges to the elderly. The proposal seeks to strengthen care and support for this respected group, ensuring their needs are met across all aspects of life.

Reviewing the report, Chairman of the Committee, H E Abdulrahman bin Yousef Al Khulaifi, emphasised that caring for the elderly aligns with the principles of family cohesion and social justice outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030. He highlighted that this group deserves greater attention and appreciation in recognition of their valuable contributions to society and the nation.

Al Khulaifi further explained that although various initiatives and services for the elderly currently exist, they remain fragmented and lack a unified legislative framework. This calls for the development of specific legislation to safeguard their rights and improve the quality of services provided to them.

The proposal presented several key recommendations, including the enactment of a dedicated law to grant the elderly distinct privileges and facilities in their daily lives.

It also called for the allocation of designated parking spaces for the elderly in both public and private areas across the country, ensuring these spaces are located near main entrances and clearly marked with appropriate signage.

The proposal further recommended enhancing healthcare services for the elderly by giving them priority in booking medical appointments at public health institutions, with the option to refer them to contracted private medical centres, in addition to providing a comprehensive health insurance system that fully covers their medical expenses.



Speaker H E Hassan bin Abdullah Al Ghanim chairing the Shura Council's weekly session yesterday.

Additional recommendations included allocating special areas for the elderly in government service centers to streamline their transactions and exempting them from certain public service fees.

The proposal also called for issuing official identification cards for the elderly by a competent authority, enabling them to access discounts and benefits in collaboration with the private sector. Following a thorough discussion of the report and its recommendations, the Council approved the proposal and resolved to submit it to the government.

The Council also approved a draft law concerning lost and abandoned property and a draft law on water, both in their amended forms. The Council referred the drafts to the esteemed government after reviewing the reports of the specialised committees and discussing their details with the members.

Separately, the Council discussed a draft law amending certain provisions of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Law, promulgated by Law No. (20) of 2019, as referred by the esteemed government. The Council decided to forward the draft to the Internal and External Affairs Committee for further study and reporting.

The Council also discussed a draft law amending certain provisions of the Lawyers' Law, promulgated by Law No. (23) of 2006, which had been referred by the government. The Council resolved to refer the draft to the Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee for detailed review and submission of its report.

The session continued with the Council reviewing the report of the Social Affairs, Labor, and Housing Committee regarding the government's response to the Council's earlier proposal on reorganising and monitoring domestic worker recruitment offices. The Council made the appropriate decision on the matter. — *QNA*

Qatar calls for diplomatic solution to issues related to Iran nuclear programme

VIENNA: Qatar has called for de-escalation, cessation of escalation, the exercise of maximum restraint, and the continuation of negotiation rounds to reach a diplomatic solution for the issues related to the Iranian nuclear program. It noted that events have proven there is no alternative to dialogue and diplomacy to ensure peace and stability and spare the region and the world further catastrophes.

This came in the statement of Qatar delivered by H E Jassim Yaqoub Al-Hammadi, Ambassador of Qatar and its Permanent Representative to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna, before the emergency meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held in Vienna.

He called on the Director-General of the Agency to communicate with the Iranian side to facilitate technical discussions and a diplomatic solution to nuclear issues related to Iran. He also reiterated Qatar's strong condemnation and utmost denunciation of the Israeli attack on the territory of Iran, and its call for the international community to bear its legal and moral responsibility to urgently stop these violations. The Ambassador emphasised Qatar's rejection of the use of force outside the United Nations Charter, noting that Israel's claim that its attack on Iran is a preemptive act of self-defence has no legal basis.

He pointed out that an armed attack on nuclear facilities subject to the Agency's safeguards system is a condemned act that could result in widespread damage to people and the environment and has serious implications for nuclear safety and security. — *QNA*



Minister of State bids farewell to Finland Ambassador

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi met with Ambassador of Finland to Qatar H E Pekka Voutilainen, on the occasion of the end of his tenures in the country. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs thanked the Ambassador for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, wishing him success in his new duties.



Vice Chairperson of Qatar Foundation H E Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani attending the Herfah showcase event.

Herfah programme at QF's Education City launches second year of celebrating traditional Qatari, Islamic craftsmanship

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: After a successful inaugural year of celebrating, promoting, and immersing the community in the richness of Qatari artistry and Islamic crafts, Herfah — a programme delivered through a partnership by Qatar Foundation and The King's Foundation School of Traditional Arts — has announced the launch of its second year.

The programme – based within Al Khater House, a historic landmark in Education City – will continue to offer its core programming, including the year-long traditional crafts programme, short-term courses, and Ramadan workshops, all of which will be open to the public.

As the first year of Herfah came to a close, the creative works of the graduates of its intensive programme were showcased at an event at Al Khater House, which was attended by Vice Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, H E Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani.

"Our intention with Herfah was not only to preserve traditional skills, but to create a space where craft becomes a form of education, one that helps restore a deeper sense of value," said H E Sheikha Hind.

"The more time we spend working with our hands, the more reverence we develop for what is well made. And in doing so, we come to see the world differently."

Herfah's second-year programme will begin in September, with registration opening in July and selected participants notified by the end of August. Applicants must be aged 18 years or older and have prior experience in crafts, and can enroll at https://educationcity.qa/herfah-al-khater-house and via Education City and Qatar Foundation social media channels. In addition to the year-long core programmes, a variety of short-term courses will be announced later in the year.

In its inaugural year, Herfah engaged over 200 participants in hands-on learning experiences and creative exploration.

Among them was Sana Arooj, who said she found the opportunity to explore traditional crafts an enriching experience while gaining a deeper understanding of Qatari culture especially because of the thoughtful structure and delivery of each module.

Najiba Haqdost, another participant in Year 1 of the programme, said that being part of Herfah gave her the chance to learn and practice traditional craft skills — things she only had the chance to read about before.

According to Executive Director Community Engagement and Programming at Qatar Foundation, Kholoud M. Al-Ali, Herfah aims to deepen understanding and appreciation of Qatari and Islamic cultural heritage.

RACA discusses ways to enhance institutional partnerships

DOHA: The Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA) held a coordination meeting with the heads of several private charitable institutions in the country to discuss ways to enhance institutional partnerships and integrate roles between the RACA and these institutions.

This will serve to achieve Qatar National Vision 2030 and consolidate the charitable sector's role as an effective partner in sustainable development.

This meeting comes within the framework of national efforts to enhance the role of the third sector within Qatar's Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030), particularly in the context of achieving the fourth strategic outcome, "Cohesive Society."

During the meeting, Director-General of the RACA, Ibrahim Abdullah Al Duhaimi emphasised the importance of developing the institutional performance of private charitable institutions and raising their organisational efficiency in line with governance and transparency requirements.

He noted that this development reflects the directions of the Charitable and Humanitarian Sector Strategy (2025-2030), which aims to enable charitable organisations to play more strategic and influential roles locally and internationally.



RACA Director-General Ibrahim Abdullah Al Duhaimi and other participants at the meeting.

He noted that a number of private charitable institutions in the country have successfully completed the institutional and organisational modernisation requirements, enabling them to efficiently conduct their activities and enhancing their ability to meet community needs within an organised, safe, and innovative work environment.

This contributes to building community capacity and promoting a culture of coexistence and tolerance, while adhering to standards of transparency, disclosure, and performance accountability, and working in close collaboration with government and community entities.

The Director-General of RACA praised the level of positive cooperation demonstrated by private charitable institutions in responding to the regulatory updates approved by the RACA. He highlighted the importance of the strategic projects recently launched by the RACA, most notably the "Sanadi" project for coordinating internal aid. This pioneering digital platform contributes to organising support and assistance to beneficiaries nationwide, achieving fairness and integration among various entities.

Al Dhaimi affirmed the RACA's commitment to its enabling and regulatory role and its continued support for building the institutional capacities of private charitable institutions and enhancing their ability to achieve the desired social and humanitarian impact within a framework of effective partnership, accountability, and institutional excellence, contributing to comprehensive and sustainable development. — *QNA*

Qatar sees 194% rise in GenAI enrolments: Coursera

DOHA: Coursera, a leading online learning platform, announced yesterday that Qatar has seen a 194 percent year-over-year increase in Generative AI (GenAI) enrolments and a 55 percent growth in professional certificate enrolments across Qatar, pointing to growing demand for flexible, job-relevant credentials that correspond to national transformation goals.

The report revealed that Qatar now leads the Arab world in technology and data science skills, scoring 64 percent in each domain, and also demonstrates strong performance in business skills with a score of 72 percent.

These results align with the country's focus on digital and human capital development under its Digital Agenda 2030, which aims to boost professional competencies by 10 percent and grow the ICT sector to 3.5 percent of non-oil GDP by the end of the decade.

According to the report, Qatar ranks 3rd in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region for overall skills proficiency, climbing to 40th place globally in 2025, up from 76th in 2023 and 58th in 2024, according to the platform's annual Global Skills Report. This leap reflects Qatar's ambitious push toward a diversified, knowledge-based economy and a future-ready workforce.

Drawing on data from Coursera's global community of over 170 million learners, the report identifies where skill proficiencies are rising, where gaps remain, and what drives learner behaviour across more than 100 countries.

In this context, Coursera's General Manager for the Middle East and Africa Kais Zribi said: "Driven by a clear vision for the future, Qatar is transforming its advanced digital infrastructure into a catalyst for AI-powered innovation and sustainable economic growth. Coursera's Global Skills Report 2025 underscores Qatar's commitment to human capital development as it proactively equips its workforce with advanced technical and job-relevant skills needed to excel in the digital age."

— *QNA*

HMC welcomes Chinese Vice-Minister of National Public Health Commission

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) welcomed Vice-Minister of the National Public Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, H E Guo Yanhong along with the accompanying delegation currently visiting Qatar.

The visiting Chinese delegation met with HMC's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Khalid Mohamed Al-Jalham. During the meeting, the two parties discussed matters of mutual interest and explored ways to enhance bilateral cooperation between medical institutions in China and HMC. The visiting Chinese delegation conducted an introductory tour of the Ambulatory Care Center (ACC) and the Qatar Rehabilitation Institute (QRI); both located within Hamad Bin Khalifa Medical City. The delegation was briefed on the advanced medical services offered by the two hospitals and received detailed explanations from the medical teams regarding its facilities, clinical departments, and cutting-edge equipment.

Both the ACC and QRI opened in December 2017. The ACC provides a wide range of medical specialties and services, including day surgeries, endoscopy, gastroenterology, outpatient clinics, and inpatient units. Patients receive the latest treatment using advanced clinical and surgical practices offered within the same day and in a single dedicated location — enhancing both the efficiency and quality of care, as well as the overall patient experience.

QRI offers specialised medical rehabilitation services for patients of all ages, including those recovering from strokes, spinal cord and brain injuries, amputations, complex fractures, cardiac and pulmonary conditions, as well as neurological and muscular disorders. The institute provides an advanced healing environment equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and technologies, including a gait lab, hydrotherapy pools, interactive simulation rooms, sensory integration therapy, and smart assistive devices, all designed to empower patients throughout their recovery journey and support optimal outcomes.



Deputy PM meets Somali Defense Minister

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs H E Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Thani met with Minister of Defense of the Federal Republic of Somalia H E Ahmed Moalim Fiqi and the accompanying delegation, on the occasion of their visit to the country. Discussion during the meeting dealt with a host of topics of mutual interest. Senior officers from both sides also attended the meeting.

Bahamas Governor General receives credentials of Qatar's Ambassador

NASSAU: Governor General of the Bahamas H E Cynthia Pratt received the credentials of H E Tariq Othman Al Othman, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar (non-resident) to the Bahamas.

The Ambassador conveyed the greetings of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to the Governor General of the Bahamas, and His Highness' wishes of good health and happiness for Her Excellency, and for the government and people of the Bahamas continued progress and prosperity.

The Governor General of the Bahamas entrusted the Ambassador with her greetings to H H the Amir, wishing His Highness good health and happiness, and the State of Qatar continued progress and development.

— QNA



Amiri Guard Commander meets UK Defence Attache

Amiri Guard Commander H E Lieutenant General Staff Hazza bin Khalil Al Shahwani met yesterday at Barzan Camp with UK Defence Attache to Qatar, Colonel (Navy) Charlie Fuller. During the meeting, the two sides discussed topics of mutual interest and ways to enhance them. Senior Amiri Guard officers also attended the meeting.

Study shows 12-week exercise programme improves heart health

FROM PAGE 1

These physical improvements likely played a role in better blood fat levels.

The study included people mostly between the ages of 31 and 65, with women making up about three-quarters of the participants.

Interestingly, the results showed that neither age nor gender made a big difference in how well people responded to the program, although other research suggests that fitness level and hormone differences may influence results.

Researchers pointed out that, while the exercise program had clear benefits, there were some limits to the study. Since there was no control group (people who did not exercise for comparison), it's hard to say how much of the improvement was due only to the program. Other factors, like diet or personal habits, may also have played a role.

Despite these limitations, the findings are encouraging. They show that structured physical activity can be a powerful tool in managing unhealthy blood fat levels and reducing the risk of long-term illnesses like heart disease.

The researchers recommend including exercise programs like this as a regular part of primary health care in Qatar.

They also suggest adding more fitness trainers to health teams, training doctors to guide patients on exercise, and launching awareness campaigns to help people stay motivated and involved.

Qatar ensuring domestic workers' access to justice, legal support: MoI official

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Officials and experts have emphasised that Qatar's evolving legal frameworks are playing a pivotal role in protecting the rights of domestic workers and ensuring their access to justice.

They were speaking during a panel discussion titled "Legal Pathways and Institutional Frameworks", held as part of a high-level event jointly organised by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Panellists included Nasser Marzouq Sultan Al-Marri, Director of the Legal Affairs Department at NHRC; Captain Mohammed Nasser Al-Jabr from the Research and Follow-Up Department at the Ministry of Interior; Dr. Lena Moller from the College of Law at Qatar University; and Margaret Kabue, Chairperson of the Kenyan Domestic Workers Association. The session was moderated by Hala Al Ali, Legal Expert at NHRC. Al-Marri presented an overview of the NHRC's efforts to promote access to justice and uphold human rights in Qatar. He outlined key recommendations aimed at reinforcing these efforts in a sustainable manner.

Al-Marri highlighted the country's significant legal reforms in favour of workers' rights and emphasised the NHRC's enhanced mandate, which allows it to independently monitor human rights conditions and propose relevant policy recommendations.

He also pointed to the NHRC's 2024–2030 strategic plan, which aligns with the Paris Principles of 1993, as a guiding framework in expanding the Committee's competencies. "Among our most vital roles is ensuring public redress by receiving and investigating petitions involving alleged human rights violations," he stated. "In 2024 alone, the NHRC received 1,853 complaints, including several concerning domestic workers, which were reviewed and addressed in coordination with the relevant authorities." Captain Al-Jabr stressed that the domestic worker–employer relationship is unique due to its deeply social and humanitarian dimensions. Given the vulnerability of this labour group, he said, Qatar has introduced a number of legal instruments to regulate and protect this relationship and to guarantee domestic workers' access to justice and legal support.

Qatar advances domestic workers' rights

FROM PAGE 1

Al-Kuwari stressed that educating and informing domestic workers about Qatari legislation, including their rights, redress mechanisms, and legal assistance, before they leave their home countries, is primarily the responsibility of their countries.

He commended Qatar's initiative to establish 14 visa centres in labour-sending countries to ensure workers are not exploited, highlighting the importance of expanding these centres to other countries.

Al-Kuwari also emphasised the importance of providing domestic workers with information on community culture and laws upon their arrival in Qatar.

Al-Kuwari commended Qatar's initiative to establish 14 visa centres in labour-sending countries to ensure workers are not exploited.

He highlighted the important role of the NHRC in protecting the rights of domestic workers as embodied in the international human rights system, analysing and expanding good national practices, and advocating for the adoption of international best practices.

For her part, Roula Hamati, in charge of IOM Mission in Qatar, emphasised the importance of the discussion session, which is the first joint event of its kind between the NHRC and IOM.

She noted that domestic workers constitute a vital part of the social fabric and labor market, adding that these workers are not only key supporters of families but also a fundamental pillar of the care economy, contributing to the economic and social participation of broad segments of society, especially women.

Hamati stated, "Qatar has made remarkable progress in legislation aimed at protecting the rights of migrants in general, and domestic workers in particular."



NHRC Vice-Chairman, Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al-Kuwari with other officials at an event on protection of domestics workers in Doha yesterday. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT/THE PENINSULA

History like you've never seen it: Students turn interviews into stunning graphic novels

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: This summer, the Georgetown Qatar library is the home of an exciting collection of graphic novels about historical events such as war, migration, and political upheaval, offering unique insight on the impact of these events on the lives of everyday people and the generations that follow. But they are not part of a new library collection, they are the outcome of an innovative course taught on campus: History and the Graphic Novel.

Taught by Associate Professor of History, Dr. Karine Walther, the course studies graphic novels as secondary history resources. "Graphic novels can show history, not just describe it. There's a unique emotional weight when you see history unfold through art, it feels more personal and real than just reading facts or dates," said Mohamed Jaski, a culture and politics major with a minor in history, who was one of 12 students enrolled in the class.

Teaching history in novel and interesting ways is not new to Dr. Walther, who was voted "Faculty Member of the Year" by the graduating class at this year's Tropaia senior award ceremony. "I first took Professor Walther during my freshman year for proseminar, and since then, she's remained my absolute favorite professor," said Jaski, who took a total of four classes with Walther, culminating in this course in spring of his senior year.

Another cornerstone of the class was a technical workshop on how to use Canva, Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, and Artificial Intelligence to generate images and develop storyboards for their graphic novel, taught by Associate Director of the Library, Robert Laws.



Novel display at the Georgetown Qatar library

"The course introduced us to so many diverse graphic styles, which inspired me to blend techniques in my own way," said Jaski. His graphic novel, titled "Maryam," which explores the loss and grief of war, blends Marvel-style design with a transition to stark black-and-white visuals for a dramatic, immersive feel.

"Seeing the students take ownership of the history-making process is always the best part of a class," said Dr. Walther. "In this class, they interviewed a member of their family or a community member, and translated those memories into a graphic novel. Although I guided them through the process of creatively engaging with their own history in conversation with historical texts, they were the ones who made this class all that it could be." "We taught each other, shared resources, and pushed each other to improve. There was a beautiful sense of collaboration," shared Jaski, who was also able to offer his peers support through his role as an assistant in the Innovation Lab, a library-based technology lab with specialized software and equipment. "Many students booked sessions with me to brainstorm, finalize their edits, and polish their visuals," he added.

The course culminated in an exhibit of student work in the Library, which, due to its essential role in supporting the class, had become an extension of the classroom. "It played a key role in this course, both in terms of accessing graphic novels and providing space for collaboration," Jaski explained. "A lot of students used the library as a creative space for drafting, scanning, and editing their graphic novels." "The class was made possible through the ongoing support of the library staff, who helped the students at every stage of the process," said Dr. Walther.

In addition to advice provided by Laws and Jaski, Library Coordinator Mirta Lendić organised the display space, printed and bound the novels, and created materials to help promote the display campus-wide.

Autism Parents Platform launched at The Pearl Qatar for inclusive support

FROM PAGE 1

It also serves as a trailblazing model, offering comprehensive support for individuals with autism and those facing sensory and behavioural challenges in a safe, welcoming environment.

"We do workshops and training for anyone who wants to be autism-friendly—places, businesses, or even service providers and caregivers. We now support more than 500 families, and every day, we offer different activities," Al-Hitmi added.

Yasser Al-Jaidah, Chief Executive Officer of UDC, highlighted that the company's support for the initiative is part of its broader commitment to building inclusive, sustainable communities that promote social unity and equal opportunities for all.



Minister of Social Development and Family HE Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al-Nuaimi and other officials at the event.

Autism House provides an all-encompassing support system that includes family services, sensory therapies, and tailored educational and training programs.

Conceived as a versatile, multi-functional facility, Autism House provides an all-encompassing support system that includes family services, sensory therapies, and tailored educational and training programs. These offerings are carefully designed for different age groups and delivered by highly qualified specialists. Moreover, the center aims to function as an active connector—bridging families, professionals, and institutions to foster a resilient and collaborative community support network.

The launch event also spotlighted the resilience and dedication of parents who turned a personal journey into a national movement for awareness, inclusion, and empowerment. Looking ahead, the organisation hopes to expand beyond The Pearl Qatar, with plans to establish future branches in Al-Wakrah and Al-Khor to reach wider communities.

Qatar calls on int'l community to continue providing support to Afghan people

GENEVA: The State of Qatar has called on the international community to continue mobilizing financial and technical resources and to fully fund the Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan to help ensure a dignified life for the Afghan people.

This came in a statement delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Delegation of the State of Qatar to the United Nations (UN) Office in Geneva Juhara bint Abdulaziz Al Suwaidi during her participation in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan held as part of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva.

Al Suwaidi affirmed the State of Qatar's continued commitment as an active international partner, highlighting that through its mediation efforts and by hosting the Special Envoys on Afghanistan meetings under the auspices of the UN, the State of Qatar succeeded in enhancing international consensus on many key issues and continued to provide humanitarian and development aid to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Afghan people.

Al Suwaidi affirmed the State of Qatar's continued commitment as an active international partner, highlighting that through its mediation efforts and by hosting the Special Envoys on Afghanistan meetings under the auspices of the UN, the State of Qatar succeeded in enhancing international consensus on many key issues and continued to provide humanitarian and development aid.

She highlighted the State of Qatar's commitment to including human rights issues in its discussions with Afghan parties, particularly in supporting and promoting the participation of Afghan women in the peacebuilding process, ensuring their right to education and equal employment opportunities, as well as protecting the rights of all segments of Afghan society.

The Afghan people endured decades of conflict, natural disasters, and terrorism, she added, pointing out that Afghanistan is currently facing numerous humanitarian, social, political, security, and economic challenges, which in turn affect efforts to promote and protect human rights.



Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Delegation of Qatar to UN Office in Geneva Juhara bint Abdulaziz Al Suwaidi speaking at the event

The Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Delegation of the State of Qatar to the UN Office stressed that addressing these challenges requires intensified efforts to rebuild Afghan institutions, ensure continued humanitarian and development assistance for the Afghan people, and maintain dialogue and engagement with all Afghan parties to reach solutions that foster greater stability and growth. — *QNA*

Qatar Airways flies F1 drivers and team principals to 'F1 The Movie' Premiere in NYC

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Airways, the Global Partner and Official Airline of Formula 1, yesterday hosted Formula 1 drivers and team principals on a Qatar Airways charter flight from the FORMULA 1 PIRELLI CANADIAN GRAND PRIX 2025 to New York City. The teams had the opportunity to view the highly anticipated premiere of the upcoming summer season's film: Apple Original Films' 'F1 The Movie'. The movie, from Warner Bros. Pictures, will be in international theatres from 25 June 2025, and in North America from 27 June 2025.

The Boeing 777-300ER flight departed from Montréal–Trudeau International Airport (YUL) and arrived at John F. Kennedy International (JFK) earlier today, transporting stars of the sport ahead of their appearance on the red carpet at tonight's world premiere.



Qatar Airways crew with the F1 drivers and team principals during the trip.

Guests experienced Qatar Airways' world-class service and award-winning Qsuite business class featuring lie-flat beds, sliding privacy doors, and customisable seating for groups travelling together. Throughout the journey, the group were able to stay connected using Starlink's high-speed Wi-Fi.

In partnership with Qatar Airways, Warner Bros. Pictures, Apple Original Films, and Formula 1, the premiere was held at Radio City Music Hall this evening and featured appearances by filmmakers, cast, soundtrack artists, and special guests.

Filmed during multiple Formula 1 races over previous seasons, Qatar Airways' branding is featured throughout the movie, reflecting the airline's growing presence in the world of elite motorsport. As the Official Partner of both the film and its premiere, Qatar Airways is proud to be part of this global cinematic celebration.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Thierry Antinori, said: "Our partnership with Formula 1 continues to be an extraordinary platform to showcase Qatar Airways' commitment to innovation, excellence, and unforgettable experiences. Flying stars of the sport to the movie premiere was more than just a journey, it was a celebration of sport, storytelling and global connection. As the Official Partner of the film and its premiere, we're proud to bring the world of Formula 1 to life both on screen and in the sky."

MOCI announces recall of Mercedes G-Class, 2024 model

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in cooperation with Nasser Bin Khaled and Sons Automobiles, Qatar's Mercedes dealership, has announced the recall of Mercedes G-Class, 2024 model, as ESP software control unit does not correspond to the current series production configuration causing engine indicator light not be displayed as intended in the event of an independent hardware fault in the ESP system.

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 coordinate 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.

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee (QAR)	Tender Bond Value (QAR)	Bid Closing Date
QF-RFQ-890	Provision of Consultancy Services for Architectural, Engineering Design & Construction Supervision to QF on Call-off Basis for 3 Years with option to Extend for 1 More Year	1,000.00	100,000.00	July 8, 2025, 2:00 PM
QF-RFQ-875	Provision for Headless CMS Service for QF Communications on Call off basis for 3 years with option to extend for 1 more year	500.00	N/A	July 10, 2025, 2:00 PM

Qatar Foundation (QF) Procurement Directorate is inviting companies to participate in the above listed public tenders. To receive the tender documents, please follow the below steps:

1) **Supplier Registration** It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website at https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration to complete the Supplier Registration process.

   Tender Fee: Interested bidders can Sign in by visiting this link https://suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee online.

   All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

   Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **June 17th to 24th, 2025**.

2) All bidders, who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.

3) Technical and commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier Portal as per instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.

   - The commercial bid must be valid for **180 days** from Bid Closing Date.
   - The commercial bid must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **180 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents).
   - The successful tenderer will be required to submit a performance bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
   - Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in below link: https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration

VCUarts Qatar opens registration for summer art & design programs

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Department of Community and Continuing Education at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) has announced the opening of registration for its highly anticipated summer art and design programs, which will take place during July and August.

These programs aim to nurture creativity, develop technical skills, and build self-confidence, offering outstanding and inspiring educational experiences for children aged 8 to 14 and for high school students aged 16 and above. Summer Program for High School Students (Ages 16+) will be running from July 13 to July 31, 2025, the high school program will take place Sunday to Thursday, from 10am to 1pm. This intensive, three-week hands-on program introduces students to the academic disciplines offered at VCUarts Qatar: graphic design, interior design, painting and printmaking, and kinetic imaging. An optional fourth week, from August 3 to 7, 2025, focuses on developing students' personal art portfolios—an essential component for applications to art and design universities.

Participants will engage in practical projects, critique sessions, and collaborative exercises that foster creative thinking, communication skills, and technical abilities—all within an inspiring environment at a leading design education institution. Tariq, a participant in the 2024 program, said, "Before this program, I wasn't sure what I wanted to study. Now I know I want to pursue interior design—and I'm excited to apply to VCUarts Qatar."

The Summer Program for Children (Ages 8–14) is designed for children beginning to explore and refine their artistic talents, this program runs from July 13 to 24, 2025, Sunday to Thursday, 10am to 1pm. Led by artist and designer Samam Azzam, the two-week program includes interactive workshops with a variety of themes aimed at encouraging creativity through fun and structured exploration. Children will gain new skills in areas such as drawing, storytelling, and digital illustration, while also strengthening their focus, imagination, and self-confidence.

Park Hyatt Doha appoints new Marketing and Communications Director

THE PENINSULA

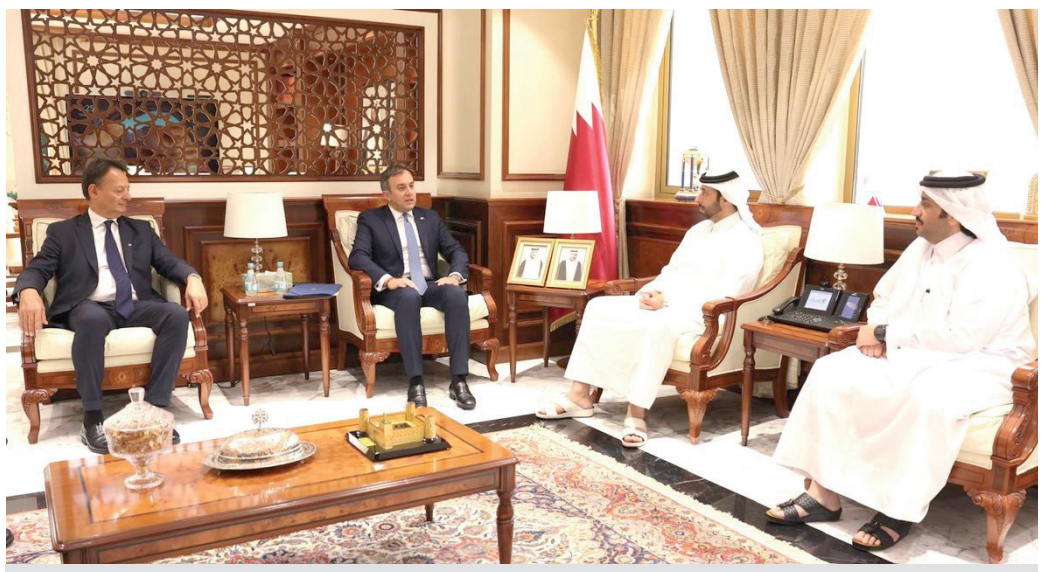
DOHA: Park Hyatt Doha announces the appointment of Pinar Kirlar Kaya ***(pictured)*** as the hotel's new Director of Marketing and Communications. With over 18 years of experience in hospitality marketing, Pinar brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of success with world-renowned hotel brands across Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

Pinar has built a dynamic and progressive career in hospitality, beginning with marketing roles at Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus with Hilton. She then advanced to become Pre-opening Marketing Manager at Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Downtown,



followed by leadership positions as Cluster Director of Marketing & Communications for Radisson Royal Hotel Dubai and Radisson Blu Resort Fujairah in the UAE. In her new role at Park Hyatt Doha, Pinar will lead all marketing, communications, digital, and social media strategies, with a particular emphasis on showcasing the hotel's food and beverage venues and cultivating luxury collaborations. Her efforts will focus on enhancing the hotel's positioning as a refined and culturally inspired luxury destination in Msheireb Downtown Doha.

"I'm excited to join Park Hyatt Doha and work with a team so passionate about creating memorable luxury guest experiences in Msheireb Downtown Doha. I look forward to sharing the story of the hotel and this vibrant destination in new and engaging ways, connecting with guests through creative and meaningful campaigns," said Pinar.



Qatar, Hellenic Republic discuss bilateral relations

Minister of Municipality H E Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al-Attiyah met yesterday with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic H E Tasos Chatzivasileiou, and his accompanying delegation, who are currently visiting the country. During the meeting, bilateral relations between the two countries were discussed, along with ways to strengthen and develop them to achieve the common interests of the two friendly countries in areas of mutual concern.

Awqaf Ministry celebrates graduation of new batch of female Quran teachers

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs held a graduation ceremony for the fourth and fifth qualifying courses for female Quran teachers recently.

This event is part of the Ministry's ongoing efforts to enhance Quranic education, disseminate its sciences among women, and qualify Qatari female cadres to serve and teach the Holy Quran.

These courses aim to empower female teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the Holy Quran and its Tajweed rules, thereby contributing to the Ministry's mission of spreading Islamic culture and reinforcing religious values in society.

The ceremony was attended by a number of Ministry officials, along with the graduates and their families. The participants who successfully completed the training programs were honoured.

Addressing the ceremony, Assistant Director of the Women's Activity Department for Quranic Affairs Lolwa Salem Al-Ghurab highlighting the importance of this role in building a generation with Quranic morals.

She explained that the fourth qualifying course saw 139 female students apply, with 37 accepted (including 7 Qataris), and 21 students completed the requirements and graduated. As for the fifth course, 302 female students registered, 50 were accepted (including 5 Qataris), and 36 students successfully passed the course, achieving a success rate of 75%. She concluded her speech by praying for the graduates' success and steadfastness in carrying this great message.

Graduate Sara Al-Qashouti delivered a heartfelt speech on behalf of her colleagues, expressing her pride in this blessed moment. She described the graduation as a turning point in their academic and advocacy journey, as the course redefined the role of a Quran teacher not merely as a conveyor of knowledge, but as an educator, a role model, and a builder of souls.

She extended her deep gratitude to the teachers, supervisors, and coordinators, emphasizing that this stage is just the beginning of a long journey in serving the Holy Quran.

Northwestern Qatar leads major presence at ICA 75th conference, amplifying Global South scholarship

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Northwestern University in Qatar further deepened its global scholarly engagement at the 75th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), held from June 12 to 16, 2025, in Denver, Colorado. Returning to the ICA stage as both a scholarly contributor and sponsor, it built on the momentum from last year's conference, leading critical global conversations.

This year's conference, themed "Disrupting and Consolidating Communication Research," brought together thousands of communication scholars, researchers, practitioners, and institutions from around the world. As a key contributor, Northwestern Qatar organized several sessions, advanced research on media, identity, and transregional communication, and presented a range of interdisciplinary studies rooted in the perspectives and experiences of the Global South.

This year, the university also served as the Opening Reception Sponsor. "Our engagement at ICA this year was especially meaningful as we broadened the scope and depth of our contributions," said Marwan M. Kraidy, dean and CEO of Northwestern Qatar. "It's been inspiring to see our faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and alumni help shape the intellectual direction of the conference by organizing sessions and presenting groundbreaking research across a wide range of topics. Building on the foundation we laid last year, we returned with a stronger commitment to amplifying scholarship on the Global South."

Presentations from Northwestern Qatar included a reflection by Chafic Tony Najem, global postdoctoral scholar at #IAS_NUQ, on alienation and epistemology in political confrontation, Dean Kraidy's mapping of the Arab–African nexus, and Bergère's exploration of youth theorization through the lens of Guinean writer Williams Sassine.

The university's engagement began with a preconference titled "Echoes and Overlaps in Arab and African Thought on Media and Culture." Co-organized by Dean Kraidy and Clovis Bergère, director of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South at Northwestern Qatar (#IAS_NUQ), and Nabil Echchaibi of the University of Colorado Boulder, the event explored intellectual intersections between the Arab world and Africa.

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Northwestern Qatar scholars further expanded these dialogues into digital and geopolitical terrains on the third day. In a roundtable on "InterAsian Digitalities," chaired by Dean Kraidy and organized by Bergère. Harsha Man Maharjan, global postdoctoral scholar at #IAS_NUQ, examined the transnational flow of identification systems alongside other scholars from around the globe involved in the InterAsian Digitalities project at #IAS_NUQ. At the same time, Dean Kraidy also participated in a separate panel on media and conflict, presenting a paper on "Digital Pyropoesis and Rogue Affects."

Faculty from across academic programs contributed with various research and creative work. In a paper titled "Advancing a Measurement Tool for Sports Diplomacy and Sportswashing in the News: The Case of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022," Associate Professor Claudia Kozman and Professor George Anghelcev explored media narratives around global sporting events.

Meanwhile, Associate Professor Banu Akdenizli joined a panel discussion on the works of Klaus Krippendorff, examining his enduring Global contributions to communication research. Assistant Professor Heather Jaber participated in a panel on "The 3M Framework and Region as Disruption."

Al Misnad receives Greece Deputy FM

DOHA: Minister of State for International Cooperation H E Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad met yesterday with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic H E Tasos Chatzivasileiou, who is visiting the country.

The meeting discussed cooperation relations between the two countries and ways to support and enhance them. The meeting also discussed the developments in the region, in addition to a number of topics of common concern. Director of the Department of European Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs H E Fahad bin Mohammed Kafoud attended the meeting.

Minister of State for International Cooperation H E Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad also met on yesterday Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the State of Qatar H E Alvaro Renedo Zalba.

The meeting discussed cooperation relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. The meeting also discussed the developments in the region, in addition to a number of topics of common concern. — *QNA*

Qatar Airways partners with Yannick Alléno to elevate culinary experience

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Airways has announced a new gastronomic collaboration with acclaimed French chef Yannick Alléno, one of the world's most celebrated culinary figures.

With 17 MICHELIN stars across 19 restaurants in seven countries, Chef Alléno brings his visionary approach to modern cuisine to the airline's award-winning experience — from the skies to its most exclusive lounges.

This culinary partnership reaffirms Qatar Airways' commitment to delivering a refined, multi-sensory journey for its passengers through elegant dining, impeccable service, and culturally rich storytelling at its core.

Qatar Airways Chief Retail and Hospitality Officer, Thabet Musleh, said: "At Qatar Airways, we are constantly striving to innovate and collaborate with the best in their fields. Chef Yannick Alléno – one of the most celebrated names in global gastronomy, represents a benchmark for excellence that reflects our shared passion for innovation, sophistication, and the art of hospitality."



Qatar Airways Chief Retail and Hospitality Officer, Thabet Musleh, and Chef Yannick Alléno during the partnership agreement signing.

This culinary partnership reaffirms Qatar Airways' commitment to delivering a refined, multi-sensory journey for its passengers through elegant dining, impeccable service, and culturally rich storytelling at its core.

Chef Yannick Alléno, said: "Partnering with Qatar Airways, whose reputation for excellence is undisputed, is a true honour. Together, we have crafted menus that reflect our shared values and aim to leave travellers with a lasting impression and a timeless moment.

Blending French refinement with global influences, the bespoke menus curated by Chef Alléno will be introduced in First and Business Class, and later extended to select premium lounges. These menus are a celebration of l'art de vivre – the French art of living and reflect both brands' dedication to craftsmanship, and hospitality.

Passengers can look forward to several remarkable culinary experiences, including the opening of a Pavyllon restaurant in the prestigious First Class Lounge at Hamad International Airport in Doha, offering diners a seat at the counter facing an open kitchen – a signature of Alléno's "gastronomic counter" concept.

The introduction of exclusive creations for Qatar Airways lounges at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport.

The debut of First and Business Class menus on selected flights between Paris and Doha, showcasing Alléno's interpretation of modern French cuisine.

Each dish tells a story, inviting passengers to engage with the essence of ingredient-driven cooking, fermentation, and technique – all hallmarks of Alléno's culinary identity.

Through this collaboration, Qatar Airways reaffirms its mission to elevate the art of living at altitude. By joining forces with one of the most innovative chefs of our time, the airline transforms inflight dining into an unforgettable cultural and gastronomic experience.

Already renowned for its partnerships with the world's top chefs, Qatar Airways continues to redefine onboard dining, setting a new benchmark for hospitality and flavour in the sky.

QU's CBE achieves advance level globally in PIR edition 2025

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The College of Business and Economics (CBE) at Qatar University (QU) has been recognised for its societal impact and commitment to sustainability as part of the sixth edition of the Positive Impact Rating (PIR), launched on 10 June 2025, at the PIR Global Summit 2025 and acknowledged during the UN PRME Global Forum.

The CBE at QU is one of the 86 business schools from 30 countries participating in this year's edition, which saw a record engagement of 17,167 student responses, a 13 percent increase from the previous year. The school achieved Level 4 out of 5, making it a transforming institution within the PIR framework.

The PIR is a global, student- and faculty-centered initiative that assesses business schools' dedication to sustainability and ethical practices. This year's survey evaluated 86 leading business schools across 30 countries, reflecting students' recognition of their schools' contributions to social and environmental impact. With a score of 4 out of 5, the CBE has been classified as a "Transforming School," highlighting its commitment to energizing, educating, and engaging students with purpose—and to developing competent, socially responsible graduates who strive to make a positive impact in society.

Participants evaluated how the college addresses societal and sustainability challenges and how well it prepares its students to become responsible leaders. The data collection was organized and led by student representatives who distributed the survey to the college students.

Prof. Rana Sobh, Dean of the CBE, commented, "This recognition reflects our commitment to developing responsible leaders and creating sustainable impact through business education. At the CBE at QU, we are proud to be shaping the future by embedding ethics, responsibility, and sustainability at the heart of everything we do. This achievement reinforces what we continuously strive for—our motto: "Education with Impact."

The PIR uses 20 questions grouped into seven dimensions across three overarching areas: Energizing, Educating, and Engaging.

These results place schools into one of five levels, three of which are published: Level 3 (Progressing), Level 4 (Transforming), and Level 5 (Pioneering).

Prof. Thomas Dyllick, PIR Founder and Member of the Supervisory Board, stated, "While future students now have an alternative source to select their business school, schools refer to the PIR primarily to measure and communicate their transformational progress. The voice of the student has become a true source of value."



Qatar sponsors 48th Telders International Law Moot Court Competition in The Hague

The State of Qatar contributed to the 48th edition of the Telders International Law Moot Court Competition 2025, held at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, in partnership with Leiden University. The final round was attended by prominent legal and diplomatic figures, including a group of judges from the International Court of Justice. Qatar's contribution reflects its commitment to supporting international law, raising students' awareness of global legal issues, and fostering the development of young legal talents in this field.

EU must up pressure on Israel to end Gaza 'slaughter': MSF

BRUSSELS: Medical aid group MSF called on the EU yesterday to exert pressure on Israel to allow unfettered humanitarian access to Gaza and end the "slaughter" of the Palestinian population.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) made the appeal in a letter to the EU's top officials and its 27 member states, whose foreign ministers are to address the conflict on Monday next week.

The open letter shared at a Brussels news conference called for an immediate end to the withholding of aid on security grounds, which MSF said amounted to "collective punishment -- a war crime".

The group further called for steps to boost medical evacuations, saying around 13,000 people, including more than 4,500 children, were in urgent need.

"Our message to the leaders is simple. We urge you to use all political, economic, and diplomatic tools to exert real pressure on Israel to stop the carnage in Gaza and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid," MSF International's secretary general Christopher Lockyear told reporters.

The EU has launched a review into whether Israel is complying with human rights principles laid out in its association agreement with the bloc.

The bloc's foreign ministers will address the matter -- and potential consequences -- in their meeting next week.

MSF's letter said that "the scale of suffering in Gaza demands more than your empty rhetoric".

Israel, after pounding most of Gaza into rubble following Hamas's attack of October 7, 2023, cut off all food and other vital supplies to the besieged territory for more than two months starting in March.

Israel eventually let in some aid -- but through a controversial US-backed initiative coordinated with the Israeli military, a setup the UN says violates basic humanitarian principles.

Dozens of Palestinians have been killed trying to reach distribution points.

Lockyear took aim at unspecified European countries for continuing to supply Israel with weapons as the death toll in Gaza has surpassed 55,000 people, the majority of them civilians.

"Will you continue issuing empty statements of concern over the situation in Gaza while sending the arms that are killing and maiming the children that we are treating every day?" Lockyear asked.

MSF teams shared accounts of the critical conditions on the ground, with medics facing constant evacuation orders and the threat of air strikes.



A column of smoke rises amid Israeli bombardment in the east of Jabalia in Gaza Strip yesterday. (AFP)

"We don't have enough hospital beds, there's no way we can respond to the needs," said Virginia Moneti, an MSF doctor who returned from the territory last week.

"This is not sustainable, this is not human, this has to stop," she said. — ***AFP***

Iraq and Italy warn of serious repercussions of military escalation in the region

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein discussed regional developments and the repercussions of the ongoing escalation in the region in a phone call today with his Italian counterpart, Antonio Tajani.

According to a statement from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, Hussein stressed the importance of halting attacks from all parties and the need to maintain Iraq's neutrality and distance it from the conflict. He also stressed that any violation of Iraqi airspace by Israel or any other party constitutes an unacceptable violation of sovereignty and a flagrant breach of international law.

Italian Minister expressed his country's concern over the developments, affirming Italy's support for Iraq's security and stability, and warning that the continued escalation could lead to serious consequences at the regional and international levels. — ***QNA***

Protectionism must not be allowed to derail green transition, energy security, says Malaysian PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Protectionism and geopolitical tensions must not be allowed to threaten the transition to green technologies and energy security, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said here yesterday.

Considering the long-term nature of these challenges, efforts to provide security against such disruptions must be a top priority to ensure the stability of the global economy and the continuation of human growth and development, Anwar said in his keynote address at the Energy Asia 2025 conference.

"Geopolitical tensions, retaliatory tariffs, and disrupted supply chains have fueled uncertainty; eroding the predictability, reliability and stability that global trade and economic systems once offered," he said.

"This fragility is perhaps most evident in the energy and climate domain. Rather than fostering collaboration, we are witnessing polarizing policy shifts driven by strategic competition, even as energy security remains out of reach for many," he said.

As part of efforts to build resilience against such disruptions, Anwar suggested a clear and coherent financial architecture that inspires investor confidence and mobilizes greater capital flows into renewable energy projects across Southeast Asia, as well as upgrading electricity grids, which will pave the way for an accelerated adoption of green technologies.

"This is critical, given that in 2023, Southeast Asia attracted only 2 percent of global clean energy spending -- a stark contrast for a region endowed with immense potential in renewable energy wind in Vietnam, hydropower in Laos, solar in Malaysia and geothermal energy in Indonesia," he said.

"At the recent ASEAN Summit, we took a significant step forward by accelerating the ASEAN Power Grid (APG) initiative through an enhanced memorandum of agreement and the establishment of a dedicated APG financing facility network. This will enhance cross-border funding flows and bring us closer to a truly integrated regional energy market," he explained.

Anwar also noted the progress that Malaysia has made as chair of ASEAN in putting dialogue and multilateralism first and building strong ties with major energy exporters in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), noting the successful inaugural ASEAN-GCC-China summit last month.

"Here in Asia, we hold fast to the belief that diplomacy prevails over autocracy, and healthy competition can coexist with mutually-beneficial outcomes," he added.

The conference gathers representatives from 38 industries across more than 60 countries and regions. — ***XINHUA***

Vietnam lawmakers abolish district-level government

HANOI: Vietnam's National Assembly approved amendments to the constitution on Monday to abolish an entire level of government, as part of major reforms to the way the communist country is run.

Lawmakers voted unanimously to do away with district level administration, reducing the governmental structure to two layers -- provinces and communes.

The move is the latest in a series of drastic changes to Vietnamese government aimed at saving billions of dollars in expenditure by cutting one in five public sector jobs.

Last week lawmakers in the assembly -- a rubber-stamp body in a one-party system -- voted to merge most of the country's provinces and cities, cutting nearly 80,000 jobs.

In February they slashed the number of government ministries, resulting in 23,000 job losses.

The dramatic changes echo the steps taken by US President Donald Trump and Argentina's Javier Milei to take an axe to government spending.

But in a communist system where working for the state has long meant a job for life, the reforms piloted by party chief To Lam have caused some unease.

Lam, the Communist Party general secretary and top national leader, has said the drastic restructuring is needed if Vietnam is to achieve "fast, stable and sustainable development" in its quest to be a middle-income country by 2030.

The National Assembly also voted to reorganise the lowest level of government, reducing the number of communes from over 10,000 to around 3,300.

With this "important reform", the size of communes will be expanded, minister of Interior Pham Thi Thanh Tra said.

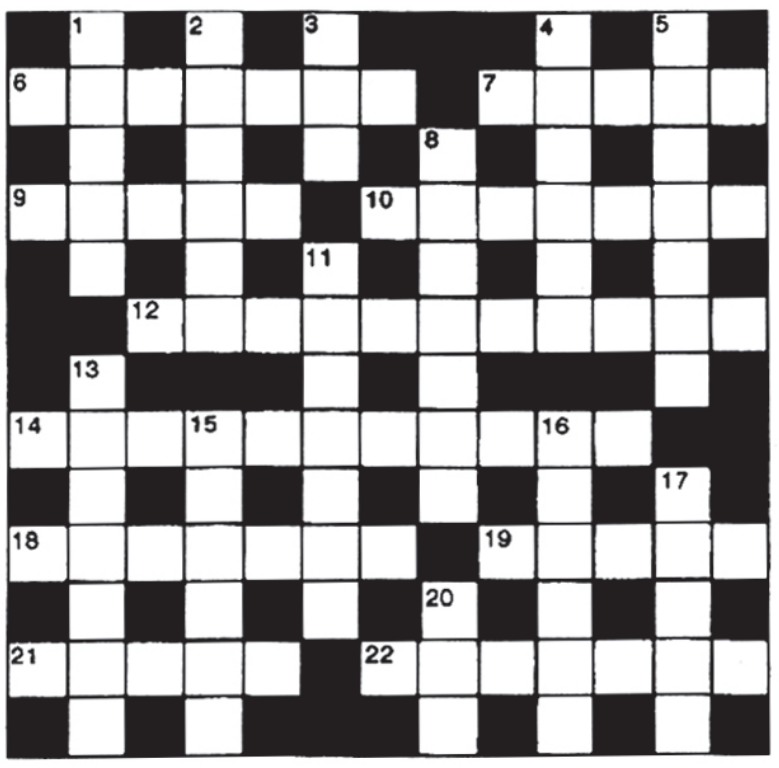
The move will mean eliminating around 120,000 part-time jobs at commune level, Tra said last week. — ***AFP***

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

6. I am going around in torn clothing (7)
7. A fibre preparation, not long-lasting (5)
9. Manor transformed into a sort of villa (5)
10. As he got confused, he was captured (7)
12. Not plain stupid, apparently (6,5)
14. What an accusation of body-snatching would be? (5,6)
18. A dear old thing, perhaps! (7)
19. A rule some of us are ignoring (5)
21. This age is very far from first-class (5)
22. Bangs on the head (7)

USE THIS SPACE TO WORK OUT THE CLUES



DOWN

1. The ghost of William Shakespeare, some say (5)
2. Harm with fairy music (6)
3. Finish within ten days (3)
4. Not always brief (3,3)
5. They hold record in trade (7)
8. A struggle to maintain faith (4,3)
11. Bill may be so conceited (5,2)
13. Stone from Tangier (7)
15. Such a threat is hardly barefaced (6)
16. They are carefully prepared for putting on (6)
17. Bird that returns in winter generally (5)
20. Naturally it lacks refinement (3)

USE THIS SPACE TO WORK OUT THE CLUES

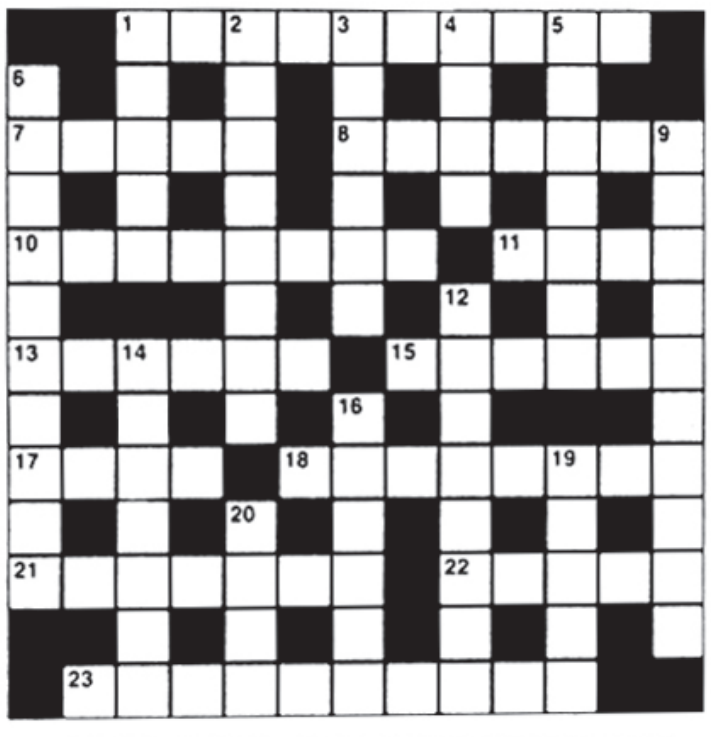
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7. Kindly (5)
8. Offender (7)
10. Last (8)
11. Uniform (4)
13. Substitute (6)
15. Develop (6)
17. Concerning (4)
18. Four-thrins of air (8)
21. Rascally (7)
22. Accumulate (5)
23. Backward view (10)

DOWN

1. Vision (5)
2. Disaster (5)
3. Rouse (6)
4. Identity (4)
5. Disentangle (7)
6. Basis (10)
9. Compassion (10)
12. Vanquished (8)
14. Introduction (7)
16. Optulence (6)
19. Bestow (5)
20. Row (4)



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EDITORIAL

Protecting rights of domestic workers

ON the eve of International Domestic Workers' Day which is marked on June 16, Qatar has sent a powerful message to the world and that is protecting the rights of domestic workers is not just a legal obligation but a moral and societal priority.

With the introduction of Law No. (15) of 2017, Qatar has made significant strides toward institutionalizing protections for one of the most vulnerable segments of its labor force. These reforms are more than symbolic—they are foundational to reshaping how domestic work is valued and safeguarded.

Speaking at a joint event hosted by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al-Kuwari, NHRC Vice-Chairman, emphasized that nearly 170,000 domestic workers—constituting over 8% of Qatar's non-Qatari labor force—form an essential part of both the economy and the social fabric. He rightly framed their protection as integral to human dignity and social justice, echoing the core values of the Qatari Constitution: equality, benevolence, and respect for all.

Key measures, such as the establishment of 14 visa centers in manpower exporting countries and continued advocacy for legal literacy, underscore Qatar's intention to act not only within its borders but also at the source of the labor migration process. These centers play a crucial role in preempting abuse and ensuring informed, consensual employment arrangements.

Roula Hamati of the IOM highlighted another critical dimension: while legislative reforms have improved conditions and introduced essential rights like freedom of movement and a minimum wage, challenges persist. Language barriers, unfamiliar legal systems, and economic pressures continue to prevent many workers from asserting their rights. A law, after all, is only as effective as its implementation.

Qatar's reforms mark a meaningful departure from outdated labor models. But the journey is ongoing. Ensuring justice for domestic workers will require not only continued legal evolution but also stronger enforcement, more accessible legal aid, and greater cultural integration.

By recognizing domestic workers as integral to the Qatari family and not merely economic actors, Qatar is setting a precedent in the region. This moment must be built upon—through deeper reforms, community awareness, and an unwavering commitment to human rights for all.

Sorry, Mr Gates, your billions won't save Africa



TAFI MHAKA
AL JAZEERA

ON June 2 while addressing an audience in the Nelson Mandela Hall at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Bill Gates – the world's second richest person and co-chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – announced that a significant portion of his nearly $200bn fortune would be directed towards improving primary healthcare and education across Africa over the next two decades. This extraordinary philanthropic pledge is expected to fulfil a commitment he made on May 8 to donate "virtually all" of his wealth before the Gates Foundation permanently closes on December 31, 2045.

Former Mozambique first lady Graca Machel, a renowned humanitarian and global advocate for women's and children's rights, attended the event and welcomed the announcement. Describing the continent's current situation as at a "moment of crisis", she declared: "We are counting on Mr Gates's steadfast commitment to continue walking this path of transformation alongside us."

The Gates Foundation has operated in Africa for more than two decades, primarily in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. Over the years, it has funded a range of programmes in areas such as nutrition, healthcare, agriculture, water and sanitation, gender equality and financial inclusion. In agriculture alone, it has spent about $6bn on development initiatives. Despite this substantial investment, the foundation's efforts have been the subject of widespread criticism both in Africa and internationally.

In particular, serious concerns have been raised about the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the foundation's agricultural interventions – especially the Green Revolution model it has promoted through AGRA, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. Co-founded in 2006 by the Rockefeller and Gates foundations, AGRA aimed to improve food security and reduce poverty for 30 million smallholder households in 11 sub-Saharan African countries by 2021. Nineteen years on, the agricultural transformation Gates envisioned – driven by American capital and know-how – has failed to materialise.

Experts argue that the Green Revolution model has not only fallen short on alleviating hunger and poverty but may in fact also be exacerbating both. Problems commonly cited include rising farmer debt, increased pesticide use, environmental degradation, declining crop diversity and a growing corporate stranglehold over Africa's food systems.

The limitations of Gates's agricultural ambitions are, arguably, unsurprising. The model is rooted in the American Green Revolution of the 1940s and 1950s – a technological shift linked to settler-colonial agricultural systems and racialised power structures. Gates's philanthropic ideology, shaped by this legacy, risks reproducing systems of dependency and ownership in the Global South.

At the core of the Green Revolution, past and present, is a belief in the supremacy of Western science and innovation. This worldview justifies the transfer of proprietary technologies to developing countries while simultaneously devaluing local knowledge systems and Indigenous expertise.

Despite its rhetorical commitment to equity, the Gates Foundation often prioritises and financially benefits researchers, pharmaceutical firms and agritech

> *Yes, Gates's decision to donate most of his fortune to Africa is, of course, admirable. But as an outsider immersed in the logic of "white saviourism" and "philanthrocapitalism", he cannot fix a continent's self-inflicted wounds.*

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corporations in the West far more than the smallholder farmers and local specialists it claims to serve. Kenyan agroecologist Celestine Otieno has described this model as "food slavery" and a "second phase of colonisation".

Meanwhile, the foundation's global health programmes have also drawn criticism for promoting technical, apolitical solutions that ignore the deeply rooted historical and political determinants of health inequity. Just as troubling is the fact that many of these interventions are implemented in poor communities with minimal transparency or local accountability.

As Gwilym David Blunt, a political philosopher and lecturer in international politics, notes, transnational philanthropy – exemplified by the Gates Foundation – grants the ultra-wealthy disproportionate power over public priorities. This undermines the principle of autonomy that undergirds any vision of distributive global justice, including the right of Africans to shape their own futures.

All of the African countries working with the Gates Foundation continue to face the enduring problems associated with foreign-designed economic interventions and chronic dependence on aid. South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria, for instance, are all contending with the fallout from United States President Donald Trump's cuts to the US Agency for International

Still, Gates's philanthropy is only one piece of a much larger, more entrenched problem.

No amount of aid can compensate for the absence of visionary, ethical and accountable leadership – or the political instability that plagues parts of the continent. In this vacuum, figures like Gates step in. But these interventions can be politically expedient and risk concealing deeper systemic dysfunction.

On June 1, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed awarded Gates the Grand Order of Merit of Ethiopia in recognition of the foundation's 25 years of contributions to the country. Yet even Gates would likely acknowledge that Ethiopia remains mired in corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency and persistent mismanagement of public funds.

Despite overwhelming evidence, Abiy continues to deny any wrongdoing by his military, insisting in parliament that his forces have not committed war crimes. Such claims only underscore the deep crisis of leadership Ethiopia faces.

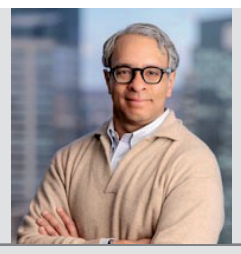
What Ethiopia – and many other African states – urgently need is not another influx of Western money but a radical overhaul of governance. Indeed, Gates's contributions may paradoxically help prop up the very systems of impunity and dysfunction that block meaningful progress.

This is why Machel's response to Gates's announcement was so disappointing. Rather than celebrating the promise of more Western aid, she could have used the moment to speak frankly about Africa's deeper crisis: corrupt, extractive and unaccountable leadership. Her suggestion that Africans should rely indefinitely on foreign benevolence is not only misguided – it also reinforces the very power dynamics that philanthropy claims to disrupt.

Yes, Gates's decision to donate most of his fortune to Africa is, of course, admirable. But as an outsider immersed in the logic of "white saviourism" and "philanthrocapitalism", he cannot fix a continent's self-inflicted wounds. No foreign billionaire can. Only Africans – through transparent, courageous and locally driven leadership – can.

– Tafi Mhaka, a social and political commentator, has a BA Honours degree from the University of Cape Town

How AI and charter schools could close the tutoring gap



GAUTAM MUKUNDA
BLOOMBERG

THE GREATEST school in history isn't Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or any other university you know. And no matter how hard you try, your kids won't get in. Why? Partly because it was so selective it only admitted one student – but mainly because it closed in 336 BC. For me, Aristotle's seven-year tutelage of Alexander is the education against which all others should be judged (after all, more than 2,300 years later we still refer to the lone pupil as "The Great"). It's the ultimate testament to the power of tutoring – a power that artificial intelligence is poised to unlock.

The problem with tutoring is it can't scale. Or it couldn't. Because even as we're besieged by concerns that AI-aided plagiarism is destroying education, we're starting to see evidence that AI-enabled tutoring might supercharge it. Getting the technology right, though, will require lots of real-life experimentation. While there's a limit to how much our traditional public school system allows for this kind of test-and-learn approach, this need creates an opportunity for the country's growing crop of charter schools to make a unique contribution to the future of education.

The wealthy's appreciation of tutoring did not die with Alexander. I paid rent my first year out of college as a private math tutor and today there are a host of companies offering tutoring services, with those at the high end often charging more than $1,000 per hour.

But for every student who can afford tutoring, there are hundreds more who could benefit from it. A meta-analysis of dozens of experiments with K-12 tutoring, conducted with students of all socioeconomic statuses, found that the additional academic attention significantly boosts student performance. And let's say you could overcome the cost issue – with more than 50 million students in US primary and secondary schools, there will never be enough tutors to work with them all.

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Early experiments with AI-based tutoring suggest it might help fill the gap. In a study of three middle schools in Pennsylvania and California, researchers found that a hybrid human-AI tutoring model – where the technology supported human tutors, allowing them to work with many more pupils – generated significant improvements in math performance, with the biggest increases going to the lowest-performing students. And in a study of four high schools in Italy, researchers replaced traditional homework in English classes with interactive sessions with OpenAI's ChatGPT-4 and found that all the AI-aided groups did at least as well as those engaged in traditional homework – with some performing significantly better.

It could help at a college level, too. In a Harvard University physics course, for example, professors trained an AI tutor to work with some students (replacing their normal class time) while others had a traditional instructor-guided class. Students with AI tutors performed better – in fact they learned twice as much – and were more engaged with the lessons than those in the normal class, even though they had less interaction with a human instructor.

The most impressive findings may come from the developing world. Rising Academies, a network of private schools with more than 250,000 students across Africa, has implemented Rori, an AI-based math tutor for students, and Tari, a support system for teachers, both powered by Anthropic's Claude and accessible via WhatsApp. Students who used Rori for two 30-minute sessions twice a week for 8 months showed an improvement in their math performance "equal or greater than a year of schooling." None of this means AI-aided tutoring is a panacea. But it does suggest that such tutors are, if well-designed and implemented, very likely to be helpful even if they remain inferior to the best human options. Since many families can't access or afford traditional tutoring, what matters is if they are better than no tutors at all.

But "well-designed and implemented" is a crucial part of that sentence. We don't yet know what the best practices are for AI tutors. Learning this will require extensive experimentation. And, much as it pains me to say this as a proud product of public schools, that kind of free-form experimentation is likely to be a struggle for public school bureaucracy.

Research by the Department of Education and the Center on Reinventing Public Education at Arizona State University suggests that charter schools, which operate with more freedom about how they staff and teach, are often more innovative than traditional public schools. And because charters are not private schools, they cannot charge tuition or be selective about who they admit. This lets them generate useful data about what does and doesn't work.

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Of course, this doesn't mean that charter schools are better than their public counterparts. Most innovations fail. But however painful failure is for an individual school, it can actually benefit the system because even bad outcomes produce useful information. Successful AI-based tutoring programs pioneered at charters can and will be adopted by public schools, and failed ones avoided. Given the potentially revolutionary change in education AI is driving, learning should be our primary goal – and charters are likely to be our best instrument toward it.

– Gautam Mukunda writes about corporate management and innovation.

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Israeli fire kills 20 waiting for aid in Gaza

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli troops killed 20 people waiting to collect food yesterday, the latest deadly incident near a US-backed aid centre in the Palestinian territory's south.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that "the (Israeli) occupation forces opened fire" near the Al-Alam roundabout in the southern city of Rafah, where many were waiting to reach an aid distribution site.

Bassal said that "20 martyrs and more than 200 wounded by occupation gunfire" were taken to nearby hospitals.

According to the rescue agency, dozens of Palestinians have been killed while trying to reach distribution points operated by the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) since it began operating in late May.

The civil defence agency said more than 20 Palestinian were killed on Saturday near another GHF site.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA has said that Gaza's "entire population" of more than 2 million people was at risk of famine.

The UN and major humanitarian groups have refused to cooperate with GHF over concerns it is designed to cater to Israeli military objectives, with an OCHA spokesperson recently calling the US-backed aid operation a "failure... from a principled humanitarian standpoint".

The health ministry in Gaza said yesterday that 5,139 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on the territory on March 18 following a truce.

The overall death toll in Gaza since the war broke out on October 7, 2023 has reached 55,432 people, according to the health ministry. — ***AFP***

Iran state TV hit as Israeli attacks kill at least 224

TEHRAN: Iran's state broadcaster was briefly knocked off air by an Israeli strike and explosions rang out across Tehran yesterday, after a barrage of Iranian missiles killed 11 people in Israel on the fourth day of an escalating air war.

The sudden flare-up in hostilities has sparked fears of a wider conflict, with British Prime Minister Kier Starmer saying from a G7 summit in Canada that he believed there was "a consensus for de-escalation" among leaders of the club of wealthy democracies.

Israel's strikes have so far killed at least 224 people, including top military commanders, nuclear scientists and civilians, according to Iranian authorities.

Iran has launched several waves of missiles in retaliation, with Iran's Revolutionary Guards warning yesterday of "effective, targeted and more devastating operations" to come.

In Tehran, the live feed of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) was abruptly cut when an Israeli strike hit its building yesterday.

A presenter in the midst of lambasting Israel was forced to flee mid-broadcast when a powerful explosion rocked the building, knocking out the monitors behind her and sending debris and dust falling from the ceiling, footage showed.

Israel had previously issued an evacuation warning for the part of town where IRIB is located.

IRIB resumed its broadcast shortly after the strike, with a senior official at the service saying "the voice of the Islamic revolution... will not be silenced with a military operation".

Explosions could also be heard elsewhere across the capital, including in the west, where a cloud of black smoke billowed into the sky.

After days of repeated strikes, residents appeared to be streaming out of the city, according to social media posts verified by AFP, showing huge traffic jams on the main road heading north.



Smoke billows for the second day from the Shahran oil depot, northwest of Tehran, yesterday. (AFP)

In Israel, Iranian attacks yesterday hit Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak, Petah Tikva and Haifa — leaving behind shattered homes, smouldering wreckage and stunned residents picking through debris.

The death toll in Israel rose by 11 yesterday, the prime minister's office said, bringing the total since Friday to 24.

The figure included three people killed when a missile struck an oil refinery in Haifa on Sunday, according to an Israeli official.

The US State Department warned citizens yesterday not to travel to Israel due to security concerns. — ***AFP***

Death toll in S Africa floods rises to 90

JOHANNESBURG: At least 90 people have died in last week's heavy floods that devastated South Africa's Eastern Cape province, the local government said yesterday, as rescue teams continued searching for more victims.

Thousands of people were left destitute after heavy wind and rains battered the country's most impoverished region at the beginning of the week.

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Friday said the "catastrophic disaster" was due to climate change and estimated the flood waters had reached more than four metres (13 feet) high.

"The latest report has indicated an increase in the number of fatalities from 88 to 90," the Eastern Cape government said in a statement.

Thirty of the victims were children, it said.

Among them were at least six children who were on a school bus that was swept away in the flood. Three students were rescued after clinging to trees.

"About 2,686 residents were left homeless" and were accommodated in temporary shelters, the local government said.

The area worst hit by the floods and subsequent landslides was the city of Mthatha, about 800 kilometres (500 miles) south of Johannesburg. — ***AFP***

Tanzania opposition leader to defend himself in treason trial

NAIROBI: Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu told a court yesterday he had been denied his basic legal rights and that he would defend himself against a treason charge that carries the death penalty.

The fiery politician was detained in April, a move denounced by international rights groups and monitors who have called for his release.

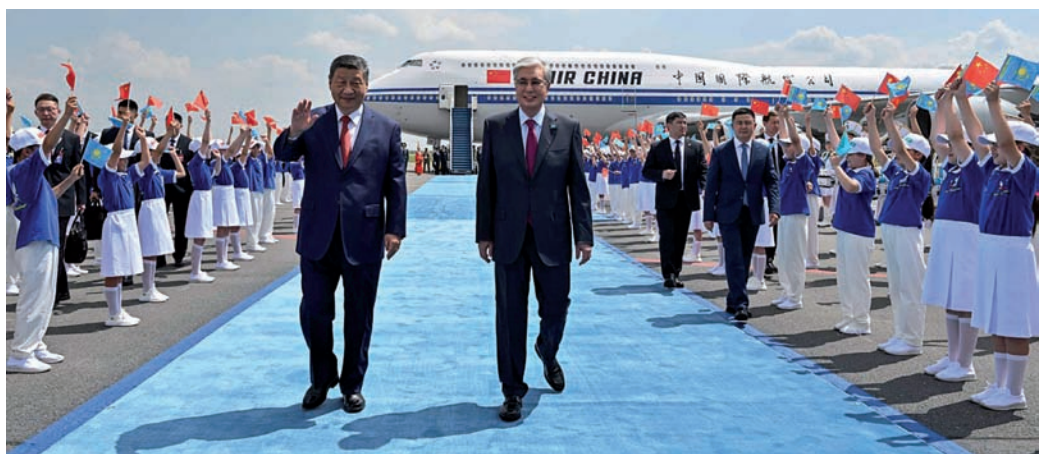
It comes as authorities in the east African country increasingly crack down on Lissu's opposition Chadema party ahead of presidential and parliamentary polls in October. Lissu told a packed courtroom that he had been denied confidential access to his lawyers since his detention.

"All the 68 days they have not been allowed to see me or speak to me," he said.

"It is time to step aside and let me do what I must do. From now on I will be my own lawyer," he said.

Chadema was disqualified from the upcoming elections after it refused to sign an electoral code of conduct.

Lissu has led a forceful charge against the government, vowing his party would not participate in polls without significant electoral reforms. — ***AFP***



Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (right) welcomes China's President Xi Jinping at the airport in Astana yesterday. (AFP)

China's Xi in Kazakhstan for Central Asia summit

ASTANA: Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Kazakhstan yesterday to attend the second China-Central Asia Summit.

He will hold bilateral meetings before the summit tomorrow, according to Kazakhstan's presidency.

Beijing's foreign ministry said yesterday that the meetings "will jointly outline a new blueprint for future cooperation".

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will attend the summit alongside the heads of state of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

The trip is Xi's third overseas this year, following visits to Southeast Asia and Russia.

Central Asia is an important strategic target for China in its Belt and Road initiative .

Xi's visit will "(open) up more room for the joint construction of the Belt and Road", Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said yesterday.

The region is also rich in natural resources, and Chinese investment could facilitate trade with Europe. — ***AFP***

Bangladesh orders fugitive ex-leader to return to face trial

DHAKA: Bangladesh's war crimes court ordered fugitive ex-leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday to return to face trial on charges amounting to crimes against humanity.

Hasina, 77, fled Dhaka by helicopter to India in August 2024 at the culmination of a student-led mass uprising. She has defied an extradition order to return to Bangladesh.

Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024 when Hasina's government launched a crackdown in a failed bid to cling to power, according to the United Nations.

Hasina and former senior figures connected to her ousted government and her now-banned party, the Awami League, are being prosecuted in Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

Prosecutors have filed five charges against Hasina, including abetment, incitement, complicity, facilitation, conspiracy and failure to prevent mass murder — charges that amount to crimes against humanity under Bangladeshi law.

"The court directed the prosecution team to issue a notice as soon as possible summoning them to appear before the court," chief prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam said yesterday. The trial will resume on June 24 without her if she fails to return. The prosecution argues that Hasina ordered security forces, through directives from the interior ministry and police, to crush the protests. Hasina is on trial with two other officials.

One of them, former interior minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, who faces similar charges, is also a fugitive.

The second, ex-police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, is in custody and was in court yesterday. — ***AFP***

Nepal begins power export to Bangladesh

KATHMANDU: Nepal said yesterday it has begun regular commercial electricity exports to Bangladesh, marking its entry into the international power market beyond neighbouring India.

The landlocked Himalayan nation started transmitting 40 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Bangladesh via India on Sunday under a five-year agreement.

"Nepal will continue supplying electricity to Bangladesh during the monsoon season from mid-June to mid-November," Rajan Dhakal, spokesperson at Nepal Electricity Authority, told AFP. In October, the country signed a tripartite power export deal with the Bangladesh Power Development Board and India's NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam, which is facilitating access to the transmission line. The following month, the line was opened for only one day. — ***AFP***

World in brief

Israel threatening regional security: Erdogan

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Israel was threatening security in the Middle East during a phone call with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin yesterday, his office said. "The spiral of violence that began with Israel's attacks on Iran has put the security of the entire region at risk," Erdogan was quoted as saying.

His office said he told Putin that the "lawless attitude" of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government "poses a clear threat to the international system", adding that the Middle East "cannot tolerate a new war". The Kremlin said Putin and Erdogan used the conversation to call for an "immediate" end to fighting between Israel and Iran. "The leaders called for an immediate end to hostilities and the settlement of contentious issues, including those related to Iran's nuclear programme, exclusively through political and diplomatic means," the Kremlin said in its readout of the call. — ***AFP***

Pakistan suspends crossing into Iran at border

QUETTA: Pakistan has closed all its border crossings with neighbouring Iran for an indefinite period, provincial officials said yesterday, as Israel and Iran trade intense strikes and threaten further attacks. "Border facilities in all five districts — Chaghi, Washuk, Panjgur, Kech and Gwadar — have been suspended," Qadir Bakhsh Pirkani, a senior official in Balochistan province told AFP.

Crossing into Iran "has been suspended until further notice", said Atta ul Munim, an official at one of the crossings in Chaghi district. However, there was "no ban on trade" activities at the border and Pakistani nationals needing to return to their the country from Iran can cross, he added. "We're expecting around 200 Pakistani students coming today," Atta said. On Sunday, Pakistan said said 450 Pakistanis were evacuated from Iran, with more to follow, as well as from Iraq. — ***AFP***

India relocates students in Iran as Israel strikes

NEW Delhi: New Delhi said yesterday its diplomats were helping some Indian students relocate out of harm's way in Iran, which has come under days of deadly Israeli bombardment.

New Delhi, which has relations with both countries, has sought to relocate its citizens within Iran after Tehran closed its airspace. "The Indian Embassy in Tehran is continuously monitoring the security situation and engaging Indian students in Iran to ensure their safety," a foreign ministry statement said. "In some cases, students are being relocated with (the) Embassy's facilitation to safer places within Iran," the ministry added.

There are around 10,000 Indian citizens in Iran, according to government data last year, while figures from 2022 listed more than 2,000 students in Iran. — ***AFP***

Cambodia threatens to ban Thai fruit imports

PHNOM Penh: Cambodia's influential former leader Hun Sen yesterday issued an ultimatum to Thailand to lift border crossing restrictions or his country will ban all Thai fruit and vegetable imports in the latest round of the border spat between the two countries.

Thailand has tightened border controls with Cambodia in recent days. In an address to the nation, Hun Sen — father of current Prime Minister Hun Manet — threatened to ban all fruit and vegetables from Thailand unless Bangkok lifted all border crossing restrictions within 24 hours. — ***AFP***

India starts handing over bodies of Air India crash victims to families

AHMEDABAD: Indian health officials have begun handing relatives the bodies of their loved ones after one of the world's worst plane crashes in decades, but most families were still waiting yesterday for the results of DNA testing.

Mourners have held funerals for some of the 279 people killed when the Air India jet crashed in the western city of Ahmedabad on Thursday, but others are facing an anguished wait. "They said it would take 48 hours. But it's been four days and we haven't received any response," said Rinal Christian, 23, whose elder brother was a passenger on the jetliner.

There was one survivor out of 242 passengers and crew on board the London-bound plane when it slammed into a residential area of Ahmedabad, killing at least 38 people on the ground as well. "My brother was the sole breadwinner of the family," Christian said on Sunday. "So what happens next?" Among the latest victims identified was Vijay Rupani, a senior member of India's ruling party and former chief minister of Gujarat state.



Workers wait to clear debris from the crash site in Ahmedabad yesterday. (AFP)

His flag-draped coffin was carried in Ahmedabad by soldiers, along with a portrait of the politician draped in a garland of flowers. Crowds gathered in a funeral procession for passenger Kinal Mistry in Anand district, a two-hour journey from Ahmedabad.

The 24-year-old had postponed her flight, leaving her father Suresh Mistry agonising that "she would have been alive" if she had stuck to her original plan.

Air India said there were 169 Indian passengers, 53 British, seven Portuguese and a Canadian on board the flight, as well as 12 crew members.

As of yesterday afternoon, 114 crash victims have been identified, Gujarat's Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi wrote on social media platform X.

Rajnish Patel, a doctor at Ahmedabad's civil hospital, said: "This is a meticulous and slow process, so it has to be done meticulously only."

One victim's relative who did not want to be identified told AFP they had been instructed not to open the coffin when they receive it. — ***AFP***

Trump orders ICE to expand deportations in largest cities, including New York and Chicago

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump directed federal officials to expand efforts to deport migrants in the largest US cities in the face of protests and court challenges, even as his administration is looking to ease the impact of the crackdown on key sectors of the American workforce.

"ICE Officers are herewith ordered, by notice of this TRUTH, to do all in their power to achieve the very important goal of delivering the single largest Mass Deportation Program in History," Trump said in a post to social media on Sunday.

"In order to achieve this, we must expand efforts to detain and deport Illegal Aliens in America's largest Cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, where Millions upon Millions of Illegal Aliens reside," he added.

Trump's move to ramp up immigration enforcement in big Democratically-controlled cities comes a week after the president acknowledged the impact his deportation agenda has had in rural communities hit hard by the loss of agricultural workers.

The president said he would craft policy changes to cover farm and hotel industry workers, recognizing concerns from business leaders regarding some critical sectors of the country's labor force.



US President Donald Trump raises a fist as he steps off of Air Force One upon arrival at Calgary International Airport, before the start of the G7 summit, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on June 15, 2025. (AFP)

Trump campaigned on carrying out the largest deportation in US history and has moved swiftly to deliver on the agenda with a sweeping series of orders and stepped-up raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Earlier this month, ICE said it was arresting 2,000 undocumented people a day, a big jump from the numbers that were typical under former President Joe Biden.

Stephen Miller, a top Trump aide and an architect of the administration's hardline policies, told ICE officials in a tense meeting last month that arrests should average a minimum of 3,000 a day. Data earlier this month showed the US workforce shrank in May, partly because of the largest back-to-back decline in the number of foreign workers in the labor force since 2020. Trump's latest call, delivered as he traveled to the Group of Seven leaders' summit in Canada, follows days of unrest in Los Angeles over the mass deportations.

The protests in LA, sparked by increasingly aggressive ICE raids, escalated following Trump's decision to deploy National Guard troops to help quell violence in the city over the objections of the city's mayor and California Governor Gavin Newsom. Trump also deployed as many as 700 active-duty Marines, who have been given orders to protect federal property and officers.

Newsom has sued the administration arguing that the National Guard deployment exceeded Trump's authority. While a lower court issued an order that would limit the use of National Guard troops to respond to the protests, a federal appeals court panel is reviewing that decision.

Over the weekend, protesters rallied in hundreds of US cities to denounce what they said were Trump's authoritarian tendencies, including the increased deportations and tactics used to carry them out. — *THE WASHINGTON POST*

British PM names first woman to lead MI6 intelligence service



LONDON: Britain's Secret Intelligence Service will be led by a woman for the first time in the agency's history after Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on Sunday that he had selected a career spy with extensive experience in technology and Middle East operations to lead the storied MI6.

Blaise Metreweli (*pictured*), who will assume the position later this year, takes over at a time of deepening international crises - with Israel and Iran suddenly at war, the conflict in Ukraine grinding into its fourth year and Russia accused of sabotage attacks across Europe amid doubts about the partnership with the United States.

The appointment of a woman marks a milestone for an intelligence service often depicted as a bastion of sexism in James Bond movies. But Metreweli, 47, had already ascended into the upper ranks of the agency in another role - "Q" - made famous by those Hollywood films.

As director general technology and innovation, a position referred to by the letter "Q," Metreweli has in recent years been involvedin developing high-tech spyware and devices that have aided Ukraine and other allies in clandestine operations, according to current and former UK and US officials. — *THE WASHINGTON POST*

France shuts Israeli weapons booths at Paris Air Show

LE BOURGET: Geopolitical tensions roiled the opening of the Paris Air Show yesterday as French authorities sealed off Israeli weapons industry booths amid the conflicts in Iran and Gaza, a move that Israel condemned as "outrageous".

The decision added drama to the major aerospace industry event, which was already being held under the shadow of last week's deadly crash of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Black walls were installed around the stands of five Israeli defence firms at the trade fair in Le Bourget, an airfield on the outskirts of Paris.

The booths displayed "offensive weapons" that could be used in Gaza — in violation of agreements with Israeli authorities, a French government source told AFP.

The companies — Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Rafael Uvision, Elbit and Aeronautics — make drones and guided bombs and missiles.

An Israeli exhibitor wrote a message in yellow chalk on one of the walls, saying the hidden defence systems "are protecting the state of Israel these days. The French government, in the name of discrimination is trying to hide them from you!"

Israeli President Isaac Herzog said he was shocked by the "outrageous" closure of the pavilions and said the situation should be "immediately corrected".

"Israeli companies have signed contracts with the organisers... it's like creating an Israeli ghetto," he said on French television channel LCI.

The Israeli defence ministry said in a statement that the "outrageous and unprecedented decision reeks of policy-driven and commercial considerations".

"The French are hiding behind supposedly political considerations to exclude Israeli offensive weapons from an international exhibition -- weapons that compete with French industries," it said.

"This is particularly striking given Israeli technologies' impressive and precise performance in Iran."

Israel launched surprise strikes on Iranian military and nuclear sites on Friday, killing top commanders and scientists, prompting Tehran to hit back with a barrage of missiles. — *AFP*

Germany holds 'Veterans Day' as army seeks fresh recruits

BERLIN: Germany has held its first ever "Veterans Day" to boost the image of the military as it races to find fresh recruits and a debate grows about whether to reinstate conscription.

The main event took place on Sunday next to the parliament in Berlin, with the armed forces, known as the Bundeswehr, setting up booths, as well as a free outdoor concert, food trucks and games for children. Due to pacifist traditions stemming from its dark World War II history, Germany has generally been reluctant to honour the military so publicly. But attitudes are changing since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, prompting Berlin to launch a drive to overhaul its long-neglected armed forces.

Doubts about US commitment to Europe's security under President Donald Trump are also adding impetus to the efforts. Nowadays there is "more encouragement for us soldiers" from the public, Maik Mutschke, a 39-year-old former soldier who was severely injured in Afghanistan in 2010, told AFP at the event. — *AFP*

Suspected killer of Minnesota lawmaker caught after two-day manhunt

WASHINGTON: US law enforcement officials in Minnesota caught the suspected killer of a Democratic state lawmaker and her husband on Sunday, authorities said, ending a two-day manhunt.

The suspect, 57-year-old Vance Boelter, allegedly disguised himself as a police officer, then shot and killed Democratic state representative Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark at their home early Saturday.

Boelter was captured in Sibley County, a rural area about an hour southwest of the Minneapolis suburbs where the murders had occurred, police and state officials said.

"After (a) two-day manhunt, two sleepless nights, law enforcement have apprehended Vance Boelter," Minnesota Governor Tim Walz told a late-night news conference. — *AFP*

Venezuela, Dominican Republic consider resuming flight connection

CARACAS: Venezuela announced on Sunday the resumption of flights to and from the Dominican Republic, but Dominican officials later said discussions were ongoing.

Caracas suspended the main flight route for Venezuelans traveling to the United States on July 29 last year, after Santo Domingo refused to recognize President Nicolas Maduro's disputed election victory. The election, which the opposition and many countries alleged was rigged, handed Maduro a third term in office.

Venezuela's INAC aviation authority announced on its Instagram account "the resumption of commercial passenger, cargo, and mail operations to and from the Dominican Republic." It did not specify the date when operations would resume. Hector Porcella, head of the Dominican Civil Aviation Assembly (JAC), however said it was not a done deal. "We have received the communication" from Venezuela, but "there must be mutual agreement... This is not a unilateral decision," he told AFP. — *AFP*

Russia transfers bodies of over 6,000 soldiers to Ukraine

MOSCOW: Russia has transferred the bodies of 6,060 fallen soldiers to Ukraine, Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky said yesterday.

Russia agreed to return the bodies of 6,000 fallen Ukrainian soldiers after Russia-Ukraine talks in Istanbul on June 2.

According to Medinsky, Russia has received the bodies of 78 Russian soldiers from the Ukrainian side. "Prisoner exchanges continue. Arrangements have also been established regarding the exchange of severely wounded servicemen from the frontline," Medinsky, also Russia's chief negotiator at the talks with the Ukrainian side, wrote on Telegram. — *XINHUA*

UK commits £8bn to flood defences

LONDON: Britain's Labour government yesterday announced plans to invest almost £8 billion ($11 billion) on flood defences over the next 10 years, citing growing risks posed by climate change.

The funding forms part of an infrastructure strategy this week due to outline the government's long-term plan to invest billions of pounds on delivering major infrastructure projects.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government said new funds will "protect hundreds of thousands of homes, small businesses, and vital infrastructure from the growing threat of flooding".

It will go towards building flood barriers and nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration. The Climate Change Committee, an expert group that advises the government, warned in April that Britain is not properly prepared for severe floods and unprecedented heatwaves. — *AFP*

Southern Mexico mayor and staff shot dead in her office

OAXACA: Four armed men stormed a mayor's office in southern Mexico, killing her and another member of her staff on Sunday, police said, in the country's latest deadly targeting of a local politician. The men arrived on motorcycles at the town hall in San Mateo Pinas, in the state of Oaxaca, police said. After threatening officers guarding the facility, they stormed into Mayor Lilia Garcia's office and proceeded to shoot her and another official, Eli Garcia, dead.

Two municipal police officers were also wounded in the attack, authorities said. "There can be no impunity for this act," Oaxaca Governor Salomon Jara wrote on social media. The state prosecutor's office said it was investigating the attack, while military and federal agents were deployed in the area. — *AFP*

Russia says US has cancelled planned talks on embassies

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday said that the United States had cancelled a fresh round of talks on normalising the operations of their embassies.

It did not say why Washington had made the decision, and the United States did not immediately comment.

The two sides had met twice before in Istanbul to discuss their diplomatic missions, and were due to meet for a third time in Moscow, Russia's US envoy said in an interview last week.

"The next meeting... has been cancelled at the initiative of the American negotiators. We hope that the pause they have taken will not be too long," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. — *AFP*

Electric fences, drones, dogs protect G7 leaders from bear attack

KANANASKIS: Electric fences, drones, thermal cameras and police dogs have all been deployed at the G7 summit in the Canadian Rockies to protect world leaders from hungry bears. US President Donald Trump, Italy's Giorgia Meloni and France's Emmanuel Macron are among leaders gathered Monday at a remote mountain lodge for talks -- uninterrupted, if all goes to plan, by ursine attacks.

"While grizzly bears are a top concern, the team is prepared for all wildlife species," Alberta's Ministry of Public Safety spokesperson Sheena Campbell said.

Security teams have erected "fence barriers around locations where attractants (food) are present, including the use of electric bear fence enclosures." She said fencing was a minimum eight feet (2.4 meters) high to ensure guest safety as part of a multi-pronged operation to prevent "close encounters" with wildlife. — *AFP*



Signage for the G7 is seen before the official arrival ceremony during the Group of Seven (G7) Summit at the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada yesterday. (AFP)

PENOMAG

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MR. GOPI RAM JAISI
NEPAL NATIONAL PASSPORT NO: PA2476924
QATAR ID NO. 28652416770



The said person is leaving Qatar for good on **23/06/2025** anybody having any claim should contact us within two **(2)** days from the date of this notice.
We shall not be held responsible to anyone for any dealings with the above mentioned person, from the date of this notice.

CONTACT NO: 55508534

SITUATION WANTED

SENIOR LIGHT DRIVER/ MESSENGER
Indian Nationality with 14 Years of experience in Qatar and 5 Years in Bahrain as light driver.
Driving License valid until 2026 with transferrable visa valid until 2026. Ready to join immediately.
Languages: Arabic, English, Hindi, Malayalam
Contact: +974 66580224
Email: ppmohd.asharaf@gmail.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ratan Kanti Shill
راتان كانتى شيل
Holder of Bangladesh Passport No. EG0101494
(Qatar ID No.29205024706)
hereby change my name to
RATAN KANTI SHIL
راتان كانتى شيل
Any objection, please contact the Immigration and Passport Office within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

I, Ritz Eleine Lizada Turco
Holder of Philippines Passport No. P8698812B
(Qatar ID No.29660802161)
hereby change my name to
RITZ ELEINE TURCO LOWELL
Any objection, please contact the Immigration and Passport Office within 15 days from the publication of this notice.





FAJR 3:13AM	ASR 2:57PM
SUNRISE 4:43AM	MAGHRIB 6:28PM
DHUHR 11:35AM	ISHA 7:58PM



WhatsApp said it will roll out three new monetization features exclusively within its Updates tab, which houses both Channels and Status features used by 1.5 billion people daily and became widely available last year.

A shared mission: Greening Africa's deserts with Chinese expertise

URUMQI: Scientists from northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are working to help African countries transform the sandy regions into greener, arable land with more trees and productive agricultural practices.

By leveraging smart technologies, indigenous Chinese expertise and a dual commitment to sand control and economic growth, they aim to establish sustainable ecosystems in these regions that have long suffered from desertification, known as "the cancer of Earth."

Noting that desertification is a shared global challenge, Lei Jiaqiang, a lead researcher at the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said collaborative efforts are crucial. Over the past decades, Lei and his colleagues have gained extensive experience in tackling desertification in northwest China and shared them with African countries.

As today marks the World Day to Combat desertification and Drought, these efforts are gaining increased attention and are expected to yield fruitful outcomes.

Although the impacts of desertification are similar worldwide, such as biodiversity loss, low land productivity and disrupted transportation, scientists admit that the climate challenges faced by tropical African countries are greater as plants in these countries must endure year-round heat.

Mauritania, situated along the Atlantic coast, is one such country, with nearly three-quarters of its territory engulfed by the Sahara desert.

Lei still vividly remembered his first visit to the country's capital more than a decade ago. The streets were lined with piles of sand, and the sidewalks, railways and houses were engulfed by shifting dunes.

After extensive research and testing, Chinese scientists implemented a range of effective measures to reverse the situation. They introduced a diverse array of plant species from China, deployed straw checkerboard sand barriers and applied the homegrown water-saving irrigation technologies.

Smart technologies such as agricultural robots, drones and sand-blocking systems powered by solar panels have been introduced by Chinese research institutes and enterprises to help boost efficiency.

These approaches are rooted in China's extensive experience in combating desertification. As one of the world's most severely affected countries, China has 2.57 million square km of land, about 26.8 percent of its total area, impacted by desertification.

Xinjiang has long stood at the forefront of China's fight against desertification. Home to the Taklimakan desert -- China's largest and the world's second-largest drifting desert -- the region has seen nearby communities grapple with frequent wind and sandstorms.

It captured global attention last November when China completed a 3,046-km green belt of trees and sand-blocking technologies, fully encircling the desert.

Over the past decades, China has expanded its afforestation area by 32 million hectares under an afforestation program and restored 53 percent of its treatable desertified land. It has also achieved the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of zero-growth in land degradation a decade in advance.

African countries, including Mauritania, have also launched their own afforestation projects. Among the most prominent is the Great Green Wall Initiative, launched by the African Union in 2007 and involving 11 countries across the southern edge of the Sahara.

As part of this ambitious transnational effort, the China-Africa Green Technology Park in Mauritania, which was established in 2024, serves as a demonstration zone for applying China's desertification control experience in Africa.

An aerial photo offers a glimpse of this 2-hectare oasis amid the vast desert, where rows of thriving fruit trees and vegetable seedlings grow in neatly organized plots, while dark blue solar panels line the fields, supplying clean energy to power the irrigation system.



This photo taken on May 22, 2025 shows plants in the China-Africa Green Technology Park in Bir El Barka, Trarza region, western Mauritania. (Xinhua)

Just last year, this was a barren land swept by wind and sand, but by February, it had harvested the first batch of vegetables, said Zhou Na, a researcher at the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, who has frequently traveled to Mauritania to assist with the park's development.

She explained that her team planted a shelter belt around the park, cultivating a variety of forage grasses, vegetables, fruits and ornamental plants such as bougainvillea and palm trees.

"We have harvested peppers, cabbage, watermelons and tomatoes, some of which have been supplied to local residents," Zhou said, adding that the team expects the park to not only help control sand but also bring tangible benefits to nearby communities. — ***XINHUA***



A video grab taken from a CCTV footage shows two tourists breaking a crystal-covered chair displayed as they are taking pictures at Palazzo Maffei museum in Verona and then fleeing once the damage became apparent. (AFP)

Italy museum hunts for tourists in viral chair-smashing video

ROME: An Italian museum has launched a manhunt for the most unlikely of outlaws -- two clumsy middle-aged tourists who managed to almost wreck a work of art while posing for photos.

Video footage released by Palazzo Maffei showed the hapless pair photographing each other pretending to sit on a crystal-covered chair made by the artist Nicola Bolla -- described by the museum as an "extremely fragile" work.

While the woman squats but does not seem to touch the work -- known as Van Gogh's Chair and covered in Swarovski crystals -- the man is not so careful, sitting and then stumbling backwards as the seat buckles under his weight. The pair can then be seen fleeing the room, in a post that went viral over the weekend.

Taking its name from the renowned Dutch painter, the work by Italian artist was inspired by the 1888 painting "Van Gogh's Chair," which depicts a simple wooden chair positioned on a tile floor.

Bolla's modern interpretation, which was made between 2006 and 2007, is covered with hundreds of Swarovski crystals.

Palazzo Maffei described it as "every museum's nightmare" and said it had made a complaint to the police. The museum released the CCTV footage of the incident, which happened in April as a reminder to visitors of the importance of treating art with respect.

"A special thanks to all of you who walk through the museum's rooms every day with care, attention and wonder," it said in a statement. "Because art is not just to be seen. It is to be loved."

"It was an idiotic thing to do," Bolla told Italian magazine *Fanpage*. But the artist added that he could also see a "positive side" to the incident. "It's like a kind of performance. Ordinary people can do it too, not just artists."

Several other artworks have also been damaged by visitors in recent years.

In April, a painting by Mark Rothko—estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars—was taken off display at a Dutch museum after it was damaged by a child.

Last year, during the opening of an exhibition at Palazzo Fava in Bologna, Italy, a man accidentally shattered a sculpture by renowned Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei. — ***AGENCIES***

WhatsApp introduces first major advertising features

SAN FRANCISCO: WhatsApp announced yesterday it will introduce its boldest advertising features yet, marking a significant shift for the messaging platform that has largely remained ad-free since its launch.

The move is a sensitive one for WhatsApp, whose chief firmly denied a report in 2023 that said the Meta-owned app was exploring advertisements as it sought to boost revenue.

Unlike Facebook, Instagram, and other social platforms, WhatsApp has maintained minimal advertising since Meta acquired it in 2014.

Users and regulators have kept a close watch on whether the social media giant would seek to monetise an app that was primarily used to chat with friends and family, and was appreciated for its privacy.

Until now, the platform's advertising consisted primarily of WhatsApp Business promotional messages to opted-in customers and some limited Status ad testing in select markets.

The messaging app has no display ads in chat feeds or conversations.

The company said it will roll out three new monetization features exclusively within its Updates tab, which houses both Channels and Status features used by 1.5 billion people daily and became widely available last year.

The company stressed that users who only use WhatsApp for personal messaging will see no changes to their experience, as all new features are confined to the Updates tab that can be deactivated in the settings.

"We've been talking about our plans to build a business that does not interrupt your personal chats for years and we believe the Updates tab is the right place for these new features to work," WhatsApp said.

The new features include paid channel subscriptions, promoted channels in the Discovery directory, and advertisements within Status, WhatsApp's version of Instagram Stories.

WhatsApp emphasized that the new advertising features are designed with privacy safeguards.

"I want to be really clear about one thing: Your personal messages, calls and statuses will remain end-to-end encrypted. This means no one, not even us, can see or hear them, and they cannot be used for ads," Nikila Srinivasan, vice president of product management at Meta, told reporters.

The company committed to never selling or sharing phone numbers to advertisers and said personal messages, calls, and group memberships will not influence ad targeting.

"To show ads in Status or Channels, we're going to use basic information like your country or city, your device language and your activity in the Updates tab," Srinivasan said.

The introduction of advertising represents Meta's effort to monetise WhatsApp's massive user base of over two billion monthly active users.

Industry analysts have long speculated that Meta would eventually bring advertising to WhatsApp given its scale and engagement rates.

The timeline for these features was not specified in the announcement. "They're going to be rolling out slowly over the next few months, so it might be a while until you see them in your countries," Srinivasan said. — ***AFP***



View from Afghan market

An Afghan vendor waits for customers at his stall selling plastic cans in a market in Mazar-i-Sharif on June 15, 2025. (AFP)

'How to Train Your Dragon' soars to top of North America box office

LOS ANGELES: "How to Train Your Dragon," a live-action reboot of a popular 2010 animated film, roared to the top of the North American box office with $83.7m in weekend ticket sales, industry estimates showed Sunday.

The family-friendly film from Universal and DreamWorks Animation tells the story of a friendship between a Viking named Hiccup (Mason Thames) and a dragon called Toothless.

"This is an excellent opening for a live-action animation remake, and it's especially good for the fourth episode in a series like this," said David A Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.

Disney's "Lilo & Stitch," another live-action remake, kept up its excellent summer returns with $15.5m, Exhibitor Relations said. So far, the film about Hawaiian girl Lilo (Maia Kealoha) and her blue alien friend Stitch (Chris Sanders) has grossed nearly $860m worldwide.

Debuting in third place is A24's "Materialists," a sophisticated rom-com starring Dakota Johnson, Pedro Pascal and Chris Evans, at $12m.

"It's a grown-up story that's well-timed as summer counter-programming," Gross said.

"Mission: Impossible -- The Final Reckoning" -- the latest, and ostensibly last, in the hugely successful Tom Cruise spy thriller series based on a 1960s TV show -- held its own in fourth place at $10.3m.

The Paramount film has now topped the $500m mark worldwide.

In fifth place was Lionsgate's "Ballerina," a "John Wick" spin-off starring Ana de Armas as a dancer turned contract killer, and co-starring Anjelica Huston. Keanu Reeves makes a brief appearance as the hitman Wick. It took in $9.4m.

Rounding out the top 10 were: "Karate Kid: Legends" ($5m) "Final Destination: Bloodlines" ($3.9m) "The Phoenician Scheme" ($3.1m) "The Life of Chuck" ($2.1m) "Sinners" ($1.5m). — ***AFP***

TRENDING IN QATAR

On *The Peninsula* social media platforms

Hot to very hot weather, rise in humidity expected: QMD

QMD said in its forecast that the country will experience hot to very hot weather conditions, accompanied by rise in humidity levels.

Spooky house, mascots and more at Qatar Toy Festival

Third season of Qatar Toy Festival will open in the first week of July packed with a plethora of activities for all age groups.

Iranian missile hits Israel's largest oil refinery, killing 3

An Iranian missile struck Israel's largest oil refinery complex in the northern port city of Haifa early, killing three workers.

Huge turnout, record sales in 4 days of mango exhibition

The Hamba Exhibition of Indian Mangoes and Products, held in the Eastern Square at Souq Waqif, has witnessed a remarkable turnout since its launch.