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 since 1978

Hamad Port anchors Qatar's food security

Since becoming operational in 2016, Hamad Port has undergone successive phases of development and expansion as part of Qatar's investment in ports and maritime transport.

A barista at a popular coffee shop along Old Airport Road said the evening hours have become an important part of the business, with customer traffic increasing noticeably after 5pm. **To Page 5**

The agency attributed the removal from watch to easing risks following the subsidence of threats to liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities. It projected that Qatar's economy will see a strong rebound driven by the resumption of gas exports and the onset of additional production from the North Field expansion, pushing growth into double digits by 2028 following a significant surge in production capacity from 2027. **To Page 5**

Discover the Future of Learning: AI in Education

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Qatar National Library (QNL) invites teachers, students, parents, and education enthusiasts to attend the Science Book Forum seminar, “AI in Education – How AI Changes the Way We Learn”, on September 9 from 10am to 11.30am in the Special Events Area.

The session will be delivered in English, with Arabic interpretation available.

This forum will introduce participants to the basic ideas behind artificial intelligence (AI), including rule-based systems, pattern recognition, and neural networks.

Through clear explanations, demonstrations, and discussion, the event will show how AI is already influencing classrooms and how it can be used responsibly to strengthen teaching and learning.

For teachers, AI can reduce time spent on routine tasks by helping to prepare lesson ideas,



quizzes, practice activities, and differentiated materials.

It can highlight patterns in student performance, suggest areas that need further attention, and support faster, more targeted feedback.

AI tools can also help educators adapt explanations for different ability levels, translate learning resources, and create more inclusive lessons.

By saving preparation time, teachers can focus more closely on mentoring, discussion, creativity, and meaningful interaction with their students.

For students, AI can provide personalised

practice, immediate feedback, and explanations presented in different ways.

Learners can use it to explore difficult concepts, improve language skills, generate study questions, and review material at their own pace.

When used thoughtfully, AI can encourage curiosity, independent learning, problem-solving, and confidence.

It may also offer additional support to students who need repetition, translation, or an alternative approach to understanding a topic.

The seminar will also address important questions about accuracy, privacy, bias, and academic integrity.

Participants will learn why AI-generated information must be checked, how to protect personal data, and why human judgement remains essential.

The aim is not to replace teachers or student effort, but to use technology as a supportive partner that expands opportunities while keeping people, values, and critical thinking at the centre of education.

Amir congratulates Italian PM

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, HH the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani, and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani have sent cables of congratulations to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on the occasion of her government becoming the longest-serving government in the history of the Italian republic, wishing her continued success and the bilateral relations between Qatar and Italy further progress and prosperity. - QNA

Kahramaa wins CSR award

The Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa) has achieved a new milestone by winning the Arab Corporate Social Responsibility Award 2026, presented by the Regional Network for Social Responsibility (RNSR), in recognition of its pioneering efforts and innovative initiatives in the fields of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability, as well as its commitment to institutional practices that create a positive and lasting impact on society and the environment.

Kahramaa received the award during a ceremony held in Bahrain, where it was accepted on behalf of the corporation by public relations and communication director Mohamed Ali Saleh al-Muhammadi.

The Arab Corporate Social Responsibility Award 2026 is one of the most prominent Arab awards specialising in corporate social responsibility and sustainability. - QNA



Qatar takes part in Arab League Council session

Qatar participated in the 166th session of the Arab League Council at the level of permanent representatives, which convened at the League's General Secretariat in Cairo yesterday.

This convention is a prelude to holding the ministerial-level session tomorrow.

Qatar's ambassador to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League Sheikh Jassim bin Abdulrahman bin Mohammed al-Thani led Qatar's delegation.

The agenda comprised political and socioeconomic matters, including the Palestinian cause, the Arab-Israeli conflict, developments and Israeli violations in occupied Jerusalem, and support for Palestine's budget, as well as condemnation of Iran's unlawful attacks against Arab nations.

The agenda further included other topics relevant to backing the sovereignty of Yemen, condemning Iranian violations of Yemen's sovereignty and the integrity of its airspace, the security of navigation and energy supplies in the Arabian Gulf region, in addition to the evolving situations in Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia and the Comoros.

In addition, the session addressed the two reports of the League's secretary-general on the activities of the General Secretariat and procedures for executing the decisions of the League Council between the two previous ordinary sessions (164 and 165), as well as the draft agenda of the Council at the summit level for its 35th ordinary session. - QNA

Ministry organises second ‘Ent Gadha’ to advance youth skills

The Ministry of Sports and Youth has organised the programme “Ent Gadha 2”, meaning “You Can Do It”, with the participation of 80 youths aged 14-18, over two days.

The programme was held as part of initiatives and activities aimed at developing youth skills, enhancing their personal and leadership capabilities, and promoting the values of teamwork, self-reliance, and responsibility.

The programme, which concluded yesterday, was organised in co-operation with the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association and Seif Al Ghariyah Youth Centre.

It focused on the concept of “learning by doing”, with participants taking part in a range of tasks and challenges requiring teamwork, planning, and decision-making, alongside water games, challenge activities, team competitions, and scouting programmes and skills.

These activities contributed to developing participants' capabilities and fostering teamwork and initiative.

The director of the Youth Centres and Institutions Department at the ministry, Fawaz al-Mseifri, said that the “Ent Gadha 2” programme offers a comprehensive youth experience combining

challenge, learning, and recreation through a diverse range of activities and practical experiences designed to suit the interests of the target age group.

He noted that the programme gives participants an opportunity to discover their abilities and develop skills in an interactive and stimulating youth environment.

Al-Mseifri added that the programme comes as part of the ministry's efforts to support high-quality youth programmes based on participation and practical experience, contributing to character building and skills development among young people.

The deputy director of Seif Al



Ghariyah Youth Centre, Ahmed al-Ansari, said the organisation of the second “Ent Gadha” programme reflects the centre's commitment to developing its programmes and building effective partnerships with various national entities and institutions.

Such partnerships, he added, contribute to providing young people with diverse experiences that combine enjoyment and learning while giving participants opportunities to discover their abilities and develop their skills.

The general commissioner of the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association, Ghanem al-Kuwari, said that co-operation in im-

plementing the “Ent Gadha 2” programme highlights the importance of partnership and integration between youth and scouting institutions in providing programmes that contribute to building young people's character and developing their capabilities.

He noted that scouting is fundamentally based on learning by doing and on fostering initiative, discipline, self-reliance, and teamwork.

The “Ent Gadha 2” programme builds on the previous edition, with its content further developed and a range of new experiences, challenges, and scouting activities added. - QNA

Peruvian minister meets Qatar's ambassador



Peru's Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Espina held a meeting with Qatar's ambassador Abdullah bin Jassim al-Ziyara, during which they discussed bilateral relations and co-operation between the two countries. - QNA

Registration for AJMI's four-month Digital Media Diploma course opens

Al Jazeera Media Institute (AJMI)'s e-learning platform has announced the opening of registration for the third edition of Al Jazeera's Digital Media Diploma.

The current edition offers a four-month learning journey, comprising seven courses in addition to a final graduation project, with the training kicking off on October 1.

The first course, “Mobile phone: a tool for digital journalistic storytelling”, explores how to use the smartphone to produce inspiring journalistic stories – from filming and conducting interviews through to editing and publishing.

The second course, titled “Digital story lab: between human creativity and artificial intelligence”, will enable trainees to discover the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in developing ideas and producing digital content, while introducing the principles of using AI tools in a professional and ethical way.

The third course, “Explanatory stories: how to explain complexity with simplicity”, focuses on skills for simplifying information and complex top-

ics, and turning them into clear, engaging stories that help audiences understand.

The fourth course, “Platform language: how do you write for social media audiences?”, provides interactive writing tools for different social media platforms, considering the nature of each platform and the characteristics of its audience.

The fifth course, “From idea to publication: podcasting as an industry”, covers the stages of producing podcast content – from developing the idea and preparing content, through recording and postproduction, to publishing and reaching audiences.

The sixth course, “The digital investigator: how do you build your evidence from open sources?”, introduces participants to the basics of research and verification, and how to draw on open sources in constructing evidence based digital stories and investigations.

The seventh course, “How do you manage your digital presence? Building platform strategies”, focuses on planning digital presence, managing platforms and building strategies aligned with institutional goals and audience needs.

Call for a unified hotline for disability services

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

A unified mechanism should be adopted and introduced to help the persons with special needs and their families navigate the growing range of services available in the country for them, a group of experts and disability advocates has suggested.

They proposed establishing a national disability services hotline as a human-access point complementing the already available digital platforms.

They said such a service could provide families with accurate, up-to-date information on the available programmes, eligibility requirements and referral procedures, while connecting beneficiaries directly with the appropriate institution.

Such proposal comes amid significant developments in Qatar's disability policy.

Law No. 22 of 2025 on Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in October 2025, establishes rights covering education, healthcare, rehabilitation, employment, accessibility and social participation.

The law also requires co-ordination among the relevant authorities and the provision of reasonable accommodations and accessible services.

The Third National Development Strategy 2024-30 has set a target of 30% economic activity among persons with disabilities, alongside plans to expand social centres serving them.

Further, the government has expanded digital access for such category of people.

In December 2025, the Ministry of Social Development and Family launched Yusr, a national digital platform intended to improve access to information and services for persons with disabilities, families, caregivers and service providers.

Head of the Volunteer Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities, Khalid al-Shoaiabi, said a unified national hotline could be an important step but would not, on its own, resolve the fragmentation of services.

He said that a person with a disability may simultaneously require healthcare, rehabilitation, education, social support, training and employment services, often provided by different institutions.

The priority is to establish a system allowing beneficiaries to move smoothly between services.

“We should not ask persons with disabilities or their families to search for and move between these institutions and try to find out who is responsible for each service,” al-Shoaiabi said. “The institutions should co-operate with one another, rather than placing the responsibility for co-ordination on the person and their family.”

He also called for a shared, regularly updated database, clear referral procedures and specialist teams capable of following cases that require services from multiple institutions.

Talib Afifa, acting executive director of the Qatar Society for the Rehabilitation of Special Needs, said the number of service providers can itself become an obstacle, particularly for families unfamiliar with the system.

He added that a unified hotline could re-

ceive enquiries, identify the beneficiary's needs and direct the family to the appropriate institution instead of requiring them to contact multiple organisations.

Afifa stressed that the services should provide more than a telephone number, as it should be supported by a comprehensive database detailing available services, responsible entities and eligibility and application procedures.

Omayya Osman, general manager of the Autism Parents Platform, said a unified hotline could make a major difference, particularly for newly diagnosed families and those arriving in Qatar for the first time.

Families may initially have basic but critical questions about where to go and what steps to take following an autism diagnosis, she said, so a single point of contact could provide a clear starting point and direct families towards appropriate services.

Osman noted that everyday healthcare challenges, including finding dentists experienced in treating autistic children and accessing laboratory services such as blood sampling, which can be particularly difficult when staff are not trained to accommodate children's communication and behavioural needs.

Najat Ali, a community-responsibility activist, said fragmented information remains a significant challenge, especially when families need an urgent service or accurate guidance.

She argued that improving access should be a shared responsibility involving government agencies, private institutions, specialist centres, associations, media organisations and civil society.

Five dead sea turtles spotted in open waters off Al Wakrah



The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC)'s Marine Protection Department has recorded the deaths of five sea turtles in the open waters off the coast of Al Wakrah during the ongoing marine monitoring and patrol operations carried out by the ministry to assess the condition of the marine environment and its wildlife.

QIB introduces new suite of features to its mobile app

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has introduced a new suite of features across the QIB Mobile App, reinforcing its commitment to continuously enhancing customers' digital banking experience through practical, customer-centric innovation. The latest enhancements are designed to provide customers with greater convenience, faster access to services, and more intuitive digital interactions, further strengthening QIB's position as a leader in digital banking innovation in Qatar.

As part of the updates, QIB has introduced an 'Advanced Search' feature within the QIB Mobile App, enabling customers to quickly locate services and functionalities using keywords or category names. The new capability significantly improves navigation within the app, allowing users to access the more than 320 offered features more efficiently while saving time.

The bank has further introduced a redesigned 'Credit Card Overview' section, offering customers a clearer and more engaging way to explore the benefits and features associated with their QIB credit cards. The enhanced section provides cardholders with easier access to their card benefits and offers, helping them



make the most of their cards locally and internationally.

In line with its customer-centric approach, QIB has introduced an in-app 'Customer Survey' capability, enabling customers to conveniently share satisfaction ratings and feedback directly through the QIB Mobile App. The new feature supports the bank's ongoing efforts to gather customer insights, continuously improve digital services, and further enhance the overall banking experience.

D Anand, QIB general manager – Personal Banking Group, said: "At QIB, we remain focused on continuously enhancing our digital banking ecosystem through solutions that are practical, accessible, and aligned with our customers' evolving expectations. These latest enhancements to the QIB Mobile

App further simplify everyday banking, provide customers with greater convenience and control, and reinforce our commitment to delivering an easy and innovative digital banking experience."

QIB continues to advance its digital strategy by expanding the features of its award-winning mobile app, which offers more than 320 integrated features and services. The QIB Mobile App enables customers to conveniently manage accounts, cards, transfers, financing, and a wide range of banking services remotely through a secure, easy, and fully digital experience.

Available on the App Store, Google Play, and Huawei AppGallery, customers can download the QIB Mobile App and self-register using their QID and PIN. For further information, visit www.qib.com.qa.



QC celebrates giving on Int'l Day of Charity

By a Staff Reporter
Doha

Qatar Charity marked the International Day of Charity, observed annually on September 5, celebrating the value of charity and the idea of giving. Qatar Charity highlighted an event in Ghana, as one of the most compelling stories illustrating the meaning of generosity.

Dr Hakeem owned land in a strategic location in Accra, the capital. Although he received offers from traders and investors to sell it, he chose a different path. In 2024, after learning about Qatar Charity's projects in his country, he donated the land to the organisation, convinced that his property could serve a wider public benefit if placed at the community's disposal.

The site helped make possible the establishment of an office and community complex featuring educational, social and service facilities. In another example in Gaza, Arkan Jomaa needed an opportunity to rebuild his life.

The four-year-old lost his par-

Qatar Charity highlights most compelling stories illustrating the meaning of generosity

ents and sister and sustained injuries in a bombing that resulted in the loss of his leg. After being evacuated to Jordan with his uncle, he began treatment and rehabilitation and started preparing to receive a prosthetic limb, with support from Qatar Charity in co-operation with the Restoring Hope Society in Jordan.

For Arkan, the journey captures another dimension of giving. Assistance does not end with medical treatment; it extends to restoring mobility and helping a young child reclaim something of the childhood taken from him by war. From mobility to water, the need changes, but its essence remains the same: ensuring that what is provided can improve everyday life.

In Senegal, Qatar Charity implemented water and sanitation projects in several areas. These included 246 wells and 49 water tanks for vulnerable families in Touba, alongside projects in other locations. With a total cost exceeding QR4mn, the initiative benefited more than 70,000 people.

In Sri Lanka, the path to a better life lay in restoring sight. Qatar Charity implemented a health initiative that included 300 cataract surgeries and the provision of 555 prescription eyeglasses, including 150 pairs for schoolchildren. The initiative targeted low-income families, older people, and children with vision problems.

When floods struck Nepal, Qatar Charity moved swiftly to address urgent needs, providing 30 tonnes of staple food supplies, along with hygiene items and emergency shelter materials. The assistance reached thousands of people affected by the disaster.

In such circumstances, speed of delivery becomes part of the value of the assistance itself. Food, shelter, and hygiene supplies are not optional extras when families have lost their homes and essential resources; they are needs that cannot be postponed.

Doha Festival City wins 'Best Mall' award for Hala Summer campaign

Doha Festival City, Qatar's leading retail and lifestyle destination, has been crowned 'Best Mall' as part of Visit Qatar's Hala Summer Shopping Festival Awards. The accolade recognises the mall's exceptional contribution to the national initiative, driven by its outstanding visitor engagement, guest turnout, and innovative marketing. This recognition reflects Doha Festival City's enduring partnership with Visit Qatar and its ongoing commitment to delivering unparalleled, world-class experiences that support the country's tourism and retail landscape, while contributing to its long-term socioeconomic vision. The mall experienced remarkable footfall throughout the summer season and brought the community together with a curated lineup of immersive family entertainment, including an exclusive Disney's Moana activity installation, vibrant street parades, a high-stakes Shop & Win campaign, and a rich range of daily shows.



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Expert calls for unified digital sick-leave platform in Qatar

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Expert and consultant in therapeutic and community nutrition Moudhi al-Hajri has called for a unified national platform to issue and transmit sick-leave certificates electronically, arguing that the system would strengthen document security, streamline administration and support Qatar's wider digital transformation.

In an interview with *Gulf Times*, al-Hajri said that sick leave should be treated as an official record tied to employees' rights, workplace discipline and the protection of public funds.

"With Qatar's continuing digital transformation, an important question arises:

why do some organisations still rely on paper certificates when electronic systems have proved successful elsewhere in the public health sector?" she asked.

Employees of the Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation already have sick-leave certificates transmitted directly to human-resources systems, eliminating paper submission and manual review.

Other government bodies and schools, however, continue to process certificates by hand, creating inconsistent procedures and greater exposure to document fraud.

Al-Hajri noted that sick leave may only be issued by an authorised physician, including a family doctor, emergency physician or specialist.

Protecting the certificate after it is is-

sued is therefore as important as verifying its source, particularly as artificial intelligence (AI) tools make document manipulation easier.

She proposed a national electronic platform linked to each person's identification number.

Health institutions would send certificates directly to employers' human-resources departments or, in the case of students, to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the relevant school, removing the need for employees, students or guardians to carry paper copies.

Beyond curbing fraud, al-Hajri said, the system could speed up processing, standardise government services, reduce paper use and ease administrative workloads.

A secure national database, she added, could also support health and workforce planning while preserving the confidentiality of medical information.

Periodic, anonymised reporting could help authorities track sick-leave trends, plan services and identify unusual patterns for review.

Al-Hajri said that any use of AI should be governed by safeguards that protect employees' rights and personal data.

The proposed platform could later expand to other types of official leave, including maternity and paternity leave, leave to accompany a patient, and absences related to workplace injuries, creating an integrated national system for managing government leave.

"True digital transformation is not simply about putting services online;



Moudhi al-Hajri

it is about building connected systems that prevent tampering, protect official records, save time and strengthen public confidence," al-Hajri said. "A government document should not be carried by hand when it can be transmitted securely through a digital system."

Zero Waste drive promotes rational consumption and circular economy

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Zero Waste campaign has progressed from an awareness initiative into a broader public effort to reduce waste, increase recycling and promote a circular economy.

The campaign, launched by the Minis-



try of Municipality in February 2022, was designed to encourage community participation, responsible consumption and investment in recycling, while supporting the environmental and sustainable-development objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

Accordingly, the focus of the campaign is increasingly shifting from just raising public awareness to foster practical changes in the way waste is generated, collected, sorted and processed, in addition to expanding recycling infrastructure, using smart technologies and turning waste into energy and other useful resources.

Qatar's 2025 Voluntary National Review reported that the Domestic Solid Waste Management Centre processes more than 2,300 tonnes of waste daily.

In 2023, around 24,878 tonnes of municipal waste were recycled.

In March 2026, the ministry renewed its call for residents to adopt waste separation, stressing that sorting at home can help reduce pollution and carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, protect natural resources and reduce the volume of waste sent to landfills.

The ministry identified materials including plastics, paper, metals and organic waste as categories that can be separated at source.

The programme has continued to expand geographically: in Al Rayyan Municipality alone, the number of blue recycling bins had reached 16,127 by June 2026, following the distribution of another 1,117 blue bins and an equal number of grey bins for organic waste.

The phased rollout is intended to give households a practical mechanism for participating in the country's recycling system.

Earlier, the ministry reported that around 11,000 recycling containers had been distributed in Doha, collecting around 2,183 tonnes of recyclable materials.

A further 12,226 containers were distributed in Al Rayyan and northern areas in co-operation with private-sector companies.

In September 2025, the ministry announced a smart-container project, initially implemented in Al Wakrah, with plans for gradual expansion to other areas.

Smart waste-management systems improves collection efficiency, enabling authorities to monitor container status and optimise collection routes, cutting vehicle movements and operating costs.

Similarly, the ministry reported that more than 835,000 tonnes of waste were processed at transfer stations during 2024.

The resulting operations generated more than 40,000 megawatt-hours of energy,



produced approximately 27,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser and recovered around 277,000 tonnes of recyclable materials.

Further, the ministry reported that more than 28,000 tonnes of sorted materials were supplied free of charge to private-sector companies, while 51 plots of land were allocated in the Al Afjah area and 30 investment opportunities were launched to support recycling-related activities.

Dukhan Bank returns as 'Supporting Partner' of Seashore Phoenix Games

Dukhan Bank has announced its return as a "Supporting Partner" of the Seashore Phoenix Games for the fourth consecutive year.

Now in its sixth edition, the Seashore Phoenix Games is a functional fitness championship organised by Erada Fitness, bringing together athletes to compete in a series of challenges that test strength, endurance, and overall fitness.

The 2026 edition will take place at Aspire Ladies Sports Hall in Aspire Zone, with the men's competition running on September 10-12, followed by the women's competition on September 13-14.

The championship will feature six individual and team categories across the men's and women's competitions, providing a platform for athletes from Qatar, the region, and beyond to compete at a high level.

The event will also recognise leading Qatari athletes alongside the overall winners across the competition categories.

"Over the past four years, the Seashore Phoenix Games has provided an important platform for Qatar's growing fitness community, bringing together athletes who share a commitment to determination, discipline, and personal achievement," said Dukhan Bank chief marketing and communications officer Talal Ahmed al-Khaja.

"At Dukhan Bank, we are pleased to continue supporting an event that encourages active lifestyles, creates opportunities for athletes to challenge themselves, and contributes positively to the wider community," he said. "We look forward to another successful edition and wish all participating athletes the very best."

Workshop held for firms operating in refrigeration, air-conditioning sector

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) has organised an awareness workshop for companies operating in the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector.

The workshop, which introduced the requirements and application process for obtaining support to establish an accredited centre for the reclamation of refrigerants and air-conditioning gases, was held in co-operation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

The workshop is part of the ministry's efforts to promote the sustainable management of refrigerants, fulfill Qatar's obligations under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, and implement the National Plan for the Phase-out of Ozone-Depleting Substances.

It reviewed the project's objectives, application requirements for companies, and the anticipat-



ed stages of implementation, as well as the proposed mechanisms for establishing and operating the centre.

The centre will specialise in reclaiming recovered refrigerants from refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment by processing them and restoring them to the specifications of new products in accordance with internationally approved standards.

This will enable their safe re-

use while reducing the release of ozone-depleting substances and greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The MoECC, in co-operation with UNIDO, has announced the opening of applications to select a company that meets the requirements to receive the technical support and equipment needed to establish the centre and carry out reclamation operations.



GULF HELICOPTERS COMPANY (GHC) Q.P.S.C.

Invites prospective suppliers to participate in the following tender

Tender Reference and Description	Submission of information & willingness for bidding	Tender fee (non-refundable)	Tender Publication	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
RFQ-GHC/SCO/037/2026 Provision of Medical Insurance for GHC Staff & Dependents (3 Years)	Until 10 th September 2026	QAR 1500/- Until 13 th September 2026 12:00 pm (Noon Doha Time)	15 th September 2026	QAR 200,000.00	4 th October 2026 12:00pm (Noon Doha Time)
RFQ-GHC/SCO/039/2026 Provision of Group Life and Personal Accident Insurance for GHC Staff (3 Years)	Until 10 th September 2026	QAR 750/- Until 13 th September 2026 12:00 pm (Noon Doha Time)	15 th September 2026	QAR 40,000.00	4 th October 2026 12:00pm (Noon Doha Time)

Brief Scope: GHC invites reputable, licensed, and qualified insurance service providers in the State of Qatar to submit competitive bids for two distinct insurance policies:

- RFQ-GHC/SCO/037/2026 - Medical Insurance: Providing 24/7 comprehensive primary worldwide medical coverage (including direct billing) in Qatar across premier hospitals and dedicated coverage options across all outstations for GHC employees and their eligible dependents.
- RFQ-GHC/SCO/039/2026 - Group Life and Accident Insurance: Delivering 24/7 worldwide coverage for death due to any cause, accidental death, permanent total/partial disability, temporary total disability, medical expenses, and repatriation of mortal remains for all GHC employee categories.

i. Interested bidders to communicate their willingness to bid and send contact details to GHC email (procurement@qulhelicopters.com) indicating company name, address, telephone, official email, authorized company representative, etc. latest by 10th September 2026. GHC tender reference numbers and description must be mentioned in the email.

ii. Non-refundable tender fee is payable to GHC, only through QNB account # 0013-036531-001 IBAN # QA80QNBAA00000000013036531001 via online or at any QNB branch. Interested bidders shall attach the evidence of the tender fee payment and send it via bidder company official email to GHC email: procurement@qulhelicopters.com, latest by 13th September 2026, 12:00 pm for GHC approval.

iii. Tender package will be sent via email to the confirmed participants from tender@qulhelicopters.com by 15th September 2026. GHC shall provide the necessary instructions and guidelines for the bid submission.

iv. Original of the Tender Bond (Bank Guarantee) must be submitted by hand to the following address:

Gulf Helicopters Company,
P O Box: 811, Al Areeesh Street,
Ras Abu Abboud, Doha, Qatar
Tel: +974 44 333 888
Attention: Supply Chain Manager

Attach a copy of tender bond to the technical offer. Offer without Tender Bond will not be considered.

v. For any clarifications on the above, please send your queries with tender reference and description addressed to Supply Chain Mail to email procurement@qulhelicopters.com

vi. For the submissions of technical and commercial proposals shall be submitted exclusively to tender@qulhelicopters.com

Note: Bidders who are not registered in GHC will be requested to complete the supplier registration process during the tendering period.



Rescue operations for boy trapped in well

AFP
Algiers

Rescuers were working yesterday to free a 10-year-old boy who fell into an 80m well in southwestern Algeria, civil protection authorities said.

The rescue operation has drawn widespread attention across the

country, and social media has been awash with calls to save the boy, whom authorities have identified only as Ayoub.

Teams have been working for four days to reach Ayoub after he fell into the well near his home in the desert municipality of Brezina in El Bayadh province, some 550km south of Algiers.

Rescuers said they were strug-

gling to reach him because he was "trapped beneath a layer of soil".

The civil protection said the well was dry and dug using traditional methods, and was only 40cm in diameter, which made efforts to rescue Ayoub difficult.

Images released by authorities and local media showed heavy machinery digging a large pit alongside the well to reach the boy.



MoECC organises workshop for ‘Bizrah’ student teams competition – Fall 2026

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change – Planning, Quality and Innovation Department – has organised a brainstorming workshop for the “Bizrah” (Seed) Student Teams Competition (Fall 2026), with the participation of Qatar University.

The workshop is aimed to discuss a number of environmental challenges and draw on specialised expertise in preparation for presenting them to the student teams participating in the competition. It opened with welcoming remarks by Aisha Ahmed al-Baker, director of the Planning, Quality and Innovation Department at the Ministry of Environment and Cli-

mate Change (MoECC).

She stressed the importance of leveraging the academic knowledge and creative capabilities of Qatar University students in addressing environmental challenges related to government operations, while providing them with an opportunity to put forward innovative ideas and solutions.

Al-Baker explained that the workshop seeks to benefit from the expertise of participants in analysing, identifying, and clearly defining the challenges, enabling student teams to understand and study them while preserving sufficient space for students to develop appropriate solutions independently, without directing

them toward predetermined approaches or solutions.

This, she noted, would broaden the range of potential ideas and solutions.

The workshop was held as part of the cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and Qatar University to organise the “Bizrah” Student Teams Competition during the Fall 2026 semester. The competition aims to harness students’ knowledge, skills, and innovative capabilities to study a number of environmental challenges and develop technological solutions and awareness-raising ideas that contribute to supporting sustainability and enhancing community impact.



Abandoned vehicles removed from wild area

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change’s Wildlife Protection Department has spotted 18 abandoned vehicles in several wild desert areas across the country as part of its land-waste monitoring system.

Accordingly, the necessary measures were taken to remove the abandoned vehicles in co-operation and co-ordination with the Joint Committee for the Removal of Abandoned Vehicles and Machinery, as part of the

integrated efforts of the relevant authorities to preserve the public appearance of wilderness areas and reduce waste and abandoned vehicles, which have a negative impact on the local environment.

Meanwhile, the ministry is set to continue its field efforts to monitor violations and waste in wilderness areas and remove them, contributing to the protection and cleanliness of the environment and the sustainable use of its natural resources.



Awqaf unveils AI Qur’an app

From Page 1

By embedding this capability, the ministry aims to lower barriers to study and encourage more frequent, informed interaction with the scripture.

For students of hifz, the upgrade introduces a structured memorisation and revision system that tracks progress at the verse level. The app allows users to set personalised revision plans, mark completed sections and view achievement metrics, creating a clear visual record of consistency over time. These functions are intended to help learners maintain momentum, identify gaps in retention and stay motivated through measurable milestones.

The refreshed platform also bundles an extensive audio and interpretation library. Listeners can access full recitations by leading reciters from across the Islamic world, alongside a curated selection of Qatari voices, all within a single interface.

On the study side, the app hosts a wide range of authoritative commentaries, including the works of Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi, giving users ready access to classical exegesis to deepen their understanding and contemplation of the text.

Beyond core Qur’anic functions, the application includes practical tools for daily religious practice. A digital tasbeeh counter supports dhikr routines, while a built-in Qibla finder helps users orient themselves for prayer. The smart interface also displays a live countdown to the next prayer

time, integrating worship planning into the everyday use of the app.

A new documentation section traces the history and development of Mushaf Qatar from its earliest conceptual stages through writing, proofreading, printing and eventual launch. This archive highlights the scale of scholarly and technical work invested in the project, offering users context on the rigorous processes that underpin the digital text they are engaging with.

Assistant Undersecretary for Islamic Affairs and Chairman of the Mushaf Qatar Committee, Khalid Shaheen al-Ghanem, said the launch reflects the ministry’s commitment to expanding and improving digital services related to the Holy Qur’an. He emphasised that the application was designed using the latest technological standards to deliver a more convenient and efficient user experience, describing it as a natural extension of Mushaf Qatar’s longstanding mission to provide reliable, authoritative educational content in service of the scripture.

The Mushaf Qatar upgrade sits within a wider wave of digital initiatives from Awqaf, including recent launches such as the Meshka platform for religious services and the Hader app for mosque operations. Together, these projects signal a coordinated effort to digitise access to guidance, streamline administrative processes and enhance the overall quality of religious services available to the public in Qatar.

Interior minister meets Sudanese counterpart



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met with Minister of Interior of Sudan Lt Gen (Police) Babiker Samra Mustafa. During the meeting, they discussed the cooperation between the two countries and ways to support and further develop them, particularly in the security fields. They also discussed several issues of mutual interest. (QNA)

When workday ends, Doha’s economy begins another shift

From Page 1

“Evening hours are very important for us. We see a noticeable increase in customers, particularly people coming after work, families and groups of friends,” the barista said, noting that the proportion of the coffee shop’s daily customer traffic at night time varies by day.

Thursday and Friday evenings are typically the strongest, the barista said, as people have more free time to meet friends and spend time with their families. Demand also increases during the cooler months, when residents are more comfortable spending time outdoors and travelling between destinations.



PICTURES: Joey Aguilar and Shaji Kayamkulam

“In areas like Old Airport, people already live and work nearby, so cafés can attract both residents and customers who are stopping by after work. The evening becomes a natural time for people to meet and spend time in these areas,” the barista said.

The evening economy is developing alongside Qatar’s broader expansion of tourism, leisure and experience-led retail.

Qatar welcomed 5.1mn international visitors in 2025, up 3.7% from the previous year, while hotel room nights sold rose 8.6% to 10.84mn, according to Qatar Tourism’s 2025 annual performance report. The authority also recorded more than 600 events during the year, supporting activity across hospitality, retail and leisure.

Knight Frank’s Qatar real estate research points to a retail market increasingly shaped by lifestyle and experience. In the third quarter of 2025, average monthly rents at lifestyle-oriented retail destinations rose 11% year-on-year to QR268 per square metre.

The consultancy said events and activations were generating spikes in footfall at destinations including Doha Festival City, Place Vendôme and Msheireb Downtown, while food and beverage rents remained resilient at about QR228 per square metre despite tighter margins.

The development of lifestyle-oriented destinations is also

changing what businesses want from their customers.

Instead of simply completing a transaction and leaving, visitors are increasingly encouraged to spend more time at a destination by combining shopping with dining, coffee, entertainment and socialising.

Knight Frank’s research highlights the growing importance of dwell time, with events, entertainment, dining and public spaces being used to increase footfall and encourage visitors to stay longer.

That model is visible across Doha. Traditional commercial areas such as Al Sadd, Salwa Road, Najma and Old Airport continue to serve neighbourhood demand. In contrast, newer destinations such as Msheireb Downtown, The Pearl and Lusail offer a broader mix of retail, dining, leisure and public spaces.

For businesses, the distinction is significant. A customer who spends two or three hours in a commercial destination represents a different opportunity from someone who enters a shop for 20 minutes. Longer visits can generate spending across several businesses and make the surrounding area more attractive to retailers, restaurants and leisure operators.

The evening is therefore becoming an important part of that equation.

The pattern is not limited to restaurants and cafés. Supermarkets, retail outlets, salons, automotive businesses and entertainment venues also operate beyond standard office hours, allowing



Dining out remains another reason to go out in the evening, with Salvador saying she enjoys exploring new restaurants from time to time.

Qatar Tourism’s events calendar also highlights the breadth of evening activity, spanning food and beverage, lifestyle, exhibitions, festivals, music, sports and family events.

Meanwhile, the barista said improving parking and pedestrian access around busy commercial areas could further support evening businesses by encouraging customers to visit multiple establishments in a single outing.

“When customers can park easily or walk safely between cafés, restaurants and shops, they are more likely to stay longer and visit more than one business,” the barista said, adding that more evening events and activities could also help increase footfall.

The trend is expected to remain important as Doha’s retail, dining and leisure landscape expands.

“People’s routines are changing, and there is a strong culture of meeting for coffee or food after work. As Doha develops more restaurants, retail outlets and leisure destinations, people have more reasons to stay out in the evening,” the barista said.

For businesses, the evening is no longer simply the final few hours of the working day. It is becoming a distinct trading period, shaped by when customers are free, where they choose to spend their time and how long they stay.

Qatar keeps AA rating: Fitch lifts negative watch

From Page 1

Fitch projected that the state budget will return to surplus by 2027, widening further the following year, supported by the launch of the Golden Pass LNG facility in the US. The agency noted that the banking sector has shown remarkable resilience despite regional conditions.

It emphasised that Qatar has one of the highest per capita income levels in the world alongside massive sovereign assets, forecasting that its net sovereign foreign assets will reach about 254.2% of GDP by the end of 2026. The country remains a net external creditor, backed by a high global governance score and a record spanning more than 20 years without any debt restructuring.

QatarEnergy is executing the North Field East project to raise LNG production capacity from 77mn tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 110 mtpa, the first phase of the country’s LNG expansion plan.

The North Field South project, the second phase of that plan, will lift capacity from 110 mtpa to 126 mtpa.

QatarEnergy announced in late March that the Golden Pass LNG project, a joint venture with ExxonMobil, had reached a major milestone towards full commissioning of its production and export facilities with first LNG output from the first of three trains, with a total capacity of 18mn tonnes per annum.

In May, S&P Global Ratings and Moody’s Ratings affirmed Qatar’s sovereign credit ratings at AA and Aa2 respectively, with stable outlooks. Both noted that the state’s massive financial assets would help mitigate the fallout from the US-Israeli war on Iran. (QNA)

Qatar eyes role of global hub in research-driven paediatric care

From Page 1

“Genomic analysis can also reveal risks that may not yet have produced symptoms, including potential cancer risks, allowing physicians and families to take a more proactive approach to healthcare. These are the kinds of things where precision medicine really comes in handy,” he added.

The shift towards preventive and proactive medicine now underpins the research programme aimed at sequencing newborns.

“Sidra Medicine began the initiative as a research project and is now looking at how it could eventually be introduced as a clinical programme. The objective is to sequence a newborn’s genome and identify genetic risks that could lead to health problems during the first five years of life, a critical window for intervention,” he said.

Rather than focusing on diseases that may emerge decades later, he said, the programme would concentrate on conditions where early identification could allow doctors to intervene during childhood.

“If I read the whole genome, I can predict based on the genome what problems they might have that I can intervene in. The

programme illustrates a broader pathway in which medical innovation begins in the research environment. It is validated on a smaller scale and can eventually be transferred into routine hospital care and potentially a national programme,” he said.

If the approach proves successful, he suggested, newborn genomic sequencing could ultimately be adopted more broadly across Qatar.

Prof Fakhro said the overarching objective for Sidra Medicine is to narrow the gap between scientific discovery and clinical care.

“Research programmes can begin with a small number of patients under controlled conditions and grant-supported funding. Successful projects can then progress into clinical programmes and eventually into broader healthcare policy,” he said.

He pointed out that the newborn genome sequencing initiative is one example of this model, while advanced genomic therapies represent another.

“Sidra Medicine’s broader goal is to establish a culture of academic medicine in which research is not separate from healthcare but is integrated directly into diagnosis, treatment and patient care,” he added.

White House reviews options to replace Hegseth’s deputy

Reuters
Washington/New York

The White House has reviewed candidates to potentially replace Deputy Secretary of Defence Steve Feinberg, three people familiar with the discussions told Reuters, a sign that more leadership change could come for a Pentagon already facing unusually high staff turnover.

The effort, which was under way in June, has included conversations with senior lawmakers in the Senate about whether the administration’s picks would have enough support to be confirmed, said two of the people, one of whom added that the review was still going on as of late August. Reuters could not determine when the White House began considering candidates.

The three sources said no decision had been made to remove Feinberg from his post. They did not say why the White House was reviewing potential replacements and did not specify which candidates the White House was considering.

“These so-called anonymous ‘sources’ have no idea what they are talking about,” said White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly.

“President Trump appreciates the work of Secretary Hegseth, Deputy Secretary Feinberg, and the entire Department of War, whose record of success in Operation Epic Fury, Operation Absolute Resolve, and Operation Midnight Hammer speaks for itself,” she said, referring to US military operations in Iran and Venezuela.

The Pentagon denied a process was under way to replace Feinberg. Asked for comment by Reuters, Hegseth said in a statement that Feinberg has his full support



Deputy Secretary of Defence Steve Feinberg sits with Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon. (Reuters/File Photo)

and “isn’t going anywhere.”

The Pentagon did not provide a comment from Feinberg and declined to make him available for an interview.

A departure by Feinberg, the billionaire co-founder of private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management, would be the most senior staff change for a department that has already seen a string of high-profile departures under Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth.

Army Secretary Dan Driscoll resigned this week following months of tension with Hegseth, according to a source familiar with the matter. The Army has declined to comment on the reasons for his departure. Navy Secretary John Phelan and several senior Army leaders have also departed in recent months.

Feinberg, who vowed to accelerate US munitions production, has not yet met that goal, according to analysts who say that the US industrial base cannot ramp up quickly. Some defence industry

executives say his task has been complicated by the slow pace of Congress appropriating funds despite immense pressure from the administration.

Feinberg “has worked tirelessly to rebuild our Defence Industrial Base and ensure our military has everything it needs to win, and I look forward to continuing to work with him,” Hegseth said in his statement to Reuters, adding, “He’s doing a tremendous job for President Trump, for the Department, and for our warfighters.”

Trump has increasingly expressed frustration with the lack of progress in the six-month-old Iran war, which has settled into a costly standoff between the US and Iran.

One of the costs has been a drawdown of US weapons stockpiles. Reuters has reported that the US military faces significant shortages of certain munitions, which have alarmed Congress and military leaders.

Trump has dismissed the concerns, saying the US has “far more

munitions than anyone in the world.”

But in an exchange with Trump at Camp David earlier this month, according to the *Washington Post*, Hegseth blamed Feinberg for letting stockpiles of long-range guided missiles and air-defence interceptors shrink.

The White House has called the report “fake news.” In a statement to Reuters, chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said: “Secretary Hegseth did not mislead anyone about our munitions posture, and he did not blame Deputy Secretary Feinberg.”

Appointed by Trump last year, Feinberg has attempted to reshape the Pentagon by ramping up the US military’s direct investments in companies and delivering loans to military contractors through multiple offices inside the department, including the Office of Strategic Capital and the newly created Economic Defence Unit.

In an August 18 memo he sent to defence firms and seen by Reuters, Feinberg called on contractors to speed up production and provide more transparency around pricing. The Pentagon did not respond to a question about the memo.

Feinberg has also come under scrutiny on Capitol Hill, where Democratic US Senator Elizabeth Warren has raised concerns about whether his former firm Cerberus could benefit from the Pentagon’s spending on its Golden Dome missile defence program.

“There are no conflicts of interest between Deputy Secretary of War Steve Feinberg and Cerberus,” said Parnell. “He has completely divested from Cerberus and has recused himself from any conversations or business relationships between the Executive Branch and Cerberus.”

US court upholds ban on Trump’s bid to use citizenship data for voter checks

Reuters
Washington

A federal appeals court panel rejected the administration of President Donald Trump’s bid to lift a ban on using a federal immigration database to check the accuracy of citizenship records on states’ voter rolls.

In a 2-1 ruling on Friday, the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia declined to lift a lower court’s ban on using the Homeland Security Department’s Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements database.

The earlier ruling determined that the government cannot use the system ahead of the upcoming November 3 midterm elections, in Trump’s Republicans are expected to defend narrow majorities in both chambers of Congress.

Chief Justice Sri Srinivasan and US Circuit Judge Robert Wilkins, both appointed to the appeals court by President Barack Obama, upheld the lower court decision that the SAVE system violates the Social Security Act as it shares millions of Americans’ private information.

The appeals court judges also noted concerns around the po-

tential for inaccurate citizen information that could lead to people having to prove citizenship to remain registered voters, and in some cases could even lead to voter registration being cancelled.

US Circuit Judge Gregory Katsas, an appointee of President Donald Trump, dissented.

A federal judge in Florida in July ordered the US Department of Homeland Security to resume giving four Republican-led states access to the database after another judge blocked it from continuing to use the database nationwide.

US sinks third alleged Ecuador drug gang boat in a week

AFP
Quito

The US military said it had blown up another boat with alleged links to Ecuadoran drug gangs, bringing to three the number of vessels it has sunk in the area in a week.

Thursday’s operation by US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is part of a broader US campaign of strikes on alleged Latin American drug boats that have left more than 200 people dead since last year.

Southern Command (SOUTH-

COM) said on X it struck a vessel “operating as a floating refueling station in support of illicit at-sea drug trafficking operations” in the Eastern Pacific.

It said its intelligence had confirmed the vessel was working with the Los Choneros, a “violent narco-terrorist organisation.” This is a notorious Ecuadoran gang that has ties to Mexico’s Sinaloa cartel.

It added that an unspecified number of individuals aboard the boat had been “safely transferred” to authorities in Ecuador before the sinking, which came a day after a separate US strike.

Ecuador’s Navy said it received 28 crew members from that vessel and the boat that was sunk on Wednesday.

On Friday last, the military also destroyed a boat after intercepting and evacuating the crew.

In Manta, the country’s main fishing port, a group of people awaited news Friday of their relatives who, they said, were traveling on the boats targeted in the past two days.

“The captain gathered us together to give us good news that our fishermen are coming back... they’re alive, they’re okay,” Ginger Reyes, 35, the wife of the captain

of one of the vessels, told AFP.

As they waited, dozens of people protested the disappearance of eight fishermen between January and March, which family members and the NGO Human Rights Watch blame on US military personnel.

“I don’t know what to do anymore... I can’t eat, I can’t sleep, thinking about my son. I want them to return him to me,” said María Cueva, weeping as she held a photograph of the 25-year-old.

Washington denies any involvement in the disappearance of the eight men.

The airstrikes have instilled

deep fear in Ecuadoran fishermen.

“We’re all afraid something might happen to us,” Fausto Soza told AFP, adding he had not gone out to sea for two months for fear of being targeted.

US President Donald Trump’s administration has not provided definitive evidence that the vessels it has been targeting in the Pacific and the Caribbean are involved in drug trafficking.

But his campaign of strikes has the full support of Ecuador’s right-wing President Daniel Noboa, who has gone to war against the gangs that have sown terror in the South American country.

Top US military officials face lie-detectors in leak hunt: reports

The Pentagon has launched a lie-detector dragnet to comb through high-ranking military officials and identify who leaked information about US munitions stockpiles, according to US press reports. In July, reports emerged that the US was rationing munitions – its missile interceptors, in particular – over supply concerns after several months of fighting Iran. Administration officials vehemently denied those reports, with President Donald Trump saying “we have a lot of ammunition, different types,” while acknowledging that “for some of the more sophisticated stuff, we’d certainly like to have more.” Late Friday, *The New York Times* reported that some 50 members of the military’s Joint Staff – the Pentagon’s planning and advisory staff – were being required to take polygraph tests as part of an investigation into how classified stockpile information made its way into journalists’ hands. CBS News later also reported the wide-scale use of lie detectors, while adding that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine, had not been tested. Asked by AFP about the reports, the Pentagon’s chief spokesman, Sean Parnell, refused to comment on the investigation. (AFP)

Mexican ruling-party lawmaker found dead

Reuters
Mexico City

A member of Congress from Mexico’s ruling Morena party was found dead from a gunshot wound in the eastern state of Veracruz on Friday, less than a year before local and federal elections.

Zenyazen Escobar, a federal legislator representing the coastal state – home to some of the country’s oil complexes – was found dead inside his car with at least one gunshot wound.

“The investigation file is being compiled,” state Attorney General Lisbeth Jimenez told reporters, without providing further details.

The secretary general of Veracruz, Ricardo Ahued, said the lawmaker’s vehicle showed no signs of violence.

Mexico’s lower house of Congress expressed its condolences to Escobar’s family and friends and urged judicial authorities to conduct a “thorough investigation into the facts.”

The death occurred as the country prepares to hold elections on June 6 to renew mayoral, state legislative, city council

and gubernatorial positions.

In previous elections, various regions have experienced incidents of violence linked to organised crime groups seeking to co-opt political figures and consolidate territorial control.

According to the human rights organisation Data Cívica, in July alone there were at least 30 incidents of “political-criminal violence” across 11 states in Mexico, 14 of which were homicides.

The states with the highest registered cases were Zacatecas, with 10 cases; Michoacan and Quintana Roo, with four each; Oaxaca, with three; and Baja California and Veracruz, with two each. Data Cívica describes political-criminal violence as threats, murders, armed attacks, assassination attempts, disappearances, and kidnappings.

The national electoral body INE has warned that organised crime represents one of the most serious concerns for democratic processes. According to the INE, court rulings have in the past documented the presence of armed individuals seeking to intimidate or coerce the public into voting a certain way, as well as acts of theft and the burning of election materials.



Security forces guard the scene where Zenyazen Escobar was found dead on a highway in Mexico. (Reuters)

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, KAMILLA KHALILOVA

holder of

KYRGYZSTAN Passport No. KP0394848
QID No. 31141700005

hereby change my name

from

KAMILLA KHALILOVA

to

KAMILLA GZANFER

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, AROSH ALI ABDUL AZIZ

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. A23184319
QID No. 27805016499

hereby change my name

from

AROSH ALI ABDUL AZIZ

to

MD AROSH MIAH

Any objection, please contact
THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR
NATIONALITY AFFAIRS
within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, BHA SKARA

holder of

INDIA Passport No. W1424610
QID No. 28135613540

hereby change my name

from

BHA SKARA

to

BHASKARA MUDDANNA SHETTY

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within 15 days from the publication of this notice.

Peru declares state of emergency in 5 prisons to combat criminal gangs

Peru declared a state of emergency in five high-security prisons yesterday, allowing police and military forces to take control of the facilities in response to citizens’ security concerns, the government said in a decree. The 60-day measure was issued by the government of President Keiko Fujimori, who took office in late July, and aims to combat criminal organisations operating from inside prisons towards the outside. The five prisons under the emergency order house around 50% of inmates linked to criminal organisations, the government said. Military and police forces will be authorised to take action to secure the airspace and electromagnetic spectrum immediately surrounding the prisons. Peru’s homicide rate rose to 10.7 per 100,000 inhabitants last year, up from 10.1 in 2024, according to official data. The previous Sunday, gunmen disguised as police officers killed four people and kidnapped a mining businessman in the country’s north; he was freed hours later after paying a ransom, police said. (Reuters)

Philippine VP Duterte posts bail over ‘grave threats’ against president

AFP
Manila

Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte posted bail at a Manila courthouse yesterday, a day after an arrest warrant was issued over her alleged death threat against the country’s president.

Duterte was charged last month with “grave threats” stemming from a late-night news briefing in which she claimed to have hired a hitman to kill President Ferdinand Marcos, his wife and a congressman cousin should she be cut down first.

She later said the comments had been misconstrued.

The alleged assassination threat also forms a crucial element of

her ongoing Senate impeachment trial, where a guilty verdict would see her removed from office and permanently banned from politics.

“The vice-president voluntarily appeared before the court that issued the warrant, so there was no need for her to be arrested,” her lawyer Lawrence Lim said.

He was speaking after Duterte emerged from the courthouse holding a court order confirming she had posted a cash bond totaling 360,000 pesos (\$5,740).

She also underwent a standard booking procedure in which her fingerprints were recorded, though no mugshots were taken, Lim said.

Duterte said in a statement that her lawyers advised her to post



Philippine Vice-President Sara Duterte (front right) leaves court after posting bail in Quezon City, suburban Manila, yesterday. (AFP)

bail for her safety.

“They explained to me that I would have better protection from

be isolated and have little protection,” she said.

Prior to entering the courthouse, Duterte told reporters she feared for her life.

“I don’t want to (post bail) if no one is watching,” she said, claiming to be the victim of police harassment.

“Will they throw me into the (jail) and then one night I die in my sleep?” she said.

The Philippine presidential palace rejected Duterte’s comments as “unfounded”, saying police were merely implementing their mandate to protect Filipinos.

“This administration will never allow the police to be used to commit any form of violence,” it said.

Under the Philippine legal code, a criminal conviction on the “grave threats” charge could car-

ry a jail term of up to six months.

The vice president’s legal team issued a statement on Friday saying she had “no intention of evading the law and will continue to exercise all her legal remedies”.

Justice department officials have rejected her lawyers’ argument that the vice president cannot be prosecuted for offences that are also tied to her impeachment.

Duterte was impeached in May by the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament, on charges that also included graft and corruption.

A guilty verdict in the Senate — where her trial recently concluded its ninth week — would spell an end to a planned run for president in 2028.

Duterte first announced her candidacy in February.

China arrests 52 Singaporeans for alleged pyramid scheme activities

Chinese authorities have arrested 52 Singaporeans in Guangxi, China, after a law enforcement operation against pyramid scheme activities and related offences, Singapore’s second minister for foreign affairs said.

Second Minister Sim Ann said the foreign affairs ministry and the Singapore police are engaging with Chinese authorities to obtain further information on the cases.

Singapore’s government does not interfere in the judicial process and investigations of other countries but is providing consular assistance to the 52 people arrested, she said.

Singapore’s embassy in Beijing and Consulate-General in Guangzhou have made three visits to the detainees to check on their well-being and provide consular assistance, she said, including conveying requests from the detainees and messages from their families and facilitating administrative matters.

“On behalf of the police, I wish to reiterate that Singaporeans should exercise caution when considering business or investment schemes, whether overseas or local. This is especially so for schemes involving the recruitment of participants, upfront payment of large sums of money, or promises of unusually high returns,” said Sim.

She did not give further details about the alleged offences.

“The police investigate and deal with cases involving criminal cases committed by foreign nationals in China in accordance with the law, while fully safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of those involved,” Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a regular news conference yesterday. (Reuters)

Korea’s president to visit France for summit, film discussion with Macron

Reuters
Seoul

Republic of Korea’s President Lee Jae Myung will pay a state visit to France from September 6-9 for a summit with French President Emmanuel Macron and for a joint discussion on the film industry, Lee’s office said on Friday.

Lee and Macron will co-chair the one-day Lumiere Summit, scheduled for September 7 in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the presidential office said.

About 150 politicians, policy makers and film industry figures have been invited to the summit, the first international event to address the future of film and video content, according to the French embassy in Seoul.

The meeting will debate how the film industry should respond to artificial intelligence, compete with social media platforms and cope with funding shortages, the secretary-general of the summit said in a press briefing on Thursday.

On September 8, Lee will hold a summit and luncheon with Macron and attend a business roundtable along with executives from about 20 South Korean and French companies, Lee’s office said.

South Korea views Lee’s trip as an opportunity to expand co-operation with France in security, the economy and human interactions, following an upgrade of bilateral ties to a “strategic partnership” during Macron’s visit to Seoul in April, Wi Sung-lac, Lee’s national security adviser, told a briefing on Friday.

“We expect this to serve as an opportunity to add fresh momentum to expanding our diplomacy with Europe,” Wi said.

South Korea is also seeking to deepen co-operation in areas including AI, aerospace and biotech, he said.

Before returning to Seoul, Lee will meet on September 9 with Yael Braun-Pivet, the head of the French lower house, and Matthias Cormann, secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

One dead, 11 people missing after mudslide in China

One person has been confirmed dead and 11 others remain missing after torrential rains triggered a mudslide early yesterday morning in a town in China’s Jiangxi Province, local authorities said.

Due to heavy rainfall brought by Typhoon Saudel, the mudslide struck around 4am yesterday in Gaoping Town of Jiangxi’s Suichuan County, damaging 12 houses, the county said in a statement.

State broadcaster CCTV also reported more than 10 people were trapped after the landslide hit the same town, state broadcasters CCTV reported. (Reuters)

Indonesia conducts water bombing to contain wildfires near future capital

AFP
Jakarta

Indonesian authorities carried out a water bombing operation yesterday to prevent wildfires from spreading in the future capital city Nusantara, a city official told AFP.

The archipelago is constructing a new capital city in Borneo, home to vast tropical jungle, to replace sinking and traffic-clogged Jakarta.

The country is also fighting to contain wildfires that have burned large swathes of Sumatra and Borneo, which caused choking haze that has drifted across the border to Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

Fires have been intensifying since mid-August in buffer areas outside the core area in Nusantara, where the city’s development is concentrated, Nusantara authority environment and natural resources



Fire fighters battle peatland fires in Sintang, West Kalimantan, yesterday. (AFP)

deputy Myrna Asnawati Safitri said.

It prompted authorities to carry out a water bombing operation to complement on-the-ground firefighting efforts, she added.

“The function of water bombing is not only to extinguish fires but also to accelerate cooling in areas that have been extinguished by ground firefighters,” Myrna said.

The operation will last until

Sunday, but Myrna said it can be extended if necessary.

So far, Nusantara’s construction has not been hampered by wildfires or haze, she said.

Then-president Joko Widodo revived the long-proposed capital move from Jakarta when he won a second term in 2019.

But construction has slowed down under his predecessor Prabowo Subianto, as the former general prioritised his welfare programmes including a free meal scheme for students.

As president-elect, Prabowo said he wanted to “continue, if possible finish” the capital move, but since taking office in 2024 he has yet to express any plans to sign the presidential decree needed to shift from Jakarta.

His spokesman Prasetyo Hadi said Nusantara should be ready to host the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government before the move can take place, local media reported.

Indonesia rescues second orangutan mother and baby from wildfire

AFP
Jakarta

An orangutan mother and her baby, threatened by encroaching wildfires to their habitat in Indonesia, were rescued earlier this week, authorities said in a statement yesterday.

The vast southeast Asian archipelago has for weeks been fighting wildfires blanketing parts of Borneo and Sumatra with smog, with haze also contributing to air pollution in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines.

The orangutan pair had been under observation since July after being spotted in a plantation area near a forest in West Kalimantan, a local natural resources conservation agency said in a statement.

But authorities decided to evacuate them to a rescue centre managed by the wildlife foundation Yayasan Inisiasi Alam Rehabilitasi Indonesia (YIARI) on Thursday as fire spread near their habitat.

Their health is being closely monitored by veterinarians, but a preliminary check found no burn injuries on the two great apes.

“Exposure to smoke over a period of time... can affect the orangutan’s respiratory system, especially when smoke concentrations in the habitat are very high,” YIARI’s veterinarian Komara, who like many Indonesians uses only



A mother-and-baby orangutan pair being evacuated by officials due to forest and land fires in Sungai Awan Kiri village, in the Muara Pawan district of Ketapang. (AFP)

one name, said in a statement.

“Both individuals will continue to be monitored while they are at the rescue and rehabilitation centre.”

The latest rescue means nine orangutans have been evacuated because of threats from wildfires in less than a month in the Ketapang district of West Kalimantan province, YIARI operational director Argitoe Ranting said.

“This shows that fires not only destroy forests but also deprive animals of shelter and food,” Argitoe said.

Most animals “do not have many options” to relocate as their habitat burns, he added.

One orangutan died after being rescued last week, with a necropsy result pointing to smoke exposure as the cause of death.

Sydney sweats in spring hot spell, faces bushfire risk

Reuters
Sydney

Australia’s most populous city Sydney baked in a burst of sweltering spring heat yesterday, raising the risk of bushfires and prompting authorities to issue a ban on lightning fires.

The heat comes as a powerful El Nino weather pattern in the Pacific, expected to be among the strongest in decades, drives hot-

State fire authorities issued a total fire ban for Sydney where they rated fire risk as “extreme”

ter and drier conditions across southern Australia during the September-November spring season.

Yesterday, the nation’s weather forecaster said temperatures in the New South Wales capital,

home to 5.6 million people, were set to hit 33C (91.4F), nearly 13C above average.

At Sydney Airport, the temperature was already 28.6C (83.48F) at 11:30am local time, more than seven degrees above the September mean maximum temperature, according to forecaster data.

“Fresh to strong and gusty northwesterly winds developing during the morning, combined with dry, unseasonably warm conditions, will result in elevated fire dangers across the Greater Sydney

Region today,” the forecaster said.

State fire authorities issued a total fire ban for Sydney where they rated fire risk as “extreme”, the second highest danger rating.

Climate change is causing extreme heat and fire weather to become more common in Australia, a bushfire-prone country of around 27 million. In January, thousands of firefighters battled bushfires in the southeast that razed homes, cut power to thousands of homes and burned swathes of bushland.



Two Nepal rescues revive hopes 10 days after flood

AFP
Kathmandu

Rescuers in Nepal pulled alive yesterday a Chinese national from a tunnel and a local woman from her partially submerged home, as emergency response teams searched with renewed vigour for thousands missing since catastrophic flooding 10 days ago.

A rescue team comprising personnel from the Nepal Army and foreign experts rescued the Chinese man from 225m (738 feet) inside the tunnel of the Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Project in Rasuwa district, a military statement said.

A picture of the rescue published on the army's Facebook page showed the man, identified only as Luhaitao, with his arms around the shoulders of two camouflage-clad rescuers.

He appeared alert, but his hands were covered in thick, wet mud.

"His health is currently being assessed and further search and rescue operations are continuing," the army said.

The man was among hundreds of hydropower workers who went missing after a tsunami-like wall of water and mud swept through the China-Nepal border following



Security personnel assisting a woman rescued from a flash-flood ravaged house at Betrawati in Nepal's Nuwakot district yesterday. (AFP)

a vast glacial and rock collapse on August 26.

Authorities later in the day said members of Nepal's Armed Police Force pulled alive Chandrika Shrestha, 64, from her buried home in Nuwakot district.

"A police team found her as they were clearing the area. She has been airlifted to Kathmandu for treatment," police deputy superintendent Iqbal Hawari told AFP.

A video released by Nepal's Armed Police Force showed only part of her house visible, with the lower floors submerged by thick sludge.



Security personnel carrying a Chinese national (2nd right) rescued from the Audit Tunnel 4 of the Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Project site in Nepal's Rasuwa district, yesterday. (AFP)

The energy ministry said rescuers were planning to use customised drones provided by Switzerland to assist in the tunnel search operations.

The drones are specifically designed to conduct search and inspection operations inside dark, narrow and hazardous tunnels that are difficult for humans to enter.

Since the drones can provide a real-time view of conditions, they could "significantly assist rescue teams in assessing risks, gathering information about trapped individuals, and developing rescue strategies", the ministry said.

"Our priority right now is... to continue the rescue efforts, keep all possible options open, and move forward with hope and responsibility," Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha said in a post on social media.

The government initially said it believed more than 100 workers could be alive inside multiple tunnels.

Experts from India, China, Australia and Republic of Korea have been aiding Nepali rescuers in their search of survivors in the blocked tunnels.

So far 1,331 bodies have been re-



Flash flood survivors collect aid from a temporary relief centre at Devghat in Nepal's Nuwakot district yesterday. (AFP)

covered in Nepal, the national disaster agency said, revising an earlier figure of 1,344. Around 5,000 people remained missing.

In China, state media said 31 people had been killed and 531 were missing.

That takes the overall death toll to 1,362 people, and more than 5,500 missing, including several hundred tourists and pilgrims.

Rescuers have also been relying on drones to deliver medicine, food and other supplies, as well as transporting bodies, in high-altitude areas hard to reach by roads.

"We have sent a lot of relief material and right now our team is loading some materials for the hospital in the area," drone operator Avaya Pokharel told AFP in Nuwakot.

The UN has warned that the "magnitude of the destruction" makes delivering aid an immense challenge, launching a \$50mn appeal to help more than 84,000 people affected by the disaster.

With morgues overflowing,

some 1,030 bodies have been buried in mass graves after taking DNA samples for future identification, Nepal Police said yesterday.

Communities in the worst-affected districts remained cut off after the floods tore through mountains, destroying roads and bridges.

Yesterday, the Nepalese government released a provisional damage assessment, saying more than 7,500 houses, 48 public buildings and about one hundred bridges had been destroyed.

In a sign of progress, a team was able to reach the remote Nepal-China international border crossing at Timure in Rasuwa district yesterday. They placed Nepal's flag at the location, Prime Minister Balendra Shah said.

"After three days of continuous efforts, Nepal's national flag has been reinstalled along the Nepali border," he said in a post on Facebook.

"It was extremely difficult to identify the border from the Nepali side and erect the flag."



An opposition alliance member shouts slogans in Dhaka yesterday, during a march bound for Chittagong to protest gas, electricity and fertiliser crisis. (AFP)

Bangladesh opposition launches protest march over energy crisis

Thousands of opposition supporters launched a long march across Bangladesh yesterday, piling pressure on Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's government over acute shortages of cooking gas, electricity, and fertiliser.

The action marks the first major street mobilisation against the government, which came to power in the South Asian country of 170mn people six months ago.

Waving banners and chanting slogans, crowds gathered at a public square in Dhaka before setting off on the first leg of a march to the port city of Chittagong, with rallies planned along the route.

"This movement is aimed at ensuring cooking gas and lighting up every household with electric-

ity," opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman told supporters.

Bangladesh has been reeling from acute shortages, partly caused by the war in the Middle East, while questions have been raised over the government's handling of the crisis.

The rally comes a day after the arrest of a college student who allegedly insulted senior government officials while venting frustration over high electricity bills, a move critics said reflected growing intolerance of dissent.

"You have failed to supply gas, electricity, and fertiliser and are not allowing people to even speak up," Akhter Hossen of the opposition National Citizen Party told the crowd.

"You will face serious consequences." (AFP)

Masked anti-migrant protesters disrupt UK's Dover port

AFP
London

Hundreds of masked people protesting Channel migrant crossings blocked access to the Port of Dover in southern England on Saturday, briefly halting traffic being ferried between France and the UK.

The Port of Dover said traffic was "free flowing" again around noon, hours after being "stopped" on Saturday morning as roads approaching the port were blocked by protesters.

Local police said no arrests had been made and the protest, which initially blocked "all routes" in

and out of the terminal, had been dispersed.

Images shared online showed hundreds of people dressed in black and wearing balaclavas streaming to roads surrounding the port, used by ferries between southern England and northern France.

In an online livestream that appeared to be shot by one of the protesters, a crowd of black-clothed men chanted "stop the boats" as they stood facing a police line.

Britain has been grappling with how to curb the perilous and politically contentious small-boat crossings, which in recent years have seen tens of thousands of migrants arriving annually on the shores of southeast England.

India food safety crackdown targets Nepali noodles company

India on Friday ordered a Nepali billionaire's company popular for its Wai Wai noodles to discontinue some products after an investigation found its factory used unhygienic "floor-collected, broken noodles" in making its Indian snacks. The crackdown is part of an unprecedented food safety drive in India, where federal and state officials are taking strict action against big and small eateries and brands ranging from Domino's and Pizza Hut to Diageo for any food safety, hygiene or labelling lapses. Friday's order was issued to a CG Foods India factory in Rajasthan state in western India, which is part of CG Corp Global, led by Nepal's only billionaire Binod Chaudhary, nicknamed the "Noodle King". The regulator's investigation focused on two Wai Wai-branded products called bhujia - a popular fried Indian snack sold by many companies in the country in tiny packs. Inspectors found "re-processing floor-collected broken noodles into bhujia without heat treatment", the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said in a social media post. In a statement, CG Foods India said it is fully cooperating with the regulatory process and remains "committed to maintaining the highest standards of food safety, quality, and compliance." Authorities also seized 32,000kg of stock from the factory, as well as 1,925 boxes of expired finished goods, the FSSAI said. (Reuters)

Britain eases public infrastructure approval rules to boost investment

Britain's Treasury said on Friday that it would lower a key rate used to evaluate the long-term benefits of investment in public infrastructure projects as part of plans to boost investment across the country.

The discount rate used for appraising public spending will be cut to 3% from 3.5%, the Treasury said in a statement detailing reforms to its "Green Book" - its manual that dictates the approval of capital projects.

Discounting is how the Treasury compares costs and benefits that arrive at different points in time - treating £100 today as worth more than the promise of £100 in future.

Lowering the discount rate reduces that gap, making it easier for long-term projects to show their full value instead of being

discounted simply because their benefits take years to arrive.

The government will publish full details of the plan, including its response to a review of the discount rate, at the budget on October 28. Finance minister John Healey plans to give his first major speech in his new role on Monday, where he is expected to set out details of the plan.

The changes are intended to give transport, housing and social infrastructure projects a "fairer hearing" in government spending decisions by placing greater weight on benefits that take years to materialise, the Treasury said.

The Treasury is also testing a new approach that assesses the economic potential of entire areas for investment decisions, rather than judging individual projects one by one. (Reuters)

India flags Abhayrab rabies vaccine batch as substandard, probes if spurious

Reuters
Hyderabad

India's drug regulator has flagged a batch of widely used rabies vaccine Abhayrab as substandard and potentially spurious after it failed a potency test, a government document seen by Reuters shows.

The finding marks the second time in less than two years that concerns have been raised about counterfeit Abhayrab doses in India, a country that reports nearly 6,000 rabies deaths a year and where the vaccine is a frontline defence against the otherwise nearly always fatal infection.

Indian Immunologicals Ltd, which makes Abhayrab and holds a 40% share of the domestic rabies vaccine market, said yesterday in a statement dated September 4 that the vials carrying the label Abhayrab that were examined by the regulator were not manufactured by the company.

"The CDSO drew vaccine

samples from an unlicensed residential premises located at Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi", Sunil Tiwari, VP of IIL, said.

The vials were labelled as Abhayrab batch number KE25012, he added.

In a statement on Saturday, the federal drug regulator said no part of batch KE25012 had been exported to any other country, adding that four people had been arrested by Delhi Police in connection with the case.

The regulator also confirmed that the batch under investigation was seized from an unlicensed premises.

IIL said it had provided batch records to the regulator and asked authorities to trace the source of the vials and act against those responsible, while cooperating with the investigation.

In an August 27 letter to state drug regulators, India's Drugs Controller General Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi asked officials to maintain "strict vigilance" over the movement and distribution of

Abhayrab batch KE25012 and take regulatory action, as necessary.

The action came after the government's Central Drugs Laboratory in Kasauli found that a field sample of the vaccine did not meet potency requirements and classified it as "not of standard quality" and a "misbranded" drug, according to the government document.

IIL said it had received queries from healthcare professionals regarding batch KE25012 but no market complaints. It added that the original batch consisted of 83,370 vials distributed through authorised channels.

IIL added that every batch of Abhayrab undergoes independent government testing before release and that vaccines supplied through authorised channels, including hospitals and licensed pharmacies, were unaffected by the issue.

While the sample passed sterility, moisture and identity tests, the laboratory also found significant differences between the sampled



Boxes of Abhayrab rabies vaccine are stored in a refrigerator at the vaccination storage centre of a government hospital in Ahmedabad, India. (Reuters)

product and a retained reference sample of the same vaccine previously submitted by a division of Indian Immunologicals for regulatory testing.

These included discrepancies in labelling, artwork, QR code verifi-

cation, cap colour, licence details and packaging text.

The regulator said the findings raised concerns about the sample's "identity and authenticity" and warranted investigation into whether it could be a spurious drug under India's Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

Having supplied more than 210 million doses of Abhayrab in India and other countries for over two decades, IIL said the lab report identified 17 differences between the seized samples and the retention samples of the same batch held at the lab.

Indian Immunologicals had previously notified India's drug regulator in January 2025 that counterfeit Abhayrab doses bearing batch number KA24014 had entered the market. Global health authorities in the United States, Britain and Australia later issued alerts for travellers who may have received the vaccine in India.

At the time, the company said it had not manufactured the counterfeit batch, reiterated that the

incident was isolated and said it was not aware of any other counterfeit doses in circulation.

India records an estimated 5,726 human rabies deaths annually, according to a 2024 study by the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Epidemiology.

Abhayrab is a human rabies vaccine used for both pre- and post-exposure protection against rabies. It is administered in multiple doses and is also supplied to government immunisation programmes in India.

The government document does not state how many doses of the batch now being investigated may have been distributed, nor whether any doses from the flagged batch had been exported or whether foreign regulators had been notified of the latest alert.

Indian Immunologicals exports Abhayrab to more than 40 countries including South Africa, Türkiye, Vietnam, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis. (AFP)

Greek PM unveils plan to bolster incomes

Reuters
Athens

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced yesterday income tax breaks and wage increases for workers, pensioners and the self-employed as part of a tax reform worth billions of euros ahead of elections next year in the country.

The measures, with a cost of €2.2bn for 2027, equal to about 1% of GDP, include an annual bonus of €400 for pensioners and €500 for public servants. Plus, the measures also include zero income tax for low income farmers and low income families with three children and a reduction of the advance tax payment for self-employed and small businesses.

His centre-right government, which was re-elected

with 40.5% of the vote in 2023 promising to increase incomes, remains ahead in opinion polls but has seen its support slip to below 30% amid a protracted cost-of-living crisis and claims of corruption.

After a financial crisis in 2009 that triggered fears Greece would crash out of the euro zone, the country is now one of the best-performing in Europe.

Greece's economy is expanding at an annual rate of 2%, outpacing the euro zone average. It expects a primary surplus worth about 4% of gross domestic product this year, almost double its initial forecast, giving the necessary fiscal space to fund the new measures.

Mitsotakis also announced a new hike in the minimum salary to €950 on a monthly basis and to €1,000 in 2028 and also a reduction of 0.5% for pension contributions.

No tolerance for hybrid actions on members: US Nato envoy

Reuters
Cernobbio, Italy

Nato members should not tolerate deliberate actions of hybrid war, and the US will stand by countries as they deal with these incidents, Matthew Whitaker, the US ambassador to Nato, said yesterday.

Whitaker said last month's attempted drone attack at Germany's Leipzig/Halle Airport, which Berlin has blamed on Russia, was more worrying than other recent incidents Nato members have faced due to Russian drones targeting Ukraine that strayed off course. "Then you have what I would call the more concerning hybrid actions like we saw in Leipzig, like we have seen in Poland," Whitaker said speaking on the sidelines of a conference in Italy.

Nato members must be prepared, vigilant and also deliver a strong message when they are challenged by these events, he said. "If we can identify who's doing it — which Germany did — we make sure we express strongly that is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it," Whitaker said.

Critical infrastructure, including energy assets, could be targeted and should be monitored by national authorities, he added.

The response to these challenges is primarily national, but the US supports countries when they are dealing with these acts, he said.

Vannacci urges EU to defend its 'identity'

Reuters
Cernobbio, Italy

Italy's rising far-right politician Roberto Vannacci told a high profile business forum yesterday that the European Union should halt political integration and start defending its cultural identity instead, prompting former Prime Minister Mario Monti to warn against his "fascist rhetoric."

Vannacci, a former general whose Futuro Nazionale (National Future) party has become Italy's fourth-most-popular force just seven months after its launch, was debating with Monti on the topic of EU integration at the gathering of managers and entrepreneurs.

Calling for the EU to slash red tape, he told the annual TEHA Ambrosetti conference on the shores of Lake Como that the 27-nation bloc should become "a platform of collaboration, not coercion."

Vannacci said right-wing forces like his own were the future of Europe, looking forward to an election tomorrow in the eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt where Alternative for Germany (AfD) is hoping to win power for the first time, and citing the strength of Rassemblement National (RN) in France.

Speaking at the same confer-



Former Italian general Roberto Vannacci at the end of the national assembly of his far-right party, in Rome. (Reuters/File Photo)

ence, RN leader Jordan Bardella said he was in favour of "changing everything without destroying anything" in the EU, to build "a Europe of growth and a Europe of borders."

Vannacci, whose proposals include expelling immigrants who fail to assimilate "the values of our civilisation," is siphoning support from Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's coalition as she seeks a new mandate at elections expected next year.

Europe should stop producing rules that hobble economic initiative and instead defend its "culture and civilisation," Vannacci said.

Business can only flourish in "a cohesive society," he said, in which "a spirit of sacrifice and a sense of belonging push citizens to work harder and take risks every day."

Monti, 83, a two-times EU Commissioner who led Italy during an acute 2011-12 debt crisis, said Vannacci may be in government one day but he was "terrified" by the prospect of his party stoking Italians' feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment like wartime dictator Benito Mussolini did.

"Old as I am, if this were to pass I'd devote what's left of my life to stopping it," he said.

Berlin launches crisis response after hackers publish data

Berlin's state government said yesterday it was reviewing with the highest intensity a trove of stolen data published by a ransomware group, as investigators attempt to assess the scale and impact of the cyberattack that targeted two departments. The cyberattack on Berlin's network came less than a month before the city-state holds elections on September 20. The data was released on Friday after an auction put on by the Rhysida group for 5.79 terabytes of data at a starting price of 30 bitcoin (\$77,622) ended after several days. Berlin had said that it would not submit to extortion. A central crisis unit will oversee the review, verification of the leaked data and support efforts to inform affected citizens and businesses, said the city. Berlin described the hacking incident as "an extremely serious crime" and an attack on the state itself, urging the public not to spread unverified claims on social media. (Reuters)

Two more electricity substations targeted in Germany ahead of vote

AFP
Berlin

Explosives have been found near two electricity substations in Germany, with authorities investigating whether the incidents were linked with similar attacks earlier this week, police said yesterday.

Germany has been rattled by attacks on electricity substations across the country this week which were apparently aimed at cutting power from coal-fired power stations and causing widespread blackouts.

Authorities said the attacks were likely a case of "climate extremism", after a 48-year-old man, named in German media as Daniel V, sent letters claiming responsibility for the acts and suspected explosives were found during searches of his apartment.

Yesterday, regional authorities said that "Following a report from a citizen, 12 improvised explosive devices were discovered on Friday near high-voltage lines close to the electrical substations of Baerwalde (near

Bautzen) and Graustein (near Goerlitz)."

Bomb disposal units disabled the devices and the surrounding electricity lines were briefly taken offline for the operation, police said. Police said they were investigating a "possible link" with the other incidents at electricity substations.

On Friday, the Bild tabloid reported that a heavily armed elite police team had stormed a truck in Hambach Forest in North Rhine-Westphalia state suspected of belonging to the activist, but had failed to apprehend him.

The area is highly symbolic for Germany's climate movement. Activists spent years protesting plans to raze vast tracts of forest to expand the nearby Hambach open-cast lignite mine.

Germany has faced a spate of attacks on the power grid in recent times, with far-left activists claiming responsibility in some cases.

The most serious took place in Berlin in January, causing an electricity outage that left tens of thousands of homes and businesses without power for a week.

Greek military pilots killed in crash during airshow

AFP
Athens

An F-4 Phantom military aircraft crashed yesterday at a base outside Athens during an airshow, killing the two pilots, Greek news agency ANA reported.

The circumstances of the crash were unclear, but the pilots did not eject from the aircraft, local media said.

The aircraft had just taken off when it suddenly lost altitude and crashed, said a journalist from public broadcaster ERT who was at the scene.

There was an explosion immediately after the crash, which happened before thousands of visitors watching the annual "Athens Flying Week".

Several firefighting aircraft were dispatched to the scene to extinguish the blaze caused by the crash, ERT reported.

The airshow was cancelled and Defence Minister Nikos Dendias called off a trip to a fair to visit the scene of the accident.



People attend a democracy festival, a day before the Saxony-Anhalt state election, by the cathedral in Magdeburg, Germany. (Reuters)

Thousands in Germany out in streets for democracy

AFP
Magdeburg, Germany

Thousands of people joined a march for "democracy" in eastern Germany yesterday, a day ahead of a regional election expected to result in a historic win for the far right.

The march in Magdeburg, capital of the Saxony-Anhalt region, drew demonstrators waving rainbow flags or holding up placards proclaiming "more love, less hate", "a better life without Nazis", and "the potato is also of foreign origin".

The march was organised by a coalition of groups dubbed "Saxony-Anhalt: Open to the World".

The far right, anti-migrant,

pro-Russian and pro-Donald Trump Alternative for Germany (AfD) party is leading in the polls for the Saxony-Anhalt election, and is expected to top the vote in the small state with over two million inhabitants.

It would be the first regional election win for the AfD, marking an unprecedented breakthrough for the far right in Germany in the postwar era.

However, the party is not assured of managing an absolute majority that would allow it to govern alone.

So far, all other parties have ruled out governing with the AfD, with the exception of the pro-Russian left-wing party BSW, whose members are divided on the issue.

Election in Germany: How the east became far-right stronghold

AFP
Berlin

More than three decades after Germany's 1990 reunification, lasting east-west divisions may be thrown into stark relief at tomorrow's election in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt.

The anti-immigration and Moscow-friendly Alternative for Germany (AfD) is expected to win big and even hopes to take power at the state level, which would be a first for a far-right party in German post-war history.

As much of the east has become an AfD stronghold, the government's commissioner for eastern Germany, lawmaker Elisabeth Kaiser, herself from Thuringia state in the east, spoke to AFP about the historic and cultural factors shaping the region's distinct politics.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, spelling the end of the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR), many state-owned enterprises were shuttered, sparking large-scale unemployment and population flight, especially by young women.

"That was a difficult experience for many East Germans, one that has persisted across generations, becoming part of a collective east



Police officers stand guard as demonstrators hold a banner reading "Stay Antifascist! Long live autonomous antifascism!" during a protest before the Saxony-Anhalt state elections in Halle yesterday. (Reuters)

German memory," Kaiser said.

"It involved this sense of devaluation, this experience of loss and the realisation that everything can change overnight."

Decades on, wages and savings remain lower on average, most big business is still based in the west, and eastern Germans — one fifth of the population — are under-represented in politics.

Billions spent on infrastructure and to stimulate the economy have born some fruit — Kaiser said the

region is now home to many of the "industries of the future".

She also praised many eastern regions as ideal for young families, with lower living costs and rents, natural beauty, good childcare and excellent universities.

Nevertheless, she said there remain "big disparities in wealth" and, among many, a feeling of being "disadvantaged and not seen".

The AfD's hostility to migration resonates in much of the east, even though it has fewer foreign-born

residents than the west.

While West Germany's post-war economic recovery was fuelled by "guest workers", the East invited contract workers from socialist "brother states" such as Vietnam and Mozambique.

They "were very much physically separated from East Germans" and on time-limited contracts, Kaiser said, meaning that East Germany "was not an immigrant society".

While state propaganda praised the GDR as internationalist, she said there was also "racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism which unfortunately erupted in the 1990s" — an era known as the "baseball bat years" for its attacks on foreigners.

More recently, she said, resentment has spread especially about Syrian and Afghan asylum-seekers and the notion of "all the extra things they were getting for free".

Kaiser also addressed warnings that East Germany is being romanticised, a nostalgic trend known as "Ostalgie". "In times of crisis people remember positive things from their past," she said, adding that populists were using "emotionally charged elements from the GDR era".

One icon is the Simson-brand scooter, often ridden by the AfD's lead candidate Ulrich Siegmund.

"Back then it was a symbol of freedom because it enabled you to move around," Kaiser said.

While older voters may remember feeling more secure in the GDR, Kaiser said it is often forgotten that "that was because everything was so controlled and surveilled".

She also pointed out that many in the east take pride in the peaceful revolution of 1989 and see it as proof that collectively they are "capable of toppling a system".

The AfD advocates closer ties to Russia despite its invasion of Ukraine and "hybrid attacks" Berlin has blamed on Moscow.

Kaiser said the socialisation of many East Germans had fostered a "strong anti-Americanism" and a lingering scepticism of the transatlantic alliance which has not eased during the current US administration.

Many in the east are keen on renewed diplomacy with Russia — a path which Kaiser says the Kremlin shows no willingness to follow.

The Soviets' tight grip over eastern Europe had left behind "an element of fear of the Russians", Kaiser said, "a feeling that you shouldn't provoke them".

Some in the west have suggested the richer part of Germany should stop "subsidising" the east. Kaiser says she finds such ideas "disastrous" and that they "annoy me".

France denies role in foiled mutiny in Niger

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot yesterday dismissed as "pure fantasy" accusations by Niger that France had incited an attack on a key military air base by mutinous soldiers last week.

"There never was any intention, nor means that France would have mobilised," Barrot told RFI radio.

Mutinous soldiers in the West African country attacked the airport and the presidency in the capital, Niamey, on August 29, the latest threat to the rule of Abdourahamane Tiani, who seized power in a 2023 coup.

Explosions and gunfire also rang out at a military air base, but Niger's army, backed by Russian paramilitary forces, regained control over it the next day.

The Council of Ministers on Friday concluded that the attack had been incited by a vast network of accomplices led by France, according to a Niger government statement read on TV on Friday. (Reuters)

Musk pushes regulatory limits with Tesla’s Cybercab robotaxi service

Tesla’s race to deploy Cybercab robotaxis will put regulatory limits to the test as the EV maker begins rides in the sporty, two-seaters that run without a steering wheel, pedals or mirrors.

Just hours after an event in downtown Austin, Texas, to mark the rollout, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said it opened an audit of about 1,000 Cybercab vehicles to assess how Tesla determined the cars comply with federal vehicle-safety regulations.

US regulators limit commercial deployment of vehicles that do not adhere to decades-old federal safety standards that were written for human-driven vehicles and require manual controls. But industry experts said regulatory gray areas and Elon Musk’s litigious track record could give Tesla a chance to force the Cybercab into broad use anyway.

Amid a frenzy of fans and social media influencers

in downtown Austin, Texas, Cybercabs were added to Tesla’s robotaxi fleet that now operates its best-selling Model Y SUVs. Tesla said Cybercab rides were open to everyone and executives described pricing plans, without specifically saying whether they were starting to charge.

The golden, butterfly-door Cybercab embodies Musk’s strategy of betting the company on self-driving software and robotics. That bet has pushed its stock valuation to \$1.4tn, more than the top several global automakers combined. Unlike most other countries, where new vehicle models and technology need regulatory clearance ahead of launch, automakers in the United States can deploy them on the public roads by self-certifying that they meet federal standards.

“I don’t think there is a reasonable interpretation that can be made to suggest that the Cybercab can comply with the Federal Motor

Vehicle Safety Standards,” said Michael Brooks, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety, a consumer advocacy group. While NHTSA is pushing faster than usual to change vehicle-safety standards and separately drafting new rules to accommodate driverless vehicles, its efforts, experts have said, are likely to take longer to kick in than what Musk is promising.

Musk is not known to wait for regulations, though. “Tesla historically has tested limits and pushed boundaries on regulations,” said Philip Koopman, a Carnegie Mellon University engineering professor and autonomous-vehicle safety expert. “I fully expect Tesla to test the limits.”

Musk could come up with a “creative interpretation” of vehicle regulation, say that Cybercabs comply with federal standards and “flood the market” with them, Koopman said. “That could take NHTSA or state regulators years to resolve.

Meanwhile, Tesla could be operating on public roads.” Tesla did not respond to requests for comment.

Tesla started manufacturing the Cybercab in April, and Musk promised production would grow “exponentially” later in the year or next. During its unveiling in 2024, Musk had said that the company would also sell them for less than \$30,000.

Since then, Tesla launched a limited, paid robotaxi service in Texas and Florida with its best-selling Model Y SUVs. The Model Y robotaxi drives itself, but it has the manual controls required by federal safety standards, as well as human backup drivers in some cars.

Experts have questioned how well Teslas can drive themselves. Tesla has said its Full Self-Driving software, a version of which runs Cybercabs, is up to 10 times safer than human drivers, and its Austin service has operated without a fatal accident. — Reuters



The best startup ecosystems aren’t built by startups alone

By Nicole Junkermann

Spend enough time investing in technology and you become wary of attempts to manufacture the next Silicon Valley. Plenty of cities want to become startup hubs. Capital is announced, accelerators open, conferences arrive and founders are encouraged to set up shop. Sometimes it works. Often, a lot of activity never quite turns into an ecosystem that can sustain itself.

The reason, I think, is that successful entrepreneurial hubs aren’t really built around startups themselves. They’re built around everything that allows startups to succeed. Founders need money, clearly, but they also need access to research and talent, experienced people who can help them, customers willing to take a chance on a young company, and other founders around them. They need somewhere an idea can move out of a university or laboratory and become a business.

I’ve been thinking about this in Doha because Qatar has spent years assembling many of these pieces, and they’re now starting to connect in interesting ways.

What strikes you in Education City is how physically close much of this infrastructure is. Universities and research institutions that might sit in different cities, or even different regions, elsewhere are effectively neighbours. Qatar Science & Technology Park and its technology community are part of the same landscape. Around that research base sits a wider support system, including Qatar Development Bank and a growing community of investors, accelerators, established companies and entrepreneurs.

None of this guarantees that great companies will emerge. Startup ecosystems are far too unpredictable for that. But it gives them somewhere fertile to emerge from.

Doha’s size helps too. We tend to assume scale is an advantage in tech, but sometimes the opposite is true. In larger economies, the people and institutions a founder needs can be scattered across different cities and networks.

Doha is compact. One of its less obvious advantages is simply how accessible people can be to one another. A researcher, investor, founder and senior decision-maker can be much closer here, both geographically and institutionally, than they would be in most major capitals.

Ideas still travel largely through people, however sophisticated technology becomes. Proximity makes it easier for those people to find each other.

I have seen Web Summit Qatar grow quickly, but what interested me earlier this year wasn’t just the scale. Over 30,000 people from 127 countries came to Doha, including 1,637 startups and 931 investors. Attendance has doubled in two years. The figure that caught my attention was 85%: the proportion of participating startups that came from outside Qatar.

You feel that international mix across the city throughout Web Summit week. The conversations don’t stop at the conference doors. Meetings continue across West Bay and Msheireb, and for a few

days you get a particularly vivid sense of how a relatively compact city can become a meeting point for people who might otherwise be several flights apart.

The numbers also suggest something bigger than the growth of a domestic startup scene. Doha is starting to become a place where entrepreneurial communities from different parts of the world encounter one another.

Geography gives Qatar an interesting hand to play here. Around 80% of the world’s population lives within a six-hour flight of Doha. Europe, Asia and Africa are all within easy reach, with the wider Middle East on the doorstep. Its domestic market is relatively compact, but I don’t see that as a barrier.

Some of the best tech companies are international from the day they’re created. If you’re building a company in Doha, you have good reason to think about customers in Riyadh, London, Singapore or Mumbai very early on. There’s little temptation to build for a huge home market first and worry about

the rest of the world later.

Something similar applies to capital. Doha is attracting more investors and international companies, but the real benefit isn’t simply having more capital available. Good investors bring experience with them. They know people, companies and markets elsewhere. They have seen businesses succeed and fail, often more than once.

When that experience becomes part of a local ecosystem, its effects don’t stop at the edge of a portfolio. An investor can introduce a Qatari founder to customers overseas or help an international technology company establish itself in the Gulf. Someone who has built a company before can help a researcher encountering the realities of building one for the first time. Over time, founders who succeed tend to invest in and advise the people coming behind them. That accumulated experience is difficult to manufacture quickly, but once it starts building, it can become a real advantage. For all

our fascination with technology, it still comes down to people.

Qatar has invested heavily in education and research, attracting talent from all over the world. The opportunity now is to make it easier for more of that knowledge to find its way into new companies. Not every graduate has to become a founder, of course. But someone with a genuinely good idea should be able to imagine a route from that idea to a business. They need access to people who have done it before, early capital when the idea is still uncertain, and an environment where an unsuccessful first attempt isn’t treated as the end of the story.

This is why I’m mostly interested in the connections forming across Doha. The ingredients are already substantial. The question is how often a university researcher meets an entrepreneur, how easily a young company can find its first serious customer, whether an international investor spends enough time here to become part of the community, and whether

people who have built successful businesses stay involved with the generation that follows them.

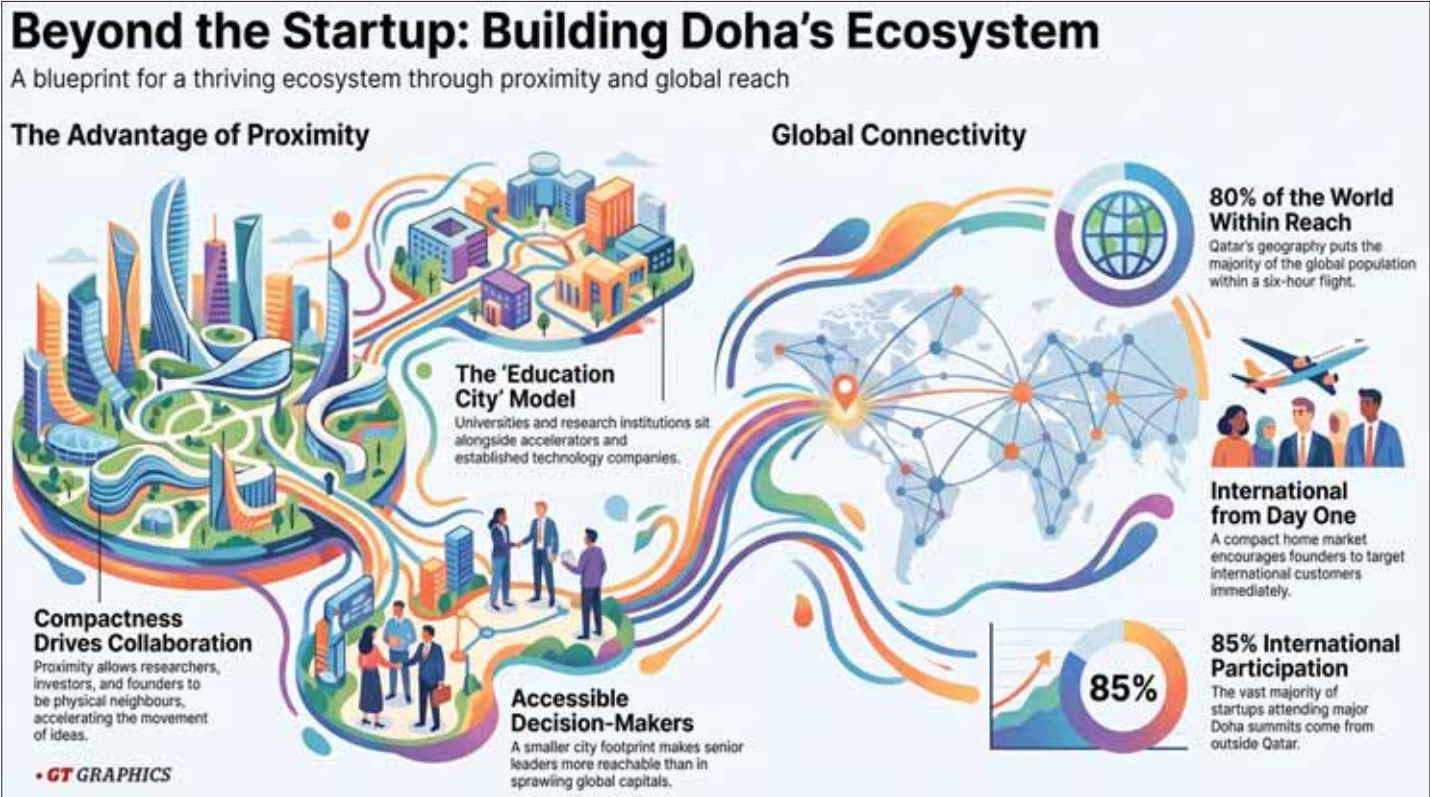
For years, Silicon Valley shaped our idea of what a successful technology ecosystem was supposed to look like. I think we’ve moved beyond that. The most interesting hubs emerging today aren’t replicas of one another. They grow out of their own universities, industries, sources of capital, geography and culture. What works in California doesn’t have to be the template for Doha, Singapore, London or anywhere else.

Doha has its own advantages. It is compact and strikingly international. It has strong universities and research institutions, access to capital and unusually good connections to the rest of the world. Perhaps most importantly, there is a natural willingness here to take a long view. Building an entrepreneurial culture takes time, and the institutions around it need time to mature as well.

Doha’s increasingly busy calendar of major international events brings a constant flow of people through the city: founders, investors, business leaders, researchers and policymakers who might not otherwise find themselves in the same place. Those moments matter, but I’m just as interested in what happens between them. Who stays? Which relationships continue? Which ideas get funded? Which companies are still growing here five or ten years from now?

That’s how a startup ecosystem becomes something more permanent. Qatar has already built a great deal of the infrastructure around entrepreneurship. Its next opportunity is to make those connections denser, more frequent and harder to replicate elsewhere.

There is no reason for Doha to follow somebody else’s model. I’m much more interested in seeing what we can build from what we already have here.



• The writer is an international investor and entrepreneur with more than two decades of experience investing across technology, healthcare, media and sport. She is the founder of NJF Holdings and NJF Capital.



Protesters wave national flags on Ban Jelacic Square during a demonstration to demand action over the illegal dumping of hazardous waste in Croatia's Lika region, in Zagreb. (AFP)

Tens of thousands of Croatians protest over hazardous waste

AFP
Zagreb

Tens of thousands of people rallied in Zagreb yesterday seeking immediate cleanup of thousands of tonnes of illegally dumped hazardous waste in one of Croatia's most pristine areas.

Some 35,000 tonnes of waste, including electronic and medical, were found in early 2025 in the Lika region, known for pristine forests and rivers and home to national parks and the country's longest mountain range.

Authorities have been investigating 10 people and four companies over the dumping.

They are suspected of importing waste from Slovenia, Italy and Germany and illegally dumping or burying it alongside medical waste from Croatia in Gospic, in the pristine region.

In August, the prosecutors published a report confirming soil contamination in Gospic, adding that the waste, which had spread beyond the dumping site, presented a "significant risk for the environment."

The report also mentioned that the waste also poses risk to people's health", though the drinking water in Gospic remained safe, according to health authorities.

Yesterday, tens of thousands of people took to the streets of central Zagreb in a march dubbed "Walk

'I want a beautiful, clean and healthy Croatia for my children, that they can drink water from any tap in this country,' - Katarina Kenda, protestor

for Lika, Walk for Croatia", that was backed by President Zoran Milanovic, the opposition, and numerous public figures and non-government organisations.

"I want a beautiful, clean and healthy Croatia for my children, that they can drink water from any tap in this country," Katarina Kenda, who joined the march with her three children, told AFP.

"This is a very serious incident and it must be stopped now, before the whole of Croatia ends up buried in waste."

"Ecocide equals slow genocide" and "Halt waste import", read some of the banners carried by the protesters, many of whom waved Croatian flags.

Organisers demanded from the authorities to present a concrete cleanup plan within the next 20 days, to remove the waste within the next three months, and to hold accountable those responsible.

Conservative Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said earlier this month that the site would be covered by mid-October and the removal would follow.

Putin meets US envoys for Ukraine war discussions

AFP
Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin began talks with US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff on ending more than four years of war in Ukraine in the Kremlin yesterday, ahead of their first visit to Kyiv expected today.

Both Russia and Ukraine vowed not to strike each other's capitals for three days during the negotiations, as Washington tries to revive US-led talks to end Europe's worst conflict since World War Two.

US President Donald Trump earlier said his son-in-law Kushner and business ally Witkoff were bringing "a proposal to end the war".

"Dear colleagues, I warmly welcome you to Moscow. The situation is, of course, not simple," Putin told the envoys in a grand Kremlin hall in footage aired by Russian TV.

"But before we begin to address it, I would like to ask everyone to convey their best wishes and words of gratitude to US President Mr Trump," Putin said.

The talks come as the grinding war saw increasing civilian deaths and attacks this summer. Putin has repeatedly said Moscow intends to seize the rest of east Ukraine.

The war, launched by Russia in 2022, has killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions.

Russian strikes on Ukraine Saturday killed at least seven people, including in the Kyiv suburbs, Ukrainian officials said.

The Kremlin said it would not strike Kyiv from midnight last night, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he would halt strikes on Moscow "from now" until tomorrow.

"The Russian president, the commander-in-chief, has given the order from midnight tonight not to strike Kyiv for three days," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Zelensky — who had offered a truce during the US visits — later said he had spoken to the US envoys and also promised Kyiv



President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, as US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff stands nearby during a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow. (Reuters)

would not strike Moscow.

"From now through the end of Saturday, as well as on Sunday and Monday, Ukraine is ready to refrain from strikes on Moscow," Zelensky said on social media.

The Ukrainian leader said he had spoken to the US officials and that he expected them in Kyiv today.

Russia had earlier struck Kyiv suburbs, with Zelensky accusing Moscow of trying to disrupt their visit with overnight attacks on Kyiv's two airports — as well as on civilian targets in the Dnipro region that killed five people.

"Two people were killed in the Bucha district" outside Kyiv, the head of the Kyiv region Tymur Tkachenko said.

"Clearly, these Russian strikes on the airports are a reaction to the discussions and preparations for the possibility of the US side using an aircraft to travel to Ukraine," Zelensky said on X.

It will be the first time that Witkoff and Kushner visit Kyiv since Trump returned to office last year with a pledge to resolve the conflict.

Travelling to Kyiv by plane would be a highly unusual move, with Ukrainian airspace closed since 2022 because of the war. Visiting leaders and officials have generally travelled by train.

The envoys are expected in Kyiv on Sunday, a senior Ukrainian official told AFP.

Trump told reporters the envoys would seek to gauge whether progress towards peace was possible.

Peace efforts have stalled, in part because of Washington's war with Iran, while Moscow and Kyiv have intensified long-range attacks, driving up civilian casualties to levels not seen since the start of fighting in February 2022.

"I sent Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, two great negotiators. They've done a great job, and we sent them over to see whether or not we can get something done. And there may be a good chance that we'll do it," Trump said.

The US president would not say whether the plan the envoys were bringing involved Ukraine ceding territory as he has previously

suggested, but added: "We have an idea for peace."

Witkoff and Kushner, who have been involved in negotiations for ceasefires in Gaza and Iran, have travelled repeatedly to Moscow in previous attempts at diplomacy.

The renewed push for diplomacy comes as Russia and Ukraine pummel each other with long-range missile and drone attacks.

Just hours before Trump's announcement on Friday, a Russian drone struck the headquarters of Ukraine's SBU security service in central Kyiv.

The strike, which Zelensky said was aimed at the office of the agency's acting chief, was the first on its headquarters since the start of Russia's offensive.

Overnight, a Russian strike killed five people and wounded five others in the southeastern city of Kamianske, said Oleksandr Ganzha, head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional military administration.

Witkoff and Kushner's visit comes after a rare trip to Moscow last month by CIA director John Ratcliffe.

Between war and peace



Svyatoslav, 6 years old, who went to the first grade of a primary school today, sits in front of an apartment building, damaged by a Russian drone strike, where he lives in Kyiv, Ukraine. (Reuters)

Hungary upholds the decision to grant asylum to military-age Ukrainian men

AFP
Budapest

Hungary will continue to welcome Ukrainian men fleeing conscription, defying a recently adopted EU policy excluding new arrivals subject to the military draft, according to a government decree that entered into force yesterday.

In July, the European Union extended emergency protections for Ukrainians, which were introduced in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion, giving them the right to live, work and claim benefits in the 27-nation bloc.

But in a change requested by Kyiv to help it find much needed manpower for the fight as the war grinds into a fifth year, the scheme no longer covers newly arriving Ukrainian men of military age who

are subject to mobilisation.

A decree published in Hungary's official gazette late Friday noted that the central European country of 9.5mn voted against the adopted EU policy and continues to oppose it. "Hungary therefore continues to maintain the scope of persons covered under current Hungarian regulations," read the order, signed by Prime Minister Peter Magyar.

Earlier this week, Magyar said Budapest would reserve the right to continue granting protection regardless of EU requirements, especially taking into account the sizeable ethnic Hungarian community in the Western Ukrainian region of Transcarpathia.

The pro-EU conservative premier a that he personally opposes the policy and shared his opinion with visiting European Council president Antonio Costa on Wednesday.

"I find it disgraceful and incomprehensible that the European Union has decided, in effect, to lock up fathers and grandfathers in a country at war and to offer them no assistance," Magyar told a Thursday briefing.

The new EU provisions do not affect military-age Ukrainian men already benefiting from temporary protection in member states, just new arrivals of males aged 23 to 60, who are prohibited from leaving the country under Ukraine's martial law. Since taking office in May, Magyar has sought to mend ties with Kyiv that were tense under his predecessor, Kremlin-friendly nationalist Viktor Orban.

In June, Hungary stopped blocking the start of EU membership negotiations with Ukraine, after the countries had reached a deal on the rights of the Hungarian ethnic minority.

'Mini-dictatorship': Students slam Argentina-run residence in Paris

AFP
Paris

Weeks before President Javier Milei visits France, scrutiny has grown around an Argentina-run university residence in Paris supposed to promote peaceful co-existence but which activists say instead restricts lodger freedoms and hosts European far-right figures.

Paris city officials have demanded the foreign ministry investigate Argentina House, one of dozens of homes run by foreign nations or French institutions on an international campus in the French capital.

The Cite Universitaire campus, or Cite U, was set up after World War I as lodgings for youth to form lasting connections with their peers across the globe.

But campus sources and former house residents, most speaking anonymously for fear of reprisal, say that the one run by Argentina has gone awry since a Milei ap-

pointee, fervent Catholic lawyer Santiago Muzio, became its director in 2024.

"The house used to be a space for community, culture, and art. Today it's a space of fear, control, surveillance, cameras," said an Argentine who lived there during the last academic year.

Residents told AFP their access to common areas such as the lounge or the outdoor barbecue — an epicentre for socialising in Argentine culture — had been restricted.

They claimed constant fear drove them to speak in whispers inside the house, with its director frowning on topics such as the forcibly disappeared during Argentina's 1976-83 military rule among others.

"It's a mini-dictatorship," said another student, who lived there during the same period.

As France's far-right eyes its best chance yet to win power in the next year's presidential elections, several reports have emerged suggesting far-right figures holding

meetings in its rooms.

Two think tanks linked to the far-right in Poland and Hungary in November were in Argentina House to present a plan to dismantle much of the European Union, according to left-wing media outlet Basta!

In May, it hosted a meeting against euthanasia in Europe.

Neither the residence nor Argentina's ministry of human capital with authority over the site, responded to AFP's repeated requests for comment.

Blandine Sorbe, of the foundation that manages the Cite Universitaire, told AFP she was working to have the issue of the house's management "raised" at a diplomatic level before Milei visits Paris in late September.

The Paris city hall has requested French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot's team conduct an investigation in a letter dated July 30 and seen by AFP.

Asked about the matter on Tuesday, Barrot responded: "We are currently in talks with the Ar-

gentine authorities and their representatives in Paris."

The Cite U hosts around 12,000 students, academics and artists of some 150 nationalities.

Argentina House has, since it opened in 1928, welcomed generations of learners from Argentina and other countries, including Argentine-French novelist Julio Cortazar.

These days, students pay between €620 and €1,210 a month (\$720-1,400) to sleep in one of its 70 to 80 beds.

Life at the house, like all others across campus, is supposed to be ruled by the Cite U's "charter of values", which includes respect for human rights and privacy.

The breaking point, campus sources told AFP, was when under Muzio, the residence in February removed a plaque "in homage to the 30,000 disappeared and victims of state terrorism (1974-1983)", saying it was for construction work.

Milei's government says the figure is much lower.

Students responded by holding a commemoration in Germany House, and campus authorities put up a similar plaque across the street.

Argentina House then did not allow 13 students viewed as against the plaque's removal to remain in dorms during the summer holidays, one of them, an academic researcher called Salvador Calanni, told AFP.

He said it felt like "political persecution".

Sorbe said around 10 of those students were rehoused for July and August.

When it came to apply for the new academic year, Calanni said he was among 42 people Argentina House rejected in what he says was an opaque admission process.

Cite U encourages houses to take in foreign students to encourage mixing, but the director of another house said he could no longer recommend Argentina's halls.

"Imagine sending someone there and them stumbling into a far-right meeting," he said.

Brokered truce takes effect for Zaporizhzhia plant repairs

A local ceasefire brokered by the International Atomic Energy Agency took effect yesterday to allow repairs to restore external power to the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southeastern Ukraine, the IAEA said.

The plant has been without external power since August 20 and has relied on emergency diesel generators to cool its vital safety systems.

The UN nuclear watchdog has said the facility is running low on diesel fuel and could face a station blackout within days unless power is restored or additional fuel is delivered.

Ukrainian technicians were due to begin work on the damaged Ferosplavna power line after demining the area, the IAEA said. Rosatom chief Alexei Likhachev said a temporary ceasefire had come into force yesterday morning to create conditions for the repair work, and that it was expected to last about a week. (Reuters)



HE the Minister of State and President of Qatar National Library Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari with Qatar Museums chief executive Mohammed Saad al-Rumaihi at the exhibition.

Second ‘Frame and Focus’ photo exhibition opens

Tasweer Photography Festival opened yesterday the second edition of “Frame and Focus” at Al Hosh Gallery, presenting the final projects of 12 photographers who have completed Tasweer’s flagship “Frame and Focus Advanced 14-week Photography Course”. On view until October 5, the exhibition features documentary photography, portraiture, and conceptual image-making shaped by each participant’s cultural background and personal experience to present intimate perspectives on place, community, and contemporary life. “‘Frame and Focus’ speaks to a wider ambition for photography in Qatar and the region: to give photographers the space, guidance and visibility to take their practice further and reach new audiences,” said Tasweer director Khalifa al-Obaidly. “By investing in artistic development and creating platforms for work to be seen and discussed, Tasweer is helping shape a more connected photographic community and opening new possibilities for the voices and stories emerging from the region,” he said. “‘Frame and Focus’ shows the learning outcomes achieved when photographers receive structured guidance and opportunities to cultivate their visual voice,” said



Alanoud al-Buainain, deputy director of image and narrative practices at Qatar Preparatory School. “Through instruction, critique, and experimentation, participants were challenged to think more critically and make images with greater clarity and purpose.” The exhibition was co-curated by The VII Foundation and Abdulla Faisal al-Khalaf. “‘Frame and Focus’ affirms our belief

that telling your own story is a human right – and that education in visual storytelling can be an act of resistance,” said Ziyah Gafic, the director of The VII Foundation, Sarajevo. “At a time of turmoil and competing narratives, these artists bring rigour, empathy, and deeply personal perspectives to questions of belonging, memory, and resilience.” “Each photographer in this year’s ‘Frame and Focus’ brings a distinct visual



HE Dr al-Kawari with al-Rumaihi and Tasweer director Khalifa al-Obaidly being briefed on the pictures on display.

Left: Al-Obaidly speaking with the artists during the ‘Frame and Focus’ opening.

language, shaped by personal experience and strengthened through the learning, experimentation, and creative exchange fostered by the Frame and Focus Photography course,” said al-Khalaf. “Together, these individual perspectives form a rich and layered exploration of home, faith, family, memory, and belonging, alongside reflections on landscape, heritage, and community.” Several projects in the exhibition draw on personal histories and connections to place, including Maja Bacic’s *I SEA*, Fate-ma Ahmad al-Doh’s *I, Myself, Am a Coun-try*, and Abdullatif Ahmad Alnaemi’s *The First Chalk Line*. Abdullatif Jaidah’s *The House of God* re-

flects on the role of the mosque as a space of prayer, hope, and continuity, while Al-waleed Alkhaja’s *And this, too, shall pass* and Burair Ali Alkishri’s *The Rose* examine how traditions, rituals, and community shape everyday life and collective memory. Themes of home, migration, and identity also feature prominently through portraiture, documentary photography, and experimental visual storytelling, with several photographers considering how in-dividuals and communities preserve herit-age across generations, navigate displace-ment, and maintain connections to culture and place. Meanwhile, Tasweer will host the “Frame and Focus Exhibition Tour & Art-ist Panel Talk” at Al Hosh Gallery, at 3pm today. Open to all, the event invites audiences to connect with works from the exhibit through the perspectives of artists, men-tors, and programme leaders.

Bean there, down that



From green beans to freshly roasted coffee – a glimpse inside a Doha roastery, where heat, time and precision bring out the rich aroma and flavour of every bean. With coffee consumption on the rise in Qatar, local roasteries are meeting growing demand for newly roasted beans. **PICTURE:** Joey Aguilar

CMU-Q convocation ceremony celebrates largest incoming class in campus history

Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q) – a Qatar Foundation partner university – celebrated the largest incoming class in campus history at the Class of 2030 Convocation Ceremony. The official welcome ceremony takes place during Orientation Week, when the new students meet faculty members, learn about expectations, and become acquainted with the many resources available to CMU-Q students. For this academic year, the CMU-Q has expanded its first-year class to 140 seats. More than 3,100 students applied for admission this year, which is also a campus record. Students in the first-year class hail from 36 nations across the globe, including the CMU-Q’s first-ever students from Honduras and South Sudan. “Students, tonight you are wearing the robes and tartan stoles of Carnegie Mellon University to symbolise that you are now part of our community,” said CMU-Q dean Michael Trick. “Class of 2030, it is my pleasure to welcome you-officially-to



Carnegie Mellon University,” he added. The convocation ceremony is a tradition that marks the beginning of a student’s journey at the CMU-Q. The event was emceed by

computer science student Junaid Yusuf. Senior associate dean for education Dudley Reynolds introduced the faculty and leadership. The CMU-Q offers undergraduate degree programmes

in artificial intelligence (AI), biological sciences, business administration, computer science and information systems. Applications for students beginning in the fall of 2027 opened on September 1. – QNA



Fan Zone adds vibrant atmosphere to Lusail-Al Wakrah match

The Lusail-Al Wakrah match in the fourth round of the Doha Bank Stars League 2026-27 season, held at the iconic Lusail Stadium, witnessed a lively and festive atmosphere ahead of kick-off with the launch of Lusail Club’s Fan Zone experience. The initiative is part of Lusail Club’s drive to turn matchday into a complete experience. The Fan Zone provided an interactive entertainment area featuring a wide range of activities and experiences de-

signed to cater to different age groups, including children, young people and families. The initiative was also intended to strengthen the connection between supporters and the stands, transforming matchday into a broader sporting and community occasion. It forms part of Lusail Club’s efforts to promote a culture of attending matches and introduce new and innovative experiences that strengthen the bond between the club and its supporters and to make attending a match an experience that goes beyond the 90 minutes of action on the pitch. “We are delighted at Lusail Club to launch a new experience during the league,” said Lusail Club assistant public relations director Yousef Nasser al-Hajaji. “Our aim is for matchday to be more than just 90 minutes at the stadium,” he said. “That is why we introduced this experience, which caters to all age groups –



parents, children, youths and families.” “The atmosphere at Lusail Stadium is truly wonderful, and the venue and preparations are heartening,” said Fatma al-Obaidli, the assistant director of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s Department of School and

Student Affairs. “The participation of our students from primary, preparatory and secondary schools, along with their families at the stadium, as well as their involvement in sports and recreational activities helps bring fathers and their children closer together.”