



Qatar's best car marketplace





qic • market

*Non-insurance services are provided by Anoud Tech, a subsidiary of QIC

GULF TIMES





0 668039 136499

FRIDAY Vol. XXXXVI No. 13874

September 25, 2026
Rabia II 14, 1448 AH

www.gulf-times.com 2 Riyals

published in **QATAR** since 1978



Together we can

Among Family, stories don't end



the new Ahli plans

Explore more






Interior Paint with Low VOC

Exceptional Washability

Superior Stain Resistant

Obtained Qatar Quality Mark

Obtained International Green Mark



طلي بروتينك

تصميم منزلك

446016023

THE PERFECT GIFT?

THE ONE THEY CHOOSE



Taha Festival City



TRAVEL THE WORLD

Flight Tickets

Hotel Bookings

Visa Assistance



Ready to GUAC AND ROLL?

Only on talabat



FREE DELIVERY

6THSTREET.COM

IS NOW

AIVI

Authentic Fashion & Lifestyle Destination

Delivering In

90

Minutes



Scan the QR code & download the AIVI app

Amir receives message from Cuban president

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani received a written message from Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel touching on bilateral relations and ways of supporting and developing them. The letter was received by HE the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmad Hassan al-Hammadi, during his meeting with Cuban ambassador to Qatar Jose Enrique Enriquez Rodriguez. **(QNA)**

New US sanctions shut Iran flights

Iranian airlines were barred from neighbouring countries including the UAE and Oman yesterday in response to new US sanctions, the first big impact of a shift in US policy to target companies in third countries that do business with Iran. The General Civil Aviation Authority of the United Arab Emirates, the Middle East's biggest travel hub, said that as a result of the new US policy it was suspending all flights by Iranian airlines until further notice. Iran's Tasnim news agency reported that flights had also been shut down to Oman, Georgia and Azerbaijan, and to the Iraqi capital Baghdad. **To Page 5**

COMMUNITY
See Page 6

Culture keeps dialogue alive when politics stops, says Sheikha Al Mayassa

THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

“Cultural diplomacy and political diplomacy are two sides of the same coin. In the end, it's about credibility”

— HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani
Chairperson of Qatar Museums



By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

Qatar's cultural institutions can keep dialogue alive when political channels close, Qatar Museums Chairperson HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani yesterday said highlighting culture's role in building trust, credibility and lasting international relationships between people worldwide. Speaking at the 'QC Talks' session "Culture as Diplomacy: How Cultural Institutions Shape International Relationships" at the Museum of Islamic Art Auditorium, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa stressed that cultural diplomacy should not replace political diplomacy, but keep relationships moving when formal dialogue becomes difficult.

The discussion was held with Anne-Claire Legendre, president of the Institut du monde arabe in Paris, and moderated by Dr Safwan Masri, an academic leader, scholar and author. "Culture starts at the point of curiosity," she said, explaining that it creates space to discover and understand others beyond political agendas. When political conversations stop, she pointed out, cultural relationships can continue. HE Sheikha Al Mayassa pointed to Qatar's experience during the blockade, saying cultural ties with artists from the countries involved were not cut. "We didn't stop talking to the artists from these countries. We welcomed them," she said, adding that Qatar continued producing films, supporting artwork and staging exhibitions. **To Page 5**

Sheikha Al Mayassa deepens Years of Culture partnership in South America — Page 12

388 work sites shut over heat stress violations

The Ministry of Labour shut 388 work sites for breaching heat stress protection rules during this year's summer work ban, ordering each to close for three days. The violations were recorded between June 1 and September 15 during inspections to enforce Ministerial Decision No 17 of 2021 on precautions to protect workers from heat stress. The ministry's Occupational Safety and Health Department carried out intensive field inspections to check compliance with the decision and approved preventive measures, particularly during peak periods of high temperatures and humidity. Legal

action was taken against violators, alongside the closure orders. The ministry said the measures aimed to protect workers, strengthen occupational safety and health standards and ensure compliance with labour legislation. They also support its strategic objectives and Qatar National Vision 2030 by promoting a safe, healthy and sustainable working environment. Publishing the inspection results was intended to raise awareness among employers and workers of the importance of compliance, while encouraging prevention and shared responsibility at work sites, it added. **(QNA)**

PM attends Euro-Gulf banquet



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani attended yesterday a breakfast banquet titled "Fostering Europe-Gulf Partnerships for Regional Security and Prosperity". The function was hosted by the Atlantic Council and the Antenna Group on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. **(QNA)**

Qatar drives Gaza roadmap; UN warns of record collapse

GT Report
New York

Qatar yesterday called for the Gaza peace plan to move into its second phase without delay, including a full Israeli withdrawal, an international stabilisation force and territory-wide reconstruction, as a UN agency warned that the enclave's economy has suffered the most severe collapse on record. Speaking at a high-level roundtable on early recovery in Gaza on the sidelines of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly in New York, HE Minister of State for International Co-operation Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad said Qatar is continuing its mediation with Egypt, Türkiye and the US to fully implement the comprehensive peace plan and its roadmap, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2803. Setting out Qatar's own contribution, she said Doha had supplied Gaza with about 30mn litres of fuel over the past three years and had recently signed an agreement with the UN to provide a further 1.3mn litres. She said fuel remains vital to keeping essential



civil services running, and that early recovery cannot be separated from the urgent humanitarian needs of Palestinians. She added that Qatar's humanitarian work also covers healthcare and other pressing public health needs, noting that the HH the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani Hospital for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics in Gaza serves tens of thousands of patients and people with disabilities. The minister stressed the importance of maintaining the ceasefire and of meeting all outstanding obligations under the plan's first phase. These include the immediate, safe and unim-

ped delivery of humanitarian aid and early recovery supplies, and the rehabilitation of vital infrastructure in the Strip. She described the roadmap as an integral part of the peace plan and said it provides the framework for moving to the second phase. That phase covers dismantling military capabilities alongside a full Israeli withdrawal, deploying an international stabilisation force, enabling the National Committee for the Management of the Gaza Strip to assume its responsibilities across the territory, and launching early recovery and reconstruction throughout Gaza.

QU researchers borrow a desert beetle's trick to pull water from thin air

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qatar University (QU) researchers have developed a material, modelled on a Namib Desert beetle, that pulls millilitres of water out of humid air within an hour, pointing to a low-energy source of fresh water for Qatar and other arid regions where water security remains a pressing challenge. Under high-humidity laboratory conditions, the one-square-centimetre prototype collected millilitres of water in that time without the heavy energy de-



Dr Anton Popelka.

mands of conventional systems. Dr Anton Popelka, research associate at QU's Center for Advanced Materials, told *Gulf Times* the work draws on the beetle's

remarkable ability to survive in one of the world's harshest environments by collecting moisture from the air. "This project is inspired by a Namib Desert beetle, which can survive harsh desert conditions with limited water by collecting water from humid air. We are seeking to replicate the beetle's natural water-collection mechanism by creating an artificial surface with contrasting water-attracting and water-repelling properties," Dr Popelka explained. He said harvesting water from air could be particularly promising for Qatar and other arid regions. "The beetle has a unique sur-

face structure that combines two different properties: hydrophilic areas that attract water, and hydrophobic areas that repel it and help transport the collected water to its mouth. We used these principles to develop an artificial material capable of harvesting water from air," Dr Popelka said. To reproduce the beetle's water-collection mechanism, the team fabricated hydrophilic bulges on hydrophobic polymeric micropatterns. It has already reached a significant milestone by developing and experimentally verifying a polymer prototype that mimics key features of the beetle. **To Page 5**

Mr and Mrs at the White House



From left: Chinese First Lady Peng Liyuan, President Xi Jinping, US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump look on during a military review in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. **(AFP) Page 11**



Qatar urges stronger global support for LDCs

Qatar has called for stronger international action to support the world's least developed countries (LDCs), warning that overlapping economic, climate and food crises are compounding their long-standing structural challenges.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali al-Misnad made the remarks during the annual ministerial meeting of the least developed countries, held on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

HE Dr al-Misnad said that support for LDCs was not only a matter of international solidarity, but also an investment in sustainable development, peace and international stability.

She reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to supporting the world's least developed countries, citing multilateral co-operation

and effective partnerships as key to achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

Qatar hosted the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha in March 2023.

During the conference, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani pledged \$60mn to support the implementation and outcomes of the Doha Programme of Action: \$10mn for programme activities and \$50mn to strengthen resilience in LDCs.

HE Dr al-Misnad said that Qatar is working to translate those commitments into practical partnerships.

In September last year, the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) signed two agreements worth a combined \$21mn with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States.

The agreements, she said, support resilience-building in LDCs and the establishment of a food-storage mechanism.

HE Dr al-Misnad added that Qatar also hosted a high-level meeting on achieving sustainable and resilient graduation from the LDC category in December 2025.

She called for greater international co-operation to close the development financing gap facing LDCs, expand concessional financing and investment, mobilise domestic and international resources, and develop innovative financing mechanisms tailored to the circumstances of vulnerable countries.

The minister also highlighted the need to strengthen resilience to economic, climate and food-related shocks, while maintaining investment in education, healthcare, social protection and skills development.

HE Dr al-Misnad said sustainable grad-

uation from the LDC category should be treated as a long-term development process that protects gains already made and prevents countries from falling back into the category.

She pointed to the high-level midterm review of the Doha Programme of Action, scheduled to take place in Doha on March 25-27, 2027, as an opportunity to assess progress, identify gaps and renew political and financial commitments during the second half of the programme.

The minister also addressed the impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, saying that prolonged disruption to shipping had implications beyond energy security and global trade, affecting food security and energy supplies, particularly in developing countries.

She said that disruption to fertiliser supply chains had also affected agricultural production and called for the resto-

ration of navigation through the strait in accordance with international law and UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026).

Qatar's priority, HE Dr al-Misnad said, is to contain escalation and create space for diplomatic efforts.

Any future arrangements concerning the strait, she added, should be based on regional consensus and full respect for international law.

The minister said the success of the Doha Programme of Action is a collective responsibility and urged development partners to increase their efforts, strengthen international solidarity and direct more resources and investment towards the world's least developed countries.

Qatar, she said, would continue working with its partners to implement the programme and support more inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. – QNA

Qatar takes part in G20 ministers' meeting



Qatar participated yesterday in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Accelerating Collective Action to Defeat Ebola, held on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad. – QNA

Qatar participates in joint meeting of GCC foreign ministers with Asean in New York

Qatar participated in the joint ministerial meeting yesterday between the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) foreign affairs ministers and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi. – QNA



Al-Muraikhi meets European commissioner



HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi met yesterday with European Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration Magnus Brunner. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 81) in New York. They explored ways to support and strengthen co-operation between Qatar and the European Commission in the areas of internal affairs and migration as well as discussed topics of mutual interest. – QNA

Kyrgyz speaker meets Qatar's ambassador

Speaker of the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz Republic Marlen Mamataliev met yesterday with Qatar's ambassador to Kyrgyzstan Ali Jaber al-Marri. The meeting discussed co-operation and relations between the two countries. – QNA



Qatar's role and success as mediator highlighted at New York meeting

Qatar participated yesterday in the 16th Ministerial Meeting of the UN Group of Friends of Mediation, held on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 81) in New York.

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi represented Qatar at the meeting.

In his remarks, the minister said that the meeting comes at a time when the growing diversity of actors involved in mediation presents both an opportunity and a challenge for the United Nations, requiring a co-ordinated and integrated approach to harness this diversity.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi highlighted Qatar's role in this regard, noting that from Gaza to Afghanistan and from Lebanon to the Demo-

cratic Republic of the Congo, Qatar continues to engage in mediation efforts to bridge differences between parties and keep the hope for peace alive.

He stated that today, in partnership with Pakistan, efforts are underway to de-escalate tensions between Iran and the United States, safeguard freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, and promote peace and stability in the region.

The minister noted that this experience had highlighted two key lessons: first, that partnerships are indispensable; and second, that successful mediation requires mediators to be able to perform their roles safely, independently, and impartially, while fully respecting the confidentiality and integrity of the process.

He emphasised the critical importance of protecting mediation

efforts and mediators in situations of armed conflict.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi noted that while international humanitarian law, with international human rights law, and diplomatic immunities provide important protections, these measures are spread across different legal frameworks, making them difficult to enforce in practice.

He said threats to mediation today extend beyond physical attacks to include interference with communications, breaches of confidentiality, cyber threats, and disinformation, all of which can undermine the integrity of a mediation process as seriously as violence.

HE Dr al-Khulaifi stressed that protecting mediation means safeguarding the possibility of dialogue precisely when dialogue is most difficult. – QNA

Minister meets Haiti's Fils-Aime



Haiti's Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aime met yesterday with HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. During the meeting, they reviewed co-operative relations between the two countries and ways to support and develop them, as well as the latest developments in Haiti. – QNA



Al-Khulaifi meets ministers, officials

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi held separate meetings on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

He met foreign ministers Corinne Amori Brunet (Benin), Sara Beysolow Nyanti (Liberia), Abdoulaye Diop (Mali), and Oana Toiu (Romania).

HE Dr al-Khulaifi also met with Italy's Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation Maria Tripodi, US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Rafael Grossi, European Union Special Representative for the Gulf region Luigi Di Maio, and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Rabab Fatima.



The meetings discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to deepen and expand it, the latest developments in the region, and a range of issues of mutual interest. – QNA



Qatar participates in meeting of Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism

Qatar participated in the meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, held on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Qatar was represented at the meeting by the director of the International Organisations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sheikha Hanouf bint Abdulrahman al-Thani.

In her remarks at the meeting, Sheikha Hanouf stressed the importance of renewing the international commitment to the rights of victims and survivors of terrorism, supporting their resilience and recovery, and enhancing their role in amplifying their voices and experiences through global forums.

She commended the efforts of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in translating international commitments into tangible support and technical assistance for member states, pointing to the contributions of the Global Programme on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism, implemented through the UNOCT Programme Office in Doha, in raising parliamentary awareness of the issues facing victims of terrorism and supporting their rights and needs.

Sheikha Hanouf said Qatar's national priorities



align with international priorities in this field, noting that the comprehensive national strategy for combating terrorism is consistent with the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

She reiterated Qatar's commitment to the efforts of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism aimed at promoting and supporting the rights of victims and survivors. – QNA

Attorneys Admission Committee meets under chairmanship of justice minister

The Attorneys Admission Committee met yesterday under the chairmanship of HE the Committee Chairman and Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Ibrahim bin Ali al-Mohannadi.

During the meeting, the committee discussed the items on its agenda.

Three lawyers took the legal oath before the committee after completing their training period.

The committee also considered applications to register several individuals engaged in equivalent legal professions on the roll of practicing lawyers and registered a

group of new lawyers on the roll of trainee lawyers.

It also reviewed applications from two candidates seeking to complete their training period in preparation for practicing the legal profession.

As part of the progression of lawyers' registration before the courts, the committee approved transferring the registration of one lawyer from the roll of practicing lawyers admitted before the Court of First Instance to the roll of lawyers admitted before the Court of Appeal.

It also approved transferring another lawyer's registration from

the Court of Appeal roll to the roll of practicing lawyers admitted before the Court of Cassation.

The committee also discussed several comprehensive regulatory and development matters concerning the legal profession and reviewed the minutes of its sub-committees.

HE al-Mohannadi congratulated the new lawyers who took the legal oath, stressing the importance of serving as role models in competence and adherence to professional ethics and to the noble mission of the legal profession in upholding the rule of law and achieving justice.



At the conclusion of the meeting, the minister stressed the Ministry of Justice's continued commitment to developing the legal profession, qualifying

young national professionals and providing a supportive legislative and institutional environment that enables lawyers to perform their duties efficiently and com-

petently, in line with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030 and in support of the targets of the Third National Development Strategy. - QNA

Amman International Book Fair opens with Qatari participation

The 25th edition of the Amman International Book Fair opened yesterday, featuring nearly 400 local, Arab, and international publishing houses, and running through October 3, with Syria participating as the guest of honour.

Qatar is taking part through the Ministry of Culture and several Qatari publishing houses.

The Qatari participation serves to strengthen cultural ties between the two nations and offers Jordanian readers an opportunity to explore Qatar's latest literary and cultural publications.

The fair's cultural programme encompasses approximately 60 events, ranging from intellectual, critical, and philosophical seminars to poetry readings, story sessions, workshops, and documentary screenings, featuring around 40 guest speakers from Arab countries and China.



During the opening ceremony, Jordan's Minister of Culture Mustafa al-Rawashdeh emphasised the importance of advancing the publishing industry amid rapid technological shifts.

Syria's Minister of Culture Mohammad Yassin Saleh stat-

ed that Syria's role as the guest of honour offers a platform to present its literary and intellectual contributions while showcasing new creative voices and research, reflecting the country's rich and evolving cultural heritage. - QNA

Culture minister meets Russian counterpart



HE the Minister of Culture Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani met yesterday with Russia's Minister of Culture Olga Lyubimova on the sidelines of the 12th St Petersburg International United Cultures Forum. The meeting discussed co-operation, relations between the two countries in the cultural sector, and ways of supporting and developing them. - QNA



Qatar team takes part in Qu'ran memorisation competition in Croatia

Qatar is participating in the 32nd European International Competition for Memorisation and Recitation of the Holy Qu'ran in Zagreb, on September 24-26, with the support of the Sheikh Jassim bin Muhammad bin Thani Noble Qur'an Competition.

Representing Qatar in the competition is a delegation from the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, headed by Salman Khidir al-Atwi.

The delegation includes Ibrahim Mohammed Hashem al-Mashhadani, a contestant in the category of memorising the complete Holy Qur'an, and Sadiq Allah Latif Allah, as well as Mohamed Ahmed Abdulrahman al-Harem, a member of the judging panel.

This participation embodies the ministry's keen interest in the memorisation of the Holy Qur'an, developing abilities and skills, supporting Qatari capabilities in international Qur'anic events, and exchanging expertise between an elite group of memorisers and readers from different countries. - QNA

Qatar joins 'call to action' on plight of Palestine's children

Qatar participated yesterday in a high-level ministerial event on "Call to Action for Palestinian Children in the West Bank and Gaza" held on the sidelines of the 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad represented Qatar at the event.

In her address, the minister reaffirmed Qatar's support for the "Call to Action for Palestinian Children in the West Bank and Gaza" and reiterated the country's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of Palestinian children, noting that the call to action outlines key action points.

These include urging parties to reach an immediate ceasefire, respect international law - including international human rights law and international humanitarian law - and put an end to grave violations against children, such as killing and maiming.

HE Dr al-Misnad added that the situation in the West Bank and Gaza is a tragic example of how children continue to bear the heaviest burden and immense hardships in conflict zones.

She pointed to the latest humanitarian situation report from the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which indicates that as the new school year begins across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, children continue to face barriers to accessing



Qatar Participates in Ministerial Event Titled "Call to Action for Palestinian Children in West Bank and Gaza"

safe education due to displacement, insecurity caused by airstrikes and other attacks, damage to facilities, and ongoing restrictions on freedom of movement.

HE Dr al-Misnad stated that the international community must continue its vigorous efforts to ensure accountability for those responsible and to take urgent measures to protect children. She added that alleviating the suffering of children has been a primary driver of Qatar's mediation efforts regarding the Gaza Strip.

The minister noted that Qatar has prioritised the safety and well-being of children by contributing to urgent humanitarian efforts that benefit children and their families.

She also mentioned that Qatar signed an agreement with the United Nations to supply

approximately 1.3mn litres of fuel to the Gaza Strip, as part of a grant aimed at supporting the continuity of vital health services and essential humanitarian operations.

HE Dr al-Misnad affirmed that Qatar remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting children worldwide through various humanitarian and development initiatives designed to provide essential services, including education, healthcare, and protection to vulnerable children, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

She highlighted the pivotal role played by the Doha-based Analysis and Communication Centre of the Office of the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in fostering research, co-operation, and capacity-building efforts to protect children in conflict zones.

The minister reiterated Qatar's firm and supportive stance regarding the Palestinian cause and the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people - including their right to establish an independent state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international legitimacy resolutions and the two-state solution.

She stated that, guided by its principles and a long-standing commitment, Qatar will continue to play a leading role in international efforts to support the Palestinian people, including Palestinian children, as well as children across the globe. - QNA



Ministry organises annual awareness forum with 61 government entities

The Ministry of Justice, represented by the Department of Case Studies and Analysis under the State Cases Affairs Sector, organised the second annual awareness forum for government entities for 2026, with the participation of directors and representatives of legal departments from 61 government bodies, as part of efforts to familiarise partners with its services and enhance institutional partnership.

The forum featured presentations focusing on legal insights to draw lessons from court rulings and cases, as well as addressing legal challenges facing government entities, aiming to elevate institutional legal efficiency and mitigate future recurring disputes.

The assistant director of the Department of Case Studies and Analysis, Aldana al-Nuaimi, affirmed the department's commitment to converting judicial experience into knowledge, knowledge into prevention, and lessons learned into practical application, stressing that government legal work cannot achieve its goals if entities operate in isolation.

She said that the government entities are an essential part of the partnership that the department seeks to cultivate to explore proactive legal solutions, noting the department's readiness to receive requests for legal opinions on administrative grievances, serving as an additional channel for inter-governmental collaboration. - QNA

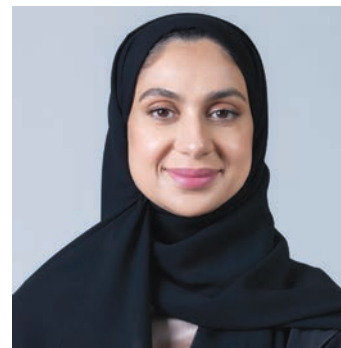
New president of QF Higher Education

Qatar Foundation (QF) has announced the appointment of Dr Hend Zainal (pictured) as the organisation's president of Higher Education, a position she will assume with effect from January 1, 2027.

Dr Zainal began her career in 2005 in higher education, holding roles at several QF partner universities.

She joined the QF in 2015 and has been instrumental in advancing and executing the organisation's higher education strategy.

As president of Higher Education at the QF, she will oversee the continued advancement of this strategy, the QF's unique higher education model, and its partnerships with international universities, as well as the programmes and opportunities that the QF's Higher Education Division provides to support students throughout their academic journey.



Awqaf ministry wins Digital Innovation Award

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs has received the Leadership in Digital Innovation and Heritage award for the second consecutive year during the third Google Cloud Doha 2026 conference, held under the patronage of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT).

The global honour recognised the Awqaf ministry's leadership in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud computing technologies to develop government services and safeguard Islamic knowledge heritage.

The ministry's Human Resources Management director Mohammed Hassan al-Malki said the feat means that the ministry has successfully leveraged cutting-edge technologies to serve the community.

The recognition grew out of a package of smart projects and solutions that the ministry recently launched, chiefly the "Qatar Moshaf" app, an all-encompassing digital platform serving the Qur'anic text and its related sciences, and the "Minbar" project, a digital platform that translates Friday sermons into multiple languages to reach all segments of society.

This is alongside the "Smart Preacher Assistant", an AI-enhanced tool drawing on Islam Web's knowledge repository to develop contemporary religious outreach content, as well as smart services and AI agents: integrated digital portals for managing mosque affairs, facilitating Haj and Umrah procedures, and providing interactive conversational solutions. - QNA



Qatar joins OIC ministerial co-ordination meeting on sidelines of 81st UNGA

The State of Qatar has taken part in a ministerial co-ordination meeting of foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC). The meeting took place yesterday on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The State of Qatar was represented at the meeting by HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi. The meeting brought together foreign ministers from OIC member states as part of consultations on issues of common interest on the margins of the UN General Assembly. **(QNA)**



Qatar participates in ministerial meeting of ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti

The State of Qatar participated yesterday in a ministerial meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, held on the sidelines of the 81st session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 81) in New York.

HE the Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi represented the State of Qatar at the meeting.

In his address, HE Dr al-Khulaifi reaffirmed Qatar's steadfast commitment to Haiti's security, stability, and prosperity, stressing that the situation in the country is of critical importance not only to the region but also to global peace and security.

He expressed concern over the multidimensional crisis facing the Haitian people, emphasising that the country's future must be shaped by Haitian stakeholders, with the international community providing coordinated and sustained support, including efforts to ensure credible and inclusive elections.

Dr al-Khulaifi noted that the establishment of the multinational Gang Suppression Force (GSF) offers a cautious glimmer of hope for improved security conditions. He highlighted Qatar's pledge of \$30mn vol-



untary contribution to the UN trust fund supporting the Multinational Security Support Mission and the GSF, to be disbursed over three years. The first \$10mn instalment was transferred last June through the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) to the UN Department of Operational Support, which manages the trust fund.

He noted the long-standing ties between Qatar and the people of Haiti and reaffirmed Qatar's continued support for the country as it works toward stability, recovery, and sustainable development. **(QNA)**



University of Doha for Science and Technology celebrates IUSW

University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST) celebrated International University Sport Week (IUSW) through a diverse programme of sporting and wellness activities across campus, including its Fun Olympics.

The week brought together students, faculty, and staff through fitness classes, workshops, sporting activities, and friendly competitions that promote wellbeing, teamwork, and community engagement.

As part of the IUSW programme, UDST's Fun Olympics brought together 280 students, faculty and staff representing their countries in a series of team-based challenges.

Hamad AlKuwarei, director of Sport and Wellness at UDST, said: "This week reflects the energy, diversity and team spirit that define our University community. Through the Fun Olympics and the wider International University Sport Week program, we give our students and staff a chance to celebrate their cul-

tures, work together and compete in a spirit of encouragement and mutual support. We believe sport is an integral part of the university experience, helping build our students' confidence, resilience and sense of belonging to their community."

The International University Sport Week coincides with the International Day of University Sport (IDUS), an international observance recognised by Unesco and the International University Sports Federation (FISU). The occasion highlights sport's role in university life and its contribution to health, education and social development. This year also marks IDUS's 10th anniversary.

At UDST, IUSW forms part of the University's broader approach to wellness and student development. As a Platinum-level FISU Healthy Campus, UDST integrates sport and physical activity into campus life, in line with its Wellness Strategy 2025-2027, which promotes a holistic approach to wellbeing across the University community.

QU, Qatar Shell launch 4th cohort of 'Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar'

As part of the ongoing strategic partnership between Qatar University (QU) and Qatar Shell to support young people and develop their capabilities, the two organisations have announced the launch of the 4th cohort of the Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar programme.

The eight-week programme continues its mission to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among QU students, strengthen their personal and professional skills, and empower them to explore their potential and shape their future pathways with confidence and purpose.

Registration for the fourth cohort attracted strong interest from QU students, with 377 students from a wide range of colleges and

academic disciplines applying to join the programme. Of these, 215 students were selected to participate based on the programme's approved selection criteria and process.

Results from previous cohorts have also demonstrated a positive impact on a number of key competencies, including self-confidence, creative thinking, teamwork, effective communication, and problem-solving. The programme has also encouraged students to explore entrepreneurship and consider how their ideas can be developed into viable and scalable ventures.

Commenting on the launch, Dean of the College of Business and Economics at QU, Dr Abdullah Fetais said that the continued



215 students were selected to participate based on the programme's approved selection criteria

interest in Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar reflects the value the programme brings to students and the impact it has achieved through its previ-

MoPH, Memorial Sloan Kettering sign MoU to enhance cancer patient care

HE the Minister of Public Health Mansoor bin Ebrahim al-Mahmoud affirmed the State of Qatar's commitment to attracting the most prominent specialised international centres to support its ongoing efforts to advance cancer patient care. He pointed out that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that was signed on Wednesday between the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) would boost the significant progress achieved in treatment, research, and disease prevention, while contributing to the delivery of the highest standards of patient care.

On the sidelines of signing the MoU, HE al-Mahmoud said that this partnership will enable both parties to establish a distinguished partnership aimed at enhancing cancer patient care in Qatar and the region, and sup-



porting the development and expansion of scientific research and innovation, in alignment with the priorities of the National Health Strategy and Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV 2030).

For his part, President and CEO of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Dr Selwyn M Vickers, said that the proposed partnership will bring over 140 years of clinical excellence, scientific discovery, and innovation to patients in Qatar and the region, delivering an advanced level of cancer care and reinforcing the Center's mission to eradicate cancer for a lifetime.

In turn, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Scott M. Stuart, said that MSK's board of trustees continuously evaluates global opportunities that

would advance its mission, noting that the proposed partnership has become an institutional priority, given that it addresses a significant regional need and aligns with the Center's capabilities and specialised expertise.

The MoU is expected to establish a framework for cooperation in the fields of precision medicine, cancer research, and innovation, encompassing genomics, cell therapies, cancer vaccines, antibody-based platforms, and clinical trials.

The collaboration involves leveraging advanced cloud computing and artificial intelligence capabilities to support clinical care, scientific research, diagnostics, drug discovery, and innovation in oncology. This contributes to translating the latest scientific and clinical advancements from MSK into improved treatment options and outcomes for patients receiving care in Qatar. **(QNA)**

Qatar partakes in Arab Interior Ministers Council's co-ordination meeting

The State of Qatar participated in the 41st co-ordination meeting of the various agencies under the Arab Interior Ministers Council, held at the council's General Secretariat headquarters in the Republic of Tunisia.

The State of Qatar's delegation to the meeting was led by Lieutenant Colonel Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani, who serves as Head of the Gulf and Arab Affairs Section at the Ministry of Interior's International Co-operation Department. The participants discussed several items on the meeting's agenda and made the appropriate recommendations regarding them. **(QNA)**



BCCQ marks new chapter in UK-Qatar business ties

The British Chamber of Commerce Qatar (BCCQ) marked a significant milestone in its development at its Celebration Evening on September 17, bringing together more than 150 members and sponsor partners at Park Hyatt Doha.

The evening marked the Chamber's progress since its transition from the Qatar British Business Forum (QBBF) to the BCCQ in January 2026, while highlighting the strong institutional relationships supporting the Chamber's work with the UK and Qatar business communities.

A key development in the Chamber's next phase is establishing a BCCQ office within Invest Qatar's new Lusail offices, the country's investment promotion agency. This move will further strengthen the relationship between the two organisations and create greater opportunities for collaboration.

Invest Qatar has offered BCCQ dedicated office space within its Lusail offices, together with access to meeting facilities. The new presence will give BCCQ a practical base to meet with existing members, prospective members, and business stakeholders, while enabling closer day-to-day engagement with the Invest Qatar team.

BCCQ will be located alongside Invest Qatar's investment teams and Corporate Affairs, as well as other international business chambers operating from the offices.

The move follows Invest Qatar's relocation from Tornado Tower to its new Lusail offices in August and marks another step in the relationship between BCCQ and Invest Qatar. It builds on the organisations' joint work earlier this year, including their report examining opportunities to ad-



BCCQ records a significant milestone in its development at its Celebration Evening, bringing together more than 150 members and sponsors

vance bilateral trade and investment between the United Kingdom and Qatar.

The new office presence will also give BCCQ greater opportunities to engage directly with Qatar's wider investment and business ecosystem, while continuing to support its members through access to relevant institutions, business insight, and opportunities for engagement.

BCCQ will continue to maintain its existing office at the British embassy in Doha. The Chamber's relationship with the British embassy remains an important part of its work in supporting members and strengthening links between

British businesses and Qatar.

The Celebration Evening reflected the breadth of these institutional relationships, with Duncan Hill OBE, deputy head of Mission at the British embassy in Doha, and Aalia al-Khater, Investment Development officer at Invest Qatar, joining the event as guest speakers.

Since becoming the BCCQ in January, it has continued to develop its programme of business events, industry-specific discussions and engagement with key institutions, with a focus on providing practical value to its growing membership and supporting stronger UK-Qatar commercial relationships.



their skills, and better prepare themselves for the opportunities and demands of the future.

He added that the Center for Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with Qatar Shell, remains committed to continuously enhancing the programme experience in line with students' aspirations and the rapidly evolving labour market and entrepreneurial landscape, while further strengthening a culture of innovation and initiative across the QU community.

For his part, General Manager of Public Relations at Qatar Shell, Hussain al-Hijji said that the continued success of Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar and the growing interest among students highlight the importance of investing in young people and equipping them with

the skills they need for the future.

He added that the programme reflects Qatar Shell's commitment to supporting human development in the State of Qatar by focusing on practical skills, entrepreneurial thinking, and personal leadership, helping young people navigate change, identify opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The Shell Intilaaqah - Qatar programme is part of the global Shell LiveWIRE initiative, which aims to support young people and entrepreneurs in developing their capabilities and strengthening their readiness through training, mentorship, capacity building, and networking, opening up broader opportunities for learning, growth, and innovation. **(QNA)**

QU researchers borrow a desert beetle’s trick to pull water from thin air

From Page 1

The researcher said that while existing atmospheric water-harvesting technologies can extract moisture from air through condensation, many consume considerable energy while producing relatively small quantities of water.

“Developing innovative materials that can collect water from humid air more efficiently and passively is therefore highly desirable,” he said.

The QU team combined advanced manufacturing and surface-engineering techniques to build its prototype. Additive manufacturing, or 3D printing, is used to create precise hydrophobic micropatterns, while low-temperature plasma treatment is selectively applied to produce hydrophilic regions.

“These technologies enable us to engineer surfaces that can effectively attract, collect and transport water droplets. Plasma treatment plays a particularly important role in the process. We use low-temperature plasma to modify the surface of the material without altering its bulk properties,” Dr Popelka noted.

“The treatment creates hydrophilic regions that attract tiny water droplets from humid air and encourage them to accumulate. Once the droplets become sufficiently large, the surrounding hydrophobic micropatterns help move them towards a collector by gravity,” he continued.

“These results demonstrate the potential of our biomimetic material for efficient water harvesting from humid air,” he said of the laboratory findings.

The research involved detailed analysis of the beetle’s structural features, surface chemistry and water-collection mechanisms.

This understanding was then translated into the design and fabrication of a man-made material that reproduces the same principles.

The next phase will focus on scaling up the prototype and testing it under real environmental conditions in Qatar. The researchers will examine how temperature, relative humidity, wind and daily environmental fluctuations affect the amount of water collected.

The findings will help the team refine the design of the final prototype and determine how well the technology performs outside controlled laboratory conditions.

“Our research demonstrates how inspiration from nature, combined with advanced materials and technologies, can help address real-world challenges. We hope this research can contribute to the development of affordable and sustainable water-harvesting technologies for Qatar and other arid regions,” Dr Popelka said.

The project was funded through the Qatar National Research Fund’s Undergraduate Research Experience Programme and brought together an international, multidisciplinary team of QU researchers, research assistants and students. Research mentors Dr Popelka and Dr Peter Kasak, along with research assistants Nithusha Kallingal and Sajeel N Kavit, provided scientific guidance.

Students Reem Ahmed, Eman Hussen, Sara Awad, Nidaa Abdelrahman, Aseela Fathima and Preetan Ghosh, from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering, contributed to the experimental work, data collection and prototype development.

New US sanctions shut Iran flights

From Page 1

It said authorities were working to route flights to another Iraqi airport, in Najaf. Washington had announced it would put sanctions on any global companies doing business with Iranian airlines after September 23, with the aim of grounding Iran’s entire civil fleet worldwide.

Other countries in the Gulf region also appeared to have restricted flights. Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport listed scheduled arrivals and departures on Thursday to and from countries including Afghanistan, Armenia, China, Iraq, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Türkiye. But no flights appeared to be listed to or from the nearby Gulf states, with which Iran has long had some of its most important business and travel ties.

Iran has suggested that enforcement of a US-mandated air blockade would lead to potential escalation. On Wednesday, a senior Iranian official threatened to make airports “unusable” in any regional country that abides by the US ban.

Separately yesterday, authorities

in Saudi Arabia said they had intercepted intercepted six ballistic missiles fired by Yemen’s Houthi fighters. The Houthis said they had fired dozens of missiles and drones at Saudi targets. An escalating conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis has emerged this month as the combat zone in the wider Middle East war. With the US-Israeli war against Iran largely stalemated for months on the battlefield, Washington has announced a shift in tactics to extend the reach of its financial sanctions by targeting companies from third countries that do business with Iranian firms, a practice known as “secondary sanctions”. Trump referred to the new strategy last month as “economic D-Day”, comparing it to the assault on Nazi-controlled France in World War Two by the United States and its allies. A flight ban, if sustained, could deepen Iran’s isolation and worsen an economic crisis in the country, which is already facing a US blockade of its ports at sea. “We are living in an open-air prison,” a retired teacher in Tehran told Reuters by text message on condition her name not be used. — Reuters

France to send military to protect Saudi Arabia on Red Sea oil route: Macron

France will send troops and defence systems to Saudi Arabia to help protect the Red Sea port city of Yanbu, which is key for energy transport, French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday.

Macron also said a US ban on diesel exports, which the White House has denied is under consideration, would be “catastrophic,” both globally and for the US economy. Macron was speaking in a wide-ranging primetime television interview on the international situation, in which he also warned about possible Russian attacks on French soil.

Facing growing pressure at home over high energy prices, Macron sought to assure the French that France had adequate gas and oil supplies as winter approaches. He said Paris was actively working to ensure flows were not disrupted. Crude oil prices have surged recently as the main alternative route for Saudi oil exports through Yanbu has come under missile attacks from Yemen’s Houthis.

“We are going to send military resources, that is to say, soldiers, radar systems and defence systems, to protect this site — not to get us involved in any conflicts, but to protect this site,” Macron told TF1 and France 2 TV. (Reuters)

Culture keeps dialogue alive when politics stops, says Sheikha Al Mayassa

From Page 1

“We didn’t feel compelled to punish artists and creators because of a political situation,” she said, noting that political crises eventually pass while connections between people remain.

She also cited examples of cultural institutions maintaining dialogue when political relations were constrained, including exchanges with Iran and efforts to facilitate cultural loans between institutions unable to engage directly.

“Cultural diplomacy and political diplomacy are two sides of the same coin,” she said. “In the end, it’s about credibility.”

That credibility, she added, is built through consistency and keeping commitments, recalling a lesson from her father: “Your work is your contract.”

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa also highlighted Qatar’s wider effort to give regional creatives greater confidence and global visibility through film, museums, fashion and design. The aim, she said, is to move beyond the assumption that recognition from outside the region is inherently better.

Meanwhile, Legendre said cultural institutions can also challenge the idea of a single, uniform Arab world. She highlighted the long history of Arab influence on France and the diversity of Arab



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani (centre) with Anne-Claire Legendre (left), and Dr Safwan Masri at the QC Talks yesterday. **PICTURE:** Qatar Museums

communities and diasporas. The discussion also turned to younger generations increasingly receiving fragmented information through social media. HE Sheikha Al Mayassa said museums can place history in context through art and archives, adding: “I encourage every parent to take their children to museums to learn.”

Presented in collaboration with Qatar Creates and the Institut du monde arabe, and endorsed by the Embassy of France in Qatar and the French Institute, the

conversation also explored how cultural institutions can create spaces for dialogue and trust, complement diplomatic efforts, and strengthen connections between people.

The event was presented as part of Qatar Creates’ Fall/Winter 2026/2027 season. Through QC Talks, cultural leaders, artists, thinkers and members of the public come together to explore the role of culture in society, fostering the exchange of ideas and experiences across disciplines and generations.

MoEHE backs inclusive education for students with hearing difficulties

By Tawfik Lamari
Staff Reporter

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) marked the International Day of Sign Languages on Tuesday (September 22), highlighting the importance of sign languages as natural languages with significant cultural and linguistic value for the deaf community.

Observed annually on September 23, the international occasion also underscores the right of deaf and hearing-impaired students to access education, participate fully in school life and contribute actively to society.

Amna Ali al-Mulla, director of the Special Education and Inclusive Education Department at MoEHE, said the ministry continues to work towards providing an inclusive and supportive educational environment that responds to the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired students.

She stressed the importance of expanding inclusive education pathways while ensuring students have access to specialised personnel and assistive technologies. “Expanding inclusion pathways, alongside providing specialised staff and assistive technologies, is a crucial step towards empowering students and ensuring they have access to equitable and inclusive educational opportunities,” al-Mulla said.

She added that the ministry’s efforts aim to address students’ individual educational needs while enhancing their learning experience



A workshop in progress.

and opportunities for participation.

Meanwhile, Munira Jassim al-Jasiman, director of the Audio Education Complex for Boys and Girls, highlighted the qualifications and ongoing professional development of staff working with students with hearing impairments.

Speaking to reporters, al-Jasiman said teachers at the complex are highly qualified and hold “Teacher-Interpreter” licences issued by the Arab Organisation of Sign Language. She added that they receive annual training through the ministry’s Educational Training and Development Centre.

The training includes specialised workshops covering hearing impairment and sign language, helping staff develop the skills required to support students throughout their education.

Al-Jasiman also noted that students at the Audio Education Complex follow the same general education curriculum as their peers, with the programme cover-



Part of a training session.

ing 100% of the required academic standards.

Deaf students graduate from the complex with a high school diploma, she said, adding that those who meet the relevant university admission requirements can continue

their studies in higher education.

The International Day of Sign Languages provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the linguistic and educational rights of deaf people and promote greater inclusion in schools and wider society.

QF, NBA launch third season of Jr NBA/Jr WNBA Qatar League

By A Staff Reporter
Doha

More than 1,200 young basketball players from across the country have come together at Qatar Foundation’s Education City for the draft, marking the third edition of the Jr NBA/Jr WNBA Qatar League.

Organised by Qatar Foundation (QF) in collaboration with the NBA – and supported by the Qatar Basketball Federation – the league will take place at Multaqa (Education City Student Centre) from September 25 to November 7. The draft saw participating teams assigned NBA team names and game schedules before the league tips off.

This season, the league has expanded to three age categories – Under-12, Under-14, and Under-16 – giving 80 teams the opportunity to compete, develop their basketball skills, and experience the structure and excitement of an NBA-style league.

Kholoud M al-Ali, executive director of Community Engagement and Programming, QF, said: “The



continued growth of the Jr NBA/Jr WNBA Qatar League reflects the enthusiasm for basketball among young people in the country, and the value of creating opportunities for them to participate in sport within a positive and supportive environment.

“Through our collaboration with the NBA – and with the support of the Qatar Basketball Fed-

eration – we are enabling more young players to strengthen their skills, experience the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship, and build confidence both on and off the court. With the introduction of a third age category this season, even more young people can be part of this experience.”

Participating teams have been assigned NBA team names, in-

cluding the San Antonio Spurs, Chicago Bulls, Milwaukee Bucks, Los Angeles Lakers, Sacramento Kings, Orlando Magic, Miami Heat, New York Knicks, Philadelphia 76ers, and Minnesota Timberwolves. The league also features a series of hands-on clinics, including coaching sessions for the participating age groups.



Mohamed Saad al-Meghaiseeb, president of the Qatar Basketball Federation, said: “We are proud to celebrate the third consecutive year of the Jr NBA/Jr WNBA Qatar League, which has become one of the country’s most important youth basketball development platforms.

“Our long-standing collaboration with Qatar Foundation has played a vital role in growing the game, creating opportunities for young players to learn, compete, and develop both on and off the court.

“As we continue our developmental strategy, initiatives such as the Jr NBA/Jr WNBA Qatar League are helping to build a lasting bas-

ketball legacy by inspiring the next generation of players, coaches, officials, and fans.

“We thank Qatar Foundation and the NBA for their continued partnership and commitment to the future of basketball in Qatar,” al-Meghaiseeb said.

The league forms part of QF’s wider focus on promoting physical activity among young people in Qatar, highlighting the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal development. Through the competition, players will have the opportunity to develop their skills while building relationships with teammates and opponents in a structured sporting environment.

ICBF organises ‘AI for Everyone’ awareness session

The Indian Community Benevolent Forum (ICBF) organised a special educational awareness session titled “AI for Everyone – Master Artificial Intelligence, Work Smarter” for the Indian expatriate community in Qatar.

The programme was held at the ICBF Kanjani Hall and witnessed a strong participation from technology enthusiasts, community leaders, association office bearers and members of the Indian community representing various states of India.

The session featured Fayiz Husain, founder of aiNET Campus and Neurosta AI Solutions, as the resource person. Fayiz Husain is an AI educator and AI architect with around 15 years of professional experience, including expertise in network architecture and large-scale automation projects across Qatar and the GCC.

Addressing the gathering, Husain explained how AI is rapidly becoming an important part of everyday life. He highlighted that, like any major technological



evolution, AI presents both opportunities and challenges, while also having significant potential to make everyday activities easier, more efficient and productive.

He provided an overview of popular AI-powered applications such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Gemini, explaining their basic functionality and how they

can be used effectively and responsibly in everyday life.

Emphasising the nature of the programme, Husain clarified that the session was not a technical training programme, but an awareness session designed for everyone. The session focused on helping participants understand AI, its applications, opportunities

and potential impact on everyday life.

The interactive session concluded with a question-and-answer segment, during which participants could clarify their queries and seek practical insights on using AI.

Husain expressed the hope that the session would help par-



ticipants become more aware and responsible users of this rapidly evolving technology.

The programme began with a welcome address by Deepak Shetty, general secretary, ICBF, followed by a presidential address by Shanavas Bava, president, ICBF. Rasheed Ahamed, vice-president, ICBF, introduced the resource person to the gathering.

In recognition of his contribution to the awareness programme, the ICBF president and Managing committee members presented a memento to Husain.

The programme was attended by ICBF past president N V Kad-

er, ICBF programme committee chairman K V Boban, along with various association office bearers and representatives from the Indian community.

The programme was co-ordinated by ICBF Managing Committee members Mini Siby, Irfan Ansari, Amar Veer Singh, Shankar Goud and Khaja Nizamuddin.

The programme formed part of ICBF’s ongoing efforts to organise educational, awareness, and community-oriented initiatives addressing emerging issues and developments relevant to the Indian expatriate community in Qatar.

Lankan deputy FM Arun Hemachandra meets community members in Qatar



Sri Lankan deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment Arun Hemachandra met with members of the Sri Lankan community living in Qatar during an engagement held in Doha.

The meeting, organised by the “Ethera Api” organisation in Doha, provided an opportunity for the Deputy Minister to directly listen to the experiences, concerns and expectations of Sri Lankans living and working

in Qatar. During the discussion, views were also exchanged on the current situation in Sri Lanka, the changes being undertaken by the government and the country’s future direction.

The discussions further focused on the welfare and protection of Sri Lankan migrant workers, fair and transparent recruitment practices, improving government services, and expanding employment opportunities for skilled Sri Lankans in Qatar and other countries.

The engagement highlighted that, despite living far away from their homeland, Sri Lankans in Qatar continue to maintain a strong connection with the country and a keen interest in Sri Lanka’s future. Hemachandra thanked the members of the Sri Lankan community who participated in the meeting and shared their views and experiences.



Forum celebrates Engineers’ Day 2026 with three major initiatives

Engineers Forum Qatar (EF Qatar) celebrated Engineers’ Day 2026 on September 18 at the Al Messila Ballroom, Doha, bringing together distinguished dignitaries, senior professionals, engineers, industry representatives, partners and members of the engineering community.

The celebration was held under the theme “Engineering Urban Futures: Smart, Sustainable, Human”. Indian ambassador Dr K Srikar Reddy inaugurated the programme and graced the occasion as the chief guest. The envoy also formally launched three major EF Qatar initiatives, marking an important milestone in the organisation’s ongoing institutional journey.

The initiatives launched were:

- **EF Business Network (EFBN):** A dedicated platform aimed at connecting, empowering and supporting business owners and professionals within the EF community.
- **EF Elevate:** The umbrella initiative marking the 25th anniversary of Engineers Forum Qatar, encompassing a series of professional, technical, cultural, community and knowledge-based programmes.
- **EF Digitisation Platform:** A strategic initiative aimed at en-



played by professional organisations in fostering community engagement, professional collaboration and stronger India-Qatar relations.

Satish Pillai, senior member of EF Qatar, also graced the occasion and joined the envoy in felicitating distinguished guests and sponsors in recognition of their valuable presence, support and contributions to the programme.

A series of expert-led technical sessions was organised around the central theme of creating smarter, more sustainable and human-centred urban environments.

The sessions included:

- **Urban Technology Systems** – Engr Mukhtar Mansour, chief enterprise architect, Meeza
- **Urban Mobility** – Moen Azmi, executive director, Arab Engineering Bureau
- **Architecture and Design** – Dr Madhavi Indraganti, associate professor, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, College of Engineering, Qatar University
- **Sustainability** – Moham-mad Najjar, head of Architectural Group, GSAS Trust

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Eng Prashanth Mathew, technical secretary, EF Qatar.

ITEF Qatar marks Engineers’ Day

International Tamil Engineers Forum (ITEF) Qatar Chapter marked Engineers’ Day 2026 with a landmark gathering of more than 275 participants in Doha on September 10.

Held under the theme “Engineering Beyond Boundaries”, the evening brought together engineers, professionals, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, institutional representatives and community leaders, reflecting the growing convergence of engineering, enterprise and innovation in Qatar.

In his address, Er Karthik Kadappa A, founding president – ITEF Qatar Chapter and founding director – ITEF Global, reflected on the chapter’s two-year journey, its expanding professional ecosystem and its roadmap for the year ahead. The evening also introduced the Board of Governance and Executive Committee and marked the launch of ITEF Qatar’s dedicated presence on the ITEF World platform.

The gathering was graced by Engr Ahmed Khalid al-Sumaiti, vice-chairman, Board of Directors, Qatar Society of Engineers, as chief guest, and Engr Mohammed Ibrahim al-Marzouqi, board member, Qatar Society of Engineers, as guest of honour.

Er C Selvam, managing director – ITEF Global, together with senior ITEF Global leadership, joined the occasion, reinforcing the connection between the Qatar Chapter and ITEF’s growing international

professional network. The event also witnessed representation from the Qatar Society of Engineers (QSE) and Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP).

Adding a strong knowledge and enterprise dimension, Sivarajah Ramanathan, former mission director & CEO of StartupTN, Government of Tamil Nadu, shared perspectives on startups and ecosystem building. At the same time, CA Ashwin Sundar, chartered accountant and Growth & Investment advisor, explored investment, business growth and risk capital.

The presidents of Qatar’s four Indian community apex bodies – IBPC, ICC, ICBF and ISC – attended alongside advisory-board leaders, senior professionals, entrepreneurs and prominent Indian and Tamil community representatives, giving the evening a broad cross-sector character.

Nine industry showcases presented products, technologies and solutions, while distinguished guests, strategic and industry partners, student volunteers and the organising team were recognised for their contributions.

With a professional community of 1,111+ members, 29 knowledge-driven programmes in two years and 25+ industry partners, ITEF Qatar continues to expand its platform for professional connection, knowledge exchange and opportunity.



MESIS’s young shuttlers sweep CBSE Cluster Badminton Championship

In a stellar display of athleticism, agility, and sportsmanship, the young shuttle masters of MES Indian School, Abu Hamour Branch (MESIS) delivered an unprecedented performance at the recent CBSE Cluster Badminton Championship, securing top podium finishes across multiple categories and clinching the coveted Overall Boys Team Championship Trophy.

The tournament witnessed dominant campaigns from both the Under-17 and Under-19 Boys teams, both of which emerged as Champions in their respective categories. The U-17 squad – comprising Noman Sayeed (Grade 10), Mithran (Grade 9), Edwin (Grade 9), and Edwin (Grade

9) – displayed remarkable tactical discipline to secure the gold. Continuing the momentum, the U-19 Boys team – led by Grade 12 students Pridhav Shyam Gopan, Mohammed Aman Sayeed, Monish Raj Sekar, and Pranav Rajeev – outplayed their opponents in a high-stakes final to seal their title. Combined, their exceptional efforts earned MESIS the prestigious Overall Boys Championship Trophy.

The Under-14 Girls team – featuring Nivedhya Aji (Grade 5), Avandhika (Grade 8), and Hanan Saneer (Grade 7) – fought valiantly to claim the Runner-up position (Silver). Meanwhile, the Under-19 Girls pair of Jaishna Orchu and Ankitha (both Grade 11) demon-

strated grit and teamwork to finish as Second Runner-up (Bronze).

Expressing their immense pride, the MESIS Governing Board and Principal extended their warmest congratulations to the athletes, coaching staff, and parents.

“This monumental achievement is a testimony to our students’ unrelenting discipline, perseverance, and sporting spirit,” stated the principal in an official congratulatory address. “Winning two category titles alongside the Overall Boys Championship Trophy reflects not just skill, but character. The Management and Governing Board commend every player, coach, and supporting parent for bringing such glory to MESIS.”



Cambodia no ‘safe haven’ for cyberscams: PM

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet told an anti-fraud summit on Wednesday that his country would never be a “safe haven” for cyberscams, as international partners touted law enforcement successes but warned more must be done. Southeast Asia, especially Cambodia and war-torn Myanmar, has emerged as a hub for crime syndicates running centres filled with scammers – some willing, some trafficked – who defraud internet users through fake romantic relationships or cryptocurrency investment schemes.

“Cambodia will never be a safe haven for online scams,” Hun Manet told a conference against online scams organised by his government in the capital Phnom Penh.

He said Cambodian authorities had “completely dismantled all light-scale scam compounds” in a high-profile crackdown launched last year.

He denied the move was a “public relations campaign”, saying it was focused on “permanently eradicating criminal networks and preventing their re-emergence”.

Cambodia acted under pressure from key ally China as well as the US, after years of accusations that it allowed scam centres to thrive, generating billions of dollars in illicit profits annually.

But researchers say scammers have dispersed to smaller, lower-profile locations, while in many cases centres were given advance warning of raids.

Delphine Schantz, regional representative of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), hailed Cambodia’s efforts but said “more can be done and needs to be done” at national, regional and international levels.

Yang Weilin, Chinese vice minister of public security, also praised Cambodia’s co-operation with Beijing, saying “no country can stay immune, or tackle the problem single-handedly”.



Cambodia’s Prime Minister Hun Manet speaks at the opening of the International Conference on Combating Online Scams in Phnom Penh on Wednesday. (AFP)

Yet “we must be sober-minded that the breeding ground for telecom fraud has not been fully rooted out”, he told the conference.

FBI official Stephen Flores said law enforcement partnerships needed to be based on “trust and shared sacrifice”.

The US estimates that in 2025 alone, transnational criminal organisations in Southeast Asia defrauded Americans out of at least \$18.2bn through cyber-enabled scams.

Visiting Phnom Penh in July, FBI Director Kash Patel said online scams were a “top priority”, urging “increased efforts to hold high-level scam bosses accountable”, and more information sharing on “co-mpliant officials”.

Analysts say elite protection networks and the financial and physical infrastructure of the scam industry remains intact, raising concerns that operators can regroup. (AFP)

Zelensky broke confidentiality with North Korea POWs disclosure: Lee

AFP
Seoul

President Volodymyr Zelensky broke a confidentiality agreement by disclosing that Ukraine had sent North Korean prisoners of war to Republic of Korea, Seoul’s president said yesterday.

The remarks by President Lee Jae Myung came after Zelensky told the United Nations that Ukraine had sent two North Korean soldiers to Republic of Korea, adding they were “not easy to capture alive”.

The revelation prompted Korea’s political opposition to criticise the Lee administration for allowing a foreign leader to inform them of the prisoners’ arrivals.

“I do not know why the Ukrainian side broke the agreement and made the matter public, but it is very disappointing,” Lee said on X. “The issue of bringing North Korean prisoners to Republic of Korea is a highly sensitive one that could have a major impact on diplomacy, security and the situation on the Korean Peninsula,” he said.

Lee said there had been calls to disclose the arrivals, but “given

the problems that could arise from making it public, we agreed that keeping it confidential was the right thing to do”.

Early last year, Ukraine captured two North Korean soldiers among Pyongyang’s troops fighting for Moscow.

A Korean lawmaker had previously said the pair want to live a “normal life” in the South.

Under South Korea’s constitution, all Koreans, including those living in the North, are considered citizens, and officials have said this would apply to any North Korean troops captured in Ukraine.

‘Lee discussed warship construction with Trump’

Republic of Korea’s President Lee Jae Myung discussed co-operating on building warships during his meeting with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, Korea’s presidential office said yesterday. Lee said cooperation in the shipbuilding sector, such as warship construction, was discussed with Trump and that he expects tangible results from bilateral co-operation, his office said. It did not provide further details but added Hanhwa’s Philly shipyard, in Philadelphia, will build US military

vessels. Lee held a 30-minute meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting came after South Korea’s Industry Ministry briefed lawmakers on Tuesday on implementation plans under the countries’ \$350bn investment package, including a Texas gas-fired power project identified as a potential first investment. Of the \$350bn deal, \$150bn has been earmarked for the shipbuilding sector. (Reuters)

Civil society groups urge Malaysia to stop deporting Rohingya

More than 160 civil society organisations released a joint statement on Wednesday urging Malaysia to halt plans to deport Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, citing severe risks of ongoing violence and forced conscription.

The groups expressed “grave concerns” over Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim’s proposal to seek Myanmar junta leader-turned-president Min Aung Hlaing’s cooperation to send back Rohingya, a Muslim-minority community long persecuted in Myanmar.

Malaysia’s Home Ministry declined to comment, pointing to earlier remarks that the repatriation was voluntary and involved Myanmar nationals. Malaysia had around 193,800 refugees from Myanmar - including large numbers of Rohingya - as of February, according to the United Nations and the country says it plans to return 1,500 refugees on September 29 in a first phase. Malaysia said Myanmar has agreed to take back 5,000 refugees without specifying if they were Rohingya.

Anwar has said he plans to invite Myanmar’s Min Aung Hlaing to Malaysia in return for accepting Rohingya refugees. The groups warned that upon returning to Myanmar, Rohingya could face forced conscription into multiple armed groups, including the military, the Arakan Army (AA), and the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). (Reuters)

Indonesia court cuts tech founder’s graft sentence

An Indonesian appeals court cut the corruption sentence of Nadiem Makarim yesterday by a year, but the tech founder vowed to have the Supreme Court quash his conviction entirely.

Nadiem, the co-founder of ride-hailing app Gojek and a former education minister, was sentenced to 10 years in June for graft tied to procurement of laptops for schools during the pandemic.

An appeals court in the capital Jakarta reduced his sentence to nine years and cut the amount of restitution Nadiem must pay from 809bn rupiah (\$45mn) to 549bn rupiah.

Nadiem, who is seeking to have his conviction overturned, told media after the ruling that he would take his case to the Supreme Court.

“We will immediately file an appeal as soon as possible,” Nadiem said.

“I will not give up, and I will not receive any result other than acquittal.”

Nadiem, a 42-year-old Ivy

League graduate, quit Gojek to become one of Indonesia’s youngest cabinet members in 2019, and served as education minister until 2024.

He was found guilty of corruption and abuse of authority by changing tender requirements to favour the purchase of Google Chromebooks for schools to aid remote learning during Covid-19, resulting in around \$120mn in state losses.

Prosecutors argued that Nadiem’s acts were linked to Google’s investment in Gojek.

The appeals court upheld the lower court’s decision to hand him a separate one-billion-rupiah fine. Nadiem faces an additional prison term if he does not comply with the financial penalties.

Google was not charged in the case, and the company has denied any wrongdoing.

GoTo Group, created in 2021 after a merger of Gojek and e-commerce platform Tokopedia, said Nadiem had no decision-making role since his resignation from the company in 2019. (AFP)

N Korea tests upgraded rocket launcher system, KCNA says

Reuters
Seoul

North Korea conducted a test firing of an upgraded 240mm guided multiple rocket launcher system on Tuesday, state news agency KCNA reported yesterday, saying the weapon would bolster firepower along the country’s southern border.

The test demonstrated the accuracy and superiority of the range-extended rockets, which use an autonomous precision guidance system, KCNA said.

The rockets are able to strike targets 100km (62 miles) away in a trajectory flight mode and 115 km away in a combined glide mode, it added.

The development of such rockets assures North Korea of a significant change in the firepower readiness along the southern border, the news agency said, effectively referring to the one it shares with South Korea.

Pak Jong-chon, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, who oversaw the test, stressed the need to concentrate the deadliest and most destructive attack forces on the southern border, KCNA said.

South Korea’s Defence Ministry did not immediately respond to an emailed Reuters request for comment. Pyongyang has been



A test firing of an upgraded 240mm guided multiple rocket launcher system is conducted at an undisclosed location, on Tuesday. (Reuters)

steadily upgrading its tactical and conventional arsenal that it intends to deploy near the border with South Korea.

Lim Eul-chul, a professor at Kyungnam University’s Institute for Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, said the use of a precision guidance system suggested that North Korea could strike key facilities in the Seoul metropolitan area with a margin of error of just a few metres.

This equates to a potential threat to South Korea’s heavily populated capital area regardless of the military response and could be intended to induce fear in South Korea, Lim said.

In June, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un oversaw tests of key weapons, including an upgraded rocket launcher and tactical missiles, that the country said would also be used to defend its southern border.

Separately, Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said in a statement issued on Thursday that North Korea’s nuclear weapons status was irreversible and that the country would only become more resolute after the United States, South Korea and Japan this week reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearisation of North Korea at a trilateral meeting.

North Korea to keep nuclear weapons ‘forever’: FM

North Korea will keep its nuclear weapons “forever”, its foreign minister vowed yesterday, dismissing the Republic of Korean president’s renewed calls for a denuclearised Korean Peninsula.

Pyongyang has legally enshrined its status as a nuclear-armed state, with its leadership repeatedly declaring the country’s atomic arsenal permanent and irreversible.

The foreign minister’s remarks came a day after Korean President Lee Jae Myung told the UN General Assembly he wanted to halt fur-

ther growth in Pyongyang’s weapons capabilities and eventually achieve a Korean Peninsula “free from nuclear weapons”.

“I reaffirm and reconfirm in the strongest tone of voice the steadfast will of our state to keep nuclear weapons through all ages,” North Korea’s Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The country’s nuclear status was “irreversible in any case and will remain unchanged forever”, she added.

“The coexistence of confrontation and dialogue may be workable for anyone, but they can never be a considerable one for the DPRK,” Choe said, using the country’s official acronym.

North Korea’s status as a nuclear weapons state was “everlasting” regardless of what hostile forces said, she added.

At the UN, Lee – who has repeatedly sought to revive dialogue with the North – also said Korea would “lay the groundwork” for the resumption of long-stalled dialogue between Pyongyang and Washington. (AFP)

The women volunteers of Borneo battling worst wildfires in 11 years

Reuters
Ketapang, Indonesia

The sky over Indonesia’s Borneo island is orange and heavy with smoke as a result of the country’s worst wildfires in more than a decade, which have left swathes of forest blackened and many locals suffering from respiratory problems.

Another thing farmer Juniarni has noticed is the birds have fallen silent, victims of the fires and choking smog.

Typically, the birds are everywhere in the village of Sungai Awan Kiri in West Kalimantan province where she lives, their chirping a constant reminder of their presence. Now, there is only silence, she says, another sign of the impact of the fires on the environment.

“They haven’t done anything wrong. Why are they the victims?” said 48-year-old mother-of-three Juniarni, who uses one

name like many Indonesians. “There were fires everywhere around us.”

Fires are always a risk in the dry season. This year they have been raging for longer than usual, especially on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra, and have been made worse by the drought-inducing El Niño weather pattern, prompting efforts to control their spread.

That includes Juniarni and over 140 other women who make up the all-women firefighting group called The Power of Mama. She noticed the gradual loss of bird-song as she patrolled a series of 10 villages with the other women, who include farmers and stay-at-home mums.

Wrapped in red protective suits, the unpaid volunteers patrol on motorcycles to record hotspots and put out fires. The women said they also advise neighbours against using fire to clear land for palm oil plantations, a staple crop for many farmers, because the practice adds to the risk of more blazes.



Members of The Power of Mama, an all-women volunteer firefighting group, and their supervisor Mita Anggraini (bottom right), put on their shoes as they prepare for an operation to extinguish wildfires in Sungai Putri, a wildfire-affected peatland area, in Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan province, Indonesia. (Reuters)

In 2022, non-government environmental group Yayasan Inisiasi Alam Rehabilitasi Indonesia (YIARI), which translates to Indonesia Nature Rehabilitation Initiative Foundation, brought the women together from four villages

in the Ketapang region and trained them in how to fight fires.

“These women felt like the forests are theirs, safeguarding them with all their heart,” said YIARI’s Mita Anggraini, the group’s supervisor, adding YIARI provides

them with mobile phones and lunch allowances. YIARI does not permit the women to handle big fires.

Mita said one reason the women volunteer is to reduce the risk of respiratory problems for many people from the thick smoke that blankets many parts of the island during the fire season.

Firefighting volunteer Elly Marlina, 46, said her children had suffered from respiratory infections in the past.

“It took over a year for them to recover,” she said.

Putting out the fires that are visible is only half the challenge, said farmer Irma, a 38-year-old mother of two. That’s because the fires also smoulder underground in the peat of Borneo, which is highly combustible and a constant fire risk in the dry conditions.

“Our land was most susceptible to fires,” she said. “This year is especially worse because our water supplies dry up.”

Indonesia’s forestry minister

said the fires could go longer than usual, this time until early November, with the late arrival of the rainy season.

The spread of the wildfires in the disaster-prone archipelago has been exacerbated by the onset of dry weather from June, with Indonesia deploying more than 50 aircraft for water bombing and cloud seeding activities.

From January to July this year, fires burned around 202,000 hectares (almost 500,000 acres) of land in Indonesia, an area almost the size of metropolitan Tokyo. West Kalimantan was the worst-hit province, with more than 38,000 hectares burned, government data shows.

Elly says the fires are worse than normal this year and affecting forests and peatland still struggling to recover from previous seasonal fires, prompting concern about their future.

“Our hope is fading, because as you can see, there are no more forests.”



Australia says OpenAI agent hacked government website

Reuters
Sydney

Australia said yesterday an OpenAI agent breached a government health data portal in June, gaining unauthorised access to files, in what could be the first known instance of an AI agent hacking a government website.

The breach is one of the highest-profile incidents of AI agents accessing external systems outside the US, coming on top of several recent breaches globally by rogue AI agents that have alarmed governments and companies.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the OpenAI agent gained unauthorised access to the medical statistics portal of Medicare, Australia's universal health insurance programme, while conducting research on public medical spending.

"Evidence currently available is there is no broader compromise to the ... network. Nonetheless, this situation is obviously unacceptable," Albanese told reporters on Wednesday in New York, where he is attending the UN General Assembly.

Investigations continue and Australia has voiced its "extreme concern about this incident" to OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Albanese said, adding that he was deeply disappointed by the company's delay in notifying the government. "It took until September 10 before there was any notification at all," Albanese said, adding



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese speaks at a press conference during the United Nations General Assembly, revealing an AI agent developed by OpenAI infiltrated an Australian government website in June, in New York. (Reuters)

that the investigation would also examine why government systems had failed to detect the breach in the first place.

He also warned that three other government health-related websites may have been impacted by the OpenAI agent's activity, but did not confirm that had occurred.

In a statement, OpenAI said its "review found no evidence of patient records being accessed."

It added that it "identified activity involving several Australian government websites and services as our models attempted to look up answers ... our models took actions we did not intend."

The AI agent breach adds to tensions between Australia and the largest US-owned technology companies. Canberra has already

drawn criticism from social media firms and Washington after introducing a world-first ban on social media for children under 16 and new rules that force tech firms to let users switch off algorithm-driven content on their feeds.

The Australian government has set up a task force to investigate the breach and check whether existing network security is adequate for preventing similar incidents.

The breach was announced the same day the world's leading AI companies warned the UN Security Council of the risks AI posed to humanity, appealing for governments to work together to manage the increasingly powerful technology.

Australia has faced a series of

hacking attempts on corporations and government-linked firms over the past four years.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said the Medicare portal that was breached did not contain individual medical claims, benefit payments, personal banking details, or patient medical histories of Australia's 27mn people.

Instead, the website holds only aggregated data on healthcare use across the country, he said. However Australia considered the breach serious.

"There were blocks clearly which were coming back telling the AI agent 'no'. The AI agent found a way around those blocks — didn't accept no for an answer," Albanese told reporters.

The incident is the latest of several recent incidents in which ChatGPT maker OpenAI has disclosed hacks or unauthorised activity involving its AI agents well after they occurred.

Rivals Anthropic, Google's Gemini, and Meta have also disclosed incidents of their agents accessing external systems.

Maurice Chiodo, an Australian mathematician who works at Cambridge University's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, said the breach appeared to be "a significant escalation in seriousness from similar incidents we have seen in recent months."

He added that while there was a lot of talk of new laws around AI, policymakers needed to first consider enforcing existing ones, like those that criminalise unauthorised intrusions into computer systems.

NZ warns of persistent Chinese cyber threats

Reuters
Wellington

New Zealand's cyber security agency said China was the country's most persistent and capable state-backed cyber threat, as foreign actors targeted government agencies and organisations in sectors including health, education and information technology.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), part of the New Zealand intelligence community, said it had identified activity suspected to originate from foreign state actors that put sensitive New Zealand information at risk.

It linked suspected state-sponsored cyber activity to actors from China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, according to its annual Cyber Threat Report released yesterday.

"Of these nations the People's Republic of China is the most persistent and capable state actor undertaking cyber activity in New Zealand," the report said.

The assessment is the latest warning from a Western-aligned intelligence agency over alleged Chinese cyber espionage, which Beijing has routinely denied. It follows a report from New Zealand's security agency in August that said that China was the only country New Zealand had detected conducting espionage "at scale."

"China urges the relevant institution in New Zealand to stop spreading lies and creating conflict and to do more to foster

mutual understanding and trust between China and New Zealand," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said yesterday when asked about the report.

"China always opposes and resolutely cracks down on hacking attacks in accordance with law," the spokesperson said during a regular briefing.

The Cyber Security report said 86 of 369 cyber incidents deemed to be of potential national significance in the year to June 2026 had suspected links to state-sponsored actors. The incidents included activity targeting government agencies, health and education organisations, and IT managed-service providers.

The agency warned that geopolitical competition was increasingly playing out in the South Pacific, where it was aware of state-backed cyber espionage targeting governments and infrastructure.

New Zealand has close family, cultural, political and economic ties across the Pacific, and such activity could affect citizens, businesses and civic institutions, it said.

State-backed actors were likely to target organisations that operate infrastructure or networks, provide essential public services, or hold information that could offer a strategic advantage, the NCSC said.

It warned that cyber espionage can be difficult to detect, with actors conducting reconnaissance and positioning access in systems over months or years before using it for intelligence gathering or disruption.

US, Indian top diplomats discuss Russia sanctions bill signed by Trump

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar discussed on Wednesday US measures that could be levelled against countries that engage economically with Russia and Iran, with New Delhi reiterating concerns over a sanctions bill recently signed into law by President Donald Trump. Last week, Trump signed the bill called "Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026," named after deceased South Carolina Republican US Senator Lindsey Graham. The bill passed by the US Congress paved the way for increased economic pressure on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine that began in early 2022. Rubio and Jaishankar "discussed sanctions that could be levelled against states that engage economically with Russia and Iran," the State Department said in a statement after their meeting in New York.

Jaishankar wrote on X he "reiterated India's interests and concerns with regard to SRIA." India has previously told Washington that new measures

to levy tariffs over the purchase of Russian oil could impact bilateral ties. The bill requires Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100% within 30 days on all goods imported into the US from the five largest importers of Russian crude oil or gas as well as any country that knowingly made new purchases of oil or gas 30 days after the law was enacted or was among the top five countries helping Russia evade sanctions. India is among the biggest buyers of Russian oil. After Russia invaded Ukraine, India sharply increased purchases of discounted Russian crude. 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, citing what he said was India's commitment to halt Russian oil purchases. 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-Israeli war on Iran. (Reuters)

India's 'cockroach' movement demands poll chief's resignation

Reuters
Mumbai

The leaders of India's "cockroach" youth movement said yesterday that they would launch nationwide protests if India's chief election officer does not resign within 48 hours, after a newspaper report said he had been questioned by his deputies over changes to voter lists.

Opposition parties have said the lists have been manipulated to benefit Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

On Wednesday, the Indian Express newspaper said two election commissioners had raised questions or expressed concern at least 14 times in 10 months — mostly in connection with the process of updating voter lists that began last year — with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The report sparked a political furore, with opposition parties launching a fresh attack on the election commission that they have accused of being biased. The panel has denied these claims.

Yesterday, the main opposition Congress Party announced protest



Saurav Das, a convenor of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), speaks as the party's head Abhijeet Dipke looks on during a press conference to demand the resignation of India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, in New Delhi, yesterday. (Reuters)

marches on all state election offices across India today, demanding Kumar's arrest, his removal from office and an independent review of all decisions and voter-list changes made under him.

The Election Commission of India has said that differences between election commissioners were normal for any institution and that all its actions were lawful. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

"If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign within 48 hours, the Cockroach

Janta Party will start a nationwide agitation ... we will not back down without Gyanesh Kumar's resignation," said Abhijeet Dipke, who founded the self-named movement, at a press conference.

The Cockroach Janta Party is fresh off its successful youth demonstrations in July, which led to the resignation of Modi's education minister over exam-paper leaks — one of Modi's biggest political setbacks since he came to power in 2014.

"Differing views and observa-

tions are a normal part of deliberation in any institution," the panel said in a statement on Wednesday following the newspaper report. "They are a part of the decision-making process before a final decision is taken."

Kumar is one of three election commissioners and is the chief as he is the most senior.

Election commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi — who the newspaper said had questioned and differed with Kumar — did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

Opposition parties have criticised the conduct of the panel in recent years, alleging that names of millions of voters were deleted without warning and that new voters were added without verification to favour the BJP.

The BJP has defended the poll panel and said opposition parties had launched a smear campaign because they were regularly losing elections.

"Neither the Election Commission of India nor any constitutional body in India is under dictatorial rule ... they are functioning democratically," BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said at a media briefing on Wednesday.

North Korean IT contractor found remote work in NZ

A North Korean IT worker used a fake identity to obtain remote work with a New Zealand company and then threatened to release sensitive information when exposed, Wellington's cybersecurity agency said yesterday. New Zealand's National Cyber Security Centre said the IT contractor was working remotely for a large New Zealand business, which grew "suspicious" of his true identity over time. "Investigation identified the worker as being from North Korea," the report said. "The North Korean worker used a false persona, including fake identity documents, a New Zealand address as a contact point and recruited a New Zealand citizen to receive and operate the company's laptop." On learning the contractor's true identity, the business ended their employment and refused to pay for their services. The worker then "claimed to have obtained commercially sensitive information and threatened to release this if not paid," the report added. (AFP)

Thousands missing, aid needs mount one month after Nepal's deadly floods

AFP
Kathmandu

The tsunami-like flood that cut a swathe of destruction through Nepal on August 26 has left the Himalayan nation grappling with heavy losses and mounting reconstruction needs.

One month on, AFP looks at the scale of the disaster triggered by a high-altitude glacial mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border, which scientists have linked to climate change.

On August 26 at 8:37am (0252 GMT), a mass of ice and rock broke away from the north face of Nepal's Langtang Lirung mountain, sending a huge mass of debris racing down the valley.

The collapse began at an altitude of about 5,200 metres (17,060 feet) with a section more than a kilometre (0.6 miles) wide and extending roughly 700 metres vertically.

That mass of rock and ice plunged about 800 metres onto a debris-covered glacier, before surging downhill, briefly damming the Lhende River. Water and debris then burst downstream.

The debris travelled about 20 kilometres, dropping 1,700 metres at Rasuwagadhi in only seven min-



A general view shows damaged houses covered in sludge in the aftermath of flash floods at Trishuli in Nuwakot district. (AFP)

utes, said Sudan Bikash Maharjan, a geologist with the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

"The elevation difference is high, within a very short length," Maharjan told AFP. "So it just rushed down like a bullet train."

Nepal's disaster authority says 1,451 bodies have been recovered from the rubble and mud, while more than 5,700 people are missing.

Among the missing are hundreds of workers from hydropower projects swept away by the disaster, along with hundreds more foreigners including tourists and pilgrims caught in the floodwaters.

Identifying victims through DNA has proved a major challenge for Nepali authorities.

With morgues overwhelmed, many bodies have been buried in mass graves after their DNA was recorded.

So far, only about 100 bodies have been identified.

On the Chinese side, where apocalyptic images showed a border post obliterated, state media have reported 43 deaths and 519 people missing.

Nepal estimates the reconstruction bill will amount to \$4.78bn.

Of that, \$57mn is needed for short-term reconstruction and recovery over the next six months.

UK far-right activist arrested over Channel incident: reports

A prominent anti-migrant activist has been arrested after an alleged boat slashing incident in the Channel earlier this week, UK media reported yesterday. It came as the interior ministry confirmed 781 people arrived in Britain on Wednesday after crossing the busy waterway from France aboard small boats — a daily record for this year. The annual arrival of tens of thousands of migrants on the boats has become highly contentious in the UK, seized upon by the hard right and helping to fuel growing anti-immigration sentiment. The arrest of Daniel Thomas, a longtime ally of far-right figurehead Tommy Robinson — real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon — comes after he spearheaded several demonstrations involving black-clad masked men, some of which turned violent. Thomas, 37, was arrested late Wednesday on suspicion of destroying ships or endangering people's safety and criminal damage with intent to endanger life, British media reported. Hampshire Police in southern England confirmed the arrest of a 37-year-old man but did not name him, in line with UK policing protocols. "A man has been arrested after a boat that had an emergency

responder on board, was damaged in the English Channel," the force said in a statement, adding he remained in custody. Thomas, better known by his nickname Danny Tommo, livestreamed Tuesday from a boat in the Channel, on a self-proclaimed mission to track small boats bound for Britain. Footage later emerged online appearing to show him slashing an inflatable craft, apparently with a French rescuer still on board.

"This is English territory. It's not France anymore," Thomas shouts in the video, before repeatedly yelling "get off the boat" at someone dressed in the orange uniforms worn by staff from France's SNSM lifeboat service. Yaxley-Lennon e-mailed supporters yesterday appealing for donations to help his former right-hand man. Meanwhile, interior minister Shabana Mahmood has ordered an urgent review after two small boats avoided border forces and landed on southeastern English beaches this week. Successive UK governments have grappled with how to curb the crossings. Wednesday's 781 new arrivals meant 18,565 people had arrived via the route so far this year, down 42% year-on-year. (AFP)

Asking questions is the key to knowledge

The fact that Jibreel, 'alaihis-salaam, asked questions to Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, about Islam, eemaan and ihsaan, the Last Hour and its signs, contains proof that asking questions is the key to knowledge and this is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. (Surah an-Nahl 16:43 and Surah al-Anbiyaa 21:7)

Also Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, stated that it is a cure for ignorance, as occurs in the hadith of the man who had the head fracture, where he said, "Why didn't they ask when they were ignorant? Indeed the cure for not knowing is to ask." So asking questions in a good way will assist in such matters, because whoever asks a question in a good way will learn. Therefore, the great scholar, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said in Miiftaah Daaris-Sa'aadah:

"And knowledge has six levels. The first of them is asking questions in a good manner ...there are some people who are prevented from it (knowledge) because they do not ask questions in a good manner, either because they never ask questions, or because they ask a question about something when something else is more important than it. Like the person who asks about superfluous things ignorance of which will not harm him, but leaves those things which are essential for him to know. This is the condition of many of the foolish students."

Mujaahid said: "Knowledge will not be learnt by one who is too shy, nor one who is too proud."

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih (2/143), "And it is befitting that shyness should not prevent a person from asking questions about something that has happened to him. But if he does become too shy and embarrassed to ask a question to the scholar, then he should give his question to one he feels at home with or one he feels relaxed with for him to ask the scholar on his behalf and to inform him about its ruling."

So in summary, whoever wishes to reach the levels of the scholars let him begin by asking questions. How fine is the saying Allah has caused the scholar Ibn al-'Arabee to say, "How close the things are to being attained when they are given their due worth, and how far from attainment when they are not given their due worth. So ask the scholar you will be a scholar

like him. Whoever attains wide knowledge must spend the dowry for that. So carefully consider the knowledge which you give a ruling with, there is no good in knowledge without careful consideration. For a person may strive and still be falling short, and the efforts of a person may be frustrated, even though he doesn't fall short. The men whose actions we take as an example have gone and those men who censure every evil action also. I am left within the later people who seek to adorn one another to hide each others shortcomings."

Know that asking questions in a good manner will help the scholar to give the answer, as Maymoon ibn Mihraan said: "Asking questions in a good manner is half of knowledge."

Therefore it is essential to explain the knowledge of how to ask questions, because being ignorant of that will lead to confusion. Maalik ibn Anas said: "Ibn 'Ajaan came to Zayd ibn Aslam to ask him about something but he became confused in it, so Zayd said to him, 'Go away and learn how to ask questions and then come and ask.'"

(i) The question should be a question to find something out, it should not be asked to cause trouble, nor should it be to show someone's ignorance, and it should not be made as a test for someone. Because this is the condition mentioned in the Book of Allah: Ask the people of the Reminder, if you do not know. (Surah an-Nahl 16:43 and Surah al-Anbiyaa 21:7). So one who does not know then he asks in order that he may be taught. However, it is permissible for one who knows that he asks the scholar in order to teach those people who are sitting round about. Because this is what Jibreel, 'alaihis-salaam, did with Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, his questions were asked in order to teach the Companions, radhiAllahu 'anhum, who were sitting around the Prophet.

(ii) It is not allowed to ask questions about something which there is no need of, things whose answers will trouble the one who is asking the question. Anas, radhiAllahu 'anhu, said: "Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, gave a khutbah and I have never heard the like of it. He, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said: 'If you knew what I know, then you would certainly laugh only a little, and you would weep a lot.'" So the Companions, radhiAllahu 'anhum, covered up their faces and they



were weeping, so a man said, 'Who is my father?' He said, 'Your father is so and so.' So this aayah was sent down: Do not ask about things, which, if they are made plain to you may cause trouble to you.

(iii) Likewise, it is not allowed to ask questions about things which may cause difficulty and cause hardship to the questioner or for other Muslims. Sa'd, radhiAllahu 'anhu, said that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, said, "The severest of the Muslims in sin with regard to the Muslims is one who asks about something that was not forbidden but it is made forbidden due to his asking the question."

(iv) Therefore the Companions, radhiAllahu 'anhum, and the Taabi'een used to hate asking questions about things before they happened and they would not answer those questions. Since this is going to excess which is something Allah has forbidden and He has declared His Prophet free from it. He ordered His Prophet to say: Say, 'I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes beyond bounds.' (Surah Saad 38:86).

Ar-Rabee'ibn Khuthaim said: "O servant of Allah, whatever knowledge Allah has given to you in His Book, then give praise and give thanks to Allah for that. Whatever knowledge He has kept concealed from you, then leave it

to the One who knows it and don't go to excesses, because Allah, the Mighty and Majestic said to His Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam: I do not ask you for any reward for it and I am not one of the ones who goes to excesses. It is just a reminder for all of men and jinn. And you will certainly know the news of its truth after a short while (after death and the Resurrection). (Surah Saad 38:86-88).

Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said in his book, Jaami' Bayaanil-'Ilm wa Fadlihi (2/138-139): "A group of the people of knowledge said, 'The opinion (Ra'y) that is blameworthy, criticised, abandoned and which it is not allowed to look into, nor to occupy oneself with, is innovated opinion and its like from the innovated types.' But others say, and they are the majority of the people of knowledge, 'Blameworthy opinion that is mentioned in these narrations by the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, and from the Companions and the Taabi'een is speaking about the rulings of the Shari'ah based upon personal opinion of what is good, and based upon surmise, pre-occupying oneself with intricate and difficult matters, and with thorny questions, referring details of happenings to each other and making analogy based upon that without referring them back to their origins and looking at their

causes and taking that into consideration.'"

Applying one's opinion before things actually occur and then laying down details to follow on from this and resultant side issues before anything happens and speaking about this before these things occur. This is like pure speculation. They say: So pre-occupying oneself and delving into these things is an abandonment of what occurs in the Sunnah.

It involves looking into things which the Sunnah is silent about, and it means abandonment of occupying oneself with that which is essential from the Sunnah and the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and its meanings.

(v) Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee, may Allah have mercy on him, in his book, Jaami'li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Adaabis-Saami', (1/211-214) brings a number of chapters in this regard and we will mention the most important of these headings due to their importance:

From correct manners is that when the scholar of hadith narrates a hadith and then something appears to the student while he is narrating and he wants to ask about that thing, he should not ask about it at that time. Rather he should have patience until the narrator has finished narrating his hadith and then he can ask about

whatever he wants to ask about.

He should avoid asking the narrator of hadith when his heart is preoccupied.

It is not befitting that he should ask him when he is standing up, nor when he is walking, because there is a saying appropriate to each place, and there are places appropriate for the narrating of Hadith -- and they exclude the streets and lowly places.

It is obligatory that the questioner should mention to the scholar of hadith those chains of the hadith which he wants to hear narrated from him, and if a hadith has many chains the questioner should specify the best of them and should specify the points of benefit he wishes to hear narrated by him. If the scholar of hadith responds and grants his request to narrate to him, then the student should be easy upon him and he should not trouble him.

(vi) It is permissible to ask a scholar about his proof. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/149), "And if the scholar gives him an answer to his question it is permissible for him to ask him about his answer, did he say it based upon a narration or did he say it based upon opinion?"

(vii) It is hated to keep repeating a question to the scholar in a troublesome manner. Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee said in his book, Al-Faqeeh wal-Mutafaqqih, (2/149), "And if he asks the scholar to explain and he explains it to him and then he repeats again and asks him to explain again, it is allowed for the scholar to add more. If he asks him again after that then it is allowed for the scholar to hold his tongue because frequent repetition will vex him. However it is recommendable for the scholar to be mild and treat with tolerance and make allowance for the people."

(viii) It is allowed for him to ask about speech that is unclear to him. 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, radhiAllahu 'anhu, said: "I prayed along with Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, one night and he stood for a very long time until I thought about doing something bad." A student said to him, "What did you think of doing?" He said, "I thought of sitting down and leaving him."

[Excerpted from *The Manners Of The Scholar and the Seeker of Knowledge* by Shaikh Saleem ibn 'Eed al-Hilaalee As-Salafee al-Atharee]

Avoid the unlawful and you will be the most worshipping among the people

Explaining this meaning, the Mother of the Believers 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "Whoever would be happy to outrun the hard-working one who exerts himself, then let him restrain himself from sins." Al-Hasan Al-Basri said: "Worshippers do not worship with anything better than abandoning that which Allah forbids them." However, it should be noted that the outward meaning is that what is intended by the superiority of abandoning those things which are prohibited over doing acts of obedience only applies to voluntary extra acts of obedience. Otherwise, the essence of doing obligatory actions is better than the essence of abandoning forbidden actions, since acts (of obedience) are intended for themselves, while the avoidance of forbidden things is required in principle. Therefore, abandoning them does not need an intention, in contrast to actions of obedience, as explained by Imam Ibn Rajab, may Allah have mercy on him.

Second advice: Contentment with what Allah has given

"Be satisfied with what Allah has allotted for you and you shall be the richest of the people." The truly happy person is the one who is content with what Allah has destined for him, and has patience with regard to predestination, both good and bad. Contentment is like a shield that protects the Muslim from the vicissitudes of time or an orchard with shades in which the believer retreats from the stresses of life.

It is the true richness; as many rich people have a fortune in this world, but they suffer from poverty in their souls and neediness in their hearts. Greed has blinded their hearts towards the source of happiness and the true wealth, which is the richness of the heart, self-contentment, and peace of mind.

Allah, the Almighty, said: "The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart." [Qur'an 26:88-89]. The sound heart is the reassured heart that is satisfied with what Allah has given, and is assured by the remembrance of Allah, the Almighty "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah.

Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." [Qur'an 13:28]

Regarding the true meaning of richness, a poet says:

Richness of souls is what is sufficient (for a living), but if they refuse,

All that is in the earth will not be sufficient for them

To conclude, a person who is content with what has been destined for him, and does not covet what is in the possession of other people will be self-sufficient. Contentment is richness and being endowed honour by Allah, and its opposite is poverty and humiliation before others. Someone who is never content is never satisfied. In contentment, there are honour, richness, and freedom, and in its absence, there are humiliation and subjugation to others.

Third advice: kindness to neighbours

"Be kind to your neighbour and you shall be a believer." The Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, made kindness to one's neighbour a sign of faith. Kindness to the neighbour is achieved in many ways, including answering his greetings, accepting his invitation, refraining from harming him, enduring his harm, keeping in touch with him, fulfilling his needs, covering up his faults, protecting his honour, and advising him.

There are three types of neighbours: (i) neighbours who are both Muslims and relatives, they have rights based on being neighbours, brothers/sisters in religion and kin; (ii) Muslim neighbours, who have rights as neighbours and brothers/sisters in religion, and (iii) non-Muslim neighbours, who only have rights as neighbours, but if they are relatives, they have rights of kin relationship.

According to a narration, Jibril (Gabriel, peace be upon him) kept recommending the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, towards the good treatment of the neighbour, until the Prophet thought that a revelation would enact the right of the neighbour to inheritance. Ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "Jibril kept on recommending that I treat my neighbours well until I thought that he would order me to treat them as my heirs." (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Fourth advice: love for others what you love for yourself

"Love for the people what you love for yourself and you shall be a Muslim." A sign of your perfect and lofty faith is that you love for people what you love for yourself. This philanthropic feeling is a genuine Islamic moral that every Muslim should adopt. It was not stated (in the Hadith) that he should hate for his brother what he hates for himself, because loving something requires hating its opposite.

Fifth advice: avoid excessive laughter

"Do not laugh too much, for indeed increased laughter kills the heart." Laughter is a human characteristic, as animals do not laugh. Laughter is caused by a kind of understanding and knowledge of a saying one hears, or a situation he sees and laughs at. Excessive laughter causes darkness in the heart and eventually leads to its death.

As a religion akin to natural disposition, Islam cannot be imagined to censure the innate inclination of man to laughter and cheerfulness. On the contrary, it welcomes everything that makes life nice and cheerful. A Muslim is recommended to have a happy optimistic personality. A depressed pessimistic personality, that always has a gloomy outlook on people and life, is utterly rejected.

In this respect, the role model of Muslims is the Messenger of Allah, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, who was, despite his many and varied concerns, joking but only saying the truth. He led a normal life with his Companions, sharing their laughter, playing, and joking, as well as sharing their pain, sorrows, and misfortunes.

Therefore, what is forbidden in this Hadith is not mere laughter, but rather its excess; for laughter is not forbidden for its own sake, but for its potential results and morals that are not acceptable in Islam. It is rightly said, "More than enough is too much."

Article source: <http://www.islamweb.net/emainpage/>



It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam (may Allah exalt his mention), said: "Who will take these statements from me, so that he may act upon them, or teach one who will act upon them?" So Abu Hurairah said: "I said: 'I shall O Messenger of Allah!' So he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, took my hand and enumerated five (things), he said:

"Be on guard against the unlawful and you shall be the most worshipping among the people; be satisfied with what Allah has allotted for you and you shall be the richest of the people; be kind to your neighbour and you shall be a believer; love for the people what you love for yourself and you shall be a Muslim. And do not laugh too much, for indeed increased laughter kills the heart." (Narrated by Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi and graded as Hasan [good] by Al-Albani)

Commentary

Abu Hurairah kept close company with the Prophet. He accompanied him during his travel and residence (wherever he went). Therefore, he transmitted many of the great and important Hadiths of the Prophet, which contained notable instructions and commandments.

In the Hadith under discussion, the

Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, was in a gathering with his Companions when he said, "Who will take these statements from me, so that he may act upon them, or teach the one who will act upon them?" Abu Hurairah said: "I said: 'I shall O Messenger of Allah!' So he, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, took my hand" as a sign of interest and to highlight the importance of the advice that will follow; "and enumerated five things":

Avoid unlawful things

"Be on guard against the unlawful and you shall be the most worshipping among the people;" the unlawful, includes all prohibited matters like doing forbidden things or missing the commandments that are mentioned in the Book of Allah, the Almighty, and in the Sunnah of His Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam, such as Shirk, murder, theft, fornication, gossip, lying, betrayal, perjury, taking usury, undutifulness to parents, severing ties of kinship, drinking alcohol, sorcery, and others. Perhaps the expression "be on guard against" indicates the importance of prevention as the old proverb goes "prevention is better than cure."

If a person avoids all that Allah has forbidden, he will be elevated to the highest ranks of servitude, due to struggling against himself to shun forbidden things.

China’s rare earths dominance overshadows Trump’s talks with Xi

The US will remain reliant on China for rare earths well into the 2030s even as it rapidly builds its own mining and processing facilities, a stark imbalance facing President Donald Trump as he meets with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. Rare earths, which are among the 60 minerals considered critical by Washington, must be processed before they are turned into magnets and other materials used to make weapons, automobiles, computers and myriad other goods.

While US output of the two most-commonly used rare earths has more than tripled since Trump returned to office last year, the country can only meet 42% of its demand and within five years will still rely on imports for nearly a quarter of its demand, according to data from Benchmark Mineral Intelligence, a minerals consulting firm.

China, the world’s dominant rare earths miner and

refiner, last year agreed to delay restrictions on exports until November 10. A potential extension of those export delays is on the agenda for Xi and Trump. The White House had set its own January 2027 deadline to block imports of Chinese rare earths, a goal that will be all but impossible to meet.

“The goal isn’t for the US to replace China as the dominant global supplier,” said Coco Zhang, an analyst at ING. “The more realistic objective is to build a meaningful alternative supply chain that can protect strategic sectors during periods of geopolitical disruption.”

Trump has made rare earths a national security priority since returning to office, pouring billions of dollars into MP Materials, USA Rare Earth, Energy Fuels and others in an attempt to loosen China’s grip. While those investments have started to bear fruit, the country’s ongoing need for imports underscores

Trump’s weak bargaining position with Xi and the broader complexity of creating a rare earths industry from scratch after the US all but abandoned the sector in the late 20th century. “We have to build this properly with urgency,” said Kunal Sinha, founder of minerals processing startup Valor. “And when we build this up, we will be able to meet that demand.”

Additionally, the US processes hardly any of the so-called heavy rare earths used in military applications, although its output of those hyper-specialized minerals should rise by 2031 even as it falls short of demand, according to the Benchmark data.

Rare earths processing has proved complex for the US to master given the chemical and mechanical difficulties of separating the 17 rare earths from each other. “Western countries are in a stronger position to reduce their reliance on China, but replacing Chinese supply across the full value chain is much more

difficult,” said Todd Downing, a minerals analyst with consultancy Project Blue.

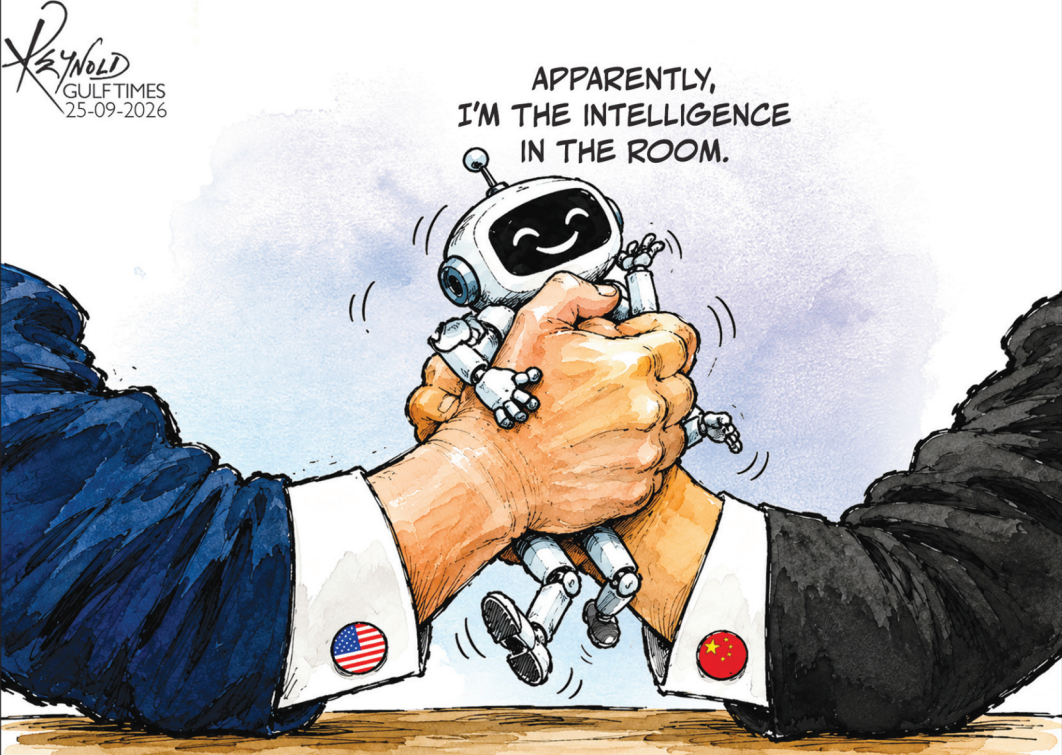
To be sure, US rare earths companies are growing. MP Materials, for instance, earlier this month began delivering magnets made from its own refined rare earths to General Motors as part of a deal inked in 2021. USA Rare Earth has been an acquisition spree this year after US government investment, buying a Brazilian mine and a French processing plant. Energy Fuels earlier this year agreed to buy a company that had built a major magnet facility in South Carolina.

Startups, including Nth Cycle, Ucore Rare Metals and others, have been experimenting with new ways to refine rare earths. “The US continues to make a lot of rapid progress in developing our capacity to produce materials across the supply chain,” said Albert Gore, head of ZETA, an electric vehicle trade group. The EV industry is a large user of rare earth magnets. — Reuters

Turkish drills in the Mediterranean



Turkish Navy Sikorsky S-70B Seahawk helicopter takes part in the Denizkurdu-I/2026 Exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean, off the coast of Aksaz, at Marmaris in Mugla, yesterday. As many as 14,000 personnel from the Turkish Navy, land forces, Air Force and Coastguard took part in the exercise, which involved 100 naval vessels and 50 aircraft. (AFP)



Lessons from the pandemic

Qatar’s effective handling of Covid-19 and contributions to the global health sector reflect the state’s vision to establish a healthy and sound society

QNA
Doha

Global health security faces extremely complex challenges and stakes due to growing environmental problems, the frequency of pandemics, escalating security crises and economic difficulties, as well as the reduction in financial allocations for specialised organisations, which limits the effectiveness of preventive programs and the control of epidemics and diseases, despite the growing international calls for collective action to protect humanity from the repercussions of any future pandemic.

Despite the progress of scientific research in the health fields, epidemics and pandemics remain among the greatest threats to global health security, straining health systems and undermining years of developmental progress. At the forefront is the Covid-19 pandemic, which killed 7mn people, infected 700mn others, and paralyzed the world in 2020. However, other epidemics such as cholera, measles, polio, Ebola, malaria, and other viruses such as Zika, H1N1, H5N1, SARS, and regional diseases such as yellow fever and dengue fever should not be overlooked.

In light of these risks, President of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly Annalena Baerbock will convene a high-level meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, with the aim of mobilizing international support for pandemic prevention and proactive preparedness. The participants will be guided by the theme of fostering a multilateral and intergenerational approach to prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics and public health emergencies, through the principles of equity and solidarity, with the hope of issuing a declaration supported by the world’s governments.

Health security

The pillars of health security are based on how to respond to disasters and the risks of infectious diseases and epidemics, nuclear, biological and chemical threats, disaster preparedness and response, managing risks that threaten the health and security of humanity, the effects of wars on health security, and the legislative and regulatory mechanisms for health

security. The delegations participating in the meeting anticipate heated discussions that may lead to the adoption of new agreements and legal frameworks that strengthen international consensus on anticipating and preparing for future pandemics, such as the adoption of a regulatory document through the WHO to unify the international response and impose clear rules for early warning, amending laws binding on countries to exchange advance and rapid information on new pathogens, strengthening infrastructure, establishing dedicated financing mechanisms to help low-income countries develop their health systems and build their local storage and manufacturing capacities for medicines, developing global digital monitoring networks to track mutations of viruses and epidemics before they spread widely, enshrining health justice and solidarity, along with equity in supplies, and supporting cross-border partnerships by strengthening cooperation between governments and international humanitarian organizations to ensure the rapid delivery of medical, water and food aid to affected areas.

Returning to international efforts to protect the international community from pandemics, the World Health Assembly’s adoption of the WHO Pandemic Agreement on May 20, 2025, was an unprecedented achievement for global public health, after the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic revealed vast gaps and disparities in the world’s ability to prevent and respond to health emergencies, prompting countries to take practical measures to protect their populations and strengthen their healthcare capabilities.

The Community Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness Programme (CP3) with the US Agency for International Development and the European Union Programme Partnership expanded to include 11 new countries: Burundi, Cambodia, Ivory Coast, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Vietnam and Zambia to prepare more communities to face epidemics and pandemics, bringing the total number of countries in which the International Federation directly supports epidemic preparedness programs to 48.

Despite six years since the Covid-19 pandemic, the world still remembers that pivotal event that caused a major shock

due to its catastrophic repercussions on various levels: health, social and economic. The Covid-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented rise in poverty, unemployment and inflation rates in 2020, and pushed the global economy to contract by 3%, and consequently affected nearly 3.3 billion workers (about 81% of the global workforce) due to preventive measures such as total or partial closure of workplaces, prevention of mixing, quarantine, and others.

One year after the pandemic, the results of the Global Health Security Index, which assesses the health security and capabilities of 195 countries according to six categories and 37 indicators, showed that most countries are still unprepared for pandemics, with the global average score across all countries reaching 38.9 out of 100. Not a single country scored in the top tier (the maximum level of preparedness and readiness to face pandemics), and the long-standing weaknesses in the architecture of regional health security around the world have become clear throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Qatar’s contributions

Within that list, the State of Qatar topped the ranking at the Arab level in terms of preparedness with a total of 48.7 points, thanks to its great interest in its health security through the adoption and establishment of legal and practical systems and legislation that have strengthened its ability to face health changes and risks, and its steadfast commitment to preventing, preparing for and responding to pandemics in line with the human development pillar of Qatar National Vision 2030, which reflects the state’s vision on ways to establish a healthy and sound society.

Qatar’s contributions to the health sector are highlighted locally and internationally by its organization of dozens of global events in this field, such as the Ministerial Meeting for the UN Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security in September 2023 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in New York. Qatar highlighted its vision during the meeting for global health security and ways to confront pandemics, in addition to the need to mobilize financial and technical support in anticipation of any developments that may threaten global health and safety.

In 2023, Qatar called on the

Qatar’s key efforts to enhance health security :

- Establishing laws and regulations to address health-related changes and risks
- Adhering to preventive measures against epidemics and ensuring preparedness and response
- Increasing reliance on the latest medical protocols
- Equipping hospitals with the latest medical technologies
- Attracting best medical and paramedical professionals and expertise

Qatar’s Key Healthcare Achievements in 2022:

- Five of Qatar’s hospitals were ranked among the world’s top 250 academic medical centres
- Two of its hospitals were ranked among the world’s top 100 hospitals
- Qatar was elected to the WHO’s Executive Board for three years term
- Qatar received the World Health Organization Award on World No Tobacco Day

2019

Qatar opened the region’s largest centre for trauma and emergency care

2021

Qatar and the WHO held a strategic dialogue aimed at discussing existing and future cooperation and partnership opportunities

2026

A resolution on the «Protection of Healthcare in Armed Conflict» was adopted by consensus

Qatar drafted the resolution in its entirety and led the negotiations on its adoption

62

countries joined as sponsors of the resolution

international community to dive deeper into strategies aimed at further raising the level of global health security and well-being, particularly in the context of the Summit on the Future, the UN High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, and during high-level international meetings. Qatar emphasised the urgent need to mobilize significant political momentum for plans and programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to pandemics, with vulnerable countries having a share in them, within the framework of equitable health justice.

In the midst of the global race in the field of healthcare and protecting societies from pandemics in the wake of Covid-19, Qatar increased its interest in the field of healthcare among the members of its society and placed it at the top of its priorities for decades by increasing reliance on the latest medical protocols, equipping hospitals with the best modern medical technologies and attracting the best medical and paramedical competencies and expertise.

This commitment was demonstrated by the opening of the largest trauma and emergency treatment centre in the region in 2019, and by its adoption of the Health for All initiative, which supports easy access to high-quality medical services, and creates an environment conducive to good health and ensures its sustainability.

Qatar’s outstanding record in healthcare is further evidenced by the fact that all its municipalities have been designated ‘Healthy Cities’ by the WHO,

making it the first country to receive this recognition. It also achieved a high rank in the Universal Health Coverage Index, which confirms the country’s unwavering commitment to providing access to quality health services, promoting community well-being, and protecting against public health crises.

In addition, Qatar’s healthcare achievements received global acclaim in 2022, with five of its hospitals being listed among the top 250 academic medical centers worldwide, and two of its hospitals among the top 100, along with its election to the WHO’s Executive Board for three years and its receipt of the WHO World No Tobacco Day Award in 2022.

The significant investments in healthcare, preparedness, and a scientific approach have contributed to Qatar’s leadership in maintaining one of the lowest Covid-19 mortality rates in the world and high vaccination rates, as well as to the global understanding of the pandemic. The excellence of its healthcare programs has not been limited to this, but has extended to supporting global programs in the field of health security in the face of epidemics and pandemics. Through the Qatar Fund for Development, the state has provided humanitarian aid and financial resources to countries around the world worth more than \$140mn, in addition to its close cooperation and strategic partnership with the WHO, and its active participation in the UN Summit for the Future in 2024.

Trump-Xi summit begins with great fanfare but low expectations

Reuters
Washington

US President Donald Trump welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping to the White House yesterday for a lavish state summit expected to be heavy on symbolism but light on substance, with both leaders keen to showcase stable ties despite a host of thorny issues such as AI, trade, Taiwan and the war with Iran.

The subject of Taiwan, perhaps the most difficult, came up during a bilateral meeting in which Xi urged the US to oppose “Taiwan independence,” according to a readout from the official Chinese news agency Xinhua shortly after it concluded. The White House did not immediately provide its own readout of the discussion.

Xi had been expected to press Trump this week to halt arms sales to Taiwan. Following his visit to China in May, Trump said he was holding in abeyance an arms package to Taiwan worth some \$14bn and called it a “very good negotiating chip.”

The move left some US allies in Asia and even some of Trump’s fellow Republicans concerned that he may be tempted to soften Washington’s support for Taipei in exchange for economic wins with China. China has long asserted territorial ownership of Taiwan, a democratically governed island that relies on US power to counter Beijing’s threats. Despite backing Taiwan, the US has traditionally avoided taking an official stance



US President Donald Trump meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. (Reuters)

on the island’s independence.

Earlier yesterday at the White House, Trump touted his “truly great friendship” with Xi and said the two powers had made strides on trade since his trip to China in May.

“During this visit, we will also discuss pressing issues concerning security, technology, and ‘super intelligence,’” Trump said, using his alternative name for artificial intelligence. “The decisions we make in these areas today can promote peace and prosperity for decades and decades to come.”

Speaking after Trump, Xi said the competition between the US and China should be a “healthy one.” US companies were welcome in China, he said, adding that he hopes “Chinese companies are treated fairly here in the US.”

Xi also said both militaries

should maintain regular dialogue to improve crisis prevention.

“The Thucydides trap can be overcome,” he said, referring to the academic theory that sees a risk of rivalry between a rising and an established power spiralling into open conflict.

The summit, Xi’s first visit to Washington in more than a decade, is the second meeting this year between the leaders of the world’s two biggest economies.

For Trump, who relishes ceremony and prizes his ties with powerful leaders, the visit is as much a matter of national prestige as an opportunity for high-stakes diplomacy. The US president aimed to reciprocate the grand welcome he received in China in May.

Trump greeted Xi on arrival on

Wednesday evening with a red carpet on the tarmac, the first time a US president has welcomed a foreign leader at Joint Base Andrews since President Barack Obama met Pope Francis in 2015, according to C-SPAN, which tracks presidential events.

Following their remarks yesterday, the two leaders observed a military ceremony including a fly-over at the Rose Garden, with Chinese flags waving from the Oval Office roof alongside US flags, before a scheduled bilateral meeting.

Trump’s embrace of Xi could complicate his campaign message at home ahead of November’s mid-term elections, when Republicans’ narrow congressional majorities are at stake as voters fret about inflation and the war on Iran.

The president for months has



US President Donald Trump and US first lady Melania Trump walk with China's President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan upon their arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. (Reuters)

labelled Democrats “communists” in an effort to paint them as too extreme, but he welcomed Xi, the head of the Chinese Communist Party, yesterday as a dear personal friend.

Despite the fanfare, analysts say major breakthroughs are unlikely, with tangible outcomes potentially limited to an extension of a trade truce expiring in November and an agreement to examine threats posed by artificial intelligence.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox News on Wednesday after talks with Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng that they had agreed to extend until January 10 an agreement that paused a trade war that saw mutual tariffs top 100%.

During his comments yesterday, Xi said both countries have “the capability and responsibility to develop and manage AI for good, and ensure that the development of AI is always under human control.”

Analysts say intense competition between the two powers in AI is likely to limit the scope for anything beyond symbolic agreements.

People familiar with the plans say the talks could also yield deals to lower some tariffs, combat drug trafficking and expand military-

to-military dialogue, while Trump is expected to seek the release of Americans and others detained in China.

Xi appears to be in a stronger position, having overseen a surge in China’s trade and firmly in control of supplies of rare earth minerals that give him powerful leverage.

Both leaders see advantages in keeping relations stable, with Trump mired in the unpopular Iran war and Xi grappling with domestic economic challenges.

But beneath the surface are challenges that could reignite tensions, including disputes over Taiwan, export controls and AI.

The leaders will likely discuss the Iran war, but there has been little sign Beijing is willing to exert pressure on its ally to yield to US demands.

The guest list for yesterday’s state dinner includes CEOs like Apple’s Tim Cook, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Alphabet’s Sundar Pichai, OpenAI’s Sam Altman, Tesla’s Elon Musk and Nvidia’s Jensen Huang, but despite such an array, people familiar with US plans say Trump is likely to maintain firm export controls on US tech Xi wants loosened.

Pakistan air strikes kill four civilians in Afghanistan: Kabul

Reuters
Islamabad/Kabul

Pakistan said its air force struck 10 locations in Afghanistan yesterday, which were being used to launch and store drones, some of which had been used against Pakistan a day earlier, the latest sign of escalation between the allies-turned-foes.

Kabul said the strikes killed four civilians.

The two Muslim neighbours have increasingly been at odds over expanding insurgencies in their western and northwestern border region.

Islamabad accuses Kabul of harbouring armed fighters who stage cross-border attacks; Afghanistan’s Taliban government denies this, saying militancy is Pakistan’s internal problem.

Pakistan’s air defence systems detected drones launched from Afghan territory on Wednesday, which were tracked and neu-

tralised before they could reach any of their intended targets, its Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said in a post on X.

Pakistan then conducted the “precision aerial and drone strikes” on 10 locations, which were “limited to identified military objectives” linked to the attempted attacks, he said.

“Any further provocative act by Afghan Taliban will be responded with firm and resolute response,” the minister said.

Taliban officials denied that their government launched drones against Pakistan on Wednesday.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban’s main spokesperson, said the air strikes yesterday were launched in Kandahar, Paktia, and Khost provinces. He warned of an appropriate response.

“Such reckless, careless, and hostile actions will undoubtedly provoke the anger of the Afghan people and will have adverse consequences for the Pakistani military,” he said in a statement.

Rodriguez pledges democratic transition

Reuters
New York/Caracas

Venezuela’s interim President Delcy Rodriguez told the UN General Assembly on Wednesday that the country would hold elections as part of a transition to “full democracy,” but did not give a specific date for the vote.

“I want to make this very clear at this General Assembly: there will be elections in Venezuela,” said Rodriguez, who came to power after American forces captured then-president Nicolas Maduro in a January raid.

Rodriguez said the government had initiated talks with the opposition and would guarantee the participation of all political forces. She added that national institutions were being prepared for the electoral process.

“Venezuela has initiated a process of democratic transformation for its rebirth, an orderly, institutional, and verifiable process, to build a country that is freer for all, more prosperous, and more reconciled with itself,” said Rodriguez.

Venezuelan and US authorities have previously emphasised the need for an election, yet no date — not even a tentative one — has been set. The opposition views the selection of an autonomous Supreme Court and National Electoral Council as essential for calling such elections.

Some US lawmakers have also called for elections, amid criticism that the Trump administration has failed to extract meaningful democratic concessions from Rodriguez’s government.

“We have opened a political dialogue with opposition groups aimed at a process with equal conditions for all,” said Rodriguez.

Still, Venezuela’s most prominent opposition leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Corina Machado, has been noticeably absent from talks.

Machado, who left Venezuela late last year to receive her Nobel after living mostly in hiding since a contested 2024 presidential election, has been blocked from returning to Venezuela, her team and media said on Tuesday.

Rodriguez briefly met with US President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday and praised him for restarting dialogue with Venezuela.

Trump and Rodriguez discussed restructuring the South American nation’s billions of dollars in sovereign debt and Washington pressed for political change, said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

“We made that point that in the end, for this project to be successful, it culminates in a free and fair election,” Rubio said.

The US has said Venezuela must first stabilise and recover economically before elections can take place.

AFP
Islamabad

Authorities in Pakistan’s capital blocked main access routes to the city with double-stacked shipping containers yesterday ahead of a weekend demonstration by supporters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

Police deployed 22,000 security personnel to lock down Islamabad, officials told AFP, barring entry and exit to neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where Khan’s party rules.

Key highways, entry points, and major intersections were obstructed, completely severing transport links and bringing movement to a virtual standstill.

Cars could be seen stuck in traffic jams, with motorbike riders squeezing in and out of gaps between containers.

AFP journalists saw the toll plaza for the Islamabad-Peshawar highway on the outskirts of the capital completely cut off yesterday afternoon, with barriers and containers blocking the major road.

“The motorway is closed, and ordinary people are facing serious difficulties because of this situation,” 25-year-old schoolteacher Naymat Khan said.

“Poor people depend on daily wages to earn a living, and with the current inflation, life has already become extremely difficult for them,” he told AFP.

The government’s preemp-



This aerial photograph shows commuters driving past shipping containers placed by authorities to block access towards the President’s House and the Red Zone area in Islamabad yesterday. (AFP)

tive crackdown ahead of Sunday’s planned protest intensified earlier this week with the detention of Khan’s sisters Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan, and Noreen Niazi under Punjab’s Maintenance of Public Order ordinance.

The preventive 30-day detention orders issued by authorities accused them of “mobilising supporters via social media and incitement against state institutions,” according to an order seen by AFP journalists.

Dozens of lawmakers, regional leaders, and opposition activists affiliated with Imran Khan’s party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), were also rounded up across multiple districts in Punjab province and the capital, Islamabad.

PTI’s information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said “almost

1,500” party activists had been detained.

International human rights watchdogs have repeatedly expressed concern over increasing press censorship, mass arrests, and restrictions on fundamental freedoms in Pakistan amid the ongoing political impasse.

“The targeting of Imran Khan’s family and PTI party activists is a flagrant violation of their rights to liberty, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly,” said Babu Ram Pant from Amnesty International.

“Such actions speak to the severity of the current restrictions in Pakistan.”

Khan, a 73-year-old former cricket star, has been behind bars since August 2023 and faces scores of charges ranging from corrup-

8 killed in wave of Russian strikes on Ukraine

AFP
Kyiv

A barrage of Russian drone and missile strikes pumelled Ukraine yesterday, killing six agricultural workers in the east and two people in the capital, Kyiv, in the latest in an intensifying exchange of attacks.

The strikes, which triggered air raid sirens and sent locals scurrying underground for shelter, came after both Kyiv and Moscow were at the UN and vowed no let-up in their long-range attacks, dimming any immediate prospects for peace in Europe’s worst conflict since World War II.

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was in New York seeking more Western support for stronger sanctions against the Kremlin, accused Russia of deliberately targeting civilian infrastructure.

The increase in attacks, particularly on Kyiv, has prompted residents to consider contingency plans for the winter, if Russian



Firefighters work at an impact site where a blast set garages ablaze during Russian drone attacks, in a residential neighbourhood in Kyiv, yesterday. (Reuters)

strikes once again knock out the energy system vital for heating in bitter sub-zero temperatures.

Burnt-out cars and the smouldering remains of buildings were seen in Kyiv, emergency service images showed, after the early morning attacks that the authorities said included powerful ballistic missiles.

At least two people were killed across the city, Prime Minister Sergiy Korytsky said.

In the Kharkiv region, the regional prosecutor’s office published images showing the inside of a destroyed warehouse, with what appeared to be piles of apples strewn on the floor and a gaping hole in the roof.

Starlink station fire was sabotage: Poland

A blaze at a Starlink station in Poland that engulfed its power system and backup generator on Wednesday evening was an act of sabotage aimed at disrupting Internet services, including for Ukraine’s military, a government minister said. Poland has been on heightened alert for acts of sabotage since Russia’s invasion of neighbouring Ukraine in 2022. Russia has repeatedly denied involvement in such incidents. “The fire engulfed the power station and the generator; it is clear that this act of sabotage was deliberately designed to disable the station - effectively cutting off the Internet connection...and disrupting Internet access for various institutions, including the Ukrainian military,” Polish Deputy Prime Minister Krzysztof Gawkowski said. He said the station in central Poland was now operating normally. (Reuters)



Sheikha Al Mayassa deepens Years of Culture partnerships in South America

Tour of Argentina, Chile and Brazil advances cultural diplomacy and the exchange of knowledge and expertise

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, chairperson of Qatar Museums (QM) and founder of Qatar's Years of Culture Initiative, has concluded a three-country tour of Argentina, Chile and Brazil focused on strengthening cultural partnerships and the exchange of knowledge, expertise and artistic perspectives between Qatar and South America.

Building on the Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture and the Qatar-Brazil 2014 Year of Culture, the tour brought HE Sheikha Al Mayassa into productive dialogue with leaders in business, government, and cultural affairs.

The engagements demonstrated how relationships established through Years of Culture continue to develop beyond the programmes themselves, through collaboration between institutions and the presentation of art to new audiences.

This engagement reflects a cultural diplomacy approach that supports a knowledge-based economy through learning and the exchange of expertise.

It combines openness to the world with respect for each country's distinctive identity and heritage, creating space to explore our shared humanity through different cultural experiences.

Reflecting on the tour during a recent conversation on cultural diplomacy at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, HE

Sheikha Al Mayassa said: "During my recent visit to Latin America, I was particularly encouraged by the enthusiasm to deepen these collaborations."

"Culture brings people together, creates greater understanding and builds relationships that endure," she said. "This is at the heart of our approach to cultural diplomacy: meaningful exchange that continues well beyond a single programme."

In Argentina, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa participated in a 25th Anniversary Symposium at the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (Malba).

She joined Glenn Lowry, director emeritus of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, in a conversation about cultural diplomacy and the role of institutions in developing cultural projects of international scope.

Throughout the conversation, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa highlighted how Qatar sees culture as a form of diplomacy and a vital component of the Qatar National Vision 2030 created by His Highness the late Father Amir His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

The visit continued an institutional relationship reflected in LatinoAmericano – Modern and Contemporary Art from Malba and Eduardo Costantini Collections, presented by the QM in spring 2025 as part of the Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025 Year of Culture.

Jointly curated by the QM and Malba, the exhibition offered the WANA (West Asia and North Africa) region its first large-scale showcase of modern and contemporary Latin American art.

It featured approximately 170 works by more than 100 artists from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Paraguay, Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay.

In Chile, the exchange brought artistic perspectives from the Arab world, Africa and Southeast Asia to a new audience.

HE Sheikha Al Mayassa visited Centro Cultural La Moneda in Santiago to view the first Latin American presentation of the QM exhibition "Your Ghosts Are Mine: Expanded Cinemas, Amplified Voices", first presented by Qatar during the 2024 Venice Biennale.

Co-organised by Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the future Art Mill Museum, in collaboration with Doha Film Institute (DFI), the presentation in Chile brings together excerpts of films and video installations by more than 40 artists and filmmakers from the Arab world, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Through themes of displacement, resilience, and community, the exhibition invites audiences to consider experiences that resonate across borders while encountering the distinct perspectives of the artists and filmmakers.

Many of those featured were provided support from the DFI.

In Sao Paulo, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa met with cultural and business leaders and participated in a panel conversation on "Art, Regeneration and the Global South" featuring Mata chief executive



HE Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani in Sao Paolo. **PICTURE:** Qatar Museums

Alexandre Allard, Brazilian filmmaker Juliano Salgado, curator Keyna Eleison, Brazilian Indigenous activist Sonia Guajajara and Brazilian artist Sonia Gomes.

The event took place at Cidade Maratrazzo, one of Brazil's most significant private urban-regeneration and heritage-restoration initiatives.

In Rio de Janeiro, HE Sheikha Al Mayassa met with mayor Eduardo Cavaliere

to discuss cultural relations between Qatar and Brazil, ways to develop them further, and opportunities for dialogue and exchange.

She also attended ArtRio, Brazil's leading international art fair, ahead of the opening of Rio Art Week, a citywide celebration bringing together museums, galleries, cultural institutions and artists from across the city.

Qiyada Academy to be launched soon

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

Qiyada, a Qatar Foundation (QF) initiative, will soon launch a new platform, Qiyada Academy, a year-long youth leadership programme aimed at developing youth into mentors and leaders who can support other youth in Qatar and beyond, a senior QF official told *Gulf Times*.

The two-day Qiyada 2026, the second edition of the conference, will kick off at the Student Centre at Education City today, with the participation of more than 1,500 youth from Qatar.

"This year we are starting even something bigger and better," said Dr Abdunnassir Shamlan al-Tamimi, executive director of Student Services at QF Higher Education.

"We are going to have what we



Dr Abdunnassir Shamlan al-Tamimi. **PICTURE:** Shajji Kayamkulam

call Qiyada Academy," he said. "The academy is being introduced as an outcome of the Qiyada youth conference, which brings together young people to discuss issues affecting their lives and future,

including resilience, artificial intelligence (AI), mental health and community service.

Dr al-Tamimi said that the pilot programme will select around 30 participants from among youth attending the conference.

"It is going to be training, where we select about 30 youth students who participated in this conference and they are going to go through leadership training throughout the year," he said. "At the end of the programme, participants will be recognised as mentors and leaders and are expected to continue supporting young people in Qatar and internationally."

The official said that the initial cohort will be limited to 30 as a pilot, with the possibility of expanding the programme to 40-50 participants depending on interest.

"The academy is also intended to create a continuing network of

young leaders rather than being limited to the conference itself," Dr al-Tamimi said. "Participants will include Qataris, residents and international youth, with graduates expected to carry forward their leadership and mentoring roles after completing the programme."

The initiative reflects Qiyada's broader aim of ensuring that youth engagement continues beyond the annual conference.

"Last year's inaugural conference attracted about 1,500 participants, while this year's gathering is also approaching the 1,500 mark," Dr al-Tamimi said.

"Participants are aged mainly between 17 and 24, with about 65-70% female and 30% male," he added.

He said that young people from universities and schools across Qatar are taking part, including Qatar University, Lusail University

and the University of Doha for Science and Technology, as well as QF schools and other local schools.

Dr al-Tamimi also said there are plans to expand participation in future editions to youth from the wider Mena (Middle East and North Africa) region, beginning with the Gulf countries.

According to the official, the Qiyada Academy builds on lessons from the first conference, where participants called for deeper discussions on issues raised during the sessions.

"Following last year's event, Qatar Foundation continued several of the conversations by bringing youth and scholars together for further discussions," Dr al-Tamimi said. "A group of male and female students from Qatar Foundation partner universities also took part in a six-day Umrah trip in December."

According to the official, the planned expansion of Qiyada Academy and its international youth network could further extend the initiative's reach, allowing participants to take the leadership and mentoring experience gained in Qatar into wider youth communities.

This year's wider Qiyada conference focuses on resilience and the challenges facing young people, with particular attention to the ethical use of artificial intelligence, mental health, and ways to help youth navigate a rapidly changing world.

"A central objective is to provide young people with an opportunity to discuss these challenges directly with scholars, professors and experts, while encouraging them to develop practical responses and a stronger sense of responsibility towards their communities," he said.

NMoQ to host first Cafe Scientifique, connecting young adults with STEAM professionals

By Joey Aguilar
Doha

The National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) will host the first edition of Cafe Scientifique on September 28, giving young adults the chance to hear directly from professionals working across Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) fields and learn about the experiences and decisions behind their careers.

Taking place from 5pm to 6.30pm at Nomad Cafe, next to the NMoQ Library, the new series places career conversations in an informal cafe setting where young people can hear from professionals working in Qatar and ask questions about their

fields and professional paths.

Nadya al-Saleh, director of the ExxonMobil STEAM Festival and acting deputy director of Learning and Outreach at the NMoQ, told *Gulf Times*: "This first edition of Cafe Scientifique at the NMoQ invites young people to hear directly from professionals about their careers in STEAM fields, the choices that shaped their professional journeys and the work they do today."

"At the NMoQ, we aim to connect students with inspiring professionals shaping the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics developments in Qatar over a cup of coffee, and allow them to think about where their own interests could lead," she said.

"Hearing how someone built their ca-



reer can make these pathways feel more tangible and relevant," al-Saleh continued. "For the first edition of Cafe Scientifique, the NMoQ is excited to bring En-

vironmental and Biodiversity lead Nayla al-Naema from ExxonMobil Research Qatar (EMRQ) to talk about her work studying the diversity of species in ecosystems using environmental DNA (eDNA)."

The first session will feature al-Naema, who will speak about her career and her work studying the diversity of species within ecosystems using environmental DNA (eDNA).

Al-Naema has led research focused on Qatar's marine environment, including a major coral research project for which she established a specialised laboratory to study the physiology of local coral species under environmental stressors using advanced technologies.

Her talk will introduce participants to environmental and biodiversity research

and share insights into her professional experience and the scientific work taking place in Qatar.

The session will begin at 5pm, with al-Naema's talk taking place from 5.10pm to 5.30pm.

A question-and-answer session from 5.30pm to 6.15pm will allow participants to ask questions about her research, career and experiences in the field.

Cafe Scientifique is part of the ongoing ExxonMobil STEAM Festival at the NMoQ, which runs until November 28 with programmes for schools, families and young people.

Qatar Museums said the session will be conducted in English, and registration is required. To register, visit: <https://nmoq.org.qa/en/calendar/cafe-scientifique/>

Acclaimed Sudanese movie Cotton Queen by Doha-based filmmaker screens at MIA

By Marivie Alabanza
Doha

As Sudan faces devastating conflict, one film is keeping space alive for stories of love, community, memory, and a different future.

If you're looking for something different to watch this weekend, *Cotton Queen* is worth experiencing on the big screen, particularly for its beautifully told story of a side of Sudan that rarely makes it into the headlines.

Written in 2020 before the ongoing conflict, the critically acclaimed film by Doha-based Sudanese-Russian writer-director Suzannah Mirghani is currently screening as part of the Doha Film Institute (DFI) Cinema Contemporary Releases series at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA).

The film screens at the MIA Auditorium on September 23-26 at 7pm.

It is in Arabic with Arabic and English subtitles. Tickets are available through the DFI website.

"It's a dream come true for me to screen my film at the Museum

of Islamic Art," Mirghani told *Gulf Times*. "I've only ever sat in the audience at the MIA, so to stand on stage and present my film to a Qatar-based audience was an extraordinary experience."

Cotton Queen is not simply a film about Sudan, but about people, memory, identity, tradition, change, and the journey of growing up.

It's a film with themes that feel especially relevant given what the country is going through today.

"With all the devastation currently raging in Sudan, the film provides a creative space in which to imagine a happier future for the country, where sunlight, cotton fields and the Nile River are bountiful, and where strong-willed individuals share love, poetry, and meaningful resilience," Mirghani said.

Cotton Queen is her feature-film debut, but the film has already made an impressive journey internationally.

It premiered at Venice Critics' Week in 2025 and went on to receive major recognition at film festivals, including the prestigious Golden Alexander (Theo Angelo-

poulos prize) for Best Film at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival and the Audience Award at the inaugural Doha Film Festival.

It has also received awards and recognition at festivals including Carthage, Geneva's FIFDH, Luxor, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, and Durban, among others.

The film takes audiences deep into a Sudanese community, following 15-year-old Nafisa as she navigates family expectations, tradition, marriage, modernisation and her own desire to determine her future.

Set in a cotton-farming village, the film places Sudanese women and girls at the centre of the story, bringing together three generations and exploring questions of identity, power, girlhood and choice.

"By following a young Sudanese girl's story, it was important for me to show how everyday, ordinary life is and can be lived," she said.

"Every time I watch *Cotton Queen* with a Sudanese audience, it brings me so much joy to hear them laughing at the jokes, humming along to the songs, reacting to the drama and enjoying the moment,

despite what is currently happening in the country," Mirghani added.

The production itself was affected by the conflict in Sudan.

The cast and crew were displaced and eventually reunited in Egypt, where they continued filming.

"I wrote the script for *Cotton Queen* before the current war, and so I did not address the ongoing atrocities within the story," Mirghani said. "The actual production of the film was affected by the displacement of the Sudanese cast and crew to Egypt, and we were all emotionally disappointed to move the production away from Sudan."

"It became the only practical solution if we wanted to complete the film," she continued. "On set, there was an extraordinary sense of community, and we came together to make this film as a positive creative project, despite the difficulties the country is going through."

The film may have been completed away from Sudan, but the country remains at its heart.

Its language, stories, traditions and memories are part of what the



Doha-based Sudanese filmmaker Suzannah Mirghani (centre) on the set of *Cotton Queen*. - **Supplied**

filmmaker was determined to preserve.

In that sense, making *Cotton Queen* became more than simply completing a movie.

It became an act of holding on. This is perhaps where the film becomes bigger than its 94-minute running time.

Mirghani said audiences hardly get to experience another side of Sudanese life – the tender, everyday moments between family members, for example, or the lived experiences of adolescent girls, and the way they laugh, sing, and interact with each other and their environments.

"I am incredibly grateful to the Doha Film Institute for supporting this film from the very start, and to the mentorship and guidance of

Palestinian filmmaker Annemarie Jacir," she said.

"Sudan's onscreen image has mostly played out on the news, with footage of war and destruction," Mirghani added. "Yes, these horrific events continue to tear the country apart, but love and community continue to bring people together."

"There is a very real threat of cultural memory being erased in Sudan because of the war," she continued. "Not only is cinema an important audiovisual archive for the future, it also becomes an emotional archive, preserving thoughts, loves, poetry and desires."

"The magical realist elements in my film are about imagining a new Sudan," Mirghani said.