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Qatar, Saudi civil defence panel meets in Riyadh

A joint committee set up to activate the civil defence co-operation agreement between Qatar and Saudi Arabia held its first meeting in Riyadh, adopting recommendations to strengthen readiness, operational efficiency and emergency response. They discussed the items on the agenda and agreed steps to widen the exchange of expertise and develop emergency response mechanisms, as part of wider efforts to deepen co-operation and co-ordination in civil defence. The Qatari delegation was headed by Director General of Civil Defence Maj Gen Hamad Othman al-Duhaimi, and the Saudi delegation by Director General of Civil Defence Maj Gen Hamoud bin Sulaiman al-Faraj. **(QNA)**

Qatar Airways restores four Saudi routes

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Qatar Airways is expanding its Saudi network this winter with the resumption of flights to Qassim, Taif, Yanbu and Tabuk. Services to Qassim will restart on October 25, followed by Taif on October 31, Yanbu on January 2, 2027, and Tabuk on January 3. Each destination will be served by two weekly flights, giving passengers greater access to the airline's global network of more than 160 destinations. The expansion will take Qatar Airways' Saudi operations to more than 155 flights a week during the winter season – an increase of over 10% compared with its summer schedule. The airline said the additional services reflected its long-term commitment to the Saudi market and its efforts to strengthen regional connectivity. It carried more than 2.3mn passengers between Saudi Arabia and its global network over the past 12 months. Qatar Airways has also increased frequencies on major Saudi routes. Its Riyadh service rose from 35 to 49 weekly flights in June 2026, providing passengers with greater flexibility and more connections through Hamad International Airport.

Qatar backs maritime freedom as PM meets Jordanian deputy PM



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr Ayman Safadi, who is currently visiting the country. They reviewed co-operation between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen it, along with the latest regional developments, particularly diplomatic efforts and joint co-ordination to reduce escalation and enhance security and stability in the region. The PM affirmed Qatar's support for all diplomatic efforts and endeavours aimed at a solution that guarantees freedom of maritime navigation and paves the way for a comprehensive agreement that achieves sustainable peace in the region. **(QNA)**

Amir meets ExxonMobil chairman



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday at Lusail Palace with the Chairman and CEO of US-based ExxonMobil, Darren Woods, who called on His Highness during his visit to Qatar. They discussed the existing co-operation between Qatar and ExxonMobil as well as ways to enhance and further develop them. **(QNA)**

Qatar warns against Israeli bid to impose new regional ‘reality’

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar has stepped up diplomatic efforts with regional and international partners to halt what it describes as Israeli violations and prevent a “new reality” in the Middle East driven by regional dominance rather than legitimate security concerns, HE Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari, adviser to the prime minister and official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said yesterday.

During MoFA's weekly media briefing, Dr al-Ansari said Qatar has been maintaining intensive contacts with its partners to stop Israeli actions and ensure accountability for violations committed by the Israeli occupation.

He also noted a clear attempt to reshape the regional landscape, urging countries worldwide, international partners and peace-oriented states to take concrete measures to hold Israel accountable.



PICTURE: Shaji Kayamkulam

“Many of the measures being taken by the Israeli occupation cannot be justified in the context of the war in the Gaza Strip or the military escalation witnessed across the region in recent months,” Dr al-Ansari said.

He referred to developments in Syria, the West Bank and Jerusalem, saying the situation reflected efforts to impose a new regional reality, warning that Israel could seek to bring about “strate-

gic and dangerous changes” in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria.

Dr al-Ansari stressed that Qatar has been working through the Arab-Islamic group and its broader regional and international relationships to end Israeli violations. He reaffirmed that Qatar's position remained “firm and clear”, emphasising that Doha rejects impunity over violations committed against the Palestinian people.

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US launches new strikes; 4 dead at Iran wedding

AFP, Reuters
Tehran

US air strikes on Iranian targets killed four people, including a child, and wounded more than 50 at a wedding in the south yesterday, officials said, in attacks that threatened to reignite the six-month-old conflict.

The Iranian Red Crescent said shrapnel from a US missile hit a home in Kuhestak, in Sirik county of Hormozgan province, where a wedding was being held, killing four people, including a young child. Earlier, deputy governor Ahmad Nafisi had put the death toll at two. A video shared by an Iranian government account showed extensive debris and people screaming.

Sirik county lies along the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has effectively closed to shipping, driving global energy prices higher.

US Central Command said US forces had begun striking Revolutionary Guards targets “following recent attempted attacks by the IRGC against commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and against American service members deployed to the region”. Iranian media reported explosions in multiple cities along and east of Hormuz, on Qeshm Island and in Bandar Abbas, Jask and Chabahar, as well as an attack on a civilian

airport in Jiroft in the far south.

The strikes followed a weekend exchange of fire – the first since July – and came after two tankers were hit on Monday. Brent crude futures, already up 2%, jumped almost 2% more on the reports.

US President Donald Trump vowed to hit Iran “hard”, as Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent warned of new sanctions, and said on social media that if Iran retaliated “they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level”. The Fars news agency quoted an IRGC spokesperson as saying the US “will regret its new attacks”. Tehran remained defiant. “If the enemy wants us not to export oil from the Gulf, no-one will be able to export oil,” parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was quoted as saying. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Washington was “addicted to making excessive demands and has mistaken negotiations for dictating terms”. President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran would reciprocate immediately if Washington honoured commitments under a June memorandum of understanding intended to halt the conflict, after a 60-day negotiation period passed without agreement. Neither the threat of strikes nor the promise of new sanctions appeared to have shifted Tehran's stance, which has been under heavy economic sanctions for half a century.

Doha forum charts course for Arab AI, digital policy

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatar yesterday hosted the opening of a two-day High-Level Digital and Artificial Intelligence Policy Leaders Forum for the Arab States region, bringing together ministers, regulators, technology executives and academics to Doha Institute for Graduate Studies to chart how the region turns digital ambition into workable policy.

HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai took part alongside senior officials and representatives from government, the private sector and

academia, underlining Qatar's role in hosting a debate that organisers framed as central to the region's economic future.

Opening the forum, Doha Institute President Dr Abdulwahab el-Affandi said he hoped the gathering would help bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, calling for governance frameworks that balance regulation with innovation and for deeper cooperation and co-ordination across the region.

Piplove Choudhary, Technical Representative and head of the UN Development Programme office in Qatar, said digital transformation delivers the greatest impact when connectivity, public digital infrastructure and emerging technologies are anchored in an inclusive policy environment. **To Page 6**



Sheikh Khalifa meets French National Gendarmerie chief



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met during his visit to France yesterday with the director-general of the National Gendarmerie of the French Republic, General Hubert Bonneau. The meeting discussed deepening and expanding security co-operation between the two friendly nations, particularly in the areas of sharing expertise, security training, and co-ordination to foster the enduring partnership between Lekhwiya and the French National Gendarmerie, which has spanned more than 20 years. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates King Haakon

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of congratulations to Norway's King Haakon VIII following his swearing-in as monarch. HH the Amir wished King Haakon VIII success in carrying out his duties and expressed hope that relations between Qatar and Norway would continue to develop and prosper. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to King Haakon. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Pellegrini

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to the Slovak Republic (Slovakia)'s President Peter Pellegrini on the anniversary of his country's Constitution Day. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of congratulations to Pellegrini. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico on the occasion. - **QNA**

Amir congratulates Mirziyoyev

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Uzbekistan's President Dr Shavkat Mirziyoyev 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 Mirziyoyev. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations to Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov on the occasion. - **QNA**

Amir condoles with Macron

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of condolences yesterday to France's President Emmanuel Macron on the death of former prime minister Edouard Balladur. HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani sent a similar cable of condolences to Macron. Meanwhile, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent a cable of condolences to France's Premier Sebastien Lecornu on Balladur's passing. - **QNA**

Al-Marri holds meeting with Pakistani minister

HE the Minister of Labour Dr Ali bin Samikh Al Marri met yesterday with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral co-operation, relations between Qatar and Pakistan in the labour field, and ways to support and develop them. - **QNA**



Health minister meets UAE envoy

HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud met yesterday with the United Arab Emirates's ambassador to Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to further strengthen co-operation in the health sector. - **QNA**



WISH Summit on November 29-30 with focus on increased lifespans

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), a Qatar Foundation global health initiative, has announced that its eighth summit will take place on November 29-30 at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) in Doha, under the theme *The New Health Span*.

The summit will place Qatar at the centre of a global conversation on one of the defining health questions of our time: how to ensure that longer lives are also healthier, more dignified and more equitably supported.

WISH 2026 will bring together leaders from healthcare, government, academia, research, technology, innovation, the private sector and civil society to examine how health is understood, delivered and governed in an era of rapid demographic and technological change.

Across many parts of the world, people are living longer than pre-



vious generations, reflecting major achievements in medicine, public health, and science and technology.

Yet, longer lives do not automatically mean better health.

For some people, extra years are active and well supported; for others, they are shaped by chronic illness, isolation, unaffordable care, or systems that were never designed for ageing populations.

"The question at the heart of WISH 2026 is simple, but deeply consequential: how do we help

people live not only longer lives, but better ones?" said WISH chief executive Dr Slim Slama.

"No single country, sector or discipline can answer this question alone," he said. "It requires the experience of health systems at different stages of development, the insight of researchers and practitioners, the perspectives of policymakers and the voices of communities themselves."

"WISH brings these diverse global perspectives together in

Doha so that evidence, experience and ideas can be examined with the seriousness these challenges demand," Dr Slama added.

The summit programme will be organised around five pillars: The Longevity Dividend, Financing the Cure, AI and Human-Centred Health, Future of Fertility, and Health Diplomacy 2.0.

Sessions will explore how societies can support healthier ageing and create conditions for people to remain active and connected for longer.

They will examine the financing models needed to make breakthrough therapies accessible and sustainable.

Discussions on artificial intelligence (AI) and human-centred health will explore how AI can strengthen health systems while safeguarding trust, safety, and accountability.

The Future of Fertility pillar will address emerging scientific ad-

vances, alongside complex ethical and regulatory questions.

Health Diplomacy 2.0 will consider how countries work together on health amid conflict, climate pressures, migration, disease outbreaks, and supply chain disruptions.

Together, these discussions will ask what needs to change in systems, policies, technologies, financing models, and communities so that longer life can also mean better life.

This wider view is central to WISH, which creates space for health to be considered not only as a clinical issue but as something shaped by decisions, systems and relationships across society.

It also ensures that perspectives from different health-system realities - including countries where innovation is often needed most but reaches people last - are part of the same global conversation.

Qatar takes part in GCC meeting on agriculture and food security

Qatar took part in the 34th meeting of GCC under-secretaries responsible for agriculture and food security, convened virtually yesterday, bringing together representatives of the member states.

The delegation was headed by HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Municipality Ali bin Mohammed al-Ali.

Addressing the meeting, he underscored Qatar's commitment to actively engage in the path of joint Gulf action and strengthen co-operation and co-ordination in the areas of agriculture and food security to help sustain food supplies and elevate the GCC states' readiness to address challenges, as well as regional and global transformations.

HE al-Ali stressed the importance of continuing the implementation of the Gulf Food Security Strategy, as it puts forward shared programmes, projects, and initiatives, affirming that Qatar is keen to execute everything that falls within its responsibility.

He hailed the efforts made to consider establishing Gulf strategic stockpiles for food, medicines, and other essen-



tial supplies, emphasising the importance of this effort in developing an integrated Gulf strategic stockpiling system, strengthening the resilience of food systems, and ensuring the continuity of essential supplies during crises and emergencies.

HE al-Ali reiterated his thanks and gratitude to the GCC General Secretariat and Bahrain, the current chair, as well as all committees, working groups, and relevant authorities.

The meeting focused on an array of matters, chiefly the food security strategy, using artificial intelligence in managing farms and increasing productivity, as well as standardising procedures for medicines, vaccines, and veterinary products, co-operating in the areas of aquatic resources and genetic resources, establishing Gulf strategic stockpiles for food, medicines, and other essential supplies, and following up on the decisions of the Agricultural Co-operation and Food Security Committee. - **QNA**

UDST signs agreement with Somalia's education ministry

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Somalia's ministry of education, culture and higher education to establish a framework for co-operation in higher education, academic programme development, faculty professional development, and academic quality assurance.

The signing ceremony was attended by UDST President Dr Salem bin Nasser al-Naemi and Somalia's Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir.

The MoU, signed by UDST Vice-President (Academics) Dr Rachid Benlamri and the director-general for higher education at the Somali ministry, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamud, focuses on

developing joint academic diploma-level programmes in five fields: Information Technology, Information Systems, Construction Engineering, Electric Power and Renewable Energy Engineering Technology, and Healthcare Management.

"This partnership reflects the UDST's commitment to advancing applied education through international collaboration and knowledge exchange," said Dr Benlamri.

"We look forward to sharing our academic expertise in programme development, faculty professional development, and quality assurance, while working with the ministry to create meaningful opportunities that contribute to the development of higher education in the Federal Republic of Somalia," he added.



The partnership includes co-operation on a joint, co-branded institute in Somalia, further strengthening the two parties' commitment to advancing academic collaboration and support-

ing the development of higher education.

"This partnership with the UDST is an important step in strengthening higher education in the Federal Republic of Somalia,"

said Mohamud. "We look forward to benefiting from the UDST's expertise in academic development and capacity building to create new opportunities for Somali students and institutions." - **QNA**

QU to host charity festival for students in need

Qatar University (QU) will host the Joud Charity Festival on September 6-10 on campus, coinciding with the International Day of Charity, to promote a culture of giving and raise financial support for the Joud Student Support Fund.

The QU said in a statement that the fund receives donations and grants from institutions and individuals to assist eligible students, including contributions toward tuition and housing fees and laptop loans for those facing financial difficulties.

Licensed by the Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities in November 2023, the fund supports the university's efforts to strengthen student assistance and ensure sustainable funding for educational initiatives.

The director of the QU's Student Services Department, Khulood al-Otaibi, said: "The Joud Festival represents a true embodiment of Qatar University's mission to provide inclusive education and sustainable support for its students."

"It contributes to strengthening community solidarity and affirms that financial circumstances should not be an obstacle to students' academic aspirations and academic excellence," she said.

"The launch of the Joud Festival comes as part of the university's support for student initiatives and its efforts to promote community sustainability," al-Otaibi said.

"Several project owners were selected according to specific criteria and mechanisms, providing them with an opportunity to showcase and introduce their projects and products to the university community," the official stated.

The festival will feature interactive activities offering the university community and visitors various ways to support the fund. - **QNA**

Myanmar foreign minister meets Qatari diplomat

Myanmar's Minister for Foreign Affairs Maung Swe met yesterday with the acting charge d'affaires at Qatar's embassy, Abdulaziz bin Yousuf al-Ali. During the meeting, they discussed co-operation and relations between the two countries. - **QNA**

MoFA secretary-general bids farewell to Turkish envoy

HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Türkiye's ambassador to Qatar Dr Mustafa Goksu, on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE Dr al-Hammadi extended thanks to Dr Goksu for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, and wished him success in his new duties. - QNA



MoFA secretary-general bids farewell to Cypriot ambassador



HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi met yesterday with Cyprus's ambassador to Qatar Andreas Nikolaides on the occasion of the end of his tenure. HE Dr al-Hammadi extended thanks to Nikolaides for his efforts in supporting and strengthening bilateral relations, and wished him success in his new duties. - QNA

Snoonu launches Tamkeen with QR2mn to help power growth of local business

Snoonu has launched the Tamkeen: Growth Fund for Local Merchant Partners, a QR2mn initiative providing upfront growth capital to local brand partners across the platform.

Named "Tamkeen - Growth Fund for Local Merchant Partners", the initiative reflects Snoonu's commitment to standing behind its partners and investing in the growth of Qatar's local business ecosystem.

The programme offers eligible merchants growth incentives ranging from QR5,000 to QR35,000 based on their sales performance, with no interest, no fees, and no restrictions on how the capital is used.

The amount is netted back gradually over six months through standard payout cycles, with no separate payment required from the merchant.

Thousands of local brands across Qatar are eligible to apply, spanning restaurants, cafés, retail outlets, and specialty stores operating on the Snoonu platform.

"Through the Merchant Growth Fund, we are putting real capital behind local businesses and giving them the freedom to invest where it matters most; whether that means expanding, improving their operations or creating new opportunities," said Snoonu founder and chief executive Hamad al-Hajri.

The initiative is built around a simple principle: when local businesses grow, the entire ecosystem benefits.

The additional capital can support a wide range of business needs, from expanding operations and upgrading equipment to increasing inventory, strengthening teams or investing in new growth opportunities.

Eligibility and funding allocations are assessed through a transparent scoring model based on three areas: partnership history with Snoonu, operational performance and demonstrated business growth.

This approach is intended to direct support towards merchants who have consistently invested in the quality and development of their businesses.

Applications are open now through September 12 via the Snoonu Merchant Portal.

'HUBB - LOVE' exhibition opens in Katara

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The "Love" exhibition by artist Shahida Ahmed, an artistic experience exploring love as a universal language through diverse visual expressions and perspectives, opened yesterday at Katara Cultural Village.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Katara Cultural Village deputy general manager Saif Saad al-Dosari, British ambassador Neerav Patel, Pakistan's ambassador Muhammad Aamer; and a group of artists.

Ahmed is an award-winning British contemporary artist, writer, podcast artist and educator whose multidisciplinary practice explores language, identity, culture and human connection.

For "Hubb" (Arabic for love), she brings her strands together in an exhibition centred on love, peace and unity, creating a contemporary meeting point between British and Arab cultural perspectives.

In an interview with *Gulf Times*, the artist stated: "As a British artist, it was very important for me to represent art as a universal dialogue."

"What I am trying to do is to captivate culture through Arabic calligraphy," Ahmed continued. "I have used different forms and styles of art to give the message that language is very important in different cultures and religions, and in different forms, and it brings people together."



Dignitaries at the exhibition. PICTURES: Thajudheen



Below: A painting depicting Salam, Arabic for 'peace'.



A painting depicting 'Hubb', Arabic for 'love'.

"I picked up the three Arabic words throughout the exhibition, 'love, peace, and unity,'" she said. "The exhibition starts with love, as it is very strong, and ends on peace."

"The power of art is what brings communities together; for me, that is my universal dialogue, and I use it in my work," the artist said.

Ahmed's exhibition is the third

at Katara; she was given the platform to present her current exhibition, which is different from the others, and she has also exhibited internationally.

This is the first time she has used Arabic calligraphy throughout the entire exhibition, in all her hand-painted works and installations, as well as a ceramic sculpture.

Working across painting, sculpture,

installation and mixed media, Ahmed draws particular inspiration from Arabic calligraphy and the visual heritage of the Arab world.

She transforms words and letterforms through colour, texture, pattern, light and sculptural form, bringing together cultural influences through a contemporary British perspective.

Her artworks are held in a range of collections, reflecting the reach and enduring relevance of a practice developed across different cultural and creative contexts.

Alongside her studio practice, Ahmed's work as a writer, podcast artist and educator extends her engagement beyond the gallery, creating opportunities for dialogue, learning and cultural exchange.

At the heart of her practice is a belief in art as a shared language, one capable of connecting people across geography, culture and experience.

Her multidisciplinary background and sustained engagement with Arab visual culture position her practice particularly strongly within international platforms committed to cultural dialogue.



Hunters urged to protect wildlife as migratory bird hunting season opens

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar's migratory bird hunting season, which opened yesterday and continues until February 15, 2027, gives hunting enthusiasts and falconers an opportunity to practise a traditional pastime while adhering to regulations aimed at protecting wildlife and the environment.

According to Arabic daily *Al-Raya*, the season, introduced under a decision by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), has been welcomed by a number of Qatari hunters and falconers, who said it provides an opportunity to preserve a heritage passed down through generations while focusing on migratory species rather than resident birds.

Hunters stressed the importance of responsible practices during the season, calling on fellow enthusiasts to restrict their hunting to the 10 species authorised by the ministry, avoid excessive hunting, and comply with designated hunting areas and other regulations.

They also called for stronger field monitoring throughout the season to prevent overhunting and ensure resident or protected birds are not mistakenly targeted.

Particular caution, they said, is needed near populated areas and in locations where hunting is prohibited, both to protect wildlife and prevent accidents.

The hunters also highlighted the cultural value of introducing children to the activity, saying that taking younger generations on hunting trips help preserve the tradition.

Abdulhadi al-Breidi said the ministry's decision to allow migratory bird hunting from September through mid-February had been long awaited by hunters and falconers.

He noted that hunting the houbara bustard is prohibited during its breeding period as part of efforts to support its reproduction, while the ministry requires that houbara be hunted only with falcons.

Al-Breidi said that falconers spend considerable time training their birds ahead of the season and supported the restriction, given the houbara's importance and the need to prevent excessive hunting.

For him, the appeal of hunting extends beyond catching birds. Spending time in the desert, camping, preparing a fire and coffee, and waking before dawn are all

integral parts of the tradition.

Al-Breidi said many enthusiasts previously travelled to countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan to practise falconry, making the opening of a domestic hunting season particularly welcome.

He added that falcon-training methods vary among hunters: his own approach involves releasing his falcon from a vehicle during desert trips.

The bird can fly 1-2km in pursuit of houbara or curlew, while a GPS device is used to track its location and determine whether it has successfully caught its prey.

Khaled al-Abbasi expressed hope that the season would benefit both hunters and wildlife, noting that large numbers of migratory birds arrive in Gulf countries during their annual migration but return in smaller numbers due to hunting.

"We warn everyone about the effects of overhunting on the environment, and we call on hunters to adhere to the 10 species permitted by the ministry and not to expand their hunting activities, but to be content with whatever God has

provided for them, whether one bird or two," he said.

Al-Abbasi stressed that some people may be unable to distinguish between bird species or determine whether a particular bird is rare, protected or legally permitted for hunting, making strict adherence to the authorised species particularly important.

He also said that falconry could help limit excessive hunting because a falcon typically catches one bird at a time and feeds once a day.

For al-Abbasi, the experience itself - preparing equipment, lighting a fire, making coffee, spending the night in the desert and setting out at dawn - is a major part of the appeal, regardless of whether the hunter succeeds in catching a bird.

Abdullah al-Quraisi described the September-to-February hunting period as a positive decision by the MoECC, saying that it gives enthusiasts an opportunity to practise their traditional hobby while avoiding direct targeting of resident wildlife.

"Since the targeted birds are migratory rather than resident,

their hunting will not affect the ecosystem in the country, because they are visitors to the Qatari environment and are not established in it, and their numbers are large," he said.

Abdulrahman al-Mutawa also welcomed the decision, saying that it supports a traditional pastime while focusing on birds that visit the region only during particular seasons.

He explained that many migratory birds move to the region as temperatures fall sharply in European countries, remain for a period and then return to their original habitats.

Al-Mutawa said migratory bird hunting was traditionally regarded as a source of food and livelihood, with different people historically becoming known for particular forms of hunting.

As the season gets underway, the hunters said preserving the tradition should go hand in hand with protecting the wildlife that makes the experience possible, urging enthusiasts to follow regulations and practise restraint throughout the season.



By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The draft Law Regulating Real-Estate Tokenisation and Trading of Real-Estate Tokens, along with its draft Executive Regulations, has been published on the “Sharek” public consultation platform, giving the public 10 days to submit their views, comments and proposals.

The drafts were published in co-ordination with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Municipality, Qatar Central Bank, the Qatar Financial Markets Authority and the General Real Estate Regulatory Authority.

The 2026 draft law establishes a legal framework for converting ownership interests in real estate into tradable digital units, potentially opening the property market to fractional investment while placing tokenisation and trading under regulatory supervision.

The proposed framework seeks to integrate digital-asset technology with Qa-

Draft law on real-estate tokenisation open for consultation through Sharek

tar’s established real-estate and financial regulatory systems.

Rather than creating an unregulated cryptocurrency market, it would subject tokenisation, trading, custody, record-keeping and related activities to licensing, supervision and disclosure requirements.

At the centre of the proposed law is real-estate tokenisation, under which ownership interests in a property can be divided into equal-value digital tokens.

A token may represent a direct, undivided share in the underlying property or an interest in the capital of a special-purpose real-estate company established to own it.

The model could allow investors to participate in real estate assets without purchasing an entire property, lowering the financial threshold for investment and providing a more flexible mechanism

for transferring ownership interests.

The draft makes clear that tokenisation would be a regulated activity.

No person would be permitted to conduct real-estate tokenisation, operate a tokenisation or trading platform, provide custody services, manage a token register, trade real-estate tokens or promote such activities in Qatar without the appropriate licence.

The proposed system would also maintain a direct legal link between digital tokens and the underlying property.

An electronic token register, using approved technologies including distributed-ledger technology, would record token ownership and transactions and remain synchronised with the official real-estate registry.

However, tokenisation would not replace the official property registry.

The latter would continue to prevail

on matters including the property’s legal description, boundaries, area, real rights and encumbrances.

At the same time, the token register would determine token ownership and transfers.

This is intended to prevent the creation of a separate, parallel property-registration system.

The proposed law would preserve existing restrictions on foreign ownership.

Tokenisation would not allow foreigners to acquire property in areas where foreign ownership or usufruct rights are restricted.

Under the draft, non-Qataris could acquire real-estate tokens only in areas where the underlying property is located and where foreign ownership or usufruct is legally permitted.

Tokenisation would therefore not change the legal status of the underlying

asset or provide a means of bypassing existing ownership restrictions.

The proposed rules would limit tokenisation to designated areas where non-Qataris are already permitted to own or use real estate, as well as any additional areas that the Council of Ministers may approve.

Ordinary residential neighbourhoods and citizens’ homes outside these designated areas would not be covered.

Properties would also have to meet strict eligibility requirements before being tokenised.

They must have a clear and properly registered legal title, be free of litigation, seizures and restraining orders, and have no debts or liens unless the required written and notarised consent has been obtained from creditors.

The property would also have to be clearly demarcated, comply with zoning requirements and be fully insured through a licensed insurer.

State-owned properties, subsidised citizen housing units, waqf properties, and properties subject to expropriation or urban redevelopment would be excluded.

Students urged to keep hydrated and avoid direct sunlight

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

As the new academic year has begun, various ministries and other experts have urged students and parents to take necessary precautions to avoid dehydration and other heat-related issues while students are at school.

With temperatures and humidity remaining high, students need to stay hydrated and avoid direct sun exposure during the daytime.

In a message, the Ministry of Labour stressed that protecting children from the heat is a “shared responsibility”.

The ministry advised families and children to start the day well hydrated and to avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight.

“Make sure that your day starts with enough water and educate the children to avoid standing under direct sunlight,” the ministry urged parents and students in a social media post.

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has echoed similar recommendations, noting the need to start the new academic year on a healthy note.

The ministry, in a video message, advised the students to learn the importance of enough fluid intake and how staying hydrated supports good health.

“Stay hydrated and make sure to take six to eight cups of water every day,” the MoPH highlighted in the message. “Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. Moreover, drink more water during hot weather and when being physically active.”

Meanwhile, a paediatric specialist said that children



Dr Vinod Kuriakose

do not adjust to heat the way adults do.

“They warm up much quicker and often forget to drink until they are already dehydrated,” said Dr Vinod Kuriakose, a specialist in paediatrics at Aster Qatar. “Don’t wait for them to ask for water. Send them to school with a good insulated flask and remind them to keep sipping all day, especially before and after break times.”

He noted that packing hydrating snacks like watermelon slices or cucumber sticks in their lunchbox really helps, as does sticking to light, breathable cotton uniforms and applying sunscreen consistently before they walk out the door.

“During the hottest parts of the day, children should definitely stick to the shade or stay in air-conditioned indoor areas rather than running around under the direct midday sun,” Dr Kuriakose advised.

“Above all, keep an eye out for warning signs like sudden headaches, sluggishness, dizziness, nausea, or dark urine,” he added. “If any of those pop up, get them out of the heat into a comfortable room, hydrate well and seek medical help.”

Meanwhile, an official at a private school said that there will be no outdoor activities for students until the weather improves and cools.

“We don’t have any major outdoor physical activities for students for the next few weeks,” he stated.

“All physical activities will be held in our indoor facilities, and children have been advised to keep away from direct sunlight during the daytime,” he added. “Even our transport system is arranged in such a way that they don’t need to face direct sunlight for a long time while boarding the buses.”

Parents embrace ‘Wassel Eyalak’ campaign on first days of school

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The launch of the new academic year has seen strong engagement from parents with the “Wassel Eyalak” (“Take Your Children to School”) campaign, with many accompanying their children to school during the first days of classes.

The scenes reflected families’ desire to share the important milestone of returning to the classroom and to provide children with emotional and moral support as they begin a new school year.

From the early hours of the first school day, numerous parents were seen arriving at schools with their children, giving practical expression to the campaign’s central message: strengthening family bonds and turning the journey to school into an opportunity for meaningful communication and conversation between parents and children, away from the pressures and distractions of everyday life.

The “Wassel Eyalak” campaign coincides with the start of the academic year as part of back-to-school activities.

It highlights the importance of family involvement in a student’s life and seeks to broaden the understanding of parental involvement beyond monitoring academic performance and grades.

The campaign encourages parents to maintain direct communication with their children, offer encouragement, listen to their concerns, and take an active interest in the details of their school day.

According to experts, the sight of parents accompanying their children on the first day conveys a broader message: even a short journey to school can become a valuable daily opportunity for connection and conversation.

Supporting children does not necessarily require extraordinary



gestures; rather, it can be built through consistent parental presence, attentive listening, encouragement and continued engagement.

Fahad al-Derham, manager of Mohamed bin Abdulaziz Al Mana Secondary School, stressed the educational and social importance of the initiative, describing it as a meaningful way to strengthen communication between parents and their children.

He noted that when a father or mother takes a child to school, an otherwise ordinary journey can become an important opportunity for dialogue, closer interaction, and attentive listening.

Al-Derham said that the time parents spend with their children on the way to school can be used to talk about the student’s day, offer encouragement and motivation, listen to concerns and understand what may be occupying the child’s thoughts.

Such interaction, he said, can strengthen the relationship between parents and children while providing students with the family support they need to begin their school day in a positive frame of mind.

He pointed out that seemingly simple moments can have a mean-

ingful positive impact on students, particularly at the beginning of the academic year, when children need encouragement and motivation to restore their study routines and readjust to the school environment following the holiday period.

However, al-Derham stressed that the idea should not be limited to the first day or opening weeks of school.

Communication and dialogue between parents and children should instead become an ongoing practice throughout the academic year, he added, with families serving as essential partners in supporting students and following their educational progress.

He also emphasised the importance of ensuring that students feel their families are genuinely interested in what happens to them at school and that they have a safe space for dialogue and discussion.

Al-Derham said that such an environment can strengthen students’ sense of responsibility, encourage commitment and regular attendance, and motivate them to make the most of their school day.

Sustained co-operation and communication between families and schools, he added, are also key to supporting the educational process.

QIB advances to ‘A’ in MSCI ESG Rating, reinforcing its sustainability leadership

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has achieved an upgrade in its MSCI ESG Rating, from “BBB” to “A”, as of August, marking the fourth consecutive year of improvement in the bank’s ESG rating levels.

With this latest assessment, QIB is one of the highest-rated organisations in Qatar, reflecting the bank’s sustained commitment to advancing its environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices.

QIB’s rating has steadily advanced to “A” over the past years, driven by the bank’s strategic priority to adopt global best practices in corporate sustainability.

This consistent progress reflects QIB’s strategic investment across multiple fronts – strengthening governance structures at board and management level, embedding ESG considerations into risk management and product development, adopting new data and monitoring capabilities, and enhancing the depth, quality and transparency of its sustainability disclosures.

QIB has driven these advancements over the past years through close collaboration across all departments, embedding sustainability considerations into the bank’s strategy, governance, risk management, product development and day-to-day operations.

The latest assessment recorded considerable improvement in QIB’s Industry Adjusted Score for the banking sector, demonstrating tangible developments in the way ESG considerations are integrated and managed across the bank, among peers.

The Environmental Pillar



showed the most significant improvement, supported by stronger ESG integration into sustainability-related financial product development, enhanced ESG due diligence triggers and risk escalation processes, and closer involvement of Credit Risk in the bank’s ESG Risk Management.

QIB also recorded considerable improvement in the Social Pillar, driven by progress across aspects of Human Capital Development, Privacy & Data Security, Consumer Financial Protection and Access to Finance.

“We are pleased to achieve an ‘A’ Rating in MSCI’s assessment, reflecting our continued efforts to further embed responsible practices across the bank,” said QIB Group chief executive Bassel Gamal. “This milestone encourages us to build on our progress, further advance our ESG practices and continue creating long-term value for our employees, customers, shareholders and the local community.”

MSCI ESG Ratings measure a company’s resilience to long-

term, industry-specific sustainability risks using a rules-based methodology.

MSCI (Morgan Stanley Capital International) Sustainability and Climate measures, benchmarks and monitors sustainability and climate performance versus peers across more than 10,000 corporate issuers, collecting thousands of data points for each company.

This upgrade strengthens QIB’s credibility with a growing base of international and regional ESG-focused investors, many of whom incorporate MSCI ESG Ratings directly into their screening, portfolio construction and engagement processes.

The result reinforces QIB’s alignment with Qatar Central Bank’s Sustainability Reporting Framework and the sustainability priorities of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Ultimately, the rating signals to shareholders, regulators and customers that QIB manages ESG considerations not only as a compliance obligation, but as a core driver of long-term resilience and value creation.

‘Arabica’ aims to bridge gap in reliable Arabic knowledge amid AI boom

A major Arab encyclopaedia project is seeking to bridge a longstanding gap in reliable Arabic reference material, positioning itself as a scholarly knowledge resource amid information fragmentation and rapidly expanding reliance on artificial intelligence.

Dr Azmi Bishara, general director of the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, said the comprehensive “Arabica” project can contribute to the advancement of Arab societies, express their cultures and develop intellectual thought.

He made the remarks during a special episode of the cultural programme *Difaf* on Alaraby 2, which explored the project ahead of the launch of its main online portal in January 2027.

Discussing its methodology, significance and challenges, Dr Bishara said the absence of a comprehensive Arab encyclopaedia had contributed to the slow development of encyclopaedic projects in the region, while information fragmentation has made credible references increasingly important.

He said “Arabica” seeks to address the shortage of reliable references while contributing to the democratisation of knowledge and making science accessible to the public in Arabic and within their linguistic and cultural context.

Dr Bishara said that building the encyclopaedia’s infrastructure took around three years, with the project expected to cover approximately 60,000 entries on general topics, particularly the issues and histories of Arab countries.



Dr Azmi Bishara during the interview.

This focus, he said, would bring to light aspects absent from other encyclopaedias.

Dr Bishara also highlighted efforts to standardise Arabic terminology, drawing on expertise from other scholarly projects and the Doha Historical Dictionary of the Arabic Language.

The project is being developed amid rapidly expanding information and growing dependence on artificial intelligence (AI) tools, raising questions about the reliability of knowledge available to users and AI systems.

Dr Bishara said “Arabica’s” strength lies not simply in collecting information but in applying a rigorous scholarly methodology and maintaining a commitment to accuracy and truth.

“The project’s greatest value lies in its rigorous scholarly

methodology and its commitment to truth,” he said, adding that the encyclopaedia goes beyond compiling information to offer contributions that can make it a reference for researchers.

He also pointed to its potential role in improving the quality of Arabic knowledge available to AI models by providing reliable, academically grounded information.

Dr Bishara highlighted Qatar’s role in supporting Arab advancement projects, describing this support as a valuable opportunity to build knowledge and contribute to intellectual development.

The official “Arabica” website is scheduled to launch in January 2027 as the main portal for the initiative, supported by a growing network of researchers and aimed at building a comprehensive Arab knowledge reference in Arabic.

CYSEC Global returns with its biggest event of the year

The stage is set for CYSEC Qatar 2026, the 22nd global edition of CYSEC Global, Qatar's biggest cybersecurity summit taking place on September 8-9 at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel. CYSEC Qatar 2026 brings together cyber governance leaders, CISOs, CIOs, VPs, and IT/OT security heads to discuss and shape the future of Qatar's cybersecurity landscape. The two-day closed-door cybersecurity summit spotlights themes such as cloud security, incident response and recovery, threat intelligence sharing, and AI and machine learning in cyber defence. CYSEC Qatar 2026 is honoured to feature the Arab Association for Cyber Security, CREST, Women in Cyber Security Middle East as its supporting partners. CYSEC Global is back with its CYSEC CTF challenge hosted by Cyber Talents. It will partner with OT Security Professionals, a community dedicated to strengthening



PICTURE: scysecqatar.com

operational technology security. Fadaat Media, as the strategic regional media partner, will play a critical role in amplifying the message of CYSEC Qatar 2026. Organisers said it will also welcome Mannai Technologies Networking & ELV as the official host partner for CYSEC Qatar 2026. The flagship summit features eminent cybersecurity leaders from leading organisations like Qlnvest, Qatar Post, Qatar's

Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Interior, Qatar Financial Centre Authority, Qatar University, Qatar Red Crescent Society, Petrotec, Google Cloud, UNODC Regional Centre for Combatting Cybercrime, HSBC, Vodafone, CREST, Qatar Airways, Milaha, RKH Qitarat and so on. CYSEC Qatar 2026 is sponsored by leading global cybersecurity and technology companies such as TXOne Networks, Google Cloud Security, Delinea, Exabeam, Censys, and others, who are at the forefront of countering evolving cyber-attacks. The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) will be the official Workshop Partner for CYSEC Qatar 2026. NCSA will conduct a workshop on "Strengthening the Digital Ecosystem through National Cybersecurity Assurance," focusing on how National Cybersecurity Assurance Services support and enhance Qatar's digital ecosystem. The entire registration process will be streamlined by MICetribe, which is taking on the role of the official registration partner.

QNA director-general meets UAE ambassador



HE the Director-General of Qatar News Agency (QNA) Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi met yesterday with the ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the State of Qatar Saeed Abdullah al-Qamzi. During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance joint co-operation in the media field. (QNA)



QF, MoQ sign MoU

Mall of Qatar (MoQ) and Qatar Foundation (QF) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), initiated through QF's JOOD Privilege Programme, to strengthen collaboration in education, culture, creativity, and community initiatives, while expanding the reach of these programmes to diverse segments of society across Qatar.

The partnership reflects JOOD's ongoing efforts to expand strategic collaborations that create value for the QF community and enhance the benefits and opportunities available to QF students and employees.

The MoU establishes a framework for cooperation between both parties in the development and implementation of programmes and initiatives that support learning, knowledge exchange, and community engagement. Through this partnership, QF will leverage MoQ's facilities and venues to host activities and engage with wider audiences.

Areas of collaboration include organising exhibitions, panel discussions, workshops, student-led initiatives, research showcases, and a range of educational and cultural events. The partnership will also support the development and promotion of joint awareness campaigns through various media and communications channels.

Furthermore, the agreement enables QF to host selected events at the Oasis Stage and across MoQ's venues, with the mall providing the required technical and communications support for agreed initiatives and activities.

The partnership also encompasses the JOOD service, a digital platform that offers the QF community exclusive benefits and discounts from participating partners, further enhancing the

range of privileges available to students and employees.

In a press statement, Ali Jassim al-Haidose, director, Logistics Services & Auxiliaries at QF said: "This partnership represents one of the first community-focused initiatives launched through the JOOD Programme for the QF community. It reflects our vision for JOOD as a platform that goes beyond offering exclusive discounts and benefits, serving as a gateway to impactful initiatives and meaningful partnerships that cater to the interests of our community and enrich their overall experience."

He added: "Through JOOD, we look forward to developing more initiatives that strengthen engagement and interaction among members of the QF community while supporting learning, knowledge exchange, and community participation."

He continued: "We highly value MoQ's collaboration and positive response to this initiative, and we look forward to building more strategic partnerships in the future. We also invite organisations interested in working with us to explore new opportunities under the JOOD umbrella and transform innovative ideas into tangible initiatives that benefit the QF community."

Rony Mourani, CEO of Mall of Qatar, said: "Education is one of the core pillars of MoQ, and this MoU represents an important step in furthering our commitment to creating opportunities for learning, creativity, and meaningful community engagement."

The MoU also provides for ongoing coordination between the parties on key initiatives and events throughout the year, contributing to the development of joint programmes with lasting impact and supporting efforts to build a knowledge-based, creative, and actively engaged society.

Children navigate Qatar's maritime heritage at NMoQ

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

When was the last time you built a boat, made your own navigation tool, and then used both to chart a journey?

At the ExxonMobil STEAM Festival, now underway at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ), children and families can do exactly that. Through hands-on activities inspired by Qatar's maritime heritage, the festival connects Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) with the knowledge and skills once used by sailors across the Arabian Gulf.

One of the festival's key activities is the NMoQ Roots of Routes zone, where participants make traditional tools including a model dhow and a kamal, a simple celestial navigation device once used by sailors to determine their position at sea.

The journey begins with building a dhow. Participants can choose from three traditional types, each associated with different aspects of maritime life in Qatar and the Gulf.

The Al Jalbut was commonly used for pearling, coastal fishing and transportation between coastal settlements. The Sanbouk was similarly used for pearling and fishing and remains familiar today through traditional dhow cruises along Doha's Corniche. The Boom was designed for long-

ExxonMobil STEAM Festival, now underway at NMoQ, connects Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics with the knowledge and skills once used by sailors across the Arabian Gulf

distance trade and transporting heavy cargo, including timber.

After assembling their chosen dhow, participants move on to creating a kamal. Made from a small rectangular board attached to a cord, the kamal was used by sailors across the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean to estimate latitude by measuring the height of stars above the horizon. Participants learn how knots positioned along the cord correspond to different measurements, with facilitators guiding them through the process.

According to NMoQ, the activity introduces children to an early form of celestial navigation, showing how sailors could use observations of the night sky and relatively simple equipment to travel considerable distances across the sea.

Once their kamal is ready, participants put their new navigation skills to the test on a large floor map.

They select one of three missions – Yellow, Green or Blue – and begin their journey aboard their chosen dhow. Using the kamal, participants determine a latitude reading and follow a series of clues before identifying the correct destination on the map.

Their handmade dhow is then placed at the location they have calculated.

For families, the activity turns concepts such as measurement, geography, astronomy and engineering into something that can be experienced first-hand.

Rohit Gupta attended the festival with his family, including his daughter, Adhika, and joined her in making a dhow and kamal.

He told Gulf Times that the activity is a fun way for children to learn while making something themselves, adding that the family planned to return to try another navigation mission.

Apart from Roots of Routes, the festival features activities designed for different ages across several areas of the museum.

The STEAM Lab includes the DADU Light Atelier for younger children and the ExxonMobil Research Qatar x DADU – Mangroves Lab, which introduces marine biology through activities inspired by Qatar's coastal environment.

Programmes are also taking place at NMoQ's Digital and AI Centre and Library. These include Evolution of Navigation workshops, a Teen Tech Takeover focused on creating augmented-



Adhika Gupta at the ExxonMobil STEAM Festival.

reality filters, a Silk Road board game, and storytelling sessions that introduce younger visitors to navigation, traditional boats, and maritime journeys.

For older participants, Café Scientifique: Careers in STEAM connects young adults aged 16 and above to conversations about education and future career pathways in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Running until November 28, the ExxonMobil STEAM Festival gives families the chance to encounter scientific ideas through familiar stories from Qatar's heritage, from constructing a traditional dhow to learning how generations of sailors once looked to the stars to find their way home.

6th Seashore Phoenix Games Fitness Championship from Sept 10



held on September 13-14. The women's competitions will be exclusively for women, while the men's competitions will be open to all.

The championship will be held across several Aspire Zone facilities, including the Ladies Sports Hall, Aspire Park, and Aspire Dome, with a dedicated enter-

tainment area for visitors and spectators throughout the event. The area will feature a variety of shops, restaurants, and cafés, providing an integrated experience for attendees alongside the sporting competitions.

The men's competitions will feature several categories, including

Advanced Arab Men, Masters 40+, Men's Teams of Three, and Men's Community Teams of Three.

The women's competitions will include Advanced Arab Women, Women's Teams of Two, and Women's Beginner Teams of Two.

This year's edition is held under the official sponsorship of Aspire Zone Foundation, with Seashore Group serving as the Presenting Sponsor and Qatar Calendar as the Strategic Sponsor. Al Kass Sports Channels will serve as the Official Broadcaster, while the championship is organised by Erada Fitness.

The championship is also supported by Vodafone Qatar, Dukhan Bank, Commercial Street, Qatar Primary Materials Company, Korean Medical Center, Nabina Holding, and Qatar Charity as the Humanitarian Partner.

QC launches eye surgery convoy in Mauritania

As part of its ongoing health initiatives for underprivileged communities worldwide, Qatar Charity (QC) has launched a specialised medical convoy for eye surgery in Mauritania. Organised with the support of Qatari donors, the initiative is being implemented in cooperation with Mauritania's National Program for Blindness Control.

The medical convoy aims to provide specialised check-ups, consultations, cataract surgeries, as well as distribute prescription glasses and medicines. The campaign targets vulnerable residents in Moudjeria, El Ghaira, and Legrane.

In a press statement, Dr Souleymane Cheikh Hamdi, Acting Director of Programs and Projects at Qatar Charity's Mauritania Branch, said the convoy aims to provide 2,500 medical consultations. He added that the team is



scheduled to perform 250 cataract surgeries, distribute 250 pairs of prescription glasses, and provide 250 medical prescriptions to eligible patients.

For his part, Dr Souleymane

Ahmed Deida, co-ordinator of the National Programme for Blindness Control, expressed his gratitude to the benevolent people of Qatar and Qatar Charity for this crucial initiative, emphasising that the

targeted areas are in dire need of such medical interventions. He urged local citizens to actively visit the convoy and make the best use of its services. Dr Deida noted that ensuring early participation in the initial screenings and consultations is essential, as it paves the way for the subsequent treatment and surgical stages.

Dr Hamahoullah Sid'Elemine, Director of El Chourouk Clinic, which executes the convoy's operations, stated that a well-coordinated plan has been established with Qatar Charity to implement the campaign in two distinct phases. The first phase, which focused on consultations and screenings, was completed between August 22 and August 28. This will be followed by the second phase, dedicated to surgical interventions and medical follow-ups, scheduled from October 22-27.



Many beneficiaries expressed their deep satisfaction with the procedures during the first phase of the medical convoy. Edoumha El Cheikh Siden expressed her gratitude for the Qatari support and Qatar Charity's efforts to bring vital medical services directly to communities in the country's interior regions, noting that residents

previously had to travel to the capital to receive treatment.

Similarly, Mohamed Salem El Abass expressed his happiness about the convoy, stating that he was in urgent need of eye treatment, which has now officially begun thanks to this campaign. He thanked everyone who helped make the initiative possible.

Qatar warns against Israeli bid to impose new regional ‘reality’

From Page 1

Regarding the recent visit of HE the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani to Iran, Dr al-Ansari said the trip was part of a series of high-level visits to Tehran including officials from Oman and Pakistan, to support mediation to restore a negotiating track and prevent renewed escalation.

He added that consultations with the other mediation partners, particularly Oman and Pakistan, remained ongoing. Qatar has warned from the very start about the consequences of leaving the crisis unresolved, particularly regarding the Strait of Hormuz, where treating its closure as

permanent would risk triggering further escalation.

“Doha continues, in coordination with its mediation partners, its efforts to return to the negotiating track,” Dr al-Ansari said, calling on all sides to exercise restraint and give priority to political solutions.

He stressed that achieving a peaceful settlement was essential, noting that the repercussions of the escalation were no longer confined to the region’s countries. The crisis has affected countries worldwide and disrupted vital sectors, including pharmaceutical and energy. Qatar is working toward a settlement that would reopen the Strait, strengthen regional security and stability, and allow peoples to pursue development.

Despite the severity of the crisis, Dr al-Ansari expressed confidence in the ability of Gulf countries and their leadership to overcome the challenge. The Gulf has faced numerous crises over the past decades but has overcome them through the wisdom of its leaders, their international standing and the strength of their economies, he said.

He also rejected suggestions that the Gulf’s influence is declining or that the “Gulf exception” is being surpassed by other geopolitical forces. He noted that such assessments do not reflect the Gulf states’ position in international politics and the global economy, pointing to their prominent roles in mediation and conflict resolution.

Addressing the recent visit of

HE State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi to Libya, Dr al-Ansari said Qatar remained deeply engaged in supporting the aspirations of the Libyan people to build a stable and inclusive state. The visit formed part of Qatar’s efforts to support a political solution and promote consensus among the country’s parties.

He stressed that Qatar’s position is based on supporting a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned solution, with the international community’s role focused on helping Libyans reach consensus rather than imposing solutions from outside. Qatar will continue to provide various forms of support to Libya to help secure a better future for the Libyan people.

Doha forum charts course for Arab AI, digital policy

From Page 1

Digital policy frameworks, he said, give countries a practical tool to identify gaps and set priorities suited to their own national contexts, describing the forum as the next step in translating regional frameworks into concrete action.

Over the two days, discussions are set to focus on turning broad digital principles into practical national policy across AI governance, digital infrastructure, data, connectivity and digital inclusion, alongside efforts to help Arab states design national digital policy plans tailored to their circumstances.

Participants agreed that digital transformation has moved well beyond a purely technical concern to become a central driver of economic growth, and called for closer co-operation between governments, the private sector and international institutions to convert policy frameworks into tangible results while building investment and trust in emerging technologies.

They also flagged the wide gap in digital maturity across Arab countries and the need to translate high-level principles into workable legislation, spanning infrastructure to smart systems and AI.

Hilal Mohammed al-Khulaifi, Chief Legal, Regulatory and Corporate Governance Of-

ficer at Ooredoo Group, said accelerating the growth of digital economies was essential, noting that the digital economy’s contribution to GDP across the Arab region ranges between 2% and 12%, rising to near 10% across the GCC. He said he hoped Ooredoo’s partnership with the UNDP would enter a new phase built around stronger dialogue and knowledge-sharing, and a shared framework that respects each country’s own readiness and circumstances.

A ministerial session stressed the need for more effective Arab co-operation. Lebanon’s Minister of State for Administrative Reform Fadi Makki said national strategies should complement rather than compete with one another, prioritising common standards in areas such as cybersecurity, interoperability and data exchange.

Libya’s Minister of Digital Economy and AI Ziad al-Hajjaji called for greater knowledge-sharing and use of GCC experience, while Iraq’s Youssef al-Khalaf urged Arab states to help shape AI’s future rather than merely respond to it, and said investment in data centres was a step in the right direction. UNDP’s Danny Wazen said the forum’s value lay in moving beyond discussion toward policies that make technology a genuine driver of growth.

Qatar Event Show builds platform for industry growth, global links

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

Qatar’s fast-growing events industry is gaining a dedicated platform to connect professionals, attract international expertise and create new business opportunities, as the second Qatar Event Show opens at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre this week.

Malek Shishtawi, founder and CEO of Mangosteen Middle East, the company behind the show, told Gulf Times that the idea emerged from Qatar’s success in hosting some of the world’s biggest sporting and entertainment events.

“Qatar hosted mega events like the World Cup, Asian Games, Arab Cup and FIBA, as well as festivals and other occasions,” Shishtawi said. “We asked ourselves: how can Qatar host some of the biggest events in the world, but event industry professionals do not have a platform of their own?”

That question became the foundation of Qatar Event Show, which was launched last year to bring companies, professionals and specialists together under one roof.

Shishtawi said the objective is not simply to showcase businesses but to create space for discussions about opportunities, challenges, collaboration, and knowledge transfer.

“The idea was that we need to have a platform in Qatar to showcase the companies, the professionals and the expertise,” he said. “We want to bring them together



Malek Shishtawi

to start discussions, collaborations and raise the bar.”

The show also aims to connect international companies seeking to enter Qatar with local partners, while helping Qatari businesses explore opportunities beyond the country.

Following strong feedback from its inaugural edition, organisers expanded this year’s exhibition and content programme, with a broader mix of local, regional and international participants.

“The feedback and appetite were very high,” Shishtawi said. “We had people coming from around the region and the world, and local companies telling us, ‘Thank you for putting this together, we really needed this.’”

A major addition this year is the first Qatar Events Awards, which will recognise individuals, companies and events across categories including venues, suppliers and agencies.

Shishtawi said organisers wanted the awards to provide credible recognition for an industry that has developed rapidly but has lacked a specialised platform



Qatar Event Show opens at DECC. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam



celebrating its achievements.

“We want to have a really fair awards concept,” he said, adding that a diverse jury was selected to ensure the process remained independent.

The growing stature of the show is also reflected in its international participation. Shishtawi highlighted the presence of senior representatives from global associations and regional industry bodies, including UFI, the Dubai World Trade Centre, Oman Convention Bureau and Saudi Arabia’s exhibitions and conferences sector.

He said such participation was

a sign that Qatar’s events industry is increasingly viewed as part of a wider global network.

The show is being held under the patronage of HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, chairman of Qatar Tourism and chairman of the Board of Directors of Visit Qatar, with Visit Qatar officials also taking part.

For Shishtawi, the goal is to ensure the platform continues growing alongside Qatar’s reputation as a host of major international events.

“We need to make it continuous, better and bigger,” he said.

Aspetar advances surgical practice through live surgery

Aspetar, Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, will organise the Aspetar Orthopaedic Masterclass: “Live Surgery and Multidisciplinary Insights” on September 19 at the Aspetar Auditorium and will also be available online.

The full-day accredited masterclass will bring together orthopaedic surgeons, physicians and healthcare professionals for advanced surgical education and multidisciplinary knowledge exchange.

The masterclass will feature renowned experts from Aspetar, including Dr Khalid al-Khelaifi, Dr Emmanuel Papakostas, Dr Gazi Huri and Dr Bruno Olory, alongside Aspetar’s orthopaedic fellows and rehabilitation specialists.

Through expert lectures, live surgical demonstrations, case presentations and interactive discussions, the faculty will explore



Dr Khalid al-Khelaifi

the latest developments in sports surgery, rehabilitation pathways and return-to-play strategies, equipping participants with practical knowledge and enhanced skills in preoperative assessment, clinical decision-making, operative and postoperative care, and rehabilitation. The programme will address common and complex sports-related conditions of the knee,

shoulder, and ankle, including meniscus injuries, multi-ligament knee reconstruction, shoulder and ankle instability. It will also emphasise collaboration among surgeons, physiotherapists and other specialists to optimise patient outcomes.

Dr al-Khelaifi, Orthopaedic consultant and director of Visiting Surgeon Programme at Aspetar, said: “The Masterclass reflects our commitment to advancing surgical excellence and sharing expertise with healthcare professionals from Qatar and around the world. By combining live surgical demonstrations with multidisciplinary discussions, we offer participants a valuable opportunity to observe real-time clinical decision-making, explore the latest developments in sports orthopaedics and strengthen collaboration across specialties. Our aim is to support better

patient care and outcomes.”

The Masterclass is expected to attract more than 140 healthcare and sports medicine professionals from Qatar and around the world, offering a unique platform for knowledge exchange and live surgery learning. The programme will feature live orthopaedic surgeries, expert case discussions, and interactive Q&A sessions, with registration still open for both in-person and online participation. The Practical sessions of the masterclass will be held in the auditorium, live-streamed from the unique Aspetar Sports Surgery Training Centre. In this dedicated environment, surgeons can exchange expertise and develop their technical skills. Its facilities support cadaveric workshops, surgical skills training, arthroscopic practice, live surgery simulations and anatomical education.

VCUarts Qatar announces Community and Continuing Education programmes

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner university, has opened the Community and Continuing Education (CCE) Fall 2026 programmes for public enrolment.

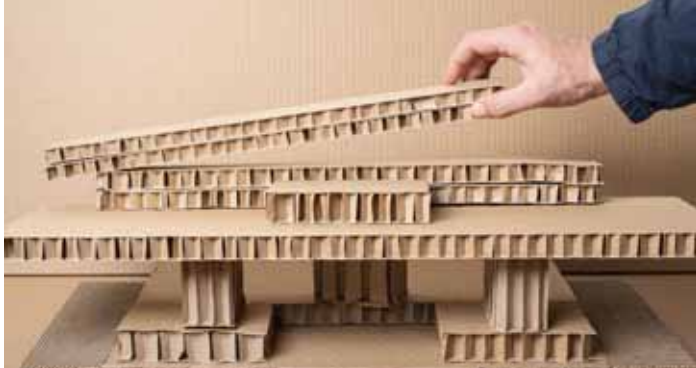
Running from late August through December, the fall offerings include two programme streams. Continuing Education provides professional development for VCUarts Qatar alumni, creative professionals, and entrepreneurs. Community Education serves children, teenagers and adult learners.

The Fall Continuing Education Programme 2026 begins on August 31 with Business Basics for Designers: How to Think Like an Entrepreneur. This course introduces fundamental business concepts and guides participants

in developing creative ideas into viable ventures. The programme is also being offered free of charge to eligible VCUarts Qatar alumni.

On September 26, VCUarts Qatar will also collaborate with BlackRook Academy to offer Design Thinking for Creative Problem Solving, an experience-led programme for alumni and creative professionals. The two-day online/virtual course focuses on design thinking as a creative, human-centred approach to complex obstacles. Participants will draw on challenges from their professional experience and examine methods for identifying opportunities, re-framing problems, and generating innovative ideas.

At the same time, the university’s Community Education Programme kicks off the semester with a multitude of hands-on



learning courses, including animation, sustainable design, digital drawing, experimental art, interior design, social media, branding, and portfolio development.

For participants aged 16 and older, the season begins with Portfolio Development A on Au-

gust 30, the first of the four-section program, which runs until December 2. Students interested in pursuing art and design education will learn to develop competitive admissions portfolios while honing their creative thinking, development, and drawing skills.

The Community Education Programme then expands into several areas of contemporary creative practice, such as Unconventional Canvas, starting September 6, which introduces art enthusiasts to modern approaches to art-making and invites them to experiment with materials, objects, and textures.

From September 20 to October 13, participants in Digital Drawing will explore creature and environment design using Procreate on iPads. They will learn how to transform initial concepts into fully rendered digital illustrations. Meanwhile, Design Your Home, starting October 6, introduces the fundamentals of space planning, furniture layouts, mood boards, colour schemes, and selecting home finishes.

Starting November 2, Social

Media Design & Branding: Create, Capture, Connect will study the relationship between branding, graphic design, photography, video, and digital storytelling. Learners will acquire the skills to develop their own social media brand – from concept to a final showcase.

Participants aged 13 to 17 can enrol in Animation Tools: A Guide to Animation Software, starting September 2, to learn about 2D drawing, digital animation, and traditional animation techniques.

On September 6, younger learners aged 8 to 14 can take part in Sustainable Cardboard Furniture for Children, a hands-on introduction to sustainable design, engineering, and fabrication centred on creating functional furniture from cardboard.



Ministry honours student for AI-powered coral reef innovation

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's Environmental Monitoring and Inspection Department honoured Mohamed Hassan al-Sayed, a student at Ahmed bin Hanbal Secondary School for Boys, for developing an innovative AI-powered smart submarine to monitor coral reef health. The recognition reflects the ministry's commitment to encouraging young people to protect the environment and supporting promising student innovations that harness science, technology and artificial intelligence to address environmental challenges.

The smart submarine uses modern technologies and AI to assess coral reef conditions, demonstrating students' ability to apply scientific knowledge and emerging technologies to marine conservation.



Qatar, Ecuador hold 2nd round of political consultations



The second round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of Qatar and Ecuador was held yesterday. The Qatari side was headed by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi, while the Ecuadorian side was headed by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility Alejandro Davalos.

During the round, co-operation and relations between the two countries were discussed, in addition to topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

Nama competition for students aims to promote innovation and social responsibility

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The Social Entrepreneurship Competition for Secondary Schools, organised by the Social Development Centre, 'Nama', aims to foster innovation and social responsibility among students, according to an official from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE).

"This competition stems from the ministry's belief that education is not limited to knowledge within the classroom, but extends to building a personality capable of deeper thinking, innovation, taking responsibility, and contributing to finding solutions for societal challenges," said MoEHE's Mohammed al-Kadi during a press conference announcing the launch of the Social Entrepreneurship Award organised by Nama.

Al-Kadi said that 2025 saw the launch of the first edition of the competition in the school category, with 31 secondary schools for boys and girls participating.

"More than 120 students benefited from the training workshops provided by the centre. Six schools qualified for the final stage—three boys' schools and three girls' schools. However, the real value of this experience was not just in the numbers, but in what we witnessed of creativity, talent, and conscious youth energy. The students moved from merely thinking about problems to understanding and analysing them, then innovating realistic, implementable solutions," he explained.

The official pointed out that many ideas emerged from the first edition of the award, with several issues the students experienced in their schools and communities, transforming them into projects with real value and impact.

"The winning projects varied between environmental sus-



Mohammed al-Kadi.

"This competition stems from the ministry's belief that education is not limited to knowledge within the classroom, but extends to building a personality capable of deeper thinking, innovation, taking responsibility"

tainability, school agriculture, health, technology, inclusive education, assistive technology, student safety, and enhancing school transport," he noted.

Speaking about the initiative, he underlined: "Herein lies the true value of the competition: it does not merely seek a winning project, but rather a student who thinks, searches, innovates, and feels responsible toward their community."

Al-Kadi also pointed out that MoEHE is keen to provide such opportunities to its students through co-operation with various entities and institutions in the country.

"We are confident that the new edition will open the door to more ideas and projects, giving our students a greater opportunity to work in a team spirit, discover their capabilities, and develop innovative solutions to real issues and challenges," he added.

Nama launches 3rd Social Entrepreneurship Award

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Targeting young entrepreneurs and secondary school students and supporting high-impact ideas and projects, the Social Development Centre "Nama", part of Qatar Foundation for Social Work, has launched the competition for the third edition of the Social Entrepreneurship Award.

Naif Zamil al-Shahrani, communications manager at Nama, and Mohammed al-Kadi from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education announced this at a press conference yesterday at Nama's headquarters.

Shahrani said that the award targets young people and individuals with innovative social entrepreneurship ideas and projects. "The award is open to young people and innovators as well as social entrepreneurs through two main categories: Best Social Entrepreneurship Idea and Best Established Social Enterprise project. It also includes a competition for secondary school students encouraging them to develop their creativity, initiative and social responsibility," he explained.

According to the official, the



Mohammed al-Kadi and Naif Zamil al-Shahrani at the press conference. PICTURE: Thajudheen.

Best Social Entrepreneurship Idea will win QR100,000 and the Best Established Social Enterprise Project will be awarded QR200,000, while the secondary schools competition offers a total of QR60,000 in prizes.

Those interested in participating in the third edition of the award can apply through Nama's official website and follow the latest updates on Nama's social media accounts.

According to al-Kadi, the competition for secondary school students aims to instil a culture of innovation and social responsibility.

Nama launched the first edition of the award in 2024, which

culminated in the Autism Parents Platform being crowned Best Existing Project and the Central Canteen Project Best Project Idea.

Entries are evaluated based on a set of criteria, foremost among them the clarity of the societal problem or challenge, the extent to which the proposed solution addresses community needs, the anticipated scale of impact, the feasibility, sustainability, and scalability of the idea or project and the ability to achieve measurable results and impact.

Ghanem Salah al-Ali, executive director of Nama, said: "The Social Entrepreneurship Award is one of the tools through which we work to empower individuals and

those with ideas and projects to develop practical solutions based on community needs. What we witnessed during the previous two editions confirms the presence of promising talent and ideas capable of creating genuine value for society."

"This year's third edition is distinguished by the addition of an intensive training programme for the shortlisted applicants. The programme aims to help them refine and systematically develop their ideas, beginning with a deeper understanding of the societal problem and progressing toward building solutions that are more feasible, sustainable, and capable of measuring their impact. Through this track, we aspire for the award to serve as a platform for learning and development, alongside competition and recognition, helping participants move from an idea to an impactful project," added al-Ali.

As part of co-operation with several of the award's partners, a set of societal challenges has been identified, studied, and examined in greater depth to better understand their dimensions and needs, thereby raising awareness of these issues and bringing greater attention to them.

Tarsheed unveils Professional Practices for Teachers as school year begins

The Doha-based Tarshid Educational Publications (Tarsheed) has published the second edition of the book *Professional Practices for Teachers: Between Theory and Practice* to mark the start of the new school year.

The book was authored by Dr Rola Qubaisi, Dr Aziz Rasmi, and Youssef Emhal. The book is four-fold in scope: teachers' professional development: between re-

flection and practice; classroom professional practices: a tour of key concepts; developing the classroom and school environment; and leveraging technology in education.

The significance of this publication lies in the consequential role of the book in enhancing teachers' professional aspects, as well as the correlation between theory and practice when it comes to educational practice.

Overall, the book is a catalyst for educational success for teachers and helps optimize school performance and effectiveness within a safe, tolerant, and inclusive environment.

The material is broadly laser-focused on a combination of core pedagogical notions that help teachers create an overall perspective on education and figure out its various dimensions.

It further supports the theo-

retical and practical knowledge of multiple actors in the education arena, thereby helping them enhance student achievement and promote well-being.

The book was shortlisted in the Education and Teaching category of the inaugural Sheikh Yusuf bin Isa Book Prize (2025-2026) in Kuwait, underscoring its contribution to advancing teachers' educational and professional practices. (QNA)

GWC Group strengthens cold chain supply into Qatar

Gulf Warehousing Company QPSC (GWC Group) has completed one of the first frozen bulk vessel operations in Oman, extending its cold chain capabilities from vessel handling and temperature-controlled storage to cross-border distribution and creating an additional route for frozen cargo into Qatar.

Frozen goods entering Oman typically arrive in standard containers. Handling a full frozen bulk vessel required specialist cold chain expertise at every phase, from vessel offloading through temperature-controlled storage to onward distribution, maintaining uninterrupted temperature integrity from port to warehouse.

Delivery of the first operation secured GWC Group a second, larger commission: the largest frozen bulk vessel operation the Group has handled to date. The customer subsequently awarded GWC Group a long-term cold storage contract, expanding the relationship from vessel handling into ongoing storage and regional distribution.

The Group also began transporting frozen poultry products by road from Barka in Oman to Qatar and Kuwait, bringing the combined volume of frozen cargo handled, stored, and distributed across GCC markets, including Qatar, to more than 1,000 truckloads.

Matthew Kearns, GWC Group CEO, said: "This operation demonstrates what our regional network is designed to do. By connecting our capabilities in Oman with our established infrastructure in Qatar, we are creating additional routes for temperature-sensitive goods into the country whilst strengthening resilience across the wider supply chain. As we grow across the GCC, our operations are increasingly working as one network, connecting markets and strengthening the infrastructure behind regional cold chain flows."

The expansion of the Oman operation reflects the continued growth of GWC Group's regional platform and its role in connecting

GWC Group has completed one of the first frozen bulk vessel operations in Oman



Haitham al-Rawahi

logistics infrastructure and capabilities across GCC markets. The net revenue contribution from the Group's international operations has tripled over the past two years as GWC Group continues to strengthen its presence across Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman and Bahrain.



Matthew Kearns

Haitham al-Rawahi, general manager of GWC Oman operations, said: "Frozen bulk vessel handling demands strict, uninterrupted temperature control from port offloading through storage and cross-border transportation. Our teams in Oman delivered this complex operation without



compromise, supported by GWC Group's specialised assets and technical expertise."

GWC Group's cross-border cold chain capabilities are supported by an extensive logistics network across the GCC and a global freight network spanning more than 120

countries through over 550 partners worldwide. The Group operates more than 4mn sq m of logistics infrastructure, supported by over 1,600 specialised vehicles and 20 strategic locations across the GCC, moving more than 2mn tonnes of freight annually.



Hichilema sworn in for a second term in Zambia

AFP
Lusaka

Zambia's President Hakainde Hichilema pledged to build on the economic turnaround achieved during his first term as he was sworn in for a new mandate yesterday after tense elections.

Hichilema took the oath of office with the main opposition leader — who was the runner-up in the August 13 ballot — under arrest on treason charges that he rejects.

The vote was marred by allegations of intimidation, pro-government bias and restrictions on the opposition, tarnishing the copper-rich country's democratic reputation. Thousands of cheering supporters wearing the red colours of Hichilema's UPND party packed the Lusaka stadium for his swearing-in ceremony attended by a handful of African leaders.

"Having done the heavy lifting in our first term, the next five years is all about growth, expansion, opportunity and prosperity for all our people," he said in an address to the packed stadium.

Hichilema has been credited with steering Zambia through a major economic turnaround during his first five-year term, after the country defaulted on its sovereign debt in 2020.

As he pursued market-friendly reforms, inflation dropped and international reserves grew. He also abolished the death penalty and made primary and secondary education free.

Critics say, however, the growth has yet to be felt by ordinary households. Acknowledging "challenges with the cost of living", Hichilema said: "There is still a lot more to be done. And that's what this mandate is all about."

"We are moving from stabilisation to growth, effectively."

"This means, in practice, broad expansion and for all our people to access opportunities, irrespective of their backgrounds."

More than 70% of Zambia's 22mn people live on less than three dollars a day, according to World



President Hakainde Hichilema

Bank data. The country is Africa's second-largest copper producer, and its economy relies on the commodity which generates around 70% of export earnings, with China a major investor and its largest bilateral creditor.

Hichilema, a 64-year-old tycoon, won 60% of last month's election followed by former provincial government minister Brian Mundubile on 38%, according to official results.

Mundubile, 55, went into hiding after security forces raided his home on August 14, the day after polling, saying they were targeting a suspected militia posing a national security threat.

His NRPUP alliance has strongly rejected the claims.

A former cabinet minister was shot and killed in the operation and 11 members of Mundubile's camp were arrested.

Mundubile and his running mate Makebi Zulu surrendered to police on August 27. Their lawyer confirmed at the weekend that they had been charged with treason, which they have denied.

"Political differences are an inevitable part of a democracy, but the pursuit of political power must never come at the expense of peace, security, and stability in our country," Hichilema said in his address.

"It takes courage to offer oneself for public service... but it should never reach the point where it becomes a matter between life or death," he said.

Israel kills 5 in Gaza, claims detention of Hamas fighter

Reuters
Cairo

An Israeli-backed raid to detain a Hamas fighter in Gaza City was uncovered during the operation yesterday, prompting airstrikes to cover the force's withdrawal that killed at least four Palestinians, including two children, Gaza officials said.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said a senior Hamas fighter had been detained, while Hamas official Ismail al-Thawabta said an Israeli special force had tried to carry out an operation in Gaza City before being detected.

According to al-Thawabta, director of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office, Israeli military then launched heavy airstrikes, that resulted in killing and wounding of several people in the vicinity.

An Israeli security official said the man detained is the head of Hamas' internal security service.

Israeli media reported the raid may have been carried out by members of an Israeli-backed militia that operates from Israeli-controlled areas inside Gaza.

Witnesses said Israeli warplanes fired at least 12 missiles near the Katiba area in the west of Gaza City, an area crowded with displaced families.

At least four people — including two children and a woman — were killed and several others wounded in the bombardment, medics said.

Two vehicles were hit and reduced to twisted wreckage. Another child was killed in Israeli fire in central Gaza, medics said.

The explosions forced many families sheltering in the area of Gaza City to leave, including from a nearby kindergarten, residents said.

In a statement made yesterday, the Israeli military announced that it successfully struck several targets in the Gaza Strip with



An elderly woman walks past a destroyed vehicle following an Israeli strike in the Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday. (AFP)

the objective of removing potential threats to the Israeli security forces without delving into the further details.

Katz did not provide details about the arrest operation or identify the Hamas fighter.

"This is our policy: we do not wait for threats, but rather pursue Hamas fighters, thwart them, and destroy their infrastructure," Katz said while visiting the Netiv HaAsara community near the northern Gaza border.

In a separate incident, medics said a girl, Israa al-Hissi, was killed and two other people were wounded when Israeli forces operating east of Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza opened fire on the area.

A US-backed ceasefire that took effect in October 2025 halted

Head of Hamas internal security captured, says Netanyahu

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday that Israeli forces captured the head of Hamas's internal security apparatus in Gaza, without giving his name. Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency and the military "in a daring operation today arrested the head of Hamas's internal security apparatus near his home in Gaza... He is one of the most senior Hamas leaders," Netanyahu said, according to a statement released by his office. (AFP)

the large-scale fighting that had devastated the enclave, but it has not ended Israeli strikes.

The military says such operations are intended to prevent attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian groups.

Hamas accuses Israel of repeatedly violating the ceasefire and undermining efforts to advance a broader plan by US President Donald Trump to end the war.

The plan includes further Israeli troop withdrawals from Gaza and the disarmament of Hamas.

More than 1,300 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the ceasefire came into force last October, according to Gaza health officials.

The Israeli military says four Israeli soldiers have been killed in attacks during the same period.

Syria wants diplomatic solution with Israel despite attacks, Syrian FM says

AFP
Damascus

Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani said yesterday that his country was working towards a "diplomatic solution" with Israel, with US mediation, despite ongoing Israeli attacks.

Israel has launched hundreds of strikes on Syria since the authorities ousted longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

Israel also sent troops into a UN-patrolled buffer zone that had separated Israeli and Syrian forces on the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights since 1974.

Israel has carried out repeated incursions deeper into Syrian territory and has vowed to keep troops in a so-called "security zone" in southern Syria, where it seeks a broader demilitarised area. "The attacks are still ongoing. We observed 65 incursions



Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen participates together with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani in the reopening of the Danish embassy in Damascus. (Reuters)

in July alone, and 52 in the first 18 days of August," Shaibani told a press conference with his visiting Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

He slammed a "campaign of raids on homes in Quneitra province and the Damascus countryside", and said Syria had regis-

tered 147 cases of Israeli troops detaining Syrians so far this year, with "49 of them still detained".

"Despite these challenges, we are still committed to the option of a diplomatic solution," Shaibani said, adding: "We are engaged in negotiations mediated by the United States of America."

UN cuts West Bank food aid as funds run short

Reuters
Geneva

The World Food Programme said yesterday that funding shortages are forcing it to cut in half its food assistance in the occupied West Bank at a time when it says escalating settler violence and Israeli military operations are driving needs higher.

The UN agency has been providing food, vouchers and cash to 400,000 in the West Bank, mostly in rural areas and the south, such as villages like Hebron, but this will be scaled back to 200,000 people from this month, it said.

"Severe movement restrictions, demolitions, and widespread displacement in the West Bank have eroded Palestinian livelihoods and contributed to increased food insecurity," Shaun Hughes, WFP Country Director for Palestine, said adding, "Right now, we should be scaling up our assistance in the

West Bank, not cutting these vital lifelines."

Foreign aid contributions by major Western donors, including the US, have fallen sharply across the board since last year as they prioritise domestic spending and defence. Violence and land and water seizures by militant Jewish settlers in the West Bank have risen during the nearly three years since the war in Gaza began.

UN bodies and most countries deem the settlements illegal under international law regarding military occupations. Israel rejects this, viewing the area as disputed rather than occupied.

Hughes said that humanitarians did not use to consider the West Bank a food crisis, but more a human rights crisis.

"They now find themselves in a chokehold, unable to move freely to access land or jobs, and so unable to afford food for their families. They face incredible injustice and hardship," he said.

Health risks soaring in Gaza as rainy season nears: WHO

AFP
Geneva

The approaching rainy season risks worsening a dire public health crisis in Gaza, where most people live in overcrowded tent camps amid rubble and overflowing sewage, the WHO warned yesterday.

The World Health Organisation warned that there had already been a clear deterioration in the quality of water reaching the population in recent months, while the number of diarrhoea cases had surged.

"Whilst we fail to provide people with the minimum quantities of water, water quality and water contamination remains a major issue," said Reinhilde Van de Weerd, the WHO's representative in the Palestinian territories.

Gaza has been engulfed in a devastating health and humanitarian crisis since Israel launched its war in the territory.

Despite a US-backed ceasefire that took effect in October 2025, violence has not halted in the Gaza



A woman looks out from a damaged building of Al-Shifa Hospital during the funeral of a Palestinian who was killed in Israeli strikes. (Reuters)

Strip, and Israel continues to impose significant restrictions on the entry of goods, including medical equipment and fuel.

In April, Doctors Without Borders said that Israel was using water access as a "weapon" in Gaza, pointing to data from the UN, Eu-

ropean Union and World Bank indicating that Israel had destroyed or damaged nearly 90% of water and sanitation infrastructure in the territory.

Israel slammed the report at the time.

Testing of some 6,700 water samples over the first eight months of the year indicated that "microbiological contamination almost tripled", Van de Weerd told reporters in Geneva, speaking from the Gaza Strip.

Contamination had gone from under 6% in January to over 18% in August, the tests showed.

Van de Weerd pointed out that lacking laboratory capacities in Gaza meant that those tests could not detect all contaminants likely found in the water and the environment.

It was therefore not surprising, she said, that cases of acute watery diarrhoea had almost doubled since March, jumping from around 27,000 cases to over 48,000 in August.

Van de Weerd warned that the approaching rainy winter season

was likely to deepen the health crisis.

The "vast majority of people in Gaza still live in very overcrowded sites of flimsy tents" surrounded by "metres-high mounds of garbage" and with "overflowing sewage everywhere", she said.

"Flooding in these very overcrowded places will (send) the sewage, the waste and contaminated water into the places where people sleep, cook and care for their loved ones," she warned.

At the same time, "the standing water will further allow for breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other pests", while tents "will be infested with mold".

Van de Weerd insisted there was still time to prevent a public health disaster. She called for "unimpeded and expedited entry of humanitarian supplies", including materials needed for permanent shelter, sustainable provision of water and waste management.

More laboratory supplies were also needed to help rapidly confirm the causes of disease and better respond to outbreaks, she said.

Syria says at least 5 dead in blast in northwest

AFP
Damascus

Syrian authorities said at least five people were killed in northwest Idlib province yesterday when a vehicle carrying munitions exploded.

A government source told AFP on condition of anonymity that the vehicle belonged to a local arms dealer in the town of Binnish, without providing further details.

A security source told state news agency SANA that "a vehicle carrying munitions in the city of Binnish in Idlib province" exploded, without saying what caused the blast.

It published images showing charred cars as firefighters doused one of the smoking vehicles, with debris strewn across the area.

Local health authorities said at least five people were killed.

The Idlib region was a bastion of rebel and militant groups including foreign fighters before forces of the present regime overthrew longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

The area sees occasional explosions at military sites and arms depots, without authorities announcing their causes.

In November, security forces said an explosion at a warehouse containing missiles and ammunition in the town of Kafr Takharim killed five people and wounded nine others.

Three months earlier, four people were killed in an explosion at a war remnants depot on the outskirts of Idlib city, authorities said.

A month before that, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said at least 12 people were killed and some 120 others wounded in a series of explosions at an arms depot belonging to the Uyghur-dominated Turkistan Islamic Party in the town of Maaret Misrin, also in Idlib province.

US urges hands-off approach to AI regulation at G20 tech meeting

Reuters
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The US yesterday pressed G20 members to take a hands-off approach to AI regulation and avoid creating new rules at a gathering of industry titans and commerce ministers in North Carolina.

The US goals largely align with the thinking of the world's biggest AI companies, nearly all of which are American. They want less regulation around the world for their rapidly growing businesses, or to shape the rules as they are written.

Federal government requirements could hurt the industry's profits if they slow the release of new models or prompt the companies to change how their products perform to address security

concerns. US tech adviser Michael Kratsios, who is co-hosting the two-day meeting, advocated for countries to adopt the "Carolina Principles."

Countries that sign on agree to "reserve new regulation for novel considerations" when writing rules for AI, Kratsios told the G20 officials at the meeting. They also will invest in "foundational research to accelerate discovery" and strengthen commercial opportunities for new technology, he said. "Policymakers do not need to approach each innovation in isolation and should not treat every emerging technology as a first-of-its-kind policy problem," he said.

The G20 leaders are convening at a key moment in the AI sector's development and the global debate over how to govern it, and as the US faces an increasing threat

from China for AI supremacy.

A UN panel recently warned that AI's developments are outpacing scientific understanding and government policy. Recent events, including a hack triggered by a rogue OpenAI agent that compromised the infrastructure of AI company Hugging Face, added to concerns about how closely leading AI companies are monitoring tests of their products.

AI agents are programs that run with minimal human supervision.

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk on yesterday morning criticised the European Union's tech regulations, saying that the EU's policy "inhibits progress" for companies. He also urged leaders outside China to develop new energy sources to power data centers.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg will address the ministers by video chat, a US Commerce Department spokesperson said, in lieu of company president Dina Powell McCormick, who had previously planned to speak. Google DeepMind co-founder Demis Hassabis was also added to the list of speakers who will address the ministers by video chat, a Google spokesperson said on Monday.

The US at the G20 tech meeting will press member countries not to set up new regulatory organisations to oversee AI development, a White House official said.

The meeting is one of a series of gatherings taking place over the next few months in US cities leading up to the G20 leaders' summit in Miami in December.

Chinese open-weight AI models, systems with publicly accessible core elements, are becoming increasingly capable when compared to proprietary systems

from American AI giants such as Anthropic and OpenAI. Chinese-made open-weight models are gaining ground with US companies, also posing a potential security risk if the country's leaders decide to interfere.

"It has increased urgency for this administration to make sure that the rest of the world stays within the American tech ecosystem and doesn't seek alternatives," said Vivek Chilkuri, a technology and national security fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

Canadian officials are slated to attend, a spokesperson for the Canadian government said, adding that the delegation will advocate for countries to balance innovation with "public trust and safety." The US and Canada are embroiled in a trade war, started by the US president.

Carney's Liberals win 3 special elections

Reuters
Ottawa

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal party won three special elections yesterday, maintaining Carney's slim majority in Parliament at a time when he has called for national unity to face a worsening trade war with US President Donald Trump.

Liberal candidates won seats in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec after Carney's government first secured a majority in April. The seats in British Columbia and Ontario were Liberal strongholds, but in the French-speaking province of Quebec it was a tightly fought contest in a riding previously held by the Conservatives, making it the most significant win for Carney.

Quebec voters will vote on October 5 in an election the separatists are favoured to win, despite falling support for independence.

"At this consequential time for Canada, voters have placed their trust in our government's plan," Carney said in a statement. "Canada is being tested in a changing world," he said.

"We are building our strength at home and diversifying our trading relationships abroad." Another six special elections in Canada will be held in coming months to fill remaining vacancies.

Venezuela's main airport resumes operations

Venezuela's main airport near Caracas yesterday said it was resuming operations after sustaining damage in the powerful earthquakes that struck over two months ago. A flight operated by Venezuelan airline Conviasa to Mexico took off at 10am, read a statement from Simon Bolivar International Airport. Another flight operated by Global Crossing arrived at around 10:30am, an airport official said. The airport is located in the coastal state of La Guaira, which was shattered by the June 24 quakes that killed over 6,500 people. Runways were "fully operational," announced Transport Minister Francisco Garces. **(AFP)**

Parliament speaker of Iran urges citizens to cut petrol use

AFP
Tehran

Atop Iranian official called on citizens to curb their petrol consumption yesterday, as the country faces difficulty importing enough fuel to meet demand due to a US naval blockade.

"Of course, part of the responsibility for this high consumption does not lie with our people; it lies with our industry," parliament speaker and top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a televised address.

"We need to save gasoline in our consumption."

Washington imposed its blockade of Iranian ports in retaliation for Tehran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital conduit for Gulf oil and gas shipments.

In recent days, long queues of vehicles have been seen at petrol stations in Tehran.

Iranian Vice President Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah said last week that domestic petrol production was "insufficient, and because of the US naval blockade, we cannot import it". Days earlier, the Iranian president's chief of staff had said petrol quotas would be reviewed.

Xi in Cairo for state visit

Reuters
Cairo

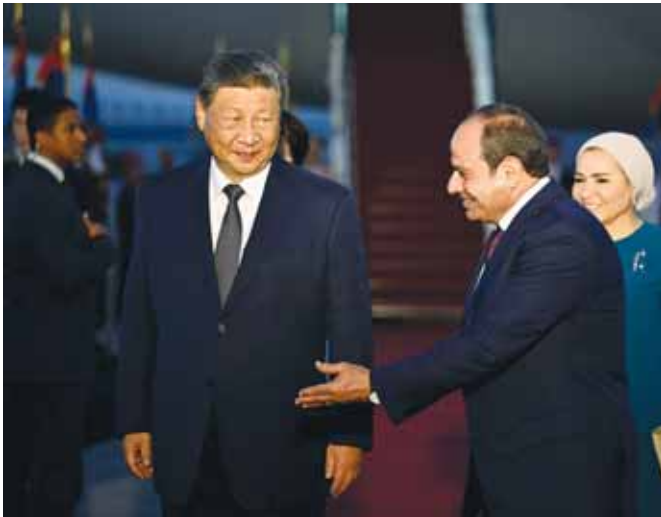
Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Egypt yesterday, his first visit to the Arab world's most populous country in a decade, as countries across the Middle East reassess security and economic ties amid the fallout of the Iran war.

The conflict has disrupted global energy markets and raised questions about whether regional countries can count on the US as a long-term security partner.

Preparations in the capital Cairo have been underway for days, with traffic diverted and thoroughfares leading to sites such as the medieval Saladin Citadel decked out with Chinese and Egyptian flags.

Egyptian state media highlighted Cairo's growing economic and military ties to Beijing and Egypt's role as the first Arab and African country to establish diplomatic ties with China 70 years ago. "Egypt and China have become partners contributing together to strengthening the role of the Global South in the international system," Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi wrote in an op-ed in state newspaper *Al-Ahram*.

Xi's visit is the second leg of



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi welcomes China's President Xi Jinping at the Cairo International Airport yesterday. **(AFP)**

his second overseas trip this year, following his participation in a Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in Kyrgyzstan where he spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin and others.

In commentary published by Chinese state news agency Xinhua, Xi said that the two countries were "close brothers standing by each other" in the face of imperialism and colonialism and that he looked forward to exploring a deeper partnership.

Last month Egypt — which re-

ceives about \$1.3bn a year in US military aid — hosted its second annual military exercises with China, launched last year as Beijing sought to chip away at US influence in the region.

The drills marked the first deployment of China's J-16 jets to Africa and a rare air combat drill involving the Chinese-made fighters and French-made Rafales, according to Chinese state media.

A Chinese air force tanker was also pictured refuelling a Rafale, offering Beijing a closer look at

Western-made equipment.

Egypt has been seeking deeper ties with Beijing since at least 2014, when recently elected al-Sisi travelled to China to sign a strategic partnership deal, said H A Hellyer, a scholar at the Royal United Services Institute think tank. Cairo's messaging towards Washington has softened since then, but "questions of American reliability and volatility" raised by the wars in Gaza and Iran have reinforced its desire to diversify partnerships, he said.

"Egypt sees itself as moving toward greater strategic autonomy," Hellyer said. "It wants strong relations with Washington, but also Beijing, Moscow, and Europe."

Bordering Israel, Sudan and Libya, and home to the vital trade artery of the Suez Canal, Egypt is often seen by foreign powers as a strategic linchpin in a volatile region riven by multiple conflicts.

Chinese investment in Egypt has surged in recent years, with billions flowing into sectors such as manufacturing, ports, solar energy, green hydrogen and satellite technology.

Last week, Xi hosted Jordan's King Abdullah in Beijing, where the issue of Palestinian rights featured prominently. Xi is expected to visit India and the US later this month.

India's Supreme Court drops criminal cases against paper leak protesters

India's Supreme Court called off criminal investigations yesterday against most of the protesters who took part in demonstrations over the leak of a medical exam paper that forced the resignation of the education minister.

The court invoked its special constitutional powers to provide relief to protesters who joined demonstrations led by the online Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) movement in July.

The demonstrations turned violent when police clashed with tens of thousands of protesters in New Delhi on July 20 as they tried to march towards the parliament. Clashes also broke out in other states, including Bihar and West Bengal. Police filed cases against hundreds of students, accusing them of rioting, violence and damaging public property. "If both sides show good faith, then all issues can be resolved one by one," Chief Justice Surya Kant said.

The court also directed the government to provide compensation within three months to the families of students who reportedly died by suicide following the exam paper leak. Following the court's directions yesterday, the CJP said it was withdrawing its plans for a protest in Delhi on Saturday, Ashutosh Ranka, a CJP spokesman, said in a statement. However, investigations would continue against 2,873 protesters who have prior criminal records.

The demonstrations were sparked by anger over the paper leak, but grew into a wider movement over unemployment, opportunities for young people and what critics describe as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's increasingly authoritarian rule. **(AFP)**

Suspected cartel leader killed in Mexico

Mexican soldiers killed a suspected leader of the Los Reyes cartel in western Mexico, the defence ministry said yesterday, as Mexico continues to escalate its war against cartels and organised crime.

The US had offered a \$3mn reward for information leading to the arrest of Luis Enrique Barragan Chavez, whom US authorities identified as a top hitman for the Los Reyes cartel, a faction of the Carteles Unidos criminal group.

According to a ministry statement, soldiers killed Barragan in Tocombo in the state of Michoacan during an operation. **(Reuters)**

Himalayas face glacial flood risks: UN

Reuters
Islamabad

The Himalayan region faces severe risks from future glacial floods, a senior UN official has warned, as the death toll from last week's flood in Nepal, triggered by a glacier's collapse, surpassed 1,000.

Not only is the hydroelectric power that many depend on threatened, but entire riverbanks where millions live might become effectively uninhabitable. "Technology cannot move fast enough to prevent loss along these massive river systems that catch the overflow of the glacier lakes," Kanni Wignaraja, an assistant secretary-general at the UN said.

Researchers identified 47 potentially dangerous glacial lakes

in Nepal, China and India in 2020. The real number has since been estimated to be significantly higher.

The population at risk "goes into the millions", said Wignaraja, who also serves as regional director for Asia and the Pacific at the UN Development Programme (UNDP). She cited updated data compiled by UNDP and partner organisations in June.

Last week's devastating flood in Nepal was triggered when parts of a glacier near the Langtang Lirung mountain peak collapsed and fell to the valley floor, unleashing a landslide that sent a flood wave down the Trishuli River.

Glacier lake outbursts are a somewhat different phenomenon — they happen when melting glacier water builds up behind a natural barrier, with pressure eventually resulting in a break or

overflow that sends a flash flood downstream.

Both threats are on the rise, UN officials say, as climate change accelerates glacier melt in the region, loosening rocks and putting more pressure on glacier lake barriers.

The region's mountains are also relatively young, Wignaraja said, and thus more liable to tectonic shifts that can also trigger sudden glacier or lake barrier collapses.

Researchers have found potentially dangerous glacial lakes across large parts of the Hindu Kush region. But Wignaraja said no country in the region depends more on glaciers for both water supplies and income than Nepal, which now faced "some very, very hard choices".

For many who live along rivers, moving to higher ground may not be financially viable.

China-Nepal flood toll tops 1,000 as tunnel rescue offers last hope

AFP
Nuwakot, Nepal

The death toll from devastating Himalayan glacial floods crossed the grim 1,000 mark yesterday, as Chinese and Nepali teams searched for survivors including dozens feared trapped in hydropower tunnels.

Nearly 4,500 people are missing after the gigantic wave of freezing water, rocks and debris triggered by a high-altitude glacial collapse roared downstream last week on Wednesday, wiping out entire settlements and carving a path of destruction across Nepal.

Nepali rescue teams are digging, drilling and blasting through debris in a desperate race against time to free around 100 hydropower workers believed trapped in multiple tunnels.

So far, rescuers have recovered

only bodies from tunnels blocked by sludge, and hopes of finding survivors are fading.

Excavators worked into the night, but an army update noted that "a large amount of water started flowing" into a hole they were digging, forcing them to start a new opening.

Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah has called the catastrophe "unimaginable and heartbreaking". With mortuaries overflowing in Nepal, authorities have begun burying hundreds of unidentified bodies after DNA sampling. Over 17 bodies have also been pulled from rivers downstream in India.

Police, using a drone to search for survivors, said yesterday that they had located 24 corpses inside a single house in Nuwakot district.

Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said he still hoped some of the thousands missing could be alive. "Miracles do happen," he told AFP



An aerial view shows a torrent of muddy water surging past houses and through the Trishuli River in Nuwakot district, Nepal. **(AFP)**

in an interview. "At this point, I do not want to completely give up hope."

In the capital Kathmandu, crowds lined up to search for their missing relatives.

Debu Sapkota, a 58-year-old driver, posted photos of his 83-year-old mother-in-law and her granddaughter, alongside dozens of others.

Sapkota said he had little hope

they survived after witnesses saw them being carried away by the torrent. "I am here hoping to find their bodies," he said

Some, believing they will never find their missing relatives, held symbolic funerals in accordance with Nepali Hindu customs.

"We searched everywhere, went to morgues across the country, but could not find his body," said Jeevan Shrestha, as his 12-year-old nephew set fire to a tiny straw effigy representing his missing father.

Aid needs are enormous. Entire communities have been swept away, leaving families homeless and using makeshift shelters as heavy rain lashes down.

Roads and dozens of bridges have been smashed, and power plants destroyed.

"There are too many challenges," said police officer E Hawadi in badly affected Nuwakot district.

AFP photographers in Nuwa-

kot yesterday saw people scouring through mud for usable items and stringing up plastic sheeting for shelter in ruins.

Foreigners missing among the list include 583 in Nepal and 261 in China, coming from more than 30 nations. They include tourists who had come for trekking in the Himalayas, as well as Hindu pilgrims seeking spiritual peace at Tibet's sacred Mount Kailash.

Nepal's economy is already under pressure, with limited resources to respond to a disaster of this scale. Kathmandu has warned reconstruction costs could run into the "billions of dollars".

There is growing anger at the scale of destruction to hit Nepal, a largely rural nation of 30mn people. The country has contributed little to the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming, but is among those suffering its consequences.

China cushion: Opec+ faces dramatic rebalancing of global oil market

Since its founding in 1960, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) has been the dominant force in the oil market, shifting between market control and defensive management. By coordinating production quotas among member countries, Opec directly dictated global spare capacity, steering oil prices to serve its members' fiscal needs while balancing global demand.

But six months into the Iran war, Opec is confronting a dramatic shift in the global energy market. The world's most powerful oil alliance is seen as losing its ability to influence prices while China is emerging as an increasingly important force in determining where crude prices go next.

The war has disrupted one of the world's most important oil corridors, damaged energy infrastructure across the Middle East and sharply reduced the amount of crude several Opec+ members

can physically export. But, cuts in Chinese crude imports have emerged as one of the dominant themes of 2026, helping to balance oil markets amid what is considered the worst-ever supply disruption.

Opec+ – the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia created in 2016 – accounted for about 40% of global oil output in July, according to Reuters calculations based on International Energy Agency data. That's down from more than 48% before the US and Israel attacked Iran in late February.

The war has also reduced Opec+'s ability to quickly raise or cut supply by effectively shutting the Strait of Hormuz, a key export route for leading producers. Opec+ says its decisions are aimed at supporting market stability and it does not target a specific oil price.

Since March, the core Opec+ group has

announced six oil output increases. Yet, because of the Hormuz blockade, most have remained largely on paper, with the decisions having little effect on oil prices, apart from in July during a brief US-Iran ceasefire that raised hopes Hormuz would reopen.

But one of the biggest price drivers this year has been a steep decline in Chinese oil imports. Since the war began, China has bought roughly 400mn fewer barrels of oil than during the same period last year. The decline reflects a ban on fuel exports, lower refining output and the growing use of electric transport.

The trend further highlights China's growing role in balancing oil markets, a role once associated almost exclusively with Opec+, as the world's swing producer. China's weaker demand for oil has helped place a ceiling on prices this year. By contrast, its buying spree last year, which may have accounted

for as much as half of global oil demand growth, helped underpin the market.

China's role is particularly significant because it is also Iran's largest oil customer. Iranian shipments to China have fallen sharply amid the conflict and renewed US pressure, dropping to a provisional 534,000 barrels per day in August from 823,000 barrels in July, according to Kpler data. The oil market is increasingly behaving as though disruptions to Middle East energy supplies are not a temporary shock but a new reality.

Nearly six months after war erupted between the US and Iran, hopes for a diplomatic breakthrough have faded. The longer the Hormuz impasse drags on, the less this looks like a temporary supply shock and the more it resembles a structural reshaping of global oil trade, according to Ron Bousso, a Reuters columnist.

Burnham's maiden speech in parliament



Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham (centre right) delivering his first speech as leader, to MPs in the House of Commons in London yesterday. (AFP)



SJC sets the ball rolling for new judicial year

The Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) affirms development of justice systems and improved services as it strengthens efforts to improve the efficiency of judicial services provided to the community

QNA
Doha

The 2026-2027 judicial year began yesterday, as part of the continued implementation of the Supreme Judiciary Council's (SJC) Strategy (2025-2030), strengthening efforts to develop the judicial system, uphold the principles of swift justice, and improve the efficiency of judicial services provided to the community.

In a statement, the SJC said the launch of the new judicial year builds on its institutional and judicial development efforts aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency, developing procedures and services, expediting the resolution of disputes, and utilizing modern technologies to support the justice system in line with national development requirements and the aspirations of society.

The council added that its priorities for the new judicial year are based on the strategic vision of the National Initiative for Developing Justice Systems, which includes integrated areas focused on improving the quality of judgments and judicial services, supporting digital transformation, developing the judicial work environment, enhancing judicial enforcement efficiency, and strengthening institutional governance, thereby achieving the highest levels of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

HE SJC President and President of the Court of Cassation Dr. Hassan bin Lahdan al-Hassan al-Muhammadi said the launch of the 2026-2027 judicial year represents a continuation of the ongoing development of the justice system. He noted that the council is implementing its plans and projects in accordance with the objectives of its 2025-2030 Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030, with the support of the wise leadership, in a manner that enhances judicial performance, reduces litigation periods, improves services for litigants, and continues to benefit from digital solutions and modern technologies to support faster and more efficient procedures.

He added that the coming phase will see

continued efforts to develop various areas of justice, strengthen judicial governance and quality, expand restorative justice, and broaden the use of artificial intelligence, thereby reinforcing the principles of swift justice and ensuring more efficient and accessible judicial services in line with best practices.

He highlighted the pivotal role of judges in the development process and in adopting updated procedures, while praising the role of lawyers and their cooperation with the SJC.

Strategic objectives

The launch of the new judicial year reflects the readiness of courts, judicial chambers and supporting departments to carry out their duties under integrated operational and organizational plans, ensuring the continued delivery of highly efficient judicial services and the achievement of the council's strategic objectives in the coming phase.

As part of its development initiatives and projects, the SJC confirmed that it would continue implementing them to improve the litigants' experience and the quality of services, while enhancing integration among relevant entities and developing systems and procedures supporting judicial work to ensure faster completion and higher-quality judicial outcomes.

The council noted that the coming phase will also see continued efforts to develop the justice system, strengthen institutional innovation, and utilize modern technologies and artificial intelligence in supporting judicial and administrative work, contributing to a more efficient, flexible and sustainable judicial system that enhances confidence in justice and meets Qatar's future aspirations.

The 2026-2027 judicial year begins with a judicial system moving toward greater quality, specialisation and digitalisation, with services increasingly accessible to litigants in easier and faster ways. It builds on the comprehensive development achieved in recent years in litigation procedures and judicial services, while continuing



implementation of the second phase of the National Initiative for Developing Justice Systems and the objectives of the Supreme Judiciary Council's Strategy (2025-2030).

The new judicial year represents a continuation of an integrated development process aimed at achieving swift justice, reducing litigation periods, improving judicial and institutional efficiency, strengthening digital transformation, expanding remote litigation and enhancing alternative dispute resolution, alongside continued development of the courts' operational environment and services provided to litigants.

Regarding the number of judicial chambers, the Supreme Judiciary Council said the new judicial year will begin with a total of 156 judicial chambers across the courts. The Court of Cassation has six judicial chambers, while the Court of Appeal has 14. The Investment and Commerce Court has 33 first-instance and appellate chambers.

The Court of First Instance includes 10 civil chambers, 47 criminal chambers, 16 family chambers and 12 chambers under the Family Documentation Department, while the Execution Court has 18 judicial chambers. Preparations for the 2026-2027 judicial year are based on performance indicators reflecting the development of the justice system over the past period. The overall case disposition rate across all courts in 2025 reached approximately 98.85% of the 210,513 cases filed, while the courts registered more than 50,000 cases in the first quarter of 2026.

Digital transformation

Digital transformation represents one

of the main areas of development during the new judicial year, building on the courts' expansion in digitizing litigation procedures and judicial services. In 2025, the courts received approximately 109,981 requests through the courts' electronic portal and application. A further 8,596 electronic services were processed through the courts' system and application during the first quarter of 2026, in addition to more than 65,000 electronic services provided by the Family Documentation Department during 2025.

The Supreme Judiciary Council continues to develop its digital channels to simplify the litigant journey, reduce procedures requiring in-person attendance at court premises, and improve the speed and efficiency of access to services.

In this regard, the council said the experience of remote litigation had demonstrated the readiness of the courts' digital infrastructure and its ability to ensure continuity of judicial work. Courts heard more than 5,000 cases using video communication technologies, alongside the electronic exchange of legal memoranda, while the Court of Cassation began holding virtual hearings.

During the new judicial year, the council will also continue strengthening the electronic litigation system, updating regulations governing judicial procedures conducted electronically and developing guidelines regulating remote court hearings. Regarding judicial services provided through WhatsApp, the council said it plans to expand virtual employee services through the platform, using process automation to provide judicial services directly. This will allow users to complete several procedures and obtain

documents without having to log in through the courts' portal.

The council noted that these services form part of its efforts to diversify channels for accessing judicial services, simplify procedures and reduce the time and effort required of litigants, thereby improving the user experience and increasing service delivery efficiency.

Regarding developments in artificial intelligence technologies, the council said the use of AI represents one of the areas of development it will continue to build on during the coming period, following the launch of the Smart Assistant through the judge's platform at the Criminal Court. The system supports benchmarking against legal precedents, identifying relevant legal provisions and summarizing cases within a legal, procedural and secure framework for the use of AI technologies. Future plans include expanding AI applications to the civil courts and using the technology in analytical studies and services for litigants, as well as further developing electronic connectivity and integration with government entities and relevant institutions.

The second phase of the National Initiative for the Development of Justice Systems includes continued modernization of the judicial legislative framework, encompassing several laws governing civil and commercial litigation, criminal procedures, penalties, family matters and estate distribution procedures. It will also assess the impact of laws that were updated and enacted during the initiative's first phase.

The plans also include updating the guidelines on indicative timeframes for court proceedings, issuing regulations governing judicial procedures conducted electronically, and issuing guidelines for conducting remote court hearings.

During the 2026-2027 judicial year, the Supreme Judiciary Council will receive visitors at its various litigant service outlets according to specified working hours. All courts at the Lusail, Dafna and Al Sadd premises will operate from 7:30am to 1:30pm, while the Family Documentation Department at Hazm Al Markhiya, the council's branch in Al Khor and government service complexes will operate from 7:30am to 1pm.

The Enforcement Court will provide services in two shifts, from 7:30am to noon and from 12:30pm to 3pm, while electronic services will continue to be available through the courts' electronic portal and via WhatsApp.



Britain's Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband leaves 10 Downing Street in London. **(AFP/ File Photo)**

UK pledges major policy reset on Israel over West Bank settlement plan

AFP
London

Britain's top diplomat vowed yesterday to launch a major reset of policy towards Israel in the coming weeks, as he condemned "apalling settler terrorism" in the occupied West Bank.

Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband's pledge, during questioning by MPs in the UK parliament, follows weeks of increasing attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian villages in the occupied territory.

It also comes after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to keep establishing settlements in the West Bank despite mounting international pressure, promising a major wave of immigration to the occupied Palestinian territory.

Some of the violence by settlers in recent weeks had drawn rare condemnation from Netanyahu and unusually strong criticism from the US ambassador, as well as more typical critics in European capitals.

"We need a comprehensive reset of our policy," Miliband said yesterday.

"This government will not acquiesce in the destruction of the two-state solution. We will act, and I will set out a comprehen-

sive set of measures in the coming weeks."

He called the so-called E1 development plan for more than 1,200 homes greenlighted by Israel last year, "the crossing of a red line, as it cuts through the heart of the West Bank and risks making a Palestinian state unviable".

Miliband, son of Jewish refugees to Britain, was speaking in parliament as foreign secretary for the first time since being appointed to the role in mid-July by Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

Britain's top diplomat said the UK was "looking indeed at our wider economic relationship with the occupied territories" and "we do not want British companies financing, constructing, or advertising new settlements".

More than 500,000 Israelis live in settlements in the Palestinian territory — which are illegal under international law — among some three million Palestinians. Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967. Violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers has increased since the war in Gaza.

Addressing the spike in violence against Palestinians in recent weeks, Miliband said the world had "seen appalling settler terrorism and Palestinians driven from their homes".

EU mulls mission to train army of Lebanon

AFP
Wicklow, Ireland

The EU said yesterday it was looking to launch a mission to train the Lebanese army in the coming months — but said it would not replace the UN peace-keeping force.

The UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, UNIFIL, has roughly 7,500 personnel from nearly 50 countries, and has been in place since 1978.

Its presence has not prevented repeated outbreaks of conflict, with southern Lebanon seeing successive wars between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah.

In August last year, however, the UN Security Council, under US pressure, decided to end Unifil's mandate on December 31, 2026.

"Ministers discussed our plans for a new EU mission to advise and train the country's armed forces, including on border and maritime security," EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas said after a meeting of the bloc's defence ministers in Ireland.

"The EU is not seeking to replace Unifil, we are investing in Lebanon's capacity to provide security for itself."

Kallas said that "planning is progressing well" on the mission with some 10 countries expressing interest in participating.

She said the hope was to reach a formal decision to launch the mission in October. UN chief Antonio Guterres has said that peacekeepers will be needed in Lebanon after the mandate of the current mission expires.

France and Italy have previously said they want to set up a multinational coalition to succeed the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

The country became embroiled in the Middle East war after Hezbollah fired rockets at Israel on March 2, prompting a widespread Israeli bombing campaign.

Russian strikes kill 12 in Kyiv region

Reuters
Kyiv

Russian air attacks killed 12 people and injured many more in Kyiv and the surrounding region early yesterday, authorities said, in the sixth consecutive day of intense strikes on the Ukrainian capital.

Russia, which began its full-scale invasion of its smaller neighbour in 2022, has escalated its air attacks against Ukraine in recent months as its progress has slowed dramatically on the battlefield.

In a new tactic since last week, Moscow has sent swarms of drones to plague Kyiv and nearby areas day and night, killing residents and damaging homes and warehouses. Many of the drones are new, fast-flying jet-powered models that are harder to intercept.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Russian drones and ballistic missiles had targeted residential areas and railway infrastructure in the overnight attacks.

He called on Ukraine's allies to increase economic pressure on Russia, and to renew discussions about using Russia's frozen assets to provide funding for Ukraine's war effort.

"It is time to signal (to) the Kremlin that imitating diplomacy does not work anymore," Sybiha said in a post on X. He urged allies to provide Ukraine with more air defences, as it runs critically low on the US-made Patriot interceptors capable of stopping Russia's ballistic missiles.

Eight people were killed in Kyiv in overnight attacks, most of them railway workers, officials said. More explosions were heard on Tuesday morning, when a further three people were injured in a daytime drone attack that caused a fire at a high-rise apartment building, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

In Boryspil just outside Kyiv, four people were killed and a further 13 injured in an attack that hit a residential building and other sites, Governor Tymur Tkachenko said on Telegram. One of the dead outside Kyiv was an Indian citizen.



Residents sit at a site of an apartment building damaged by a Russian missile strike, in the town of Boryspil, Ukraine. **(Reuters)**

"There's the crater. My car was parked here, and the blast threw it over there," Yevhen Zavorodnyi, 44, told Reuters, pointing to a large crater in front of a building in Boryspil where residents were cleaning up. "But we're alive and well, thank God. My wife, my son and our dog," said Zavorodnyi, who moved his family recently from Sloviansk in eastern Ukraine.

The Russian strikes also targeted a border crossing with Nato-member Romania in the Black Sea region of Odesa. Thousands of families there were left without electricity, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Moscow has been pounding Ukrainian cities regularly during the war in largely overnight attacks. The new waves of daytime strikes have disrupted life in the capital. Russia attacked Ukraine with more than 2,800 jet-powered drones in August, air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said, after it increased their use fivefold in July compared with June.

Ukraine's air force said it had been able to shoot down five ballistic missiles. Kyiv recently received a small batch of Patriot interceptors.

Ukraine has also increased its attacks on Russia, targeting oil refineries and logistics infrastructure, including warehouses of on-

line shopping companies.

Russian regional governors said air attacks caused a fire in the port area of Ust-Luga, a major export outlet in the northwest, and damaged civilian facilities in the Samara region, home to a number of oil refineries.

A civilian was also killed in an attack on Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, the acting governor said. Estonia's defence forces said drones used in a Ukrainian strike against Russia had briefly entered Estonian airspace. Estonian Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur said the incident — the latest of a series in recent months — showed how important it was to support Ukraine with air defence assets.

Russia's defence ministry said Moscow hit military and energy facilities in Kyiv and Odesa overnight, as well as regions surrounding these cities.

US-led peace talks stalled this year as Ukraine refused Russian demands to cede territory and as Washington has become increasingly preoccupied with the conflict with Iran. Zelensky said on Monday he had held a "detailed and constructive" call with US President Donald Trump's envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, and that the sides were working to finalise dates for a visit to Ukraine.

Germany blames Russia for airport drone incident, hits back with sanctions

AFP
Berlin

Germany yesterday blamed Russia for an attempted "hybrid attack" involving an explosive-laden drone at a strategic airport last month and announced diplomatic counter-measures.

The European Union expressed "full solidarity" with Germany, Nato assured that it would defend its members and countries including Britain, Estonia and Poland offered strong backing.

Germany will close Russia's consulate in the former capital Bonn later this month, and cancel the contract for the Russian House, a cultural centre in Berlin, said Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul.

"We are tightening entry controls for Russian nationals" and Germany would propose the listing of more Russian individuals for European Union sanctions, he added, as the Russian ambassador to Berlin was being summoned.

Germany's top diplomat also vowed that "we are increasing pressure on the Russian shadow fleet" — a term for the old oil tankers and other cargo ships with opaque ownership Russia uses to get around Western sanctions.

Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt said that after assessing the drone technology used and other intelligence, "the government concludes that Russia is responsible for the hybrid attack in Leipzig on August 4". He blamed

"low-level agents" for the operation and said "the drone configuration — various components, explosives and ignition systems — are known to us from other hybrid operations by Russia and its war against Ukraine. "We do not view the Leipzig incident in isolation, but rather see it in the context of other hybrid actions," he said. "We assume that Germany is the target of further hybrid attacks by Russia. We are not at war, but we are a daily target of hybrid warfare."

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said the bloc stands in "full solidarity" with Germany, while Nato chief Mark Rutte said the alliance "will continue to strengthen our ability to deter and defend all Allies against any threat."

Sweden also summoned the

Russian ambassador in Stockholm over the incident, its Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson told a news conference, citing its allegiance to Germany and Ukraine.

Germany, which supports Ukraine in its fight against Russia, has for months reported suspicious drone sightings over military and industrial sites, but the Leipzig incident raised the alarm as a drone found there carried explosives.

Police used a robot to defuse the device near a Ukrainian cargo plane. Another drone was reportedly found weeks later near the airport, also with traces of an explosive substance.

The airport in eastern Germany plays a key role in the transport of military goods, including by the German military and Nato al-

lies, and also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines.

Chancellor Friedrich Merz said last week that Germany has "found itself in the crosshairs of hybrid attackers" and warned that the perpetrators would "pay for them", without naming a target.

There had been much discussion of whether Germany should shut down Berlin's Russian House, which security services believe is both a centre to spread propaganda and an intelligence hub.

The Russian House of Science and Culture, a seven-storey building opened in 1984 in what was then East Berlin, is located near the Russian embassy.

Conservative MP and security policy expert Roderich Kiesewetter recently told Welt TV that the

facility is assumed to be a hub for espionage. He said more than 100 people lived there "with no one knowing who they are" and that the building's power consumption is unusually high.

It was "presumably filled with technical surveillance equipment", he said, and used by "people who are not well-disposed towards Germany". In recent weeks, the German government had explained it was so far keeping the Russian House open by pointing to its bilateral contractual link to the Goethe Institute in Moscow.

Kiesewetter had dismissed concerns about Russian countermeasures. "Are we not closing it because we believe the Goethe Institutes in Russia would then be closed in retaliation?" he asked.

Finland steps up response to tackle Africa swine fever

The Finnish government said yesterday it had introduced measures to combat the spread of African swine fever as cases in the country have continued to rise since July. Harmless to humans, African swine fever (ASF) is a viral haemorrhagic disease with a mortality rate close to 100% in pigs and wild boar. The first dead wild boars infected with ASF were detected in Finland in late July, and as of 28 August, a total of 36 cases had been identified in southeastern Finland, according to the Finnish Food Authority.

"I am pleased that the entire government acknowledged that combating African swine fever is our shared challenge and also set out guidelines for addressing it," Agriculture and Forestry Minister Sari Essayah told reporters ahead of budget talks yesterday.

One measure introduced will see the financial reward for samples collected from wild boars hunted outside the infected area be raised from €50 (\$58) to €500 (\$580).

(AFP)

Nature's collapse



This photo taken yesterday shows a view over the Stubai Glacier near Neustift im Stubaital, Austria. By 2026, experts are increasingly speaking of structural disintegration regarding the state of Austria's glaciers. The latest glacier report (2024/25) reveals that the country's ice masses are no longer just shrinking; they are collapsing in their very substance. **(AFP)**

Dutch police arrest 34 after deadly shootout

AFP
The Hague

Dutch authorities said yesterday they had arrested 34 people, including French, Belgian and Algerian nationals, after a pre-dawn shootout reportedly linked to a notorious drug lord that claimed one life.

Police urged residents in the eastern Dutch town of Overasselt near the German border to stay indoors with doors and windows shut in case further suspects remained on the loose.

At around 4am, a group of heavily armed men with balaclavas approached a house in Overasselt and shots were fired, resulting in the death of a 51-year-old, reportedly a security guard.

Officers responding to the scene immediately came under fire, with two sustaining injuries that were not life-threatening, police spokeswoman Jolanda Aalbers told reporters.

Several weapons, data storage

devices, and vehicles were also seized, Aalbers said.

According to local media, the shootout was likely connected to the criminal underworld of Dutch drug lord Jos Leijdekkers, also known as "Bolle Jos" ("fat Jos").

Leijdekkers is one of the Netherlands' most wanted criminals and has previously been convicted for his role in international cocaine trafficking.

He is believed to be in Sierra Leone and is reportedly in a relationship with President Julius Maada Bio's daughter.

The Het Parool daily said the gunfight resulted from a conflict over several hundred kilos of cocaine thought to have been trafficked by Leijdekkers' gang.

Deputy Chief Prosecutor Monique Vinkesteijn told reporters there had been a shooting at the same house last year related to a "longstanding conflict" but did not reveal further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

"We know that the group currently in custody is international in nature," Vinkesteijn added.



A journey through Morocco, in Doha

A visual and sensory journey through the North African country unfolds at Dar Al Maghrib Pavilion in MIA Park

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Visitors to Doha's Museum of Islamic Art Park can step into Morocco without leaving Qatar, with the Dar Al Maghrib Pavilion offering an immersive journey through the country's history, traditions, craftsmanship, festivals and football heritage. Spread across 1,300 sqm near the Museum of Islamic Art, the pavilion takes visitors through a carefully designed series of spaces where ancient artefacts, traditional crafts, music, photography, film and interactive displays come together to tell the story of Morocco.

During a recent weekend visit, visitors could be seen moving slowly through the pavilion, stopping to examine displays, watch audiovisual presentations, and photograph some of the exhibition's intricate details. The name Dar Al Maghrib means "House of Morocco" in Arabic, and the pavilion lives up to its name by bringing different aspects of Moroccan culture together under one roof.

Inaugurated in November 2024 as a focal point of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, the pavilion was officially opened by Moroccan Princess Lalla Hasnaa, alongside Qatar Museums (QM) chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Inspired by Moroccan history and architecture, the pavilion itself forms part of the experience. Its design draws on the Ksar of Ait-Benhaddou, the famous fortified earthen village in Morocco's Ouarzazate province and a Unesco World Heritage site. Inside, Moroccan architectural and decorative traditions are reflected in details including zellige tile patterns and intricate wooden latticework. But the journey begins with something much older than Morocco's architectural heritage.

According to QM's Year of Culture, the "Land of Confluence" section explores Morocco's position at the crossroads of Africa, Europe and the wider Mediterranean world. The displays trace the country's story from some of the earliest human settlements through successive civilisations and historical periods, highlighting Morocco's longstanding role as a place where cultures, peoples and ideas have met.

Human origins

Among the displays are references to the remains of early Homo sapiens discovered at Jebel Irhoud, one of the most significant archaeological discoveries associated with human origins.

Another striking object is a copy of a Phoenician-style sphinx discovered at Lixus and dating to the fourth to third centuries BC.

The pavilion also looks beyond archaeology to Morocco's role in modern history. Photographs and other displays recall events including the first Islamic Summit in Rabat and the creation of the Organisation



Visitors examine interactive displays inside the Dar Al Maghrib Pavilion, located beside MIA, surrounded by Moroccan-inspired geometric patterns and historical imagery.

of the Islamic Conference, following the arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

A photograph of the Casablanca Conference on Africa, held in 1961, highlights another important chapter, in which independence and African solidarity were central themes at a meeting involving King Mohammed V and several African leaders. Historical stamps and photographs also document events ranging from the Pan-Arab Games in Casablanca to the Casablanca F1 Grand Prix.

Together, these displays underline one of the pavilion's central themes: Morocco as a meeting point between cultures and civilisations. From the Land of Confluence, visitors enter the "Land of Light", where the experience becomes more sensory. A traditional Moroccan courtyard provides an introduction to the country's tangible and intangible heritage, while audiovisual installations bring its landscapes, traditions and Unesco-recognised heritage sites to life.

The pavilion's craftsmanship is particularly difficult to miss. Traditional Moroccan clothing is displayed in vivid colours, with elaborate embroidery and decorative details demonstrating the skill and patience behind the country's textile traditions.

There are also displays of traditional musical instruments, offering another glimpse into Morocco's rich artistic heritage. Among them are the Moroccan oud, loutar, Gnaoua sintir, Arabo-Andalusian rebab, qanun, bandir, tarr, ney flutes and the copper neffar.

The instruments are presented not simply as objects but as part of a wider story about Morocco's musical traditions and the different cultural influences that have shaped them.

The pavilion also brings artisans into the experience through workshops and pop-up events, including hands-on encounters with traditional crafts, culinary demonstrations and live music performances.

The third section, the "Land of Gathering", shifts the focus from objects and history to people and cel-



ebrations. Here, visitors encounter Morocco's vibrant festival culture, including Fantasia, the centuries-old equestrian tradition in which equestrians perform choreographed displays at speed. Photographs and moving images capture the energy of the performances, with horses, riders, traditional clothing and ceremonial displays filling the screens.

The section also looks towards Morocco's future as a host of major international events, including the 2030 FIFA World Cup, which Morocco will co-host with Spain and Portugal.

The emphasis is not only on celebration but also on Morocco's role in welcoming the world and its ambitions around sustainability and environmental awareness.

For many visitors, particularly football fans, one of the pavilion's sections may prove the most familiar.

Football corner

"Land of Passion" explores Morocco's long relationship with football, tracing the sport's development in the country and the national team's journey. At the centre is "The Glorious Hours of the Morocco National Team", a display chronicling some of the landmark moments in Moroccan football.

The section recalls the country's early football clubs and traces the national team's major achievements, culminating in its historic run at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

For Qatar-based visitors, that part of the story carries a particular resonance. Morocco became the first African and Arab team to reach a World Cup semi-final, defeating Belgium, Spain and Portugal on its remark-



able run before eventually finishing fourth.

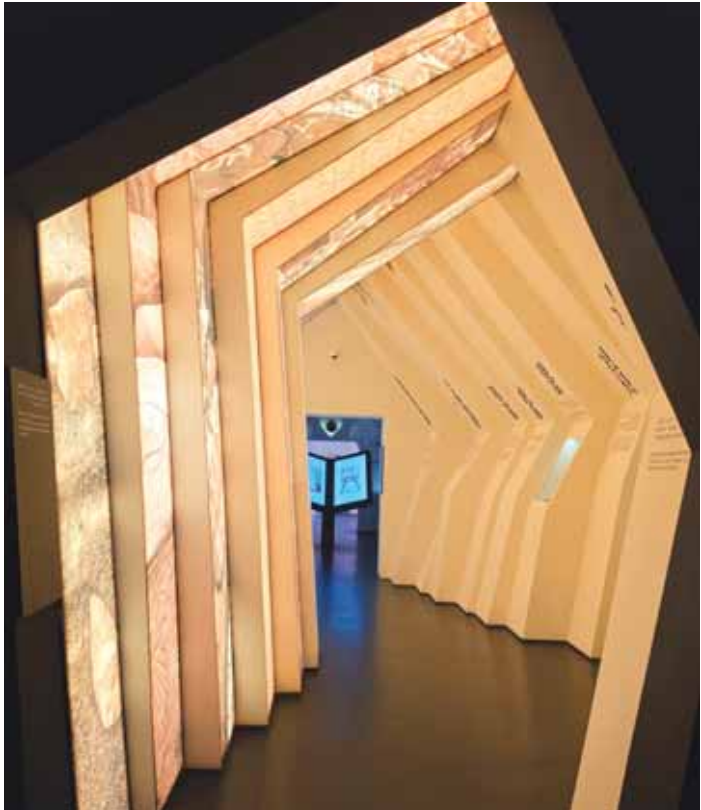
The pavilion also offers an interactive look at Morocco's preparations for the 2030 World Cup, connecting the country's football history with its future ambitions. Dar Al Maghrib also presents a broader portrait of Moroccan society.

One theme highlights Morocco as a "Land of Equality", outlining the country's efforts to advance women's rights and gender equality since independence, as well as reforms introduced under the leadership of King Mohammed VI.

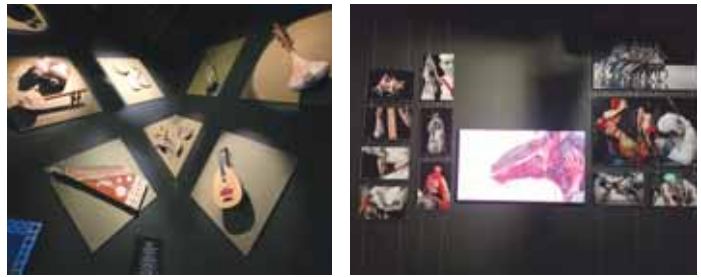
The pavilion allows visitors to take a piece of Morocco home. A curated gift shop offers handmade Moroccan products, including ceramics, textiles and other artisanal items.

For a visitor walking through its galleries, Morocco is presented not as a single historical narrative, but as a culture shaped by encounters — between peoples, continents, traditions and generations.

And for those spending a weekend in Doha, the pavilion offers a chance to experience that journey without having to board a plane.



The Dar Al Maghrib Pavilion at the Museum of Islamic Art Park offers visitors an immersive journey through Morocco's rich heritage, showcasing its history, traditional crafts, music, festivals, cultural traditions and football legacy, including its historic FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 campaign. **PICTURES:** Joey Aguilar



By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Local vegetable production is expected to hit retail markets starting in early October, with cucumbers, zucchini, hot peppers, and leafy vegetables among the first crops to reach consumers, followed by other varieties as the agricultural season progresses. According to the Arabic daily 'Arrayah', several local farm owners and managers noted that this year's agricultural season was delayed by about 20 days compared with normal schedules, mainly due to the intense heat and high humidity this summer, particularly for crops grown outdoors.

However, most farms have completed preparations for the new season, including soil preparation, greenhouse maintenance, and seedling planting.

Farmers have welcomed the support provided by the Ministry of Municipality, saying that the process has become more organised and accessible following the introduction of the "Raqmna" digital programme, where the system allows farmers to submit agricultural plans, request services and obtain advice on crops and diseases electronically, reducing the time and effort required to complete procedures.

Yet, rising production costs remain a major concern, as many farmers reported significant increases in fertiliser, seed, and pesticide prices, partly due to higher transportation



Variety of local veggies to hit the market in early Oct

costs and supply chain disruptions. They warned that rising input costs are putting additional pressure on farms, particularly when market prices fall sharply during periods of abundant supply.

Nasser al-Kuwari, owner of a farm, said preparations for the new season are progressing well, with land ready and some seedlings already planted and transferred to permanent growing areas. "Planting has started on a limited scale and will gradually expand as preparations for the season are completed," he said.

The farm has around 20 greenhouses, including five cooled units, allowing it to grow a variety of vegetables according to crop requirements and weather conditions. Its main products include tomatoes, eggplants, cowpeas and cucumbers. Al-Kuwari stressed the importance of expanding protected agriculture to strengthen local production and provide fresh produce to the market. He also called for continued support for Qatari farms, saying increased local production can help stabilise the market by boosting supply and reducing reliance on imports.

Ali al-Hanzab, farm owner, said most preparations have been completed, with the soil and irrigation network ready. Planting is expected to begin next week. The farm plans



to focus on a limited number of crops, including tomatoes, carrots, onions, eggplants, hot peppers and zucchini, to produce sufficient quantities to compete in the market rather than spreading production across too wide a variety. The farm plans to cooperate with several retail outlets to market its produce. It is also committed to allowing crops to develop naturally rather than using materials intended to accelerate growth.

"We prefer to give the plants enough time to grow naturally," he said, emphasising that the approach is intended to ensure the quality of the final product. Eng Saber al-Dahmani, a farm manager, said the summer heat and humidity had a significant impact on the start of the agricultural season.

"High temperatures and humidity, particularly since August 10, delayed planting operations significantly and affected plant growth on a large number of farms," al-Dahmani said, noting that eggplant planting would normally begin in early August, with the crop reaching markets by the end of the month. Cucumbers would typically begin appearing around September 10. However, this year both schedules were pushed back.

The farm has now begun planting zucchini and eggplant, along with melon and cucumber, as temperatures have moderated. Cucumber and eggplant planting in greenhouses is expected to continue in the coming days, while tomato seedlings will be planted from early September and transferred to greenhouses on October 1. The season will also include sweet peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage and other crops that are less tolerant of high temperatures.

Mohamed Ajlan al-Kaabi, farm owner, said preparations are underway, including soil preparation, fertiliser application and green-



house maintenance. The farm is preparing to receive strawberry seedlings imported from Jordan.

Strawberry production is not new to the farm, which has been growing the crop in climate-controlled greenhouses for about four years. The new season's plan includes regular and cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, hot and sweet peppers, with around five to six principal varieties. Seedlings will begin being transferred to greenhouses and permanent growing areas from September 20.

Strawberry production is expected to begin around 45 days after planting, while tomato production will take longer, with fruit expected in December. Other vegetables are expected to begin production in November. The farm produced approximately 175 to 180 tonnes of vegetables last season, most of it cucumbers. It also produced about 1.9 tonnes of honey. The farm operates around 17 greenhouses, 10 to 11 of which are cooled.

Basel al-Yafei, farm manager, said the farm has completed preparations and its seedlings are ready for transfer to permanent growing areas from September 20,

weather permitting. He said high temperatures and humidity delayed open-field planting by around two weeks. Crops such as tomatoes and eggplants had been scheduled for planting in mid-August, but weather conditions prevented this.

The farm produces a wide range of vegetables, including tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, cabbage, broccoli, peppers, cowpeas, corn, zucchini, okra, molokhia and various leafy vegetables. Eng Mohamed Mousa, farm manager, said the 2026 agricultural season has already begun, with farms implementing their planting plans and preparing crops for market. Planting began on August 15 with outdoor crops including melon, watermelon and zucchini, while cowpeas were planted in greenhouses.

The farm is already producing cucumbers and zucchini in cooled greenhouses and has begun supplying some of its produce to the central market. Mousa expects the new season's production to become more visible in markets from mid-October, with early crops including different varieties of eggplant, squash, melon and watermelon.