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Qatar unveils 5-year pipeline of \$60bn projects, opportunities

● PM announces 'Doha Investment' to grow QIA's domestic portfolio

GT Report
New York

Qatar has launched a new platform, "Doha Investment", to manage and grow the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)'s domestic portfolio, as HE the Prime Minister unveiled a five-year pipeline of projects and investment opportunities worth more than \$60bn.

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani made the announcement in his opening remarks at the Qatar Economic Forum - Powered by Bloomberg, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The Prime Minister said the platform builds on three decades of work to construct world-class infrastructure, institutions and companies, and marks Qatar's push to widen private sector participation as a driver of growth. It will back leading companies, help startups scale, deepen capital markets and draw in international capital and expertise, he said, adding that its success would be judged by how far it helps build a

more competitive, resilient and diversified economy with a bigger role for the private sector.

Over the next five years, Qatar is set to launch new infrastructure projects worth around \$38.5bn, including public-private partnerships, with initial tendering to begin immediately, the prime minister said. Alongside these, real estate and hospitality projects are expected to draw private investment of \$22.5bn, among them the Simaisma Beach project, projected to attract about \$5.8bn, with more announcements to follow. Combined, he said, the projects and opportunities represent a value exceeding \$60bn over five years.

He said the aim is to pair public infrastructure with private capital and international expertise, with Qatar seeking partners bringing technological innovation, market access and a commitment to long-term partnership.

HE the Prime Minister added that Qatar does not underestimate the current climate of uncertainty but will not let short-term disruption dictate its long-term direction, and that it works to bolster regional stability through diplomacy while pursuing reform, resilience and growth through investment. **To Page 2**

“The aim is to pair public infrastructure with private capital and international expertise, with Qatar seeking partners bringing technological innovation, market access and a commitment to long-term partnership

HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Qatar emerged stronger from every crisis: PM

Qatar has emerged stronger from every crisis it has faced, HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani said yesterday, stressing that the regional war had tested and demonstrated the strength of the country's security, supply chains and financial institutions.

Speaking during a panel discussion at the Qatar Economic Forum – Powered by Bloomberg, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, he described the regional crisis as an “earthquake” that had shown the effectiveness of the systems Qatar had built. Whatever the challenges and uncertainty surrounding the war.

Qatar's pledge to its people was to overcome them and build stronger foundations for the future, he said. Addressing reports of a potential 30% reduction in government spending, HE the Prime Minister said there was misinformation about the measures, explaining that the necessary cuts were confined to operational expenses. **To Page 2**

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Prime minister meets PwC global chairman, Bloomberg founder, Sierra Leone leader

HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met separately yesterday with Sierra Leone's President Dr Julius Maada Bio, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) global chairman Mohamed Kande and Bloomberg founder Michael Bloomberg, on the margin of the Qatar Economic Forum Powered by Bloomberg: UNGA Special Edition 2026, in New York. The meetings discussed a host of topics of mutual interest. **- QNA**

Deputy Amir congratulates Nepal's president

His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a cable of congratulations to Nepal's President Ramchandra Paudel on the occasion of the Constitution Day. HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani meanwhile sent a similar cable of congratulations to Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah on the occasion. **- QNA**

Arab League slams ongoing Houthi attacks

The General Secretariat of the Arab League has condemned the Houthis' pursuit of their campaign of attacks against Saudi Arabia, with the latest involving the launch of a missile toward Riyadh, along with attempts to target several Saudi cities and regions. In a statement yesterday, it stressed that these persistent assaults amount to an unacceptable and grave escalation, violate the kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and endanger civilian lives, exacerbating tensions and imperiling the security and stability of the region. **- QNA**

Shura Council takes part in AIPU session

The Shura Council participated in the 43rd session of the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), held yesterday in Cairo. The Shura Council was represented at the session by council member Dr Sultan bin Hassan al-Dhabit al-Dosari, who is a member of the AIPU Executive Committee, along with HE the Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council Dr Hamda bint Hassan al-Sulaiti, who is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and vice-president of the Committee representing the Arab Group at the IPU. The AIPU committee discussed a number of items on its agenda and reviewed reports submitted by the specialised committees, along with a report by the General Secretariat on the Union's activities during the past period. **- QNA**

QNA official takes part in Moscow meeting

Qatar News Agency (QNA) Director-General Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi participated in the 58th meeting of the Executive Board of the Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA), held in Moscow. The meeting brought together heads and representatives of 14 news agencies that are members of the organisation's executive board. Participants reviewed the organisation's financial and technical reports and discussed various issues related to the development of its operations. A general session marking the 65th anniversary of OANA's founding takes place today. **- QNA**

Minister meets French envoy



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani has met with France's ambassador to Qatar Arnaud Pescheux. They discussed areas of cultural co-operation between the two countries. **- QNA**

Public Security director-general meets senior Syrian official

The director-general of Public Security, Major-General Mohammed Jassim al-Sulaiti met with the head of Syria's Central Authority for Supervision and Inspection, Amer al-Ali. The meeting discussed issues of common interest and reviewed ways to enhance co-operation and exchange expertise in relevant areas. **- QNA**

Delegation from Syria visits Qatar's Public Prosecution

A delegation from Syria's Central Authority for Control and Inspection, led by Amer al-Ali, visited Qatar's Public Prosecution. During the visit, the delegation received a detailed briefing on the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the Economic Crimes and Money Laundering Prosecution, which highlighted its vigorous efforts to investigate corruption cases and prosecute financial crimes. The Public Prosecution presented the delegation with a detailed briefing on the responsibilities and accomplishments of the Criminal Studies Institute, highlighting the institute's role in legal education and professional training for national legal personnel. **- QNA**

Public Prosecution conducts course on juvenile justice

Qatar's Public Prosecution, represented by the Criminal Studies Institute, has organised a training course on juvenile justice in light of international standards, in co-operation with Italy's Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights. Held at the Public Prosecution's headquarters in Doha, the four-day course brought together 25 members of the Public Prosecution. The training programme covered a range of legal and human rights issues related to juvenile justice, including the concept of juvenile criminal justice and different legal frameworks. The course formed part of the Public Prosecution's efforts to develop the capabilities of its legal personnel, strengthen co-operation with leading international institutes, and facilitate the exchange of expertise and international best practices. **- QNA**

MoFA secretary-general receives copies of credentials of envoys

HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi has received, separately, copies of the credentials of ambassadors Elpidoforos Economou (Cyprus) and Twaib Abdullah Ali (Malawi). HE Dr al-Hammadi wished the two envoys success in carrying out their duties and affirmed Qatar's support for strengthening relations with the respective countries. **- QNA**

Qatar emerged stronger from every crisis: PM

From Page 1

Capital projects listed under Chapter Four of the budget remained untouched, as did Chapter One, which covers human resources, salaries and citizens' living standards.

"Our focus is on managing our budgets with high efficiency under these circumstances," he said.

Crises also presented opportunities to identify excess expenditure in government operations, eliminate inefficiency and redirect investment towards areas that benefited the country and its citizens, he added.

On the impact of declining oil and gas revenues, the prime minister acknowledged that Qatar and the wider region had suffered significant economic disruption.

However, he stressed that the damage did not reflect a weakness in the country's underlying foundations.

"Upon closer examination, we find that this disruption is circumstantial rather than structural," he said.

Qatar had maintained full transparency from the outset and expected the same from its business partners, he added.

The crisis had tested the systems developed over the years and demonstrated their effectiveness in protecting citizens

and maintaining the flow of supplies. Financial assistance continued, banks remained operational and cash flow was sustained, reflecting an effective institutional response.

He said the strength of the country's foundations mattered most when measured against the priorities delivered and achievements secured for its people.

The prime minister said Qatar's record showed its ability to turn seemingly impossible ambitions into reality, pointing to its investments in natural gas and its hosting of the FIFA World Cup.

Before Qatar focused on natural gas, critics had questioned the wisdom of the investment and predicted it would yield nothing. The country subsequently became the world's leading supplier of liquefied natural gas, he said.

Similarly, sceptics had dismissed Qatar's chances of winning the right to host the World Cup and, once it secured the tournament, predicted it would fail.

Instead, Qatar delivered an exceptional event that continued to be discussed around the world, he said.

The government remained confident it would overcome the current turbulence and was concentrating on building a solid foundation for the next phase of the country's development.

The prime minister said the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) continued to invest actively in global markets and would maintain that approach.

Turning to artificial intelligence, he said Qatar regarded the technology as central to the future and believed it needed to be involved from an early stage.

Qatar had launched a national AI entity that would focus on advancing the field and establishing mechanisms and frameworks to ensure safety and security while preserving the cultural identity of its people, he said.

For Qatar, participation in AI was therefore accompanied by a responsibility to consider how the technology would be used. The national entity's work would bring together the ambition to lead in the field with safeguards for society.

On Gaza, the prime minister urged Israel to honour its commitments, saying continued killing and restrictions on humanitarian aid demonstrated that obligations under the agreement remained unfulfilled.

Qatar's role was to facilitate peace talks and mediate between the parties, maintaining open channels of communication and using them when needed, he said.

The approach had proved highly effective, even if some around the world did not support that form of engagement.

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Metrash expands digital services with its upgraded app

The Metrash App has become one of Qatar's most widely used government service platforms, with over 10mn services annually and more than 2.8mn active users, an official at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said.

"Launched in 2011, Metrash has grown into one of Qatar's most widely used government service platforms, with more than 2.8mn active users accessing more than 500 services," Captain Ali Ahmed Syed, head of MoI's Internet and Electronic Services Section at the Systems Development Department, said yesterday. "On an annual basis, Metrash is used for processing more than 10mn services and can be accessed in six languages."

He was addressing the participants of a webinar organised by the MoI on the topic "E-Services of the Ministry of Interior through Metrash App".

"The Metrash platform has undergone a major overhaul, with a redesigned interface, streamlined procedures and a wider range of electronic services aimed at making government transactions faster and easier for residents, citizens, companies and visitors," Capt Syed said.

The latest upgrade reflects advances in smart application technology, improving accessibility and simplifying procedures.

"The Metrash application has been comprehensively redesigned to reflect the latest advancements in digital technology, offering a streamlined, intuitive and accessible user experience across all smart mobile devices," he said.

The revamp includes a new interface, re-engineered services, revised classification of government transactions, and the introduction of new services.

Services have been grouped by nature and frequency of use, allowing users to access several related transactions through a single icon.

Traffic-related services, for instance, have been consolidated to make procedures easier to navigate, while new categories cover security, traffic, personal files, delegations, Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) citizens, visa enquiries, notifications, certificates and payments.

Among the new services is a facility that lets users pay traffic violations for friends or family members.

Capt Syed highlighted the platform's importance in reducing the need for individuals and company representatives to visit MoI service centres.

"Many services relating to traffic, passports and immigration can now be submitted electronically through Metrash or the Ministry of Interior website, with applicants able to follow



Capt Ali Ahmed Syed.

the progress of their transactions online," he said. "Users who choose delivery through Qatar Post can also track the status of their documents, including whether a document has been printed and when it is expected to reach them."

The upgraded Metrash platform provides users with access to a wide range of personal information and documents.

These include the ID card, driving licence, vehicle information, military driving licence and details of companies registered under a user's name.

The application provides enquiry services covering sponsored persons, travel movements, travel bans, police clearance certificates and other information.

Residence permit services have also been organised into dedicated categories.

Users can renew or cancel residence permits, complete required approvals, pay residence permit fines, follow applications and reissue previous permits.

Capt Syed explained that residence permit renewal, one of the most-used Metrash services, can be completed in a few steps.

"Users can select the residence permit procedures, choose the people whose permits are to be renewed, specify the renewal period and make the payment," he said.

"The renewed ID card can then be delivered through Qatar Post," Capt Syed continued. "The platform also enables users to follow up applications for lost or damaged documents, update personal photographs, change passport details and submit applications relating to name changes."

"Visa-related services have similarly been brought together under dedicated categories covering application submission, visa procedures, application follow-up and medical check-up procedures for recruitment from outside of Qatar," he added.

Qatar unveils 5-year pipeline of \$60bn projects, opportunities

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Diplomacy and economic stability go hand in hand, he said, since diplomacy safeguards the conditions that let people trade, invest and plan ahead — and lasting security cannot rest on cycles of escalation and retaliation, or on arrangements that leave any state permanently exposed.

On the current regional crisis, the prime minister said talks would need to begin with security and de-escalation before moving to energy supplies, shipping routes and the fate of investment plans.

The region needs a framework built on respect for sovereignty, in which no state threatens another, he said, adding that Qatar would remain a committed mediator, a reliable energy supplier and a long-term investment partner.

He described recent events as an "earthquake" whose aftershocks have reached beyond the region, upending long-held assumptions about security and stability.

Doha, he said, has worked with regional and international partners to keep communication channels open, ease tensions and support diplomatic understandings.

The crisis tested these foundations as activity was disrupted and costs rose, he said, yet Qatar's financial system kept running and companies carried on operating — resilience he attributed to years of preparation under the leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani.

The prime minister affirmed that Qatar's economic fundamentals remain solid, and said the expansion of the North Field would reinforce the country's standing as a reliable energy supplier and support its diversification drive — energy, he said, is Qatar's source of strength, diversification its secret to resilience, and technology its future.

The prime minister stressed that peace required more than mediation or bringing parties together to celebrate the signing of an agreement that might subsequently go unimplemented.

"It is abundantly clear that the obligations stipulated in the agreement have not yet been met, and we call upon the Israeli government to fulfil its commitments," he said. **- QNA**

Amir receives written message from Jordan's king



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has received a written message from Jordan's King Abdullah pertaining to bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them. HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi received the message during his meeting with Jordan's ambassador to Qatar Zaid Mufleh al-Lawzi. - QNA

Amir sends written message to Indonesia's president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has sent a written message to Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto pertaining to bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and develop them. The message was handed over by Qatar's ambassador to Indonesia Dr Sultan bin Mubarak al-Dosari during his meeting with Indonesia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Sugiono. - QNA



Arab Postal Regulation Forum opens in Doha



The Arab Postal Regulation Forum 2026 kicked off yesterday in Doha under the theme *Postal Sector Reform in the Arab Region: Enabling Innovation, Competition and Sustainable Digital Trade*.

The two-day forum, the first of its kind in the Arab region, is hosted by the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) in co-operation with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Regional Office for the Arab Region in Doha.

The forum provides a platform for dialogue and exchange of regulatory experiences and practices, contributing to enhanced regional co-operation and supporting efforts to develop the postal sector across the Arab region in line with international best practices and UPU standards.

"Qatar is proud to host the first edition of the Arab Postal Regulation Forum, reflecting its commitment to strengthening Arab co-operation and developing frameworks for co-operation among postal regulators and policymakers," said CRA president Eng. Ahmad bin Abdullah al-Muslemani.

"The forum comes at a time when the sector is undergoing significant transformations driven by rapid technological developments and changing market and consumer needs," he said. "This requires the adoption of more flexible and efficient regulatory frameworks that keep pace with innovation, foster competition, and strengthen trust in postal services."

"We look forward to the forum's work resulting in the 'Doha Recommendations',

serving as a shared Arab reference that supports the development of postal regulation, enhances the sector's readiness to keep pace with rapid technological and economic transformations, and reaffirms our collective commitment to building a more efficient, innovative and sustainable postal sector," the official said.

Sheikha Noor bint Hassan al-Thani, manager of the UPU Regional Office for the Arab Region in Doha, said: "The Arab Postal Regulation Forum provides an important opportunity to bring together policymakers and regulators from across the Arab region to exchange expertise and discuss the shared priorities and challenges facing the postal sector."

Over the two days, the forum will feature discussions on key regulatory issues fac-

ing the postal sector, including licensing and market access, competition in digital postal markets, consumer rights and quality of service, complaints handling, transparency, data protection and privacy.

The forum will also discuss the future of universal postal service, including accessibility, affordability, digital inclusion and sustainable financing models.

Held within the framework of the UPU regional project on postal policy and regulation in the Arab region (2026-29), the Forum is expected to conclude with the "Doha Recommendations", which are intended to identify priority actions at the regional level, strengthen future co-operation, and support the development of postal regulatory frameworks across the region. - QNA

Doha Fashion Summit showcases international talent, eyes expansion

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

Doha Fashion Summit organisers are planning events across the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and in London, building on a Qatar showcase that brought together international designers and models from 12 countries this month.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the "Threads of Fashion" event in Doha on September 18, producer and organiser Mansoor Abdul Majeed outlined a longer-term ambition to take such an event around the world, beginning with the GCC.

He said auditions were held in Riyadh in August, with an initial meeting planned for October.

Oman, Bahrain, Dammam and London, he noted, were also among the destinations he was considering.

"This is our third edition in Qatar," Abdul Majeed said, adding that the first edition was held under the name "International Designer League", followed by a second event in January before the change to "Doha Fashion Summit".

"This is our major event," he said, describing a wider events business that has organised musical programmes, trade shows and corporate functions.

He highlighted the participation of designers and models from different countries as a feature of this edition.

For event partner Abdul Wahid, creative director of Guidance Events, the attraction was an opportunity to work in a field he believes has room for more events in Qatar.



Shafi Parakal, Mansoor Abdul Majeed and Abdul Wahid.

"Mostly we are doing corporate events," he said, stressing that his company, which he identified as Guidance Event Management Company, had been operating in Qatar for "almost 10 years".

Wahid said fashion shows of this kind were comparatively rare in Qatar, which had influenced the decision to join the summit.

"That's why we selected this kind of fashion show event with Doha Fashion Summit," he pointed out.

Wahid said interest in fashion was encouraging his company to pursue further projects: "Our next step is we have one project in Saudi Arabia, also in Oman, also London we are planning."

The Doha programme brought together international collections and locally based talent.

According to the organisers, models representing 12 countries took part.

Among the designers were Doha-based Filipino Ramon Elorta Sarmiento of Rosabella Fashion, Ukrainian Mishel Jaan of Diva Boutique, French designer Laila Allaoui Ouadah of Colour Your Mood Design, and Japan's Shinobu Harima of S. Shieno.

The line-up included Vesti by Martha Rodriguez, Sonya Styles by Sonya Gurung, Khanfir by Yossra Khanfir, and Calypso by

Natascha Asselstine and Monisha Sikka.

The Rosabella Wedding Collection was accompanied by harpist Hristina.

Other presentations included the Filipino Fashion Designers of Qatar, Sinag Fashion Campers and designers Sreerupa Mitra and Meenu Prasad.

Alongside Guidance Events, event partners included Shafi Parakal of Rehaab Media and Mon Sarmiento of Tala Digital Media, Advertising and Events.

LuLu Hypermarket was the title sponsor. JRTistic Women Beauty Salon provided the hair and makeup services.

The Golden Falcon Awards recognised achievements in entrepreneurship, style, digital influence and marketing.

Honourees included Amal Ameen al-Mehain for entrepreneurship, Mariam Ammar for style coaching, Ahmed Saif Al-noufali, known as Ahmed Pato, for digital influence, Qatar Living for its social media platform and Sara Chatila for marketing.

Iris Rodriguez received a lifetime achievement award, while Farhan al-Sheikh al-Sayed and Khalid Abdul Rehman Fakhroo were also honoured for supporting the summit, according to the organisers.

Electronic auctions for abandoned vehicles and equipment launched

The Ministry of Municipality, represented by the Joint Committee for the Removal of Abandoned Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment, in co-operation with the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC)'s Execution Court, has launched online auctions for abandoned vehicles and equipment through the "Court Auctions" application.

The event, held yesterday, is part of the efforts to modernise and organise the sale of abandoned vehicles, machinery and equipment and expand the use of integrated digital solutions in auction management.

Judge Mohamed al-Kubaisi, deputy head of the Execution Court, and Jaber Hassan al-Jaber, director-general of Al Wakrah Municipality and deputy chairman of the joint committee, attended the launch, along with officials and employees from the ministry and the SJC.

The initiative follows a memorandum of understanding signed between the ministry and the SJC in October last year concerning the management, organisation and implementation of electronic auctions.

Accordingly, al-Jaber said the launch reflects the Ministry of Municipality's commitment to developing the system for managing abandoned vehicles and machinery and using modern technologies



Officials at the launch.

and digital solutions to organise auction operations.

Similarly, Othman al-Hammoud, administrative director of the Execution Court, said the launch represents a new stage in co-operation between the SJC and the Ministry of Municipality.

He explained that adding abandoned vehicle and equipment auctions extends the Supreme Judiciary Council's efforts to develop the platform for use by various government entities.

Online auctions will be held twice a month from 4pm-7pm, with a live countdown displayed on the application showing the remaining time before each auction closes.

The number of vehicles offered will vary according to scheduled campaigns and auctions, with regular campaigns expected to feature between 100 and 120 vehicles per auction.

Available listings and quantities can be viewed under the "Vehicles" section of the application.

To participate, users must download the "Court Auctions" application, create and activate a free account using their national address information, and deposit the required security amount for the relevant auction.

Bidders can then submit their financial offers during the specified auction period.

Participants must have an activated account linked to their Qatar ID and national address information, deposit the required security amount before bidding begins, meet the legal age and eligibility requirements, and pay the remaining balance within the legally prescribed period if they win the auction.

The first vehicle auction is scheduled for September 28.

QMC takes part in ASBU meeting in Tunisia

The Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) participated in the 115th session of the Executive Council of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), held in Hammamet, Tunisia, prior to the 26th Arab Radio and Television Festival. Qatar TV director Ali bin Saleh al-Sada headed the QMC's delegation to the meetings. The 115th session discussed topics related to

developing Arab media work and strengthening co-operation and co-ordination among member media organisations. The executive council also discussed preparations for the Arab Radio and Television Festival, which will be held under the theme *The Pulse of the Image and the Echo of the Future*, from today until September 24, in Tunisia. - QNA

Qatar slams attacks, Al-Aqsa storming

From Page 1

It reaffirmed Qatar's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all legitimate measures the kingdom takes to protect its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity and interests. Saudi Arabia's security, it stressed, is integral to Qatar's security and the collective security of the Gulf Co-operation Council states.

In its statement on al-Aqsa Mosque, the ministry condemned the storming of the compound under the protection of Israeli occupation police as a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, and an unacceptable provocation to

the sentiments of millions of Muslims worldwide.

It stressed that al-Aqsa Mosque is exclusively a place of worship for Muslims and that any unilateral measures seeking to alter the historical and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its holy sites are null and void under international law.

The ministry reaffirmed Qatar's steadfast support for the Palestinian cause and the resilience of the Palestinian people, stressing the need to end the occupation and enable Palestinians to exercise their legitimate rights, foremost among them the establishment of an independent state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. - QNA

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UDST highlights healthy campus practices at FISU World Forum 2026

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) participated in the FISU World Forum 2026 in Östersund, Sweden, held under the theme “Active Body, Healthy Mind: How Impactful Sport Can Be at Universities”. The forum brought together students, university sports leaders, academics, and experts to discuss the role of sport, physical activity, and wellness in university life.

As a Platinum-label university under the FISU Healthy Campus Programme, UDST shared its approach to leveraging an inclusive and supportive campus environ-



ment. Representing UDST, Megan Skeels, head of Wellness and Health Promotion at the Sport and Well-

ness Directorate, joined the Healthy Campus panel alongside represent-

atives from Umeå University and the University of Calgary. UDST also participated in workshops focused on the FISU Healthy Campus Programme, and UDST delegates,

led by Hamad al-Kuwari, director of Sport & Wellness at UDST, met with FISU president Leonz Eder and secretary-general and CEO Matthias Remund to exchange perspectives

and explore opportunities to further strengthen collaboration between UDST and FISU. Dr Salem Al-Naemi, president of UDST, said: “At UDST, we believe that wellness is fundamental to student success and must be embedded into the culture of the University. Our commitment to the FISU Healthy Campus Programme reflects our vision of creating an environment where students, faculty and staff are supported holistically and empowered with the knowledge, resources and opportunities they need to thrive. Through strong leadership, collaboration and stu-

dent engagement, we continue to advance a campus culture where wellness is not an additional initiative, but an integral part of the university experience.”

Fernando Parente, FISU deputy secretary general and director of education and development, said: “The theme of this year’s Forum, Active Body, Healthy Mind, captures exactly what UDST has built on its campus, achieving Platinum status within the Healthy Campus Programme is not just a label, it is proof that student and staff well-being can become part of an institution’s culture. We look forward to continuing this journey together.”

QNA launches training course on advanced journalistic editing skills

Qatar News Agency (QNA) launched a training course titled “Advanced Skills in Journalistic Editing” on Sunday as part of the 2026 training plan of the QNA Training Center.

The four-day course is being attended by a number of agency employees and staff members of government entities.

The course aims to develop participants’ journalistic editing skills and enhance their ability to prepare news stories and reports in accordance with established professional standards, contributing to higher-quality media content and stronger editorial performance at media and government institutions.

The course, led by Dr Nabil al-Mariri, a training adviser at QNA, covers the concept of news and news values, their relationship to editorial policy, news sources, and mechanisms for evaluation and editorial decision-making. It also examines the stages of constructing a news story and the editor’s role in producing journalistic content.

The course also addresses the structure of a news story, the basic questions of news writing, and methods for writing headlines, leads and body text. It examines the importance of background and context in supporting a news story, as well as the main journalistic formats and the criteria for selecting them according to the nature of the content and the target audience.



It also includes specialised sessions on news reports, including the differences between news stories and reports and the purpose of each, as well as types of news reports and how they are structured. Other topics include language and style, text quality and the characteristics of journalistic language, with the aim of improving professional performance in accordance with established editorial standards.

The course is part of QNA’s efforts, through the QNA Training Center, to develop media and national capabilities and strengthen professional skills in journalistic editing, keeping pace with the requirements of modern media work and contributing to higher standards of journalistic performance. (QNA)

QMC participates in QF’s 2nd BiAraby Gathering

The Qatar Media Corporation (QMC) is participating in the second edition of the BiAraby Annual Gathering 2026, one of the initiatives of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF).

The forum kicked off on Saturday at the Student Center in Education City and will continue for two days under the theme “With Our Ideas, We Build”.

The QMC’s participation, as a media partner, comes as part of its support for initiatives aimed at strengthening the presence of the Arabic language and promoting its use in the media and knowledge sectors, in addition to contributing to conveying the message and content of the forum to a wider audience, and introducing its goals and initiatives.



At the forum, the corporation has dedicated a pavilion to introduce the “Media Encyclopedia”, one of its specialised knowledge projects. The encyclopedia provides Arabic content documenting media concepts, terminology, and theories, as well as prominent figures in the media and influential institutions, following an academic approach that connects media knowledge with its intellectual and historical contexts.

Official spokesperson for the

Qatar Media Corporation Ali Issa said that the media partnership with the BiAraby forum stems from the Corporation’s interest in initiatives that strengthen the presence of the Arabic language in the media landscape and open broader avenues for its use and for developing its tools across various knowledge-based and professional fields. He emphasised the QMC’s commitment to supporting projects that enrich Arabic media content.

He explained that the “Media Encyclopedia” is one of the knowledge projects that reflects the Corporation’s interest in documenting media concepts and terminology in Arabic and presenting them within an academic framework that provides a specialised reference for professionals, researchers, and those interested in the field. (QNA)

VCUarts Qatar announces new merit based scholarship as 2027-28 applications open

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar (VCUarts Qatar), a Qatar Foundation partner, has introduced a new merit-based scholarship for outstanding students applying for the 2027-2028 academic year. Intended for new incoming undergraduates, the merit scholarship is valued up to \$40,000 per year, with up to five scholarships awarded each academic year. The funding covers tuition and may also support housing or essential academic and living expenses, subject to prior approval. The scholarship is renewable annually and based on continued academic performance. “VCUarts Qatar’s current student body reflects the calibre we want to continue attracting: intellectually curious and creatively ambitious young adults who engage in their disciplines beyond the classroom,” said Dr Caitlin Murphy, director, Recruitment and Admissions VCUarts Qatar. “This scholarship expands access to a VCUarts Qatar education, enabling talented applicants to fully benefit from academic and creative opportunities that may otherwise have been beyond their reach.”

Prospective students do not need to submit a separate scholarship application, as every applicant is automatically considered. Selection is based on academic and creative excellence, assessed through the applicant’s academic record, recommendation letters and a potential structured interview. Art History applicants are assessed through their essay and interview, while BFA applicants are also evaluated on the strength of their portfolio. Applicants should have a GPA of 3.30 or higher and demonstrate English proficiency through a TOEFL score of 90 or above, a Duolingo score of 130 or above, or an IELTS score of 7.0 or above. Students can apply to VCUarts Qatar’s Bachelor of Arts in Art History or Bachelor of Fine Arts programmes. BFA students begin with a one-year Art Foundation programme before choosing a major in Graphic Design, Interior Design, Painting + Printmaking or Kinetic Imaging. The application process is now open, with a priority deadline of November 15 and the final deadline on January 15, 2027. Details can be collected at: <https://qatar.vcu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-merit-scholarship/>

PHCC, QU College of Medicine organise awareness event

The Wellness Section at the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) organised a health awareness event to highlight the importance of prevention and early detection of health risk factors, and to encourage students and employees to adopt a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.

Held in collaboration with the College of Medicine at Qatar University (QU) and involving the wellness team and medical students, the event is part of PHCC’s efforts to implement the Wellness Section’s strategy and action plan under the Preventive Health Department. The initiative promotes healthy lifestyles, behaviours and habits as part of efforts to prevent disease and improve overall health.

The initiative featured a general awareness and guidance booth, where a team of medical and specialised professionals provided health information and advice, along with several interactive stations that enabled participants to undergo various health checks and measurements.

The event included six health stations that students and employees visited, where measurements were taken and results recorded in their health passports, enabling them to monitor their health



indicators and better understand areas for improvement.

The stations included vital signs, where participants had their vital signs measured and received appropriate health guidance; body mass index (BMI), which assessed body composition while raising awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy weight; carbon monoxide measurement and smoking counselling, which involved checking carbon monoxide levels and providing guidance on the risks of smoking and available methods to quit; and blood glucose measurement, which allowed participants to check their blood sugar levels and learn about the importance of prevention and regular monitoring.

In addition, handgrip strength was

measured as a functional indicator associated with health and physical fitness. One-on-one sessions with a community medicine physician also provided individual lifestyle consultations to discuss healthy habits and offer personalised tips on nutrition, physical activity, and lifestyle.

This event supports a culture of prevention and early detection and strengthens individual responsibility for health by offering a practical, interactive experience that combines screening, awareness, and health consultation.

The event also encourages students and employees to learn about their health indicators and take positive steps to improve their health and quality of life, in line with promoting healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.

Qatar Rail holds event for employees’ children participating in Back-to-School Competition

Qatar Railways Company (Qatar Rail) held an event for the children of its employees who participated in the Back-to-School Competition, launched by the company to coincide with the start of the new academic year, as part of its initiatives aimed at enhancing community awareness and promoting a culture of safe and responsible use of public transport among younger generations.

The competition targeted children of Qatar Rail employees up to age 15, aiming to increase their awareness of Doha Metro and encourage them to learn about its

services and its importance as a safe, sustainable mode of transport. This was achieved through a set of simplified awareness questions suitable for their age groups, along with an opportunity for them to submit creative drawings expressing their views of Metro services.

The competition saw wide participation and strong engagement from employees’ children, who submitted artworks and drawings reflecting their understanding of the importance of Doha Metro and its role in providing a safe, sustainable travel experience, while highlighting their awareness of responsi-

ble public transport use.

Qatar Rail intends to display a selection of the distinguished drawings at several Metro stations at a later stage, to celebrate the participants’ creativity and encourage them to continue engaging with awareness and community initiatives.

The competition reflects the company’s commitment to engaging employees and their families in meaningful initiatives that combine awareness and creativity, helping build a generation more aware of the importance of public transport and its role in the future of sustainable mobility.

This initiative extends Qatar Rail’s mission to support community development and promote a culture of sustainable public transport, in line with its role in providing integrated transport solutions that improve quality of life and support the State of Qatar’s sustainable development goals. Through this initiative, the company also affirms its commitment to continuing awareness and community programmes for different groups, supporting creativity among younger generations, and strengthening public transport as a safe and sustainable choice within the community.





The General, Limited Tenders Committees and Supply Chain Department announces the following Tenders:

Important Notice:

Suppliers and Contractors who are already registered with QatarEnergy via Mushtaryat Portal can “Buy Tender Online and download Tender Document” from QatarEnergy website (Mushtaryat Portal).

Effective from 1st July 2023, bids submitted by a Local company (companies incorporated in Qatar) acting as Tenderer in accordance with this Invitation to Tender, will not be accepted by QatarEnergy without any further notification, if such companies are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal (<https://icv.qa/en-US>) by the specified Original Tender Closing Date or Original due date for submission of COMMERCIAL Package in case of two stage Tendering as per ITT. However, any Local company that has been established within last two (2) years is exempt from this mandatory ICV certification requirement.

Sl. No	Tender Number	Tender Sale Period	Tender Closing Date	Tender Bond	Bond Curr.	Tender Fee	Fee Curr.
1	GT26104300	21.09.2026 - 27.09.2026	08.11.2026	400,000.00	QAR	500.00	QAR
Title of Tender: OVERFILL PROTECTION IN TANKS AT QATARENERGY REFINERY, MESAEIED							
Mid-Tender Meeting Location :		To be advised if required					
Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time :		To be advised if required					
2	GT26104900	16.09.2026 - 22.09.2026	25.10.2026	1,300,000.00	QAR	500.00	QAR
Title of Tender: EPIC FOR IMP RELIABILITY OF GAS SUPPLY TO POWER PLANT PR							
Mid-Tender Meeting Location :		To be advised if required					
Mid-Tender Meeting Date & Time :		To be advised if required					

* Tender documents can be purchased and downloaded from QatarEnergy Website-> Supply Management -> Tenders page during the Tender Sale Period mentioned above against each Tender. Request for issuance of Tender after the specified Tender Sale Period will not be entertained.

* Always refer to QatarEnergy Website (www.qatarenergy.qa) -> Supply Management -> Tenders page for up to date information on QatarEnergy Tenders. Subscribe to Tender Alert to receive notification in your email on new Tenders

* Changes to Tender Sale Period and Bid Closing Date will be updated in QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal only.

* Brief Scopes of Work for the above tenders are posted on the QatarEnergy website/Mushtaryat Portal.

* Suppliers and Contractors who are in possession of a valid SAP ID issued by QatarEnergy are instructed to maintain their Company Registration and Communication details upto date and valid via QatarEnergy Mushtaryat Portal on urgent basis.

* No queries will be entertained, or bids received, from entities who have not purchased tender documents in compliance with the above provisions.

* QatarEnergy invites all prospective Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in QatarEnergy Tenders to register online and obtain a QatarEnergy SAP Vendor Code, a mandatory requirement for the issue of Tender Documents by QatarEnergy.

* Prospective Qatar based Suppliers and Contractors interested to participate in future QatarEnergy Tenders shall obtain an ICV score. Relevant information pertaining to ICV, ICV Scorecard, ICV Certification, and ICV Guidelines are available on the ICV Digital Portal - <https://icv.qa/en-US>

Conference highlights Qatar's growing role in dispute resolution

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

The third edition of the Doha Arbitration Days 2026 opened on Saturday, bringing together a distinguished group of arbitration and dispute-resolution experts from Qatar, the region, and around the world.

Under the patronage of HE Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Hassan al-Mohannadi, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, the two-day conference is being organised by the Ministry of Justice in co-operation with the Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (QICDRC) and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIARB), with discussions focusing on current practical issues affecting arbitration and commercial dispute resolution.

The programme covers a range of topics, beginning with the complementary relationship between the judiciary and arbitration and extending to challenges affecting contracts, projects, supply chains, and force majeure circumstances. It also examines the development of arbitral institutions and their ability to adapt to emerging changes in the legal and business environment.

Dr Saad Ahmed al-Muhannadi, chairman of the Qatar Branch of CIARB, said the conference represents a professional platform



aimed at establishing Doha as a sustainable regional and international centre for dispute resolution. He stressed that strengthening relationships and partnerships among stakeholders would help develop arbitration and other dispute-resolution mechanisms and

further support Qatar's position as a destination for arbitration.

He said achieving this vision requires continued co-operation among relevant institutions and professionals to consolidate Doha's role in arbitration and dispute resolution.

Meanwhile, Faisal Rashid al-Sahouti, CEO of QICDRC, said Qatar's arbitration community initiated Doha Arbitration Days to create a forum where arbitrators, lawyers, experts and engineers can meet and exchange knowledge and professional experience.



He described arbitration as a key mechanism for resolving disputes and an important component of a sound business environment.

He noted that developing the arbitration system requires integrated infrastructure, including training arbitrators and continuing to develop the country's arbitration community. He also described arbitration as complementary to the judiciary, providing parties with an alternative mechanism for resolving disputes within the jurisdiction of arbitral institutions.

Accordingly, Sheikh Thani bin Ali al-Thani, chairman of the Qatar International Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration, said Qatar has developed a sophisticated framework for arbitration and alternative dispute resolution. He highlighted the significance of the country's Arbitration Law issued in 2017, describing it as an important development in the sector.

He pointed to Qatar's strategic geographical location and international connectivity as factors supporting its potential to host international arbitrations. He also highlighted training programmes conducted in co-operation with Qatar University, noting that these programmes have helped qualify at least 500 arbitrators over ap-

proximately a decade, some of whom have gained international recognition.

Mubarak al-Sulaiti, chairman of the Qatar Lawyers Association, said the conference agenda addresses practical and contemporary issues relevant to arbitration. He said the association's participation as a supporting body reflects its commitment to specialised legal initiatives that facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen the presence of Qatari lawyers in arbitration and dispute resolution.

Mohamed Ladhan al-Muhannadi, Chairman of the Association of Experts and Arbitrators, said the conference could contribute to strengthening the arbitration market in the Arab world and internationally, particularly amid economic crises and regional developments that may generate commercial disputes.

Mona al-Mutawa, Vice-Chairperson of the Qatar Lawyers Association, stressed that arbitration and the judiciary are complementary rather than competitive. At the same time, Lawyer Dr Asmaa Al-Qurra Daghi described Doha Arbitration Days as an increasingly prominent professional and legal platform that brings together arbitrators, judges, lawyers, academics, and specialists.

Aspetar contributes to AFC guidelines on dental health

QNA
Doha

Aspetar, Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, has contributed to the development of the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) newly approved AFC Sports Dentistry Guideline for Dental Health and On-field Management of Dental Emergencies, aimed at strengthening the protection of footballers' health and well-being across Asia.

Approved by the AFC Medical Committee, the guidelines provide a practical, evidence-based framework for promoting oral health, preventing and managing orofacial injuries, and improving the on-field response to dental trauma in football.

They are intended to serve as a reference for AFC Member Associations and healthcare professionals working with players across the continent.

The initiative was led by Dr Mohammed Alsaey, Director of Sports Dentistry at Aspetar and Chair of the AFC Sports Dentistry Advisory Group, in collaboration with leading sports dentistry specialists from across Asia.

Dato' Dr Gurcharan Singh, Chairperson of the AFC Medical Committee, said the guide-



lines marked an important step in advancing athlete healthcare in Asian football. He noted that they provide AFC Member Associations with a practical framework to enhance player welfare, prevent orofacial injuries and promote long-term oral health.

He also commended the AFC Sports Dentistry Advisory Group for its contribution to the initiative, which he said would benefit football communities across Asia.

The guidelines reflect growing recognition of the link between oral health and overall athlete

well-being. By incorporating dental prevention, screening, emergency preparedness and clinical best practices into football medicine systems, they aim to help teams provide more consistent and timely care for players.

Dr Alsaey said good oral health was fundamental to athletes' well-being, performance and long-term health, describing the approval of the guidelines as an important milestone for sports dentistry and Asian football.

He said the collaborative initiative brought together experts from

across the continent to establish clear, evidence-based recommendations for dental care in football.

He added that strengthening prevention, education and clinical best practices would help protect players, enhance their well-being and raise the standard of care available to footballers at all levels.

Aspetar's contribution reflects its longstanding commitment to advancing specialised sports medicine and translating clinical expertise into practical standards for athletes and sports organisations.

Endowments Ministry wraps up 'Zad Al-Du'ah' Forum to strengthen religious discourse

The Department of Da'wah and Religious Guidance at the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Institute of Da'wah and Islamic Sciences, has concluded the third edition of the Zad Al-Du'ah Forum.

The event brought together 50 preachers from the department as part of the Masarat wa Manarat programme (Paths and Lighthouses) dedicated to training preachers and bolstering their scholarly and professional capabilities.

The edition sought to establish a rigorous scholarly methodology for engaging with the Prophetic Sunnah and enhance the effectiveness of da'wah and linguistic performance to ensure the delivery of a sound and influential religious discourse in society.

The programme was led by Dr Hamza Abdullah Malaibari, a prominent Islamic scholar and an expert and specialist in Hadith studies. The scholarly sessions and training workshops addressed guidelines governing the transmission and understanding of hadith, methods for verifying narrations, and a systematic approach to differences among Hadith scholars in authenticating and grading narrations.

The programme also delved into guidelines for citing weak hadith. It included practical training in applying diacritical markings and avoiding pronunciation errors when reading hadiths, along with improving public-speaking and preaching skills to strengthen their impact and enhance the credibility of religious presentations.

Head of the Institute of Da'wah and Islamic Sciences Ibrahim Mohammed al-Darwish said the Forum is one of the specialised programmes designed to keep pace with the needs of contemporary da'wah work.

He noted that the third edition focused on investing in the development of preachers' skills and furnishing them with scholarly tools that enable them to make proper use of the Prophetic Sunnah, supporting the ministry's mission of promoting sound religious awareness and reinforcing the values of moderation and balance in society.

The organisation of the programme was part of the Ministry's strategic plan, which focuses on investing in human capital and building a corps of religious outreach professionals who combine proper grounding in Islamic tradition with professional competence. (QNA)

ONE YEAR IN: ASAYA AT ROSEWOOD DOHA CHARTS A MORE SOCIAL FUTURE FOR WELLNESS

September brings together Doha's creative community, international wellness expertise and a first look at Rosewood's new signature massage..

One year after opening its doors at Rosewood Doha, Asaya is marking its first anniversary by returning to the idea at the heart of its creation: that wellbeing is not only personal, but something strengthened through the community.

Since its launch on 1 September 2025, Asaya has offered a different perspective on urban wellness in Doha. Rather than separating movement, recovery, nutrition and social connection, the members-only social wellness club brings them into one environment designed around the rhythms of everyday life.

Throughout September, its anniversary program will reflect the wider wellbeing, bringing together the members who have shaped Asaya's first year, Qatar's creative community and visiting international experts.

"Asaya was created with the belief that wellbeing becomes more meaningful what it feels personal, relevant and connected to the way people live. It's first year has been shaped by our members and by the sense of community that has grown around them. This anniversary gives us an opportunity to celebrate that collective while continuing to explore what wellness can become."

MARTA MARTIN, HOTEL MANAGER, ROSEWOOD DOHA



The month will begin with a gathering dedicated to Asaya's members, creating a moment to reconnect and acknowledge their role in the social wellness club's evolving identity. More than a conventional anniversary celebration, the occasion will place the community itself at the center of the milestone.

On 24 September, Asaya will collaborate with InStudio Club, the

private members' community founded by Noof Al Heidous to connect artists, designers, creatives and entrepreneurs in Qatar. Created exclusively for Asaya members and a selected from the InStudio community, the collaboration will bring two collectives together through a shared experience exploring relationship between creativity, personal expression, and wellbeing.



From 19 to 22 September, Asaya will welcome back Brows by Suman for a limited-time residency. Founded by London-based brow artist Suman Jakafm the studio is known for an individual approach that considers each client's natural features, proportions and expression. The residency introduces another perspective on personalized care, bringing together technical artistry and a deeper understanding of individual identity.

The anniversary program will continue from 22 to 25 September with the arrival of internationally recognized spa and wellness consultant Jean-Guy de Gabriac. During his time in Asaya, de Gabriac will lead a series of workshops created exclusively for members and introduce them to the Rosewood Intuitive Massage, ahead of its wider launch at Asaya in October.

Developed by de Gabriac as Rosewoods first global signature massage, the treatment moves away from a fixed sequence. Instead, it is guided by consultation, therapeutic touch, scent and sound, allowing the experience to respond to how each person feels at that particular moment. Asaya members will be the first in Doha to experience the treatment before it becomes available to a wider community.

Together, these encounters reveal the broader story of Asaya's first year. Wellness is becoming less defined by occasional treatments and more closely integrated into how people move, recover, create and connect. In Doha, Asaya has interpreted that shift through a members' club shaped by its community and the cultural context of the city around it.

Its first anniversary is therefore both a celebration and a point of reflection: on what Asaya has become over the past year, and on how a more personal, social and culturally connected approach to wellbeing may continue to develop in the region.

How QPO is bringing Latin America closer to Qatar through music

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

Music, for Enrique Arturo Diemecke, needs no translation.

That belief came to life in Doha last week as the acclaimed Mexican conductor returned to the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO), leading the ensemble through a programme that showcased the many faces of Mexican music: from mariachi-inspired rhythms to the rich and sophisticated works of its 20th-century composers.

For Diemecke, the return also continued a musical relationship that began in Doha in 2025 and soon travelled to one of the world's most renowned concert halls. He first conducted the QPO in September last year for A Musical Encounter: Sounds of Qatar and Argentina, before leading more than 70 QPO musicians at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires as part of the Qatar-Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture.

Looking back on that experience, Diemecke described it as a “dream” — from rehearsing and performing in Doha to travelling to Buenos Aires the following day and playing to a full house at the historic theatre.

“Almost 3,000 people listened to

Qatar-Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture celebrates shared connections and opens new avenues for artistic exchange

the music of Qatar and the orchestra from Qatar, and also Argentine music,” he said. “And it was really a dream come true. It was fantastic.”

That experience, he said, strengthened the connection between him and the QPO, with both sides sharing a commitment to musical excellence, integrity and passion.

“We find that it was a compelling thing and it was an attraction that we were all tuned to the same idea of making music to the highest standard and integrity and passion,” he said.

His latest appearance with the orchestra shifted the focus from Argentina to his own country, with the programme presented as part of the Qatar-Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture.

The repertoire featured Arturo Márquez’s Danzón No. 2, Carlos Chávez’s Chacona in E Minor, Blas Galindo’s Sones de Mariachi and Silvestre Revueltas’s Redes, Second Suite — works that, for Diemecke, offer different perspectives on Mexico’s musical character.

“Each of these composers has

different aspects of the music and rhythms of Mexico,” he said.

The programme draws on influences from different parts of the country, including the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico and Veracruz, as well as the Pacific coast and its mariachi traditions.

Together, the works provide what Diemecke described as a broader picture of Mexico’s musical identity — one that is rich in melody, rhythm and emotional expression.

“It’s very rich, it’s very melodic, it has a lot of rhythms and passion and love,” he said.

For Diemecke, bringing Mexican music to Qatar is particularly meaningful because it introduces audiences to a culture and classical music tradition that may seem geographically distant but has much to offer.

“Mexico has a lot of things to offer, a lot of things to really show to the world,” he said, describing Qatar as a “great place” to showcase the country’s development of classical music over the past century.

He also sees such programmes as central to the wider role of the

Qatar Philharmonic and Qatar Foundation in connecting Qatar with cultures around the world.

“It is so important, and that is ... the mission of the Qatar Philharmonic and the Foundation, to have this context with different countries in the world and to bring the art from those areas,” he said.

Conducting Mexican repertoire with an orchestra whose musicians come from different cultural and musical backgrounds presents its own challenge — and opportunity.

Diemecke said the starting point is music’s universality.

“Music is a universal language. And it doesn’t matter which language do you speak,” he said.

He compared musical interpretation to pronunciation in spoken language. While the notes and musical ingredients remain the same, emphasis, accents and phrasing can vary, and those details are crucial to capturing a work’s particular style.

“The ingredients are there, but then you have to really bring them out,” he said.

His assessment of the QPO musicians was equally direct.

“I think they have passion,” Diemecke said. “They really, really want to express that passion.”

He said the musicians’ eagerness to give their best creates a



Enrique Arturo Diemecke conducting the QPO.

particularly rewarding dynamic for a conductor.

“They would really want to give. And for a conductor, it’s nothing more beautiful than that,” he said. “And then it’s just a give, give, give. Win, win, win.”

For Diemecke, however, an orchestra’s significance extends beyond the performance itself.

He sees cultural exchange as one of the most important functions of institutions such as the QPO, allowing audiences and artists to learn about one another through creative expression.

“Culture is the way of making connections,” he said.

For him, that connection is ultimately about sharing what people carry “in our souls” and “in our minds” and using culture to build greater understanding.

“How can we share it with other people?” he asked. “How can we approach with the best way possible and make what we would like to see in life, peace and love.”

He believes Qatar is already playing a growing role in bringing

Latin American music to international audiences.

Following the QPO’s engagement with Argentina and its latest focus on Mexico, Diemecke pointed to the potential for future cultural exchanges with other Latin American countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru.

Having performed in several of those countries, he said each has distinctive musical traditions and styles that could offer discoveries for Qatar audiences.

“They are very rich in music and styles,” he said. “Then it would be really a great discovery for the Qatar audiences and for the exchange of this wonderful thing in culture.”

Diemecke says that exchange is ultimately what makes an orchestra more than a collection of musicians on a stage. Through repertoire from different parts of the world, the QPO can help audiences in Qatar encounter new cultures while creating opportunities for musicians to connect across geographical and cultural boundaries.

QU holds annual convocation for 2026–2027 academic year

Qatar University (QU) organised its annual convocation for the 2026–2027 academic year to honour distinguished members of the QU community and alumni in academia, research, administration, and community service. The convocation aims to recognise achievements and contributions and promote a culture of excellence across all areas of university work.

The awards were presented by Prof Ibrahim al-Kaabi, executive vice-president for Academic Affairs; Prof Aiman Erbad, vice-president for Research and Innovation; Dr Mai al-Naemi, vice-president for Administration and Financial Affairs; and Dr Muna al-Marzouqi, vice-president for Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness.

In his remarks, QU president Dr Omar al-Ansari said: “We begin a new academic year in our University’s journey, one that brings renewed ambitions and opportunities, along with a shared responsibility for shaping the future of Qatar University and its role in serving the nation and society.”

He added: “Over the past period, we have worked to define the University’s strategic positioning, and we have now moved from defining our position to translating our vision into action. Our focus is on identifying the projects and initiatives that will help us achieve our ambitions and continue developing our institutional ecosystem to strengthen the University’s impact and role.”

Al-Ansari said: “We are working on projects aimed at enhancing the student experience and harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence, such as the smart academic adviser.

Through these efforts, we seek to leverage the capabilities of



Dr Omar al-Ansari delivering his opening remarks.

modern technologies at the institutional level to support students and enhance their university experience.”

He noted that this academic year holds particular significance as QU approaches its 50th anniversary. He emphasised that the University’s journey over the past five decades has been shaped by everyone who has been part of its community, with each individual contributing to what the University has become today. The Golden Jubilee will provide an opportunity to celebrate this journey and highlight the University’s achievements and its impact on society and the wider community through a range of events and initiatives befitting this important milestone in QU’s history.

In the Academic Awards category, Dr Emad Abd-El-Moneim Awadallah, associate professor of Accounting, received the Outstanding Teaching Award. Prof Junaid Qadir, professor of Computer Engineering, received the Outstanding Faculty Service Award.

The Outstanding Administrative Employee Awards were presented across three categories. In the Leadership Category, the award was presented to Saeed Rashid al-Athba, acting manager of Services and Support; and Ja-

waher Mohamed Fakhroo, acting director of the Engineering Services Department.

In the Academic Support Category, the award was presented to Waleed Said Taher Abdelghany, academic project manager; and Fatema Abdulla Ali, senior student counsellor.

In the Administrative Category, the award was presented to Khider Ahaid Khider Hassnien, senior accountant — General Ledger; Huda Essa al-Muraikhi, administrative co-ordinator; Hassan Ali al-Tamimi, administrative co-ordinator; and Alhanouf Ali al-Shahwani, Senior Outreach and Engagement specialist.

For the Research Excellence Awards, Dr Susu Zughaier, associate professor of Microbiology and Immunology, received the award in the Medical, Biomedical and Health Sciences Category, while Prof Mohammad al-Ghouthi, professor of Environmental Sciences and head of Biological and Environmental Sciences, received the award in the Science and Engineering Category.

The awards concluded with the Young Alumnus Award, presented to Shaikha Mohammed AlSubaey, a 2019 graduate of the College of Business and Economics and head of the Institutional Excellence Team at Qatar Charity.



QT, Old Doha Port expand global cruise ties

Qatar Tourism (QT) and Old Doha Port participated in Seatrade Cruise Med 2026, held at Las Palmas Cruise Port in Gran Canaria, Spain, from September 16 to 17, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Qatar’s position in global cruise itineraries and support the sector’s continued growth.

The Qatar delegation brought together key tourism and industry partners, including Qatar Airways and Al Tawfeeq Travel.

Participation focused on leveraging the capabilities Qatar has developed in recent years, from modern infrastructure at Old Doha Port and global air connectivity to hotel capacity and diverse tourism experiences, to create tangible growth opportunities for the sector by strengthening collaboration with cruise operators and developing future cruise opportunities.

This integrated approach demonstrates Qatar’s destination readiness and ability to support a seamless cruise experience.

Throughout the exhibition, the delegation met with international cruise lines, industry executives, and key decision-makers, including one-to-one meetings with Carnival Maritime GmbH, AROYA Cruises, MSC Cruises, Celestyal Cruises, and Aman at Sea. The en-

agements focused on strengthening long-term partnerships and exploring future cruise opportunities. The meetings also provided valuable insight into industry trends and the sector’s future growth requirements.

QT participated as part of the Cruise Arabia Alliance stand, reinforcing the importance of regional collaboration in growing the Gulf’s cruise offering. Through this collaboration, Qatar Tourism joined neighbouring GCC destinations in engaging with international cruise lines, exploring opportunities to strengthen regional itineraries, support continued growth in cruise traffic across the Gulf, and reinforce Qatar’s role as a key port of call on these routes.

Omar Abdulrahman al-Jaber, director of Operations Affairs at QT, said: “Our focus is on strengthening relationships and building long-term partnerships with cruise operators, while positioning Qatar on the global cruise tourism map in the coming seasons.”

“Qatar brings together strong cruise infrastructure, global connectivity and a diverse range of visitor experiences, and we will continue working with our national and regional partners to strengthen Doha’s role within Gulf itineraries and support the sus-

tainable growth of Qatar’s cruise and tourism sector,” he added.

QT and Old Doha Port continue to work alongside public and private sector partners to strengthen destination and operational readiness, enhance the cruise passenger journey, develop high-quality tourism experiences and shore excursions, and encourage pre- and post-cruise stays.

Engineer Mohamed Al-Atwaan, COO at Old Doha Port added: “Seatrade Cruise Med 2026 gave us a valuable opportunity to engage directly with cruise lines, port operators and tourism partners on their evolving requirements, from berthing and marine services to the overall arrival experience.

“These discussions will help inform our planning at Old Doha Port as we work alongside Qatar Tourism and our industry partners to strengthen operational readiness and support Doha’s position as a key port of call within Gulf itineraries.”

Following Seatrade Cruise Med, the Qatar delegation also participated in the Cruise Lines International Association Ports & Destinations Dialogue on 18 September, broadening its engagement with cruise lines, ports and destinations and supporting continued collaboration towards the sector’s future priorities.

QU holds CPD-accredited workshop on Blackboard Ultra to strengthen clinical education

Qatar University (QU), through its Clinical Affairs Office, and in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and the Continuing Professional Development for Healthcare Professionals Office (CPD-HP), organised a specialised, CPD-accredited online training workshop on Blackboard Ultra for clinical preceptors and field training co-ordinators across QU Health Sector colleges.

The workshop reflects QU’s commitment to digital transformation and aims to enhance the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of clinical education and training through the strategic use of digital tools. It featured an interactive presentation and hands-on activities on Blackboard Ultra tools, led by Jumana Samara, Senior Educational Technology specialist at CETL.

In a press statement, Dr Halema AlFarsi, director of the Clinical Affairs Office at QU, highlighted the important role of clinical preceptors in connecting academic learning with practical healthcare training, stating: “Clinical preceptors play a vital role in bridging academic education and practical application across healthcare training sites. Equipping them with effective digital tools supports a more integrated and consistent learning environment and strengthens students’ monitoring and assessment throughout their clinical training.”

Dr Nura Mohamed, Clinical Education specialist at the Clinical Affairs Office, expressed appreciation for the strong participation from healthcare providers across Qatar and emphasised the importance of standardising digital practices in clinical education.

She said: “Standardising com-

munication and assessment practices, together with effective monitoring of student performance, contributes to the quality of health education and supports our efforts to prepare highly qualified healthcare professionals who are responsive to the needs of the healthcare sector.”

Taghreed Abunada, teaching assistant in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, emphasised the role of digital learning systems in strengthening the documentation and monitoring of clinical training, stating: “Standardising workflows among those involved in clinical education facilitates more accurate monitoring of student performance, documentation of achievements, and assessment of competencies. This contributes to the quality of clinical training and strengthens collaboration between Qatar University and healthcare institutions.”

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **MOTIUR RAHAMAN ABDUL HOQUE KHAN**
holder of
BANGLADESH Passport No. EH0951698
QID No. 27605001807

hereby change my name
from
MOTIUR RAHAMAN ABDUL HOQUE KHAN
to
MOTIUR RAHMAN KHAN

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **SAMEER**
holder of
INDIA Passport No. P5029360
QID No. 29335601422

hereby change my name
from
SAMEER
to
SAMEER SAYYED

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

Qatar Foundation concludes 2nd BilAraby annual gathering

Qatar Foundation (QF) has concluded the second edition of the BilAraby annual gathering, bringing together 1,600 participants for discussions on building digital platforms that serve people, overcoming challenges in entrepreneurship, and drawing on community knowledge to build peace.

Organised by Qatar Foundation (QF)'s BilAraby initiative, the gathering took place on September 19-20 at Multaqa (Education City Student Center) in Doha under the theme *With Our Ideas, We Build*.

HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater attended the second day of the gathering and toured the partner pavilions.

The programme featured main-stage talks, exploratory sessions, workshops, and interactive spaces, enabling participants to share experiences, discuss ideas, and explore their practical applications.

The final-day programme included "Lead in His Footsteps (Peace Be Upon Him): An Interactive Simulation of Prophetic Leadership", presented by the QF's QIYADA conference, and "Read to Me", a session on advancing Arabic-language education presented by the Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development.

The gathering also hosted the "Initiative Accelerator Lab", presented by Al Sharq Forum, which focused on moving from ideas to action.

A video presentation highlight-



ed the "BilArabyFee..." events in Damascus, Amman, and Djerba, alongside an invitation to those interested in hosting the event in their own cities.

These events enable local and

regional partners to showcase ideas and experiences from their communities as part of the initiative's year-round efforts to foster dialogue and knowledge exchange in Arabic. (QNA)



Qatar National Library, Colombian embassy celebrate Garcia Marquez's legacy



The Qatar National Library (QNL), in collaboration with the Colombian embassy in Qatar, hosted a Book Chat session titled "The Sounds of Macondo - Musical Interpretations of One Hundred Years of Solitude", featuring Colombian artist Oriana da Marte and exploring the connection between music and storytelling through the lens of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's masterpiece, *One Hundred Years of Solitude.

The event underscored the QNL's ongoing commitment to fostering international cultural dialogue and celebrating diverse global heritage.

The gathering offered literary

enthusiasts and music lovers a fresh artistic perspective on one of Latin America's most influential literary works.

Drawing inspiration from her award-winning album *Un Viaje a Macondo, da Marte brought new life to the novel's themes of memory, imagination and the broader Latin American experience.

By combining literary discussion with live musical performance, she brought the audience into the world of Macondo, the iconic fictional town at the heart of Marquez's magical realism.

Senior QNL librarian (Adult Programming) Haya Abdulla al-Sheeb said that merging the

captivating literature of Gabriel Garcia Marquez with da Marte's compositions offered the community dynamic ways to connect with global literary heritage and celebrate Colombia's rich artistic traditions.

Camilo Vizcaya, first secretary and charge d'affaires of the embassy, said that culture is helping Colombia and Qatar deepen their friendship.

He noted that although the two countries were geographically distant, they shared close ties based on affection, mutual respect, and a shared appreciation for heritage, creativity and cultural exchange. (QNA)

Qatar, ICRC sign MoU

Qatar and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on mediation, humanitarian action, and international humanitarian law, on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The MoU was signed by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad and ICRC president Mirjana Spoljaric Egger. (QNA)



QC provides school supplies to orphans in Rwanda

As part of its ongoing efforts to support orphans and help them continue their education, Qatar Charity (QC), through its Rwanda branch, distributed school supplies to help orphans prepare for the new academic year.

The QC distributed 64 school kits, each containing essential educational supplies for the academic year.

The project was implemented as part of Qatar Charity's "Rofaqa" initiative, which provides

comprehensive care and support for orphans and other sponsored individuals worldwide.

Under this initiative, Qatar Charity currently sponsors around 226,000 orphans and other sponsored individuals.

The initiative supports the QC's Education Campaign 2026, which aims to reach around 123,000 children globally.

Qatar Charity called on donors to support the campaign and help more children continue their education.



Ariane unveils new identity, celebrates employees

Company marks new phase under SK Holding, honours teams behind its growth

Ariane celebrated its employees on Wednesday evening as it unveiled its new corporate identity, marking a new phase in the company's journey and recognising the teams behind its growth since its establishment in 2013.

The gathering, held at Rosewood Doha, was attended by HE Sheikh Suhaim bin Khalid bin Hamad Al Thani, Chairman of SK Holding and Ariane, and HE Sheikh Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani, CEO of Ariane, along with senior leadership and employees.

The evening reflected the spirit of teamwork and pride in Ariane's journey since its establishment in 2013.

The celebration was held in recognition of the efforts made by the company's employees over the years and their role in building its journey and developing its business.

It also highlighted that the growth and expansion achieved by Ariane would not have been possible without the expertise and dedication of its teams, whose efforts have helped turn the company's vision and plans into tangible results.



The evening featured a special film documenting Ariane's journey since its establishment and highlighting key milestones in the company's development, the evolution of its projects and its expanding presence in the real estate market, leading to its new phase under the umbrella of SK Holding.

The film highlighted the company's focus on innovation and sustainability, as well as the growth of its real estate portfolio. It also showcased the extensive efforts made by its various teams over the years and their

contributions to strengthening Ariane's presence and position in the market.

During the celebration, the company emphasised that the launch of its new identity represents more than a change in its corporate look and visual appearance. It reflects Ariane's evolution and transition into a new phase, building on the legacy of its past years while looking ahead to continued growth and enhanced value for its clients and partners.

In this context, HE Sheikh Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani expressed his appreciation for the efforts of Ariane's employees, stressing

that people are a fundamental element in the success of any organisation. He noted that the next phase requires continued teamwork and a stronger culture of collaboration, transparency and discipline to support the company's ability to achieve its objectives and translate its vision into tangible results.

Mr Mohamed Nahla, Public Relations and Marketing Director at Ariane, emphasised the importance of human capital in the company's new phase, describing employees as key partners in its ongoing development. He noted that

the new corporate identity reflects Ariane's ambitions for the future while preserving the values and trust that the company has built over the years.

The evening concluded in a warm atmosphere reflecting the strong sense of unity among Ariane employees, with a renewed commitment to teamwork and to moving forward into the company's new phase, drawing on accumulated experience and shared ambitions for greater growth and continued development.



AI ‘warning shots’ focus Beijing on national security risks

AFP
Beijing

While AI researchers in the US fret over out-of-control superintelligence wiping out humanity, Chinese policymakers have until now been more focused on immediate risks, from deepfakes to child safety.

But the alarming hacking ability of top artificial intelligence (AI) models is leading Beijing to see the dangers in a new light, with the spy agency chief warning this week that the technology could jeopardise national security.

The potential vulnerability of Chinese mega-app WeChat was also revealed recently when a small team of programmers in California said it had used AI to build a cyber-attack “worm” that, if unleashed, could easily compromise millions of WeChat accounts.

“There are more similarities than differences when it comes to AI safety issues” in China and

the US, said Kevin Xu, founder of US-based technology hedge fund Interconnected Capital.

But unlike in America, these “don’t get litigated or go viral in public in China”, Xu told AFP.

Nevertheless, the cybersecurity impact of AI agent bots acting without human oversight “would rank very high among the Chinese government’s biggest concerns”.

As the topic grabs global headlines, the pressure is on for President Xi Jinping and US counterpart Donald Trump to discuss tackling the AI threats to both countries at in-person talks on Thursday – despite their rivalry in the field.

Both powers are “developing a more realistic and shared understanding of these risks, thereby heightening the sense of urgency” to work together, Sun Chenghao of Tsinghua University’s Center for International Security and Strategy told AFP.

Co-operation on shared safety evaluations for AI models or alert systems when crises emerge might be undermined by the



Figurines with computers and smartphones are seen in front of the words “Artificial Intelligence AI” in this illustration. (Reuters/File photo))

fiere competition, however.

“We’re leading China in AI... and frankly I want to keep it that way,” Trump said when asked about calls from top US labs for a coordinated slowdown of their cutting-edge work.

Meanwhile, Sun said: “China is concerned that ‘security’ may be used as a tool to restrict its technological development”.

A stark warning of the exis-

tential threat posed by self-improving future AI systems, posted Monday on X by a researcher resigning from US startup Anthropic, has fuelled debate worldwide over how the technology should be governed.

China is already actively regulating how it is used, such as by prohibiting the creation of an AI-generated avatar in someone’s likeness without their consent.

“Chinese AI policy focuses more on real, present-day harms to society and people,” said Brian Tse, CEO at Concordia AI, a Beijing-based consultancy focused on AI safety.

“Beijing treats AI as a general-purpose technology – not a ‘god-in-a-box,’” he said.

It sees it as “something closer to electricity or the automobile: enormously beneficial for society and industry, but ultimately manageable through regulation”, Tse said.

He added that “recent AI capability jumps, high-profile incidents acting as ‘warning shots’, and a worrying pace of AI development through automation” had all pushed the technology up the list of priorities.

On the streets of Shanghai, AFP found a mix of concern and pragmatism about AI.

“In my view, no new technology develops completely smoothly,” said 42-year-old Xie Zongbo.

He said news of the cyberattack “worm” that could hack into WeChat may in fact be “a good thing:

identifying the issue, solving it, and patching the loophole ultimately benefits the advancement of cybersecurity”.

There was also broad support for tight regulation.

“I believe that no business... would ever impose restrictions on themselves,” said a 50-year-old pharmaceutical worker, who gave her name as Jenny.

“Take traffic as an example: drivers would never say, ‘I want all red lights”

Jia Zijian, founder of Singapore-based Inspired AI, said his greatest concern was highly capable AI models learning to crack complex passwords.

“Suppose these critical passwords or national security key codes were to be effortlessly cracked. In such a scenario... both China and the US would find themselves vulnerable: if our (China’s) capabilities are strong enough, they would feel exposed.

“And if they are strong enough and we lack defences, we would be in a similarly vulnerable position.”

Senior Taiwan official makes rare trip to China

Taiwan’s labour minister travelled to China for an Apec ministerial meeting yesterday, the first such trip by a senior Taiwanese government official since President Lai Ching-te took office two years ago.

China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and has threatened to take the self-ruled island by force if necessary.

Beijing has branded Lai – whose Democratic Progressive Party rejects China’s sovereignty claims over Taiwan – as an independence separatist and has halted formal communication with Taipei for a decade.

With China hosting this year’s Apec, there were concerns that Taiwan could be blocked from participating in the international forum.

Taiwan’s labour minister Hung Sun-han took a 5:50pm flight yesterday to the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing, where he will attend meetings on Monday before returning home, his ministry said.

Chen Binhua, spokesman for China’s Taiwan Affairs Office, told a press briefing this month that Taiwan’s participation in Apec meetings and activities would be handled in accordance with the “one-China principle.”

Hung said this week that his visit to China would follow “the

existing pattern” and be based on “the principle of parity and dignity”.

“Apec is a very important international, multilateral economic and trade forum for us,” Hung said.

The Taiwanese delegation will “share their experience and expertise in labour issues and human resources with other Apec member economies during the meeting, Hung said.

Hung did not have plans to travel to other Chinese cities during his trip, the labour ministry told AFP.

Taiwan’s government said members of its delegation have already taken part in Apec meetings in various Chinese cities this year, including a May trip to Suzhou by then-top trade negotiator Yang Jen-ni.

These ministerial meetings will culminate in November at the Apec Economic Leaders’ Meeting in Shenzhen, where world leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump are expected to meet.

Apec represents 21 member economies and is one of the few international bodies in which Taiwan holds full membership.

Taiwanese presidents have over the years appointed special envoys to attend the flagship summit on their behalf. (AFP)

North Korea fires two ballistic missiles off east coast: Seoul

AFP
Seoul

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast yesterday, Republic of Korea’s military said, with the second flying more than 600km (370 miles).

The launches came days after Pyongyang reasserted its status as a nuclear-armed state and rejected a United Nations resolution demanding it halt its nuclear activities.

Korea’s military said the first missile was launched at around 3:00pm from the Wonsan area and flew around 450km into the East Sea, a body of water also called the Sea of Japan.

“Our military detected an additional short-range ballistic missile launched from the Wonsan area of North Korea towards the East Sea at around 5:50pm,” Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said.

The second missile “flew more than 600km, and Korean and US authorities are conducting a detailed analysis to determine its exact specifications,” it said.

The JCS said Korea, the United States and Japan had been

“tracking and sharing relevant developments from the initial stage of the launch”.

Japan lodged a “stern protest” with North Korea over the launches, condemning them as a threat to regional peace and security, the Kyodo news agency cited the government as saying.

Korea’s presidential National Security Office convened an emergency security meeting following the first launch and assessed its impact on national security, the presidential office said.

The government called on Pyongyang to “immediately cease” its ballistic missile launches, describing Sunday’s firings as a “grave act” that violated UN Security Council resolutions.

The launches came eight days after North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles towards the East Sea as part of what it later described as a joint firepower drill.

That exercise involved long-range artillery and missiles, with the weapons “hitting the targets with 100 percent accuracy”, state media reported.

North Korea accused “hostile forces” of seeking to end the country’s nuclear programme



People sit near a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a train station in Seoul yesterday. (AFP)

during this week’s General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

A foreign ministry spokesperson said the IAEA resolution “has no effect on the DPRK’s position as a nuclear weapons state”, using the acronym for North Korea’s official name.

The North’s status as a nuclear power is “guaranteed by the actual nuclear deterrent and irreversibly and permanently fixed by the supreme law of the

state”, the spokesperson said.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, recently said the country’s nuclear-armed status was “absolute” and called those hoping for its denuclearisation “idiots”.

US President Donald Trump said in August that North Korea possessed 57 “very powerful” nuclear weapons, while Korea has put the figure at between 80 and 120.

Indonesia to continue search for missing in capsized ship

Reuters
Jakarta

Indonesian authorities will continue searching today for more than a hundred people still missing after a passenger ship sank in the Java Sea last week, with the confirmed death toll now at 10, its rescue agency said yesterday.

The passenger ship, Virgo Transport 8, was carrying 243 people, including 30 crew mem-

bers, when it capsized in bad weather early on September 13 during a 20-hour voyage from Surabaya in East Java to Banjarmasin in South Kalimantan.

“Hopefully the weather at the site will be favorable (tomorrow)... so more victims trapped inside the ship can be evacuated,” said I Putu Sudayana, an official at the national rescue agency in a press conference.

Sunday’s operation was hampered by strong currents, he said.

On Monday, the agency will send a remotely

operated vehicle into the vessel to help guide the divers during the operation, Putu added.

The divers recovered on Sunday one more body from inside the ship’s hull, after finding three victims on Friday. Following the latest operation, 125 passengers remained unaccounted for and 108 people had survived.

The rescue agency has extended for a week the recovery operation due to the large number of missing people and because the salvage operation to right the ship is expected to take time, authorities said on Saturday.

Indonesia cash-for-photos scheme turns hunters into protectors

AFP
Kapuas Hulu, Indonesia

Indonesian villager Octavius wades through the forest in rubber boots and tattered joggers, ears pricked, eyes peeled, a telephoto lens on his phone primed to capture orangutans, monkeys or birds.

The daily photo hunt earns Octavius and hundreds of others in Borneo cash as part of a conservation programme seeking to make animals worth more alive than dead.

Locals on the island have long made money from hunting wild songbirds and selling them, mainly to domestic customers.

The KehatiKu project aims to break that cycle by paying individuals in nine participating villages in West Kalimantan province for photos or recordings of animals instead.

Payments range from 5,000 rupiah (about \$0.30) for observing a common bird, to 130,000 rupiah for an endangered orangutan – the top prize. The most successful observers earn up to 10 mn rupiah a month – equivalent to about \$570, several times an average farmworker’s income.

The extra cash “really helps, especially to pay for my children’s college”, said 50-year-old Octavius, who like many Indonesians uses a single name.

The programme, run by envi-



Wildlife observer and former poacher Octavius using a mobile phone equipped with a telephoto lens to take pictures of wildlife in a forest near Labian village in Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan. (AFP)

ronmental consultancy Borneo Futures, began two years ago and produces data on wildlife distribution and population changes.

Most participants are small-scale farmers of rice, cacao, durian and the stimulant kratom.

Early signs suggest the scheme is working. “People have started to realise that where previously they caught one bird and it was worth 50,000 rupiah, now they just need to take a photo, send it to us, and they can receive a payment of 5,000 to 10,000 rupiah,” Borneo Futures Indonesia director Nardiyono told AFP.

“If they take just five photos, they (may) earn 50,000 rupiah,

and the bird is still in their environment, still observable, and still able to reproduce, so the potential income from observing birds is far greater than from hunting birds.”

That shifting logic has prompted two participating villages to voluntarily introduce hunting bans since the project started, added Nardiyono.

The programme is funded by philanthropic foundations and has received about \$300,000 to date, according to Borneo Futures.

Half has gone towards development, including a mobile app for uploading animal sightings and an AI system that helps humans verify observations.

Malaysian ex-PM Najib working on conditions to start house arrest

Reuters
Singapore

Malaysia’s jailed former prime minister, Najib Razak, is working to fulfil the conditions to leave jail and begin his house arrest, including paying a 50mn ringgit (\$12mn) fine, his lawyers said yesterday.

Najib’s ability to satisfy the condition “do not lie in his own hands” as a significant part of his assets, bank accounts and properties remain subject to freeze orders and enforcement proceedings by the government, the lawyers said in a statement.

Najib, prime minister from 2009-2018, was found guilty of corruption in relation to the embezzlement of billions of dollars tied to IMalaysia Development Berhad, a state investment fund he co-founded while in power. He has consistently denied wrongdoing.

Malaysia’s king agreed on Friday to let Najib Razak leave jail and serve the remainder of his sentence under house arrest. It was the second royal pardon over

his conviction for his involvement in a multi-billion-dollar financial scandal.

Malaysia’s Prisons Department said in a statement on Sunday that it and the home affairs ministry were waiting for official written confirmation of the pardon before taking any action. By law, the home affairs minister has the power to gazette any premises as a prison, which could be used to designate Najib’s home as a place to serve his sentence.

Najib has been “deeply moved” by the support he has received from the public, the lawyers said.

The president of Najib’s UMNO party, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, said on Friday that a collection fund would be launched for party members and supporters to help Najib pay for the fine. The party had raised almost 1 million ringgit by Saturday noon, local media reported.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim’s multi-party government, which includes the DAP as well as Najib’s UMNO, has seen growing rifts over the government’s response to issues of corruption



A supporter wears a shirt with an image depicting former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak in Kuala Lumpur. (Reuters)

US court rejects Trump policy allowing deportations to third countries

Reuters
Boston

A US federal appeals court rejected on Friday a policy adopted by the Trump administration that allows authorities to rapidly deport migrants to countries other than their own without giving them a chance to raise safety concerns.

Ruling in a case that is likely headed to the Supreme Court, a three-judge panel of the Boston-based 1st US Circuit Court of Appeals largely upheld a February decision by a lower-court judge that declared the Department of

Homeland Security's policy unlawful.

The ruling came in a class-action lawsuit filed by migrants subject to deportation orders that has become a key test of what due-process protections the government must provide before removing people to countries with which they have no connection.

"This decision confirms that due process and the protections Congress enacted against persecution and torture cannot be circumvented by putting someone on a plane to a country that was never part of their removal proceedings," Trina Realmuto, a lawyer for the plaintiffs at the National Immigra-

tion Litigation Alliance, said.

Under President Donald Trump, the administration has entered into a series of agreements that have allowed it to send more than 25,000 migrants to at least 29 third countries, in many cases Mexico, according to Third Country Deportation Watch, a project run by Refugees International and Human Rights First.

The government is expected to appeal. Earlier in the case, the administration twice convinced the Supreme Court to lift a preliminary injunction protecting migrants' due-process rights, clearing the way for eight men to be deported to South Sudan.

The administration has also carried out third-country deportations of people to nations including Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and the Central African Republic. DHS General Counsel James Percival posted on X that the policy remains in force because the 1st Circuit's decision is not yet in effect. "If you claim fear in your home country, DHS has the right to send you elsewhere," he said.

In March 2025, DHS adopted a policy aimed at addressing individuals who were subject to final orders of deportation but had been granted protections in immigration court against being sent back to their countries of origin.

The policy would allow migrants to be sent to alternative countries if immigration authorities have credible diplomatic assurances they will not be persecuted or tortured there. The policy called for only minimal notice before a migrant could be sent to a third country that had not given the State Department such assurances.

US District Judge Brian Murphy, an appointee of Democratic President Joe Biden, set aside the policy and concluded that it failed to protect migrants' due-process rights and could lead to their swift deportation to unfamiliar and potentially dangerous countries, without notice.

Fire threatens Colombian Andes

A massive forest fire was burning yesterday in central Colombia near the popular tourist town of Villa de Leyva, officials said.

The flames were visible from the central square of the Andean town, known for its colonial architecture and cobblestone streets, which attracts more than a mn tourists each year.

Colombian President Abelardo de la Esprilla posted on X: "We will deploy all state resources to fight this fire and protect its inhabitants, its heritage, and its natural wealth." (AFP)

US healthcare under strain due to crackdown on Haitians

AFP
Washington

Like many Haitian healthcare workers in the US, Rachelle has been forced into hiding by US President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant policies.

"We take care of sick people. We don't commit any crimes. So why hunt us down like animals?" the New York nurse in her 30s told AFP, speaking under a pseudonym for fear of the authorities.

After years spent caring for sick Americans, Rachelle faces deportation, like hundreds of thousands of her compatriots – which in turn is straining many American hospitals, nursing homes and healthcare facilities that rely on them.

At the end of July, the US government revoked her Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which allowed her to live and work temporarily in the US due to dire conditions in Haiti.

Rachelle's employer then fired her, and she has stayed home since, fearful of getting detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents if she went outside.

"I wake up every day praying that they've changed their minds," she said of administration officials.

Established after the devastating 2010 earthquake, TPS status was benefitting more than 350,000 Haitians, a third of whom worked in the US healthcare sector when it was revoked, according to estimates.

That's created "chaos" in a sector already struggling to find enough workers, and degrades patient care, said Nancy Hagans, a nurse who heads a New York City healthcare workers' union.

Hagans said that in her facility, 21

workers were let go. In a nearby nursing home, hundreds were fired, she said.

"These workers were providing care to the most vulnerable," she said.

In Florida, home to a large chunk of the Haitian diaspora, two home care agencies have been forced to close, said Denise Bellville, president of an association representing stakeholders in the sector.

While some caregivers continue to work undocumented in homes despite the risk of arrest, most employers have resigned themselves to layoffs, she explained. Replacing these workers is nearly impossible. The healthcare sector was already facing a staff shortage and relied heavily on immigrant labour to fill the lowest-paying positions, such as nursing assistants and personal care aides.

"Americans don't choose that type of job. It's not their focus," Bellville said. "They can make more money doing something else" like working in a fast-food restaurant or for Amazon.

The Trump administration has also revoked TPS for other countries such as Ethiopia, South Sudan and Yemen, and is expected to remove it soon for others like Ukraine, raising the specter of deportation over more than a million immigrants.

All this will have repercussions for Americans, warned Bellville. "It's not just the employee who is sent back to their country of origin; it affects all the patients they were caring for," she said, particularly those receiving home care who could then lose the ability to remain in their own residences.

While some healthcare facilities are trying to retain these caregivers by changing their status, the process is generally very long and expensive, and was made even more complex by the Trump administration.

Trump to use Washington arch as military complex

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday the triumphal arch he plans to build near Arlington National Cemetery in Washington would double as a "military complex" housing drones and snipers, as well as storing large quantities of ammunition.

The president cited national security concerns for the move, echoing the rationale offered for the roughly \$400mn ballroom complex being built on the site of the White House's former East Wing. He did not identify any specific threats.

The projects are part of Trump's ambitious effort to reshape Washington, including a push to add his name to the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The plans have drawn criticism from preservationists and others who argue they could alter or diminish historic landmarks.

In a social media post, Trump said that at the "strong request" of the military he had agreed to turn the 250-foot (76-meter) arch "into a top grade Military Complex/ Triumphant Arch, to house,



A view of the Memorial Bridge near the proposed site for Donald Trump's Triumphant Arch in Washington DC. (Reuters)

store, and have the rapid ability to use large numbers of drones, plus Snipers, on both the roof and plaza areas, and additionally have and hold large quantities of sniper ammunition in storage."

A US military official told Reuters that the Defence Department had nothing to add beyond Trump's social media post. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump did not elaborate on why such capabilities would be needed at the arch. His proposed White House ballroom has already been touted as a drone facility to protect Washington.

Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel, said the move appeared aimed at countering opposition to the arch, which is planned for a traffic circle near Arlington National Cemetery, about a mile from Fort Myer, an active Army installation, and roughly 3.2 km from the Pentagon.

"It looks like it's tacked on in order to strengthen the rationale for construction," Cancian, a senior adviser with the Defence and Security Department at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank said. "There is this military facility (Fort Myer) long established with a varie-

ty of military capabilities one mile away. So why you need this one isn't clear."

Cancian also said that storing ammunition at the arch would create logistical challenges, questioning the value of positioning snipers there.

US District Judge Tanya Chutkan earlier this month ordered the Trump administration to give 48 hours' notice before engaging in any activity on the site of the triumphal arch. Her ruling came a day after the US Interior Department announced plans to move forward soon with work on the arch despite legal challenges and the lack of final approval from a government planning authority.

The Federal Aviation Administration said last week that the arch would not pose a hazard to aircraft but would be required to have an "eternal flame" on top, clearing an aviation hurdle for the arch, which Trump proposed to mark US' 250th anniversary.

Aviation experts have raised safety concerns given its proximity to Reagan Washington National Airport while veterans have sued to block the arch, arguing it would destroy the historic sightline between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

Houthis agree not to fight US as they continue to attack Saudi: Fox News

AFP
Washington

President Donald Trump said yesterday that Yemen's Houthis have agreed not to attack the US, despite the Iran-allied group stepping up its war against US ally Saudi Arabia, Fox News reported.

The network's reporter Trey Yingst, who often talks to Trump, cited the president saying that Washington is "in constant communication with the Houthis and that they've agreed not to fight

the US." Trump has made the claim before that the Houthis are holding back from attacking US forces in the region.

"The Houthis called us and they don't want to fight with us," Trump said during a visit to Ireland on September 12. "They don't want us to go after them."

But the latest comments to Fox News came as close US ally Saudi Arabia is under growing pressure, with a missile targeting the capital Riyadh on Saturday.

The Houthis have also staged a rapid offensive inside Yemen, seizing swaths of territory from

the internationally recognised government, which is backed by Saudi Arabia.

Fox News reported that Trump is in "deciding mode" on Iran, where US and Israeli forces launched a massive aerial bombing campaign on February 28 before settling into a now almost-seven-month standoff.

Yingst said Trump told him that "big things will be happening in the not so distant future" and that "Iranians better behave, and he is making this decision as to whether or not to blow up their nation."

Burnham welcomes US-Greenland deal

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham yesterday congratulated Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen on a deal agreed between the US, Denmark and Greenland. Burnham said the deal, set to be signed next week, benefitted the US, Greenland and Denmark, his office said.

Downing Street said the leaders on a call welcomed Washington's "commitment to the region" and "underlined the strategic and shared importance of the High North for Euro-Atlantic security". Burnham said he would also congratulate US President Donald Trump on the deal.

The two leaders are set to hold their first in-person meeting next week at the UN General Assembly in New York. (AFP)

Trump lists achievements as difficult midterms loom

AFP
Washington

President Donald Trump claimed he halted all refugee admissions and made English the official language of the US in a long list of achievements, as difficult midterm elections loom.

Trump is scrambling to boost his low approval ratings ahead of November's vote, with polls showing the war in Iran that led to consequential rise in prices of fuel is hurting his party.

Polls say the party could well lose control of the House and perhaps even the Senate, a setback which would pose a ma-

jor challenge for Trump and his America-first agenda in the last two years of his second term.

Trump said he "achieved the most secure border in history" in a lengthy social media post on Truth Social that focused on immigration, foreign policy and the economy. "ZERO illegal aliens admitted to the US in the past 16 months," he wrote, adding that his administration had slashed refugee admissions from "dangerous places".

Trump has presided over an often violent immigration crackdown which involves deportations and shipping people that the US cannot legally send home to third countries – sometimes compensated with money.

US sanctions bill on Russia puts India in a bind over energy security

Reuters
New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is caught in an energy policy bind with no easy exit.

Cutting Russian oil imports to avoid potential new US tariffs could increase fuel prices ahead of key regional elections, or stress government finances. Maintaining such purchases could cripple Indian exports to its largest market.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer and among the biggest buyers of Russian crude, reacted unusually strongly on Thursday to a US congressional bill that would allow Washington to impose tariffs of up to 100% on countries, including India and China, for major purchases of Russian oil.

The sharp response showed how an energy trade that has delivered India billions of dollars in savings since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is now colliding with its broader strategic and commercial interests.

New Delhi said it had warned the US that the measure could damage bilateral relations and disrupt global energy markets, vowing to keep

"ensuring energy security for its 1.4bn people" by buying from diversified sources.

But holding firm could further strain ties with Washington after a turbulent year marked by repeated disputes over trade and tariffs under President Donald Trump. A planned trade deal between the two countries has already faced multiple delays.

Two Indian sources said the latest tensions did not mean New Delhi would abandon hopes of striking a trade deal with Washington, though they said India may increasingly need to lean on deals elsewhere if additional US tariffs hit exports.

Since last year, India has signed a trade deal with Britain, finalised one with the EU and is looking to conclude talks on another one with Canada by the end of the year.

New Delhi is hoping for a breakthrough when Modi travels to the US for the G20 summit in December, where he could meet Trump on the sidelines, said one of the sources.

The White House and the Indian government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"The US-India relationship



Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with Narendra Modi during the G7 Summit in Evian-les-Bains, France. (Reuters/File Photo)

has suffered over the last year for a range of reasons, including US tariffs," said Michael Kugelman, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington.

"But this new legislation, which enjoyed strong bipartisan support and takes the most maximalist position possible on punishing India for its Russian oil buys, may be the biggest blow yet."

If Washington delayed imple-

menting tariffs or applied them only lightly, the damage could be manageable, he said, adding the legislation nevertheless could widen the trust gap in Delhi for a trade deal and make it harder for Indian negotiators to agree to last-minute concessions needed to secure a deal.

"From the perspective of the trade talks, this new legislation couldn't have come at a worse

time," he said. "The two sides are not far from the finish line, but getting there will require careful diplomacy."

The bill has already become a political issue in India, with the opposition urging Modi to adopt a tougher stance. Any hike in pump prices would be risky for Modi, whose party faces elections in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, in Punjab and in Modi's home state of Gujarat starting early next year. Modi's BJP runs both Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

Before Trump, India was courted by the US for decades as a strategic counterweight to China, but the world's fifth-largest economy has repeatedly been left reeling over the past year by decisions taken in Washington.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, India sharply increased purchases of discounted Russian crude, which now account for more than 40% of India's overall oil supplies. The stepped-up purchases were partly the reason Trump imposed tariffs of as much as 50% on Indian goods in August 2025, among the steepest levied on any country.

In February, Trump rolled back

those duties in exchange for what he said was India's commitment to halt Russian oil purchases and lower trade barriers.

But New Delhi only briefly reduced purchases from Russia in early 2026. They have since jumped, especially since the supply shock that followed the US and Israeli attack on Iran.

New Delhi has repeatedly resisted pressure to scale back purchases, arguing that its large population and growing economy need secure, affordable and reliable energy supplies. Indian refiners have already secured crude supplies for September and October that include Russian oil, sources familiar with the matter have told Reuters.

Indian analysts said the country's purchases of Russian oil were not financing the Ukraine war, but only helping stabilise global supplies and keeping domestic prices in check.

"Tariffs of up to 100% would punish Indian exporters and American consumers, disrupt trade and give the US president excessive power over major partners," said Ajay Srivastava, founder of New Delhi-based think tank Global Trade Research Initiative.

Malaysia’s ex-PM Razak and the multi-billion-dollar 1MDB scandal

Malaysia’s king has granted a second pardon to jailed former premier Najib Razak, allowing him to serve the remainder of his sentence under house arrest, four years after a conviction for his involvement in a multi-billion-dollar financial scandal.

1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) was a sovereign fund set up in 2009 with the help of Malaysian financier Jho Low to promote economic development.

Najib, who was prime minister from 2009-2018, co-founded 1MDB and chaired its advisory board until 2016.

1MDB raised billions of dollars in bonds for use in investment projects and joint ventures between 2009 and 2013.

Conducting its largest -ever kleptocracy investigation, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) said \$4.5bn was diverted to offshore bank accounts and shell companies, many linked to Low, whose whereabouts are unknown.

Malaysian authorities say Najib illegally received more than \$1bn traceable to 1MDB.

Public anger over the scandal contributed to

Najib’s defeat in the 2018 election.

In 2019, Najib was charged in Malaysia with four counts of abuse of power and 21 counts of money laundering.

He was found guilty in December 2025 and sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined \$2.8bn and has lodged an appeal.

Najib has faced other 1MDB-related trials.

In July 2020, he was sentenced in Malaysia to 12 years in prison and fined 210mn ringgit (\$46.94mn) after being found guilty of criminal breach of trust, abuse of power, and money laundering for illegally receiving about \$10mn from SRC International, a former 1MDB subsidiary.

The verdict was upheld by an appellate court in 2021 and in August 2022, Najib began serving his sentence.

A pardons board chaired by a former king halved his sentence to six years and reduced his fine in 2024.

The board, chaired by current King Sultan Ibrahim, on September 18 allowed Najib to serve the remainder of that under house arrest until August 2028. – Reuters



With the ship taking in water, would it survive the midterms?



By Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

More than six months have passed since the US and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury, their war on Iran that seemed at first to be an attempt to force regime change, perhaps on the model of President Donald Trump’s lightning intervention in Venezuela in early January.

The initial four-to-six-week estimate provided by the White House for the operation has given way to a protracted stalemate in which each side believes it can outlast the other.

While a ceasefire entered into force on April 8 and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Iranian and US leaders on June 17, the US and Iran remain far apart on possible terms to end the war.

Furthermore, the reignition of Yemen’s civil war, which had largely been paused since a truce agreed in 2022, and the resumption of indiscriminate Houthi attacks against energy, infrastructure, and civilian targets in Saudi Arabia, has introduced a volatile new angle to the conflict, and put at risk one of the key workarounds to the Strait of Hormuz.

Since February, the fact that Saudi officials could redirect up to 7mn barrels of oil per day through the East-West Pipeline to the Red Sea complex at Yanbu was a key mitigating factor in oil markets, together with a temporary sharp fall in Chinese oil imports from the region.

These factors ensured that oil prices did not spike as far as some had feared when the war began.

The Houthis’ capture of the port of Mokha on September 10 put them within touching distance of the Bab al-Mandab, the second vital strait that provides access to the western flank of the Arabian Peninsula, just as the Strait of Hormuz does on the eastern flank.

The prospect of both critical maritime chokepoints being vulnerable to disruption by Iran and its most powerful current proxy group is not one that the White House will welcome as the Congressional midterm elections draw nearer.

This is for two reasons.

The first is that the Houthi gains further undermine Trump administration narratives that they are in control of the regional situation and the second is the impact on energy markets and prices in the US.

For more than a decade, Trump has been the Harry Houdini of contemporary politics, floating on water above a litany of issues that would have sunk most other political figures.

Trump famously stated, during his 2016 campaign for president, that he could shoot somebody on Fifth Avenue in New York and he would not lose any voters, and, by and large, he has been proven correct, across two spells in office and his four years out of office.

He even survived the fallout from the January 6 unrest at the Capitol in 2021 when Republicans declined to convict him in impeachment proceedings and only gained in popularity as he battled legal cases during the Biden administration.

The fact that Trump won millions more votes in each of his three presidential runs proved his enduring support among his base.

It is likely that the success of the January 3 operation to capture and exfiltrate Venezuela’s leader, Nicholas Maduro, and impose a successor who was willing to align with US policy objectives, engendered a sense of optimism that Trump could do the same in Iran.

Instead, he now finds himself, for the first time in his political career, at least, in a position where he faces an adversary that will not follow the playbook that has served Trump so well for years.

Iranian leaders appear to be prepared to prolong the economic pain from the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz in order to translate it into political repercussions in November.

Something similar happened during the administration of Jimmy Carter, when the Iranian leadership prolonged the hostage crisis throughout the remainder of his presidency, contributing to his defeat in the 1980 election, and symbolically released them on 20 January 1981, just as his successor, Ronald Reagan, was being sworn into office.

Two years ago, Trump completed his political comeback, which had appeared so improbable in January 2021, when he became the first president in more than 130 years to serve a non-consecutive second term.

His victory in 2024 owed much to the resonance of his campaign on affordability and the cost of living, as inflation had surged in the aftermath of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020-21 and Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Trump’s pledge to bring down prices “on day one” was popular among voters who were experiencing financial hardship, especially as food prices had increased rapidly during Joe Biden’s term in office.

Voter surveys in 2024 consistently cited affordability and concerns about the cost of living as among the most important issues which mattered most to them.

Instead, six weeks out from the midterm elections, Americans face mortgage rates approaching 7%, inflation running ahead of wage increases, gas prices at their highest level since 2022, and the first rise in interest rates for three years.

Consumer prices have also continued to increase at elevated levels, and the price of specific refined fuel products, notably diesel, is at near-record highs.

Diesel is significant because it is an indispensable fuel for agricultural and industrial activity and farmers in key swing states in the Midwest are paying thousands of dollars more for fuel than they were even a year ago.

All this is feeding a narrative that the missteps in the Iran war are now blowing back to consumers at home.

Fuel prices are just one of several wildcards which could play a pivotal role in determining the outcome of the midterm election, particularly in farm states such as Iowa and Ohio.

Elsewhere, in swing states along the US-Canada border, such as Michigan, which the Democrats need to hold, and Maine, which they need to gain if they are to retake the Senate, the impact of the US-Canada tariff war may also be consequential.

This makes the midterm elections a barometer of several intersecting policy issues.

● The writer is a leading scholar specialising in Gulf politics and international political economy, and a fellow at the Baker Institute and co-director of the Middle East Energy Roundtable.



This picture taken on September 18 shows people listening as US Vice-President JD Vance speaks during a Republican National Committee (RNC) midterm rally at the Mid-America Centre in Council Bluffs, Iowa. — AFP



This picture taken on September 16 shows Trump greeting supporters before speaking at a campaign rally with North Carolina Republican Senate candidate Michael Whatley at Gastonia Municipal Airport, North Carolina. — AFP

Pakistan’s oldest promise to the Gulf gets a nuclear shadow

By Jasim al-Azzawi



For nearly 60 years, Pakistan has kept one promise to the Gulf. It sends soldiers, not just signatures.

That promise now carries a weight it never had before.

Islamabad’s defence minister has said the country’s nuclear arsenal will be “made available” to Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh has not denied it.

The Gulf has seen Pakistani boots on its soil for generations. It has never had to reckon with Pakistani warheads standing behind them.

Start with history, because the region tends to forget it.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed their first defence co-operation agreement in 1967, brought to Islamabad by then-Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz.

Pakistani pilots flew Royal Saudi Air Force jets against south Yemen in the 1969 Al-Wadiah conflict, while still training the force that owned them.

By the 1980s, up to 15,000 Pakistani troops were rotating through Saudi Arabia under a 1982 protocol, some stationed near the Israeli-Jordanian-Saudi border.

Pakistani units helped end the 1979 Grand Mosque siege in Makkah, Islam’s holiest site.

During the 1991 Gulf War, roughly 13,000 Pakistani troops and 6,000 advisers were deployed to defend the kingdom.

At its peak, Pakistan had military missions running in 22 countries and was, by some counts, the largest supplier of military manpower in the developing world.

That relationship was always transactional in a specific way.

Pakistan gave manpower. The Gulf gave capital, oil and, at times, diplomatic cover Islamabad needed elsewhere.

It was never framed as extended deterrence. It was framed as brotherhood with a payroll attached.

The scale had shrunk by the 2020s.

Harvard’s Belfer Centre estimated only 1,500-2,000 Pakistani personnel remained in the kingdom on training and advisory postings by last year, a fraction of the Cold War-era peak.

On September 9, 2025, Israel struck Hamas leadership targets inside Doha, a sovereign Gulf capital and a US treaty partner.

On September 17, 2025, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a new Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement.

On August 7 this year, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye expanded that bilateral pact into a trilateral one in Makkah, declaring that an armed attack on any one of the three “shall be regarded as an attack against them all”.

The Doha strike did more to reshape Gulf threat perception than any communique.

Sun Degang, director of the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, argued that when Washington showed reluctance to protect Qatar, it “directly triggered Riyadh’s unease”.

A security architecture built for decades on American guarantees suddenly looked thinner than advertised.

This is where the nuclear question enters, and where the Gulf needs to read carefully rather than reflexively.

When the 2025 pact was first signed, a Saudi official who was asked whether it extended a nuclear umbrella answered only that the deal “encompasses all military means”.

That studied vagueness held for two days.

Then Pakistan’s defence minister, Khawaja

Asif, told Geo television that “whatever we have, our capabilities, will absolutely be available” to Saudi Arabia.

He repeated the claim on other channels, and it stuck.

Stimson Centre analyst Mohammad Salami said flatly that under the agreement, “Saudi Arabia gains access to a nuclear umbrella and potentially nuclear weapons”.

Gulf defence analyst Riad Kahwaji went further, writing that the pact “now puts Riyadh under the nuclear umbrella” of Pakistan.

Other analysts have pushed back hard.

A Belfer Centre assessment concluded that nothing in the pact “magically converts Pakistan’s India-centric nuclear doctrine into a Middle East umbrella”, and noted there is no evidence Islamabad has retargeted any strategic forces toward Iran or Israel on Riyadh’s behalf.

Islamabad-based security analyst Syed Muhammad Ali made a similar point after the Makkah signing, arguing that Pakistan’s conventional forces are “adequate enough to improve the security of Saudi Arabia without having to resort to the nuclear option”.

The Middle East Institute was blunter still, warning analysts to “slow their roll”, since extended nuclear deterrence is notoriously hard to operationalise and “the devil is in the details, about which we know nothing”.

Both readings can be true at once, and that is precisely the problem for the Gulf.

Ambiguity is not an accident here. It is the product.

Riyadh gets to signal that an attack on it carries unknown consequences, without committing Islamabad to anything specific.

Islamabad gets to look like the indispensable Muslim nuclear power, without formally revising a doctrine built around India.

Nobody has to test the promise until someone is forced to.

That is a manageable arrangement between two capitals.

It is a harder one for the rest of the Gulf to absorb.

Turkiye is now formally inside the pact.

Egypt has been signaled as a possible future member.

Qatar, the state that was struck last year, remains outside the trilateral structure, even though its vulnerability accelerated the whole process.

A security architecture assembled this quickly, around this much ambiguity, raises a question Gulf capitals should be asking out loud rather than assuming answered: does formalising an old manpower relationship into something that sounds like a nuclear guarantee actually deter future strikes, or does it just raise the stakes of the next miscalculation, for states that never signed anything?

Pakistan has earned trust in the Gulf the old-fashioned way, one deployment at a time, since before most of the region’s current leaders were born.

That history is real, and it matters.

However, history built on soldiers is not automatically history that scales to warheads.

The Gulf would do well to ask Islamabad, plainly, what the new pact actually commits it to, rather than let television interviews and think-tank guesses set the terms of such a consequential promise.

● The writer is a prominent news anchor, programme presenter and media instructor.

Merz shaken by far-right and far-left gains in German state votes

AFP
Berlin

The far right and far left had more success in German state elections yesterday, dealing yet another blow to embattled Chancellor Friedrich Merz — who has vowed to stay the course.

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) scored 37-38% in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania against 35.5-36.5% for the centre-left SPD, according to exit polls by public broadcasters ARD and ZDF.

Merz's centre-right CDU hovered just above 5% there, the point where it would crash out of parliament — an outcome Merz admitted was a “disaster”.

In Berlin, the far-left Die Linke party with 24.5-26% looked set to easily defeat the CDU, which is currently running the coalition government and which scored 20%, according to exit polls.



Friedrich Merz gives a statement after first exit polls of the Berlin and Mecklenburg Western Pomerania state elections in Berlin. (Reuters)

Merz — who had called a crisis meeting of his party leadership in anticipation of a poor result — quickly stepped before the cameras and vowed to stay the course, following recent speculation he may soon be ousted by his party.

“The reforms have to come,” 70-year-old Merz said.

“I am taking on this responsibility because I want to move our country forward.”

The AfD also won 16% in Berlin, although it looked set to remain shut out of power in both states because of a “firewall” of non-cooperation agreed by other major parties.

Merz — with record low personal approval ratings after 16 months in office — has been fighting off rumours he may be ousted by his centre-right CDU/CSU bloc. On election night, he was huddling in a crisis meeting of the CDU party leadership to discuss the outcome of the regional polls.

The chancellor has also cleared his calendar for the following days and skipped a trip to the UN General Assembly to deal with potential aftershocks from the votes.

The latest polls came two weeks after the far-right, pro-Trump and Moscow-friendly AfD dealt a stunning defeat to the CDU in the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Sunday's Berlin election was a historic first for Die Linke, which promises drastic steps to solve a housing crisis in the German capital, including expropriating flats held by large corporate landlords.

A CDU defeat there, if confirmed in final results, is another black eye for Merz — especially at the hands of its nemesis Die Linke,

which opposes big business, rejects military aid for Ukraine and wants Germany to exit Nato.

When Merz took office in May last year, he vowed to reboot a flagging economy, rebuild the military to deter Russia, and reduce irregular immigration to soothe voters' fears and lure them away from the AfD.

But the AfD now leads nationwide polls and Merz's personal approval ratings hover just above 10 %, not helped by his occasionally blunt and abrasive comments.

The string of election debacles come as Merz has struggled to push through promised economic and social welfare reforms with his centre-left coalition partners the SPD.

Under-fire Merz received some badly needed support from CDU powerbrokers on Wednesday when eight state premiers declared jointly that Germany needs “stability now more than ever” rather than “discussions about personnel”.

Police arrest ex-PM Imran Khan's sister before march

Police arrested Aleema Khan, the sister of Pakistan's jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan at her house in Lahore, a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Punjab spokesman said yesterday, ahead of a planned protest march by the party on September 27.

A notification issued by Lahore's district administration said she has been arrested and sent to jail for 30 days.

“According to intelligence reports, her presence at any public place will pose a grave threat to public safety,” the district administration said.

Imran Khan's party has organised a march to Islamabad next week demanding his release. Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Saturday that the government would do everything it could to stop the protest march.

A close aide to Khan, Zulfi Bukhari, said the arrest of Khan's sister is “absolutely despicable”. “The fear of the 27th protest is clearly taking its toll,” he said. (Reuters)

Italy to ban burqas in schools, PM Meloni says

AFP
Rome

Italy will ban burqas and niqabs in schools and limit the number of foreign students per class, far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said yesterday.

Italy is a frontline country for migration, and integration is a major campaign issue ahead of a general election next year.

“A measure will soon be presented to a cabinet meeting to legally establish a maximum number of foreign students per class,” Meloni told a gathering of the youth wing of her Brothers of Italy (Fdi) party.

“It also requires parents of foreign students facing serious difficulties integrating into the school system to learn Italian, and bans burqas and niqabs in schools,” she said.

A crackdown on the use of burqas in schools was called for in July by the National Future (FN) party.

The FN, which is not part of the governing coalition, is further to the right than Meloni's and has emerged as a major challenger, rising sharply in the polls since launching in February.

While there is no law in Italy that expressly bans burqas, either in

schools or in public places, a 1975 law prohibits the use of helmets or garments that make identification difficult without a justified reason.

In 2008, Italy's highest administrative court clarified that full-face veils may be worn for religious or cultural reasons provided that the face is revealed when identity verification is required.

The anti-immigrant League party, which is part of Meloni's coalition, submitted a bill to the Senate earlier this year that would ban helmets or garments except for in certain circumstances, such as sporting events or places of worship.

The limit on the number of foreign students per class already exists under Italian law, and Meloni did not spell out how that would change. Foreign students account for just under 12% of those enrolled in Italian schools, according to the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT).

Since 2010 the number of foreign students has been limited to 30% of a class and of a school's enrolment.

The limit can be raised in cases involving foreign students with adequate language skills, such as foreign students born in Italy, or lowered when foreign students have a poor command of Italian.

Russian drone attack kills three children and a woman in Kyiv region

The death toll from an overnight Russian attack on the Kyiv region rose to four, including three children, Kyiv regional authorities said yesterday. In Kyiv itself, Russian drone attacks persisted throughout the day, with Mayor Vitali Klitschko reporting one injured. Drone fragments fell in various districts in the capital.

Outside the capital, a mother and her two 3-year-old children were killed in Kyiv region when a Russian drone strike hit a private home, the emergency service said. Kyiv region governor Tymur Tkachenko said a girl died in hospital after a separate drone strike in another district. Tkachenko said the region endured more than a day of hostile attacks, with 31 sites damaged in five districts.

The southwestern Fastiv district sustained the most damage, with 24 sites hit, including homes, industrial and utility buildings, the grounds of an agricultural enterprise and vehicles, he added.

Russia has been attacking the capital Kyiv and the surrounding Kyiv region with drones continually in recent weeks.

In Kramatorsk, local officials said one person died in one of several bouts of shelling. Kramatorsk is one of the “fortress cities” on eastern Donetsk Region repeatedly targeted by Russia in the slow advance through the region of its forces. (Reuters)

Ukrainian drones hit Moscow on last day of Russian election

AFP
Moscow

Ukraine fired waves of drones at Moscow and the surrounding region early yesterday, killing two people and setting an oil refinery ablaze as Russians voted in a final day of parliamentary elections, officials said.

The attack was the largest on Moscow since the Kremlin launched its Ukraine offensive in 2022 and involved some 1,600 drones, 450 of which were aimed directly at the capital, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said.

Images showed a gaping hole in a multi-storey apartment building on the outskirts of the city, while another showed black smoke pouring from what appeared to be an oil refinery.

The strikes came on the final day of tightly controlled parliamentary elections that are widely expected to result in another win for the ruling United Russia party which backs President Vladimir Putin.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin accused Ukraine of attempting to interfere with the polls.

“The unprecedented attack was clearly planned with the aim of disrupting the elections. The enemy did not succeed,” Sobyenin said on Telegram.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky meanwhile praised the strikes, saying: “Our long-range responses had a very significant impact in the Moscow region last night.”

“One of Russia's key oil industry facilities and the aggressor's logistics facility were hit. These are billions of dollars that sustain the war machine,” he posted on X.

Ukraine has targeted Russian infrastructure with drones throughout the war, in retaliation for Russian bombardment of its own towns and cities.

At least two people were killed in yesterday's attacks — a 44-year-old woman and an elderly man — in two separate locations, Moscow regional Gover-



Workers sweep the courtyard of a damaged multi-storey residential building hit by what authorities described as a Ukrainian drone strike in Kotelniki in the Moscow region, Russia. (Reuters)

nor Andrey Vorobyov said.

A fire triggered by a drone crashing into a 21-storey building also led to 400 people being evacuated, Vorobyov said.

The strikes came as voting to determine all 450 seats in Russia's lower house State Duma entered its third and final day.

The parliamentary vote is Russia's first since launching its Ukraine offensive in 2022, and while the results are unlikely to offer many surprises, they may offer clues as to public sentiment towards the war.

The United Russia party, which has won every parliamentary election in Russia since 2003, is widely expected to cruise to another victory.

All other parties back Putin and the Ukraine war.

Yabloko, a liberal party that has called for an end to the fighting, was barred from running its federal list by Russia's Supreme Court, although its candidates remain on the ballot in some single-mandate constituencies.

Putin had urged Russians to take part, casting the vote as a

show of support for Moscow's troops and an “answer to those who want to weaken Russia”.

In Moscow, one voter told AFP they were frustrated by the state of the economy.

“Many people have lost their jobs. Wages are now falling rather than rising,” Diana, 30, said.

Another voter, 71-year-old Tatiana, said she had voted for United Russia.

“It is the largest party, the hardest-working and most productive,” she said.

Putin's political opponents have mostly been driven into exile, while his main rival, Alexei Navalny, died in an Arctic prison in 2024.

Navalny's widow Yulia Navalnaya called on anti-war Russians to collectively cast their ballots at noon on yesterday, a tactic that drew crowds in the 2024 presidential election.

In Berlin, a few dozen opposition supporters gathered outside the Russian embassy to protest, an AFP reporter saw.

As voting entered a final day, Russia's electoral chief said there

had been a wave of cyberattacks targeting election infrastructure.

Ella Pamfilova, chair of Russia's Central Election Commission, did not say who was responsible.

The attacks appeared to have been carried out by “highly professional, well co-ordinated groups using artificial intelligence tools,” she said.

“Over the past period, more than 1,000 waves of DDoS attacks have been recorded against infrastructure in Russia that is specifically involved in the electoral process,” Pamfilova was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

DDoS (distributed denial-of-service) attacks involve overwhelming a system with internet traffic so that it is unable to function normally.

She warned on Saturday that saboteurs had also severed communication lines in Russia's far east, in an apparent attempt to frustrate the voting.

“We view the incident as a deliberate act of sabotage and an attempt to disrupt voting in the region,” Pamfilova was quoted as saying by state news agency TASS.

Macron welcomes Carney to French archipelago in north Atlantic

AFP
Saint-Pierre

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday welcomed Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney to France's tiny North Atlantic territory of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, just off the Canadian coast.

The leaders' meeting was being held at a time when both their countries were experiencing strained relations with the US.

Macron was waiting for Carney as he stepped off his airplane and the two leaders greeted each other with a warm handshake and a long embrace in the bright sunshine.

They were expected to confirm Canada's close relations with both France and the European Union in a joint statement following a working lunch.

“In a world in crisis, our friendship is a strength,” Macron posted on X, above a video of him welcoming Carney at the airport.

“Together, we affirm our sovereignty, our freedom to decide and our willingness to build a future of peace and prosperity,” he added.

Carney is the first Canadian prime minister to visit the territory.

Macron's three-day visit to the French territory, a three-island archipelago of fewer than 6,000 people just 25 km off Newfoundland, is the first by a French president in more than a decade.

The trip carries significant symbolic resonance.

The archipelago is France's only remaining possession in North America, a vestige of the vast territories Paris once controlled in what is now Canada and the US.

Macron argues that US President Donald Trump's second mandate has reinforced the case he has promoted that Europe needs to become more sovereign, especially on security.

Carney, caught up in an intensifying dispute with US President Donald Trump — who has even



President Emmanuel Macron (right) greets Prime Minister Mark Carney upon arrival in Saint-Pierre yesterday. (AFP)

threatened to annex Canada — has welcomed a proposal for his country to become the European Union's first “associate member”.

He has described his nation as “the most European of non-European countries”.

Trump's repeated remarks about making Canada the 51st US state have been strongly rejected by Ottawa.

Last week, Trump posted an image to social media with a map of North America in which Canada,

Greenland and Mexico, much of central America and the Caribbean, as well as Iceland, were coloured in with the US flag.

The image also encompassed several French overseas territories, such as Guadeloupe, Martinique — and Saint Pierre and Miquelon.

But the territory is French, Macron reaffirmed on his arrival in the territory late Saturday: “It's obvious,” he added, dismissing “strange ideas” on the subject.

The joint visit will underscore that Canada and France share “the same values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for the sovereignty of nations”, the French president's office said ahead of the meeting.

“In a world marked by the return of power politics, geopolitical tensions and new forms of dependency, France and Canada share a common ambition: to work together, and with all countries that share these values, to strengthen their capacity to make decisions and act independently,”

the Elysee Palace added.

Carney's office quoted him as saying that “Canada and France share more than a border.”

“We share a history, common values, and a resolute commitment to building a more secure and prosperous world. In an uncertain world, President Macron and I understand the importance of this relationship”.

The archipelago is one of several strategically located French overseas territories that span the globe, and has economic and social problems familiar to many such remote territories.

In what French officials describe as France's first climate-driven community relocation, the village of Miquelon has started moving inland to escape the growing threat of sea level rise, with a second phase due to begin.

The population is falling, deaths outnumber births and young people leave to study in mainland France or Canada and often do not come back.



Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud and the ministers at Saudi Arabia's 96th National Day celebration in Doha yesterday. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

Saudi Arabia marks 96th National Day in Doha

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

Qatari-Saudi relations are built on deep-rooted fraternal ties, shared interests and a common destiny, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Qatar Prince Saad bin Mansour bin Saad bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al-Saud has said.

Speaking at Saudi Arabia's 96th National Day at Sheraton Grand Doha Resort & Convention Hotel yesterday, the envoy highlighted the long history of communication and co-operation between the two nations, supported by the sincere will of both leaderships to advance these relations toward broader horizons.

The event was attended by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani, HE the Minister of State and Qatar National Library President Dr Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kuwari, HE the Minister of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen al-Ghanem, HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali bin Mohammed al-Mannai, HE the Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs

Ibrahim bin Ali bin Issa al-Mohannadi, HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah, HE the Minister of Transport Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed al-Thani, HE the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's Protocol Department Ibrahim bin Yousif Fakhro, and Eritrea's ambassador to Qatar head of diplomatic corp Ali Ibrahim Ahmed, as well as a number of dignitaries, sheikhs and heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the State.

In his address, Prince Saad recalled the unification of the kingdom by its founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman al-Saud and the establishment of a state built upon unity, security, and stability.

"We celebrate the achievements of our flourishing present under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud – may God protect them both," Prince Saad said. "The kingdom is witnessing a comprehensive developmental transformation and rapid progress across various sectors in line with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030."

He noted that the kingdom's celebration of this occasion in Qatar holds special

significance, given the fraternal ties and ongoing co-operation between the two nations.

Prince Saad highlighted that the eighth meeting of the Saudi-Qatari Co-ordination Council – held in Riyadh in December 2025, co-chaired by Prince Mohammed and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, marked a pivotal milestone in the trajectory of bilateral relations.

He said the meeting produced numerous initiatives, agreements, and memoranda of understanding, most notably the high-speed electric railway project connecting the kingdom and Qatar, which aims to boost the movement of people and goods and deepen economic integration between the two countries.

The Saudi envoy stated that the commencement of his duties in Doha coincided with the meeting of the Saudi-Qatari Co-ordination Council.

He viewed this as the beginning of an advanced phase in the relationship between the two nations, affirming his commitment to translating the directives of both leaderships into programmes and initiatives that serve the interests of their brotherly peoples.

He highlighted that recent regional de-

velopments have demonstrated the depth of co-operation and co-ordination between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, evidenced by ongoing communication and consultation between their leaderships and officials, as well as joint efforts to contain crises, support regional security and stability, and mitigate humanitarian and economic impacts.

He emphasised that relations between nations are measured not only by achievements during times of prosperity but also by the cohesion and co-ordination demonstrated during times of adversity.

In this context, he pointed to the kingdom's efforts to facilitate the smooth flow of travel, trade, and supply chains; provide necessary support for air, land, and maritime transport; and expand logistics options to serve Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states as well as regional and international markets.

The Saudi envoy also expressed his appreciation for Qatar and its leadership, recalling the significant contributions of HH the late Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani to the nation's renaissance and development.

"We also express our appreciation for the wise leadership of HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani – may God



Prince Saad speaking at the event.

protect him – and the continuous achievements, active international presence, and prominent role in mediation and conflict resolution witnessed by the State under his reign," Prince Saad said. "Furthermore, we acknowledge Doha's success in hosting meetings, forums, conferences, exhibitions, and major sporting events, all of which have cemented its status as a vital hub at both regional and international levels."

Concluding his remarks, he expressed his wishes for enduring security, stability, and prosperity for both Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and prayed for the success of both countries' leadership in serving the best interests of their brotherly peoples.

UDST, Alfardan Exchange launch FinTech Stars competition to support student innovation and entrepreneurship

The University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) and Alfardan Exchange have launched the 'FinTech Stars' Competition, an initiative aimed at supporting innovation and entrepreneurship and encouraging students to develop practical solutions that contribute to the advancement of Qatar's fintech sector.

The initiative supports young national talent and strengthens their contribution to shaping the future of the digital financial sector, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030, the National Development Strategy and Qatar Central Bank's FinTech Strategy 2024-2030. It also aligns with the vision of the Qatar Financial Centre to transform Doha into a leading global financial and commercial hub, while supporting economic development and diversification through a world-class business, legal and regulatory environment.

The launch was held at the University of Doha for Science and Technology in the presence of representatives from the university and Alfardan Exchange. The competition is open to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Financial Technology programme, providing them with an opportunity to apply their academic knowledge through practical projects that reflect the latest digital trends in the fintech sector.

The competition begins with students forming teams, with each team given two months to prepare and develop its fintech project. Final projects are scheduled to

Bashar Al Waqfi, CEO of Alfardan Exchange, said:

"We aim to provide a platform that enables students to develop their ideas and transform them into applicable solutions."



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be submitted on November 7, 2026, ahead of presentations to a specialised evaluation committee on November 18.

The committee will comprise representatives from UDST, Qatar Financial Centre, Alfardan Corporation and the Tariqi Programme, Alfardan Exchange, as well as a number of specialised parties from the fintech sector.

The winning teams will be announced during the competition's closing ceremony on November 25, 2026. The first-place team will receive a cash prize of QAR50,000, while the second- and third-place

teams will receive QAR30,000 and QAR15,000, respectively. The prizes will be presented by Alfardan Exchange.

Dr Vincent Mangematin, Dean of the College of Business at UDST, said: "Hosting the FinTech Stars Competition at the University of Doha for Science and Technology reflects our commitment to providing an applied learning environment that responds to the rapid evolution of the financial technology sector.

"Initiatives such as this strengthen the connection between academic knowledge and industry practice, while equipping our students with

the capabilities to contribute to the development of an innovative and competitive financial sector. As Qatar advances its digital transformation and knowledge-based economy, UDST remains committed to preparing work-ready talent that can contribute meaningfully to these national priorities."

Bashar Al Waqfi, CEO of Alfardan Exchange, said: "We are proud to launch the FinTech Stars Competition in partnership with the University of Doha for Science and Technology, as it represents a practical step towards empowering the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs in

Qatar.

"Through this initiative, we aim to provide a platform that enables students to develop their ideas and transform them into applicable solutions, supporting the digital transformation of the financial sector and reinforcing the State of Qatar's position as a leading hub for fintech."

The 'FinTech Stars' Competition is expected to help develop students' practical skills and enable them to present innovative ideas that support the advancement of digital financial services, further contributing to Qatar's development as a leading regional fintech hub.