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Amir exchanges Eid Al Adha greetings with leaders of Arab, Islamic countries

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani has exchanged cables of congratulation with their Majesties, Excellencies, and Highnesses, the leaders of Arab and Islamic countries.

H H the Amir also received cables of congratulations on this occasion from a number of leaders of friendly countries.

Also Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani has exchanged cables of congratulation with Their Highnesses and Excellencies crown princes and vice-presidents of Arab and

Islamic countries, on the occasion of the blessed Eid Al Adha.

H H the Deputy Amir also received cables of congratulation on this occasion from a number of leaders and vice presidents of friendly countries.

Separately, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani exchanged cables of greetings with Their Excellencies prime ministers of Arab and Islamic countries on the occasion of Eid Al Adha. — **QNA**

Amir to receive Eid Al Adha well-wishers

DOHA: The Amiri Diwan announced that Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani will receive well-wishers on the occasion of Eid Al Adha at Lusail Palace on the morning of the first day of Eid.

Immediately after the Eid prayer, H H the Amir will receive Their Excellencies Sheikhs, ministers, undersecretaries of ministries, the Speaker and members of the Shura Council, and citizens, as well as leaders and senior officers of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Interior, and the state security services, and Their Excellencies the Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the State.

The Amiri Diwan wishes that this blessed occasion be full of goodness and blessings for Qatar, and the Arab and Islamic nations. — **QNA**



Amir to perform Eid Al Adha prayer at Lusail prayer ground

DOHA: The Amiri Diwan announced that Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani will perform the Eid Al Adha prayer along with citizens at Lusail prayer ground today morning.

The Amiri Diwan wished that this blessed occasion be full of goodness and blessings for Qatar, as well as the Arab and Islamic nations. — **QNA**

Amir, Iranian President discuss de-escalation efforts

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held a phone call yesterday with President of the Islamic Republic of Iran H E Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian.

During the call, they discussed the latest developments in the region as well as efforts aimed at de-escalation, safeguarding regional security, and promoting peace and stability.

H H the Amir reaffirmed the State of Qatar's firm position in favor of political and diplomatic solutions and stressed the need for all parties to exercise the utmost responsibility and

Amir reaffirmed the State of Qatar's firm position in favor of political and diplomatic solutions and stressed the need for all parties to exercise the utmost responsibility and restraint to spare the region the consequences of further escalation.

restraint to spare the region the consequences of further escalation. His Highness also expressed appreciation to HE the President for the Iranian government's engagement in dialogue and constructive efforts.

His Highness also

emphasised the importance of peaceful solutions to contain tensions and safeguard regional security and stability, thanking H E the President for his efforts in that regard and calling for continued positive engagement in the negotiations being facilitated by the

Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as well as for broader dialogue, particularly with countries in the region.

For his part, H E the Iranian President praised H H the Amir's efforts to promote security and stability in the region, expressing his appreciation for His Highness's positions supporting de-escalation, and affirming his welcome and interest in His Highness's proposals on advancing an agreement that would promote regional and international stability. — **QNA**

PM stresses need for all to engage constructively in ongoing mediation

DOHA: Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani held a phone call with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H H Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah Al Saud.

During the call, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to further strengthen and enhance them, in addition to the Pakistani mediation efforts between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The call also addressed coordination of efforts aimed at supporting the mediation to de-escalate tensions in a manner that reinforces regional security and stability.

H E the Prime Minister stressed the need for all parties to engage constructively in the ongoing mediation efforts to address the root causes of the crisis through dialogue and peaceful means, ultimately paving the way toward a sustainable agreement that prevents renewed escalation.

The Prime Minister also held a phone call with Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Adviser of the United Arab Emirates H H Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The call discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen

The calls discussed relations between the countries and ways to support and strengthen them. They also discussed Pakistani mediation efforts between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. They also addressed coordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at de-escalation.

them. It also discussed Pakistani mediation efforts between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The call also addressed coordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at de-escalation, thereby contributing to enhanced security and stability in the region.

H E the Prime Minister emphasised the significance of supporting ongoing mediation efforts to reach a lasting peace agreement.

The Prime Minister also received a phone call from Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt H E Dr. Badr Abdelatty. — **QNA** ➔ **P2**

Pilgrims pray on Mount Arafat

Pilgrims pray on Saudi Arabia's Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal al-Rahma or Mount of Mercy, during the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage early yesterday. More than 1.7 million people have joined the Hajj this year. Pilgrims from Qatar joined worshipers from around the world at Mount Arafat yesterday to perform the most important ritual of Hajj, in an atmosphere marked by prayer, reflection and devotion. Qatar's Hajj mission said it continues to implement a comprehensive operational plan to ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage.



Qatar hospitality sector remains resilient in Q1 2026

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar's hospitality market demonstrated resilience during the first quarter of 2026 despite softer tourism volumes and broader regional uncertainty, according to a report by ValuStrat, which highlighted stable hotel pricing and continued strength in the country's premium accommodation segment.

The report showed that Qatar's total hospitality stock stood at approximately 42,260 hotel keys during the quarter, based on revised estimates by Qatar Tourism.

Around 68 percent of the total inventory consisted of four and five-star hotels, while seven percent fell within the one to three-star category. The remaining 25 percent comprised hotel apartments.

ValuStrat noted that nearly 1,000 additional hotel keys remain in the development pipeline, with the majority concentrated in the upscale four and

five-star segments. However, no major hotel openings were recorded during the first quarter, with several pending projects expected to be delivered later in the year.

Tourism activity moderated during the quarter, with total visitor arrivals reaching one million, reflecting an 8.3 percent decline compared to the same period last year. Travelers from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries accounted for 36 percent of all visitors, underlining the continued importance of regional tourism demand to Qatar's hospitality industry.

Despite the decline in visitor numbers, hotel pricing remained relatively resilient. Average Daily Rate (ADR) during Q1 2026 rose 2.3 percent year-on-year to QR453, although it declined 14 percent compared to the previous quarter. Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR), a key hospitality performance indicator, stood at QR308 during the quarter, down 2.8 percent annually and 26 percent quarter-on-quarter. ➔ **P2**

Qatar to mark Eid Al Adha with prayers, festivities and celebrations

VICTOR BOLORUNDURO
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar is set to celebrate Eid Al Adha today with thousands of worshippers expected to gather for Eid prayers at mosques and prayer grounds across the country, while a packed calendar of family-friendly events and cultural activities promises a festive atmosphere throughout the holiday.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs has completed preparations for Eid prayers by designating 733 mosques and open-air prayer grounds across the country to accommodate worshippers for one of the most significant occasions in the Islamic calendar.

Eid prayers are scheduled to begin at 5am, with venues distributed across municipalities to ensure easy access for residents and citizens. Preparations have included arrangements to facilitate crowd movement and ensure worshippers can perform prayers in a safe and comfortable environment.

The ministry has encouraged worshippers to head to nearby designated prayer grounds and arrive early, particularly as large crowds are expected at major mosques and Eid musallas in Doha and surrounding municipalities.

The spiritual observance of Eid Al Adha, known as the Festival of Sacrifice, will see families gathering after prayers to exchange

greetings, share festive meals and perform charitable acts, while many residents are expected to take advantage of the long holiday to enjoy entertainment and tourism activities around the country.

Adding to the festive spirit, several destinations across Qatar have unveiled special Eid programmes featuring live performances, cultural activities and children's entertainment.

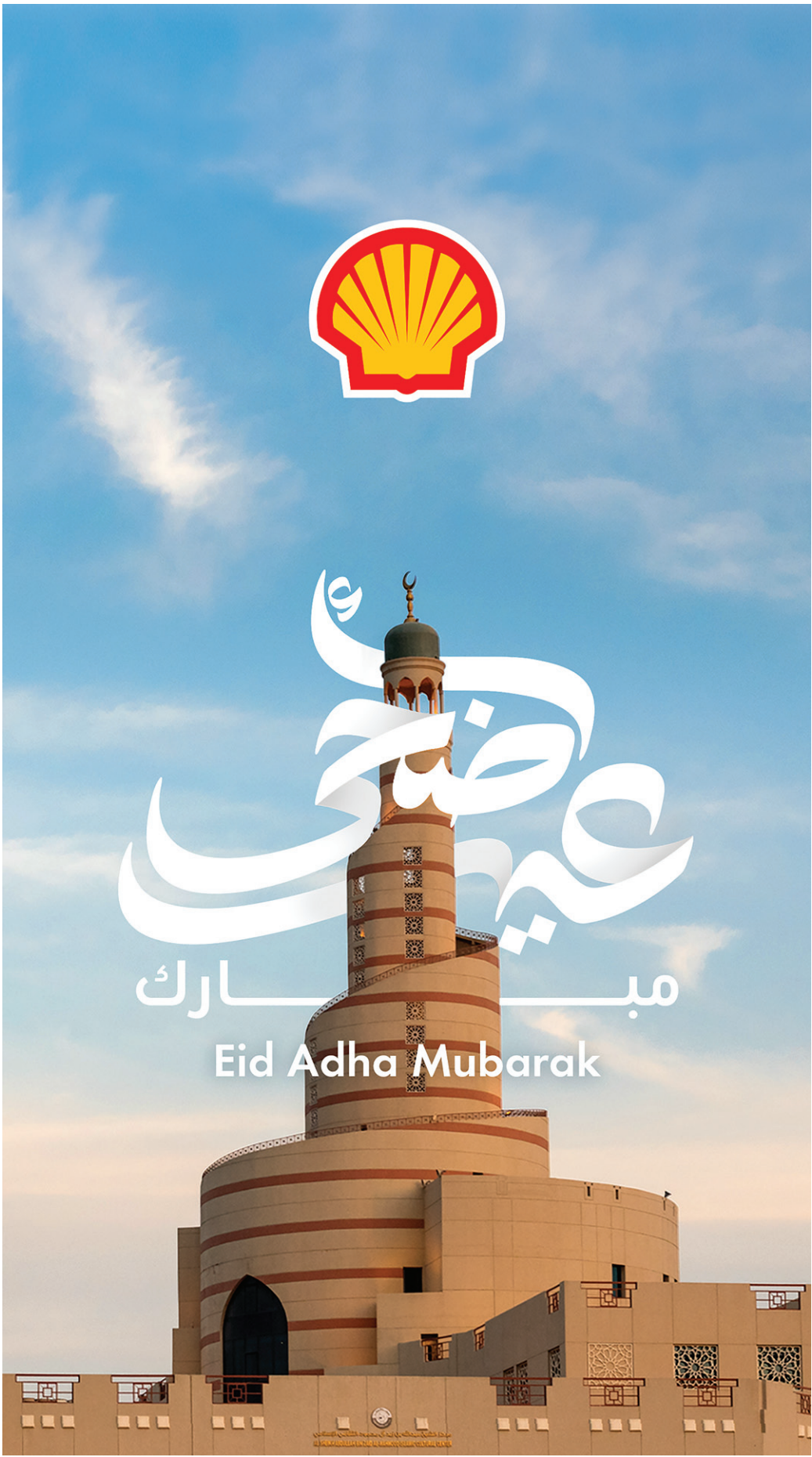
At the Education City Stadium, Eid prayers will be followed by family-oriented activities organised by the Minaretein Center, creating a community atmosphere

for worshippers and visitors. Families attending the prayers will be able to enjoy post-prayer gatherings and activities aimed at celebrating the occasion in an engaging environment.

Meanwhile, Old Doha Port will host four days of Eid Al Adha festivities, offering visitors traditional performances, family entertainment and activities celebrating Qatar's maritime heritage. The Mina District will come alive with cultural experiences, including traditional music, hospitality experiences, interactive performances and giveaways for families and children. ➔ **P4**



People shopping in preparation for the Eid Al Adha celebrations at a retail outlet in Doha yesterday. PIC: RAJAN VADAKKEMURIYIL / THE PENINSULA



PM stresses need for all to engage constructively in ongoing mediation

FROM PAGE 1

During the call, they discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them, as well as Pakistani mediation efforts between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The phone call also addressed coordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at de-escalation, thereby contributing to strengthening security and stability in the region. H E the Prime Minister stressed the need for all parties to respond positively to the ongoing mediation efforts, which would pave the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, leading to a sustainable agreement that prevents renewed escalation. Separately the Prime Minister held a phone call with

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan H E Dr. Ayman Safadi. The call discussed relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. It also discussed Pakistani mediation efforts between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The call also addressed coordinating efforts to support mediation aimed at reducing escalation, thereby contributing to strengthening security and stability in the region. H E the Prime Minister voiced the need for all parties to respond to the ongoing mediation efforts, which would open the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, and lead to reaching a sustainable agreement that prevents renewed escalation.

Hospitality sector remains resilient

FROM PAGE 1

The report showed that five-star hotels continued to command significantly higher room rates, with ADR averaging QR629 during the quarter. Meanwhile, ADR for four-star hotels averaged QR247, while three-star hotels averaged QR212. Average hotel occupancy across Qatar stood at 68 percent in Q1 2026, reflecting a five percent annual decline as seasonal travel patterns and geopolitical developments weighed on demand. ValuStrat also observed that ADR declined by 27 percent between February and March 2026, compared to a 24 percent decrease during the same period last year, indicating that seasonal factors played a larger role in the slowdown than regional geopolitical tensions. Commenting on the market, Anum Hasan, Head of Research, Qatar at ValuStrat, said the sector had performed better than initially expected despite concerns surrounding regional instability. “In hospitality, expectations of a significant downturn were not fully realised. Tourism volumes declined by 8.3 percent year-on-year, while average daily rates increased by 2.3 percent annually, indicating pricing resilience,” Hasan said. “Month-on-month ADR movement between February and March was broadly consistent with last year, suggesting limited incremental impact from the conflict,” she added. Industry analysts say Qatar’s hospitality market continues to benefit from the country’s strong tourism infrastructure, international connectivity, and growing calendar of business, sports, and entertainment events.

Amir sends condolences to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani, and Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani sent cables of condolences to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the passing of HRH Prince Nawaf bin Naif bin Mamdouh bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — QNA

Amir sends Independence Day congratulations to Guyana President

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, H E Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, on the occasion of his country’s Independence Day.

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of Guyana H E Mark Phillips on the occasion. — QNA

Amir sends Independence Day congratulations to Georgia President

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani sent cables of congratulations to President H E Mikheil Kavelashvili of Georgia on the occasion of his country’s Independence Day.

Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of Georgia H E Irakli Kobakhidze on the occasion. — QNA

Eid Mubarak

on the occasion of
EID AI ADHA
We extend our heartiest greetings to

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

His Highness Father Amir
Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani

His Highness
Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Thani
Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar

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

Chairman, Board of Directors and all employees of Qatar Navigation Q.P.S.C “Milaha”





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Father Amir

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Deputy Amir

and to all the honorable people of Qatar on the occasion of
Eid Al-Adha

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Eid Al Adha celebrations for communities in Asian Town, Barwa Al Khor and Kreeq Sports

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: On the occasion of Eid Al Adha, the Workers Support and Insurance Fund will be organising “Eid Al Adha Celebrations 2026 for Communities” at Asian Town and Al Khor Workers Sports Complex on first and second days of Eid from 5 pm – 10 pm and on first, second and third days of Eid at Kreeq Sports behind Barwa Village from 5 pm to 11 pm.

The Eid Gah (Eid prayer facility) also arranged in the parking slot of the cricket stadium in Asian Town for 5000 people in collaboration with Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. The venue will be open for the public from 4.30 am today in order to start the Eid prayer at 5 am.

The “Eid Al Adha Celebrations 2026” at Asian town is held at the car parking area

of the cricket stadium in Asian Town within the Doha Industrial Area. In addition to this, a musical concert featuring artists from Pakistan will take place on first, second and third days of Eid at Kreeq Sports Stadium, located behind Barwa Village and opposite Madinatna and the celebrations in Al Khor will be held in the Barwa Workers Recreation Complex in the Al Khor Industrial Area.

The celebrations include cultural and traditional shows by communities and school teams, and musical concert by local bands and a popular musical band from Pakistan.

Worker’s Support and Insurance Fund has also arranged valuable prizes for the public through raffle draw, safety and security awareness programmes and film shows by various

The Workers Support and Insurance Fund will organise Eid Al Adha celebrations at Asian Town, Al Khor and Kreeq Sports, featuring cultural performances, musical concerts, community activities, raffle draws and health awareness programmes, with free entry for the public.

departments of the Ministry of Interior and free diabetic and blood pressure checkup by private clinics.

The Workers Support and Insurance Fund invites all members of the communities in Qatar to join the celebrations from 5 pm to 10 pm and the entry is free.

Workers’ Support and Insurance Fund aims to provide services to support and insure workers in the state in accordance with state standards to improve workers’ working and living conditions, strengthen the

working system of the state, in line with the pillars of human development and economic diversity of Qatar National Vision 2030, by emulating best practices in this field, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of nonadministrative and technological work system and developing service delivery methods along with enhancing and developing specialised competencies in this field. Workers’ Support and Insurance Fund is a government body established by Law No. 17 of 2018.

Pre-register for Abu Samra border crossing on Metrash, Mol reminds

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Ministry of Interior (Mol) issued a reminder of a feature in Metrash mobile application allowing travellers from Qatar to pre-register at the Abu Samra border crossing.

In a social media post, the Ministry stated that “the pre-registration service for the Abu Samra border crossing, available on the Metrash app, allows Qatari vehicle owners, citizens and residents to complete travel

The pre-registration service for the Abu Samra border crossing on the Metrash app, allows Qatari vehicle owners, citizens and residents to complete travel procedures through the crossing with ease.”

procedures through the crossing with ease and convenience.”

The steps to pre-register using the Metrash mobile application are as follows:

Log in to the Metrash Mobile Application, and open ‘Travel’ window and then select “Pre-Registration for Abu Samra”.

Choose the registration type between Entry or Exit, then specify the expected travel/ arrival date. Select the type of vehicle you would be using. Add drivers and passengers either as a citizen/resident or as a visitor. Then verify the information and submit. A confirmation message will then be sent once registration is complete.

The Ministry noted that a feature allowing Qatari vehicle owners to add drivers and passengers from GCC countries using ID or passport numbers and visitors using passport numbers even if the vehicle owner is not travelling has been added to the Metrash app.

Scientific symposium in Doha explores history of medicine in Islamic civilisation

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Syrian Medical Association in Qatar, in collaboration with the Qatar Cancer Society, organised a scientific and cultural symposium entitled ‘The History of Medicine in Islamic Civilisation’ at Al-Razi Hall of the Qatar Cancer Society, with the attendance of a distinguished group of physicians, academics, and scholars interested in the history of medicine and Islamic civilisation.

The event was moderated by Dr. Mahdi Alwani and opened with a welcoming address and an introduction to the programmes and initiatives of the Qatar Cancer Society, delivered by Dr. Hadi Mohammad Abu Rasheed, Director of Programmes and Scientific Advisor at the Society. He highlighted the

organisation’s efforts in public awareness, community support, and healthcare initiatives.

Dr. Hassan Al-Sawwaf, President of the Syrian Medical Association in Qatar, emphasised the importance of reconnecting younger generations with the scientific and civilizational heritage of the Islamic nation, while also strengthening the scientific and cultural presence of the Syrian community in Qatar.

The symposium featured a keynote lecture by Professor Dr. Abdul Nasser Kaadan, lecturer at Weber State University in the United States and President of the International Society for the History of Islamic Medicine. His presentation explored the contributions of Muslim scholars and physicians to the establishment and advancement of medical



Participants during the event.

scientific and cultural events in promoting scientific awareness and cultural understanding within society. He noted that these initiatives help strengthen the confidence of medical professionals, especially younger healthcare generations, in their historical and scientific heritage, while also providing a deeper understanding of the present through a meaningful connection with the past.

At the conclusion of the symposium, attendees expressed their appreciation for the rich scientific and cultural content of the event, praising its role in highlighting the civilizational and scientific contributions of Muslims and in fostering cultural and intellectual dialogue within Qatar’s diverse academic and professional communities.

Diabetes Qatar empowers mothers of children living with type 1 diabetes

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Diabetes Qatar organised an educational support programme for mothers of children living with type 1 diabetes at Park Hyatt recently, bringing together 25 mothers for a day focused on education, peer support, and practical diabetes management.

The initiative aimed to equip mothers with the knowledge and practical skills needed to effectively manage their children’s condition, while also providing a supportive platform to discuss the emotional and day-to-day challenges families face while caring for children living with type 1 diabetes.

The programme featured two interactive educational sessions, practical workshops, and open discussions, allowing participants to share experiences, raise concerns, and explore practical solutions to common challenges associated with managing type 1

diabetes in children.

Commenting on the initiative, Executive Director of Diabetes Qatar, Dr. Abdullah Al Hamaq said, “At Diabetes Qatar, we believe that effective type 1 diabetes management extends beyond clinical care—it starts at home. Mothers play a vital role in their children’s daily care and emotional well-being, which is why empowering families through education and support remains a key priority for us.”

The event forms part of Diabetes Qatar’s broader monthly programme supporting people living with type 1 diabetes and their families. Recent initiatives have included a recreational gathering for girls living with diabetes, as well as a sports and recreational programme for boys living with type 1 diabetes, reflecting the organisation’s commitment to providing holistic support that combines education, wellbeing, and community engagement for different age groups.

Graduate nutrition research highlights advances in public health, dietary science

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Department of Nutrition Sciences at the College of Health Sciences at Qatar University (QU) hosted the final thesis defense presentations for MSc in Nutrition students. The event marked an important academic milestone for the graduating cohort and highlighted research addressing important public health and nutrition priorities at both national and international levels.

The presented theses reflected the diversity of research conducted within the MSc in Nutrition programme, covering chronic disease epidemiology, maternal and infant nutrition, and dietary assessment. The studies demonstrated a high standard of scientific rigor and emphasised the development of evidence-based approaches relevant to Qatar and the wider global health community.

Student Shalima Latheif presented her thesis titled ‘Association Between Circadian Syndrome and Asthma Among

The event marked an important academic milestone for the graduating cohort and highlighted research addressing important public health and nutrition priorities at both national and international levels.

Adults: Evidence from China, USA, and UK,’ under the supervision of Dr. Zumin Shi and committee members Dr. Shufa Du, Dr. Giridhara Rathnaiah Babu, and Dr. Ala Rajabi. This study aimed to examine the relationship between circadian syndrome and asthma among adults using population-based data from the United States, China, and the United Kingdom.

The findings revealed that circadian syndrome was positively associated with both current and incident asthma and demonstrated stronger predictive ability for asthma compared to metabolic syndrome.

humanitarian and scientific impact on world civilization.

In addition, Dr. Mohammad Monajed, Secretary-General of the Syrian Medical Association in Qatar, stressed the importance of organising such

In addition, the study also identified a dose-response relationship between meal skipping and asthma risk, suggesting the possible role of circadian health and lifestyle behaviours in respiratory disease prevention and management.

Student Yasmine Attia presented her thesis titled ‘Maternal Determinants of Minerals and Pesticide Residues in Preterm Human Milk in Qatar,’ under the supervision of Dr. Maya Bassil and committee members Dr. Tareq M. Osaili, Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Al-Ghouti, Dr. Layaal Karam. The study examined maternal determinants of mineral composition and pesticide residues in preterm human milk among mothers residing in Qatar.

The findings demonstrated that maternal dietary patterns and clinical characteristics were associated with variations in certain mineral concentrations, particularly magnesium levels. A vegetarian dietary pattern was positively associated with magnesium concentrations, while a Western dietary pattern showed

an inverse association. No detectable pesticide residues were identified in the analyzed milk samples, providing important local evidence related to maternal and infant nutrition as well as environmental exposure.

Student Yasmen Khial presented her thesis titled ‘Development and Validation of a Quantitative Food Frequency Questionnaire to Assess Dietary Intake in a Representative Sample of Children and Adolescents Aged 6-14 Years Old Living in Qatar,’ under the supervision of Dr. Reema Tayyem and committee members Dr. Simone Perna, Dr. Nivein Hashem Abu Rmilah, Dr. Maya Bassil.

The study developed and validated the first culturally adapted quantitative food frequency questionnaire designed to assess habitual dietary intake among school-aged children and adolescents in Qatar. The questionnaire demonstrated acceptable validity and good-to-excellent reproducibility in ranking nutrient intake among participants.

AI at work: Redefining jobs, skills, and human connection

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Artificial Intelligence is redefining the world of work in profound ways. But when he spoke at Qatar Foundation’s Education City Speaker Series, Mo Gawdat offered reassurance to those who fear a technological takeover of the workplace: “AI will reshape roles, but should not wipe out entire industries or regional economies.”

The former Chief Business Officer at Google X and best-selling author, insists that the narrative of AI as a destroyer of jobs is misguided. For him, the real challenge lies in inequality: “We have a shortage of workers, not jobs; the real issue is wages and income inequality.”

His perspective reframes the debate, suggesting that the danger is not automation itself, but how society values human labour.

Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and a Teaching

Professor of Computer Science at Qatar Foundation (QF) partner university Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q), Dr. Khaled Harras adds to this perspective.

He acknowledges that some fears are valid, saying: “The reality is that some of that fear is justified because many jobs will indeed be replaced.” However, he emphasises that the bigger issue is readiness.

“Our current workforce isn’t fully equipped to integrate this rapidly evolving AI ecosystem to become more effective,” he says, “creating a contradiction where younger employees may skip foundational skills while seasoned experts resist new tools.”

This tension highlights the need for balanced adaptation, and efficiency gains are already visible. As Dr. Harras points out: “AI provides much more effective access to distilled information and data. It creates a massive gain in efficiency for

mundane human activities such as summarising emails, drafting slides, coding, and media production.”

These advances lower barriers to entry, allowing workers to accelerate through tasks that once consumed hours. But Gawdat reminds us that human qualities remain central. “Technological change can create opportunities for emotional intelligence over formal credentials. AI is not replacing human connection; it is amplifying the need for it.”

The World Economic Forum predicts over a billion jobs will be transformed in the coming decade, and Dr. Harras explains what this means. “Job transformation means the expected set of skills must evolve, and workflows will become increasingly AI-assisted,” he explains. “For an expert, AI becomes a ‘peer’ that handles the mundane lifting, allowing the human to focus on curation, creativity, and finding

that specific spin or angle.”

As Gawdat says: “AI isn’t coming for your job, someone who knows how to use it. The reality is that the jobs themselves will not disappear, but the way they are performed will change dramatically.”

“What we will see is not mass unemployment, but a filtering process where the least adaptable workers lose out, and those who embrace AI thrive in newly transformed roles.”

Dr. Harras also raises regional concerns, noting that the Middle East has opportunities to leapfrog legacy systems but faces risks of ‘digital sovereignty’ if nations rely too heavily on external AI providers.

“If a nation doesn’t invest in its own AI capacity, its entire functionality becomes reliant on external entities like OpenAI or Anthropic,” he says. “This is a new form of economic dominance where a country’s functioning could effectively be



Mo Gawdat at Qatar Foundation’s Education City Speaker Series, held recently.

guided by an external company’s decision.”

Ultimately, both Dr. Harras and Gawdat return to the human dimension. “The future of work is not about fewer jobs, but about better jobs,” Gawdat says. Dr. Harras echoes the same sentiment, “We must adapt, not just in how we work, but in how we define meaning itself. We must reimagine our economies

and our systems of governance, anchoring them in human connection, empathy, and our deepest values.

“And as the digital world becomes more complex, we must hold even more firmly to our humanity, reminding ourselves that progress is only meaningful when it serves people and uplifts human well-being.”

Qatar National Library welcomes 4,773 visitors at Doha International Book Fair

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar National Library brought knowledge, heritage, and innovation to the 35th Doha International Book Fair, welcoming 4773 visitors over ten days at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC) from May 14 to 23, 2026.

As one of the Arab world's leading literary platforms, the fair offered the Library a vital opportunity to engage the community and introduce its personalised resources to new audiences.

This year marked the public debut of the #Library4You campaign, positioning the Library as a personal partner in every member's learning

journey and demonstrating its dynamic role as a modern national institution. The Library's interactive booth engaged visitors in immersive experiences that connected them to its diverse collections, services, and cultural initiatives.

Visitor turnout remained strong throughout the event. The "Scan to Play: Qatar's Story" game on the Library's mobile app extended engagement beyond the physical booth: through a QR code-based challenge and prize draw, the interactive game generated 1100 app downloads.

The booth's programming was designed to appeal to a wide audience. Families



Qatar National Library booth at the Doha International Book Fair.

discovered the "Ready for School" initiative through "Dream Big, The Hero is You," allowing children to create

personalised digital stories. Students and adults engaged with the AI-powered "Literary Twin," an immersive Ibn

As one of the Arab world's leading literary platforms, the fair offered the Library a vital opportunity to engage the community and introduce its personalised resources to new audiences.

Battuta heritage journey, and a rare Aerial Photography Collection documenting decades of Doha's transformation.

Prospective members explored the "Free Knowledge Shopping Spree," while a 360-degree virtual tour offered many visitors their first glimpse inside the Library's iconic

building. Scheduled appearances by Ramily, the Library's beloved mascot, added warmth and energy to the atmosphere throughout.

"The Doha International Book Fair is a cornerstone of Qatar's cultural calendar, and this year demonstrated our community's strong appetite for knowledge, heritage, and discovery," said Event Specialist, Qatar National Library, Fatma Al Mannai. "Seeing families, students, and researchers engage with such enthusiasm was deeply encouraging.

Every interaction reflected what the Library stands for: a welcoming, inclusive space where knowledge is accessible to all."

Qatar Falconry Association strengthens ties at Istanbul Traditional Sports Festival

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Qatari Falconry Association has concluded a successful participation in the 8th Traditional Sports Festival in Istanbul, reinforcing Qatar's role in preserving and promoting falconry heritage while strengthening cultural ties with participating nations.

The four-day festival, organised by the World Federation of Traditional Sports recently under the slogan "The World is Here," brought together delegations from several countries to showcase traditional sports, arts and cultural practices in a vibrant family-oriented setting.

The Qatari delegation was headed by Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Qatari Falconry Association and member of the federation's board, Ali bin Khatem Al Mahshadi, accompanied by Vice President Mohammed bin Abdul Latif Al Musnad and Secretary Zayed Al-Ali Al-Maadeed.

The festival witnessed significant public turnout, with visitors exploring a wide variety of traditional activities including archery, wrestling, horseback riding, horseback falconry, Saluki dog demonstrations, martial arts, acrobatics, theatre performances, traditional handicrafts and culinary arts.

Interactive zones also enabled visitors of all age



Officials during the event.

groups to experience traditional sports firsthand, reflecting the event's emphasis on cultural learning and heritage engagement.

Speaking on the sidelines of the festival, Al-Mahshadi said the participation offered an important platform for engagement with senior officials, dignitaries and international visitors, including Sayed Nayef bin Jassim Al-Abd Al-Jabbar, as well as Turkish ministers and officials.

He noted that the Qatari Falconry Association held several meetings with participating delegations, including representatives of Turkish falconry institutions and new federation members, in a move aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchanging expertise.

Al-Mahshadi said

discussions highlighted the association's efforts to preserve falconry as a cultural and educational heritage at both local and international levels. The meetings also showcased Qatar's experience in building partnerships with friendly organisations and its commitment to nurturing young talent through competitions and initiatives dedicated to emerging falconers.

He stressed that participation in such international gatherings provides an opportunity to deepen people-to-people ties, particularly between Qatar and Turkey, while also fostering closer relations with countries from Central Asia.

According to Al-Mahshadi, the Qatari experience received positive feedback from

participants, who commended the association's scientific and cultural initiatives. These include Qatar's organisation of conferences dedicated to falconry and veterinary medicine, research efforts such as the falcon genes project, and programmes focused on reintroducing falcons into the wild and promoting the role of falconers in conservation.

As part of the closing ceremony, Al-Mahshadi participated in honouring winners of festival competitions, including the Russian delegation.

The festival was inaugurated by Bilal Erdogan, who described the gathering as a "family meeting" that transcends differences in geography and language through shared values and cultural memory.

He highlighted the festival's strong focus on youth engagement, noting that educational workshops, heritage activities and recreational programmes were designed to strengthen children's connection to culture and identity.

The opening ceremony also featured remarks by senior Turkish officials, including ministers responsible for health, culture, tourism, youth and sports, alongside Istanbul's governor, underscoring the event's growing international significance as a platform celebrating traditional sports, heritage and intercultural dialogue.

Brisa by Praia opens at Waldorf Astoria Doha Lusail



THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Waldorf Astoria Doha Lusail announces the opening of Brisa by Praia, a new beachfront restaurant located on the hotel's private shoreline. Inspired by Mediterranean coastal destinations including Ibiza, the Côte d'Azur and the Greek islands, the concept brings together all-day dining, beachfront lounging and music-led ambience within a contemporary setting overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

Designed as a refined yet relaxed seaside destination, Brisa by Praia reinterprets Riviera-style living through an experience adapted to Doha's coastline.

The restaurant features outdoor seating areas and

uninterrupted sea views, creating a setting intended to transition seamlessly from daytime lunches to evening gatherings.

The interiors combine natural textures and contemporary finishes, with sustainably sourced bamboo used throughout the space alongside woven lighting, rattan detailing and earthy materials. A palette of deep blue, sand, terracotta and ivory tones reinforces the Mediterranean-inspired aesthetic, while bar seating and lounge areas contribute to a more social atmosphere.

Open daily for lunch and dinner, Brisa by Praia's culinary offering focuses on Mediterranean cuisine with an emphasis on seafood, grilled specialties and sharing-style dishes.

Birla Public School team wins silver at Destination Imagination 2025–26

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The students of Birla Public School brought laurels to the school by securing the Silver Medal in the Improvisational Challenge at the prestigious Destination Imagination 2025–26 competition.

Destination Imagination is an educational programme organised by the Al Faisal Without Borders Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The programme aims to foster creativity, innovation, teamwork, and community partnership among students through hands-on and collaborative learning experiences. The challenges presented to students include technical, scientific, fine arts, improvisation, and early

learning categories, encouraging participants to become lifelong problem solvers and innovative thinkers.

This academic year, eight teams from Birla Public School, ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 9, participated enthusiastically in the competition. The school's Middle School team excelled in the Improvisational Challenge and secured Silver Medal at the competition held on 6 February 2026 at Qatar University.

The closing ceremony of Destination Imagination was held on May 21, 2026 at Qatar National Convention Centre, where the winning teams were honoured for their outstanding achievements.

The proud winners from Birla Public School are Joachim Sanish, Nehara Vinod



Birla Public School Principal Dr. Anand R. Nair, vice principals, and teachers with the winning students.

Nair, Mukund Anuj Kumar, Aaron Joy Miracle, Hanaa Hussain Syed, Chaitanya Mishra, and Saanvi Tsaliki. Their remarkable achievement reflects the school's commitment to nurturing creativity, collabo-

ration, and innovation among students.

The school management and the senior leadership team congratulate the students and mentors for their dedication and commendable performance.

Supreme Judiciary Council auction raises over QR 26m

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Supreme Judiciary Council said it generated over QR 26m from more than 2,200 bids in a single-day auction on May 24.

In a post on X, the council said the Department of Judicial Evacuations and Auctions conducted a number of auctions on May 24, 2026, yielding a total of QR 26,083,814, across 1,162 cases, with a total of 2,265 bids.

Three real estate properties were auctioned for QR 23,664,264.

QF Art expert highlights how healing power of art can support our mental health

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Art has always been a language beyond words, but in times of emotional strain that we all experience in our lives, it can become a lifeline for children and communities.

Community Arts Lead at Qatar Foundation Ameera Al Aji and a specialist in fine arts and art therapy, emphasises that art offers children a developmentally appropriate, emotionally safe, and non-threatening way to express feelings when verbal language is insufficient, unsafe, or unavailable.

In moments of fear, grief, anger, or confusion, art-making bypasses linguistic limitations and allows children to communicate through symbol, image, color, texture, and movement. "The canvas or paper becomes a psychological boundary where emotions can be externalised safely, making fear drawable, anger shapeable, and confusion visible, thereby reducing emotional intensity and restoring regulation," Al Aji says.



Ameera Al Aji

Drawing and painting give children a simple, safe way to work through overwhelming feelings. These activities engage the senses and use symbols to help them process emotions in a calm and manageable way. According to Al Aji, children can use simple artistic actions, like drawing lines, dots, textures, patterns, choosing colors, or creating rhythms, to turn vague, overwhelming feelings into clear, visible forms. This process helps ease anxiety and brings their focus back to the present moment.

Over time, the steady practice of making art again and again helps children bring order to confusing or fragmented experiences. As Al Aji explains: "Drawing and painting do not aim to eliminate difficult emotions, but to give children a safe, embodied, and dignified way to hold and transform them."

Teachers and caregivers can harness art as a gentle tool for resilience and hope. By inviting children to "draw how today feels" or "create a place where you feel safe", Al-Aji says, they validate emotions without pressure.

Focusing on the act of creating rather than the final result helps children build confidence and a sense of control. At the same time, storytelling and group murals allow them to turn challenges into shared narratives of strength.

Storytelling through art helps children regain a sense of normalcy by turning difficult experiences into manageable narratives. Instead of relying on words, they use images and symbols to take ownership of

their stories, restoring coherence and stability. Imagination allows them to rehearse solutions and embody strength, while attentive listening from adults reassures them that their inner world is valued and connected to the wider community.

"Consistent creative rituals, such as weekly reflection journals or shared art circles, provide predictability and emotional safety," Al-Aji says. "Normalcy is not about returning to what it was, but about discovering that you can still play, imagine, create, and be understood despite what has happened."

Al Aji says that collaborative art projects extend healing to the community level. They create shared spaces of belonging where differences are held with care rather than tension. Working side by side on murals, sculptures, or performances restores trust and fosters cooperation.

Importantly, collaborative art disrupts rigid hierarchies: children are not defined by language ability, background, or trauma history, but by creative

contribution. Displaying shared artworks in schools or public spaces affirms collective pride and visibility, strengthening bonds between children, caregivers, educators, and the wider community.

"In my practice, I have seen how collaborative art does more than bring children together for an activity – it helps them feel what community is again," says Al-Aji. "Not as an abstract idea, but as a shared rhythm, a shared creation, and a shared sense of 'we'."

Integrating healing art practices into daily routines does not require special materials or artistic skill, but rather intention and consistency. Parents and educators can embed small creative practices into existing routines, such as beginning the day with a color check-in or ending with a reflective drawing. Accessible art spaces—a basket of crayons, clay, or recycled materials—communicate permission for expression.

Adults support healing best when they act as attentive witnesses rather than judges, simply

noticing and affirming children's creative choices. Art can be woven into calming routines, from drawing to music or making big gestures on large paper, and group practices such as collaborative journals help normalise expression. What matters most is consistency: even a few minutes of regular art making can build resilience and emotional safety.

As Al Aji says: "Integrating healing art is not about teaching children how to make art – it is about using art to build trust, resilience, and relationship within the rhythm of everyday life."

Art, whether through personal expression, storytelling, or collective creation, becomes more than creativity – it becomes a source of healing and belonging. In times of emotional pressure, it restores a sense of control, nurtures hope, and shows children and communities that they can imagine, rebuild, and thrive together.

"Hope grows when people see themselves not only as survivors of hardship, but as active meaning makers," Al Aji says.

Pilgrims pray on Mount Arafat as Hajj reaches peak

MOUNT ARAFAT, SAUDI ARABIA: Huge numbers of Muslims prayed on Mount Arafat yesterday at the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage, defying searing temperatures under the desert sun as they fulfilled a lifelong dream.

From daybreak, thousands of white-robed worshippers recited Quranic verses on the 70-metre rocky hill near Makkah, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is believed to have delivered his last sermon. Volunteers handed out bottles of water, parasols and food packages to the tens of thousands of pilgrims as they made their way toward Mount Arafat, as helicopters buzzed overhead regularly.

“It is an indescribable feeling,” said Ahmed Abu Al-Ezz, a 35-year-old Egyptian engineer, as he approached Mount Arafat for the first time.

More than 1.5 million people have joined the hajj this year.

More than 30,000 Iranians have made the journey, about a third of the 86,000 originally expected. Iran's IRNA state news agency said the “wartime situation” explained the drop.

Despite the war, Saudi officials said over the weekend that more pilgrims had travelled from abroad this year than in 2025. The hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, must be performed at least once by all Muslims with the means to do so. With temperatures hitting 44 degrees in Makkah in recent days, Saudi authorities have urged pilgrims to drink plenty of water and protect themselves from the sun during the mostly outdoor rituals, which can take five days or more to complete.

Since men are prohibited from wearing hats during hajj, many carry umbrellas to try to



Muslims gather near Saudi Arabia's Mount Arafat during the Hajj pilgrimage yesterday. (AFP)

keep the blistering sun at bay.

Saudi authorities have introduced a range of heat-mitigation measures including more shaded areas and thousands of extra health workers.

More than 50,000 healthcare staff and 3,000 ambulances were deployed to help pilgrims in need, the Saudi health ministry said.

After Mount Arafat, pilgrims

will spend the night in Muzdalifah, where they will collect pebbles for the symbolic “stoning of the devil” ritual in Mina, starting today (Wednesday). — **AFP**

Israeli forces kill Palestinian man in Jenin refugee camp

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man inside the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said yesterday.

“A citizen... was killed by Israeli fire in the Jenin camp, and ambulance crews transported his body to Jenin Government Hospital,” the Ramallah-based ministry said in a statement, without specifying when he was killed.

The director of Jenin's Government Hospital, Wissam Baker, identified the victim as Nasser Al-Saadi, noting that “he arrived dead at the hospital after being shot in the thigh”.

“It appears he bled heavily after being injured before an ambulance was called to transport him to the hospital,” Baker told AFP.

The Palestinian Red Crescent had earlier announced that Israeli forces handed over the body of a 30-year-old from inside the Jenin refugee camp, which is adjacent to the city of Jenin. — **AFP**

Russian call for diplomats to leave Kyiv draws backlash

MOSCOW: Russia's call for diplomats and foreigners to leave Kyiv over the threat of fresh strikes drew a sharp backlash from Western countries yesterday.

Russia announced Monday it had started a campaign of “systematic” strikes on Kyiv, after battering Ukraine with hundreds of drones and a hypersonic missile over the weekend. It said the strikes would target the Ukrainian capital's “decision-making centres” and urged foreign citizens and diplomats “to leave the city as soon as possible”, as well as for Kyiv residents to avoid public buildings.

Ukraine encouraged its allies to ignore the warning, while several Western diplomatic missions announced they had no plans to evacuate their staff.

Almost 50 countries condemned what they said were threats by Russia against embassies in Ukraine in a joint statement at the United Nations yesterday. — **AFP**

Gaza health officials say seven people killed in Israeli airstrikes

GAZA: Gaza health officials said Israeli airstrikes killed at least seven people yesterday, including five in one attack, in the latest violence to hit the Palestinian territory despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

“Five martyrs and several wounded were transferred (to hospital) after an Israeli airstrike targeted a group of

citizens in eastern Al-Maghazi,” the civil defence agency said.

Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital and a Palestinian security source confirmed the incident and the casualties.

A witness told AFP that a group of armed men entered the Al-Maghazi refugee camp and broke into a house yesterday morning.

“Residents in the area

noticed them and confronted them with stones and sticks, at which point an Israeli drone then fired a missile at the residents, killing five,” he said.

The witness, who declined to be named for safety reasons, added that the gunmen subsequently fled toward the border area east of the camp, which is under Israeli control.

The Palestinian security

source from the Gaza interior ministry confirmed these details.

Nasser hospital in the southern city of Khan Yunis reported receiving two bodies following an Israeli airstrike on a vehicle in the city's western area.

At least 906 Palestinians have been killed since the October 10 ceasefire, according

to Gaza's health ministry, whose figures are considered reliable by the UN.

The Israeli military says five of its soldiers have also been killed during the same period.

Media restrictions and limited access in Gaza have prevented AFP from independently verifying casualty figures or freely covering the fighting. — **AFP**

Medical check up went 'perfectly': Trump

BETHESDA, UNITED STATES: Donald Trump said an annual medical check-up had gone “perfectly” yesterday, as the health of the oldest US president ever to take the oath faces growing scrutiny with the approach of his 80th birthday.

It was Trump's third medical examination since returning to office last year and follows mounting speculation about issues including bruising on his hands and apparent sleepiness during meetings.

“Everything checked out PERFECTLY,” Trump posted on

his Truth Social network as he drove back to the White House from the Walter Reed Military Hospital near Washington.

But Trump has long been accused of a lack of transparency about his health — and the chronology of his various check-ups during his second term has added to the confusion. He referred to yesterday's check up as a “six-month physical,” despite the White House billing it as an annual dental and medical examination when it announced it earlier this month. Trump's last

scheduled annual check up was in April 2025. But it was followed by an unannounced hospital visit that October, which the White House then also described as an annual physical.

The Republican billionaire's claims about his health are all the more subject to scrutiny given his repeated boasts about his mental and physical vigor compared to Democratic predecessor Joe Biden. Trump turns 80 on June 14. “I feel the same as I did 50 years ago,” Trump said earlier this month. — **AFP**



Civil defence workers search through the rubble following an Israeli strike in the southern Lebanese area of Al-Hosh yesterday. (AFP)

Strikes hit south Lebanon city as Israel expands ground operations

BEIRUT: Several strikes hit the southern Lebanese city of Nabatieh yesterday after an Israeli evacuation warning.

An AFP correspondent in Nabatieh reported airstrikes following the warning yesterday and saw plumes of smoke rising from various locations within the city.

An Israeli military official told AFP that troops had begun operating beyond the Israel-announced “Yellow Line” in south Lebanon, which runs

around 10 kilometres deep inside Lebanese territory.

Hezbollah said its fighters confronted Israeli troops trying to advance into a town that overlooks Nabatieh city yesterday. In eastern Lebanon, the health ministry said “yesterday's Israeli enemy airstrike on the town of Mashghara in West Bekaa resulted in a preliminary toll of 11 martyrs, including two girls and a woman, and 15 wounded, including a child”. — **AFP**

Trump to meet cabinet at Camp David on Iran

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is set to hold a rare cabinet meeting at the Camp David presidential retreat yesterday as Iran talks near a critical point, a White House official told AFP.

The choice of the secluded retreat in the Maryland mountains reflects the sensitive nature of discussions. The New York Post reported that Iran was set to dominate the meeting, which was expected to be attended by all cabinet members. The economy was also on the agenda, it said.

Trump said Saturday that a deal with Tehran to end the Middle East war was close but negotiations are still tense, with the US leader warning that strikes on Iran could resume. Camp David has been the scene of major US-led diplomatic developments in the past, including the 1978 accords between Israel and Egypt under President Jimmy Carter and a failed 2000 Israeli-Palestinian summit under Bill Clinton. Trump has however been an infrequent visitor. — **AFP**

Record temperatures as spring heat wave bakes Europe

LONDON: People in western Europe turned to fans and fountains as they sweltered through a record-breaking heatwave yesterday, with temperatures set to soar even further.

Hit by a so-called “heat dome” of warm air from northern Africa that is pushing the mercury well above normal levels for May, some Europeans even admitted they were considering getting air conditioning, in a region famously averse.

People across western Europe swarmed beaches,

braved the streets clutching handheld fans and umbrellas to fend off the sun, and went for a dip or splashed themselves wherever they could — including Rome's Barcaccia fountain and the bubblers in the Jardin du Palais Royal in Paris.

The UK reported its hottest-ever day for May, at 35.1C at Kew Gardens, in southwest London — breaking a record of 34.8C set at the same location Monday — as a high-pressure system trapped warm air over western Europe.

In France, which also logged

its hottest-ever May day Monday and then again on Tuesday, the weather agency said the heatwave could last through the week, predicting temperatures could go as high as 39C in some areas.

Across the Channel, tennis fans in Paris baked in temperatures of 33C at the French Open, with players battling through heat that Norway's Casper Ruud said left him feeling “like a zombie”.

Government authorities also noted the heat had taken a deadly turn.

French authorities on Tuesday reported at least seven deaths linked to the heatwave — five of which were drownings, as many people sought relief on beaches and in the water, even though life-guard supervision is not due to start in many areas until July.

Authorities in Britain said four teens had drowned in England since Sunday.

A record May temperature of 28.8C was recorded at two of Ireland's weather stations amid the current blast of heat, Met Eireann data showed. — **AFP**

 World in brief

Four dead after train hits school bus in Belgium

BELGIUM: A train yesterday hit a school minibus killing four people, including two children in a “horrific accident” in northern Belgium, authorities said.

The children aged 15 and 12, were killed by the impact alongside the 49-year-old driver and a 27-year-old supervisor, according to Lisa De Wilde, a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office. The other five schoolchildren on the bus were injured in the crash at a railway crossing in Buggenhout, a Dutch-speaking municipality about 25 kilometres (15 miles) northwest of Brussels.

“A tragic collision between a train and a school bus took place in Buggenhout this morning. Four people have been killed, including two children,” Belgium's deputy prime minister Maxime Prevot wrote on X. — **AFP**

Putin to raise Armenia's EU ambitions at summit

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will travel to Kazakhstan today for a three-day visit, during which he is expected to address Armenia's EU membership bid — a move Moscow has openly criticised.

Last year, Yerevan passed a law formally declaring its intention to seek EU membership, though it has yet to submit a formal application. Armenia still hosts a Russian military base on its territory. Speaking at a press briefing attended by AFP, Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov said Putin would raise Yerevan's EU aspirations at an upcoming Eurasian Economic Union summit — a Russia-led economic bloc of former Soviet states that includes Armenia. AFP

“Putin has repeatedly stressed that it is impossible to belong to two associations simultaneously. It simply will not work,” Ushakov said. — **AFP**

Malfunctioning drones crash into Sydney water

SYDNEY: A show featuring dozens of drones in dazzling displays above Sydney's Darling Harbour has been called off, organisers said yesterday, after the flying gadgets malfunctioned and fell into the water.

Vivid Sydney takes place every year and features drones, fireworks and art shows across the Australian city's central business district. But a nightly drone show went terribly wrong on Monday evening as the airborne objects glitched out and plunged into the harbour.

SkyMagic — the company behind the drone performance — blamed a change in radio frequency for the disaster that saw 89 of the devices fall into Cockle Bay. — **AFP**

Senegal parliament elects ousted PM as speaker

DAKAR: Senegal's National Assembly elected ousted prime minister Ousmane Sonko as its speaker yesterday, in a move which could challenge the president's ability to govern as he navigates a massive debt crisis.

President Bassirou Diomaye Faye dramatically fired Sonko, his former mentor, and dismissed the cabinet four days ago after months of tension and growing disagreement including over the troubled economy. But yesterday, lawmakers rebuffed the president by overwhelmingly backing Sonko — the sole candidate — for the powerful position of speaker.

Sonko remains the undisputed leader of Pastef, the party he founded in 2014 and which controls 130 of the 165 seats in Senegal's only legislative body. — **AFP**

Director of Venezuela ‘torture’ prison fired

BARINAS, VENEZUELA: An uprising by prisoners alleging torture continued Monday at a Venezuelan penitentiary, despite the firing of the prison director accused of ordering the abuse.

Hundreds of inmates chanting “no more torture” took control of Barinas Judicial Detention Center, a center for common-law prisoners, in western Venezuela on Sunday. They also burned mattresses and sheets. On Monday, a group of prisoners remained huddled on the roof as mediators attempted to talk them down.

Dozens of inmates were bused out to other facilities, including over 100 women, according to the Venezuelan Prison Observatory (OVP), a human rights NGO. — **AFP**