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Amir receives message from UAE president

HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani yesterday received a written message from UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to bolster them. The message was handed to HE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, during his meeting with Ambassador of UAE to Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi. (QNA) **Page 2**

Trump threatens to hit Iran hard again

US President Donald Trump yesterday promised further strikes against Iran after the first tit-for-tat attacks in a month, as a conflict that had lately settled into an economic standoff threatened to escalate into open fighting again. Iran launched missiles overnight at two US air bases in Jordan in response to a US attack on Iran's Larak Island, where Washington said it had struck Iranian launchers firing mines into the Strait of Hormuz. "We're going to hit them hard," a Fox News reporter quoted Trump as later telling the channel. "There will be a response." A senior Iranian source told Reuters the overnight exchanges of fire, the first since late July, were a "limited and contained confrontation" but said Tehran would deliver a harsh response if attacked again. Trump said US air defences had downed all Iranian missiles that could have caused any damage and that new U.S. economic sanctions on Iran were having a big impact, Fox News reported. Earlier, Trump had posted to social media two videos depicting explosions engulfing Iran's main oil export terminal, with the message "Kharg island being blown to smithereens!!!" But the videos were generated by AI and no such attack took place. Iran called Trump's post "laughable". Vice President JD Vance told reporters Trump "likes to switch it up on social media a little bit" and was "sending a message". Washington has so far mainly held off from hitting Iran's major oil and gas infrastructure, a move that Iran says would be met with devastating attacks against its Gulf neighbours. (Reuters)

Amir honours high school top performers



Amir extols achievers to serve the nation

HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani expressed his happiness at honouring a new cohort of outstanding high school graduates. In a post on his official X account, His Highness said he was pleased to honour the graduates and wished them a successful journey marked by excellence and achievement. He also expressed his hope that they would contribute to the advancement of the nation and serve their community. HH the Amir further praised the efforts of the graduates' families and teachers, recognising the support they had provided and its significant role in the students' outstanding achievements.

HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has honoured the country's top-achieving male high school students for the 2025-26 academic year.

The recognition took place yesterday at the Amiri Diwan where HH the Amir said the students'

academic achievements should encourage them to continue developing their knowledge and skills and contribute to Qatar's development.

His Highness also praised the ability of Qatari talent to excel, meet different challenges and manage crises, wishing the stu-

dents success in their future studies and careers.

HH the Amir highlighted the important role of families and schools in preparing young people and helping them achieve their ambitions. He also praised parents and educators for their efforts in supporting the stu-

dents' achievements.

The honourees expressed their happiness at meeting HH the Amir, saying his recognition of their success would motivate them to pursue their ambitions and contribute to the service and development of Qatar.

The ceremony was attended by

Qatar to host MWC26 alongside ITU conference

By Joey Aguilar
Staff Reporter

Doha will stage two of the telecommunications world's biggest gatherings under one roof this November, putting the ministers who write the rules and the companies that build the networks in the same building for the first time.

MWC26 Doha runs at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center from November 8 to 10, organised by the GSMA in partnership with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Overlapping it, and running far longer, is the International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference - PP-26 - which occupies the same venue from November 9 to 27 under the Communications Regulatory Authority.

The scheduling is deliberate. A delegate arguing over global spectrum policy in the morning can, in the afternoon, walk a few metres and put hands on the equipment that policy will govern. Organisers describe it as a single platform linking digital policy direction with the technology already in the field - a model no other host



city has attempted at this scale.

The stakes for the ITU meeting are considerable. Held once every four years, the Plenipotentiary is the union's supreme policy-making body: it sets strategic and financial direction, elects the organisation's five most senior officials, seats 48 member states on the ITU Council and picks the 12 members of the Radio Regulations Board. Getting the chair's gavel is not a ceremonial prize.

That gavel goes to Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla al-Muslemani, president of the CRA and chair-designate of PP-26, who said hosting the conference alongside MWC26 reflected Qatar's leading role in shaping global connectivity and the regulatory frameworks behind it. He said the authority was committed to a regulatory environment that supports digital transformation, and expressed hope the conference would help

steer international telecoms policy towards a more inclusive and sustainable digital ecosystem.

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai said running the two events concurrently reflected Qatar's growing role in shaping the future of global connectivity and telecoms policy, and reinforced the country's commitment to the Digital Agenda 2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030, and to building a thriving digital economy and a sustainable digital society.

The commercial read is equally plain. GSMA director general Vivek Badrinath said the inaugural MWC Doha last year had demonstrated the scale of Qatar's digital ambition, and that pairing this edition with the Plenipotentiary would put policymakers and industry leaders in the same room - regulators, ministers, operators and technology chiefs, all arguing about the same future.

The numbers from the first edition give the pairing its weight. MWC Doha 2025 drew more than 9,000 participants from 110 countries and territories, close to 300 speakers and over 250 exhibitors and sponsors, and produced announcements of more than 30 partnerships and initiatives.

Qatar condemns Iran attacks, al-Aqsa storming, Niger unrest

Qatar has strongly condemned renewed Iranian attacks on Jordan with missiles and on the UAE with a drone, calling them a serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries and a breach of international law and the UN Charter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday that Iran's continued attacks represented a dangerous escalation that could complicate de-escalation efforts and undermine diplomatic and political initiatives aimed at restoring security and stability.

It also called for a serious return to dialogue and negotiations, and for adherence to understandings reached through diplomatic efforts.

Doha reaffirmed its full solidarity with Jordan and the UAE and said it supported measures taken by the two countries to protect their sovereignty and security.

In a separate statement, the ministry condemned the storming of al-Aqsa Mosque by the extremist Israeli national security minister and groups of settlers, calling it a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law and an unacceptable provocation to the feelings of millions of Muslims worldwide. It stressed that al-Aqsa is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims, and that all unilateral measures aimed at changing the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites are null and void under international law.

The ministry also condemned and denounced the incidents in Niamey, the capital of Niger, affirming Qatar's full solidarity with Niger and its support for all legitimate measures taken to preserve its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. (QNA)

Pakistan to head tripartite secretariat in Saudi for 3 years

Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan have agreed to establish a secretariat in Saudi Arabia under their Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, with a Pakistani secretary general to head it for an initial three-year term, the three countries said in a joint statement yesterday. The decision was taken at the first meeting of the Strategic Political and Defence Committee of the Makkah Agreement, held at Istanbul's Ciragan Palace with the countries' foreign and defence ministers and top military officials in attendance. Pakistan was represented by Chief of Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif.

Signed in early August, the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, stipulating that an armed attack against any of the three countries would be regarded as an attack on all. **To Page 7**



Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates winning the Qatar 2022 World Cup. (Reuters) **Details Sport 1**



Sheikh Khalifa meets French justice minister



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met France's Minister of Justice Gerald Darmanin during his visit. The meeting dealt with bilateral co-operation between the two friendly countries, along with ways to support and develop them, particularly in the legal and security fields. - **QNA**



Amir receives written message from president of UAE

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has received a written message from the United Arab Emirates's President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to bolster them. The message was handed to HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, during his meeting yesterday with the UAE's ambassador to Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Malaysia's ruler

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Malaysia's King Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Sultan Ibrahim. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on the occasion. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Kyrgyz president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Japarov. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Kyrgyzstan's Prime Minister Adyibek Aleshevich Kasymaliev on the occasion. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates President Kangaloo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Trinidad and Tobago's President Christine Carla Kangaloo, on the anniversary of her country's Independence Day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Kangaloo. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani meanwhile sent a cable of congratulations to Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar on the occasion. - **QNA**

QNL welcomes academic year with mentorship, technology, and literary events

As the new academic year begins, the Qatar National Library (QNL) has invited students, researchers, and lifelong learners to a dynamic month of programmes spanning mentorship, technology, and literature.

According to the QNL, the calendar kicks off on September 5 with "The Murshidi Programme: Academic and Career Mentoring", an initiative connecting high school, university students, and fresh graduates with leaders from Education City and other institutions in Qatar for one-on-one guidance on university applications and career planning. Launching the same day is the "Skills Hub: Empowering Women", a three-part series designed by women for women.

Running on September 5, 12, and 19, the programme features interactive sessions on personal finance, artificial intelligence (AI) productivity, and critical thinking.

Shifting focus to documentary storytelling, the QNL hosts "Voices of Keys to Palestine" from September 8-12.

Education and technology merge on September 9 at the "Science Book Forum: AI in Education", a seminar exploring the parallels between human and machine learning, alongside how AI can foster critical thinking in the classroom.

History and literature take centre-stage on September 17.

First, an interactive session on "Diplomacy and Influence: A Reading of the British Presence in the Gulf", presented by the acting head of the Department of International Affairs at Qatar University (QU)'s College of Arts and Sciences, Dr Aisha Hadi al-Rashdi, explores the geopolitical footprint of the East India Company through the lens of early diplomatic practices.

Also taking place that evening, the library collaborates with the embassy of Colombia for "Book Chat: The Sounds of Macondo".

Pivoting to specialised industry support, professionals in regional archives and libraries are invited to attend a training programme on "Disaster Risk Management and Preparedness", running from September 22-30.

Returning to literary discussions on September 23, the Book Chat series continues with Qatari novelist Ali al-Naama, author of *Circus of the Greats*.

Live music returns to the venue on September 24 with "Philharmonic at the Library", featuring the Qatar Philharmonic Brass Quintet in a special performance celebrating the Years of Culture honouring Mexico and Canada.

The month's ongoing focus on publishing and technology culminates on September 26 with the third edition of the "Write to Inspire: Books and Authors" programme.

This year's theme delves into the impact of AI on Qatar's publishing industry, offering a platform for authors and publishers to discuss ethics, authenticity, and creative opportunities associated with emerging digital technologies.

Rounding out the month's public events, the "Qatar Contemporary History Series" takes place on September 26-27. - **QNA**

Al-Misnad meets Ecuador's deputy foreign minister



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali al-Misnad met yesterday with Ecuador's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility Alejandro Davalos, who is visiting Doha. Their meeting focused on bilateral relations and ways to bolster them, in addition to topics of mutual interest. - **QNA**

MoI busts three over unlicensed medical and cosmetic activities

Qatari authorities have arrested three European nationals for providing unlicensed medical and cosmetic services.

The Criminal Investigation Department of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), in lockstep with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), launched an investigation after receiving information about the unauthorised activities.

Authorities said the suspects were arrested after the necessary authorisation was obtained from the Public Prosecution.

They were found engaging in the activities and admitted to the allegations.

The suspects, along with the seized tools and supplies, were referred to the Public Prosecution for further legal proceedings. - **QNA**

Qatari Armed Forces aircraft lands in Nepal with aid for flood victims

A Qatari Armed Forces aircraft arrived in Nepal carrying urgent humanitarian aid for people affected by the floods that struck the country.

The aid was provided by the Qatar Fund for Development as part of Qatar's ongoing efforts to support relief and humanitarian response operations and strengthen international solidarity in addressing disasters and crises.

The Qatari aid, benefiting around 52,000 people, includes water extraction and pumping equipment, lighting and food supplies, and multipurpose tents, helping meet the basic humanitarian needs of families and children, particularly in areas facing challenges in accessing water and essential services.

The Qatari International Search and Rescue Group, affiliated with the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya), is participating in delivering the Qatari aid to affected areas and supporting humanitarian efforts on the ground, contributing to the response to the urgent needs of affected populations.

The response comes as part of Qatar's longstanding approach of standing by countries and peoples affected by crises and disasters, based on its belief that international co-operation extends beyond emergency humanitarian response to contributing to addressing crises and strengthening communities' capacity to withstand and recover from them. - **QNA**



ses and disasters, based on its belief that international co-operation extends beyond emergency humanitarian response to contributing to addressing crises and strengthening communities' capacity to withstand and recover from them. - **QNA**

Minister expresses condolences to Nepal over deadly floods

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali al-Misnad expressed her condolences to Nepal over victims of recent floods during a phone call yesterday with Nepal's Minister of Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal. She offered Qatar's condolences to the families of those who died in the floods and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

HE Dr al-Misnad said the arrival of a Qatari aircraft carrying humanitarian aid for people affected by the floods in Nepal was part of Qatar's ongoing efforts to support relief and humanitarian response operations and promote international solidarity. She also reaffirmed Doha's readiness to continue co-ordinating with Nepal on its priority humanitarian needs. - **QNA**

Ministry holds briefing on 2nd Autonomous e-Mobility Forum

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) held a press briefing yesterday on the 2nd edition of the Autonomous e-Mobility Forum (AEMOB).

Held under the patronage of HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, the event will take place at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) on September 7-8.

Assistant Undersecretary for Land Transport Affairs Eng. Abdullah Saif al-Sulaiti said that Qatar's transportation industry has been witnessing rapid progress and achieving well-recognised milestones both regionally and globally, driven by the MoT's commitment to delivering smart, sustainable transportation solutions and providing supporting logistics services that meet the demands of modern cities and contribute to a better quality of life.

He said that electric transportation technologies and autonomous vehicles are emerging as key priorities for the ministry, which aims to cement Qatar's profile as a trailblazer in adopting smart mobility systems and solutions - specifically through projects leveraging AI - given the promising opportunities these

technologies offer to enhance transportation system efficiency, reduce harmful environmental and health emissions, improve safety, and foster more flexible and sustainable mobility experiences.

Al-Sulaiti pointed out that the MoT launched the Autonomous Vehicles Strategy and teamed up with its partners to supervise the execution of the first phase of electric robotaxi tryouts to test the operational and technical aspects while evaluating safety and efficiency levels.

The second phase of testing is expected to commence soon, paving the way for the future expansion of their use within the country's public transit system.

The official noted that Qatar has progressed remarkably on switching its public transit system to eco-friendly.

He said more than 70% of its public transport fleet is now electric and the target is 100% by 2030.

Al-Sulaiti said that the ministry will continue working to develop an integrated smart transport system by leveraging digital technologies, modern systems, and artificial intelligence (AI) in the planning, management, and operation of the transport and mobility network.

The chief of service delivery at Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail), Eng. Ahmed Mohammed al-Saleh, meanwhile said that Qatar Rail's participation in the second edition of the Autonomous e-Mobility Forum reflects the company's commitment to supporting national initiatives aimed at advancing sustainable transport in Qatar.

He added that this participation aligns with the national vision and the Ministry of Transport Strategy 2025-30, which seeks to build an integrated, safe, flexible and sustainable public transport system, while strengthening connectivity between railway networks and other modes of transport.

Al-Saleh noted that through its participation in the forum, Qatar Rail looks forward to highlighting the role of Doha Metro and Lusail Tram in supporting smart, reliable and sustainable mobility, while showcasing the solutions, services and opportunities its networks provide for institutions, individuals, residents and visitors.

This year's AEMOB Forum will bring together more than 40 international and regional speakers, representing government, industry, academia, technology,



Assistant Undersecretary for Land Transport Affairs Eng. Abdullah Saif al-Sulaiti at the press briefing.

research and the wider mobility ecosystem.

Across its two-day professional conference, AEMOB Forum 2026 will feature more than 50 keynote sessions and panel discussions spanning 10 dedicated mobility and industry tracks, creating a multidisciplinary programme exploring autonomous and electric mobility through technology, policy, regulation, sustainability, infrastructure, research, public adoption and real-world implementation. - **QNA**

Reyada launches Junior Care, a back-to-school initiative

Reyada Medical Centre has launched Reyada Junior Care, a dedicated back-to-school initiative to support children's health and well-being as they return to their regular school routines after the summer break.

The initiative, running from August 27 to September 30, is designed to encourage parents to prioritise preventive healthcare and ensure their children begin the new academic term in good health.

During this period, children can avail a complimentary paediatric consultation, along with 30% off laboratory and radiology services related to the Paediatric Department.

The back-to-school period often brings changes in children's routines, including sleep patterns, eating habits, physical activity and increased exposure to common seasonal illnesses.

Through Reyada Junior Care, parents have an opportunity to consult with a paediatric specialist, address any health-related concerns and seek appropriate medical guidance before or during the school term.

Reyada Medical Centre's Paediatric Department is available seven days a week, making it easier for families to schedule consultations around their school and work commitments.

Reyada also provides free valet parking, adding further convenience for parents and families visiting the facility.

Through initiatives such as Reyada Junior Care, Reyada Medical Centre continues to emphasise the importance of preventive healthcare, early medical attention, and accessible pediatric services, while supporting parents in helping their children get a healthy and confident start to the new academic year.

Reyada Medical Centre, a JCI (Joint Commission International)-accredited multi-speciality healthcare facility on C-Ring Road in Doha, offers more than 18 specialities and a dedicated team of more than 30 expert doctors.

The centre offers an extensive range of services, including radiology, laboratory, pharmacy, optical, and physiotherapy, all designed to provide patients with comprehensive, affordable and quality care.



Over 1,000 applications benefit from simplified MoECC system

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has announced the results achieved by the initiative to simplify procedures for issuing environmental permits for industrial facilities, since its launch in February 2025.

The ministry said in a statement that since its launch, the initiative has processed more than a 1,000 requests through simplified pathways.

The MoECC noted that applications that benefited from the simplification pathways constituted about 90% of the total applications covered by the two pathways (normal and simplified).

The ministry affirmed that these indicators reflect a tangible shift in the mechanism for dealing with requests, and the transition of the environmental permitting system to a more efficient and flexible model, based on the suitability of the level of procedures to the nature of the activity and the size of its potential environmental impacts, instead of subjecting all activities to the same procedures and requirements.

It explained that the initiative reclassified industrial activities according to their nature and environmental requirements, allowing the direct issuance of industrial licences for 861

industrial activities, representing 66% of the total activities, according to pre-defined environmental requirements, and without the need to obtain a prior environmental permit.

The MoECC noted that 257 industrial activities, representing 20% of the total activities, were exempted from environmental and operational permits, while the requirement to obtain a prior environmental permit was limited to 182 industrial activities, representing 14% of the total activities.

The ministry indicated that the number of applications that passed through the main environmental permitting track for industrial facilities with higher environmental impacts reached about 111 applications since the initiative was implemented.

It indicated that these requests are mainly based on heavy industries and large facilities with higher environmental impacts, including petrochemical industries, recycling, waste treatment, and other projects that require a

more detailed environmental assessment before implementation and operation.

The ministry said that this approach represents a shift in work philosophy, from consuming technical resources in studying a wide range of low- and medium-impact activities, to focusing expertise and specialised evaluation on projects with higher environmental impacts.

It also underscored that indicators measuring the impact of the initiative showed a tangible improvement in the investor journey, as the average order completion time decreased from about 15 working days to only three, a decrease of 80%.

The MoECC highlighted the decrease in the number of procedures and steps required from the investor from seven main procedures to three, a decrease of nearly 60%, which contributed to improving the investor's journey and raising the efficiency of service delivery.

It added that customer satisfaction levels exceeded 85%.

It indicated that the impact of the initiative was not limited to reducing procedures and completion times, but extended to achieving savings in time and administrative costs associated with doing business.

AMAN Centre takes part in back-to-school campaigns

The Protection and Social Rehabilitation Centre (AMAN) participated in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE)'s "Back to School 2026-27" campaign and the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF)'s "Walk Your Kids to School" ("Wassel Eyalak") campaign, through activities held at West Walk.

One of the centres affiliated with the Qatar Foundation for Social Work, the Aman Centre set up a pavilion at West Walk, offering a range of educational and interactive activities aimed at introducing visitors to the centre's services, promoting concepts of personal safety and protection, raising awareness about preventing violence and bullying, and highlighting the importance of family dialogue.

AMAN Centre acting executive director Fadal al-Kaabi affirmed that the centre's participation in both campaigns stems from its belief in the importance of taking part in community events targeting families and children, as a partner in implementing these awareness campaigns.

He added that this is particularly important with the start of the new academic year, as this stage represents an opportunity to strengthen awareness of protection and prevention.

Al-Kaabi noted that this is an important opportunity to raise children and parents' awareness of children's rights, safe behaviours, and the importance of building a supportive and safe school and family environment for our students.

AMAN Centre community awareness director Bakhita al-Ghayathin said that the participation focused on delivering innovative awareness messages tailored to the target age group, combining interaction and entertainment to achieve the greatest possible impact.

She added that this contributes to reinforcing concepts of self-respect, safe interaction with others, rejecting bullying and violence, and encouraging children to express their feelings and seek support and assistance when facing any problem.

It also familiarises them with the appropriate mechanisms for resolving problems. - QNA

QIC MARKET Redefines How Qatar Buys and Sells Cars

Buying or selling a car in Qatar was long considered a test of patience, defined by weekend trips to distant showrooms, refreshing scattered online listings, and navigating vague word-of-mouth leads. That fragmented era is now coming to an end as Qatar's automotive community embraces a far more sophisticated way to trade.

At the center of this transformation is QIC Market, an AI-powered marketplace offered by Anoud Technologies LLC and integrated directly into the award-winning QIC App and qic.market. Serving over 160,000 active users across the broader QIC ecosystem, QIC Market consolidates every stage of an automotive transaction into a single interface. What once required days of coordination now unfolds in just a few clicks, signaling a decisive shift toward modern convenience.

For prospective buyers, QIC Market offers an intuitive experience supported by artificial intelligence. Users can explore interactive visual representations alongside comprehensive technical specifications. Tailored filter tools allow buyers to instantly narrow options by budget, condition, color, and personal preference, selecting from an expansive catalog of more than 10,000 new and pre-owned vehicles across 60+ automotive makes. Through direct partnerships with verified official dealerships and vetted private sellers, the platform delivers complete transparency across every listing.

Beyond the upfront purchase price, QIC Market provides buyers with a clear breakdown of total ownership costs, covering routine maintenance, operating expenses, and fuel efficiency. Buyers can evaluate the true long-term value of a vehicle rather than relying on the sticker price alone, enabling more informed and confident decisions.

The seller's journey is equally streamlined. Individuals looking to list pre-owned vehicles can do so free of charge while leveraging intelligent, built-in tools. A complimentary car price checker delivers instant, data-backed market valuations to help sellers set competitive prices without guesswork. To clear the final administrative hurdle, an integrated insurance transfer feature allows current owners to transfer their QIC policies directly to the buyer without visiting a service center.

Ultimately, QIC Market reflects QIC's vision of building the region's premier insurance-driven ecosystem, uniting essential everyday services into a single digital space. By removing friction from a historically fragmented marketplace, QIC Market does not simply streamline vehicle trading. It reinforces QIC's ecosystem as Qatar's leading platform for drivers while setting a new benchmark for regional convenience.





New Updates to the General Tax Authority's Website and Dhareeba Platform

A smoother digital experience, with clearer access to tax information and services.



GTA rolls out new updates to website, Dhareeba platform

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The General Tax Authority (GTA) has announced a series of new updates to its official website and Dhareeba platform.

Among the key enhancements is the launch of a new Knowledge Centre, which brings together tax guides and information in one centralised location.

The feature is designed to help taxpayers better understand tax requirements and procedures and to make it easier to access the information they need.

The GTA also updated its electronic calculator, which now enables eligible taxpayers to calculate capital gains tax and financial penalties through a simple, clear, step-by-step process.

In addition, the Tax Agreements page has been updated to provide clearer information

and guidance on tax agreements and related procedures, benefiting taxpayers and entities involved in international transactions.

The updated page includes transfer pricing guidance and information on mutual agreement procedures.

The Income Tax on Capital Gains page has likewise been refreshed, with new frequently asked questions and additional guidance added to help taxpayers clearly understand the relevant requirements and procedures and more easily access the information they need.

According to the GTA, these updates are part of its ongoing efforts to advance digital transformation and develop its electronic services, with the broader goal of improving the taxpayer experience and enabling easier, more efficient access to tax information, tools, and services.

In June, the GTA was awarded first place in the second edition of the “Government Services Redesign Challenge 2026”, organised by

the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, for its Excise Tax Product Registration service.

The win followed the authority's participation in an innovation event featuring interactive workshops focused on assessing the current service, identifying challenges, and prototyping improved solutions, reflecting the GTA's continued push to simplify procedures and strengthen digitalisation.

In July, the GTA partnered with the General Authority of Customs to launch integrated digital services linking the Al Nadeeb electronic customs clearance system with the Dhareeba tax platform, comprising 11 joint digital services covering registration, tax returns, goods movement, and excise tax procedures.

The integration enables secure, automated data exchange between the two authorities, reducing manual entry and duplication while improving data accuracy.

Uzbekistan marks 35 years of independence amid strong ties with Qatar

Uzbekistan's strong and rapidly expanding ties with Qatar are opening new avenues for co-operation across investment, trade, energy, infrastructure, tourism and other sectors as the Central Asian nation marks 35 years of independence and embarks on a new era of economic growth and reform.

For Qatar and the wider Gulf region, Uzbekistan's transformation carries particular significance.

Relations between Doha and Tashkent have developed rapidly in recent years, evolving from traditional diplomatic contacts into a broad-based strategic partnership covering investment, trade, energy, infrastructure, transport, education, culture, tourism and other areas of mutual interest.

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev (*pictured*) has played a significant role in strengthening this relationship, with high-level political dialogue providing the foundation for a rapid expansion of bilateral co-operation.

A major turning point came in 2023, when Qatar and Uzbekistan exchanged historic state visits at the highest level.

On June 5-6, 2023, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani paid a state visit to Uzbekistan at the invitation of Mirziyoyev.

During the visit, Mirziyoyev and HH Sheikh Tamim discussed expanding co-operation in trade and investment, energy,

infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, transport and other areas.

Several bilateral agreements and investment arrangements were also concluded.

A few months later, on October 1-2, Mirziyoyev paid a state visit to Qatar at the invitation of HH the Amir.

The visit further strengthened the momentum generated earlier in the year.

In Doha, the two leaders discussed expanding political and economic co-operation.

At the same time, Mirziyoyev also attended the opening of Expo Doha 2023 and met with representatives of Qatari business and investment circles.

The reciprocal state visits in 2023 demonstrated the two leaders' strong political commitment to developing long-term relations and laid the foundation for the next stage of the partnership.

This momentum led to the signing of the Agreement on Strategic Partnership between Uzbekistan and Qatar in April 2024, establishing an institutional framework for deeper co-operation.

A further step came in August 2025, when the first meeting of the Qatar-Uzbekistan Co-ordination Council for Strategic Partnership was held in Doha.

In November 2024, the two countries held the inaugural session of the Qatari-Uzbek Joint Committee for Economic, Trade and Technical Co-operation in Doha,



with investment, industry, agriculture, information technology and logistics among the areas discussed.

For Qatar, Uzbekistan represents an increasingly important partner in Central Asia, offering opportunities in a rapidly developing market with a young population, expanding consumer demand and an ambitious programme of economic reform.

For Uzbekistan, Qatar is an important partner in the Gulf, bringing significant investment capacity, global business networks and expertise in areas including infrastructure, energy, logistics, tourism and services.

The growing relationship between Qatar and Uzbekistan extends well beyond investment and trade.

Mathaf and VCUarts Qatar launch public lecture series and seminar

Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), is presenting Fanoon (Arabic for “arts”), a new public lecture series and university seminar bringing internationally renowned artists into dialogue with audiences and students in Doha.

The series features four distinct research-led practices: Rayyane Tabet's work with archives and the built environment; Bahar Noorizadeh's exploration of digital and financial infrastructures; Shuddhabrata Sengupta's practice of collective knowledge production with Raqs Media Collective; and Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti's decolonial spatial practice with Decolonising Architecture Art Research (DAAR).

The public lecture series is presented in partnership with Qatar Creates Talks, expanding opportunities for audiences in Doha to engage with international artists, ideas and contemporary creative practice.

The new series builds on the legacy of VCUarts Qatar's original Fanoon Centre for Printmedia Research, established in 2012 as the first print-publishing programme of its kind in the Middle East.

Through collaborations with leading regional and international artists, the centre created an important body of work while giving students direct experience in artistic production and exchange.

The new Fanoon carries that spirit forward, expanding it through public lectures and university seminars.

Conceived as an experiment in exploring new approaches to learning and knowledge-sharing, Fanoon inaugurates a new collaboration between a museum and an arts university.

The initiative connects Mathaf with the Painting and Printmaking programme (Department of Fine Arts) at VCUarts Qatar, creating a space for ongoing dialogue around contemporary artistic practice and proposing a forward-looking model for arts education.

Each participating artist will deliver a public lecture at Mathaf's Mekan Auditorium.

The lectures are free and open to all, offering audiences a unique opportunity to engage with the artists' research, methodologies and wider fields of inquiry.

The public programme is accompanied by a university seminar led by writer and curator Tirdad Zolghadr, curator of Academic Outreach at Mathaf.

Open to students across Education City, the seminar will enable participants to examine the ideas presented during the lectures through continued discussion and study.

The Public Lecture Programme will feature four lectures, all beginning at 3pm at Mathaf's Mekan Auditorium: Rayyane Tabet's on September 8; Bahar Noorizadeh's on September 29; Shuddhabrata Sengupta's on October 27; and Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti's on November 17.



Qatar Charity delivers high-impact education projects in Gaza Strip

Despite the extraordinary challenges facing the Gaza Strip, including the impact of the war and restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid and essential supplies, Qatar Charity (QC), with the support of generous donors, continued to deliver high-impact education programmes and projects throughout 2025 and 2026.

These initiatives have helped sustain access to education and provide a safer, more stable learning environment for displaced and conflict-affected children.

Around 24,000 students and education staff benefited from projects delivered during this period, while education projects currently under preparation and implementation are expected to reach approximately 220,000 people soon.

Completed initiatives included the distribution of 9,631 fully equipped school bags containing stationery, as well as clothing for 4,873 children.

The QC also distributed 2,055 learning packs to students and teachers.

Designed as practical, condensed alternatives to conventional textbooks, the packs contain educational materials and lessons covering both the first and second semesters.

In addition, the organisation supported temporary schools by providing students with 14,560 nutritious meals and equipping 60 temporary classrooms with whiteboards and cleaning and sanitisation supplies.

Following the launch of its Education 2026 campaign, Qatar Charity is currently implementing the “Back to the Classroom 2” project.

To date, the organisation has distributed 500 fully equipped school bags containing stationery and 50 classroom whiteboards.

The project aims to provide a total of 6,500 fully equipped school bags, 6,500 learning packs and 6,500 individual writing boards.

It will also equip 60 temporary classrooms with whiteboards and cleaning and sanitisation supplies, helping to create a safe and suitable learning environment for children in displacement areas.

Preparations are also under way to launch two high-impact projects.

The first, the “Integrated Support for Schoolchildren” project, has an estimated budget of QR4.7mn.

It aims to provide 18,250 fully equipped school bags with learning packs, distribute 40,000 school meals and deliver psychosocial support activities for 8,000 boys and girls across the governorates of the Gaza Strip.

These interventions will strengthen children's ability to continue their education and cope with the challenges created by current conditions.

The second, the “Temporary Learning Environment” project, has an estimated budget of nearly QR4.8mn.

It aims to improve conditions in temporary schools by providing 4,000 double desks, each seating two students; installing 80 drinking-water points with storage tanks; and constructing and equipping 160 temporary classrooms. – QNA

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نادي السد الرياضي

وشركة ون نين سيكس نين فتنس هيب

إعلان مزاييدة لبيع سيارات بطريقة المظاريف المغلقة

يعلن نادي السد الرياضي وشركة ون نين سيكس نين فتنس هيب عن طرح سيارات للبيع عن طريق المزاييدة بالمظاريف المغلقة

الجموعة الأولى			
م	الموديل	نوع السيارة	العدد
1	2014	ياجيرو سبورت ميتسوبيشي	1
2	2012	نيسان باترول	1
3	2006	لانسر ميتسوبيشي	1
4	2007	لانسر ميتسوبيشي	2
5	2007	غالاوت ميتسوبيشي	2
6	2014	اتراج ميتسوبيشي	1

الجموعة الثانية

م	الموديل	نوع السيارة	عدد المقاعد	العدد
1	2005	باص سوبر جيت - مرسيدس بينز		1

الجموعة الثالثة

م	الموديل	نوع السيارة	العدد
1	2005	روزا ميتسوبيشي	4
2	2006	روزا ميتسوبيشي	3
3	2007	روزا ميتسوبيشي	1
4	2008	روزا ميتسوبيشي	1
5	1999	تويوتا كوستر	1

الجموعة الرابعة

م	الموديل	نوع السيارة	عدد المقاعد	العدد
1	2005	ميتسوبيشي L300	12	1
2	2007	ميتسوبيشي L300	12	3
3	2008	ميتسوبيشي L300	12	1
4	2014	ميتسوبيشي L300	12	3

فعلى من يرغب في المشاركة بالمزاد تقديم عرضه وفقا للشروط التالية:

1. نطاق العرض:
يشمل العرض المقدم جميع السيارات، على أن يتم تسعير كل مجموعة على حدة.
 2. معاينة السيارات:
يحق للمشاركين في المزاد معاينة السيارات المطروحة للبيع خلال ساعات الدوام الرسمي اعتباراً من يوم الثلاثاء الموافق 01/09/2026 وحتى نهاية الدوام الرسمي يوم الأربعاء الموافق 02/09/2026.
ويقر المشارك بأن نادي السد الرياضي غير مسؤول عن الحالة الفنية أو الميكانيكية للسيارات بعد المعاينة.
على الراغبين في معاينة السيارات أو الحصول على معلومات إضافية بشأن موقعها وآلية المعاينة التواصل مع السيد/ جعفر على رقم الهاتف: (55542021).
خلال ساعات العمل الرسمية لتتسقى موعد المعاينة.
 3. تقديم العطاءات:
تقدم العطاءات في مظاريف مغلقة، ويشترط أن تكون مصحوبة بتأمين ابتدائي لا يقل عن (20%) من قيمة العطاء، وذلك بموجب شيك مصرفي معتمد باسم نادي السد الرياضي.
 4. مكان وألية تسليم العطاءات:
يُقدم العرض وفقاً بشيك التأمين إلى السيد/ أسامة داخل مطروف مغلق يكتب عليه نادي السد الرياضي - مزاد بيع السيارات.
وتسلم العروض يبدأ بيد في استقبال نادي صالة علي بن حمد العطية للسيد/ أسامة (50101076) وذلك في موعد أقصاه نهاية الدوام الرسمي يوم الأربعاء الموافق 02/09/2026.
 5. سحب العطاءات:
لا يجوز للمشارك سحب عطاءه إلا من خلال توجيه رسالة رسمية بالسحب قبل الموعد النهائي لتقديم العطاءات.
وفي حال انسحاب صاحب أعلى عطاء بعد انتهاء فترة تقديم العطاءات، يحق للنادي مصادرة مبلغ التأمين دون الحاجة إلى إشعار مسبق.
 6. ترسية المزاد:
تتم ترسية المزاد على صاحب أعلى عطاء لكل مجموعة على حدة، شريطة أن يكون السعر المقدم مناسباً لإدارة النادي.
 7. استرداد التأمين وسداد قيمة المزاد:
يتم التأكيد برد شيك التأمين للمشاركين الذين لم يفوزوا بالمزاد، ويلتزم صاحب العطاء الفائز بسداد المبلغ المتبقي من قيمة المزاد خلال مدة أقصاها ثلاثة (3) أيام من تاريخ إخطاره بترسية المزاد عليه.
 8. التأخر في السداد:
إذا تأخر الفائز بالمزاد في سداد باقي الثمن خلال ثلاثة (3) أيام من تاريخ إخطاره كتابياً بترسية المزاد عليه، يتم مصادرة مبلغ التأمين ويحق للنادي الرياضي إلغاء الترسية.
 9. استلام السيارات ونقل الملكية:
يلتزم الفائز بالمزاد بسحب السيارات وإتمام إجراءات نقل الملكية خلال مدة لا تتجاوز سبعة (7) أيام من تاريخ إخطاره بالترسية.
 10. وفي حال عدم الالتزام بهذه المدة، يحق للنادي إلغاء الترسية ، ولا يحق للفائز المطالبة بأي مبالغ سبق سدادها.
- لا يتم تسليم السيارات إلا بعد سداد كامل قيمتها.

لمزيد من الاستفسارات الاتصال بالسيد / جعفر – هاتف: 55542021



AI-powered storytelling can turn Qatar's viewers into visitors

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

As Qatar works towards its goal of attracting 6mn visitors annually by 2030, tourism media must become a central part of the country's digital strategy rather than remain a promotional afterthought, writer and media personality Moza Abdulaziz al-Ishaq has said.

In an interview with *Gulf Times*, she argued that Qatar's advanced technology and growing global competitiveness have made destination storytelling part of a wider contest for attention.

Al-Ishaq called for closer collaboration between specialised journalists and artificial intelligence (AI) tools, with AI supporting, not replacing, editorial judgement and creativity.

A stronger digital tourism media ecosystem, she said, should bring together journalists, photographers, video producers, AI specialists, data experts and tourism professionals.

Qatar's digital and media infrastructure, together with Qatar Tourism's ex-

tensive library of images, video and destination information, provides a solid base for that partnership.

"Today's traveller is not simply asking, 'Where should I go?'" al-Ishaq noted.

Visitors increasingly want to know what they will discover, how a destination will make them feel and what stories they will take home.

In a crowded feed of images, advertisements and videos, an authentic tourism narrative can carry more influence than conventional promotion.

Al-Ishaq said technology can give those stories reach, precision and immediacy. She added that the required shift is from content that merely describes a place to journalism that helps audiences imagine experiencing it.

She noted that traditional coverage often answers, "What is there in Qatar?" Modern tourism media should instead ask: "Why do I want to be there?"

Yet striking visuals and sophisticated platforms cannot give a destination its soul on their own, according to al-Ishaq.

That remains, she said, the work of skilled media professionals who can turn

a location into a story, an event into an experience and historical information into a human narrative.

Al-Ishaq said successful tourism journalism should also preserve an element of discovery.

Instead of listing everything a visitor can see, a story might begin, "There's a place in Qatar you haven't seen yet", then offer a glimpse through an image, voiceover, map or personal account.

Curiosity, al-Ishaq suggested, can be more persuasive than direct advertising.

She said Qatar already has the material for compelling stories: heritage, culture, sport, hospitality, arts, nature and a year-round events calendar.

It also has rapidly developed digital infrastructure and an ambition to make the visitor journey smarter and more personalised.

She added that the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 demonstrated how technology could improve the guest experience while projecting the country's image globally.

Al-Ishaq said competition among destinations is no longer determined solely by museums, beaches, hotels, or major

events; it is increasingly a competition for attention.

Countries that tell their stories creatively, and reach travellers at the right moment, are more likely to convert digital interest into actual visits.

That changes the role of tourism media, she said.

Beyond reporting events and supplying destination information, it can help shape national image, build emotional connection and influence travel decisions.

Qatar's continued digital transformation, she said, offers media organisations an opportunity to develop smarter, more interactive forms of tourism journalism.

Al-Ishaq proposed identifying creative talent, providing the right working environment and removing obstacles to experimentation.

A national platform could connect media institutions, content creators, photographers, producers and tour guides, while giving them reliable data, current tourism calendars, images and video.

Such a resource would improve co-ordination and help ensure that destination



Moza al-Ishaq

content is timely, accurate and professionally produced.

With journalists supplying context and credibility, and AI, video, and augmented reality expanding the ways stories are presented, she said tourism media can become one of Qatar's strongest ambassadors in the digital world.

She said the objective is not simply to create more content, but to tell better stories, stories capable of turning images into experiences, curiosity into intent and viewers into visitors.

Gaza health officials say five killed in Israeli airstrikes

AFP/Reuters
Jerusalem/Cairo

Israeli airstrikes killed five people west of Gaza City yesterday, a Gaza hospital and rescuers said, while the Israeli army said it targeted Hamas "military operatives".

Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City said yesterday morning that it received two bodies "following an Israeli airstrike that targeted the entrance of a residential building near the municipal park in Gaza City".

Later in the day, the hospital said it received three additional bodies and several wounded "as a result of an Israeli drone strike that targeted a civilian car in the Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood, southwest of Gaza City".

The civil defence, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas authority, confirmed to AFP the toll in the two strikes.

Images shared by the civil defence showed workers inspecting the car targeted in the second strike, completely destroyed and reduced to a blackened shell of warped metal, with a crowd of bystanders gathered around it.

When contacted by AFP, the Israeli military said that in both strikes it "attacked operatives from Hamas's military wing", the Ezzedine Al-Qassam brigades, and said it would provide further details later on.

Despite a US-backed ceasefire that took effect in October 2025, violence has not halted in the Gaza Strip, with Israel continuing to target Palestinians it says are militants.



Residents gather as fire is extinguished following an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City. - Reuters

Israel has insisted it must eliminate threats from Hamas, following the events of October 7, 2023 that sparked the war in Gaza.

At Al Shifa Hospital, the enclave's largest medical facility, relatives and friends paid their last respects to two of the five men killed yesterday before carrying the white-shrouded bodies to the cemetery to bury them.

"There is no ceasefire. There is not one good day in Gaza since October 7 (2023)," said Amjad Abu Abdo, a relative of one of the people who died in the first strike yesterday. "I swear,

we do not sleep from the sound of drones. You sleep scared of being hit."

Israeli operations in Gaza have killed at least 1,318 people since the ceasefire came into effect, according to the Palestinian territory's health ministry, which also operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The Israeli army has reported five deaths in its ranks over the same period, as well as the death of one civilian contractor.

Inclusive education should move from integration to empowerment: experts

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The expansion of inclusive education in Qatar must be matched by greater readiness among schools, teachers, students and families to ensure that children with disabilities can learn, participate and develop independence, educationists and specialists have stressed, according to a report published by Arabic daily *Al Raya*.

The experts said successful inclusion goes beyond placing students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and requires accessible facilities, specialised personnel, assistive technologies, trained teachers and individualised educational support.

The issue is becoming increasingly important as inclusive education services expand.

They currently cover 18 government schools and 18 schools on the outskirts of the country, while a plan is underway to integrate students in Grades 5 and 6 from the Audio Education Complex into government schools starting in the 2026-27 academic year, *Al Raya* reported.

The expansion also comes amid wider developments in Qatar's disability policy.

Law No. 22 of 2025 on Persons with Disabilities establishes equal rights, independence, reasonable accommodation and access to education, rehabilitation, employment and assistive technologies.

It also provides for a unified national database and classification system for persons with disabilities, which could strengthen service planning and evaluation.

Haya Abdulrahman al-Mannai, an expert in planning and monitoring social services, said the number of beneficiaries and schools is an important indicator, but does not by itself measure the success of inclusion.

She called for a broader assessment based on students' educational progress, continuity in education, participation, social integration, family satisfaction, response times and access to specialised personnel.

"The question should move from

"How many students benefited?" to "What difference did the service make in the life of the student and the family?" she said, according to *Al Raya*.

Nora al-Maslamani, a teacher at Al Noor Centre for the Blind, said education and inclusion should be viewed as matters of rights, equal opportunity, dignity and independence rather than simply as services.

"The real measure of inclusion is not the number of students who have been integrated, but the change integration makes in their lives, in terms of independence, confidence, participation, learning and the ability to work and pursue their ambitions," she said.

Saad al-Ghanim, vice-president of the Qatar Autism Association, described the integration of students from specialised education into government schools as a positive step towards equal educational opportunities.

"True inclusion" means the student feels like a natural part of the school community from the first day

However, he cautioned against treating inclusion simply as providing students with a place in a mainstream classroom.

"The student with a disability does not need a seat in the classroom only, but a school environment prepared to understand his needs and respect his differences," he said.

Al-Ghanim said classmates should also be prepared before students with disabilities join their schools.

Awareness programmes involving students, teachers, administrators, specialists and parents could promote a better understanding of different disabilities and of appropriate ways to communicate and provide assistance.

He also called for clear measures to prevent bullying, isolation, and ridicule, as well as for psychological, social, and educational follow-up after integration.

"True inclusion", he said, means that the student feels like a natural part of the school community from the first day.

Jamila al-Shemmari, principal of Al Khor Primary School for Girls, said

school readiness must extend beyond physical infrastructure.

Successful inclusion requires suitable facilities, specialised staff, trained teachers and a clear plan identifying each student's individual needs, she said.

Responsibilities must also be clearly co-ordinated among school administrators, teachers and specialists, while families and other students should be prepared for the transition.

Behavioural therapy specialist Dr Abdulrahman al-Abdullah said behavioural challenges among students with disabilities may result from communication difficulties, problems understanding instructions or transitions, sensory discomfort, or educational demands that exceed their abilities.

"Understanding the message behind the behaviour moves the response from control to empowerment," he said.

Saida al-Muhammadi, a behavioural and psychological trainer and counselor, warned that a sudden move from a specialised environment to a mainstream school can increase pressure on students due to changes in routine, support, and sensory stimuli.

She recommended preparatory visits to the new school, accurate transfer of information and co-ordinated plans between home and school. Students should also be taught alternative ways to express their needs, including pictures and gestures.

Dr Ghada al-Nuaimi, executive director of Himam Centre for Special Needs, said families often require a range of services, including speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapy, behavioural intervention and educational support.

She said the private sector is an important partner in providing specialised services, but called for stronger co-ordination between private rehabilitation centres and inclusive schools.

Haya al-Kaabi, an expert in personality modification and mental health, stressed that physical presence in a mainstream classroom does not automatically constitute successful inclusion.

A properly supported school environment can strengthen confidence, belonging and self-esteem, while superficial inclusion without adequate preparation and support can lead to isolation, frustration and psychological distress.

QPO kicking off its new season on September 6

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO) will open its 2026-27 season on September 6 with a concert featuring a performance of Antonin Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9 From the New World*.

The composition will be conducted by maestro Elias Grandy and feature acclaimed international pianist Joseph Moog, with the concert taking place at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

The season-opening programme features two masterpieces of the Romantic era.

The evening will begin with a performance of Johannes Brahms's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, one of the most celebrated works in the classical piano repertoire, before concluding with Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9*, one of the most cherished symphonic works, which was inspired by the composer's experi-

ences during his stay in the US.

The opening concert heralds a new and eventful season that reflects the QPO's commitment to artistic excellence, the promotion of cultural dialogue, and the presentation of world-class musical experiences.

Throughout the season, audiences will be treated to a programme featuring some of the world's top conductors and international soloists, alongside performances of major orchestral masterpieces and special concerts celebrating Qatar's cultural partnerships with several countries, including Mexico and Canada.

QPO executive director Kurt Meister said the new season embodies its ongoing mission to bring exceptional music to audiences in Qatar while promoting cultural exchange and unlocking new artistic prospects. - QNA

Iraq imprisons kidnapper of US journalist

Iraq's judiciary has sentenced a man to 15 years in prison for the kidnapping of a US journalist who was abducted earlier this year by a powerful Iran-backed group, a judicial source revealed yesterday. At the height of the Middle East war, on March 31, Kataeb Hezbollah kidnapped journalist Shelly Kittleson in Baghdad, before setting her free just hours before the United States and Iran agreed to a ceasefire. Iraqi authorities arrested one member of the group at the time. According to a document shared by local media, a criminal court on Sunday sentenced Amir Rahim Jabbar to 15 years in prison under an "anti-terrorism law... for the crime of kidnapping" Kittleson. A judicial source verified to AFP the document's authenticity, and a Kataeb Hezbollah source confirmed the ruling against one of its members. - AFP

10 missing fishermen found alive in UAE, says Iran

Ten Iranian fishermen who went missing in Gulf waters weeks ago are alive in the United Arab Emirates and set to travel home soon, Iran's foreign ministry said yesterday. Mohammad Soleimani, head of the ministry's representative office in Hormozgan province, said 13 fishermen had been missing since early August, amid concerns they may have been arrested after entering the territorial waters of neighbouring countries. "Today, the UAE informed our embassy in Abu Dhabi that 10 of these fishermen are in the country and can leave from there," Soleimani said, according to the Iranian state broadcaster. - AFP

Can You Negotiate Across Cultures? HEC Paris, Doha Public Masterclass Explores the Rules of Successful Dealmaking



What works in one business conversation may not work in another. But are there principles of negotiation that hold true across cultures?

HEC Paris, Doha invites professionals and business leaders across Qatar to explore this question at a public masterclass, "**Dealmaking Across Cultures: Are There Universal Rules in Negotiation?**", on Wednesday, 9 September 2026.

Led by Professor Gonçalo Pacheco de Almeida, Dieter Schwarz Foundation Chaired Full Professor of Strategy and Negotiation at HEC Paris, the interactive session will explore how culture, context, and different approaches to dealmaking shape the way business gets done.

Participants will take part in a live negotiation exercise designed to put these ideas into practice. The session will examine which approaches can be applied across cultures, the essential dos and don'ts of cross-cultural dealmaking, and how to distinguish between local ways of working and more universal principles.

The masterclass is part of HEC Paris, Doha's commitment to sharing world-class faculty expertise with Qatar's professional community.

Registration is required, and places are subject to availability.

Venue: HEC Paris, Doha Campus, 1st Floor, Classroom 102 - <https://maps.app.goo.gl/MBTWtcg3MNY4GFhT7>

Registration: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/KppdJLSeU>

Al-Khanji’s vision for Arab art

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

As Qatar’s private art scene gathers momentum, collector and designer Dr Abdulaziz al-Khanji is building a platform in Doha that connects Arab artists, informed collectors, and craftsmanship across generations and disciplines. In an exclusive interview with ‘Gulf Times’, the AZ Arts Studio founder said he wants collecting to be personal, informed and connected to the people behind each work.

“The whole idea of creating AZ Arts Studio and the AZ collection is to share the passion towards craftsmanship and the story behind everything that we get attracted to,” al-Khanji said. He sees the studio as a meeting point for established Arab artists, emerging voices and collectors who want to understand why a work matters before asking what it is worth.

The approach comes at a pivotal moment for Qatar’s cultural landscape. The inaugural Art Basel Qatar, held in February 2026 across M7 and Doha Design District, brought together 87 galleries presenting 84 artists, more than half of whom were from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. His own journey began not with an acquisition strategy, but with a damaged painting.

Around a decade ago, he encountered a canvas that drew him in. He admired the artist’s work so completely that he did not notice the damage until friends pointed it out and advised him not to buy it. “I started to think during the night: why am I connected to this painting, and why did I not see the defect, even though I am a very detailed person?” he recalled. “I started to realise that it was something deeper that connected me to the painting. And yes, it all started there.”

The experience gave him a principle that still shapes his collecting: “When you like something, you do not see the flaws; you see perfection.” Al-Khanji’s interests span paintings, sculpture, watches and design. He creates jewellery, furniture, and leather pieces through collaborations, is a partner in a footwear brand, and has designed



Dr Abdulaziz al-Khanji

watches for L’Artisan, in which he is also a partner. He co-founded the Doha Watch Club.

The disciplines may appear separate, but he views them through the same lens: material, precision, story and the hand of the maker. “One thing I learned from L’Artisan is that art is not limited to paintings or sculptures,” he said. “Art can be everywhere. Art can be the craftsmanship and the story behind everything that we see.”

Working with watchmakers shifted him from collecting finished pieces to helping create them. He treats a watch dial like a small canvas, considering a motif’s position, negative space and how guilloché or hand-painted enamel can carry the intention of a brushstroke.

The process sharpened how he looks at paintings. He searches for discipline beneath the surface: the underdrawing, restraint in a brushstroke and decisions a viewer may never reconstruct. He sees the same rigour in stone setting, joinery and

dial design. His collection is centred on Arab art because he believes artworks preserve dimensions of regional history that formal records cannot. “History books tell you what happened. Art tells you what it felt like to live through it, the emotional texture of a moment,” he said.

He points to the mid-20th-century Hurufiyya movement, when artists across Iraq, Egypt, Sudan and elsewhere brought Arabic calligraphy into modernist abstraction as newly independent states explored modern Arab identity. A canvas from that period, he argued, can communicate its era more immediately than a textbook paragraph.

AZ Arts Studio does not organise its collection around one generation or market fashion. Established artists are placed beside younger figures to create an essential dialogue. Senior artists bring technical knowledge, context and artistic memory; emerging artists bring urgency, experimentation and a contemporary reading of Arab life.

When assessing an emerging artist, he looks for three qualities: command of material, conceptual coherence and clarity of voice. He asks whether the artist understands how a medium will behave over time, whether a consistent idea runs through the work and whether the artist knows what they are trying to say. “Technique can be refined with time and mentorship; a muddled voice usually cannot,” he said.

Al-Khanji believes museums and national collections form the foundation of an art ecosystem by establishing its historical record. Independent platforms can move more quickly, supporting artists before institutions are ready, arranging studio visits, and connecting collectors directly with makers.

He sees education as central to that role. “I am keen to share knowledge, to share my experience, to educate about art techniques and meet with artists to share their experience,” he said. “I believe this will get art enthusiasts more engaged.” For people intimidated by collecting, his advice is simple.

“You do not need to know. You do not



need a theory. You need to experience,” he said. “Go out, look around, pick the piece that you feel connected to, go to exhibitions, meet artists and designers, talk to them, learn their stories and see where you connect.”

He resists the idea that every artwork must explain itself completely. Ambiguity, he said, allows a work to change with the person living beside it. The painting may accompany joy, provoke reflection or offer inspiration and emotional support.

International perceptions are also shifting. Sotheby’s described its 2023 Middle Eastern art season as one of its most successful, with its autumn sale recording the category’s highest total since becoming a regular London fixture in 2016. A painting

by Saudi modernist Mohammed al-Saleem sold for \$1.1mn.

Al-Khanji is encouraged by such recognition and by seeing younger Qatari artists enter international auction catalogues. Yet he does not want the studio’s legacy measured only through prices or transactions. “My hope is that AZ Arts Studio leaves behind not just a collection, but a community,” he said, with collectors able to explain why a piece matters, and artists who received genuine support before the wider market recognised their voice.

For al-Khanji, the most valuable collection is ultimately a living one: built through curiosity, sustained by knowledge and open enough for each artwork to become part of another person’s story.

Trump blasts backlash against data centres

AFP
Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday attacked opponents of the data centres powering the artificial intelligence boom, saying superpower rival China “could not be happier” about the growing backlash.

Energy-guzzling data centres have become a surprise issue in November’s crucial midterm elections, with anger among both Democrats and Republicans over rising electricity bills and noise from these facilities.

“The only reason that communities throughout the USA should not want Data Centres is if they want to end up being backwards and poor,” Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

“If they want to be successful and rich, with far lower taxes and jobs all over the place, let Data Reign,” Trump said, adding that “If we kill the Golden Goose, you will only have yourselves to blame.”

US candidates in at least 21 races across 18 states have aired television advertisements mentioning data centres this cycle, according to marketing data cited by US media, almost evenly



President Donald Trump

divided between both parties.

But US media reports have suggested that China may also be trying to stoke opposition to data centres, with a congressional committee demanding an investigation.

Trump, who is due to host Chinese President Xi Jinping at the White House on September, did not repeat the allegation but said that Beijing would be pleased with the situation.

“China could not be happier with this anti Data Centre movement. Actually, they can’t believe it is happening!” Trump said.

China is on course to nearly double its data centre capacity within the next five years, as an AI race with the US intensifies.

Peru seeks to lead UN labour body amid funding shortfall

Peru has entered the race to lead the International Labour Organisation, its website showed yesterday, as the body grapples with a financial shortfall that may force it to cut jobs. Peru has nominated its former Foreign Affairs Minister Javier Gonzalez-Olaechea to lead the ILO. Spain has also nominated Labour Minister Yolanda Diaz and they will both run against current head, Togo’s Gilbert Houngbo, who is seeking a second term. In his mission statement, Gonzalez-Olaechea, who worked at the ILO for two decades, pledged reform and to help protect dignity in the workplace amid major disruptions caused by artificial intelligence and automation. Candidates’ hearings are planned in November, followed by a secret ballot. The new Director-General’s term begins in October 2027. The ILO, like the wider UN system, is facing a challenging financial and liquidity situation due to delayed assessed contributions. The US has outlined plans to not pay its ILO contributions for the next fiscal year. (Reuters)

DR Congo Ebola epidemic passes 6,000 cases

The Democratic Republic of Congo has recorded more than 6,000 confirmed cases and nearly 3,000 deaths from the country’s worst Ebola epidemic ever, according to the Congolese authorities’ latest toll yesterday.

Since being declared in mid-May, the latest bout of the viral haemorrhagic fever has surpassed a 2018-2020 outbreak to become the deadliest in the vast central African country’s history. It rapidly spread across six provinces in the DRC’s restive north and east, plagued by a plethora of armed groups fuelling long-running violence in the mineral-rich region.

According to yesterday’s toll from the Congolese health authorities, 2,911 people have died, while 1,366 more have made a recovery out of the 6,041 cases confirmed since the epidemic began. With the state having long been absent in many parts of the epidemic’s epicentre in the eastern DRC, health workers have also had to contend with the distrust of the authorities from some within the affected communities.

According to the Congolese health authorities, the Bundibugyo variant often causes apparently mild symptoms in its initial stage, which complicates detection. (AFP)

‘Trump’s Kharg Island post was message for Iran’

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump was sending a message to Iran with his social media post about Iran’s energy hub of Kharg Island being blown to smithereens, Vice President JD Vance said yesterday.

“The president likes to switch it up on social media a little bit. He would be the first to say he doesn’t make announcements about military actions on social media, but I think that he’s sending a message to the Iranians,” Vance said when asked about Trump’s post.

Trump’s one-line social media post on Sunday was accompanied by an AI-generated video clip. A US official said yesterday the military had not targeted Kharg Island in overnight strikes. An Iranian official dismissed Trump’s post as “laughable”.

Attacking Kharg, which handled 90% of Iran’s oil exports before the war launched by US and Israeli attacks on February 28, would severely disrupt its energy trade and



U.S. Vice President JD Vance walks before boarding Air Force Two at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, yesterday. (Reuters)

put huge pressure on its economy.

In describing the first known US military strikes since late July, a US official said forces attacked two Iranian launchers on Larak Island.

3 minors killed in Colombia strikes on guerrilla bases

AFP
Bogotá

Three minors were killed in a Colombian bombing raid on cocaine-trafficking guerrillas in the Amazon last week, forensic experts said.

The airstrike was the deadliest against Colombia’s myriad armed groups since right-wing President Abelardo de la Espartero came to power earlier this month vowing to flush out the rebels with US military support.

Ten people were killed in total in the August 27 strike, three of them minors, the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences said in a statement Sunday night.

According to the defence ministry, two of the victims of the bombings in the southern department of Guaviare were 15 years old and another was 16.

Those killed allegedly belonged to a dissident faction of the defunct rebel army FARC that rejected a historic peace agreement between the state and FARC in 2016.

De la Espartero yesterday report-

ed another bombing in the same area against another FARC dissident group led by Colombia’s most wanted guerrilla, who goes by the alias Ivan Mordisco.

Eight members of Mordisco’s group were killed, according to the president. It is not yet known whether any of them were minors.

Colombia’s new leader, a staunch ally of US President Donald Trump who succeeded leftist Trump critic Gustavo Petro, expressed “full support” for the operations against what he called “narco-terrorist” groups.

“The bandits who for decades have recruited minors to turn them into combatants or human shields must pay for these crimes that violate International Humanitarian Law,” he wrote on X.

Rights groups warn that children and teens are increasingly being recruited by Colombian armed groups on social media.

Human Rights Watch in a report last week said that, in some cases, children were being used as “cannon fodder”.

The Ombudsman’s Office reported 428 cases of child recruitment by armed groups last year.

US farm agency moves to support beef industry

Reuters
Washington

US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said yesterday that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is taking actions to support the beef industry, including loans for small meat processors and the use of conserved land for grazing.

President Donald Trump on Friday pledged action to allow ranchers to process their own cattle, aimed at breaking up a “nasty monopoly” among top meatpackers.

US shoppers have faced record beef prices as drought and wildfires have driven the cattle herd to 75-year lows. Trump last week signed an order expanding lower-tariff beef imports in an effort to bring down prices, angering farm groups. Among the USDA’s efforts are a guaranteed loan programme for smaller meat processing operations and allowing ranchers to



A general view of the US Department of Agriculture headquarters in Washington DC. (Reuters/File Photo)

use some conserved lands after natural disasters and wildfires, according to an agency press release.

“We are investing real dollars

to rebuild the Great American Beef Herd, giving producers the risk management tools they need, cutting the red tape that has squeezed small and independent

operators, and demanding transparency in a marketplace that has been consolidated and foreign-owned for far too long,” said Rollins in the release.

Pakistan to head tripartite secretariat in Saudi for 3 years

From Page 1

Under it, the three countries will strengthen their collective defence capabilities through joint activities, defence industry co-operation and joint technology development.

The three countries also agreed to institutionalise their co-operation to enhance their solidarity and ensure the credibility and effectiveness of their collective deterrence, contributing to regional efforts towards a just, inclusive and lasting peace.

“Acting with a sense of regional ownership, the three countries reiterate their determination to work together within the framework of the Makkah Agreement to achieve sustainable peace and stability in their region. To that end, they will continue to support efforts towards de-escalation and restraint to encourage peaceful resolution of crises,” Pakistan’s Foreign Office said, adding that through the institutionalised and resolute implementation of the agreement the countries would make essential contributions to regional peace and stability.

Arabian Women Exhibition opens with 140 entrepreneurs

QNA
Doha

The 15th edition of the Arabian Women Exhibition opened yesterday at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center, under the patronage of the Qatari Businesswomen Forum at Qatar Chamber, with 200 local and international booths. The exhibition was inaugurated by Director of the Membership Affairs Department at Qatar Chamber Al Anoud Zayed Al Muhannadi.

The exhibition will continue until Sep 5, 2026, with the participation of around 140 Qatari women entrepreneurs, in addition to participants from GCC countries, Morocco, Jordan, Türkiye, Lebanon, Egypt, Pakistan, India and France. It provides an important platform for showcasing the latest fashion trends for Fall/Winter 2026.

In press statements, Chairwoman of the Qatari Businesswomen Forum and Qatar Chamber Board Member Ibtihaj al-Ahmadani said the exhibition has

become a distinguished platform for highlighting the creativity and projects of Qatari and Arab women entrepreneurs.

She noted its significant development in organization, exhibits and participating entities over previous editions, underscoring the important role women now play in supporting economic development and promoting innovation.

Al-Ahmadani said this year’s edition features cooperation between the Arabian Women Exhibition and M7, presenting a selection of exceptional regional talents through diverse designs combining contemporary design, traditional craftsmanship and modern creative visions, celebrating talent and innovation from Qatar, GCC countries and the wider region.

She invited visitors and those interested in the design sector to explore these selected works and the distinctive regional designs and creations on display, offering an experience that brings fashion, design and craftsmanship together under one roof.

Al-Ahmadani affirmed Qatar Chamber’s commitment to supporting women’s participation in various economic and commercial activities and providing opportunities for them to contribute effectively to economic and social development. She said the exhibition reflects the Chamber’s commitment to strengthening the role of Qatari and Arab women in entrepreneurship and expanding their regional and international networks.

She added that the exhibition provides an important opportunity for businesswomen to connect, explore new areas of cooperation and establish business alliances, contributing to women’s increased participation in the private sector and economic diversification.

For her part, Director of Vogue Event Company, the exhibition’s organizer, Tamader al-Marri said they are pleased to hold the 15th edition of the Arabian Women Exhibition, which this year is held under the theme “Athar (Impact),” reflecting the impact women create through

their creativity, work and presence.

She said the exhibition is a leading platform bringing together prominent Qatari and Arab women entrepreneurs and creatives under one roof, with the aim of highlighting their achievements and strengthening their contribution to economic and social development.

She added that the exhibition features the latest designs in fashion and women’s accessories, particularly for the Fall/Winter 2026 seasons, expressing her appreciation to the Qatari Businesswomen Forum at Qatar Chamber for its continued support, which reflects its belief in the pivotal role of women in leading successful businesses and contributing to economic diversification.

She also expressed hope that this edition would provide an exceptional experience enabling participating women entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations and products while offering visitors and investors promising opportunities to discover the latest innovations in fashion and women’s products.

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Pacific Islands summit opens in shadow of China-Taiwan tensions

AFP
Koror, Palau

The Pacific Islands' annual summit opened yesterday with a pointed message that outside partners "do not choose our destination", as five leaders skipped the talks shadowed by China-Taiwan tensions.

The gathering aims to grapple with challenges such as climate change, drug crime and the Chinese test-firing of a ballistic missile in July that landed in the Pacific Ocean. But at least five leaders won't attend, sending lower-ranked ministers in their place. The 18-member Pacific Islands

Forum is being hosted by Palau, a diplomatic ally of Taiwan.

Beijing claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory, and has protested against Taiwan's inclusion among aid partners invited to attend, which include China, Singapore, Japan, Britain and the United States. Chinese diplomats had warned Pacific leaders not to appear at side events in Palau where Taiwan's foreign minister may be present, AFP was told. "Our partners are welcome to sail with us but they do not choose our destination," Palau's President Surangel Whipps said at the opening ceremony, urging Pacific unity. Solomon Islands Foreign Minister Rick Houenipwela said "strategic

competition has sharpened around us". "The forum must remain the political home where Pacific leaders speak honestly, listen carefully and decide our own thoughts," he said. "Our partners are welcome and their support is valued, but this should help us realise our missions, not define them," he added.

Houenipwela spoke at the ceremony in place of his country's prime minister, Matthew Vale, who rushed home a day earlier to fend off a surprise push to unseat his government. Vale had sought to reduce the Solomons' reliance on China after taking office in May, visiting Canberra, Washington and Tokyo to seek investment and vowing to review a secret security

pact with Beijing. Other leaders not attending include Kiribati's president and the prime ministers of Samoa and Vanuatu.

The head of government of the French territory of New Caledonia will also skip the summit, a forum official told journalists. Fiji's delegation to Palau was led by the foreign minister, but it was not known whether the prime minister might join at a later stage.

The leaders' absence may weaken any joint Pacific statement on the Chinese missile test, said Oliver Nobetau, Pacific analyst at the Lowy Institute, a Sydney-based think tank.

"Not having these leaders there really lowers the expectation of

whether or not we will see a strong statement come out of the Pacific Islands Forum," he told AFP.

Some Pacific leaders were staying at home to tackle domestic political priorities, said Nobetau, director of the institute's Pacific Islands programme. Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Pacific countries "make their own decisions about their delegation and who leads them". "This forum matters," she told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"It enables decisions to be made for the Pacific by the Pacific and in a time of regional contest and competition... having a strong regional organisation and regional decision-making is one of the ways

in which that asymmetry of power between great powers and smaller powers can be navigated."

Around 110 police officers drawn from various Pacific islands will provide security at the forum, the first large-scale demonstration of Pacific-wide cooperation on policing. Australia, the biggest forum member and aid donor, has led efforts for the Pacific to provide its own security, arguing there is no need for China to have police in Kiribati and the Solomons.

"Investing in the security and prosperity of our Pacific neighbours makes our region safer and our economy stronger," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in a statement.

Nepal teams seek scores trapped in hydropower tunnels after floods

By Gopal Sharma, Saurabh Sharma and Ethan Wang
Reuters

Nepal's rescue teams, helped by Chinese and Indian experts, stepped up efforts yesterday to reach hundreds of people believed to be stuck inside blocked hydropower project tunnels in the aftermath of last week's Himalayan flood.

The unprecedented deluge of ice, rock, mud and debris carved a trail of destruction in the country's valley towns and villages, as well as across the border in China, on Wednesday, killing more than 900 people, with nearly 5,000 still missing. A glacier collapse is thought to have triggered the disaster.

Hundreds of bodies, many unidentified, have been buried in shallow graves as they began decomposing in the humid weather in the plains of the Himalayan country after being swept down the mountains by the torrent. Nepali officials said that the focus was on reaching the 933 workers believed to be trapped at 11 hydropower projects, including many who were working in about half a dozen tunnels, in the two hard-hit districts of Rasuwa and Nuwakot.

Pictures and videos shared by rescue teams showed earth-moving equipment digging and shovelling mud and rocks under lights in the dark of the night as workers watched. Soldiers used torchlight in a big pit they had created to look for space to get into one tunnel.

The Nepali army said search-and-rescue teams were using controlled blasts, excavators and searchlights to clear water and mud and reach trapped people. Teams recovered three bodies after entering two tunnels, while other sections remained buried in mud and were still being searched, it said. "A large amount of debris has been deposited and that is posing us a big challenge to open the tunnels," Nepali army spokesperson Raja Ram Basnet said. "Our main focus is on opening the tunnels." On Monday, Nepali authorities said

■ **933 workers missing from 11 hydropower projects in flood-hit region**
■ **Nearly 21,000 security personnel join Nepal's rescue operations**

903 people were confirmed dead, with 4,247 missing, including the 933 at hydropower projects. On the Chinese side, authorities said 16 people were killed in Gyirong County and 546 were missing.

The Nepali foreign ministry said that about 590 foreign nationals from 39 countries were still missing. More than 10,000 people had been rescued from the flood-hit region, including 323 foreign nationals, it added. The Red Cross has estimated that more than 90,000 people were likely to have been affected by the disaster, which China has linked to the effects of climate change.

There has been a boom in hydropower projects in Nepal since the turn of the century as the mountainous country sought to take advantage of its Himalayan water resources to address chronic domestic power shortages and exploit prospects for selling electricity to southern neighbour India. Hydropower projects in Nepal's mountains need tunnels to carry water through the steep terrain, allowing developers to exploit the sharp elevation drop between Himalayan rivers and powerhouses to generate electricity.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah said the flood was an "unprecedented and devastating natural disaster" and it remained challenging to compile a complete assessment of the damage.

Beijing has said 261 foreign nationals from 23 countries were unaccounted for in Tibet, near a key border crossing with Nepal.

On Monday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun



Members of the Nepal Army head back after retrieving the bodies that were washed away by flash floods and a mudslide, in Narayani River, Chitwan. (Reuters)

said that nearly 100 Chinese citizens have not been contactable on the Nepalese side. A meeting of the Chinese cabinet urged all-out effort to search for the missing, the release of authoritative information, addressing risks and hidden dangers and further improvement of emergency management capabilities, state television CCTV said.

Although Nepal has said that it does not need foreign help in general rescue and search, it has leaned on giant neighbours India and China for their expertise in tunnel rescue. Rescue operations have been suspended several times because of bad weather and concerns that a lake formed across the Nepal-China border by the disaster could trigger fresh flooding after it began overflowing into Nepal's rivers.

On Monday, CCTV said that glaciers around an impact crater carved out near the site of last week's glacier collapse on the Nepalese side remained at risk of collapse. Drone footage showed multiple landslide deposits along both riverbanks, posing a risk of further collapses and the formation of new lakes, it said. Last



Mona Khadka grieves the death of her son, Ayush, who died in the aftermath of flash floods in Nepal, outside a mortuary in Chitwan district. (AFP)

week's flood was "caused by glacier instability under the long-term effects of global warming", the state broadcaster reported.

Two Nepali officials told Reuters that China had not shared much information on glacier risks and

water levels following a meeting to strengthen cooperation earlier this year, and they feared that a lack of data-sharing could hamper future disaster preparedness. The Chinese foreign ministry said that Beijing had continuously pro-

At least 2,500 buildings destroyed in valley: data

More than 2,500 buildings were destroyed in Nepal's Trishuli valley in tsunami-like glacial floods on August 26, according to an AFP computation of data from Europe's Copernicus observatory.

That's about two-thirds of all buildings in the three potentially affected zones studied by Copernicus' emergency management service.

When partially damaged buildings are included, the proportion of structures affected rises to more than seven out of 10, underscoring the flood's violence as it tore through the valley. These areas, which include parts of the towns of Timure, Syabrubesi and Bidur, north of the capital Kathmandu, were home to nearly 6,000 people before the disaster. Images for the area around Bharatpur, Nepal's third most populous city, were still being studied on Monday morning.

Scientists attribute the flash flood to the collapse of a huge glacier in the Himalayas. It swept through the Gyirong border post between Nepal and Tibet, an autonomous region of China, after it raced some 20km down from the glacier. The small border town of Timure and its surroundings lost more than 80 percent of their buildings. Ten kilometres further south, the disaster-stricken area of Syabrubesi lost nearly three-quarters of its buildings. This village is the starting point for the famous Langtang trek and a route frequently used by Hindu pilgrims. Further downstream, the riverbanks around Bidur -- the administrative centre of the Nuwakot district and the base for the rescue teams -- saw more than 1,800 buildings destroyed, or three out of every five. As well as homes, the disaster destroyed roads and bridges, making it more difficult to deliver aid and search for the missing. (AFP)

vided Nepal with meteorological and hydrological data and would continue to "strongly support" Nepal's disaster relief efforts and safeguard the two countries' common interests.

Sarawak considers cloud seeding as haze worsens

AFP
Kuching

Malaysia's Sarawak state plans cloud seeding operations in early September, officials said, as smoke from fires in neighbouring Indonesia pushes air quality to hazardous levels. Indonesia, a vast archipelago, has for weeks battled wildfires that have led to school closures and thousands of people requiring medical treatment, with smoke also drifting across to Malaysia and Singapore.

Sarawak, which shares a border with Indonesia's Kalimantan province on Borneo island, has been the most affected by the haze. Sarawak Disaster Management Committee chairman Douglas Uggah Embas said Monday cloud seeding could be carried out between September 3 and 5, if weather and atmospheric conditions permit.

"Cloud seeding can only be carried out when suitable cloud formations and atmospheric conditions are present -- it cannot create rain in the absence of suitable clouds," Uggah told reporters. Air quality deteriorated sharply across Sarawak on Monday, with seven locations recording hazardous Air Pollutant Index (API) readings above 300, led by Serian district at 475. Under national guidelines, API readings above 300 are considered hazardous, while levels exceeding 500 trigger consideration of a local emergency. "If an emergency is declared, it will strictly be enforced within that specific locality, not for the entire state," Uggah said.

The cloud-seeding also aims to replenish critically depleted reservoirs and dams after a prolonged dry spell. State satellite monitoring detected nine active hotspots in Sarawak, compared with 1,180 in Indonesia's Kalimantan region. Kalimantan recorded 15,587 hotspots between January and late August, including more than 13,000 in August alone.

"This issue is a diplomatic issue," Uggah said, adding that the state authorities had urged the federal government to raise the matter with Jakarta under the Asean Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. Authorities have deployed firefighters to the hotspots in Sarawak and urged residents to limit outdoor activities and wear N95 masks.

Japan seeks \$55.6bn defence budget, with AI focus

AFP
Tokyo

Japan's defence ministry requested a record budget of 8.9tn yen (\$55.6bn) yesterday as Tokyo looks to artificial intelligence to speed up decision-making in the face of a tense security environment.

The final budget reportedly could reach 10tn yen as Tokyo undergoes a sweeping upgrade of its defence in order to navigate growing tension with neighbours such as China, North Korea and Russia.

The latest request focuses on countering "new ways of warfare", with an emphasis on the use of AI, drones and standoff missiles. Under the request, the ministry hopes to implement an AI-powered decision support system. It also wants to procure low-cost drones that can work in tandem with long-range missiles to neutralise enemy assets.

The ministry said it plans to develop underwater-launched hypersonic missiles and establish a new unit to bolster defences against cognitive warfare, a growing threat aimed at shaping public opinion through disinformation campaigns and other operations. The budget request for the fiscal year starting from April 2027

China's rapid military expansion and North Korea's steady development of missiles and nuclear weapons have pressed Japan to shore up its defence

highlights the latest step by Japan to boost its military to meet the volatile geopolitical reality, gradually shedding its traditional pacifist stance that limited the use of force purely for self-defence. China's rapid military expansion and North Korea's steady development of missiles and nuclear weapons have pressed Japan to shore up its defence.

Russia's war in Ukraine has fuelled worries among Japanese policymakers that a similar conflict could erupt in East Asia, considering China's mounting pressure on Taiwan and its escalating territorial disputes with Japan.

The Nikkei newspaper said the defence ministry's request may jump to more than 10tn yen, citing an unnamed ruling party law-



Type-88 missile being tested off the coast at the JGSDF Shizunai Anti-aircraft firing range in Shinhidaka, Hidaka district on the northern island of Hokkaido. (AFP/File)

maker. The current request did not specify the estimated costs of many products and services, including missiles, drones and digital systems. These figures will be finalised once the government finishes its revision of core national security documents by the end of the year, defence officials said.

Those three documents set the outline of the country's future defence capabilities while assessing the country's security environment. Japan has been beefing up military spending and security cooperation in Asia, deploying missile launchers to outer islands, moving to acquire "counterstrike" capabilities and easing rules on

weapons exports. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, seen as a China hawk, has placed national defence at the top of her conservative agenda. Japan's ties with China deteriorated sharply after she suggested in November that Japan could intervene militarily in any conflict over Taiwan, which Beijing insists is its territory. China has expressed alarm at what it sees as a return to "new militarism" by Japan.

Under Takaichi, the government is expected to make an overall budget request of around 143tn yen, a sharp increase from 122.4tn yen requested for the ongoing fiscal year, the Nikkei newspaper reported.

Spanish PM rules out Moroccan responsibility in Ceuta migrant surge

AFP
Madrid

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez yesterday ruled out Moroccan responsibility in last month's migrant rush to Ceuta, accusing Israel, Russia and the far right of spreading disinformation about the crisis.

More than 70,000 migrants entered the small Spanish territory in north Africa on July 30-31, swimming or crossing on foot from neighbouring Morocco in an unprecedented rush that left scores dead.

Some analysts have suggested the crisis may have been a message sent to Spain by Morocco over the disputed Western Sahara after Sanchez visited Rabat's historic enemy Algeria in July.

The Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony largely controlled by Morocco but claimed by the Algerian-backed pro-independence Polisario Front.

But Sanchez told Cadena SER

radio that "no intelligence service with which the Spanish government normally co-operates" had suggested "any involvement in one way or another of the Moroccan authorities".

"We must be aware that this crisis can only be resolved through co-operation and not through distrust toward Morocco," he added.

While the National Intelligence Centre and police shared situation reports with the government, "no information made it possible to gauge the scale, the seriousness of the crisis we were going to experience," Sanchez said.

"We are continuing to investigate" what happened, he added.

Sanchez also singled out "rumours and disinformation" that spread on social networks after the mass entry, which he said were "linked to Russia and Israel, and to an ultra-right international that always uses migration to attack both Spain and Europe and divide it".

Sanchez is an outspoken critic of Israel's devastating war against



A young unaccompanied migrant overlooks a shelter set up by the Spanish government in Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta following a mass crossing from Morocco. (Reuters/File Photo)

Hamas in Gaza and a staunch supporter of Ukraine since Russia's 2022 invasion.

The Socialist leader said Russian and Israeli disinformation in the migration crisis was due to "the

political stances we are maintaining regarding the genocide in Gaza or (President Vladimir) Putin's invasion in Ukraine".

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar hit back on X, saying Sanchez was "lying shamelessly" by "accusing Israel of disseminating misleading information".

"Continuing to spread defamatory lies will not distract from Sanchez's disgraceful failure to manage his country's affairs," Saar wrote.

Experts have told AFP that disinformation on social media fuelled the surge in the first place by deliberately misinterpreting a Spanish Supreme Court ruling, claiming that migrants who arrived by sea would not be returned.

The crisis triggered fresh tensions within the European Union over the sensitive topic of immigration and dealt a blow to one of its main achievements, the Schengen free-travel zone.

Italy's right-wing government imposed border checks for one month on travellers from Spain af-

ter the crisis, with Madrid reciprocating a week later.

Both governments announced a 15-day extension of the controls yesterday. Although the vast majority of the migrants returned to Morocco within hours, thousands remain in the tiny territory of 18 square kilometres and 84,000 inhabitants, many living rough on the streets. Their fate has become a major political flashpoint, with the conservative and far-right opposition demanding that all those who entered Ceuta, including minors, be returned to Morocco.

Ceuta residents have held regular demonstrations over what they say are security and hygiene problems linked to the influx.

Sanchez yesterday said that 6,000 spaces at reception centres would soon be available in the territory for migrants, whose status must be verified by the Spanish authorities before any possible return to Morocco.

He also pledged an additional €168mn (\$195mn) in aid for Ceuta to respond to the crisis.

Tribunal obligates India to adhere to Indus water treaty

AFP
The Hague

An international tribunal ordered India yesterday to "observe its obligations" under a treaty with Pakistan on the sharing of the Indus and other rivers, which the New Delhi government sought to suspend.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration, based in The Hague in the Netherlands, also made an order "prohibiting" India from carrying out works at two hydroelectric projects that could breach the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.

The treaty governs the use of water from six rivers, whose headwaters originate in India but flow into Pakistan as part of the Indus basin — a resource relied on by hundreds of millions.

The Indus cuts through ultra-sensitive demarcation lines between India and Pakistan in contested, Muslim-majority Kashmir

— a Himalayan territory both countries claim in full.

India said in May 2025 that it was suspending its membership of the treaty after accusing Islamabad of backing a deadly attack on tourists on the Indian side of Kashmir. Pakistan denied the charges. New Delhi immediately rejected the court's decision yesterday that India had no grounds to withdraw from the treaty.

"India categorically rejects its so-called award, just as it has firmly rejected all prior pronouncements by this illegally constituted body," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance remains in force."

Pakistan welcomed the tribunal's decision, as well as interim measures imposed by the court requiring India to pause work on a dam wall for a hydroelectric project and provide regular construction updates until an expert

gives a final ruling expected next year.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar added on X that the decision "vindicates Pakistan's consistent position that a binding international treaty cannot be unilaterally suspended or set aside". He said his nation was committed to protecting it rights under the treaty.

India's Water Minister CR Patil said this year that the government would ensure that "not a single drop of water" will flow into Pakistan, which accused India of seeking to "weaponise" the precious resource.

Pakistan has previously said it would consider any attempt to change the flow of cross-border waterways as an "act of war".

The court said in a statement that it had unanimously found that "none of the grounds" put forward by India to suspend the treaty were justified. It said India's construction of hydroelec-

tric projects on the Indus and associated rivers had to conform to the 1960 treaty.

"In a unanimous decision, the court found that none of these grounds could justify suspension or termination of the treaty," a statement released by the panel said.

"Accordingly, the Indus Waters Treaty remains fully in force, and India must observe its obligations under the treaty, including those relating to the design and operation of its hydro-electric projects on the Western Rivers," it added.

Water risks becoming a flashpoint in a region grappling with climate change and population growth, which are stretching resources in the agricultural sectors that form the backbone of both countries' economies, experts say.

The water treaty provided a rare avenue of diplomatic engagement between the rival sides until India suspended its involvement.

Poland investigates drone factory fire

Polish prosecutors announced yesterday that they had launched a terrorism investigation into a fire at a drone factory. The fire at the WB Electronics factory in the central city of Skarzysko-Kamienna was started deliberately, a prosecution statement said. Firefighters took two hours to control the fire early yesterday and the country's ABW intelligence agency has joined the investigation with the police.

The prosecution statement said an investigation had started "for participation in the activities of a foreign intelligence service directed against the Republic of Poland and for a terrorist offence, consisting of deliberately causing a fire on the premises of the WB Electronics factory using a device containing flammable materials." (AFP)

Sweden inks French warship deal to boost its defence

Reuters
Stockholm

Sweden signed an order for four Naval Group frigates during a ceremony in Stockholm yesterday attended by French President Emmanuel Macron and Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. Sweden, Nato's newest member, is racing to build up its military strength after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 prompted the country to abandon its long-held policy of neutrality.

European governments more generally have increased defence

spending in response to pressure from US President Donald Trump and increased doubt they can rely on US support.

"France and Sweden in the European Union and in Nato show that European sovereignty is being built together," Macron said.

He said Sweden's order "strengthens the industrial and technological basis of European defence at a time when Europeans must take greater responsibility for their own security and consolidate Nato's European pillar".

In May, Sweden said it would order the vessels from the French company in a \$4bn deal.

Alleged Nato spy to remain in custody, Belgian prosecutor says

A Canadian woman accused of spying while working as an intern at Nato's military headquarters in Belgium will remain in custody, the Belgian Federal Prosecutor's Office said yesterday in a statement. The Belgian Chamber of Indictments said it had decided to extend the suspect's pretrial detention by one month. The woman, identified by sources as Claire Z, was arrested last month on suspicion of espionage on behalf of a third country and of membership of a criminal organisation. The woman worked as an intern at Nato's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, or SHAPE, in the Belgian city of Mons. Claire Z's lawyer did not reply to an emailed request for comment. (Reuters)

Israel signs with Greece one of its biggest-ever arms sales

AFP
Jerusalem/Athens

Israel yesterday signed a three-billion-euro (\$3.5bn) arms deal with Greece, one of Israel's biggest ever sales at a time when it faces criticism in much of the world. The agreement will be part of the new "Achilles Shield" aerial defence system for Greece, and comes as both Mediterranean nations are navigating tense relations with Türkiye.

"The security agreement signed today with Greece, one of the largest in the country's history, is a direct continuation of the Eastern Mediterranean alliance we forged a decade ago with Greece and Cyprus. It serves as further proof of the tremendous capabilities of Israel's defence and technological industries," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"This move expresses Israel's



Israel Defence Minister Israel Katz with General Director of the GDIA of Greece, Major General Ioannis Bouras in Greece. (Reuters/File Photo)

strength, the confidence in our defence exports, and the strengthening of regional alliances."

The Achilles Shield will include Israeli-made anti-missile, anti-aircraft and anti-drone systems.

The Greek defence ministry in a statement called it part of the

greatest reform to its armed forces in the country's history, with Greece the first European Union nation to adopt such a multi-layered air defence system.

"We've entered an era of radical change. Modern conflicts have changed the parametres of military

defence and deterrence," Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias said in a statement.

Recent technological developments, he said, "have long rendered existing defence doctrines completely obsolete".

A Greek defence ministry source had told AFP in late July that the upcoming purchase was part of a broader defence investment for the Achilles Shield of €4.2bn (\$4.8bn).

"Israel and Greece share common strategic interests and face shared regional challenges," Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said in a statement.

"At a time when actors with hegemonic ambitions are seeking to expand their influence and undermine stability in the region, Israel and Greece will continue to deepen their defence and strategic co-operation," he said, in a veiled reference to Türkiye. Netanyahu has increasingly set his sights on Türkiye, whose leader, Recep

Tayyip Erdogan, has been a vociferous critic of Israel.

Netanyahu recently ordered the bombing of a Syrian base where he said Türkiye was preparing to establish a foothold. While much of Greek public opinion is also sharply critical of Israel, Türkiye is Greece's historic foe. The country is one of only four European Nato members to spend at least 3% of GDP on its military.

In 2023, Israel signed a deal with Germany to provide the Arrow 3 anti-ballistic missile defence system, which was expanded in December for a total value of \$6.5bn — the country's largest-ever military export contract.

Israel has also forged deals with other partners such as India despite international criticism of its devastating war in Gaza.

Britain in 2024 suspended a limited number of arms export licenses to Israel out of concern the weapons could be used in Gaza.

Slavery reparations: The prickly issue of compensation for historical wrongs

AFP
Paris

A UN watchdog says countries involved in the transatlantic slave trade of the 16th to 19th century are legally obliged to compensate for the harm they caused.

But while most of the many countries implicated agree to symbolic or commemorative measures, they are reluctant to address the sensitive issue of financial or material reparations for the trade, which saw millions of African men, women and children shipped to the Americas to work in appalling conditions.

A total of 182 countries — including the US, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain — are parties to the international treaty aimed at eliminating racial discrimination.

In many of those same countries, black people continue to face discrimination and poverty today.

"No former slave society... has paid restitutions to the descendants of formerly enslaved people," American historian Ana Lucia Araujo stressed in her transnational and comparative history book *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade*.

Instead, almost all of them paid compensation to former slave owners, she said.

Slaves — essentially an unpaid workforce who were bought, sold and inherited like inanimate goods — were used in the British, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish colonies in the Americas.

Humans continued to be enslaved after independence in the US, Brazil and other Latin American countries.

Haiti is a notable example of this.

In exchange for French King Charles X recognising its independence, the former French colony agreed in 1825 to pay 150mn gold francs in compensation to the former landowners and slave owners, a sum that was eventually reduced to 90mn.

To do so, the young Caribbean republic founded by former slaves had to take on debt with French banks. It took several decades to settle this double debt.

In 2025, French President Emmanuel Macron launched a "work of remembrance" on slavery. But he did not explicitly mention the prospect of any financial compensation.

The agrarian reform that followed Cuba's 1959 revolution greatly benefitted the black rural population, even though it was not designed specifically to redress the legacy of slavery.

The reform, and programmes

including access to free healthcare and education, enabled Afro-Cubans to benefit from symbolic and material restitution that was not offered to most descendants of slaves in other parts of the Americas, Araujo said.

In 2022, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte apologised for his country's role in slavery. King Willem-Alexander followed suit in 2023. The government also allocated €200mn (\$230mn) to raising awareness of the Dutch trade in humans and its consequences in the present day.

In March 2026, the UN General Assembly declared the slave trade and slavery of Africans to be "the gravest crime against humanity" — a cause championed by Ghana, which organised the first global conference on compensations two months later.

The US opposed the UN decision, while Britain and the 27-na-

tion European Union abstained.

EU member France, the first country in the world to recognise the slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity, sought to justify its abstention by saying it did not wish to establish a hierarchy among crimes.

In May, the French parliament started repealing outdated decrees that define slaves in its colonies as "moveable goods" who can be inherited, outline brutal punishments for trying to escape and condemn the children of slaves to the same bondage fate as their parents.

In the absence of concrete commitments from governments, a number of institutions and local authorities have taken independent initiatives.

The Church of England apologised for its historical links to slavery and in 2023 announced plans to invest £100mn to address the gen-

erational damage slavery caused to several communities.

The project is still in the development phase.

In 2023, insurance market Lloyd's of London said it would spend £52mn on racial equality causes after a report found it played a "significant role" in the slave trade.

Since 1989, the US Congress has repeatedly been asked to create a body to investigate slavery and its consequences. But it has never voted this into law.

The town of Evanston in Illinois has chosen to address the issue on its own by tackling housing discrimination against its Black population.

The local press says more than \$6mn dollars has been distributed since 2021 to eligible residents as part of the scheme, which is being challenged in the courts but is still ongoing.

A school year that begins well is a state that plans well

Qatar's schools reopened on Sunday to 419,373 students across 649 public and private schools and kindergartens, and the most striking thing about the day was how little went wrong. Roads moved. Buses arrived. Classrooms were staffed. Attendance at many private schools ran at 85 to 90% on the opening morning. None of this is accidental. It is the visible return on years of deliberate national investment in education. Behind an ordinary first day sits a considerable machinery of planning. Six new public schools opened across several areas of the country, adding 3,600 seats, while maintenance and renovation works were completed at existing public schools. Three thousand buses of varying sizes were put on the road. Public schools and kindergartens are staffed by 17,679 teachers, with a further 25,372 teachers and administrators in the private sector. Administrative and teaching staff reported for duty on August 23, a full week ahead of students, so that final

preparations were finished before the first child walked through the gate. The Ministry of Interior deployed traffic personnel around school premises, with the General Directorate of Traffic intensifying field efforts to safeguard pupils; the Ministry of Transport and other entities co-ordinated their own arrangements. The Cabinet's endorsement of the ministry's readiness was, in this light, an acknowledgment of interlocking work rather than a courtesy. Two figures deserve more attention than they usually receive. The first is 14,561 – the number of free, reduced-fee and voucher-supported places made available through the private schools' social responsibility initiative. This is the mechanism by which a family's income is prevented from becoming a ceiling on a child's schooling, and it widens genuine choice rather than merely offering it on paper. The second is the provision for children with disabilities: 81 nurseries serving mild cases requiring integration, alongside 122 buses and 400 cars allocated to

students with disabilities. Inclusion here is treated as infrastructure – budgeted, scheduled and delivered – not as a sentiment expressed at the start of term. The state's investment in teaching quality is equally deliberate. Two hundred and ten teachers were appointed through the Tamouh programme, run with Qatar University's College of Education, and the annual educational meeting carried more than 15 workshops on teaching practices, methods and performance development, with approved training continuing through the year via the Training and Development Centre. The Qiyadat, Tamheen and Bedaya Mwafqa programmes point in the same direction: an education system is only as good as the adults standing in front of the class, and Qatar has long grasped that recruitment alone does not produce quality. Health and safety received the same methodical treatment – 26 approved suppliers for government-school canteens, an approved list of

food items meeting health standards, strengthened cooling and completed security requirements. There is also a quieter virtue in the plurality of the system. For most international schools this was the start of a new year; for Indian schools, which educate a significant share of pupils here, it was a resumption of a year begun in April. A country that can accommodate several academic calendars, curricula and languages within one regulatory framework is doing something more sophisticated than running schools. It is honouring the diversity of the community it serves. The ministry's welcome to students spoke of a new beginning and renewed ambitions, and of a year filled with learning and achievement. Those are the right words, and Sunday showed they rest on solid foundations. In a country that has made human capital the centre of its national vision, the smoothness of a single morning is not a small thing. It is the daily proof of a state that puts its children first, and that intends to keep doing so.

Serving it up



A Sharpie robot makes a Blizzard ice cream for a customer at a 24-hour DQ Blizzard & Burgers restaurant in Shanghai yesterday. The store, jointly made by AI robot company Sharpie and Dairy Queen, opened this week in Shanghai's Jing'an district. (AFP)



\$17bn settlement: Fine that fences out competition



By Kamran Rehmat

Meta agreed last Wednesday to pay up to \$17.1bn to 47 states, the District of Columbia and several US territories, and to rebuild the way teenagers use Instagram and Facebook: a two-hour daily cap, a blackout from midnight to 6am, notifications silenced through the school day, “like” counts switched off, cosmetic-surgery filters withdrawn, and an outside auditor marking the homework every year for a decade. It is the largest state consumer-protection settlement since Big Tobacco. It is also, on the evidence of the document itself, one of the shrewdest deals a defendant has struck in the history of American technology litigation. Begin with proportion. The four states that took Meta to trial in Oakland this month had asked for something near \$200bn in civil penalties. They settled for a base of about \$12bn spread over 10 years, with a further \$5.1bn withheld against a condition Meta itself devised. The company's market capitalisation is around \$1.45tn, which makes the maximum penalty roughly 1% of the firm. Meta earned \$15.85bn in profit in a single quarter this year. “\$17bn sounds like accountability, until you look at the numbers,” said Lisa Strohmman, the clinical psychologist who founded Digital Citizen Academy, a US

body working on technology addiction. Annualised, this is a line item. Money, though, was never the point. Tennessee's attorney general Jonathan Skrmetti, one of the two lead negotiators for the states, put it plainly: the states wanted “to protect kids and we wanted to reform the platforms.” The reform is what cost Meta, and the reform is what makes the deal historic. How it came about is a study in leverage. In January, Meta hired CJ Mahoney, a former Microsoft general counsel and a lead negotiator of the Trump administration's North American trade deal, as chief legal officer reporting directly to Mark Zuckerberg, Meta's founder and chief executive. Within days he was on the phone to Skrmetti and his Colorado counterpart Phil Weiser, hunting a grand bargain. The talks stalled for months over one thing: Meta would pay, but it would not redesign. Then it began losing. A Los Angeles judge ruled that a teenager's addiction claim was a product-liability case, not a speech case, and refused to dismiss it; Zuckerberg spent a day on the stand insisting he was being mischaracterised, while internal documents showed his own staff likening themselves to drug dealers. New Mexico's consumer-protection judgment followed. On August 6, Mahoney flew to Nashville with a \$19bn offer and went home empty-handed. Four days later the Ninth Circuit, the federal appeals court covering California, refused to throw the addiction cases out on Section 230 grounds, and the floor gave way. Daily negotiations began. By the time Adam Mosseri, the head of Instagram, had finished testifying, Zuckerberg's own second appearance was scheduled and the company had run out of reasons to fight.



Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg arriving at the court for appearance. (Reuters file photo)

It is a weapon. Meta pays the withheld \$5.1bn only if TikTok and YouTube accept comparable limits and comparable penalties; if they do, Meta's own teen cap tightens from two hours to one. The company published an open letter the same morning and bought full pages in three American newspapers to press the case. “This framework will only work if all our peers join us,” Mahoney wrote. Read that again. A regulator has just converted the target of its enforcement action into a lobbyist for extending that enforcement to the target's competitors. The logic is not mysterious. Restrictions borne by Meta alone are a handicap, and teenagers locked out of Instagram at midnight will simply migrate. Restrictions borne by everyone are a floor beneath the entire market, and floors are what incumbents build. Compliance behaves like a fixed cost: age-assurance systems, auditors, parental-control architecture, six-hour response guarantees on abuse reports in

two languages. Meta will absorb it without blinking. A three-person start-up will not. Consumer-protection law has quietly delivered the barrier to entry that antitrust law exists to prevent. There is a second paradox, smaller and sharper. Part of the original grievance was that Meta harvested too much data on children. The remedy obliges Meta to identify children far more accurately than it does today. We are protecting minors' privacy by requiring a company to know precisely who the minors are. Notice, too, what survived. The recommendation engine is untouched. Minors keep personalised feeds; they merely gain the option of a chronological one, which few will choose. Haley Hinkle, policy counsel at Fairplay, a US advocacy group for children's online privacy and safety, welcomed that option while noting what it dodges: personalised recommendation to minors remains “a huge driver of excessive time online.” The states capped consumption and left the

machine that drives it running. They legislated the packet, not the leaf. The conservative objection deserves an airing. No legislature debated whether two hours was the right number or midnight the right curfew; prosecutors and a defendant settled it over bagels in Nashville, and an auditor will now police a national technology policy that Congress never wrote. Parents buy the phones and pay for the wi-fi; teenagers have evaded house rules since long before Zuckerberg was born; Australia's under-16 ban has not abolished adolescence. All true, and all beside the point. Congress held more than a dozen hearings across a decade and produced nothing. Regulation by litigation is what happens when legislation by legislature does not. The tobacco master settlement was drafted the same way, for the same reason, and it changed an industry. So what does the verdict portend? Three things. Product-liability pleading is now the standard key to the American platform economy, and it will be turned next on AI companions, on algorithmic pricing, on whatever is built to hold attention rather than merely to host it. Governance by consent decree is now the default mode, with fifty attorneys general functioning as the regulator the United States declined to create. And Meta has demonstrated that a defendant with enough cash can convert a judgment into an industrial standard of its own drafting. The settlement runs 10 years. The teenagers it protects were toddlers when Instagram appeared. It is entirely possible that by 2036 the app they cannot open after midnight will be a curiosity, and that the rulebook Meta wrote for its rivals will bind an industry Meta no longer leads. That would be the tidiest outcome of all: a company that paid one per cent of itself to make sure everyone who comes after has to pay the same. ●The writer is Deputy Managing Editor, Gulf Times.

Kyiv revamps security protocols after Russian drone strikes

AFP
Kyiv

Kyiv yesterday announced a review of security protocols – especially for public transport – after a dramatic surge in Russian drone attacks it says are aimed at “paralysing” the Ukrainian capital.

After intensifying its missile strikes on Kyiv earlier this summer, Russia has also drastically increased its daily drone attacks.

Since last week, jet-powered drones have been attacking Kyiv and surrounding areas, triggering a dozen air-raid alerts a day and forcing a partial shutdown of economic activity. The metro no longer crosses the Dnieper River, which divides the capital in two, causing traffic chaos.

Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said on Telegram he had met with local officials on Monday to discuss changes to security protocols, suggesting one metro line remain open despite strikes. City hall also announced it was preparing changes for schools, including remote learning, as the school year begins in Ukraine today.



Vehicles travel on a half-blocked highway at the site of a warehouse hit by a Russian drone strike in Kyiv yesterday. (Reuters)

Kyiv residents took to social media to question whether it was possible to continue living in the capital, especially with children, with some mulling a move to safer areas.

“The enemy is trying to paralyse economic activity in the capital and major cities,” Ukrainian Prime Minister Sergiy Korotshuk said on Facebook on Saturday.

“Prolonged air-raid alerts affect not only people’s safety, but also the operation of businesses, logistics, transportation, schools,

kindergartens,” he said. He called for adapting security rules “with the aim of better protecting people and preserving the ability to live in our cities and communities”.

Some in Kyiv – a city of 3mn people – consider the security protocols ineffective. “If, because of a single drone somewhere in the region, everything or almost everything in the entire capital stops for about 40 minutes every hour,” Mykhailo Zhernakov, head of a legal think tank, said on Facebook.



Turkiye’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, Türkiye’s Defence Minister Yasir Guler, Turkish Chief of General Staff General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Pakistan’s Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan’s Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Saudi Arabia’s Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, and Saudi Arabia’s Chief of General Staff General Fayyadh bin Hamed al-Ruwaili pose before the first committee meeting under the joint defence accord, the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, in Istanbul, Türkiye. (Reuters)

Turkiye says regional defence pact not against any country, open to others

AFP
Istanbul

Turkiye’s top diplomat stressed yesterday the regional defence pact with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was not aimed at any particular country and open to others, including Egypt.

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan’s remarks came after the first ministerial meeting of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement which commits Türkiye, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to mutual defence in the event of any of them being attacked. “This alliance is founded on international principles such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and non-interference in their internal affairs,” he told reporters in Istanbul after they met in an Ottoman-era palace.

“The alliance is not against any state and is open to all states in our

region that adhere to these fundamental principles,” he said of a pact inked against a backdrop of war between the US and Iran, and regional attacks by Tehran-backed Houthi rebels.

It unites Nato’s second-largest army, Türkiye, with the Islamic world’s only nuclear-armed state, Pakistan, and the leading Gulf power in Saudi Arabia.

The meeting came as Israel yesterday said it signed a three-billion euro deal with Athens (almost \$3.5bn) to set up the “Achilles Shield” aerial defence system for Greece.

Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan were also at the talks, alongside defence ministers from all three countries and their military chiefs of staff.

Asked if other countries including Egypt could join the pact, Fidan said it was “indeed possible” but stressed consultations were ongoing to determine conditions,

procedures and standards for membership.

“We are also working on a roadmap regarding the processes of joining the alliance,” he added.

Asked about Israel’s increasingly bellicose rhetoric towards Türkiye, Fidan noted the proximity of the upcoming Israeli elections and said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was “not someone to be taken seriously”.

Earlier this month, Türkiye said it was seeking an international arrest warrant for Netanyahu accusing him of “genocide” linked to Israel’s interception of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla, prompting a flurry of verbal exchanges between the two nations.

“The main audience Netanyahu must answer to is the international community, because Netanyahu, his mentality, and the genocidal crowd acting with him constitute a threat, not only for Türkiye but for global security as a whole,” Fidan said.

Putin, Xi hold talks in Kyrgyzstan as SCO summit begins

AFP
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Russia’s Vladimir Putin and China’s Xi Jinping began talks yesterday in Kyrgyzstan, where a dozen other heads of state also gathered for a two-day summit of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO), which seeks to be a counterbalance to the West.

Iran’s leader Masoud Pezeshkian, Türkiye’s Recep Tayyip Erdogan, India’s Narendra Modi and Pakistan’s Shehbaz Sharif were also among those in Bishkek to attend the summit of the regional SCO bloc, which celebrates its 25-year anniversary.

The summit takes place four-and-a-half years into Moscow’s Ukraine invasion and six months into the war between Washington and Tehran.

Putin and Xi have previously used SCO summits to promote their vision of a multipolar world and present a united front against the West.

Xi told Putin he was “happy” to see him, saying Russia-Chinese ties have become “more solid” and that their “prospects will be even brighter”.

“The amount of uncertainty and unpredictability in the international order has obviously increased,” the Chinese leader said.

Putin told Xi: “Co-operation is successfully developing on all fronts.” The pair last met in May.

Russia’s economy has become increasingly dependent on China during its invasion of Ukraine. Western countries have called on Beijing to pressure Moscow to end its offensive.

The Kremlin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian media the pair only discussed the Ukraine war “in passing”.

Putin also met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with both leaders arriving in the same car for the talks.

The Russian leader said Moscow was “following the path” towards resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, without elaborating.

The peace talks, brokered by the US, remain stalled.

Putin is also expected to hold separate talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.



President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping shake hands during a meeting on the sidelines of SCO summit yesterday. (Reuters)

Russia and Iran – among the most sanctioned states in the world – have massively deepened their military and economic ties since Moscow invaded Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump has warned Moscow and Beijing against arming Iran.

Putin’s meeting with Pezeshkian will come days after the CIA’s director John Ratcliffe made a rare trip to Moscow, with US media speculating he could have discussed Ukraine and Iran with his Russian counterparts.

Speaking in Bishkek after the first exchange of fire between the US and Iran in a month, Iran’s Pezeshkian said continuing the war was not in Tehran’s interests.

“We continue to strive for a path of agreement and understanding, and we believe that continuing the war is neither in our interest, nor in the interest of the region,” he told India’s Modi.

Putin, Xi, Pezeshkian, Modi and Sharif are due to take part in a plenary session chaired by Kyrgyz leader Sadyr Japarov.

The SCO has historically focused on economic issues but has gained momentum in recent years under Moscow’s and Beijing’s leadership.

On top of its 10 members, it now has 15 “dialogue partners”, including Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

It also has two observer countries: Afghanistan and Mongolia.

No place for Serbia’s ‘glorification’ of war criminal Mladic, EU says

EU Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos yesterday criticised Serbia’s plans to bury former Bosnian Serb military leader and convicted war criminal Ratko Mladic with state honours. Mladic died on Thursday while serving a life jail term in The Hague for war crimes committed during the 1990s Bosnian war. “Regarding Ratko Mladic, the glorification of war criminals is contrary to fundamental European values and has no place in the European Union or in countries that aspire to become members,” Kos told reporters.

Serbia’s justice minister Nenad Vujic said Friday that Mladic “will receive all the military and state honours to which he is entitled”. Serbian officials were awaiting details on when authorities in The Hague would release the body, he said. Serbia is among Balkan countries seeking EU accession. Kos said she would travel to Serbia on September 9.

“Ratko Mladic was a convicted war criminal, serving a life sentence for the genocide in Srebrenica and for crimes against humanity. And this will be the basis on which we will also assess developments,” Kos added.

Mladic, who had suffered several strokes in recent months, was serving a life sentence for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity during the Bosnian war. (AFP)

Germany authorises entry of Taliban team for Afghan deportations

AFP
Berlin

The German government said yesterday that it had authorised a team of Taliban government representatives to enter Germany to co-ordinate more deportations of Afghan nationals.

“We have approved the short-term entry of a technical support team,” a foreign ministry spokesman told a press conference in Berlin, with the stated goal of “increasing the number of deportations to Afghanistan”.

“It is in our interest that Afghan representations are able to provide consular services for the roughly 450,000 Afghan nationals in Germany and contribute in particular to return operations,” he said.

He added that the representatives were subject to a “security check”, were “not accredited diplomats in Germany” and would leave the country “after a short stay”.

After taking in a large number of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years, Berlin has toughened its migration policy under conservative Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who hopes to stave off the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Merz’s government said that deportations to Afghanistan would focus on criminals but last week 23 Afghan men were deported, among them some who had not been convicted of any crime.

Human rights organisations strongly criticise deportations to Afghanistan, where the Taliban are accused of severe human rights abuses.

Afghan people should ‘not be abandoned’: Red Cross official

AFP
Kabul

Afghanistan has slipped from international attention despite the “extreme needs” of its people, an International Committee of the Red Cross senior official said yesterday, urging the world “not to abandon Afghan communities”.

ICRC director of operations Yasmine Praz Dessimoz told AFP in an interview in Kabul that Afghans are “struggling to survive with significant humanitarian needs” and a collapsing health system.

One million Afghan children face life-threatening malnutrition, while 3.7mn suffer from acute malnutrition, the UN children’s agency Unicef warned last week. Owing to the decrease in international aid, 100 clinics that had treated malnutrition in chil-



Yasmine Praz Dessimoz, Director of Operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) speaks during an interview with AFP in Kabul yesterday. (AFP)

dren have closed across the country, the UN said recently.

Afghanistan remains among the

top five ICRC operations worldwide, but due to funding cuts “we had to make those difficult choices

in order to remain alongside the Afghan population,” Praz Dessimoz said.

“Afghan people need national and international support,” she added.

The ICRC supports 46 clinics and seven rehabilitation centres across Afghanistan, including services for people wounded in conflict or by unexploded ordnance.

It has made the Durand Line, a colonial-era frontier that Kabul has never formally recognised, a priority, focusing on communities affected by the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan as it can engage with parties on both sides.

Clashes between the neighbouring countries intensified last October and continued into the spring, displacing thousands of people in Afghanistan and killing and wounding hundreds of civilians.

Praz Dessimoz expressed con-

cern over the restrictions imposed on women by Taliban authorities, including bans on education higher than primary school and certain professions.

“We could keep our female staff in our health support,” but the major concern is “what is next? Because if the new generation is not educated, then there won’t be any replacement”.

She stressed the importance of women health workers, “in order then to deliver (care) and to be close to a woman”.

In her week-long visit, she met Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi and Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

“What is important is to be able to engage, to be able to have a dialogue with them,” Praz Dessimoz said.

The Taliban government, which returned to power five years ago, is officially recognised only by Russia.



Amir honours meritorious students, wishes them successful academic journey



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has honoured the country's top-achieving male high school students for the 2025-26 academic year. The recognition took place at the Amiri Diwan where His Highness the Amir said the students' academic achievements should encourage them to continue developing their knowledge and skills and contribute to Qatar's development. His Highness also praised the ability of Qatari talent to excel, meet different challenges and manage crises, wishing the students success in their future studies and careers and expressed his happiness at honouring a new cohort of outstanding high school graduates. In a post on his official X account, His Highness said he was pleased to honour the graduates and wished them a successful journey marked by excellence and achievement. He also expressed his hope that they would contribute to the advancement of the nation and serve their community. (QNA)



Class of 2030 begins Northwestern journey

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Northwestern University in Qatar (NUQ) welcomed the Class of 2030 at its 19th Convocation ceremony, formally inducting its newest students into the Northwestern community and marking the start of their undergraduate journey. In his address to the incoming class, dean and CEO Marwan M Kraidy focused on 'basira', an Arabic word associated with insight, vision, and discernment.

"'Basira' is often translated as 'insight', but it means much more than that," Kraidy said. "It is intellectual clarity, moral discernment, and the wisdom to recognise deeper truths beneath the surface. It is seeing not only with the eyes, but also with the mind, the character, and the heart."

Building on his message of tajdeed, or renewal, to the Class of 2029, Kraidy told students that 'basira' was especially important at a time when artificial intelligence, technology, and the rapid circulation of information are changing how people understand and engage with the world. He described three dimensions of basira, imagination, integrity, and wisdom, and urged students to see their education as more than the accumulation of knowledge.

Kraidy also spoke about the responsibility that comes with working in journalism, communication, media, and other fields

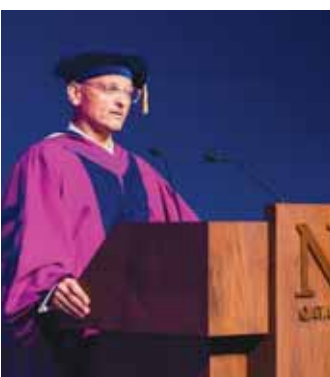


where technology increasingly shapes how information is created and consumed. Facts, evidence, context, and empathy, he said, remain essential.

He encouraged the Class of 2030 to make Northwestern Qatar's values of excellence, community, collaboration, and sustainability part of their everyday experience. "These values are not simply aspirations," he said. "They are habits to be acquired. They are commitments to be renewed. They are ways of practising 'basira' every day."

Northwestern University provost Erik Luijten, who assumed the role on July 1, joined Kraidy in welcoming the incoming class. Luijten noted that despite having spent more than 17 years at Northwestern, he and the students shared the experience of starting something new. "When it comes to the role of provost, I, like you, am a first-year," he said.

Much of Luijten's advice cen-



tered on curiosity. He encouraged students to keep asking questions, seek help when needed, and resist the fear of making mistakes. "Questions are the catalysts of our fields," he said. "We believe that asking 'how' or 'why' and challenging existing assumptions expands our understanding of the world and allows us to improve it."

Luijten encouraged students to take advantage of both the



academic opportunities and the community they will find at Northwestern.

Offering the student perspective, NUQ Student Government president Timaa Kamar, Class of 2027, reflected on how her own understanding of university life had changed since she first arrived at NU-Q. Kamar said she entered Northwestern focused on the projects she wanted to complete, the opportunities she hoped to pursue, and the goals she wanted

to achieve. As she begins her final year, she said the experiences and relationships formed along the way have become just as important.

She recalled classmates who became close friends during long nights editing films, professors who pushed and encouraged her, and faculty and staff who helped her navigate university life. "Somewhere along this journey, the people around me stopped being simply classmates, professors, and faculty," Kamar said. "They

became an important part of this chapter of my life."

She encouraged the Class of 2030 to stay ambitious, take opportunities, and try things that may initially feel uncomfortable, while remembering that university life is about more than the next achievement. The ceremony brought together students, faculty, staff, and university leaders to welcome the Class of 2030 and mark the beginning of the new academic year at NUQ.

At HEC, Class of 2026 celebrates a journey of learning, leadership

On the eve of this summer's HEC Paris commencement ceremony, more than 144 graduates and their families from across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) gathered in the French capital for the 4th edition of the HEC Paris, Doha Graduation Reception. The evening was dedicated to celebrating the achievements, leadership, and transformative journeys of the Class of 2026.

Organised by HEC Paris, Doha, the reception brought together participants from four Executive MBA cohorts - Executive MBA Doha, Executive MBA Riyadh, Executive MBA Riyadh PIF, and the Executive MBA - Emerging Leaders Track - representing GCC, the Middle East and beyond.

The reception was held at Hotel Le Marois, a landmark venue located on Avenue Franklin D Roosevelt, steps away from the Champs-Élysées and opposite the Grand Palais. Co-hosted by Djelloul Bekka, Chief Operating and Administrative Officer, and Joshua Kobb, Chief Growth and Impact Officer, and led by Nayef Sabeh as the Master of Ceremonies, the evening brought together graduates, alumni, faculty members, families, and distinguished guests.

Speakers included Joshua Kobb; Philippe Oster, executive director of International Affairs at HEC Paris; and Veronique Ehrhard, vice-president of the HEC Alumni Association; alongside cohort representatives Kholoud al-Ghati and Abdulrahman al-Jumaily. Each emphasised the impor-

ance of leadership in a constantly evolving world, the growing influence of the HEC Paris community across the Gulf region, and the responsibility entrusted to tomorrow's leaders in shaping business, innovation, and society. The Class of 2026 reflects the richness and diversity of HEC Paris Doha's executive education ecosystem.

This year, 144 participants graduated across the four Executive MBA cohorts, representing a wide range of industries including finance, healthcare, energy, technology, telecommunications, public services, manufacturing, consulting, and entrepreneurship, as well as a diversity of nationalities and leadership backgrounds.

More than 430 graduates and family members registered to take part in the celebrations in Paris, demonstrating the strong bonds forged throughout the program.

"The HEC Paris Executive MBA enabled me to complete my vision of the transformation taking place in the financial sector."

The programme provided me with new perspectives on fintech, financial data, and innovation, while equipping me with the knowledge needed to contribute to this transformation," said Shaikha Maryam al-Thani from the Executive MBA Doha cohort, who joined the programme after more than 20 years of experience in the financial sector. As CEO of the Qatar Credit Bureau, she plays a key role in financial innovation, the development of financial services, and the transformation of Qatar's financial ecosystem.



Nour ElHouda Zorgui

For Shaikha Maryam al-Thani, the Executive MBA was fully aligned with her ambition to support the sector's evolution and help shape the future of finance. Throughout the evening, graduates shared stories of career transitions, personal challenges, and professional ambitions that inspired them to return to learning despite already holding significant responsibilities.

Whether working in finance, healthcare, technology, energy, or the public sector, many described the Executive MBA as an opportunity to gain new perspectives, expand their networks, and develop the strategic mindset required to lead in an uncertain



Shaikha Maryam al-Thani

environment. More than a degree, the programme emerged as a powerful driver of personal development, professional growth, and meaningful exchanges among leaders from across the Gulf region and beyond.

"I began my career as a specialised dental surgeon and continue to practice today. However, as I gradually moved into operational and managerial roles, I felt the need to develop the skills required to lead at a higher level. That is what led me to choose the Executive MBA," said Nour ElHouda Zorgui, part of Executive MBA Riyadh cohort. Trained as a dental surgeon, she now serves as director of Operational Ex-



Tarek Atiyah

cellence at Alcare, one of Saudi Arabia's leading private healthcare groups, where she oversees the operational performance of a network of hospitals and medical facilities.

For her, HEC Paris had long been a professional aspiration. Originally from Tunisia, she viewed the institution as a benchmark for academic excellence and an opportunity to strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset and agility that are essential in today's business environment.

Throughout the evening, one theme emerged repeatedly: transformation. Although the graduates came from different countries, industries, and professional backgrounds, many described their time at HEC Paris as a genuine turning point in their careers, equipping them not only with advanced leadership capabilities but also with the capacity to create meaningful impact within their organisations and contribute to the development

and progress of their respective countries. This spirit of transformation was also reflected in Tarek Atiyah's testimony.

"It was not simply about acquiring knowledge; it was about refining the way I think, decide, and lead. Through strategy, negotiation, and leadership, this experience enabled me to move beyond theory and develop genuine conviction, make clearer decisions, create greater value, and lead with confidence and transparency."

United by shared experiences and strengthened by lasting connections, HEC Paris Doha Class of 2026 graduates now join HEC Paris's influential global alumni network.

It brings together more than 83,000 members across 152 countries, opening opportunities for collaboration, career development, and international exchange. They leave Paris as HEC Paris Alumni, ready to shape the future across the Gulf region and far beyond.