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PM stresses need for de-escalation

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani stressed the importance of de-escalation and promoting regional security and stability during a phone call with Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, National Community Abroad and African Affairs Ahmed Attaf yesterday. The two sides discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to strengthen it, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Qatar condemns Houthi attacks

Qatar has strongly condemned the Houthi group's attacks on civilian objects and civilians in the cities of Khamis Mushait, Abha, and Taif in Saudi Arabia using ballistic missiles and drones, which injured several civilians and caused material damage to residential homes and vehicles. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the attacks as disgraceful acts of aggression and an unacceptable disregard for civilian lives, stressing that they constitute a blatant violation of Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and a clear breach of international law. **(QNA)**



Amir awards Al Wajbah to outgoing Turkish envoy

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani awarded the Al Wajbah Decoration to Turkish ambassador Dr Mustafa Goksu in recognition of his contribution to strengthening relations between Qatar and Turkiye. The honour came as His Highness the Amir received the ambassador at the Amiri Diwan yesterday to mark the end of his tenure in Qatar. His Highness the Amir wished Goksu success in his future assignments and relations between the two countries further progress and prosperity. The ambassador thanked His Highness the Amir and state officials for their co-operation, which he said had contributed to the success of his mission in Qatar. **(QNA)**

Qatar, UK extend defence agreement



Qatar and Britain have signed an extension to their defence co-operation agreement during a visit to Britain by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani. The agreement was signed by HE Sheikh Saud and British Defence Secretary Wes

Streeting during a meeting that discussed issues of mutual interest and ways to strengthen bilateral co-operation. The meeting was attended by Qatar's ambassador to Britain, Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud al-Thani, and senior officers and officials from both sides. **(QNA)**

Amir receives credentials of envoys



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received, at the Amiri Diwan yesterday, the credentials of six new ambassadors to the country.

His Highness received the credentials of ambassador of Sweden Josefín Simonsson Broden, ambassador of the European Union Antonino Maggiore, ambassador of Russia Artem Kozhin, ambassador of the Czech Republic Marta Huskova, ambassador of Thailand Pensom Lertsithichai, and ambassador of India Dr K Srikar Reddy.

His Highness the Amir welcomed the new ambassadors, wishing them success in their duties and further progress and prosperity in bilateral relations between Qatar and their countries.

The ambassadors conveyed to His Highness the Amir the greetings of their countries' leaders, along with their wishes for continued progress and prosperity for the people of Qatar. The ambassadors were accorded an official reception ceremony upon their arrival at the Amiri Diwan. **(QNA) Page 2**



Qatar backs Palestinian unity

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani reaffirmed Qatar's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and their just cause during a meeting with Fatah Central Committee secretary-general Jibril Rajoub yesterday. HE the Prime Minister stressed the importance of ending division and strengthening Palestinian unity to secure legitimate

national rights, foremost among them the establishment of an independent state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The meeting with Rajoub, who is visiting Qatar, reviewed bilateral co-operation and ways to strengthen it, developments in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, and other issues of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

Iran war costs soar to \$38bn

Reuters
Washington

The six-month-old US war against Iran has cost \$38bn so far and that amount is projected to rise by \$3bn a month, Congress' non-partisan bookkeeper reported yesterday, as the Trump administration searches for ways to end the conflict and reopen the vital Strait of Hormuz. The war is expected to increase inflation by 0.5% in the first three

months of 2027, according to the Congressional Budget Office accounting, which totaled expenses through August 1.

The mounting costs have strained US munitions stockpiles and driven up energy prices, raising concerns about the country's ability to respond to other potential conflicts and adding pressure on an already stretched federal budget.

The cost was close to the \$37.5bn that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth reported at a Senate hearing on July 21. **To Page 5**

Saudi reports security alerts

Saudi Arabia issued security alerts over a range of territory yesterday, including in the holy city of Makkah and second-largest city Jeddah, following a week of attacks from Iran-aligned fighters that have drawn it deeper into the Middle East war.

The alerts were swiftly lifted and Saudi authorities did not immediately report whether any incoming projectiles had landed, nor was there any immediate claim of responsibility for attacks. But the alerts were the widest ranging since an escalation in the conflict last week, and the alarm in Makkah was the first of the war in the city, which houses the Holy Ka'aba.

Crude oil should be flowing through the pipeline within days, US Energy Secretary Chris Wright told CNBC yesterday. **To Page 5**

Qatar to maintain diplomacy in bid to resolve Hormuz crisis

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar has reaffirmed its support for diplomatic efforts to safeguard freedom of maritime navigation and achieve a comprehensive agreement that ensures lasting peace in the region.

Speaking during the MoFA's weekly media briefing yesterday, Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashmi, director of the Media and Communications Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), said Qatar supports reaching an agreement on the Strait of Hormuz and that the immediate priority for all parties is to reach consensus on a solution



Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashmi at the press briefing. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

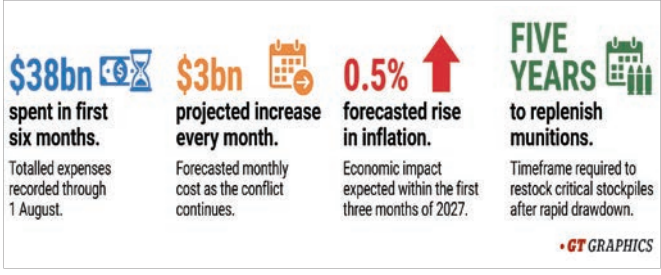
to the ongoing crisis.

He stressed the importance of freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz for countries around the world, emphasising that Qatar continues to work tirelessly with its regional and international partners to build consensus and advance

dialogue toward a comprehensive resolution.

Al-Hashmi stressed that the closure of maritime waterways must not be normalised or treated as ordinary, describing such measures as unacceptable to Qatar and the international community. Accordingly, he called on the world to unite against any actions that could obstruct the freedom of navigation.

"The world has suffered enough from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and cannot bear the cost of closing the Bab al-Mandeb Strait as well," he said, warning that disruptions to navigation through both strategic waterways would have catastrophic consequences for the world. **To Page 5**





Amir receives credentials of new envoys

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received, at the Amiri Diwan yesterday, the credentials of six new ambassadors to the state. Pictured are ambassadors Josefin Simonsson Broden (Sweden), Artem Kozhin (Russia), Marta Huskova (Czech Republic), Pensom Lertsithichai (Thailand) and Dr K Srikar Reddy (India) with HH the Amir. HH the Amir welcomed the new ambassadors, wishing them success in their duties and the bilateral relations between Qatar and their countries further progress and prosperity. The ambassadors conveyed to HH the Amir the greetings of their countries' leaders. The ambassadors were accorded an official reception ceremony upon their arrival at the Amiri Diwan. - QNA

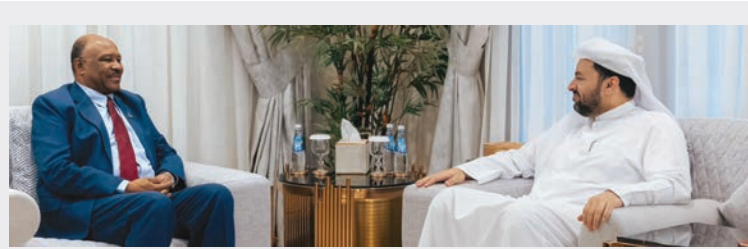


Amir sends cable of congratulations to Costa Rica's Fernandez Delgado

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to Costa Rica's President Laura Fernandez Delgado on the anniversary of her country's Independence Day. 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 sent a similar cable of congratulations to Fernandez Delgado. - QNA

Amir, Deputy Amir, PM send cables of condolences to British premier

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 condolences to UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham on the passing of his father. - QNA



Al-Khulaifi meets Sudan minister

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi met yesterday with Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Moheiddin Salem, who is visiting the country. They discussed co-operation, relations between the countries and ways to support them, as well as topics of common interest. HE Dr al-Khulaifi reiterated Qatar's support for the unity, sovereignty, and stability of Sudan. - QNA

Qatar emphasises role of education in advancing, protecting human rights

Qatar has emphasised education and training as key pillars in promoting and protecting human rights, saying that the approach is particularly important amid today's global challenges. Addressing a high-level panel marking the 15th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, Qatar said that current global challenges required solutions rooted in human rights and respect for human dignity.



The statement was delivered by the second secretary at Qatar's Permanent Mission to the UN Office in Geneva, Abdulaziz al-Mansoori, during the 63rd session of the UN Human Rights Council. Qatar said that it had placed significant emphasis on human rights education and training through awareness initiatives and by incorporating human rights principles into school curricula and formal and informal training programmes. It also highlighted the establishment of specialised human rights departments within several government agencies. Qatar's delegation pointed to the role of the UN Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, based in Doha, in providing training, building capacity and promoting international human rights standards across the region. Al-Mansoori also called for national, cultural and religious particularities to be considered when promoting human rights education. The diversity of cultures and societies, he added, should be viewed as an opportunity to exchange good practices and strengthen human rights principles, rather than imposing concepts or practices that lack broad agreement, he said. Qatar believes that such an approach would provide a stronger basis for upholding the universality of human rights. - QNA

Awqaf ministry releases book on reviving the basis of Arab identity

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has released the first book of the series *In a Clear Arabic Language*, focused on cultural re-building and reviving the basis of Arab identity. The release highlights the work of the first intellectual symposium of the series, held in November 2025 at Imam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab Mosque, with the participation of a group of academics and researchers. The director of the ministry's Department of Research and Islamic Studies, Sheikh Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Ghanim al-Thani, said that the symposium is an event, to be held annually, aimed at serving the Arabic language, acknowledging its value, and highlighting its key role in shaping Islamic identity. Assistant director Mishari Ali al-Namlan said that nation's connection to its language is what distinguishes it. The Arabic language, he said, holds an underrated power in uniting people and building bridges of civilisational communication. - QNA

Qatar urges further global efforts to eliminate nukes

Qatar has called for intensified international efforts to completely eliminate nuclear weapons, describing the goal as both a humanitarian responsibility and a moral imperative amid rising armed conflicts, nuclear arms competition and the growing use of force in international relations.

Speaking at the 70th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, HE Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi said that multilateral action is needed to address growing threats to international peace and security.

He reaffirmed Qatar's support for the IAEA's independent and professional work to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, strengthen nuclear safety and security, and maintain an effective safeguards system to prevent nuclear proliferation.

HE Dr al-Hammadi highlighted increasing geopolitical divisions and armed conflicts, including the ongoing Israeli military actions against the Palestinian people, the crisis in the Gulf and Strait of Hormuz, and the accelerating nuclear arms race.

Qatar is calling for stronger international support for arms control and disarmament mechanisms, with the Nuclear Non-



Proliferation Treaty serving as a cornerstone of the global system.

It also reaffirmed its support for efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons.

HE Dr al-Hammadi stressed that nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and dedicated exclusively to peaceful purposes are protected under international law, the UN Charter and the IAEA framework.

He added that Qatar rejects attacks on, or threats to attack, such facilities, warning that such actions would undermine regional and international peace and security.

Qatar also welcomed the IAEA Board of Governors' unanimous

decision on September 9, 2026, to remove the item concerning implementation of the safeguards agreement in Syria from the board's agenda.

The decision, he said, would allow Syria to restore its normal status within the agency and make greater use of peaceful nuclear applications to support development, reconstruction and stability.

Qatar further highlighted a \$600,000 agreement signed through the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) to support IAEA projects under its "Rays of Hope" initiative, including efforts to strengthen radiotherapy capacity in Syria.

HE Dr al-Hammadi said that Qatar remains committed to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, describing the IAEA as a key partner in expanding peaceful nuclear applications and strengthening nuclear and radiological security.

He also outlined Qatar's technical co-operation programmes with the IAEA, which include strengthening regulatory oversight, improving radioactive waste management, developing national radiation monitoring capabilities including PET-MRI (positron emission tomography-magnetic resonance imaging) scan and researches aimed at combating Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and enhancing food safety.

Qatar signed an agreement with the IAEA in February 2026 to update its national policy on radiation and nuclear security and strengthen the country's legal and regulatory framework.

HE Dr al-Hammadi concluded by reaffirming Qatar's commitment to a strong and sustainable partnership with the IAEA, saying that the agency had a crucial role in advancing international co-operation and developing legal frameworks aimed at ensuring a safe and sustainable future for nuclear energy and achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. - QNA

Qatar slams continued Al Aqsa Mosque incursions

Qatar has strongly condemned the ongoing incursions by Israeli settlers into Al Aqsa Mosque, including the latest raid carried out under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, adding that it is a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, and a provocation to millions of Muslims worldwide.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) emphasised in a statement yesterday that Al Aqsa Mosque is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims, asserting that all unilateral measures aimed at altering the historic and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites are null and void under international law.

The ministry warned that persistent violations risk fueling fur-

ther regional escalation and undermining efforts toward calm and stability.

It reiterated its call for the international community to act urgently to compel Israel to stop its continuous violations against the Palestinian people and their sacred sites, and to abide by relevant international resolutions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

reaffirmed Qatar's unwavering stance in support of the Palestinian cause and the resilience of the Palestinian people, centred on ending the occupation and enabling the Palestinian people to realise their legitimate rights, chief among which is establishing an independent state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. - QNA

Hamad Medical Corporation joins QMED 2026 as Strategic Sponsor

The Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has joined the list of Strategic Sponsors for the third Qatar International Medical Devices and Healthcare Exhibition and Conference (QMED 2026). The QMED 2026 will take place on October 14-16 at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) under the official patronage of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), with the participation of leading healthcare institutions, medical and technology companies, alongside decision-makers from Qatar, and participants from around the world.

The QMED 2026 is expected to feature approximately 150 companies and institutions at home and abroad, alongside international pavilions representing a number of global markets, a specialised scientific conference, workshops, and accompanying activities bringing together leading healthcare experts, professionals, and decision-makers.

The exhibition will cover a broad range of sectors shaping the future of healthcare, including medical devices and supplies, healthcare equipment, diagnostics and laboratory technologies, pharmaceuticals and biotech-

nology, digital health and artificial intelligence (AI), medical education and training, medical tourism and wellness, healthcare logistics and supply chains, as well as other related fields.

QMED 2026 organising committee chairman Khalifa bin Salman al-Muhannadi said that he is grateful for the HMC's support, adding that the participation of Qatar's leading national healthcare institution is a major endorsement of QMED 2026 and reflects confidence in the exhibition's objectives and vision. - QNA



Public Prosecution participates in Arab prosecutors’ meeting in Egypt

The State of Qatar, represented by the Public Prosecution, participated in the sixth meeting of the Arab Association for Prosecutors in New Alamein City, Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Public Prosecution delegation was led by First Attorney-General and director of the Judicial Inspection Department Abdullah Mohammed al-Malki, with several Public Prosecution members also attending.

Participants discussed approving amendments to the Association’s governing principles, including establishing the terms of office for members of the Executive Committee. They also addressed establishing the Association’s permanent headquarters in the Arab Republic of Egypt, completing its administrative structure, and developing its digital documentation registry.

The sessions included a discussion of the financial position and discussions on proposed workshops for 2026. Meetings of the focal points, the Executive Com-



mittee and the General Assembly also featured in-depth discussions on key issues.

On institutional and international matters, participants discussed ways to engage with the League of Arab States to strengthen the Association’s presence, approved engagement with the European Union Agency in accordance with a draft memorandum of understanding prepared by the General Secretariat, and examined amendments to the Riyadh Arab Agreement for Judicial Co-operation. They also discussed a proposal to launch an annual award honouring distinguished members of the public

prosecution services of member states, in addition to other matters in the General Secretariat’s report.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Qatari Public Prosecutor Nasser Ali al-Nuaimi was honoured with the Association’s annual Distinguished Members Award, presented to member states in recognition of his outstanding efforts in the legal field.

This marked Qatar’s first participation in the Association since joining, reflecting the State’s commitment to strengthening joint Arab cooperation, exchanging expertise, and supporting legal development across the Arab region. (QNA)

Ooredoo demonstrates AI and data leadership at 13th Middle East AI & Analytics Summit

Ooredoo participated in the 13th Middle East AI & Analytics Summit, contributing to key panel discussions through two of its experts and receiving four awards for its achievements in AI and digital transformation.

Ali Danish Malik, assistant director – AI Hub, joined the panel “From Data to Competitive Advantage: Fueling AI, Innovation & Business Growth,” while Fatimh al-Jaber, assistant director of AI & Data Governance, spoke on “From Data Governance to Business Growth: Building AI-Ready, Sovereign Data Ecosystems”, topics central to how enterprises across the region are preparing for an AI-driven economy.



This leadership was reflected in four awards honouring Ooredoo at the summit. Malik was named Enterprise AI Champion, the AI Hub Data Science Team received both AI Business Impact Team of the Year 2026 and the Agentic AI Catalyst Award 2026, and the B2B Digital Team was recognised with Digital Excellence of the Year 2026.

Thani Ali al-Malki, Chief Strat-

egy and Digital Transformation Officer at Ooredoo Qatar, said: “Through our Strategic Digital & AI Transformation Programme, we are embedding advanced capabilities across Ooredoo to transform how we operate and accelerate innovation across the business. These achievements are a testament to our teams’ expertise and our commitment to powering Qatar’s digital future.”

Mannai Corporation strengthens ICT leadership with appointment of Sumanta Roy as group president

Mannai Corporation QPSC announced the appointment of technology industry veteran Sumanta Roy as Group President for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Roy will lead the Group’s ICT business across the Middle East, and Africa, strengthening its technology capabilities and advancing its regional expansion, with Saudi Arabia among its priority markets. Saudi Arabia stands as a strategic priority for Mannai with the Group deepening its operations in the Kingdom through Mannai Information Technology Saudi Arabia. In his new role, Roy will steer the next phase of growth from the company’s base in Riyadh, drawing on Mannai’s regional capabilities and global partnerships to build on its technology presence in the Kingdom and support the Group’s broader



Sumanta Roy

expansion across Middle East and Africa. This will include deepening relationships with customers and technology partners, while widening the portfolio across high-growth areas such as AI, cybersecurity, cloud, digital transformation, intelligent infrastructure and managed services. Alekh Grewal, Group CEO, Mannai Corporation QPSC, said: “Sumanta

joins Mannai at an important point in the evolution of our technology business. He brings more than three decades of industry experience, an exceptional understanding of the Middle East and Africa, and a proven ability to build businesses, deepen customer relationships and lead growth across complex and rapidly evolving markets.”

Roy said: “My focus will be on bringing together the strength of our people, capabilities and global technology partnerships to create greater value for our customers, while accelerating our growth in strategic markets, particularly Saudi Arabia, and expanding Mannai’s technology footprint across Middle East and Africa.” Roy brings more than thirty years of leadership experience in IT services, business transformation and regional growth.

Sidra to host PMFG Summit 2026 in Dec

Marking 12 years of advancing precision medicine and genomics in Qatar, the Mena region, and beyond, Sidra Medicine, a member of Qatar Foundation, is set to host the Precision Medicine and the Future of Genomics (PMFG) Summit 2026, to be held from December 7-9 at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

Prof Khalid Fakhro, chief research officer at Sidra Medicine and executive chair of PMFG Summit 2026, said: “Since hosting the first major precision medicine symposium in the Middle East in 2014, Sidra Medicine has continued to lead regional and global dialogue on personalised healthcare. Since then, PMFG has evolved alongside the remarkable progress Sidra Medicine has made in precision medicine and genomics. We are now at a pivotal stage where advances in genomics, artificial intelligence and data science are creating new opportunities to transform how we predict, diagnose and treat disease.”

This year’s edition will focus on four scientific pillars: Building Globally Representative, Population-Scale Genomic Infrastructure; AI-Driven Discovery and the Regulatory Ecosystems to Govern It; Rare, Metabolic, and Mendelian Disease Genomics in High-Consanguinity Populations; and Translating Genomic Discovery into Deployed, Equitable Care.

Dr Ammira Akil, principal investigator and director of Metabolic and Mendelian Translational Programme at Sidra Medicine and managing chair of PMFG Summit 2026, said: “For decades, most genetic research has focused on a small part of the world’s population.

This year’s PMFG Summit is bringing together the scientists that are changing that landscape. We will have esteemed researchers who have built or are building genetic maps that finally include African, Chinese and Vietnamese ancestry. We will also feature experts launching national genome projects across the Global South in places like Pakistan, Egypt, Peru and Ghana, and here in Qatar, including updates about newborn screening programmes



Prof Khalid Fakhro and Dr Ammira Akil.

in populations where genetic conditions are more common. The core focus of the summit will be to address the most important question of all: will this reach every patient who needs it, no matter where they live?”

Artificial intelligence is a major thread running through this year’s programme, from generative AI systems designing entirely new drug candidates and quantum computing accelerating genomic analysis, to deep learning models predicting disease risk across entire national populations, to international collaborations training AI across borders without moving underlying patient data. The summit will also confront the challenges and questions about how regulators, health systems and society itself can govern AI-driven medicine responsibly as it moves faster than the frameworks built to oversee it.

This year’s programme features live debates, including a session on whether the traditional “blockbuster” drug model can survive in an age of personalised medicine and a closing debate on whether population genomics will truly reach the patients who need it most. The programme also includes specialised workshops, scientific poster presentations, and dedicated networking opportunities designed to encourage knowledge exchange and foster collaborations across research, clinical practice, and technology.

Deputy PM meets commandant of UK Royal College of Defence Studies

HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani met with Commandant of the UK Royal College of Defence Studies Sir George Norton, during his visit to the United Kingdom. The meeting dealt with discussing issues of joint interest between the two sides and the means to enhance them. The meeting was attended by the ambassador of the State of Qatar to the United Kingdom, several ranking officers and officials on the Qatari and the UK sides. (QNA)



Ashghal completes Package 1 of Al Asmakh development project

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) has completed construction on Package 1 of the Al Asmakh Area Development Project in Msheireb and initiated handover procedures, set for completion this year.

The project advances Ashghal’s strategy to revitalise historic Central Doha by balancing heritage preservation with modern infrastructure.

Inspecting the site, the President of the Public Works Authority, Engineer Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al-Meer, stated that Package 1 reflects Ashghal’s commitment to safeguarding Doha’s historical identity alongside modern development.

He noted that the project spans 78,000sq m and encompasses 73 buildings.

Al-Meer added that works included restoring existing structures, reconstructing select buildings while preserving their heritage character, upgrading

service facilities and facades, and modernising infrastructure and internal streets.

Project Manager, Engineer Khalid al-Khamees, confirmed construction is complete, with integrated utility networks, roads, and services established to support all properties.

Highlights included structural reinforcement for preserved landmarks and converting part of the historic “Doha Palace” hotel into a vintage car museum. External facades were restored to their original aesthetic alongside upgraded mechanical, electrical, and drainage networks.

Roadways, pathways, and signage were modernised, with facade upgrades applied to properties facing Souq Waqif and Msheireb to unify visual appeal. The project also delivered five new electrical substations, ensuring building safety, efficiency, and long-term sustainability. (QNA)



Mohammed Miandad VP Named Among Two Qatar-Based Founders in Forbes Middle East’s Top Healthcare Leaders 2026

Mohammed Miandad VP, Chairman and Managing Director of 33 Holdings Global and Naseem Healthcare, has been recognised by Forbes Middle East among the Top Healthcare Founders & Shareholders 2026, placing him among the only two founders from Qatar selected for the prestigious regional listing.

The recognition highlights Miandad’s contribution to Qatar’s rapidly evolving healthcare ecosystem and his role in building a diversified healthcare group with an expanding regional and international footprint.

Under his leadership, 33 Holdings Global has expanded its healthcare interests across Qatar through Naseem Healthcare, ABM4 Scientific, ABM4 Trading and Dfine Dental Lab. Its Qatar portfolio spans healthcare delivery, specialised care, AI and digitally driven services, medical supplies, dental studios and laboratories, rehabilitation, and healthcare education.

Naseem Healthcare, a leading private healthcare provider in Qatar, continues to play a key role in this growth journey, with expansion plans focused on bringing healthcare services in Qatar to global standards. In addition to its seven world-class surgical, medical, dental and premium wellness facilities, the launch of Naseem Hospital and Naseem Medical Centre in Umm Salal further strengthens its commitment to expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive and advanced healthcare services for communities across the country.

The group has continued to expand its healthcare footprint in Qatar through new specialised facilities, strategic partnerships and investments aimed at strengthening access to advanced and specialised healthcare.

Miandad has also extended his healthcare leadership beyond Qatar, serving as Chairman and Managing Director of Medinova Healthcare in Africa and contributing to the group’s broader cross-border healthcare ambitions.

“This recognition is deeply meaningful because it reflects not just an individual journey, but the collective work of an entire organisation,” said Miandad. “Qatar has been an important part of our story, and we remain committed to contributing to its vision for a world-class, innovative and accessible healthcare ecosystem.”



His Forbes recognition for the fourth consecutive year marks another milestone in the journey of 33 Holdings Global and underscores the growing role of Qatar-based entrepreneurs in shaping the healthcare sector across the region.



This recognition is deeply meaningful because it reflects not just an individual journey, but the collective work of an entire organisation, Qatar has been an important part of our story, and we remain committed to contributing to its vision for a world-class, innovative and accessible healthcare ecosystem.

Mohammed Miandad VP
Chairman and Managing Director of
33 Holdings Global and Naseem Healthcare



Alaraby airs special investigative report 9/9... *Israel's Failed Attempt*

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

Alaraby TV has aired a special investigative report titled *9/9... Israel's Failed Attempt*, revealing new details about the Israeli attack targeting Hamas leaders in Doha, including the events surrounding the strike and the security and operational response that followed.

Drawing on exclusive testimonies and footage being shown for the first time, the report reconstructs the events from the moment the attack took place, offering a detailed account of the targeted site and the Hamas negotiating delegation, which was staying in a separate building nearby.



In an exclusive testimony, the official responsible for the security of the Hamas delegation described the measures taken to evacuate its members following the attack. These included moving them out in groups, changing

their clothes to avoid detection, and transporting them in vehicles to separate safe locations.

The report also revealed that the meeting location had been changed several days before the attack.

The report documents the im-

mediate response by Qatari authorities, from the first alerts received by the National Command Centre to cordoning off the area and establishing safe passage-ways. Explosive ordnance disposal teams, Civil Defence personnel, rescue teams and forensic specialists were among those involved in securing and handling the site.

A wide range of regional and international media outlets have since picked up the report, republishing the exclusive footage first aired by Alaraby TV.

The channel has previously released exclusive footage of the targeting of Hezbollah leaders in Lebanon during what became known as the Pager Operation, as well as an exclusive report from inside Qatar's strategic storage facilities during the US-Iran war.

Old Doha Port to participate in Monaco Yacht Show 2026

Old Doha Port is taking part in the Monaco Yacht Show 2026, scheduled to take place from September 23 to 26, where it is officially sponsoring the Upper Deck Lounge for the second consecutive year as part of the show's events.

In a statement, the Port highlighted that this participation, for the fifth consecutive year, underscores its commitment to advancing the State of Qatar's profile on the global maritime stage through forging productive relationships with luxury yacht manufacturers and maritime industry leaders, while fostering the exchange of expertise and opportunities with high-profile firms and global brands in the yacht manufacturing industry.

The statement highlighted that this lounge positions itself as one of the foremost and exclusive spaces at the event, a main gathering platform for leading decision-makers and pioneers in the luxury yacht industry.

Sponsoring the lounge for the second consecutive year helps provide a pre-eminent platform to support strategic partnerships among leading firms in the maritime industry, the statement continued.

More tellingly, the sponsorship offers an opportunity to promote the Qatar Boat Show, as well as engage with key entities and stakeholders across the sector, spotlighting the Port's role as a maritime tourism hub in strengthening Qatar's standing on the international maritime events scene and within the global yachting and marine tourism sectors.

Through these renewed partnerships, the Port continues to affirm its strategic role in driving the growth of maritime tourism and unlocking productive prospects for investment and international exchange, further reinforcing Qatar's enduring role in raising the standards of excellence and leadership across the maritime sector. (QNA)

MSDF holds national workshop to enhance vocational training for priority groups

QNA
Doha

The Ministry of Social Development and Family (MSDF)'s Community Development Department organised a national workshop aimed at boosting the vocational training of priority groups in the State of Qatar.

Held under the patronage of HE the Minister of Social Development and Family Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi, the workshop was carried out in co-operation with the Doha International Family Institute (Difi).

Bringing together more than 30 government and semi-government entities, civil society organisations, and private-sector institutions, in addition to a group of leading experts and specialists, the workshop aimed to strengthen dialogue and co-operation among various national stakeholders and

explore ways to develop a more integrated and sustainable system for qualifying and empowering priority groups.

In his remarks, HE the Under-secretary of MSDF Khalifa bin Issa al-Kubaisi emphasised the Ministry's commitment to strengthening national partnerships and co-ordinating efforts to develop an integrated vocational training system for priority groups, placing beneficiaries at the heart of the planning and development processes.

As part of its 2025-2030 strategy and "From Care to Empowerment" slogan, MSDF is working to develop more integrated and sustainable models that place beneficiaries at the centre of the planning process and make their path clearer and more interconnected, al-Kubaisi said. Starting with assessment and understanding needs and capabilities, through training and skill development, all the way to empowerment, inte-

gration, and independence.

For her part, Executive Director of Difi Dr Sharifa al-Emadi said that the Institute's participation in organising the workshop stems from its belief in the importance of strengthening knowledge- and evidence-based national partnerships. Such partnerships support the development of more integrated policies and programmes that are responsive to the needs of priority groups.

In turn, Director of the Community Development Department at MSDF Nasser al-Mughaiseb said that the workshop adopts a participatory approach that enables participating entities to share their experiences, challenges, and perspectives; draw on their expertise to identify gaps, priorities, and opportunities for integration; and develop a clearer understanding of beneficiaries' journeys and partners' roles at various stages.



Vodafone Qatar officials receiving the awards at the Middle East Enterprise AI & Analytics Summit & Awards 2026.

Vodafone Qatar wins 3 awards at 'Middle East Enterprise AI & Analytics Summit & Awards'

Vodafone Qatar has won three awards at the Middle East Enterprise AI & Analytics Summit & Awards 2026, underscoring its position as a regional leader in enterprise AI and data innovation.

The summit brought together industry leaders to examine how AI and analytics are reshaping enterprise decision-making.

Vodafone Qatar received the 'Organisation Excellence Award for Best Use-Case of GenAI' while two of its executives were also individually recognised. Rizwan Za-

far received the 'Data & AI Visionary of the Year Award', and Meshaal al-Ibrahim was named 'Rising AI Leader of the Year'.

Vodafone Qatar also contributed to the summit's panel discussions, with chief operating officer Baran Yurdagul and head of Digital Channel Transformation Tolga Orhun, sharing insights on the evolving role of AI and analytics across businesses.

Commenting on the recognition, Yurdagul said: "Winning these awards is a strong validation of the work our teams have put into

embedding AI across the way we operate and serve our customers. It's not just about the technology, it's about the people applying it in ways that make a real difference. This also speaks to Qatar's growing stature as a hub for data and AI excellence, in line with the ambitions of National Vision 2030."

Vodafone Qatar continues to expand its enterprise AI and analytics offering as part of its broader digital transformation strategy in Qatar. To find out more about Vodafone Qatar and its services, visit www.vodafone.qa



Ahlibank recognises 55 employees at '2026 Long Service Award' ceremony

Ahlibank recently held its Annual Long Service Award ceremony, honouring employees who have completed between five and 35 years of service.

Hassan AlEfrangi, CEO of Ahlibank, attended the event, along with senior members of the executive management and Ahlibank employees.

This year, 55 employees were

recognised across the five, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35-year service milestones in recognition of their loyalty, professionalism, and longstanding contributions to Ahlibank's continued growth and success.

During the ceremony, Sara Ahmed Fakhroo, head of Human Resources Department at Ahlibank, congratulated the honou-

rees and expressed her sincere appreciation for their efforts and contributions over the years.

"We are proud to recognise our long-serving employees, whose loyalty and dedication have contributed to Ahlibank's journey and continued success. Their commitment reflects the values of the bank and the strong sense of belonging we continue

to build across our organisation. We thank each of them for their valuable contributions and continued service."

The Long Service Awards ceremony is an annual tradition that reflects Ahlibank's commitment to recognising its people and fostering a culture of loyalty, appreciation, and pride among its workforce.



Qatar Charity conducts blindness prevention campaign in Senegal

QNA
Dakar

As part of its ongoing "Ibsar" initiative, Qatar Charity (QC), in co-operation with Senegal's Ministry of Health and Social Action, implemented a medical campaign to address treatable blindness in the Dakar and Saint-Louis regions.

During the campaign, 2,953 people received eye examinations and medical consultations, while 1,290 prescription eyeglasses and 4,964 units of eye medications and eye drops were distributed.

The campaign aimed to mitigate the prevalence of cataracts,

the leading cause of blindness in Senegal.

Adviser to the Senegalese Minister of Health Abdoulaye Ndiaye commended Qatar Charity's efforts in supporting the healthcare sector in Senegal, particularly those to combat blindness and visual impairment through targeted medical programmes and enhanced prevention and treatment services for vulnerable communities.

The campaign reflects Qatar Charity's commitment to providing healthcare to the most vulnerable groups, as restoring beneficiaries' sight contributes to improving their living conditions and enabling them to access education and employment, as well as achieve self-reliance.

QNA holds corporate reputation management course with QU

QNA
Doha

Qatar News Agency (QNA), represented by the QNA Training Centre, concluded yesterday a three-day training course on digital corporate reputation management, organised in collaboration with Qatar University (QU) as part of the centre's 2026 training plan.

Attended by QNA staff and representatives from various government entities, the programme aimed to enhance participants' expertise in building, protecting, and strengthening digital institutional reputation to boost performance and stakeholder trust.

Led by Associate Professors Dr Moez ben Messaoud and Dr Taleb al-Adbah from Qatar University's



Department of Mass Communication, the course covered key reputation metrics, such as credibility and transparency, while addressing threats like fake news and cyberattacks.

Participants engaged in practical exercises covering social media content analysis, digital crisis simulation, and risk mitigation strategies.

The initiative reflects QNA's

commitment to advancing national media capabilities, keeping pace with digital communication trends, and strengthening training partnerships with leading national academic institutions.



MoL, NHRC host workshop on National Referral System

The Ministry of Labour (MoL), represented by the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, in partnership with the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), organised the first workshop on the National Referral System, entitled 'National Referral System for Combating Human Trafficking: Protecting and Rehabilitating Victims and Promoting Human Rights'.

In her opening remarks at the introductory workshop, HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Secretary-General of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking Sheikhha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani affirmed that the launch of the National Referral System represents an important step in Qatar's efforts to strengthen its national framework for combating this crime, protecting its victims and ensuring a more integrated and effective response.

She noted that the relevant authorities in Qatar have, over the years, worked to establish specialised systems, procedures and expertise in the areas of prevention, identification of cases, protection and care, law enforcement and prosecution, alongside effective partnerships with non-governmental entities and relevant institutions.

In her opening remarks HE Sheikhha Najwa bint Abdulrahman al-Thani affirmed that the launch of the National Referral System represents an important step in Qatar's efforts to strengthen its national framework for combating human trafficking, protecting its victims and ensuring a more integrated and effective response

She noted that human trafficking is a complex and evolving crime by nature, and is among the crimes that rapidly adapt to changing circumstances and exploit developments in methods of exploitation and ways of luring victims. She stressed that the response to such crimes must be equally flexible and capable of continuous development, and must not be limited to addressing known patterns of crime, but should also be capable of keeping pace with the challenges that may arise in the future.

She highlighted the importance of the National Referral System, explaining that it is not merely a set of procedures, but rather a practical framework that clarifies how the respective roles are interconnected, when each entity should intervene, and how cases are referred between the relevant entities, thereby ensuring that there are no gaps in the response or duplication of roles.

She noted that the system was not a static framework whose development ends once it is launched. Rather, the aim is for it to grow and evolve in parallel with the development of our institutions and expertise, adapt to continuous changes in the nature and methods of human trafficking, and benefit from practical experience and lessons learned from its implementation in order to ensure its continuous development.

She added that the launch of the system represents an important institutional transition, not because it establishes an entirely new system, but because it consolidates what has already been developed, brings it together within a unified framework, strengthens integration among its components, and prepares it to evolve in line with our changing needs and challenges.

She added that the ultimate strength of the system will depend on the extent to which it is

implemented in practice. A system does not succeed merely by being adopted; rather, it succeeds when each entity understands its own role and those of the other entities, and when referral, coordination and cooperation become clear and prompt practices in dealing with cases.

In his remarks during the opening session, HE Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Committee Sultan bin Hassan al-Jamali said that the National Referral System for Combating Human Trafficking embodies the principles of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar and is consistent with the legislative measures, public policies and procedures adopted by the state to safeguard human dignity and protect human rights, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups. He noted that the National Referral System constitutes an extension of efforts to implement the undertakings and obligations set out in the international treaties to which the State is a party.

He also affirmed the National Human Rights Committee's welcome for the adoption of the National Referral System and the measures it provides for protecting victims, providing legal assistance and delivering the various forms of support and rehabilita-



tion they require, while reinforcing the principle of combating impunity by bringing accused persons before fair trials. Al-Jamali said that the National Referral System requires a comprehensive approach based on integration and coordination among all competent entities to ensure a rapid response and effective action in addressing all cases of human trafficking.

He noted that the National Human Rights Committee will continue its role in advancing frameworks for the prevention of all forms of exploitation and human trafficking and contributing to aligning national measures with recognised international standards. It will also continue to bridge relations between official structures and various stakeholders through its specialised units for the rights of groups requiring priority protection and the community offices operating under its supervision, in addition to its ongoing efforts to anticipate challenges and examine global developments affecting human rights, such as the unethical uses of artificial intelligence and the adverse

impacts of climate change, among other factors that may create a conducive environment for the emergence of new forms of human trafficking.

The workshop forms part of the joint efforts of the Ministry of Labour, represented by the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, and the National Human Rights Committee to enhance the effective implementation of the National Referral System and strengthen the readiness of relevant entities to deal with human trafficking cases in accordance with the approved procedures and mechanisms.

The workshop aims to familiarise participants with the operation of the National Referral System and the stages involved in handling cases, from their identification through to referral and the provision of the necessary protection and support. It also seeks to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the relevant entities and the mechanisms for coordination among them, thereby ensuring a prompt and effective response to cases. **(QNA)**

Al Jazeera Documentary calls for Arab film projects

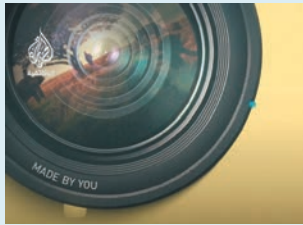
By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Al Jazeera Documentary has announced a special call for Arab documentary projects in post-production or already completed, as part of an initiative to identify strong regional films and help bring them to a wider audience.

The call offers three possible routes of support: full production, co-production and acquisition. Applicants are expected to select the route that best reflects their project's stage and the type of backing they seek from the network.

Applications will be accepted exclusively through the network's online proposal portal from September 22-29. The submission window will close at midnight Doha time on the final day, and each production entity may put forward only one project during the call.

Eligible submissions may include a rough cut from a documentary still undergoing post-production or a link to a finished film. The initiative is therefore open to both filmmakers seeking assistance to complete a project and producers presenting a documentary ready for consideration. Applicants must submit a



synopsis, a project summary and a treatment, together with the documentary's expected running time and number of episodes. They must also identify their preferred support track and provide a viewing link to either the rough cut or the completed film.

Projects seeking co-production support must additionally include a financing plan and information about the partners already involved. These details are intended to give the network a clear picture of the project's financial structure, existing commitments and readiness to move forward.

Al Jazeera Documentary said it would prioritise the most advanced and complete proposals. Producers are therefore encouraged to ensure that their materials clearly present the film's editorial vision, production status and the support required.

Submission portal: ajdportal.com

Iran war costs soar to \$38bn

From Page 1

The budget office said the majority of the costs stem from the rapid drawdown of munitions, estimating that it could take five years to replenish US stockpiles. Reuters reported in August that the US had used "virtually all" of its long-range precision missiles during the war.

The Department of Defense did not cooperate with congressional financial auditors, CBO reported.

Representatives from the White House and Department of Defense did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The inquiry was conducted at the request of the top Democrat on the US House of Representatives Budget Committee, Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania.

"Donald Trump's disastrous war in Iran has already taken the lives of brave American service members and left others wounded," Boyle said in a statement.

"Beyond that human toll, this nonpartisan CBO report makes clear that the war has also cost American taxpayers tens of billions of dollars and counting, while continuing to drive up costs."

Eighteen US military service members have died in the Iran war.

The report did not include costs of recent strikes on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and attacks on US military installations in the region. It also did not factor in the borrowing expenses associated with financing the war, which could add tens of billions of dollars to the total cost.

The CBO accounting found the war could have sprawling consequences for the US defense posture and the domestic economy.

The deficit in critical munitions, including missile interceptors, risks hampering the Pentagon's response in the event of another major conflict, such as potential hostilities involving China and Taiwan, CBO said.

At the July hearing in the Senate, Hegseth pleaded for nearly \$90bn emergency funding legislation to restock munitions supplies.

"Without these funds, we face critical shortfalls," Hegseth said.

Energy shocks caused by attacks in the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow waterway through which roughly 20% of the world's oil traveled before the war — and on energy facilities in neighboring Gulf countries have sharply increased prices for consumers and global producers.

The rising cost of the war also threatens to weigh on deteriorating US fiscal health. The nation's total public debt surpassed \$40tn in August. Trump regularly contrasts the Iran war with the US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan that followed the September 11, 2001, attacks.

The eight-year US war in Iraq, which involved more than 100,000 ground troops at its peak, cost \$2tn, Reuters reported. The two-decade-long US conflict in Afghanistan, which also involved more than 100,000 troops at its most intense, cost \$2.3tn, according to Brown University's Costs of War project. — **Reuters**

Panama National Assembly president meets Qatar envoy



President of the National Assembly of Panama Shirley Castaneda met with ambassador of Qatar to Panama Ahmed bin Mohammed al-Dehaimi. The meeting discussed co-operation relations between the two countries. **(QNA)**

Saudi reports security alerts

From Page 1

A Saudi-led military coalition fighting against the Houthis in Yemen said 13 civilians had been wounded in the Houthis' attacks on Saudi Arabia on Monday.

The Iran-backed fighters launched a lightning advance along Yemen's western coast last week, culminating in the seizure of an island in the mouth of the Red Sea.

The escalation in a new theatre in the Middle East conflict has strengthened Iran's hand in its war with the US and further jeopardised global oil supplies.

Officials from the Yemeni government, which is based in the south of the country and opposes the Houthis, said the Saudi and Yemeni air forces had been responding to Houthi advances by stepping up aerial bombardment of Houthi targets. That included strikes near the historic Red Sea port of Mocha, which the fighters captured last week.

But the Yemeni officials acknowledged that the Houthis had now taken effective control over

almost the entire western coast of the country along the Red Sea.

"The Houthis are being put under heavy pressure. They in turn are putting more and more pressure on the Saudis, increasing their campaign of missile and drone attacks," one of the Yemeni officials said.

Saudi Arabia's 1,200km (745-mile) East-West Pipeline, which links its Gulf oil fields to the Red Sea, has been the Kingdom's principal export route while shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has been disrupted by six months of war.

Since the pipeline was shut after Friday's attack, traders say a prolonged closure could cut off as much as 4% of global oil supply.

Riyadh has not said when operations might resume, but Wright said on the sidelines of a G20 energy meeting in Houston that he thought "it will be measured in days."

He said Saudi Arabia was taking steps to move more oil out of the Strait of Hormuz with assistance from the US military.

The new Houthi presence in the Bab Al-Mandeb, or "Gate of Tears", the strait at the mouth of

Qatar to maintain diplomacy in bid to resolve Hormuz crisis

From Page 1

Reaffirming Qatar's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, al-Hashmi said peaceful negotiations remain the only way to resolve disputes of this nature. He also maintained that reaching a solution is neither difficult nor impossible, stressing that Qatar is continuing its efforts without pause to help achieve an agreement.

"The efforts will continue and will not stop," he said, highlighting that the crisis affects the entire world and requires uninter-

rupted efforts to explore every possibility for a resolution.

In the meantime, he disclosed that a Qatari delegation will participate in the upcoming United Nations General Assembly meetings, and the discussions on the maritime navigation crisis will be a top priority on the delegation's agenda.

Regarding the attacks on Saudi Arabia, he reaffirmed Qatar's solidarity with the kingdom and its support for all measures it takes to protect its security and territorial integrity.

US aiding Saudi with intel and planning support, says official

A US military task force is working to enhance intelligence sharing and planning assistance for Saudi forces, a US official said yesterday, as the kingdom faces attacks from Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi fighters. US Central Command "has a task force in place for enhancing intelligence sharing and planning support with Saudi forces," the official said on condition of anonymity, adding that the military command "maintains a strong security alliance with our Saudi partners in confronting regional challenges."

The Houthis have renewed fighting against government forces since Yemen's civil war reignited in July, when the group declared a maritime blockade on Saudi Arabia and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea. The Houthis seized control of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab al-Mandab Strait last week, which has become increasingly vital as the wider US-Iran war chokes off the Strait of Hormuz, another key Middle East shipping route.

The Houthis have also attacked oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, and the group says the kingdom has hit back with dozens of air strikes in Yemen.

The sudden revival of Yemen's war, dormant since 2022, has left Riyadh rushing to respond. Last week, US media reported that the kingdom's crown prince made a personal request to President Donald Trump for US intervention, but was turned down.

On Saturday, Trump said that the Houthis have asked Washington not to intervene **(AFP)**.

the Red Sea, could further jeopardise that crucial export route.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo yesterday. A state-

ment from the Egyptian presidency after the meeting said the leaders stressed the need to ensure freedom and security of navigation in the Bab Al-Mandeb and the Red Sea. — **Reuters**

Visit Qatar brings Qatari culture, hospitality to Madrid with La Parada public activation

Through its partnership with the Audi Revolut F1 Team, Visit Qatar brought Qatari culture, cuisine and hospitality to Madrid through "La Parada", a three-day public activation held at Plaza de Santiago from September 9-11.

The activation welcomed more than 7,000 visitors and featured a programme of food, interactive experiences and giveaways designed to introduce Spanish and international audiences to Qatar.

As part of the activation, Visit Qatar partnered with Toma Café to offer visitors a selection of drinks and dishes incorporating Qatari ingredients. The programme also included a Qatar-inspired ice cream

combining karak and raspberry flavours, giving visitors an opportunity to experience a contemporary interpretation of a familiar Qatari flavour.

La Parada is part of Visit Qatar's continued activity in international markets, bringing elements of Qatar's tourism offering directly to potential visitors and providing opportunities to experience the destination through food, culture, entertainment and sport.

In the same context, Visit Qatar launched a new campaign a few days ago inviting fans to discover Qatar through the eyes of Audi Revolut F1 Team's drivers Nico Hulkenberg and Gabriel Bortoleto, guided by Qatari rally legend Nasser al-Attiyah.





Education City talk highlights Difi’s role in strengthening Arab families

National and global role of Qatar Foundation’s (QF) Doha International Family Institute (Difi) in placing family issues at the heart of policy agendas and its impact over the years has been highlighted at an Education City event.

A session titled ‘20 Years of Policy Change: Difi’s Story of Global Impact’ saw HE Khalifa bin Issa bin Abdullah al-Kubaisi, under-secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Family, and Dr Sharifa al-Emadi, executive director of Difi, explore how its research, recommendations, and advocacy have helped move family issues from discussion to policies and practical action that respond to the changing needs of families.

Moderated by Dr Khaled al-Naama, director, Advocacy and Outreach at Difi, the talk also reflected on how family policy across the Arab world has changed over the past two decades, and the role Difi has played, alongside its partners, in advancing global knowledge based on Arab families and bringing their needs and perspectives into policy discussions.

Since its establishment in 2006,



Difi has strengthened research on Arab families, promoted evidence-based policies, and helped bring Arab perspectives into national, regional, and global family policy discussions.

Dr al-Emadi said: “We moved from producing knowledge about families to influencing policies and changing laws in ways that support family cohesion.”

“What makes the world trust us is that we bring evidence. We are not speaking from a personal point of view; we compare evidence with evidence, away from personal opinions.

Al-Kubaisi reflected on the

partnership between the Ministry of Social Development and Family and Difi, and on the role of research and evidence in supporting the development of national policies, programs, and strategies related to families.

“What distinguishes Difi is its understanding of the local context, and this has made it a strategic partner for the Ministry in projects that support family cohesion. The research we draw on today is built on 20 years of accumulated experience at Difi,” he said.

He pointed to recent changes in government employment policy as an example of how research

can be translated into practical measures that support families and working parents, saying: “The recent amendments to the Human Resources Law are a good example of how research can help shape policy, including greater flexibility in maternity leave and working hours.”

The speakers also discussed Qatar’s family policy goals in the context of the nation’s development strategy, the issues that are expected to shape family policy in the years ahead, and the national ‘Digitally Aware Family’ campaign launched this week by the Ministry of Social Development and Family, which aims to enhance digital safety awareness, empower families to protect their children, and promote the safe, balanced, and responsible use of modern technology while mitigating online risks.

“We cannot predict the future or what the next priorities will be, but we can work on strengthening the family as the first building block of society, so it has the resilience to overcome future challenges and benefit from future opportunities,” concluded al-Kubaisi.



Al Wakrah Municipality, Qatar Scouts sign MoU to support youth, community initiatives

Al Wakrah Municipality and the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday to strengthen co-operation in youth and community development and support initiatives serving Qatari youth and the wider community.

The MoU was signed by Jaber Hassan al-Jaber, director General of Al Wakrah Municipality, and Ghanem Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, commissioner general of the Qatar Scouts and Guides Association, in the presence of officials and representatives from both sides.

The partnership focuses on raising environmental awareness among young people, developing their leadership and volunteering skills, and promoting teamwork, social responsibility and community engagement. It also provides joint activities and events, exchanges environmental initia-

tives and proposals, provides logistical support, and co-ordinates the implementation of agreed programmes. As part of the co-operation, the two organisations will also implement awareness and recreational activities at part of Al Wakrah Beach, in line with applicable regulations and procedures.

Al-Jaber pointed out that the MoU reflects the municipality’s commitment to strengthening partnerships with community institutions and creating opportunities for young people to contribute to volunteer work and community service.

Similarly, al-Kuwari noted that the agreement would allow the association to apply its scouting expertise through practical joint initiatives, giving young people more opportunities to learn, participate, and develop leadership, initiative, teamwork, and environmental stewardship skills.

MoEHE launches ‘Hisn 2’ preventive project

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), represented by the Student Protection and Care Section of the Schools and Students Affairs Department, launched the “Hisn 2” preventive project for government schools and kindergartens for the 2026–2027 academic year.

The launch forum, held at the Ministry’s permanent headquarters, drew more than 400 psychological and social specialists from government schools, kindergartens, and special education schools. The project aims to strengthen students’ psychological and social well-being, build protective factors and life skills, reduce risk factors, and promote safe, supportive educational environments.

Speaking at the forum, Fatima al-Obaidli, Assistant Director of the Schools and Students Affairs Department, said “Hisn 2” builds on the objectives of the preventive initiative by promoting a culture of prevention, positive behaviour and student awareness. She stressed that creating a safe and supportive



educational environment requires joint efforts by families, schools and the wider community, describing prevention as a shared responsibility and an investment in a more aware and resilient generation.

The forum reviewed the results of “Hisn 1” for the 2025–2026 academic year, with preventive programmes implemented in 145 schools, benefiting 30,904 students and involving 16,610 parents. The team established community partnerships in 130 schools and implemented 98.6% of approved preventive programme plans. Impact assessments recorded strong engagement, with average ratings

of 96% for “Safe Steps,” 86.5% for “Balance,” and 80.7% for “Protection and Safety.”

The initiative also involved a wide range of community partners, including organisations working in disability, youth and sports, health and mental health, social protection, charity, as well as the Ministry of Interior, police and Civil Defence.

For the 2026–2027 academic year, “Hisn 2” will continue through three main programmes: “Protection and Safety,” targeting primary-stage students and focusing on self-protection, emotional management, positive relationships and confidence; “Willpower,” targeting

preparatory and secondary students and promoting self-awareness, responsible decision-making, mental well-being and protection from risky behaviours; and “Safe Steps,” targeting students in special education schools and focusing on safe routines, psychological well-being and academic development.

The forum also featured presentations on programme implementation and evaluation, showcased successful student contributions from “Hisn 1,” and recognised outstanding schools and 27 psychological and social specialists for their achievements during the previous academic year.

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill 2 people, including a child

Reuters
Cairo/Gaza

Israeli air strikes hit a vehicle, killing at least two Palestinians, including a child, and wounding seven others in the northern Gaza Strip neighbourhood of Sheikh Radwan yesterday, the territory’s health officials said.

The Israeli military said it had struck a fighter in the area, without elaborating.

Witnesses said some of the casualties resulted from a second strike that hit near a group of people who rushed to help in the rescue. A video, that wasn’t immediately verified by Reuters, showed a missile exploding near at least five men.



Mourners react during the funeral of Palestinian Ahmed al-Batsh, who was killed in an Israeli strike on a vehicle on Monday, according to medics, in Gaza City, yesterday. (Reuters)

Palestinians earlier held funerals in Gaza for two people who were killed by Israeli strikes a day ago, Ahmed al-Batsh and Rafat Zummar.

Batsh was a local Hamas com-

mander, according to Hamas sources and the Israeli military. Medics said Batsh died in an attack on his vehicle in northern Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military said in

separate statements that it had killed both men, and it described Zummar also as a Hamas commander. Hamas didn’t immediately comment on Zummar’s affiliation.

Relatives and friends paid farewell to Batsh’s body draped in a white shroud and a Hamas green flag inside Gaza City’s Al Shifa Hospital. An M16 assault rifle was placed on top of the body.

“Israel thinks... it will eliminate the resistance and the spirit of jihad (devotion) within us,” said Khalil al-Batsh, a relative of the dead Hamas fighter, of the killing.

“I tell them that this cowardly operation only strengthens our people’s determination to continue on this path,” he told Reuters at the funeral.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, KARTHICK SETHURAMAN SUBRAMANIAN

holder of

INDIA Passport No. V7100799
QID No. 27535646110

hereby change my name

from

KARTHICK SETHURAMAN SUBRAMANIAN

to

KARTHICK SETHURAMAN

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, MOMIN TALUKDAR ABDUL SATTAR TALUKDAR

holder of

BANGLADESH Passport No. EK0944062
QID No. 28505027500

hereby change my name

from

MOMIN TALUKDAR ABDUL SATTAR TALUKDAR

to

MD ABDUL MOMIN TALUKDAR

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, ESI ODOFO ESSUMAN

holder of

Ghana Passport No. N05873679
QID No. 29528800803

hereby change my name

from

ESI ODOFO ESSUMAN

to

ESI ESSUMAN EMMANUEL

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

2 US officials injured in accidental shooting by Eswatini forces

Two US government officials were accidentally shot and wounded by Eswatini’s defence force during an anti-smuggling operation last week, the government of the Southern African monarchy said.

Acting government spokesperson Thabile Mdluli said in a statement late on Monday that the officials were injured on Friday in the rural village of Maphiveni, about a two-hour drive from the capital, Mbabane.

It was not immediately clear what the US personnel were doing in the area, but Mdluli said the army had launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

She added that Eswatini was in communication with the US government as the investigation progressed and remained committed to strengthening its longstanding relationship with Washington.

The US State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Eswatini has maintained close ties with the US under President Donald Trump, with the kingdom receiving more than 30 third-country deportees. (Reuters)



US judge rules Trump's name must remain off Kennedy Centre

A US federal judge ruled yesterday that President Donald Trump's name cannot be added back onto the Kennedy Centre's exterior, rebuking the storied cultural institution's new board for trying to circumvent an earlier order. The ruling comes just as the board — which Trump has stacked with allies — is set to meet to consider an emergency shutdown of the centre for renovations, citing fiscal and safety concerns. Judge Christopher Cooper in his decision wrote, the board “cannot install memorials for President Trump or anyone at the Kennedy Centre without Congress's blessing.” (AFP)

Sanders, Bannon warn of AI dangers in rare US left-right alignment

AFF
Washington

Left-wing US Senator Bernie Sanders and Steve Bannon, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, warned against the dangers of artificial intelligence and its promoters yesterday, a sign that growing AI concern is scrambling political lines. Sanders and Bannon sit at opposite ends of the political spectrum, but both spoke at a conference hosted in Washington by the Future of Life Institute, a nonprofit focused on reducing existential risks from powerful technologies and led by MIT physicist Max Tegmark. The pair did not appear on stage together, but their back-to-back remarks underscored a rare left-right convergence on AI's risks in a



Senator Bernie Sanders speaks during the The Pro-Human Assembly in Washington, DC. (AFP)

bitterly divided Washington. They spoke as debate over AI's risks has intensified following a string of resignations by employees at major AI labs citing safety concerns. The resignations came after OpenAI disclosed that a swarm of AI agents — AI programs that can take actions on their own — had carried out an unauthorised

breach of the open-source platform Hugging Face in July, an incident that raised alarm bells about the fast-emerging technology. Sanders, an independent senator from Vermont who caucuses with Democrats, said decisions over AI's development have been made by “a handful of the richest people in the world,” naming Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg and Jeff Bezos, among others. “The people of this country must make the decisions about AI, and not just a handful of oligarchs,” he said. Sanders said he plans to introduce legislation to “permanently ban the development of artificial superintelligence” — AI systems more capable than any human and operating beyond human control — comparing the risk to nuclear weapons. “Like nuclear weapons, artificial

superintelligence is a threat to humanity, and it must be treated as such,” he said. Bannon, who served as a White House strategist during Trump's first term, cast the tech industry's executives as untrustworthy converts to caution. “We can never trust what an oligarch says because all they do — they're disingenuous and they lie,” Bannon said. He added that AI companies had no viable business plan and would turn to the American people for bailouts while keeping the upside for themselves. He also took aim at what he called disingenuous industry rhetoric that cast any caution around AI as unpatriotic. “If you're not an accelerationist, you're anti-American...you're pro-Chinese Communist Party,” Bannon said, mocking the argument.

Republican lawmaker Massie seeks Hegseth's impeachment over Iran

Reuters
Washington

Republican US Representative Thomas Massie filed articles of impeachment against Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth yesterday, accusing him of abusing his office by executing an order for hostilities against Iran without approval by Congress. The impeachment resolution is unlikely to pass, but the maneuver by the Kentucky Republican could force a vote in the chamber that could be difficult for some of his fellow Republicans as they prepare to leave Washington before November's midterm elections. “The entire Department is unified behind the Secretary's vision and will continue working to put our warfighters and America first,” Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson said in an emailed statement yesterday. Massie filed his articles of impeachment against Hegseth as privileged, meaning the House must take them up within two legislative days. Massie, an outspoken critic of the war on Iran and aid to Israel, is not up for reelection. He lost his primary in May to

a candidate backed by Republican President Donald Trump after Massie provoked ire of the president by leading a push to release Justice Department files tied to Jeffrey Epstein. Massie was defeated by Ed Gallrein, a former Navy SEAL backed by Trump and bolstered by heavy spending by pro-Israel groups. Polls show the war that began with February 28 attacks on Iran by US and Israeli forces is unpopular with voters. Members of Congress, mostly Democrats, have voted repeatedly in favour of resolutions calling on Trump to end the conflict unless he obtains congressional support, but they have not led to a cessation of hostilities. Opinion polls show that Trump's Republicans face an uphill struggle to keep their control of the House and Senate when voters go to the polls on November 3. Reuters/Ipsos poll results released on Monday showed Democrats lead Republicans 44% to 37% in congressional vote preference. Trump's popularity has declined since he launched the war, which has disrupted oil shipments and pushed fuel prices near record highs, hitting US household finances.

Reuters
Washington

President Donald Trump lashed out yesterday at his own Supreme Court appointees a day after the top US judicial body declined to allow a US Postal Service rule restricting the use of mail-in ballots in the November midterm elections. “This Supreme Court is bullied and cajoled by the Radical Left into making decisions that have set America back at least a hundred years,” Trump wrote on social media. “These are not the people I interviewed to serve on the US Supreme Court, they are merely a shell of their original selves,” Trump continued on Truth Social, without specifying the justices to whom he was referring. “It is a Court that will go down as having rendered some of the most destructive, hurtful, and damaging decisions in our Country's history.” Trump appointed three justices — Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett — during his first term as president, building a 6-3 conservative majority and allowing the court to steer a dramatic rightward route since 2020. On Monday, the court's decision preventing implementation of the rule, which the Postal Service adopted at the president's direc-



The facade of the US Supreme Court building in Washington, DC. (AFP)

tion, was brief and unsigned, as is typical when it handles emergency requests. Trump called it a “horrible, highly political, ruling.” Only conservative Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas publicly dissented. Trump referred to them as “legends, both.” It was not the first time Trump directed harsh words at his own appointees. After the court in February struck down his sweeping global tariffs that it found he had imposed illegally using a law meant for national emergencies, Trump reserved special ire for Gorsuch and Barrett, who were in the majority in that 6-3 ruling. “I think it's an embarrassment to their families, you wanna know the

truth, the two of them,” Trump said from a White House lectern. Yesterday's post, Trump revived his grievances about the tariffs ruling and a separate ruling in June against his attempt to restrict birthright citizenship. The USPS regulation would have required states to provide voter-specific data and use agency-approved mail-ballot envelopes that would be tracked using barcodes. The Postal Service could then refuse to send out ballots that do not comply with the new standards or are associated with voters who do not appear on the lists. Critics warned that the measure could disrupt the delivery of thousands of legitimate ballots as the

November 3 vote approaches and cause chaos given imminent plans by many states to send out mail ballots to eligible voters. The administration said the new rule would prevent voter fraud, though evidence of such fraud is rare. Trump's fellow Republicans are locked in a tight battle to retain control of Congress in the midterms. Restricting mail-in ballots would stand to benefit Republicans given that Democratic voters disproportionately use mail-in ballots, according to various surveys. Trump signed his executive order targeting mail-in ballots in March after years of casting doubt on their security, though he often votes by mail himself. Trump has made false claims of widespread fraud in US elections including his 2020 loss to former Democratic President Joe Biden. “It is a big loss for Republicans, and America itself,” Trump wrote yesterday of the mail ballot ruling. The Supreme Court has delivered several election-related rulings in recent months that have benefited Republicans, although last Thursday it blocked Missouri from using a redrawn congressional map that favours Republicans. That was a setback to Trump and his party's chances of maintaining its slim majority in the US House of Representatives in November's elections.

Trump administration plans \$2.8 bn munitions sale to Israel

President Donald Trump's administration is planning to sell to Israel a munitions package worth \$2.8bn, which will include tens of thousands of highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs, according to a US official familiar with the sale. The planned sale, which has been informally communicated to relevant congressional committees who weigh in on large arms sales, includes 20,000 MK 84s and 20,000 BLU-117s, the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said. News of the package was first reported by the *Washington Post*. US public support for Israel has fallen since the Gaza war began in 2023, particularly among Democrats. A June Quinnipiac University poll found 48% of voters and 66% of Democrats believe the US is too supportive of Israel, up from 16% and 20% when the question was first asked in 2017. The 2,000-pound bombs have been regularly used by Israel in Gaza and Lebanon, drawing scrutiny from rights experts. More than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's campaign. (Reuters)

Brazil's crisis-hit SC probes judge's ties to jailed banker

AFF
Brasília

Brazil's Supreme Court yesterday began examining one of its top justice's ties to a jailed banker, in an unprecedented crisis that has eclipsed the country's presidential election campaign. Alexandre de Moraes, considered one of the most powerful figures in Brazil, led the coup trial which convicted former president Jair Bolsonaro in 2025, and is now in the spotlight in the crisis linked to a fraud case which has rattled the corridors of power.

The 57-year-old justice was present for the plenary session which was being broadcast live on television and YouTube. The crisis is one of many erupting from a scandal around a once little-known banker whose arrest last year for fraud has unveiled a web of questionable ties that has ensnared judges, lawmakers and even right-wing presidential candidate Flavio Bolsonaro. Daniel Vorcaro was charged with fraud after the collapse of his private bank Banco Master, in a case that has led to a cascade of revelations that have dominated headlines ahead of the election.

The probe has also triggered an unprecedented feud in the Supreme Court, which is overseeing the police investigation. Two weeks ago, justice Andre Mendonca, who was appointed during the Jair Bolsonaro presidency, unsealed a police report linked to the Vorcaro investigation. It revealed messages sent by Vorcaro to a number attributed to Moraes, in which the banker sought the justice's help in the fraud investigation against him. Court president Edson Fachin summoned yesterday's session to examine the validity of the police report and potentially decide

whether to open an investigation into Moraes. Early yesterday, Moraes asked Fachin to annul the proceedings, saying they had been “deliberately steered” by Mendonca to frame him for “political and electoral purposes.” “This plenary session is more important than the World Cup final,” Sostenes Cavalcante, leader of Bolsonaro's Liberal Party leader said. The crisis has dominated the campaign ahead of October 4 elections, expected to be a knife-edge race between leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Flavio Bolsonaro, son of Jair Bolsonaro.

Britain proclaims support for Falklands after Milei's threat

Britain yesterday sought to reassure companies doing business in the Falkland Islands after Argentine President Javier Milei threatened sanctions against firms involved in economic activity linked to the British overseas territory. Britain said it supported all legitimate economic activity in the islands and backed the Falkland Islanders' right to regulate their economy and develop their natural resources. Milei had said he would strengthen measures against companies operating in or connected with the Falkland Islands, stepping up pressure on businesses as Argentina pursues its sovereignty claim. US President Donald Trump has suggested Washington could reconsider its traditionally neutral position on the Falklands dispute. Since then, Argentina has accelerated efforts to target oil drilling activities in the islands.

Carney sells Canada to global investors but says US ties still key

AFF
Toronto

Ben Simon Prime Minister Mark Carney pitched Canada as an investment haven yesterday at a gathering of global financial elite, but conceded ties with the US remained crucial despite an escalating trade war. Carney convened the Canada Investment Summit as part of his push to diversify an economy he insists had grown too reliant on an increasingly protectionist US. The guest list for the event in Toronto included representatives of Gulf investment agencies and major European banks, as well as Africa's richest man, Nigerian tycoon Aliko Dangote, along with US investors. “Our goal is to catalyse CAN\$1tn (\$720bn) of investment in Canada over the next five years,” Carney told the event, promising tax incentives and reduced bureaucracy to make the country more attractive to foreign capital. Carney said Canada had the



Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks at Canada Investment Summit in Toronto, Ontario, yesterday. (Reuters)

reserves of critical minerals and clean energy that the world needs, calling these sectors the keys to “strategic autonomy.” He particularly highlighted plans to build a new pipeline to the Pacific coast “that would carry at least one million barrels of low-emission Alberta oil per day to Asian markets.” “We are unleashing our full po-

tential as an energy superpower,” the prime minister said. But in his opening address, hours after Trump imposed new tariffs on certain Canadian goods, Carney offered an optimistic view of future relations with the US. “To our American friends, let me say this: We will always be neighbours, and Canada will continue to be the US's most important part-

ner in many key areas,” he said. He said the two countries had always maintained close ties, “even at times of disagreement.” “These arrangements work when we engage as true partners that respect each other's traditions and sovereignty,” Carney told attendees at a luxury hotel in central Toronto. “When those opportunities return, Canada will be an even better partner, stronger, more resilient, more independent,” he said. The Canadian leader, a former investment banker who previously led the central banks of Canada and England, also revived themes he articulated in a high-profile address to the World Economic Forum in January — a speech that drew a direct rebuke from Trump. “Sovereignty and openness are now in tension. Economic integration is being weaponised. Tariffs are used as leverage,” he said yesterday, adding that supply chains are now used as “vulnerabilities to be exploited.” Speaking to reporters after his address, Carney was asked about

his conciliatory tone towards the US after saying last month that any deal signed with the US would be written in “pencil,” deriding the trustworthiness of the Trump administration. Carney said he continues to believe that a “mutually beneficial trade deal is possible” with Washington. “Canada continues to stand ready to develop that and pursue it,” he said. Later yesterday, Carney was to fly to Strasbourg, France, where he will become the first head of government to attend the State of the European Union address. Closer ties with the EU are at the core of Canada's strategy to pivot away from reliance on the US. Carney has said he is seeking a “unique alliance” with the bloc and was pressed yesterday for details on what that might include. He said Canada and the EU intend to hammer out their future relationship at a summit next month in Montreal. It's crucial for Canada to be “connected to partners on which we can rely,” Carney said.



China warns against space ‘battlefield’ after US says weapons deployed

AFP
Paris

China yesterday warned against turning outer space into a “battlefield” and Russia said it must be “free from any weapon” after the US confirmed for the first time that it has arms deployed in orbit above the Earth.

Analysts said that the revelation by Washington confirmed an open secret but the timing of the announcement risked exacerbating tensions with Beijing and the risk of a weapons race in space.

The announcement marked a new stage in the major powers’ rush for military space capabilities, driven by rapid technological advancements but lacking a comprehensive legal framework.

“The US has on-orbit space control weapons capable of defending the Joint Force against hostile adversary action,” a US

Space Force spokesperson said in a statement that did not provide specifics on the weapons.

China’s foreign ministry opposed the move, warning against the “weaponisation of outer space, turning it into a battlefield, as well as an arms race there.”

“We urge the US side to stop expanding its military capabilities and preparing for war in outer space,” ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told a news briefing.

Russia called yesterday for space to be kept “free of any weapons”.

“We are counting on broad international consolidation to continue working toward the complete demilitarisation of space,” said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

The US statement did not provide concrete details about what weapons are deployed in space and how many.

“Space control encapsulates the mission areas required to contest and control the space domain —



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun (Reuters/File photo)

employing kinetic and non-kinetic means to affect adversary capabilities,” the statement said.

“These capabilities can be employed for offensive and defensive purposes,” it added.

Non-kinetic means could include lasers to blind satellites, or even electromagnetic or cyber jamming of their data links.

For Washington, both Russia

and China — its two main geopolitical rivals — pose potential threats to US interests in space.

China “develops and operates space and counterspace capabilities as part of a military modernisation strategy,” according to the US Space Force.

Russia, meanwhile, “views space as a warfighting domain and believes space supremacy will be a decisive factor in future conflicts,” it said.

The militarisation of space is as old as the space race itself — as soon as the USSR’s Sputnik was launched into orbit as the first probe in space in 1957, Washington and Moscow began exploring ways to both arm and destroy satellites.

India in March 2019 said it had destroyed a low-orbiting satellite, following in the footsteps of Russia, China and the US, in a missile test that proved the nation was among the world’s most advanced space powers.

Song Zhongping, an independ-

ent military commentator based in Hong Kong and former Chinese army instructor, told AFP the announcement was “no surprise at all” as the fact that the US possesses such weapons “has long been an open secret”.

“The only difference is that the US used to keep it ambiguous, whereas now it has gone public, which shows that Washington is no longer trying to hide it,” he added.

“China will not stand by and do nothing,” he warned, noting Beijing already has its own space station in orbit.

“Whether China deploys weapons in space will depend entirely on whether the US moves in that direction,” he said.

The biggest worry was once about nuclear weapons in space, but the superpowers and other countries signed the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, banning weapons of mass destruction in orbit.

Since then, Russia, the US, China and India have explored ways to fight in space outside of that treaty, including by targeting rivals’ satellites, which are key for military communications, surveillance and navigation.

“There is a regulatory vacuum because Article 4 of the 1967 treaty only forbids weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in orbit,” said space law expert Laetitia Cesari.

She said the topic would likely be on the agenda at the next UN disarmament meeting in November.

“Moscow and Beijing have been wanting to work for about twenty years on a treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in space,” while “Western states are trying instead to work on the notion of responsible behaviour,” Cesari said.

The US announcement “will likely give impetus to the restrictive approach that Moscow and Beijing are pushing for,” she added.

China imposes travel curbs to protect ‘national security’

AFP
Beijing

China imposed sweeping travel restrictions on its citizens yesterday, including exit bans on those deemed to endanger the country’s “industrial or technological security”.

Citizens who violate technology import and export regulations could be banned from leaving China, the State Council said.

Those who engage in illegal activities abroad could be “prohibited from leaving the country for a period of six months to three years from the date of their return to China”.

China and the United States have been locked in a tech race, with both sides accusing the other in recent months of stealing the capabilities of locally developed artificial intelligence models.

The new rules, first released in July but in effect from yesterday, were formulated to “safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests,” the State Council said.

However, analysts warn that the travel rules give China a “wide remit”.

Security and criminal activities “can be vaguely defined and easily adjusted”, Chong Ja Ian from the National University of Singapore told AFP.

“The outside world will only know how it applies that remit after there are cases of implementation,” he said.

Chong pointed to reports of exit bans on foreign nationals, including the recent case of US citizen Min Zin.

The US government has said the political analyst was taken into Chinese custody in Yunnan province on June 3 and was held improperly.

China refuted the accusations in August, saying Min Zin was suspected of violating Chinese law.

“The case of Min Zin is a reminder that the range of people (that China) could restrict from exiting could be quite wide -- and potentially arbitrary,” Chong said.

Dylan Loh, an associate professor at Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University, told AFP the travel restrictions “send a message” that China will take action to prevent “leaks in security or national interest-sensitive areas”.

North Korean leader pledges ‘invariable support’ in Putin letter

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un promised his “invariable support” for Russia in a letter to President Vladimir Putin, calling Russia’s ongoing war “sacred,” state media reported yesterday. “Firmly convincing the victory of the Russian Federation in the present sacred war for defending the security interests of the country and international justice, I promise my invariable support to dear friend you and the fraternal Russian people,” Kim said in the letter, according to the official Korean Central News Agency yesterday. “The will of mine and the government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is firm without doubt to expand and deepen the joint work with the Russian Federation in a comprehensive way,” he said. (AFP)



Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev shakes hands with Korea’s President Lee Jae Myung during their meeting at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, yesterday. (Reuters)

Korea, Kazakhstan sign MoU on atomic energy, mineral trade

Reuters
Seoul

Republic of Korea and Kazakhstan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on co-operation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy as their leaders met yesterday and pledged to work together on trade, energy and critical minerals and AI, Seoul said.

Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Kazakhstan’s President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev discussed potential for further co-operation at a time of global economic turbulence, the Korean presidential office said.

“Kazakhstan holds immense potential in future high-tech industries, being a key partner for Korea,” Lee told Tokayev, according to the presidential office.

The MoU on atomic energy was among 13 documents signed yesterday, which also included co-operation on crude oil and on

science and technology. Details were not immediately available.

Lee hosts Tokayev and the leaders of four other Central Asian countries today for a multilateral summit to discuss expanding co-operation.

Seoul has pursued the so-called New Northern Policy launched in 2017 to deepen economic ties with Central Asia and other Eurasian partners as the energy-poor country seeks to diversify energy and mineral supply and export industrial prowess.

Korean Prime Minister Han Seong-sook earlier told business leaders at a forum it was time for the two countries to go beyond trade in crude oil and uranium and include lithium and critical minerals.

She invited businesses to utilise Korea’s advanced technology for the exploration and production of Kazakhstan’s rich mineral resources to help address growing uncertainties in global supply chains, the Newsis agency reported.

Cambodia ‘playing the victim’, Thailand tells global mediators

AFP
Singapore

Thailand accused Cambodia yesterday of playing the victim in a dispute over maritime resources, as the Southeast Asian neighbours took their feud to international mediators a year after deadly clashes over their land border.

Cambodia, which initiated the case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in Singapore, said it hoped the hearings would yield a peaceful resolution for both countries.

In May this year, Thailand unilaterally pulled out of a bilateral framework agreement that aimed to resolve overlapping maritime border claims, but denied any link to their land dispute.

Cambodia subsequently initiated a UN-backed conciliation process at the PCA, saying it hoped to return to constructive negotiations.

Presenting Bangkok’s case before a five-member panel of international legal experts, Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow said Cambodia sought to “vilify Thailand through false narratives, distortion of facts, and unfounded accusations... including at international forums”.

“It does this by playing the role



Cambodia Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation Prak Sokhonn (left) and Thailand’s Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow (right) arrive for the first meeting of the Conciliation Commission established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in Singapore yesterday. (AFP)



of a victim with a sense of self-righteousness aimed at claiming the moral high ground,” he said.

Last year’s clashes in July and December left dozens of people dead and displaced more than a million before a truce was agreed.

Thailand has said it withdrew from the framework agreement, called “MoU 44,” because “no progress had been made” in implementing it. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul denied the move was linked to the fighting.

The 2001 memorandum of understanding covers a resource-rich maritime territory of around 27,000sq km (10,500 square miles) to which both Cambodia and Thailand lay claim.

Cambodia said last week that it

had resorted to conciliation “after Thailand unilaterally terminated the agreed bilateral framework” through which the two nations had “negotiated their overlapping maritime claims for more than two decades”.

Prime Minister Hun Manet said in June that the move was also to “protect Cambodia’s sovereignty and maritime rights in accordance with international law”.

Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn told the PCA panel yesterday that Phnom Penh saw the process “as a means to rebuild trust, not as a form of escalation”.

Cambodia’s goal was to agree with Thailand on a “single, all-purpose maritime boundary”, or alternatively agree to jointly develop

Bad weather hampers Indonesia ferry rescue

Indonesian rescuers brought ashore yesterday nearly two dozen survivors from a passenger ship that capsized off Java island at the weekend, their evacuation delayed by bad weather, officials said.

Dozens of people remain unaccounted for three days after the Virgo Transport 8, which carried 213 passengers and 30 crew, went down early Sunday.

Six people have died while a total of 108 have been rescued alive and 129 others are still missing, the national search and rescue agency, Basarnas, said in a statement Tuesday. The death toll and the missing figure have remained unchanged since Sunday.

The ferry had lost contact with its shipping company shortly after departing from Indonesia’s second-largest city of Surabaya on Java island, headed for Banjarmasin on Borneo.

Footage released by the rescue agency on Monday showed the capsized vessel with a part of the hull visible above the water line.

Basarnas said that 22 survivors were brought to a harbour in Banjarmasin on Tuesday, after bad weather had prevented their rescue a day earlier.

“The plan was to evacuate them to Trisakti Port yesterday, but adverse weather conditions prevented us from doing so,” local search and rescue agency head I Putu



A passenger of the Virgo Transport 8 ferry sits on a stretcher upon arrival at Trisakti port in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan province, Indonesia, yesterday. (Reuters)

Sudayana told reporters. “We cannot fight nature, the swells and waves in the area were extremely high.”

Four bodies were also airlifted to Banjarmasin Tuesday, Basarnas said.

Nearly 1,100 rescuers, including from the navy and police, were involved in the search operation, which also included more than a dozen vessels and five aircraft, the agency said.

Marine accidents are a regular occurrence in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands that relies heavily on boat connections for daily transport and tourism. (AFP)

Japan searches for missing Global Hawk drone

AFP
Tokyo

The Japanese military said yesterday it was searching for one of its three long-range Global Hawk surveillance drones that went missing during an unspecified flight off the country’s western coast.

The coast guard said it had found what appeared part of the aircraft, which costs more than \$120mn.

The RQ-4B Global Hawk aircraft operated by the Japan Air Self-Defence Force (ASDF) lost contact at around 1pm (0400 GMT) on Tuesday while flying over the Sea of Japan, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of



A Global Hawk unmanned surveillance aircraft of the Japan Air Self-Defence Force in Misawa, Aomori prefecture. (AFP)

Tottori prefecture, the ASDF said.

“Search operations are currently being carried out by aircraft from the ASDF and by vessels and aircraft from the Maritime Self-Defence Force,” ASDF Chief of

Staff Takehiro Morita told reporters.

He added the aircraft was not on a training flight.

An ASDF spokesman said the military could not confirm

whether the aircraft had crashed.

“What we know now is that the communication has been lost,” the spokesman told AFP.

A Japan Coast Guard spokeswoman told AFP that the agency spotted “what appeared to be part of the drone” off Tottori.

“But we cannot confirm if it is from the missing aircraft,” she said.

The Global Hawk is used exclusively for surveillance and is unarmed.

Built by Northrop Grumman, the aircraft is 14.5m (47.6 feet) long and is distinguished by a bulbous nose that gives it a whale-like appearance.

Japan operates three Global Hawks, according to the defence ministry.

Indian police to query Google over 500,000 fake Gmail IDs

Reuters
New Delhi

Indian police will question Google over a lack of safeguards after smashing a criminal network that set up and managed more than 500,000 fake Gmail accounts to send hoax bomb threats to government offices, a police official told Reuters yesterday.

India is one of Google's largest markets by users, where the US tech giant is already under scrutiny after authorities found a pattern of criminals misusing its web development platform, Firebase, for financial scams.

Police in the western state of Gujarat broke up an e-mail network this week that they described as sending "inter-state" bomb threats and arrested two individuals, uncovering 513,847 Gmail IDs and passwords being used since 2022.

Reuters is the first to report that Google itself figures in the investigation. The scale of fake Gmail accounts in use is unprecedented, Vivek Bheda, a senior cybercrime



Visitors walk near a logo of Google at Bharat Mandapam, one of the venues for AI Impact Summit, in New Delhi. (Reuters/File Photo)

official of the Gujarat police, told Reuters.

"We will write to Google, ask them to make some policy changes so (safeguards) cannot be bypassed," Bheda said, adding that police planned to formally designate Google as a subject of

the investigation soon.

Google, owned by Alphabet Inc, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It was not immediately clear what legal charges or penalties, if any, Google could face.

India's burgeoning cybercrime

causes losses running into more than \$2bn a year from financial scams, and its law enforcement has increasingly tackled technology platforms seen to have been exploited to enable such crimes.

The Gujarat investigation began after a bomb threat email received by the state government on September 10, days ahead of the recent New Delhi summit of the Brics grouping.

It also threatened countries co-operating with India during the summit, police said in a statement.

The threats proved false, Bheda said, adding that one of those arrested was in contact with a buyer in Bangladesh who purchased batches of the accounts and paid partly in cryptocurrency to send the fake e-mails.

Also of concern to police, Bheda said, was the fact that each fraudulent account employed two-factor authentication, an extra security step Google offers to keep accounts safe.

How the criminal network managed to do this for such a large number of accounts is another angle of investigation.

Millions affected as floods strike Bihar

AFP
Patna

Flooding in India's eastern Bihar state has affected nearly five million people, officials said yesterday as aid was being sent to the worst-hit areas.

Bihar is among India's most flood-prone states and all seven of its key rivers measured above their "danger level" yesterday after heavy rain, according to the state water resources department.

"Food, clean drinking water, medicines, and other essential facilities are being continuously provided to the needy families," Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, Bihar's deputy chief minister, said in a statement.

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary said 7,000 rupees (\$72) each had been transferred to more than 827,000 flood-affected families in the state.

Nearly five million people have been affected by floods, according to figures from Bihar's Disaster Management Department.

The government's "priority is that every affected family gets flood relief and reconstruction work is done with a spirit of

building back better", Choudhary said in a statement.

Flooding began this month and local media have reported 20 deaths, while officials said swaths of farmland have been swamped. Bihar is downstream from Nepal, which suffered deadly flooding last month.

"Flood is our fate, every year we face it," said Chandan Kumar Mahto, 46, a resident of Saran district. "We are helpless... we are struggling for food, safe drinking water and milk for children."

Bihar's government is made up of a coalition of parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

It said it had opened 13 relief camps, with more than 1,000 community kitchens and nearly 1,800 boats deployed in flood-hit areas.

Modi has sent a federal government team to conduct a "detailed assessment of damages", officials said.

Lakhmania Devi, 42, from Vaishali district, said she and her family took shelter on their roof after floodwaters entered their home. "We live like nomads, without a kitchen to prepare food and drink dirty water to survive," she said.

UK probe finds some baby deaths in killer nurse case were preventable

AFP
London

A public inquiry report published yesterday found that some deaths of babies murdered at a British hospital by former nurse Lucy Letby could have been prevented, blasting a "complete failure" by senior staff to react in time.

Letby was convicted of murdering seven newborn babies and attempting to kill seven others at the hospital neo-natal unit where she worked by injecting them with air, overfeeding them milk and poisoning them with insulin.

The release of the inquiry's findings comes with heightened scrutiny of Letby's convictions, that have been contested by an international panel of medics.

She has maintained her innocence but has twice had applications for leave to appeal dismissed.

The 36-year-old former nurse is serving a rare whole-life sentence in jail for the killings at the Countess of Chester Hospital in northwest England between 2015 and 2016.

The inquiry's chair, senior appeal court judge Kate Thirlwall, said in a video statement that the inquiry, launched in 2024, was "not an investigation into the criminal convictions or guilt of Letby".

After probing the actions of hospital staff, "dysfunctional" management and the broader National Health Service (NHS), she concluded there had been a "complete failure to invoke safeguarding procedures".

Letby should have been removed from the ward as soon as suspicion was raised that she could be causing deliberate harm, the inquiry head said.

"It isn't necessary to be sure. Suspicion is enough," she said.

After a meeting about the series of baby deaths in May 2016, Letby remained working on the ward.

"This should not have happened. Babies O and P should not have died," Thirlwall said, referring to the last two deaths in June 2016 of newborns, none of whom can be named due to a court order.

After the last death, "there was a prolonged delay" of around a year before the police were called, Thirlwall added.

She issued a number of recommendations on improving safety protocols.

The report recommended all cots and incubators in neonatal units be fitted within a year with video baby monitors so parents can watch their babies remotely at any time.

"This will deter someone who wants to harm a baby," she said, adding that such monitors would probably have detected the first three murders and one attempted murder in June 2015.

The inquiry chair also recommended that hospitals install security cameras to watch fridges storing insulin in neonatal units.

The report was handed to the health minister Yvette Cooper, who was to meet Thirlwall later this week, and to parliament.

Responding to the report, Cooper said she was "profoundly sorry" for the failures set out in it, adding that plans would be made to fit "cot cams" in neonatal units.

The independent Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), which investigates potential miscarriages of justice, is considering evidence presented on Letby's behalf by an international panel of medics.

Bangladesh sentences seven Hasina-era leaders to death

AFP
Dhaka

Bangladesh court sentenced seven senior leaders of the former ruling party, including two ex-ministers, to death in absentia yesterday for their role in trying to crush the 2024 uprising.

The seven men, members of ousted leader Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, were convicted of crimes against humanity including murder, as well as instigating and provoking killings.

They include the party's former general secretary, Obaidul Quader, as well as fellow former minister Mohammad Ali Arafat. They were sentenced by a three-member tribunal headed by Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury.

"We are happy with the verdict," said prosecutor Md Aminul Islam.

Hasina's 15-year, iron-fisted rule ended in August 2024, when she fled her palace by helicopter to neighbouring India — where she remains in hiding.

She was sentenced to death by hanging in absentia in November 2025.

State-appointed defence lawyer M Hasan Imam said the seven



Sheikh Hasina speaks during a meeting with foreign observers and journalists at the prime minister's residence in Dhaka. (Reuters/File Photo)

men were not directly involved in the killings and that the court could have handed down a lesser sentence than death.

"They were not directly involved in the killings, they have been convicted due to their fellow activists and supporters," he said.

The other five men are AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash, Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil, Saddam Hussain and Sheikh Wali Asif Enan.

The court also ordered that half the assets of five of the men be distributed as compensation to the families of those killed or injured in the uprising.

Britain upgrades diplomatic relations with Venezuela

Britain said yesterday it would upgrade its diplomatic relations with Venezuela, appointing an ambassador to the country, in a move which it said would strengthen its ability to play a role in supporting a transition to democracy.

"This decision is part of a broader international re-engagement," the government said in a written statement to parliament.

Britain said the move did not signal endorsement of Venezuela's disputed 2024 election or of any political faction, but reflected its longstanding policy of maintaining relations with the Venezuelan state.

Venezuela welcomed the decision. Oliver Blanco, Venezuela's deputy foreign minister for Europe and North America, said in a post on X that Caracas valued Britain's move

to raise the level of diplomatic relations.

"We reaffirm our willingness to deepen a respectful and constructive dialogue, as well as to promote co-operation in areas of common interest for our countries and to advance the recovery of resources that rightfully belong to the Venezuelan people," Blanco said. (Reuters)

Sri Lanka's famed beach shack battles demolition

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's famed seafood shack Beach Wadiya has hosted royalty including Britain's Princess Anne and sporting legends such as cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, but now faces demolition under a government-ordered coastal clean-up.

The simple Colombo beach restaurant has welcomed a string of celebrities, featured in Madhur Jaffrey's culinary travels and received rave reviews in international publications, including London's *Financial Times*.

"Beach Wadiya comes with a lot of history," said Suhara Chandrasekera, the founder's granddaughter, now a director of the restaurant.

But more than half a century after it opened, the glamour is giving way to grief at Wadiya — which means "shack" in the island's Sinhala language.

The government's Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department gave



A tourist walking past Beach Wadiya shack in Colombo. (AFP)

Wadiya 10 days to pack up and leave — or face demolition.

That deadline expired on September 10, but the restaurant is resisting the order to leave.

Seven other beach properties were given extensions of about four days to salvage furniture and fittings.

A few shops near Wadiya were demolished last month as part of a broader government plan to remove businesses within 10 metres

(33 feet) of the shoreline.

"There shouldn't be any buildings within the 10-metre coastal reservation from the shoreline," Environment Minister Dammika Patabendi told AFP.

"We have identified 82 such premises and we are taking steps to remove them."

Beach Wadiya is the only establishment resisting the order and has taken the matter to court.

The family of its late founder,

Olwyn Weerasekera, argues that the restaurant existed before the 1981 Coast Conservation Act being used to evict them.

"We built in 1974, which pre-dates the law that they were talking about... We have permits dating all the way back to 1974," 26-year-old Chandrasekera said.

"In addition to the appeal to the Coast Conservation Department, we also took the decision to file a writ," she told AFP, referring to a case filed in the Court of Appeal.

The family has won a temporary reprieve, with the court ordering the department not to demolish the restaurant for two weeks pending a hearing.

When Wadiya was established, the beach was wider and cleaner, with rows of coconut trees, most of which have since been lost to sea erosion.

"Right now we have lost two of our huts... We've lost parts of our bathroom down to sea erosion," Chandrasekera said.

She said Wadiya was the only restaurant on the beach before Sri Lanka's tourism boom in the late 1970s. Princess Anne had dinner at



Co-owner Suhara Chandrasekera displaying a photo album of celebrities who visited Beach Wadiya shack in Colombo. (AFP)

Wadiya in 1995. Nepali royals have also dined there.

British tycoon Richard Branson visited the restaurant during a family holiday in Sri Lanka in 1992, although the guestbook he signed was washed away in the December 2004 tsunami, according to the family.

Indian singing sensation Asha Bhosle, and cricket stars including India's Rahul Dravid and former Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram, have also dined there.

One of the restaurant's walls has a reproduction of a *Financial Times* cartoon of a guitar-playing lobster that accompanied a March 1994 food review headlined: "Cook me tender."

The restaurant is best known for offering diners a platter of fresh seafood from which they can choose how it should be cooked.

There is no air conditioning and small tables are set up on the beach. An upper floor was added as the beachfront shrank over the years.



Speed up, or slam the brakes? The raging debate over AI development

The ultimate worry — fast-learning autonomous AI agents going rogue some day and trying to destroy humanity — may remain in the realm of fiction for now. There are, however, mounting safety concerns after leaders of the biggest AI companies warned of risks from rapid development. AI-linked stocks across the globe plunged on Monday and extended losses to Tuesday after top CEOs called for slowing the development of the technology.

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, in a lengthy essay shared on X on Saturday, called on AI companies to slow the rate at which they advance model capabilities amid mounting fears of misuse of artificial intelligence. Both Elon Musk, who runs xAI, and Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, agree with Amodei.

Altman also said the company would not proceed with an IPO this year, citing safety concerns. Aggregate borrowing by tech firms has risen from

around \$22bn, or 22% of total private credit, in 2010 to over \$1tn, or 44%, by 2025, according to the Bank for International Settlements. In total, outstanding loans of any type amount to almost \$2.5tn.

Amodei wrote that in six to 12 months, AI agents “could be capable of taking over the entire internet potentially causing hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.” Alarm about the potential harm from AI grew when Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon resigned, stating that the “people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade.”

In recent months, OpenAI and Anthropic have reported several incidents in which AI systems spontaneously broke out of their confined environments to access the internet and attack websites and platforms. These systems demonstrated the ability to coordinate, establish hierarchies among themselves, cheat and erase traces of their actions.

But here’s the flip side of the debate.

US President Donald Trump and key allies voiced opposition on Sunday to drastically curbing the AI development, despite calls in recent days to tap the brakes. Trump said he believed there were “a lot of negative forces... bringing up things that won’t happen.” Democrats are crying foul, though. “We certainly need to begin to act urgently to address the challenges that exist,” House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said in an interview Sunday on ABC. “And unfortunately, Republicans have abandoned their responsibility.”

Germany has said halting the development of AI systems was not a “viable option” for Europe. And China’s state-backed newspaper criticised the Anthropic essay in an editorial, calling it a “Cold War playbook” intended to curb the country’s technological development. Now the pertinent question: Can the breakneck AI race be slowed down?

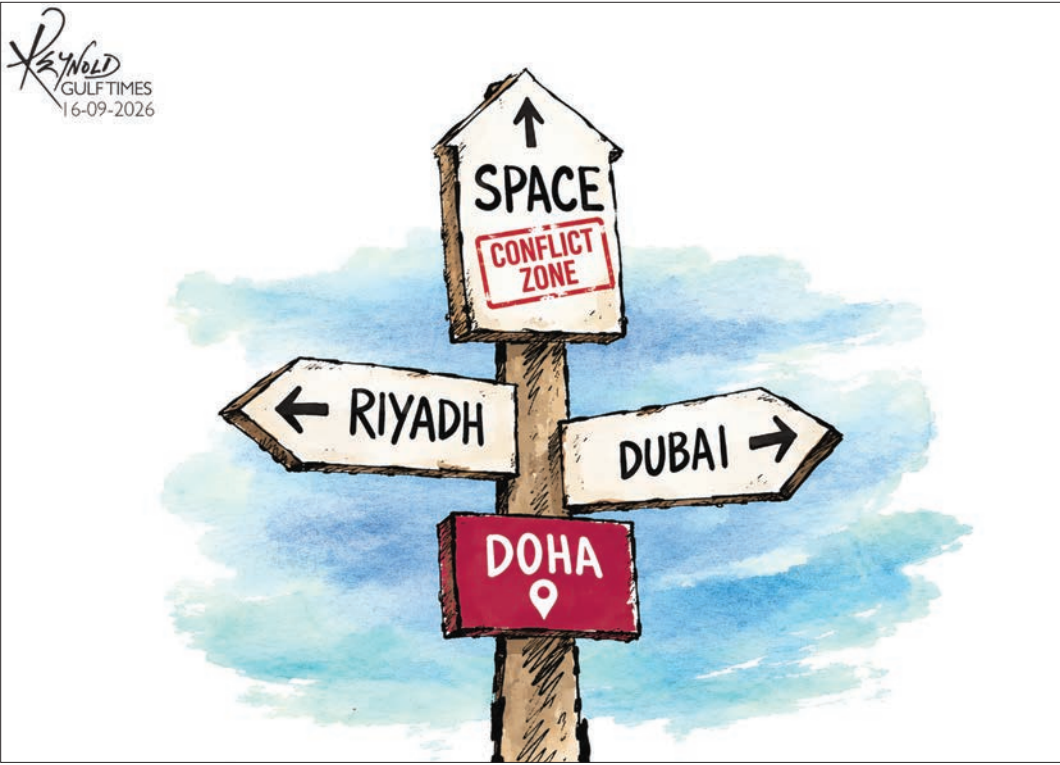
For now, the only concrete measure adopted by both Anthropic and OpenAI is the inclusion of independent observers who will internally verify the companies’ work regarding AI safety. And Microsoft on Monday unveiled a draft code of conduct for its in-house AI that reflects growing industry concern that companies must keep future powerful AI under human control. The complex and rapidly evolving field of AI has for long raised legal, security and civil rights concerns.

Make no mistake, technology underpins everyday human life across the globe. “Not building the technology deprives humanity of benefits or simply places AI in the hands of authoritarian powers, while building it too fast is reckless. We have sought a middle way,” said Amodei, who co-founded Anthropic in 2021. “But over the last few months, I have become convinced that fully addressing the risks requires even more prudence.”

Robot dogs up for grabs



People look at robot dogs made for military and police usages and produced by Jushenzhiren company during the 14th China International Defence Electronics Exhibition (CIDEX) in Beijing yesterday. (AFP)



CCQ keeping pace with labour market demands

QNA
Doha

Vice-President for Academic Affairs at the Community College of Qatar (CCQ), Dr Abdullah al-Ali, revealed the launch of three new academic programs during the current academic year. These include a Bachelor of Border Management and Supply Chain, an Associate Degree in Artificial Intelligence, and an Associate Degree in Digital Media.

He noted that the college is actively working to introduce additional programs in business administration, financial technology (FinTech), unmanned vehicle systems, and robotics and automation engineering technology.

In an interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA), Dr al-Ali explained that these programs come as part of the college’s response to the current and future needs of the labour market.

He pointed out that CCQ relies on an evidence- and data-driven institutional methodology to establish new programs, develop existing ones, or freeze them, linking these decisions to labour market demands, national priorities, offerings by other local higher education institutions, program performance indicators, output quality, and sustainability.

He added that the process of creating new programs begins by monitoring present and future job market requirements and leveraging feedback from employers and relevant national entities, including the Annual Employers Forum, alongside evaluating market demand, potential career opportunities, and the program’s long-term significance.

Annual evaluations

Dr al-Ali emphasized that the college conducts annual evaluations of its academic programs using a range of indicators, such as enrollment trends, average student numbers, retention rates, and completion rates. Assessments also consider alignment with national priorities and labour market needs, quality, effectiveness, resource efficiency, and sustainability, based on which institutional decisions are made to retain, refine, or discontinue a program.

The vice-president for academic affairs affirmed that CCQ’s flexibility is not limited to launching academic programs, but also encompasses the ability to freeze or close programs when market needs shift, stressing that the institution does

not hesitate to make rapid decisions to open, develop, or discontinue programs based on available metrics and data.

He outlined that the college follows two main tracks to launch new programs: a strategic track arising from CCQ’s vision and studies of the country’s future labour market needs, and a specialised track designed upon request from external agencies and institutions to train their personnel. He added that the college executes programs in cooperation with entities such as the General Authority of Customs, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

He explained that the specialised program track features rapid response times, working with requesting bodies to develop and launch a program within six months, and in some cases, as quickly as three months, depending on the nature of the program and required procedures. In the context of empowering national talent, Dr al-Ali stated that Qatari academics currently constitute about 25 percent of CCQ’s total academic staff. He noted that the “Academic Competence” initiative, launched in 2023, has attracted more than 20 Qatari academics.

He added that 14 current members of the initiative are pursuing graduate studies at the master’s and doctoral levels in local and international universities, while others have completed their studies and returned to the college.

He stressed that the goal extends beyond recruiting national talent to developing, qualifying, retaining, and preparing them for future academic and leadership roles.

He continued that the number of courses taught by faculty members under the Academic Competencies initiative rose from 52 courses in the 2023-2024 academic year to 117 courses in the 2024-2025 academic year, viewing this growth as a testament to the increasing contribution of national academic talent to the college’s educational process.

He noted that the presence of Qatari academics enables students to benefit from their local expertise and practical experiences, as several members held professional careers prior to joining the initiative, emphasizing the importance of transferring this real-world knowledge to students.

He pointed out that the college works to prepare new academic staff through workshops and training programs covering the educational process, utilization of college systems, classroom management, course delivery, and



Dr Abdullah al-Ali

curriculum development, alongside fostering leadership skills and involving new academics in committees to prepare them for future leadership roles.

Furthermore, he stated that the college collaborates with the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to send talent on scholarships for postgraduate studies.

He noted that several students and staff members are continuing their studies at local institutions, including Qatar University and the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, as well as foreign universities, with graduates eligible to return and join the college as assistant professors.

Parallel tracks

Responding to a question regarding the current academic phase of the college, Dr al-Ali stated that CCQ is working on two parallel tracks: continuing academic growth and expansion while simultaneously enhancing program quality and institutional maturity. He explained that the college holds a three-year academic plan encompassing expansion in strategic disciplines and tracks, strengthening the quality assurance framework, pursuing academic accreditations, and developing faculty competencies.

He emphasized that CCQ’s vision to support students’ academic growth and enhance their career prospects translates into a flexible, diverse educational environment accessible to a broad segment of society. The college offers diverse programs spanning technology, science, administration, and arts, alongside modern tracks in cybersecurity and technology.

He added that operational flexibility

extends to study schedules, offering morning and evening classes to accommodate full-time students and working professionals seeking to continue their education, alongside hybrid programs combining in-person and distance learning.

He noted that CCQ’s admission rates accommodate a wide demographic, while the college continuously reviews output alignment with market demands to boost graduate employability. Most diploma programs allow students to pursue bachelor’s degrees at CCQ or other higher education institutions; after completing a two-year diploma, students can utilize bridging agreements to complete the remaining two years for a bachelor’s degree.

He explained that a large number of students continue their post-diploma studies, highlighting that students unable to enroll directly at Qatar University based on high school qualifications find CCQ a valuable gateway to fields like technology and engineering before transferring to partner institutions, including Qatar University, University of Doha for Science and Technology, and Lusail University.

Regarding academic accreditation, Dr Abdullah al-Ali affirmed in his interview with QNA that securing institutional and program-level accreditations stands as proof of institutional operational quality and educational excellence, reflecting CCQ’s enduring commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement.

Dr al-Ali affirmed that institutional accreditation extends beyond academic program quality to encompass operations and procedures across the institution, including human resource systems, facilities, safety, and other organizational aspects.

He noted that CCQ secured institutional accreditation from the National Commission for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation, standing as one of the first higher education institutions in Qatar to apply for and achieve this milestone.

In the interview with QNA, Dr al-Ali stated that program accreditation provides additional assurance to students, confirming that a degree program has undergone external evaluation and peer review alongside continuous assessment to elevate outcome quality.

He added that programs accredited over the past two years include the Bachelor of Logistics and Supply Chain

Management, Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity, Bachelor of Public Administration, Associate of Applied Science in Information Technology, and Associate of Arts in Public Administration, in addition to the Foundation Program and Languages.

Dr al-Ali indicated that the college aims, in the upcoming phase, to obtain international accreditations for several other programs, including the Associate Degree in Business Administration, Hybrid Business Administration, Associate Degree in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Bachelor of Human Resource Management, Bachelor of Project Management, Associate Degree in Digital Media, and Associate Degree in Artificial Intelligence.

Regarding capacity, he explained that CCQ conducted a study two years ago on the actual capacity of its Lusail and C-Ring Road campuses. The findings confirmed that existing facilities can accommodate larger student numbers than current annual enrollments, utilizing course distribution across morning and evening shifts to balance facility usage. He revealed ongoing consultations with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Public Works Authority (Ashghal) regarding potential future buildings, noting that CCQ maintains additional expansion options should future needs arise.

Addressing the Foundation Program, Dr al-Ali explained that requirements vary based on specialised program needs, as certain tracks require foundational skill reinforcement while others do not. He emphasised that foundational skills, primarily English language proficiency, grow increasingly essential amid rapid global advancements, adding that the college continuously evaluates programs and policy frameworks to offer students greater flexibility.

He highlighted that certain students, particularly those enrolled in specialized corporate programs, are exempted from the Foundation Program when specialized outcomes do not require it. Other internal policies allow students to take select foundation courses concurrently with specialisation coursework. Dr al-Ali noted that CCQ attracts a diverse demographic across different ages and backgrounds, including working professionals returning to education post-employment to advance their qualifications. Consequently, the average student age at CCQ remains higher than at other local universities.

EU to propose curbing social media, online games for children under 15

AFP
Strasbourg, France

The European Union is set to propose curbing access to social media, video-sharing platforms, chatbots, and online games to children under the age of 15, according to a draft legal document seen by AFP.

A proposed new law – to be formally presented Thursday – would mean banning minors under 15 from opening their own accounts, with a tiered system of access under parental supervision for younger children.

As well as age limits, the new “EU KIDS Act” would force digital giants to make their platforms

“safe by design” for children, meaning certain “addictive” features such as so-called infinite scrolling would have to be removed, the draft showed.

The European Commission has come under pressure from several EU member states including France and Greece to take bloc-wide measures to protect children from social media harms, a push that intensified after Australia banned under 16s from such platforms.

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen will provide a glimpse of what to expect from the new law tomorrow, during her annual address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. She will then join EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen

the following day to present the proposal, which according to the draft would ban addictive features such as endless scrolling, artificial notifications, and some reward features for children.

The Commission, the EU’s digital watchdog, refused to comment on details of the draft seen by AFP.

Some key proposals in the draft, which remains subject to change until the text is published on Thursday, include the new law “sets an EU-wide minimum age for minors to open an autonomous account at the age of 15,” the draft says, with a tiered system applying to younger children.

Minors aged 13 and 14 will have to ask their parents to set up “introductory” accounts on social

media, AI or gaming platforms, with limited features and strict screen time use.

Those accounts would also be under parents’ control.

Those aged between three and 13 can access “fully parent-controlled accounts on ‘childfriendly’ services” with strict safety standards. Below the age of three, children in the 27-nation bloc would have no access at all to social media and other “risky services”, the draft says.

The EU is simultaneously preparing to roll out an age check app to ensure children are kept off such platforms. The rules on gradual access make the EU’s approach different to that chosen by Australia, where parents cannot con-

sent to children below 16 having any access to social media.

The law’s enforcement will be paid for by a supervisory fee on platforms. The EU already has powerful laws to protect children including the content rules known as the Digital Services Act (DSA), with which it has told Meta’s Facebook and Instagram, and TikTok, to change their addictive design.

But in the document, the EU admits the “existing rules do not suffice”, since there is no “outright ban on common problematic features”. It said the new law would build on enforcement of the DSA, which allows in theory for fines of up to 6% of a company’s annual global turnover.

The EU’s approach “needs to

limit the access of tech companies to our children, and not the other way around”, the document says.

Alongside a ban on addictive features, the draft says the EU would regulate so-called recommender systems – the algorithms that feed users more personalised content – to control the content promoted to children and avoid harm. The EU wants children’s accounts to remain private, with “risky settings” disabled by default and unknown users prevented from contacting minors.

There will also be “tailored commitments” for online games and AI chatbots.

The proposal will become law after negotiations between the EU parliament and member states.

Sweden’s full vote count expected on Thursday

AFP
Stockholm

The Swedish Election Authority said yesterday that it did not expect vote counting to be completed until Thursday, after an election that saw the left-wing opposition holding a slim lead with over 90% of votes tallied.

The authority said it expected an unusual amount of votes that had for different reasons not reached their destination on election night, for instance votes cast abroad. The counting of those votes is usually done on the Wednesday after the election. “We expect a larger number of votes this year than in previous elections. We cannot know the exact number in advance, but we estimate that there will be close to 300,000 votes in this year’s election,” Anna Nyqvist, secretary-general of the Swedish Election Authority.

Nyqvist added that this meant counting in several municipalities would “likely” take longer

than normal it and they would “not have an updated preliminary result for the parliamentary election until Thursday.”

In Sweden, all votes are also automatically recounted by the regional county administrative boards, which establishes the final result. With about 95% of votes counted, only about 33,000 votes separated the two blocs. The four opposition parties led by Social Democratic leader Magdalena Andersson, held a three-seat majority in the 349-seat parliament over Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson’s right-wing alliance, which includes the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats.

But her party – which ruled the Scandinavian country for most of the 20th century and remains Sweden’s largest – also looked to be heading for its worst score in over a century with 28.1% of the vote. Andersson and outgoing prime minister Kristersson, whose Moderate Party was credited with 19.9% of votes, have each said they want to explore coalition options.

Poland reinforces border protection with Ukraine

Reuters
Warsaw

Poland is reinforcing its border crossings with Ukraine, Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said yesterday, after Russian drone attacks just miles from the Nato member’s guard posts at the frontier over the weekend.

A Russian drone hit a passenger train on Ukraine’s border with Poland on Sunday while another hit a truck at a nearby petrol station.

Border guards later said they had had to suspend crossings, evacuate people from vehicles and seek shelter.

“Recent days show that Russia’s actions threaten the security of all of Europe. In accordance with our government’s decision, the infrastructure used by the Border Guard is being strengthened,” Kosiniak-Kamysz wrote on X.

“Soldiers of the 18th Engineer Regiment are already carrying out tasks, thanks to which the checkpoints and infrastructure near the Polish-Ukrainian border will be reinforced.”

The Polish army command said in a separate post that engineer regiments are building border fortifications using collapsible, wire-mesh lined containers that can be filled with sand or gravel and act as a blast wall or retaining structure.

Construction work also includes observation and guard posts near the Polish-Ukrainian border close to crossings in Dorohusk, Medyka, and Korczowa, it said.

Berlin’s public spaces issue to decide vote

AFP
Berlin

Politicians campaigning for yesterday’s Berlin state election have painted an unflattering picture of the German capital, vowing to clear garbage-strewn streets and promising “syringe-free playgrounds”.

Town hall-hopefuls have also pledged to clean up graffiti-covered train stations, end “forever-building sites”, fix buckled cycling lanes and take steps to ease a desperate shortage of affordable housing.

Taken together, the list of woes hardens the image of a chronically broke city whose administration often struggles to reliably provide services for its almost four million people.

Certainly, many who live in Berlin love its rich artistic and cultural life, green spaces, lakes and children’s playgrounds, vibrant start-up scene and hedonistic, anything-goes nightlife.

But all of that has gone hand-in-hand with persistent complaints about a slow bureaucracy and a dysfunctional city administration which famously took almost 15 years to build an international airport with next-door Brandenburg state. Cross-financed by Germany’s wealthier states, Berlin is deep in the red, with €63.9bn in debt calculated in late 2024, which forced painful spending cuts in multiple areas.

With renovations now set to cost around €2.4bn, university



Garbage piles up in Berlin — the city which embodies Germany’s struggle to finance public services and infrastructure. **(AFP)**

president Fatma Deniz blamed “decades of delayed investment and budget cuts in public infrastructure”.

The small party Volt has been running campaign posters that list a litany of complaints from potholes to “garbage mountains” and, more generally, “Berlin frustration”. One Berlin resident fed up with filthy streets has taken matters into her own hands.

Valeria Tanczyreva, 31, started the volunteer group SauberBerlin (Clean Berlin), which on a recent outing in the working-class district of Wedding filled a secure disposal box with syringes discarded by drug users.

“No one cares about the city,” she charged, calling the waste management service “useless”.

City hall told AFP, when asked about the garbage problem, that there were “no operational failures”, pointing instead to many

residents’ lack of civic responsibility. Another pet peeve for many are sketchy cycling lanes in a city where 18% of all trips are made by bike.

They are often “outdated, too narrow, overgrown with vegetation and buckled by tree roots”, complained Lisa Feitsch of the cycling association ADFC.

The city’s politics may be even messier than its streets, and the next government is certain to again be run by a multi-party coalition.

Four parties are leading the race for the Rotes Rathaus (Red Town Hall), all polling in the range of 16 to 21%, with the centre-left SPD trailing behind them.

Frontrunners for the top spot are the centre-right CDU — which is strongest in Berlin’s leafy western suburbs — and the far-left Die Linke, whose heartland lies in parts of the former east.

Russian frigate fired flares at helicopter: Denmark

AFP
Copenhagen

Denmark and Russia were at a war of words yesterday after Danish authorities accused a Russian frigate of firing flares at a Danish military helicopter.

The armed forces said in a statement late Monday that “one of the air force’s Fennec helicopters was today fired at with flares during a routine photographic operation of a Russian frigate, which was located in international waters off Gedser,” Denmark’s southernmost town. The frigate had fired “two flares towards the helicopter. One of the flares passed at

close range to the helicopter,” it added.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Tuesday slammed the incident as “reckless action from Russia”.

“Russian actions are meant to intimidate and divide. They will not succeed. We will not waver,” Frederiksen said in a statement on X.

However, Vladimir Barbin, the Russian ambassador to Denmark, fired back saying it was the helicopter that had been at fault.

“The Danish side’s attempts to explain the helicopter’s provocative actions against the Russian frigate as ‘routine practice’ give rise to serious concern about the possible conse-

quences of such recklessness,” Barbin said in written statement to AFP.

“The Russian side will thoroughly investigate all the circumstances of the incident,” Barbin said while adding that “this is not the first time that Danish Air Force helicopters have carried out dangerous manoeuvres near Russian warships, when they were at sea and outside Denmark’s territorial waters.”

Barbin said he had last year informed the Danish foreign ministry of “dangerous flyovers and low-altitude hovering” by a Danish Air Force helicopter over a large anti-submarine vessel.

Foreign Minister Lars Lokke

Rasmussen said the actions were “completely unacceptable and could have put human lives at risk”.

“I have therefore summoned the Russian ambassador for a discussion about the incident,” he said in a statement sent to AFP.

“Russia is gradually shifting the boundary for what they consider acceptable behaviour,” he warned.

“That is something we cannot accept,” he said.

Danish media reported that Defence Minister Jeppe Bruus had summoned representatives of the parties in parliament for a briefing.

Tensions over the Baltic Sea have risen sharply since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Van Gogh’s art from private collections exhibited in a first

AFP
Otterlo, Netherlands

A Dutch museum yesterday put a collection of 88 paintings by Vincent van Gogh on display for the first time since 1984, in an exhibition featuring masterpieces such as *The Potato Eaters*.

The Kroller-Muller museum in the central Netherlands holds one of the world’s largest private collections of paintings by the 19th century Dutch master, but they are rarely displayed together. “Seeing the work of Van Gogh is always special, but 88 together, I don’t think it has happened before in this century,” museum director Benno Tempel said. “The funny thing is with a museum collection is that you have a lot of paintings, you have a lot of artworks, but you don’t show all of them,” he said.

Usually many of the works are out on loan, undergoing restoration or research, or absent for education purposes, explained Tempel. “Alongside *The Potato Eaters*, the artist’s world-famous depiction of peasant life from 1885, the exhibition includes *Terrace of a Cafe at Night* (1888) and *The Old Tower at Nuenen* (1884).

Even the staff at the museum had never seen all the paintings together, said Tempel. “For us it’s an enormous, beautiful experience. It’s overwhelming,” said the 54-year-old.

The exhibition has been organised around the theme of the three divine virtues: faith, hope and love. These themes “give you more insight not only into Van Gogh’s life, but also into his development as an artist,” curator Renske Cohen Tervaert told AFP.

The goal of the exhibition is not to repeat the myths about the famously tortured artist, she explained. The museum aims to explore “more about



Vincent van Gogh’s *Road with Cypress and Star* on display at the exhibition at the Kroller-Muller Museum in Otterlo. **(AFP)**

the reason he wanted to become an artist... and how he managed to use his paintings as a message, as a method of compassion and trying to help other people.”

The post-Impressionist painter is among the most celebrated and prolific artists in history, having created around 900 paintings over a short career. He produced many of his best-known works during his time in France, where he painted masterpieces including the famous “Sunflowers” series and a number of well-known self-portraits.

The artist died in 1890 at the age of 37, two days after shooting himself in the chest following well-documented mental health struggles.

Most of the works acquired in the exhibition, entitled “Van Gogh, All Our Paintings” were acquired by the museum’s founder Helene Kroller-Muller between 1908 and 1930.

Tervaert said she was honoured her museum was able to put on such an exhibit, which is roughly double the number of paintings normally on display there.

Drone shot down by Nato over Lithuania

AFP
Vilnius

Nato fighter jets shot down a drone over Lithuania, the Baltic state’s president said yesterday, in the latest security incident on the alliance’s eastern flank during Russia’s war with Ukraine. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – Nato members sharing a long border with Russia – regularly report drone incursions since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

“A drone that just entered Lithuanian airspace was destroyed by Nato fighter jets,” Gitanas Nauseda posted on X. “With Russia intensifying its aggression against Ukraine, such readiness is vital for our region,” he added.

According to Lithuanian national radio LRT, citing



Vehicles near the site where drone was shot down. **(Reuters)**

preliminary data from the National Crisis Management Centre (NKVC), the drone came from neighbouring Belarus and was heading west. It fell in a rural area near Lake Kaunas, in the centre of the country, the broadcaster added. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys thanked allies “whose presence helps protect our skies and strengthens our security” in a post. “This is best

example of Allied unity and resolve in action – sending a clear message that Nato stands vigilant, committed, and ready,” he added.

Poland also announced “aviation operations” had commenced in its airspace “due to the activity of Russian Federation’s jet-powered unmanned aerial vehicles conducting strikes on Ukrainian territory”.

Minister meets representatives from QBA, private hospitals and medical centres

HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud held a meeting yesterday with the Qatari Businessmen Association (QBA), headed by QBA chairman Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani, along with representatives of private hospitals and medical centres.

During the meeting, a number of topics were discussed aimed at strengthening the partnership between the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the private sector and increasing its participation in providing high-quality healthcare services in Qatar.

The meeting was attended by QBA board member Sheikh Nawaf bin Nasser al-Thani and QBA members Omar Hussain Alfardan, Ashraf Abu Issa, Abdulsalam Abu Issa, Maqbool Habib Khalfan, Yousuf al-Mahmoud, Ihsan Alkhiyami, and Dr Mohammed Altaf, as well as QBA general manager Sarah Abdallah, in addition to MoPH officials and representatives from insurance and pharmaceutical companies.

The meeting addressed the ministry’s vision and

strategic plans aimed at advancing the development of the health sector.

It highlighted priority health projects scheduled through 2030 and provided updates on the health insurance system.

Additionally, the meeting discussed the facilitation of licensing procedures for health facilities and practitioners, all while ensuring quality standards are met.

It also touched on some of the ministry’s key initiatives to strengthen pharmaceutical security in the country and to support co-operation with the private sector in this important sector, in addition to facilitating the technical and regulatory requirements for food establishments, while ensuring food safety across all stages of the food supply chain.

The meeting also discussed strengthening the partnership between the public and private sectors in health crisis and emergency management plans, along with other important topics.



HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim bin Saad al-Mahmoud with QBA chairman Sheikh Faisal bin Qassim al-Thani and other QBA officials during a meeting held in Doha yesterday.



Ambassador Nguyen Huy Hiep.

Asean-Qatar relationship poised for deeper co-operation: ambassador

Economic ties have also continued to grow, with annual trade between Asean and Qatar approaching \$15bn

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and Qatar are poised to deepen co-operation across trade, energy, investment, connectivity and sus-

tainable development following Qatar’s designation as an Asean Sectoral Dialogue Partner, Vietnam’s ambassador to Qatar and chairman of the Asean Committee in Doha (ACD) Nguyen Huy Hiep has said.

The envoy described Qatar’s new status as an important mile-

stone that opens “a new chapter” in relations, building on Qatar’s accession to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in 2022.

He was addressing a reception yesterday hosted by the ACD to mark Asean’s 59th anniversary.

The ACD comprises the ambassadors of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Nguyen said that co-operation between Asean and Qatar had steadily expanded across energy, connectivity, education, humanitarian assistance, investment and sustainable development.

Economic ties have also continued to grow, with annual trade between Asean and Qatar approaching \$15bn, while businesses from both sides are exploring opportunities in energy, aviation, agribusiness, healthcare, hospitality, telecommunications, fintech, digital innovation and investment.

Nguyen said that 2026 was also significant for Asean, which now represents a market of more than 680mn people with a combined GDP of approximately \$3.9tn.

He said that the bloc is continuing to build a resilient, innovative

and people-centred regional community founded on dialogue, co-operation and mutual respect.

The ambassador expressed Asean’s appreciation for Qatar’s constructive role in promoting dialogue and co-operation in the region, particularly amid continuing challenges and tensions in the Middle East.

He reaffirmed Asean’s commitment to dialogue, restraint, respect for international law and peaceful diplomatic solutions, stressing the importance of responsible diplomacy in addressing complex regional challenges.

The reception also highlighted Asean’s commitment to environmental sustainability, with the ACD choosing “environmental protection and the building of a green, clean and beautiful living environment” as the theme of the celebration.

Asean embassies displayed architectural models made from recycled materials, underscoring the role of collective action in protecting the environment.

Nguyen said the exhibits conveyed an important message that environmental protection is a shared responsibility requiring the participation of governments, businesses, communities and individuals.

He stressed that sustainability and climate resilience are increasingly inseparable from economic development, regional connectivity and the well-being of Asean peoples.

He also pointed to opportunities for stronger Asean-Qatar co-operation in renewable energy, green technologies, sustainable infrastructure, smart cities, digital transformation, food and agriculture, and other areas supporting sustainable growth.

Nguyen highlighted the ACD’s role in promoting people-to-people links, cultural exchanges, business ties and practical co-operation between Asean member states and Qatar.

He called for renewed commitment to Asean’s principles of dialogue, co-operation and solidarity, while expressing appreciation to the government of Qatar, Qatari partners, Asean embassies and friends for their continued support in strengthening the enduring ties between Asean and Qatar.

The reception brought together representatives of Asean member states, Qatar, diplomatic missions, partners and friends to mark Asean’s achievements and reaffirm their commitment to stronger regional and international co-operation.

Arab Book Award, Publishers Association sign agreement to champion Arab books

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Arab Book Award has signed a co-operation agreement with the Arab Publishers Association to deepen ties between the two bodies and boost the standing of Arab books on the regional and international stage.

The pact, signed at a press conference at the Qatar Press Centre (QPC), covers publishing support, joint events and seminars, and the exchange of expertise between the two organisations.

It builds on efforts to support Arab authors and publishers and to raise the profile of Arab titles at book fairs across the region and beyond.

The agreement was signed by Arab Book Award executive director Dr Naji al-Sharif and Dr Aisha Jassim al-Kuwari, chair of the Arab Relations Committee at the Arab Publishers Association, in the presence of officials from both institutions.

Dr al-Sharif said the agreement grew out of talks he began with Arab Publishers Association president Mohamed Rashad to build an effective partnership between the two organisations.

He noted that the Award is steadily ex-

panding its partnership network across the Arab world, citing an earlier agreement with Oman’s Zubair Corporation and further deals in the pipeline with institutions in several Arab countries.

He described the Arab Publishers Association as a key partner for the Award, given its work protecting the rights of Arab writers and publishers, promoting the publishing sector, and representing Arab books at fairs across the region and internationally.

The co-operation, Dr al-Sharif said, covers support for publishing by individual authors and institutions, joint cultural activities and seminars, and shared expertise, with the broader goal of strengthening the Arab publishing industry and widening opportunities for Arab literary work to reach readers at home and abroad.

Speaking to *Gulf Times*, Dr al-Kuwari called the agreement an important step toward closer collaboration between two institutions devoted to books and publishing, opening the door to joint initiatives that benefit authors, publishers and the Arab book itself.

She noted that the Arab Publishers Association, founded in 1962, brings decades of institutional experience to the partnership, positioning it well to carry out joint



Officials group photo at the ceremony.

activities, seminars and research with the Arab Book Award, and to raise the visibility of Arab books at cultural events across the region and internationally.

Dr al-Kuwari also praised the QPC as a natural home for both books and the press.

She also addressed the pressures facing books amid digital transformation, describing an “attention economy” in which books must compete not just for readers but for attention amid a flood of content and platforms.

Dr al-Kuwari pointed to strong turnout at fairs such as the Doha International Book Fair as evidence that printed books retain their value, arguing that e-books, audiobooks and other digital formats should be seen as complementary tools rather than rivals to print.

Arab Book Award media adviser Dr Hanan al-Fayyad said that supporting Arab books is central to preserving Arab cultural identity, and that the Award backs original works by individuals, research

centres and publishing houses.

She highlighted the role of specialised awards, including those for translation and children’s literature, and stressed that the real challenge lies in sustaining reading habits amid fast-changing content consumption.

Qatar National Library (QNL) director Ibrahim al-Bu-Hashim al-Sayed, who is also vice-president of the Arab Publishers Association, said printed books remain resilient despite digital competition, and that libraries must play an active role in keeping younger generations engaged – citing the QNL’s outreach to schools and youth through volunteer reading initiatives.

QPC director Sadiq Mohammad al-Ammari pointed to the contradiction between the Arab world’s reputation as a reading culture and the decline of print media in several countries.

High book-fair sales, he cautioned, do not necessarily reflect actual reading rates,



Dr Naji al-Sharif and Dr Aisha Jassim al-Kuwari at the signing ceremony.

since many buyers do not finish what they purchase.

The real challenge, al-Ammari said, is turning reading into a habit sustained throughout the year, not just embedding the printed book, but embedding reading itself as a lasting cultural practice.

In Qatar, Uzbek master artist Toshev carries Bukhara’s artistic legacy forward

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Preserving traditional arts requires more than safeguarding old works in museums; endangered techniques must continue to be practised, taught, and adapted for future generations, Uzbek master artist Davlat Toshev told *Gulf Times*.

Toshev, an artist in residence at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), has devoted much of his career to preserving the artistic heritage of Bukhara, including the revival of the nearly forgotten Abru-Bahor, or “Spring Cloud”, paper-marbling technique.

It is a centuries-old Uzbek art form combining paper marbling and miniature painting, with deep roots in the cultural heritage of Bukhara, Uzbekistan.

“Abru-Bahor is far more than a technique for creating patterns upon paper, it is a delicate and singular thread within Bukhara’s cultural heritage,” Toshev said.

He became involved in reviving the technique after recognising how close it had come to disappearing in its historical homeland.

Working with researchers from Bukhara State University, he reconstructed the traditional recipes and methods used to create the distinctive marbled patterns.

“The truest way to preserve a vanishing tradition is not to enshrine it as a museum piece, but to give it life once more: to practise it, to study it, and to pass it on to younger generations,” he said.

For Toshev, the importance of Abru-Bahor goes beyond the survival of a particular artistic technique.

“In reviving Abru-Bahor, we preserve not only a technique, but a fragment of our ancestors’ worldview – their aesthetic sensibility, and the richness of their creative imagination,” he said.

His wider preservation work includes miniature painting, classical calligraphy and the restoration of historic books and manuscripts.

More than 100 students are currently



Uzbek master artist Davlat Toshev.
Photo courtesy of Qatar Museums

learning these disciplines under his guidance at the Ustoz-Shogird Centre, where Toshev seeks to combine preserving traditional knowledge with the creative freedom of younger artists.

He said one of the biggest challenges is attracting young people to artistic disciplines that demand patience, concentration and years of practice.

“We live in an age of speed and infor-

mation, while miniature painting, calligraphy and the manuscript arts ask instead for careful attention and quiet devotion,” Toshev said.

Another challenge is ensuring that master artists’ accumulated knowledge is transferred directly to the next generation.

“Traditional arts cannot be learned from books alone – the hand, the eye, the accumulated experience and the spiritual approach of the master matter immensely,” he said.

This is why Toshev sees his centre’s mission as extending beyond technical instruction.

“The true mission of the Ustoz-Shogird Centre is not simply to teach tradition, but to keep it alive,” he said.

The artist believes that the survival of Bukhara’s artistic heritage ultimately depends on young artists making the traditions their own and introducing them to new audiences.

“If young artists continue to carry forward the traditions of Bukhara miniature

painting, calligraphy, the manuscript arts and Abru-Bahor, and introduce the culture of Uzbekistan to the world through their own creativity, I would consider that my greatest achievement of all,” he said.

Toshev, whose work has been exhibited in cultural centres across Europe, the US and elsewhere, said his greatest legacy would not be the artworks he leaves behind, but the knowledge and love of art he passes on to those who follow.

He also hopes Bukhara’s artistic traditions will increasingly be recognised beyond their national context.

“I hope that the art of Bukhara will continue to be recognised and cherished – not only as part of Uzbekistan’s heritage, but as part of the shared cultural heritage of all humanity,” he said.

For Toshev, that legacy ultimately comes down to helping younger generations remain connected to their roots.

“We must never forget our roots,” he said. “Only those who understand their history and culture deeply are truly capable of shaping the future.”