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Qatar condemns attack on Emirati tanker in Strait of Hormuz

DOHA: The State of Qatar has strongly condemned the Iranian attack that targeted an Emirati ADNOC tanker with a missile while it was transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Qatar considered the attack a blatant violation of international law and the freedom of maritime navigation, and a flagrant breach of UN Security Council Resolution 2817.

In a statement issued yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's categorical rejection of using the Strait of Hormuz as a tool of pressure. The Ministry called for its unconditional reopening and affirmed that freedom of navigation in this vital waterway is a fundamental and non-negotiable principle. It emphasized that the continued closure of the Strait jeopardizes the vital interests of the region's countries and the global economy.

The Ministry stressed the need to halt Iran's unjustified attacks on the assets of brotherly nations, while simultaneously affirming full solidarity with United Arab Emirates and support for all measures it takes to protect its assets.

Meanwhile, UAE has strongly condemned and denounced the hostile Iranian attack involving a missile that targeted the carrier affiliated with ADNOC as it transited through the Strait of Hormuz, with no injuries reported.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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underscored that this attack constitutes a flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolution 2817, which affirmed the importance of freedom of navigation, and rejected the targeting of commercial vessels or the obstruction of international maritime routes.

It emphasised that targeting commercial shipping and using the Strait of Hormuz as a tool of economic coercion or blackmail represents acts of piracy by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, and constitutes a direct threat to the stability of the region, its peoples, and global energy security.

The statement further stressed the need for Iran to halt these unprovoked attacks, ensure its full commitment to an immediate cessation of all hostilities, and the complete and unconditional

Qatar welcomes UNSC condemnation of Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

DOHA: The State of Qatar welcomed the statement issued by the members of the Security Council on August 7, which condemned the missile attacks launched by the Houthi group against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since July 13, as well as attacks against commercial vessels since July 22.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Qatar's full appreciation for the statement's emphasis on adherence to international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2216, and its rejection of actions that threaten regional security and the rights and freedoms of maritime navigation. The Ministry reaffirmed Qatar's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its sovereignty and security. It further stressed that Saudi Arabia's security is an integral part of Qatar's security and the security of the GCC states. — *QNA*

PHCC health centres record over 380,000 patient visits in July

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) health centres recorded 380,637 patient visits during July, reflecting continued demand for a broad range of primary healthcare services across Qatar.

Family medicine clinics accounted for the largest share of visits, with 209,810 consultations during the month, according to latest data released by the PHCC.

PHCC operates family medicine clinics across all 31 health centres in Qatar, with the Family Medicine Model serving as a core component of services at every regional health facility.

The integrated Family Medicine Model is designed to help patients better manage their health, promote greater independence and wellbeing, and reduce the need for admission or referral to secondary care where appropriate.

Dental services recorded 26,877 visits in July, while 6,653 visits were made to mental health clinics.

PHCC's integrated psychiatry service provides support and management for patients with moderate to severe mental health disorders.

In addition, mental health support clinics cater to people experiencing mild to moderate anxiety and depression, with psychologists providing behavioural interventions and support.

The mental health support service is currently available at Rawdat Al Khail, Thumama, Lebaib, Qatar University and Al Wajbah health centres, with access through referral from a family physician. PHCC family physicians can also refer patients diagnosed with mild to moderate cognitive impairment or dementia to the service.

The Well-Baby Clinics across PHCC health centres recorded 14,591 visits during July. ➔P2

Registration opens for diploma programmes at military entities

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar's Permanent Unified Committee for the Selection of Officer Candidates for Military Entities announced the opening of registration for Qatari men and women holding a General Secondary School Certificate or its equivalent to join diploma programmes offered by military entities.

According to an announcement published by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior, applications will be accepted from August 8 to August 29, 2026, for programmes leading to ranks other than officer ranks.

The available programmes include the Technical Institute Diploma and Military Diploma under the Ministry of Defence; the Police Sciences Diploma and Emergency and Safety Technician Diploma under the Ministry of Interior; the Security Studies Diploma at the State Security Bureau; and the Security and Protection Diploma.

The committee outlined nine admission requirements. Applicants must be Qatari

The available programmes include the Technical Institute Diploma and Military Diploma under the Ministry of Defence; the Police Sciences Diploma and Emergency and Safety Technician Diploma under the Ministry of Interior; the Security Studies Diploma at the State Security Bureau; and the Security and Protection Diploma.

nationals and hold a General Secondary School Certificate or its equivalent. They must also be no older than 26 years of age when applications open.

Applicants must be of good reputation and conduct and must not have previously been convicted of a felony or a crime involving dishonour or breach of trust unless they have been legally rehabilitated.

They must also not have been dismissed from public service by a judgment or final disciplinary decision and must be declared medically fit by the

competent medical committee.

Candidates are additionally required to successfully pass the prescribed physical fitness tests and a personal interview before the selection committee.

The committee noted that it may impose additional conditions or examinations whenever necessary.

Applicants are required to upload several documents when registering, including a certified copy of their secondary school certificate or equivalency certificate for private schools, a copy of their Qatar ID, a copy of their birth certificate, and a certificate from the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau confirming that they are not employed by any government entity.

Registration is available electronically through the Permanent Unified Committee's official portal.

The announcement also provides telephone, mobile and WhatsApp channels for applicants seeking further information.

Qatar deepens cybersecurity workforce development

JOEL JOHNSON
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA), through the National Cyber Security Academy, has launched the 12th cohort of its 'Fresh Graduates Training Camp' as part of efforts to prepare and develop national talent for specialised careers in cybersecurity.

On its social media handles, the agency stated yesterday that the programme is designed to provide recent graduates with a strong foundation in cybersecurity and help them develop the technical and professional skills required to pursue careers in the rapidly evolving field.

The initiative combines theoretical learning with practical training, giving participants an opportunity to apply their knowledge in realistic cybersecurity environments.

According to the NCSA, the training camp focuses on strengthening participants' technical capabilities and developing essential professional skills that can support their transition into specialised cybersecurity roles. Trainees will also be guided

toward career paths within defensive or offensive cybersecurity teams, depending on their interests and capabilities.

The programme includes internationally recognised certification courses, realistic simulations, and practical exercises designed to expose participants to the challenges cybersecurity professionals face in real-world environments. The agency mentioned that such training is expected to help graduates build the expertise needed to identify, prevent and respond to cyber threats.

The launch of the 12th cohort reflects continued efforts by NCSA to expand the national cybersecurity talent pool and create a pipeline of qualified specialists capable of supporting organisations as cyber risks become increasingly complex.

Alongside the graduate-focused initiative, the agency also organised the first cohort of its 'Cybersecurity Managers Program', targeting department managers and professionals responsible for overseeing cybersecurity-related functions within their entities. ➔P2

Excessive screen time during summer puts children's sleep, health at risk: Expert

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Excessive screen use during the summer holidays can disrupt children's sleep, concentration and emotional wellbeing while replacing physical activity, creative play and face-to-face interaction, a pediatric medicine expert at Sidra Medicine has warned.

Chair of Pediatric Medicine at Sidra Medicine, Dr. Ahmed Al Hammadi said the health impact of prolonged screen use extends beyond the time children spend on their devices, with the activities displaced by screens becoming an important concern.

"When families come into clinic worrying about devices, what we usually see is rarely just the screen in isolation—it's what comes with it," he told *The Peninsula*.

Children who spend long periods on phones, tablets, computers or gaming devices may experience eye strain, headaches and poor posture. More importantly, excessive screen use can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle by reducing opportunities for movement, creative activities and social interaction.

"The latest scientific evidence emphasizes

that every hour spent scrolling is an hour stolen from physical movement, creative outlets, and face-to-face social contact with family and peers," Dr. Al Hammadi said.

Late-night screen use can be particularly disruptive, affecting children's natural sleep rhythm through both exposures to screen displays and the stimulating nature of interactive content.

According to Dr. Al Hammadi, this can suppress melatonin, the hormone that helps the body prepare for sleep. "The brain is essentially tricked into thinking it is still daytime," he said.

Poor or interrupted sleep can leave children more irritable, less able to concentrate and more likely to struggle with emotional self-regulation. Over a prolonged summer break, chronic sleep disruption can also affect memory, learning capacity and emotional resilience.

Parents can identify excessive screen use by watching for changes in behaviour and daily routines.

Warning signs include significant distress when a device is taken away, losing interest in hobbies a child previously enjoyed, withdrawing from family life and spending long periods indoors without physical activity. ➔P3

SCREEN TIME MATTERS

Children who spend long periods on phones, tablets, computers or gaming devices may experience:



EYE STRAIN
Prolonged screen use can tire the eyes.



HEADACHES
Too much screen time can lead to frequent headaches.



POOR POSTURE
Long hours of sitting can affect posture and spinal health.



Excessive screen use can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle by reducing opportunities for:



MOVEMENT



CREATIVE ACTIVITIES



SOCIAL INTERACTION

QNL to host Storytime session celebrating Canadian culture

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Qatar National Library (QNL) will host a special Storytime session on August 9 as part of its Summer Camp programme and the Qatar–Canada–Mexico Year of Culture 2026.

The session, designed for children aged 7 to 10, will take place at 4pm in the Children’s Library. The event will offer young participants an opportunity to enjoy an engaging story inspired by Canadian culture while exploring themes of friendship, imagination and cultural discovery.

MoPH advises on food safety during summer

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: With summer temperatures remaining high across the country, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has urged the public to follow safe food preparation, storage and ordering practices to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

In Qatar, where summer temperatures routinely exceed 40°C, proper refrigeration and handling of perishable foods become particularly important to reduce the risk of bacterial growth and food spoilage.

The ministry has shared guidelines to help the public safely prepare, store and order

food during the summer months.

In a post on social media, MoPH outlined several key recommendations for preparing food safely.

It advised the public to wash their hands thoroughly before handling food, keep raw and cooked foods separate to prevent cross-contamination, thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator rather than at room temperature, and avoid preparing food if experiencing symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhoea.

For safe food storage, the ministry recommended keeping refrigerated foods at 4°C or below and hot foods at

65°C or above. It also advised against leaving food unrefrigerated for more than two hours and warned the public not to refreeze foods that have already been thawed.

The ministry also urged consumers to order food only from licensed restaurants. Upon delivery, the public should ensure that hot food is delivered hot and cold food is delivered cold.

The food should also be tightly sealed and wrapped to protect it from contamination.

MoPH also advised refrigerating leftovers promptly and reheating cooked food thoroughly before consumption.

Local Dates Festival records sales of over 153 tonnes of fresh dates

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The 11th Local Dates Festival at Souq Waqif has recorded sales of more than 153,000kg of fresh dates since its launch, attracting around 75,000 visitors, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Municipality.

The festival has sold a total of 153,303kg of fresh dates, comprising a wide variety of premium locally grown varieties. Sales included 30,691kg of Shishi dates, 29,158kg of Khenaizi dates, 17,513kg of Barhi dates, 64,810kg of Khalas dates and 11,131kg of other varieties.

The festival, which opened on July 25 at Souq Waqif, provides visitors with an opportunity to explore Qatar’s agricultural heritage and purchase locally grown fresh dates directly from farmers.

The 11th edition features the participation of 114 fresh date farms and 11 fruit farms, showcasing a diverse selection of locally produced agricultural products.

Organised at the Eastern Square of Souq Waqif, the festival will continue until August 10. It is open from 4pm to 9pm from Sunday to Thursday, and from 4pm to 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

Dawah Department concludes ‘Tafaqquh’ programme on Hadith terminology, Quranic sciences

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Dawah and Religious Guidance Department at the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has concluded the sixth edition of the ‘Tafaqquh’ programme on Hadith terminology and Quranic sciences, organised by the Dawah and Islamic Sciences Institute at Maryam bint Khalifa Al Attiyah Mosque in the Fereej Bin Omran area.

The programme drew strong participation from men and women seeking to acquire Islamic knowledge from reliable sources, as part of the institute’s series of academic and foundational programmes.

The course witnessed significant participation from members of the community, reflecting the Dawah and Religious Guidance Department’s commitment to providing specialised educational programmes that promote sound Islamic knowledge and religious awareness based on moderation and balance, while facilitating access to Islamic sciences through a group of scholars and specialists from the ministry.

The programme featured two main academic tracks.

Dr. Hamza Al-Mulaibari conducted a course on Hadith terminology titled “An Introduction to Hadith Terminology”, covering key concepts and basic principles related to the discipline. He introduced participants to the fundamentals of dealing with the Prophetic Sunnah and methods of verifying narrations and hadiths.

Dr. Masoud Jarallah Al-Marri presented a course on Quranic sciences titled ‘Topics in Quranic Sciences’, addressing a range of academic issues related to the sciences of the Holy Quran, as well as key terminology and topics that students of knowledge need to understand the Quran and comprehend its sciences and objectives.

The lectures were held daily from after Maghrib prayers until after Isha prayers, providing participants with an opportunity to benefit directly from specialists, ask questions and discuss the academic topics presented.

The ‘Tafaqquh’ programme is among the foundational academic programmes offered by the Dawah and Islamic Sciences Institute for men and

women seeking to acquire Islamic knowledge. It aims to establish a systematic academic foundation for beginner students and introduce them to the keys and basic principles of Islamic sciences through a rigorous methodology based on reliable Islamic sources.

The programme also seeks to revive the mosque’s academic role as a centre of knowledge, guidance and religious outreach, strengthen its role in disseminating Islamic knowledge among members of society, and provide specialised educational content that contributes to establishing sound beliefs and a moderate understanding of Islam, with a positive impact on individual behaviour and social stability.

It also aims to make use of the ministry’s academic and religious outreach expertise by drawing on the knowledge and experience of its specialists to serve the community through courses and academic sessions that combine sound Islamic foundations with accessible presentations suitable for different segments of society.

Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Darwish, Head of the Dawah and Islamic



Participants during the programme.

Sciences Institute, said the “Tafaqquh” programme is one of the institute’s distinctive programmes that contributes to educating and preparing members of the public in Islamic academic fields by introducing them to the basic principles and foundations of Islamic sciences. This, he said, helps participants develop a correct understanding of religious matters based on evidence and knowledge.

The programme also contributes to strengthening sound religious awareness, promoting values of moderation and balance, and supporting efforts to safeguard the intellectual security of society by equipping individuals to address misguided ideas and misconceptions and providing them with the Islamic knowledge needed to engage consciously with contemporary intellectual and religious issues.

Katara to screen free planetarium shows throughout August



THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Cultural Village Foundation – Katara will host a series of free movie screenings at the Al Thuraya Planetarium in Building 41 throughout August, offering visitors of all ages an opportunity to explore space and astronomy through immersive full-dome presentations.

The screenings will be held on upcoming Tuesdays. On August 11 the programme will feature two shows with The Perfect Little Planet at 5pm followed by The Great Solar System Adventure at 6pm. Katara said on its social media accounts.

On August 18, visitors can watch Stars at 5pm and Polaris 3D Show at 6pm. The final screenings, on August 25, will feature The Zula Patrol Show at 5pm and The Great Solar System Adventure at 6pm.

The shows are presented in both English and Arabic and are suitable for all age groups.

Visitors can enjoy the programmes free of charge, with limited seats available. Online booking and e-tickets are required, and tickets will be made available on the Katara website one day before each screening.

Visitors are advised to arrive at least 30 minutes before the show for registration.

Located at Katara, the Al Thuraya Planetarium is a 2,240-square-metre facility designed to cater to both children and adults. Its full-dome digital system features a 22-metre screen and state-of-the-art digital projectors, providing an immersive viewing experience.

The planetarium is named after the Pleiades star cluster, also known as the Seven Sisters or M45. Visible from locations around the world, the Pleiades has been an important star cluster in Arab astronomical traditions since ancient times.

NCSA issues warning against fraudulent travel offer links on WhatsApp

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) yesterday issued a public advisory cautioning residents and citizens against clicking on unsolicited travel-offer links distributed through WhatsApp.

The national authority warned that unknown links promising heavily discounted vacation deals or promotional packages could harbor malicious software or direct users to fraudulent websites created to steal sensitive personal data.

The official reminder highlighted a recurring cyber threat as fraudsters leverage popular messaging platforms to distribute tempting holiday offers.

According to security experts, these cyber scams often spike during peak travel planning periods when individuals are actively seeking affordable flights and accommodation packages.

Clicking on such suspicious links can expose mobile devices to dangerous malware or trick users into entering confidential credentials on spoofed booking platforms designed to closely

replicate legitimate travel agencies.

To mitigate the risk of financial loss and digital identity theft, the NCSA advised the public to exercise caution and immediately disregard unrealistic or overly generous offers sent from unfamiliar numbers.

The agency strongly recommended that individuals perform due diligence by verifying promotions directly through official company websites or accredited booking channels before proceeding with any transactions. Users are also reminded to avoid

inputting sensitive details, such as credit card numbers or personal identity information, on unverified or suspicious web pages.

The warning forms part of the NCSA’s broader, continuous efforts to raise digital safety awareness and build robust cyber resilience across the country.

Authorities urge all internet users to maintain vigilant Online safety practices, routinely scrutinise unexpected messages, and report suspicious digital activity or phishing attempts through official security channels.

Excessive screen time during summer puts children’s sleep, health at risk: Expert

FROM PAGE 1

Physical symptoms such as headaches, tired or strained eyes and a stiff neck may also indicate that screen habits need to be reassessed.

“When these habits begin to interfere with daily life or well-being, it’s time to recalibrate,” he said.

Rather than applying a fixed screen-time limit to every child, Dr. Al Hammadi recommended that parents consider the wider role media plays in their child’s life.

He highlighted the 5 C’s of media use: Child, Content, Calm, Crowding Out and Communication as a framework for helping families establish healthier digital habits.

The Child principle recognises that every child responds

differently to media. A platform that helps one child explore music or art may have a different effect on another child.

Content is also critical. Parents should know what their children are watching and playing and guide them towards age-appropriate, positive and creative content, while being mindful of violent material, unrealistic beauty standards and negative role models.

The Calm principle focuses on the use of screens to relax or manage stress. While digital media can be one way for children to unwind, Dr. Al Hammadi said they should also develop other calming strategies, such as reading, talking with family members or being physically active.

Crowding Out means focusing not only on reducing

screen time but also on restoring the activities screens may be replacing — from outdoor play and family meals to time with friends.

The final principle, Communication, calls on parents to keep an open and non-judgmental conversation with their children about media use.

“Talk with your kids about the media early and often. Ask questions, listen without judgment, and keep the conversation open,” he said.

He stressed that the 5 C’s are not intended to create rigid rules but to help families develop healthier routines.

“The 5 C’s aren’t about strict rules, they’re about balance, guiding habits, and strengthening family connections,” he said.

Dr. Al Hammadi said parents are more likely to succeed when

they offer children appealing alternatives instead of simply taking devices away.

“Kids don’t need lectures; they need better offers,” he said.

Simple activities such as swimming, cycling, baking, drawing and other creative pursuits can encourage children to put down their devices. Summer camps, park playdates and family gatherings can further strengthen social interaction and resilience.

The goal, he said, is not to ban technology but to ensure that it does not take over the parts of childhood that are essential for healthy development.

“It’s not about banning technology, but ensuring enough movement, play, and human connection so screens don’t take over,” Dr. Al Hammadi said.

Qatar Health Congress 2026 to spotlight innovation and integration in surgical care

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has announced the Qatar Health Congress 2026, which will be held from November 11 to 14 at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel under the theme “Advancing Surgical Care Through Integration and Innovation.”

The congress is set to bring together more than 2,000 healthcare professionals from Qatar, the Gulf region and around the world to exchange knowledge, showcase innovative research and discuss advances in multidisciplinary

surgical and emergency care.

HMC said the four-day event will feature a three-day main conference comprising four theme-specific tracks, preceded by two days of pre-conference workshops and courses.

The scientific and educational programme will include lectures, panel discussions, interactive sessions, research presentations, scientific symposia and specialised sessions covering critical care, neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, peri-operative medicine, pre-hospital care, trauma nursing, quality improvement, clinical research, medical education and artificial intelligence.

The congress will bring together leading specialists in traumatic brain injury and injury care systems, pre-hospital medical care, mass-casualty preparedness, healthcare delivery in conflict zones, and the use of artificial intelligence in neurosurgery.

Qatar Health Congress 2026 will also partner with the 13th World Society of Emergency Surgery (WSES) Congress, the 2nd World Congress of Trauma and Emergency Leagues (WCTEL), the 3rd Eastern Mediterranean Trauma Round Table (EMTRT3) and the Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)

MENA Region 17 Meeting.

HMC said the collaboration will create a platform for scientific exchange and the sharing of emerging developments in emergency and trauma surgery and related specialities.

The congress will feature experts and thought leaders from Qatar and internationally, including specialists affiliated with WSES, WCTEL, ATLS MENA Region 17 and the World Health Organisation.

As part of the congress, medical professionals, students and researchers from around the world are invited to submit abstracts presenting innovative research, clinical findings and

advancements in surgical care.

Abstract submissions are being invited across a broad range of themes, including general, acute care, emergency and trauma surgery; vascular, orthopaedic, cardiac, plastic, thoracic, endocrine, colorectal, breast and hepatobiliary surgery; oncology, gastrointestinal surgery, neurosurgery, transplant surgery, robotic surgery, laparoscopy, surgical intensive care, peri-operative and anaesthesia care, nursing, basic surgical research and artificial intelligence and machine learning in surgery.

The congress is open to

physicians, surgeons, nurses, allied health professionals, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, respiratory, occupational and physical therapists, as well as professionals involved in academic medicine, clinical research and medical education.

HMC said the event will be particularly relevant to professionals working in emergency and trauma surgery, critical care, neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, peri-operative medicine, pre-hospital care and trauma nursing, as well as those seeking to explore the latest trends and innovations in surgical care.

Early detection helps identify type of allergy in children and triggers

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Allergies are among the most common health conditions affecting children and may present in various forms, including allergic rhinitis, allergic asthma, eczema, food allergies, drug allergies, and insect sting allergies.

Specialist Paediatrician at Al Mashaf Health Centre of the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), Dr. Sufian Bani Awad (**pictured**) explains that allergies may initially present with seemingly mild symptoms such as frequent sneezing, nasal congestion, nighttime coughing, itching, or skin rashes. As a result, parents may mistake them for a common cold or a temporary condition. However, when these symptoms recur or are associated with a particular season, food, or medication,

they may serve as an early warning sign from the child's body that warrants medical attention and evaluation.

Allergies occur when the immune system overreacts to substances that are normally harmless to most people, such as dust, pollen, animal dander, and certain foods. The severity of allergic reactions varies from one child to another. While some cases are mild and limited, others may progress to severe reactions requiring urgent medical intervention.

Early detection is essential because it enables healthcare providers to identify the type of allergy and its triggers and to initiate appropriate treatment before the condition affects the child's health and daily life. For example, recurrent nighttime coughing may deprive a child of restful sleep, while uncontrolled



allergic rhinitis can impair concentration and academic performance. Persistent eczema may cause continuous itching, discomfort, and sleep disturbances. Early diagnosis of food allergies or asthma also helps families recognize warning signs and respond appropriately in emergency situations.

Dr. Sufian emphasises that

the effects of allergies extend beyond physical symptoms to include psychological, social, and educational aspects of a child's life. Children may avoid playing or participating in sports for fear of triggering symptoms, and they may miss school frequently. At the same time, families often experience ongoing anxiety and uncertainty. When an allergy is accurately diagnosed and a clear treatment and prevention plan is established, children are better able to lead safe, active, and fulfilling lives, while families gain confidence in managing the condition.

Improving the quality of life of a child with allergies is therefore not limited to controlling symptoms. It also involves helping the child sleep better, participate in daily activities, attend school regularly, and grow up in a safe environment

Allergies occur when the immune system overreacts to substances that are normally harmless to most people, such as dust, pollen, animal dander, and certain foods.

free from unnecessary restrictions. The goal is not for children to live in fear of their allergies, but rather to understand their condition, manage it confidently, and enjoy their childhood to the fullest.

Dr. Sufian notes that PHCC plays a pivotal role in allergy care through its network of health centres across Qatar.

The care journey begins with receiving the child, taking a thorough medical history,

conducting a comprehensive clinical examination, and assessing symptom patterns and associated triggers. An individualized treatment and follow-up plan is then developed, while parents receive health education on avoiding triggers, using medications correctly, and recognizing warning signs that require medical attention or emergency care.

PHCC also provides ongoing follow-up to monitor treatment response and coordinates referrals to appropriate specialist services whenever advanced investigations or further evaluation are required. This integrated approach across different levels of care ensures that children receive the right care at the right time while maintaining continuity of care and supporting families throughout every stage of treatment.

Lebanon says Israeli troops infiltrated Lebanese army-held village

BEIRUT: Israeli troops infiltrated a Lebanese village placed under the control of Lebanon's army as part of a June agreement, building an earthen barrier there overnight, state media and the local mayor said yesterday.

An *AFP* correspondent saw the barrier, situated at the village's eastern entrance and blocking the road. The local authorities said it was unclear if any Israeli forces remained in the area.

"An Israeli occupation army force advanced into the village of Zawtar Al-Gharbiya shortly after midnight... and erected a new earthen barrier near the town square," Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Zawtar Al-Gharbiya was one of two designated "pilot zones" where the Lebanese army was to take over as part of a US-sponsored framework agreement signed with Israel.

Contacted by *AFP*, the Israeli military said it was "not aware of such an event in this area". Israel invaded south Lebanon after militant group Hezbollah entered the Middle East war on the side of its sponsor Iran in March. Israeli forces

continue to occupy a broad band of territory in the south along the border.

Its invasion and widespread bombing campaign have killed more than 4,300 people, according to Lebanon's health ministry, and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

Under the June agreement, Lebanon is meant to disarm Hezbollah while Israel is supposed to gradually pull back its forces. Beirut's army deployed to Zawtar Al-Gharbiya on July 21, and around 50 families have since returned to the village, mayor Abed Ezzeddine told *AFP*.

Israeli troops had been present on the outskirts of the village before the deployment. Ezzeddine said they were surprised to see the barrier in the morning, located around 100 metres from the town square.

Confirming the incident, a Lebanese military source told *AFP* it was a violation of the framework agreement.

Separately, the military later reported that "three soldiers were wounded, one of them moderately, while dismantling unexploded ordnance" in Zawtar Al-Gharbiya yesterday.

Lebanon and Israel had just completed their seventh round of direct negotiations in Rome on Thursday, with a Lebanese source telling *AFP* the Israelis refused to discuss withdrawing from more areas before making sure Beirut's military had full control over the pilot

zones. Hezbollah rejects the deal and refuses to surrender its weapons, while Israel still carries out intermittent strikes on southern Lebanon despite a ceasefire in place since June. The NNA yesterday reported artillery shelling in southern Lebanon. — *AFP*



Residents sit at the entrance of their home destroyed by the Israeli military in the southern Lebanese village of Zawtar Al-Gharbiyah yesterday. (AFP)

Iran targets UAE tanker as Hormuz deal with Oman close

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates yesterday said Iran had targeted a tanker belonging to the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) while it was transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has imposed an effective blockade of the strait and wants to charge users for passage, which the US fiercely opposes, and is in talks with nearby Oman over arrangements for the strait's future management.

The UAE foreign ministry in a statement condemned what it called a "hostile Iranian attack that targeted a tanker belonging to ADNOC with a missile while

it was transiting the Strait of Hormuz, without causing casualties".

On Friday, ADNOC had put out a statement saying that since the start of the war, 15 of its vessels had been attacked in Hormuz, "including three vessels this week alone".

Before US-Israeli strikes in February kicked off what quickly became a regional war, Hormuz carried around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday said that talks with Oman were "approaching the final stages" but cautioned that "this is not a

sign of the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz".

"The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is subject to other conditions and compensation for the violation of the memorandum of understanding by the United States," he said, referencing a June agreement between the US and Iran to set terms for peace talks.

The Revolutionary Guards, the ideological arm of the Iranian military, underscored the point yesterday, saying: "The opening of the Strait of Hormuz has its own mechanism and has nothing to do with the negotiations between Iran and Oman." — *AFP*

Hamas says still ready to go ahead with Gaza plan

GAZA CITY: Hamas said yesterday it remained ready to proceed with a US-backed Gaza peace plan and urged pressure on Israel, which insists it did not agree to the latest part of the deal.

Hamas informed US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace that it stood by the latest stage of the plan, under which the militants would hand over weapons to a nascent Palestinian governing committee in the war-battered territory.

"Hamas and other factions have confirmed to mediators their readiness to begin implementing the agreement and move to the second phase,

provided it receives Israeli approval and that Israel begins implementing the agreement," a Hamas official told *AFP*.

"Hamas is urging the US administration to exert pressure on Israel to compel it to abide by the agreement and move to the second phase," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who faces a tough reelection fight in October and wide opposition from his right-wing base to the Gaza deal, said on Tuesday that Israel had not agreed to the "draft" presented by the Board of Peace. — *AFP*

Death toll from Israeli aggression on Lebanon rises to 4,335

BEIRUT: The death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression on Lebanon, which began on March 2, has risen to 4,335, with 12,273 wounded.

The Lebanese Ministry of Public Health's Health Emergency Operations Centre stated in a press release that the total cumulative toll from the aggression has increased after the killing and wounding of additional civilians, reaching 4,335 dead and 12,273 wounded.

It is worth noting that Lebanon and Israel signed a framework agreement, sponsored by the United States, which stipulates security arrangements and the redeployment of the Lebanese army in the south, as well as measures for the reconstruction of affected areas, economic recovery, and the establishment of direct communication channels between the two sides. — *QNA*

Lebanon detains Assad-era Syrian officer wanted by Damascus

BEIRUT: Lebanese authorities detained a former Syrian army officer following an arrest warrant from Damascus accusing him of "killing and crimes against humanity", a judicial official told *AFP* yesterday.

Adel Issa, a 67-year-old former officer in the Syrian army's 17th brigade under ousted leader Bashar Al-Assad, headed to his country's embassy in Beirut for paperwork on Friday, the official said on condition of anonymity.

When staff learned of an arrest warrant from Damascus filed in absentia for the "crimes of killing and crimes against humanity during his time with the Syrian army", they called on Lebanese authorities to detain him, the official added.

He is still in their custody, and Lebanon's public prosecutor has asked his Syrian counterpart to send the suspect's extradition file before Beirut decides whether to hand him over.

Since Assad's fall in December 2024, Syrian authorities have arrested dozens of people they say committed crimes during the country's 13-year civil war, and trials began in April.

Lebanon and Syria have expressed their determination to open a new chapter in their relations since Assad's ouster and the weakening of Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, a key Assad ally.

Under The Assad family, Syria exercised tutelage over its neighbour for decades, and was accused of carrying out numerous assassinations there.

Since 2024, officials from the two countries have met on several occasions, agreeing to cooperate on a number of issues including security. — *AFP*



QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY PSC
INVITATION TO TENDER

QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-6000006012	Consultancy Services for Development of Economic Model for the Project to Support FID	500/- (non-refundable)	28,800 /- (twenty-eight thousand eight hundred Qatari Riyals)	09.08.2026 10.08.2026 11.08.2026 12.08.2026 13.08.2026 16.08.2026 17.05.2026	26.08.2026

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
 - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
 - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
 - IBAN : **QA51QNBAA000000000013025828058**
 - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender (**Very Important**), during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to rmagallanes@qafco.com.qa on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the submission of Tender Fee receipt, you may contact at rmagallanes@qafco.com.qa or on 44225702.
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- The Tender shall be strictly submitted using the QAFCO's Supply Chain Portal – SAP Ariba, on or before the "Tender Closing Date". Tenderers who fail to adhere to this requirement will result in the disqualification of their Tender.



QatarEnergy LNG
Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/PRD/7800/26 PROVISION OF EXHIBITION STAND	02/08/2026 to 24/08/2026	0	107,000	24/08/2026

Scope of Work:

CONTRACTOR is required to provide comprehensive, turn-key exhibition stand and SERVICES on a call-off basis. This mandate encompasses the end-to-end lifecycle of corporate exhibition stands; including bespoke design, high-quality fabrication, logistics, on-site installation, and dismantling. Services will be required for both Qatar (Qatar-based) and as required international events. All design solutions must adhere to the company Corporate Identity and meet the COMPANY's (Safety and Environmental standards.)

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for **180** calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.

Pentagon to invest \$400m in Australian rare earth mine

SYDNEY: A remote Australian town will become a “corner-stone” of the Western supply of scandium, a rare earth needed for defence, planes and data centres, miner Sunrise Energy Metals said yesterday after a \$400m US pledge.

The Pentagon announced a \$400m conditional loan commitment to Sunrise to build the world’s first primary mine for scandium, of which China dominates supply and processing, at a meeting between President Donald Trump and mining executives in Washington.

Scandium is usually sourced as a byproduct of other mining. “We aim to establish Syerston as a cornerstone of Western scandium supply,” Sunrise chairman Robert

The Pentagon announced a \$400m conditional loan commitment to Sunrise to build the world’s first primary mine for scandium, of which China dominates supply and processing.

Friedland said in a statement, referring to the proposed mine in Fifield, New South Wales state. Fifield is around 450km (280 miles) west of Sydney. New South Wales has some of the highest concentrations of scandium globally, the state government said.

China restricted exports of scandium for defence products

last year, triggering the US search for new suppliers.

The Pentagon statement said the scandium project will “ensure Western alignment from mine to finished product”.

Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese signed a critical minerals agreement aimed at countering China in October, pledging that each would invest \$1bn in projects.

Sunrise struck a deal with Lockheed Martin last year to sell the defence and aerospace manufacturer 25 percent of its scandium output for the first five years of the mine. The company will make an announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange on Monday, Friedland said. — **AFP**



Pacific Islands Forum meeting

Foreign ministers and top diplomats of the Pacific Islands countries posing for a family photo during a meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in Suva, Fiji, yesterday, ahead of the full leaders meeting scheduled for September 2026 in Palau. (AFP)

WHO urges Ervebo vaccine trial in DR Congo Ebola outbreak

GENEVA: WHO vaccine experts on Friday recommended a full-scale human trial of the only existing approved Ebola vaccine to see if it offers cross-protection against a deadly strain spreading in the DR Congo.

The Ervebo vaccine has proved safe and efficacious against the more common Zaire strain of Ebola virus, and World Health Organization experts said early data, notably from animal trials, showed it may also give some protection against the rare Bundibugyo strain exploding in the DRC.

The recommendation came as the number of confirmed cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo went past the

4,000 mark, now standing at 4,053, including 1,850 fatalities.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned again Friday that the virus was spreading faster than response efforts can catch up.

The UN health agency’s technical advisory group on candidate vaccine prioritisation (TAG-CVP) for the Bundibugyo outbreak response met last week to review data that has emerged since their meeting in May, in the days following the outbreak declaration.

“The members recommended Ervebo, the only licensed Ebola vaccine, be prioritised for inclusion in a randomised clinical trial in the

context of the ongoing outbreak,” a WHO statement said.

A spokesman told AFP it would be “a ring trial in the DRC”, involving the circle of contacts around known cases.

The experts looked at several studies, including one which showed that three out of four non-human primates vaccinated with Ervebo survived Bundibugyo, compared with one out of four control animals.

They also looked at an unpublished study on ferrets which found that the research-grade version of Ervebo provided 100-percent protection against Bundibugyo, whereas all control animals died within 10 days.

Tedros called the findings

“good news”.

The TAG-CVP experts unanimously agreed that there were no safety concerns about using Ervebo in a clinical research study vaccinating case contacts, noting that it is already licensed by regulatory agencies and has been given to hundreds of thousands of people in Africa.

“Expectations need to be managed about its likely protective effect if used in a Phase III ring vaccination trial as efficacy against symptomatic disease and transmission may not be high, whereas protection against a fatal outcome may be achieved,” their report said.

Final-stage Phase III trials of potential drugs of vaccines typically involve hundreds to

thousands of people.

Nonetheless, a specific Bundibugyo vaccine remains the preferred option for fighting the current outbreak, they stressed.

Two potential Bundibugyo vaccines are in the early stages of clinical trials on humans, while a third is being worked on to bring it to that stage.

Ebola is spread by contact with bodily fluids and causes a haemorrhagic fever.

Around 87 percent of cases in the DRC outbreak are in the northeastern Ituri province, with 11 percent in neighbouring North Kivu.

The Gavi global vaccine alliance maintains a stockpile of 500,000 Ervebo doses.

It said doses from the stockpile were to be made available for the trials, with some already in the DRC.

“This is already the largest Ebola outbreak in DRC’s history, and could well become the largest outbreak ever,” said Gavi chief executive Sania Nishtar.

“Given the terrible toll on communities and frontline workers, we are encouraged that the approved Ebola vaccine Ervebo... could help reduce severe illness and deaths.”

Gavi said that around 55,000 frontline workers in Ituri and North Kivu have received Ervebo through previous preventive vaccination campaigns. — **AFP**

Nepal rescuers find bodies of five climbers killed last year

KATHMANDU: Rescuers in Nepal have found the bodies of five mountaineers, including three foreigners, killed in an avalanche last year near the Chinese border, a local government official said yesterday.

“Five bodies, three foreigners and two Nepalis, who had been missing since last November, have been discovered,” said Biswash Karki, chairman of Gaurishankar Rural Municipality. The foreigners were an Italian-Canadian, a German and an Italian, he told **AFP**. The avalanche hit the climbers on the lower flanks of the 5,630-metre (18,471-foot) Yalung Ri peak, near Nepal’s border with Tibet.

Locals and rescuers discovered the bodies on Thursday, Karki said, adding that the local authority was working to recover them.

“Ever since they went missing, we had been deploying the army, police and local rescue teams to search for them, but thick snow had covered their bodies,” the official said.

Senior local police officer Manoj Kumar Lama said a rescue helicopter was sent to the area on Friday, but “due to bad weather, our team has not been able to reach the spot”.

“Our rescue team will airlift the bodies once the weather clears,” he told **AFP**.

Home to eight of the world’s 10 highest peaks, including Mount Everest, Nepal welcomes hundreds of climbers and trekkers every year. According to the Himalayan Database, an expedition archive, more than 1,000 people have died on peaks since 1950, with avalanches killing almost a third of them. — **AFP**

Toll in Thai school shooting rises to eight after child dies

NONTHABURI: A 14-year-old boy in Thailand, described as “troubled” and “bullied” by a classmate, killed his grandparents before shooting dead five more people at a school on Friday, police said.

A 12-year-old girl wounded in a school shooting in Thailand died yesterday, the health ministry said, bringing the death toll to eight, including the teen assailant’s grandparents killed in their home.

First he shot dead his two grandparents, using his grandfather’s handgun, then went to a secondary school in Nonthaburi province, bordering Bangkok, and killed five school staff, national police said in a statement. The 14-year-old perpetrator also died, the statement said, with a police official telling **AFP** he had killed himself.

Officials earlier gave a higher toll of eight dead, which had included the suspect, and initially said students were among the victims.

Dozens of police and

emergency responders gathered outside the cordoned-off Debsirin Nonthaburi School, **AFP** journalists saw, while parents waited to pick up their children and tearful students and staff comforted each other outside.

“I was afraid that I would die, and I was scared that I wouldn’t be able to pursue my dreams,” said Pawarisa Maylissa, a grade 12 student who hopes to attend medical school.

“I heard many gunshots very loudly because it seemed the suspect was on the floor directly above us,” she told **AFP**.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul told reporters at the scene that “police interrogated his close friend who said the suspect had been under stress” related to his schooling.

“His actions also suggested that he had clearly planned” the assault, Anutin added.

“The gun was a registered firearm and was kept at a house, but somehow he gained access to it.” The prime

minister said more than 30 people were injured, with around nine in critical condition. The shooter was identified by local media as a student of the school.

Purin Khumchoo, 17, said he was among the students who had nearly been shot.

“He was my junior, but I had a feeling that he was a troubled kid. My group of friends who knew him said he was interested in the FBI and guns, and that he was bullied by many other students,” Purin told **AFP** outside his school.

“When I saw him aiming the gun at me, I thought he looked very professional, as if he had been trained for a long time.”

Photos published by local media show the suspect wearing a purple school uniform and carrying a black cross-body bag, with several bullet casings visible on the ground. Education Minister Prasert Jantararuangtong pledged to provide mental health assistance to students and ramp up security measures at educational institutions.

“We haven’t checked whether students have brought weapons to school. Our level of security is not that tight,” he told reporters at the school.

Thongchai Thanakat, a motorcycle-taxi driver who has worked in the area for 20 years, said he was waiting to pick up passengers outside the school when he heard more than 10 gunshots and saw a stream of students rushing out.

“Some of them weren’t even wearing shoes,” he told **AFP**.

Anutin earlier called the shooting “a terrible incident”, posing the question: “How could this happen in our country?” — **AFP**

World in brief

Asean marks 59th anniversary, calls for greater opportunities for youth

JAKARTA: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) marked its 59th anniversary yesterday, highlighting the need to ensure the regional grouping remains relevant to its people, particularly young people, amid growing geopolitical, economic and social challenges.

Asean Secretary-General Kao Kim Hourn said the region’s future would depend in part on whether its younger generation sees Asean as something valuable that creates opportunities in their everyday lives. “That means continuing to expand opportunities for young people to learn, work, innovate and collaborate across our region,” Kao said in his remarks at the celebration in Jakarta yesterday. — **XINHUA**

Azerbaijan, Armenia discuss progress in ties

BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan discussed progress in normalising bilateral relations during a phone conversation yesterday, according to the Azerbaijani presidential press service. During the conversation, both sides noted progress made over the past year in normalising relations between the two countries. The two sides also highlighted growing trade and economic ties, including Azerbaijan’s export of petroleum products to Armenia and the transit of cargo through Azerbaijani territory to Armenia and onward to other destinations, the statement said. — **XINHUA**

China says sailors died in South China Sea collision

BEIJING: Beijing has quietly confirmed the deaths of two Chinese sailors in a collision in the contested South China Sea, according to government statements nearly a year after the incident.

Last August, a Chinese navy vessel collided with one from its own coast guard while chasing a Philippine patrol boat near a disputed shoal, video footage released by Manila showed.

A Chinese Coast Guard spokesperson confirmed at the time that there had been a confrontation, but did not mention the collision, nor injuries or deaths. — **AFP**

Japan plans record-high budget for FY2027

TOKYO: Japan’s Defence Ministry plans to request a record-high budget of about 8.9 trillion yen (around \$56bn) for fiscal 2027, local media reported on Friday. The actual defence budget could rise further when finalised at the end of this year, as the request includes numerous items for which specific amounts have yet to be determined, Kyodo News reported, citing sources familiar with the matter.

The report also quoted a senior government official as saying that the final defence budget for fiscal 2027, which runs from April 2027 to March 2028, could reach around 10 trillion yen. According to the report, key spending areas include deploying interceptor drones, introducing artificial intelligence (AI) into command-and-control systems, and further deploying long-range missiles with what Japan calls “counterstrike capabilities.” The Defence Ministry plans to procure large numbers of interceptor drones, which are viewed as a cheaper alternative to surface-to-air missiles, to bolster its capability to sustain combat operations. — **XINHUA**

Tanzania starts new probe into 2025 poll violence

DAR ES SALAAM: Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan announced a new investigation on Friday into the perpetrators of violence surrounding the October 2025 general election in which hundreds, possibly thousands, of people died.

Western diplomats and rights groups accuse Hassan’s government of massacring hundreds of people during the election unrest, as well as abducting and murdering critics in the run-up to the vote. An initial government-appointed enquiry, which submitted its findings in April, said at least 518 people died during and after the ballot, which Hassan was declared to have won with 98 percent of the vote. — **AFP**

Rwanda in ‘initial’ migration talks with European nations

KIGALI: Rwanda and some European nations are holding migration talks, Kigali’s spokesperson said Friday, a week after dramatic scenes of thousands crossing the Morocco-Spain border reignited the migration debate in Europe.

In June European lawmakers approved tougher migration rules, notably enabling nations to open “return hubs” outside the EU’s borders, where migrants with no right to stay could be sent.

Kigali government spokesperson Yolande Makolo, asked

specifically about an agreement with Italy by Rwanda’s Royal FM radio station, said that while discussions were ongoing, there was “no agreement yet”.

The broad talks were around an “emergency transit mechanism”, said Makolo.

Rwanda could provide “a safe place for families who are stranded... have nowhere else to go or in danger for various reasons”, she added.

She said the families could either return to their countries of origin or be resettled in another nation after applying

for asylum.

Makolo later confirmed to **AFP** that they had had “some initial discussions with some European countries but nothing has been decided”.

The talks referred to Rwanda’s “general approach and experience on the migration issue”, she added.

These latest talks echo an agreement the Great Lakes nation reached with the United Kingdom under the former Conservative government but subsequently scrapped by its successor.

Russian strikes kill three in Kyiv region: Military official

KYIV: Russian strikes killed three people including a child in a district northeast of Ukraine’s capital, a regional military official said yesterday, as Kyiv warned of incoming ballistic missiles.

Moscow has significantly upped its attacks on the Ukrainian capital in recent months, typically firing salvos of hard-to-intercept ballistic missiles in short blitzes.

Three people including a child were killed and three others were wounded in strikes on Brovary district northeast of Kyiv, Tymur Tkachenko, head of the regional military administration, wrote on

Moscow has significantly upped its attacks on the Ukrainian capital in recent months, typically firing salvos of hard-to-intercept ballistic missiles.

Telegram.

Falling debris from the attacks damaged houses and vehicles and caused a fire in a non-residential building, he said.

Ukraine’s state emergency service shared photos of a destroyed building covered in

flames, saying the attack in the village of Pukhivka destroyed a two-storey house and two cars and sparked a fire in a warehouse.

An *AFP* reporter in the capital heard a dozen explosions as Ukraine’s air force warned of the “threat of ballistic weapon use from the north”.

Four people were wounded from overnight attacks in the city, Kyiv’s military administration said on Telegram.

“An air raid alert has been declared in Kyiv due to the use of ballistic missiles,” it had said earlier, instructing residents to take shelter. — *AFP*



A burning building following Russian ballistic missile strikes in Kyiv region, yesterday. (AFP)

Spain warns Italy over border checks

MADRID: Spain threatened Italy with countermeasures Friday if it does not swiftly lift border checks introduced after the mass migrant rush to Ceuta drawing a rebuff from Rome.

The rare spat between the European Union and NATO allies came after tens of thousands of migrants crossed from Morocco to Spain’s North African territory last week in an unprecedented and deadly rush.

The scenes infuriated other EU members that back a hard line on irregular immigration, including Italy which imposed a one-month suspension of its free-travel Schengen deal with Spain.

The Spanish government slammed the measure Friday as “unfair, contrary to the EU’s interests and discriminatory for the Spanish population”.

Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares described it as “a torpedo fired at the hull of European unity.”

“We urge the government of Italy to rectify, put an end to the checks and treat Spaniards like other European citizens,” the government said in a statement.

“If it does not do so before

the end of today, August 9, Spain will be obliged to adopt proportional measures to protect the interests and dignity of its citizens.”

The statement did not specify what those reprisals would be.

The government of Italy’s far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Rome “had no intention of revising the decision” before August 15, when it said Spanish authorities “expected a new wave of migration” to hit Ceuta.

“Italy does not accept ultimatums or impositions from abroad regarding national security and border control,” Meloni’s office said in a statement.

“Only when there is certainty that there are no security or terrorism risks to Italy, that no new wave is occurring, and that no irregular migrants are heading toward European territory, will the decision be reconsidered,” it read.

Spanish police have been monitoring online rumours and social media messages about possible fresh migrant arrivals in Ceuta in mid-August,

according to local media but authorities have not expressly said they expect a repeat of last week’s rush.

Border authorities would in the meantime “do their utmost to ensure maximum ease of movement for Spanish and European citizens” who are not affected by the border checks, the Italian statement added.

Italy, which does not share a land border with Spain, introduced border controls at maritime and air entry points for third-country nationals arriving from the Iberian country.

The move announced on July 31 was an “extraordinary measure” intended to “safeguard national security and prevent possible repercussions for our nation”, Meloni said then.

She was among EU leaders who called for Spain to be suspended from the visa-free Schengen travel zone after the Ceuta incident, despite such a move being legally impossible.

Italy’s coalition government has sought to stop the tens of thousands of migrants who land in small boats on the country’s shores each year. — *AFP*

Drone enters Bulgaria, explodes near pipeline at Romanian border: PM

SOFIA: A drone that entered Bulgaria yesterday exploded near the Romanian border and the Trans-Balkan gas pipeline, which links Turkey to Ukraine, Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev announced.

Radev did not specify where the drone, which caused no casualties, came from and said authorities did not yet know what type it was.

But he said the amount of explosives it was carrying was “significant”.

“The drone exploded in the immediate vicinity of the Kardam border crossing with Romania,” near the Black Sea in the country’s northeast, “1,000 metres from the Trans-Balkan gas pipeline’s compressor station,” he said in a video released by the government on social media.

The drone later crashed into a sunflower field, he said.

The sound of the drone was recorded by border police in Romania, and then “a loud explosion accompanied by black smoke” was spotted by

a Bulgarian border police patrol, Radev added, speaking after an extraordinary meeting of his cabinet’s security council.

“One thing is certain: the drone was carrying a significant amount of explosives, given that it could be heard from a distance and produced such black smoke,” he said.

The drone “crashed into a sunflower field, and I hope we will soon discover what type it is,” Radev said, adding that it was not a “hobby drone” but a “larger drone”.

He noted that the drone had not been detected by either of the two neighbouring countries.

“As you know, identifying and neutralising these drones poses a major challenge,” he added.

Incidents involving drones have become increasingly frequent in recent months across Eastern European countries that are NATO members and supporters of Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. — *AFP*

Man arrested after Rotterdam stabbing spree

THE HAGUE: Dutch police announced the arrest of a 26-year-old man suspected of injuring two people in a series of apparently random stabbing incidents in Rotterdam yesterday.

Police said the first two incidents took place, on a residential street in Spangen, a working-class neighbourhood west of the city centre, and at nearby Marconiplein, a major transport hub.

“Two random victims (men) were injured. One victim was taken to hospital, while the other was treated at the scene in an ambulance,” the Rotterdam police department posted on X. Around half an hour later, police received a report of an attempted stabbing at the Brug van Cyrene footbridge near Rotterdam The Hague airport in the city’s northwest. “The same suspect is believed to be involved in the stabbing incidents and is thought to have travelled by car,” the police said. — *AFP*

Hungary ruling party wants Orban-critic judge as president

BUDAPEST: Hungary’s ruling party yesterday said it has chosen a former supreme court judge who was fired by former premier Viktor Orban as its pick to be the country’s next president.

The parliamentary group of Tisza, led by new pro-EU Prime Minister Peter Magyar, said it has nominated Andras Baka as its choice for the largely ceremonial role of head of state.

Hungary’s single-chamber parliament will on Tuesday designate the successor to Tamas Sulyok, an Orban ally who had to step down July 19 after lawmakers passed a constitutional amendment truncating his term.

Baka, 73, was removed

from Hungary’s supreme court in 2012 after he condemned a move under Orban to reduce the age of mandatory retirement for judges from 70 to 62, calling it a judicial purge.

The European Union and the United States both called the age-limit reduction illegal, and in 2016 the European Court of Human Rights found in Baka’s favour.

Before Baka, Magyar had suggested to Hungarian chess legend Judit Polgar that she could become president, but she turned the offer down.

Tisza lawmakers went on to draw up a shortlist of 10 other possible candidates, and Baka ended up being chosen by secret ballot. — *AFP*



Serbian, Ukrainian Presidents discuss bilateral cooperation

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic received his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the latter’s visit to Serbia yesterday. The meeting explored ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic field. (QNA)

Spain deploys 275 firefighters to tackle Andalusia forest blaze

BARCELONA: More than 275 firefighters were yesterday battling a challenging wildfire in Spain’s southern Andalusia region, though authorities said no residential zone was currently at threat.

The blaze, happening north of the town of Niebla, halfway between Seville and the Portuguese border, was active in an area of around 4,000 hectares (9,900 acres), an adviser to Andalusia’s emergency service, Antonio Sanz, said.

“This wildfire is driven by constantly

changing winds, which up-ends attack strategies,” he told reporters.

He adding that a “window of opportunity” had opened yesterday for a few hours, before conditions again worsened later in the day.

Sixty troops belonging to a military unit for emergencies were among the 275 firefighters, who were being assisted by some 20 aircraft and heavy machinery, the regional fire service said.

Spain is enduring a tough summer for

wildfires, with various blazes having forced the evacuation of thousands of people, especially in the centre of the country. One forest inferno that raged in July in the Avila region near Madrid was considered the biggest Spain had seen in recent history.

Early in July, another sweeping blaze caused 14 deaths in Almeria province in Andalusia. Europe has suffered successive heatwaves and drought this year, which scientists say have been aggravated by human-generated climate change. — *AFP*

Europe readies for solar eclipse dip in power generation

BRUSSELS: European energy operators are braced for next week’s solar eclipse to cause a temporary dip in power generation and have taken steps to keep electricity flowing to businesses and consumers, an industry body said Friday.

While the August 12 eclipse offers a rare spectacle for the general public, it presents a technical challenge for grid operators, which must constantly balance electricity supply and demand to guarantee secure power provision.

“Under clear-sky conditions, photovoltaic (PV) output could decrease by up to 9.7 GW across Europe, creating a rapid but predictable change in

generation patterns between 19:15-21:30 CEST,” said the association representing Europe’s power grid operators, ENTSO-E.

It said operators were “ready to ensure the secure and stable operation of the electricity system throughout the event”.

They have activated a task force to coordinate preparations, monitor the situation and aid information-sharing before and after the eclipse.

Spain -- where the Moon will completely cover the Sun in a total eclipse -- is expected to experience the biggest solar power reduction, along with Germany, ENTSO-E said.

The EU had about 406 GW of installed solar capacity at the end of 2025, said SolarPower Europe.

The European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity represents 40 operators representing 36 countries.

With solar now making up about 13 percent of Europe’s electricity mix, the group said, its members were “increasingly managing weather-related and natural phenomena that can influence generation patterns over short periods of time”.

Proactive steps included briefing control room operators and warning market

participants about the expected dip in solar generation, while “avoiding planned grid outages during the eclipse period to maximise operational flexibility,” the body said.

“To support real-time decision-making, local system operators receive additional updated photovoltaic generation forecasts from weather service providers,” it added.

The total eclipse is the first visible in mainland Europe since 2006, with the “path of totality” as it is known passing from remote northern Russia over Greenland, Iceland, northern Spain and the north-eastern tip of Portugal. — *AFP*

 World in brief

Pilot killed as plane crashes in southern Portugal

LISBON: A pilot was killed yesterday morning when a light aircraft crashed at the Portimao aerodrome in the southern Faro district of Portugal, according to the civil protection authorities quoted by Lusa news agency.

The victim, a 28-year-old man, was the only one aboard the plane. No other casualties were reported.

Aeronautical sources were quoted as saying that the pilot was carrying out aerial work when the crash occurred.

The Aircraft and Railway Accident Prevention and Investigation Office (GPIAAF) confirmed it had been notified, and its civil aviation team was en route to the site to gather evidence and investigate the cause of the incident. — *XINHUA*

Drones sighted above army site in west Germany

BERLIN: Drones have been detected above an army installation in western Germany known to house a large underground depot, a military operational command spokesman told yesterday.

The spokesman said the security centre at the Mechernich site had reported the sightings to the police on Thursday, confirming reports in the German press. Officers had opened an investigation, the spokesperson added, declining to elaborate.

Mechernich is a special army site for storing equipment at a depth of 130 metres (425 feet) across some 30,000 square metres, or the equivalent of four football pitches.

It houses components for US-made Patriot air-defence systems, which Ukraine has frequently requested to help fight off Russia’s aerial bombardments.

The latest incident comes days after an explosives-laden drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane at Leipzig-Halle airport, which plays a key role in the transport of military goods by the German military and NATO allies.

Various European countries have reported drone sightings above sensitive sites in recent years, with many leaders blaming Moscow at a time of high East-West tensions as a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. — *AFP*

Two trains collide east of Zagreb, 20 injured

ZAGREB: A passenger train and a freight train collided yesterday morning near Skrinjari, about 60 kilometers east of the Croatian capital Zagreb, leaving six passengers severely injured and 14 others with minor injuries.

The crash occurred at approximately 1005 a.m. local time (0805 GMT) on a section of the track between the Sveti Ivan Zabno and Gradec stations, according to the national broadcaster Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT).

There were 28 people aboard the passenger train when the collision happened, including 26 passengers, a train driver and a conductor. The impact left several carriages of the train severely damaged.

Emergency medical personnel and firefighters rushed to the scene shortly after the collision, while police cordoned off the area. The railway line was temporarily closed to all traffic.

The Croatian Ministry of Health confirmed later in the day that a total of 20 people were injured. All the wounded have been transported to hospitals in nearby major cities for treatment.

An investigation into the cause of the collision is underway. — *XINHUA*

Trump renews effort to remove US Fed Governor Lisa Cook

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is moving forward with an attempt to remove Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook over mortgage fraud allegations, according to a White House letter seen by *AFP* on Friday, after the Supreme Court batted him back in June.

“You are hereby provided notice that the President is considering removing you from your position,” reads a letter from the White House to Cook dated August 5 and signed by Deputy Chief of Staff Dan Scavino.

Cook has been given 21 days from the date of the letter to respond to unproven allegations that she made false statements on mortgage applications charges that she has denied.

Trump has launched an unprecedented assault on the independence of the Federal Reserve in his second term,

opening a criminal probe against previous chairman Jerome Powell and attempting to fire Cook.

His move to dismiss Cook was the first such attempt by a president in the US central bank’s 111-year history.

The Supreme Court ruled in June that Trump did not have the power to dismiss Fed governors “for any reason, or no reason.”

The US central bank is a non-partisan institution that makes monetary policy for the world’s largest economy, with governors appointed by the president after a Senate confirmation process.

The Supreme Court made special mention of the importance of the Fed’s independence.

The court said it decided the case “on the narrow ground that the President failed to afford Cook the procedural

protections to which she was entitled by statute.” It did not rule on the underlying mortgage fraud allegations.

Trump reacted angrily to the June verdict, saying on social media he would take “appropriate action immediately” against Cook.

The White House letter details the allegations against Cook, asserting that “at a minimum, this conduct was grossly negligent and demonstrates that you are unfit for the office.”

Referencing the Supreme Court’s decision, in which judges ruled that Trump had tried to fire Cook without giving her an opportunity to respond to the allegations, the letter demands she do so by August 26.

Cook, the first Black woman to serve as a Fed governor, has consistently denied the allegations against her.

“This was never about mortgage



US President Donald Trump walks off of Air Force One at Newark Liberty International Airport yesterday. (AFP)

documents signed years before I became a Federal Reserve governor,” she said in a statement reported by US media after the Supreme Court ruling. — *AFP*

US announces intention to send \$1bn aid to Colombia

WASHINGTON: US State Department officials announced late Friday an intention to work with Congress to approve a \$1bn assistance package for Colombia, as the new right-wing president there took office.

“As a cornerstone of this renewed partnership, the United States, working with Congress, intends to announce \$1bn in assistance as part of a security package to support President (Abdelardo) de la Espriella’s administration in achieving our shared goals,” the statement said. — *AFP*

US Senate passes sweeping Russia sanctions bill

WASHINGTON: The US Senate passed a sweeping sanctions package targeting Russia’s energy revenues.

The legislation now heads to the House of Representatives, though a vote there will not take place until at least early September due to the congressional summer recess.

The package would impose sanctions on Russian officials, oligarchs, financial institutions and the so-called shadow fleet used to evade restrictions on Moscow’s oil exports.

It would also allow President Donald Trump to set tariffs of up to 500 percent on Russian imports, including gas and oil.

Crucially, the sanctions would enable Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100 percent on goods from major purchasers of Russian oil and gas, including countries such as China and India.

Supporters say choking off

energy income is essential to weakening Russian President Vladimir Putin’s ability to finance the war in Ukraine, now in its fifth year.

If adopted into law, Putin himself would be among those targeted by the sanctions, as well as other top officials.

The bill was named after the late Senator Lindsey Graham, who died on July 11 after spending more than a year building support for it.

Shortly before his death, Graham announced he had reached an agreement with the White House on a revised version of the text, including the extension of existing sanctions authority aimed at restricting funding for Iran’s energy and weapons sectors.

For the late senator’s sister Darline Graham, who replaced him in Congress, the final adoption of the bill will not only honour her brother, “but will also promote peace by

cutting off the funding fuelling Russia’s war machine.”

Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a member of the Senate’s Foreign Relations Committee, said the bill “hits Russia’s energy and financial sectors very hard.”

“Vladimir Putin only understands strength, and he only responds to pressure,” Shaheen added.

“This legislation represents our best opportunity to finally bring Russia’s war machine to its knees and to force Putin to the negotiating table.”

Russia’s embassy in the United States had condemned the bill, saying it “does the current US administration a disservice.”

Moscow is also under increased European pressure, with the EU last month agreeing to a new round of sanctions albeit watered down from harsher earlier proposals. — *AFP*

Mexico, Peru reestablish ties after asylum spat

MEXICO CITY: Mexico and Peru announced the restoration of diplomatic ties, following a months-long split over the asylum bid of a former Peruvian official accused of coup plotting.

The governments of leftist Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and her newly inaugurated, right-wing Peruvian counterpart Keiko Fujimori patched things up “considering the historic bonds of brotherhood, friendship, and cooperation that unite” their countries, a joint statement read.

Sheinbaum later said at her daily press conference that the former official at the centre of the spat, ex-prime minister Betsy Chavez, was being flown on Friday aboard a Mexican military plane to Mexico.

Fujimori’s government had granted safe passage to Chavez as a gesture of “goodwill,” Sheinbaum said.

Mexico and Peru have had

strained relations for years, following the ouster of left-wing Peruvian leader Pedro Castillo in December 2022.

He had been impeached and removed from office after attempting to dissolve Congress, and was arrested on his way to the Mexican embassy to seek asylum.

He and Chavez, his prime minister at the time, faced charges of plotting a coup over the bid to dissolve Congress.

While Castillo has been in jail since his arrest, Chavez was released on bail and sought asylum in the Mexican embassy in November 2025.

Peru’s Foreign Minister Carlos Espa said he was “very happy” about restoring ties with Mexico on Friday.

Chavez’s journey to Mexico had occurred “in a context of security and calm,” Espa told the Canal N television channel.

Castillo is meanwhile

Mexico and Peru have had strained relations for years, following the ouster of left-wing Peruvian leader Pedro Castillo in December 2022.

serving a prison sentence exceeding 11 years, which Mexico continues to dispute.

“We are going to keep defending president Castillo,” said Sheinbaum. “The new government of Peru knows it, but it’s a step,” she added, referring to Friday’s reconciliation.

Fujimori, who narrowly won a runoff election in June, had said she hoped to mend ties with Mexico. She took office in late July, becoming Peru’s ninth president in a decade, including a series of interim leaders following Castillo’s ouster. — *AFP*

Colombia’s new president vows to ‘defeat narco-terrorists’

CALI: Colombian President Abelardo de la Espriella vowed to restore order and eradicate “narco-terrorists” in a fiery first speech as leader on Friday.

The US-backed millionaire flew by helicopter to address soldiers in a military garrison after his inauguration in the southwestern city of Cali.

His mandate marks a sharp turn right for the Andean nation, with the 48-year-old keen to cozy up to Washington and come down hard on Colombia’s patchwork of armed groups.

“There will be no room for maneuvers that undermine the stability of the nation,” the president, who adopted a stiff military salute on the campaign trail, told hundreds of soldiers.

He pledged to “relentlessly defeat narco-terrorism,” adding that “the option of dialogue is completely exhausted” a reference to the former administration’s spluttering peace talks with guerrillas.

The first thing on his to-do list, he said, was to join US President Donald Trump’s regional



Colombia’s new President Abelardo de la Espriella delivering a speech at the Pichincha Battalion after swearing in, in Cali, Colombia, on Friday. (AFP)

anti-cartel alliance known as Shield of the Americas.

The US leader now has an eager ally in Bogota, and the feeling appeared to be mutual late Friday, when the US State Department issued a release saying the Trump administration intends to work with Congress to announce “\$1bn in assistance as part of a security package to support” the new

administration.

De la Espriella, who holds dual US and Colombian citizenship, has offered to host US troops on Colombian soil and wants to bomb jungle cocaine labs, build “mega-prisons” and slash the size of the state.

In a break with tradition, his inauguration took place in Cali, Colombia’s salsa capital, not at Congress in more but-

toned-down Bogota.

Among the guests was beleaguered FIFA boss Gianni Infantino, who faces scathing criticism over his now-shelved plan to open the World Cup and other competitions up to private investment.

Right-wing figures also attended, including Argentina’s President Javier Milei and Todd Blanche, Trump’s acting attorney general, who headed the US delegation.

De la Espriella’s leftist predecessor Gustavo Petro declined to attend the ceremony.

He earlier left the presidential residence in the capital, bidding “farewell, freedom and life.”

Cali has suffered several guerrilla attacks in recent years, and the city saw beefed-up security for the occasion including 11,000 troops and an anti-drone system.

De la Espriella’s narrow victory of less than one percentage point ended four years of Colombia’s first-ever leftist government. — *AFP*

Black voters in US South struggle for political voice under new maps

MEMPHIS: A move by Republicans to split the majority-Black city among three US congressional districts smacks of the racist policies of last century.

“As a child, you couldn’t even go to certain stores because they would not sell to you. You see, it was so prejudiced and so racist here,” Jadu Bin Ahmed Bin Hassan, a 76-year-old African American who grew up in segregated Memphis said of the southern state of Tennessee.

“And it still is, and it’s not changing, right? It’s not changing,” Dressed in a beige suit and a silk scarf, Bin Hassan spoke to *AFP* at the Memphis Islamic Centre as it hosted a candidate forum, during which voters could also learn about the new districts.

Tennessee’s Republican-controlled legislature redrew the congressional map in May, days after the US Supreme Court rolled back civil rights protections that had ensured at least one of the state’s nine districts remained majority Black.

That district had been Tennessee’s 9th, which encompassed Memphis and was reliably won by Democrats.

The new map splits Memphis up among three districts stretching far out into rural Tennessee that are all expected to be won by Republicans.

Many African Americans like Bin Hassan worry that under the new maps, their voices will not count in the November midterm elections, in which President Donald Trump’s Republicans are battling to retain control of Congress.

In late April, the US Supreme Court weakened protections under the Voting Rights Act, a landmark law passed in 1965 at the height of the civil rights movement, designed to prevent former segregated Southern states from undermining the voting rights of African Americans.

After Tennessee redrew its maps, several other Republican-majority Southern states followed suit. — *AFP*

5.5 magnitude earthquake strikes Alaska

WASHINGTON: An earthquake of magnitude 5.5 struck the Skwentna area of the US State of Alaska, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said yesterday.

The quake struck at a depth of 200 meters. There were no immediate reports of casualties or property damage.

The state lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, a seismically active zone where tectonic plates meet and interact, making it prone to frequent earthquakes and volcanic activity. — *QNA*



Maradona’s iconic World Cup ball going up for auction

The ball used by Diego Maradona for his famous “Hand of God” goal against England in the 1986 World Cup is going up for auction in the US. It is expected to sell for around \$10m when it goes under the hammer later this month. (AFP)

Canada tries to adapt to a future of wildfires

MONTREAL: Faced with another summer when wildfires have scorched millions of hectares of land and blankets of smoke have disrupted daily life nationwide, Canada is trying to limit the annual devastation.

Yet, despite procuring new water bombers and deploying forest management strategies to protect populated areas, experts caution that intense wildfires will remain a fixture of Canadian life.

“We’re going to have to live with this,” said Normand Lacour, who spent decades at Quebec’s wildfire prevention and detection organisation (SOPFEU).

Canada is home to about a quarter of Earth’s boreal forest area and average annual temperatures in the country are increasing roughly twice as fast as the global average.

That makes conditions in Canada particularly “conducive to intense and very extensive forest fires,” University of Ottawa geography professor Patricia DeRepentigny told *AFP*.

Canada’s last three wildfire seasons have been among the

10 worst on record, including the devastating summer of 2023 when 18 million hectares were torched, an area nearly as large as Syria.

This summer is not currently on track to approach that historic toll, with 4 million hectares burned so far, but the damage has been widespread.

In the western province of British Columbia, 15,000 people have been ordered to evacuate their homes, while residents of major eastern population centres like Toronto endured some of the world’s worst air quality last month.

Canada’s emerging response is broad-based.

The federal government has invested CAD\$317m over five years “to establish a new national aerial firefighting surge capacity,” Ottawa announced in May.

The money is being used to lease 10 aircraft capable of confronting wildfires, to be dispatched to provinces facing intensifying blazes.

Ottawa is also backing a CAD\$150m programme that aims to clear flammable material such as vegetation

from populated areas.

Provinces have also beefed up their firefighter capacity, including in Quebec where SOPFEU staffing levels are up 40 percent.

But, when it comes to protecting people from wildfires, “Canada is not in an excellent position,” said Ryan Ness, the director of adaptation research at the Canadian Climate Institute.

There are “too many communities that are in areas that are exposed to wildfires that continue to develop,” he told *AFP*.

Canada is also extremely vulnerable to “fire clouds,” or pyrocumulonimbus clouds, immense blazes that create their own wind and even lightning that can spark fresh fires.

The phenomenon, a consequence of the more frequent heat waves caused by climate change, was once rare in Canada, but that is changing.

Fire clouds were recorded 140 times in Canada in 2023, compared with once or twice a year historically, DeRepentigny said. — *AFP*

Deforestation hits record low in Brazilian Amazon

SAO PAULO: Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon last year plunged to its lowest level in a decade, according to official data released Friday, the latest decline under Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva’s government.

The world’s largest tropical rainforest had 2,874 square kilometers (1,110 square miles) cleared from August 2025 to July 2026, marking a nearly 37 percent drop from the previous year, the National Institute for Space Research said.

The group began tracking deforestation via satellite starting in 2016.

Left-wing president Lula, who will seek re-election in October, has vowed to end illegal deforestation by 2030.

“The numbers indicate that, if we maintain the current pace, with the seriousness we’ve shown and by providing the necessary resources, we can achieve this,” Lula said as the new data was presented in Sao Paulo. — *AFP*